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SIX: fluid leadership and aural arranging within the context of contemporary a cappella

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Dissertation

SIX: FLUID LEADERSHIP AND AURAL ARRANGING
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY A CAPPELLA

by

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DEDICATION

For my wife.

The love of my life and truly, my inspiration.

Thank you my darling!
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Words are inadequate to express the depth of appreciation that I have for all those who were instrumental in the completion of this dissertation; however, I do want to express, to the best of my ability, the thankfulness I feel so deeply. First and foremost, I am thankful to my Heavenly Father and my Lord, Jesus Christ, whose quiet presence allowed me the strength to endure to the end.

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SIX: FLUID LEADERSHIP AND AURAL ARRANGING

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY A CAPPELLA

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ABSTRACT

Despite increasing popularity and interest in contemporary a cappella, little research exists involving this genre of music making. In this study, I investigated how SIX, a professional contemporary a cappella group, utilizes a primary practice of aural arranging to create original, a cappella cover arrangements entirely by ear. From one initial question and use of classic grounded theory analysis, three questions emerged: what did SIX do, how did SIX carry out what they do, and what characterizes how SIX carries out what they do?

The substantive theory of aural arranging and the substantive and formal theories of fluid leadership emerged from the data. The theory of aural arranging posits that SIX creates original cover arrangements by ear through the use of interactive activities initiated by application of task and social-emotional leadership. This substantive theory addresses the questions: what does SIX do and how does SIX carry out what they do? The theory of fluid leadership posits that SIX uses a form of fluid leadership to create original cover arrangements through interactive activities initiated by task and social-emotional leadership.
horizontal leadership governed by five principles; 1) no single, primary leader, 2) leading in areas of strength, 3) accurate awareness of strengths, 4) a practice of unassuming leadership, and 5) the maintenance of a healthy relational climate. These substantive and formal theories address the question, what characterizes how SIX carries out what they do?

Aural arranging and fluid leadership emerged from an environment of complex challenges wherein SIX established environments of safety and empowerment, promoting the sharing and utilization of musical and leadership thinking and knowing toward creation of an aural arrangement. Although the findings from this research are not generalizable given the single case study methodology, the theory of aural arranging presents a viable structure for creation of aural arrangements in other contemporary a cappella groups, and fluid leadership illustrates potential as a leadership model within small musical ensembles both within and beyond the formal music education classroom. The principles of fluid leadership may potentially be useful in dissimilar small groups traversing many disciplines. This study expands and enhances the current knowledge base related to contemporary a cappella, aural arranging, and leadership within small ensembles and groups.
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CHAPTER 1
HOW DO THEY DO THAT?
CONTEMPORARY A CAPELLA, FLUID LEADERSHIP,
AND AURAL ARRANGING:
RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

Since completing my master’s degree in choral conducting, I have
made my living as a choral conductor in either music ministry or the
collegiate music education setting. My focus and training has been in
classical choral literature, although I have conducted a variety of other
choral styles including traditional and contemporary sacred, gospel,
musical theatre, and vocal jazz. As a singer, my experience, both in
accompanied and unaccompanied vocal groups, had been largely the
same. I found myself in Branson, Missouri, in the summer of 2007,
where a music ministry opportunity allowed me to exercise not only my
traditional conducting skills, but also to form a contemporary praise
team. This experience considerably stretched my stylistic abilities,
broadened my appreciation for more contemporary and popular styles of
music, and allowed me to work with singers who were often better with
their ears than with a notated score.

In the summer of 2008, a friend of mine came to the Branson area
for a vacation with his wife. Branson is known as the "family friendly
Vegas," primarily because of the more than 100 family-friendly live shows
along what is called "the Branson Strip." While my friend was there, he
and his wife wanted to see a couple of shows. There was a new show in
town that had received rave reviews and was performed in a style called
contemporary a cappella. Because of my interest in vocal music, I
suggested that we attend this show called SIX, a group of six brothers
who sang contemporary a cappella. In the previous year, SIX took
Branson by storm, winning the "Best New Show" award from the
Branson Critic. Since then, they have received many best show awards
and have maintained a high ranking among shows in Branson (State of
the Ozarks, 2007–2015; Wackerly, 2009–2014). Attending this show
spawned intense interest for me because, with the exception of having
heard the King’s Singers many years previous, the performance
represented the first time I had heard a cappella renditions of
vocal/instrumental popular pieces with voices only.

Once I heard SIX, my ear and interest were piqued. In the
meantime, having made the acquaintance of Curtis, the youngest
member of SIX, I went to hear SIX a second time several months later at
Curtis’s invitation. It was then that I spoke with Barry, the senior
member of the group, complimenting him on the excellent delivery of
SIX’s vocal arrangements. In his gracious acceptance of the compliment,
he mentioned that SIX was a group of ear musicians. The use of this
term struck me. I then asked. “Do you mean that all of the
arrangements I just heard were created by ear?” His answer was that
with only a few exceptions, yes, the entire show was created by ear, without the use of a written score. His answer seemed peculiar. For me, a classically trained and notation-literate musician, the creation of full-blown vocal arrangements without having a written score was incomprehensible. From this position of incomprehension was born the principal research question that has guided this study: how does a group of six singers create intricate, professional sounding a cappella arrangements by ear, without reference to a musical score?

Contemporary a cappella, the style in which SIX performs, is officially defined by the recognized “father” of contemporary a cappella and the founder of the Contemporary A Cappella Society of America (CASA), Deke Sharon, as an “idiom of popular a cappella that arose during the mid-late 1980s, and now spans a wide variety of styles including rock, pop, R&B, hip-hop, country, jazz, etc.” (Sharon, Rubin, & Anderson, 2009, para. 2). Groups that sing in this style may be of the male, female or mixed variety and normally include from eight to sixteen singers. American and British pop or rock songs comprise the majority of the repertoire, although jazz, Broadway, and novelty songs are also performed. In the early 1990s, groups largely existed as extracurricular collegiate ensembles and were called “collegiate” a cappella (Duchan, 2007b, 2012a). Currently, there are many high school, collegiate, professional, and community groups demonstrating contemporary a
cappella’s adaptability to a variety of performance environments. Though a cappella as a genre represents an ancient classical style with roots dating back to Gregorian chant and the Renaissance, this new flavor of a cappella demonstrates popular appeal, is considered relevant to our modern society, and is described in CASA’s Core Values as “cool, current, and the voice of the future!” (Mission, n.d.).

**Need for the Study: An Emerging Problem for Music Educators**

Music education can occur in many settings: K–12 classrooms and ensembles, collegiate music programs, community music ensembles, church choirs and praise teams, garage bands, and other settings. Contemporary a cappella is found perhaps most commonly in secondary and post-secondary educational settings, making it an area of study that is important for today’s music educators. This study of contemporary a cappella in the context of SIX, which as a professional group is outside the “typical” music education context, promised to reveal aspects of musicianship related to the genre not readily found within the music classroom.

Contemporary a cappella presents unique problems but also dynamic opportunities for music educators in the 21st century. Contemporary a cappella is demonstrably on the rise in popular culture and in the music classroom (Adams, 2013). In recent years,
contemporary a cappella has sky rocketed in visibility and popularity as demonstrated on the successful television series, *The Sing Off!* (The Sing-Off, 2009–), currently in its 5th season, the box office hit *Pitch Perfect* (2012), and its recent sequel, *Pitch Perfect 2* (2015). This style of singing demonstrates appeal, certainly to college age singers, as indicated by the steady increase in amateur collegiate groups over the past 25 years (Duchan, 2007b). Resulting from this growing student fascination, teachers within both secondary and post-secondary music classrooms have begun turning more frequently to contemporary a cappella as a significant genre of instruction (Adam, 2013; McDonald, 2012; Mihalek, 2013). As music educators adapt to the needs of students in the 21st Century, many more may begin to utilize this genre as a component within choral programs.

Another aspect with regard to this emerging problem is that most, if not all, contemporary a cappella groups rely on a by ear practice in order to replicate at least some musical aspects needed for authentic sounding a cappella cover arrangements. Sharon states that although by ear or aural arranging is not the primary practice in the world of contemporary a cappella, many professional and amateur groups do primarily arrange by ear (personal communication, June 2013). From my own experience facilitating a contemporary a cappella group and Duchan’s (2007b, 2012a) accounts of contemporary a cappella
emulation, some aspects of any written contemporary a cappella arrangement must be worked out by ear, such as vocal percussion, stylistic interpretations, stylistic vocal tone, and rendering instrumental sound effects. In the case of a completely aural arrangement, every aspect must be worked out with proficient by ear skills; therefore, study of a by ear contemporary a cappella group provides an opportunity to examine practical aural skills in action that go beyond what may be found in other types of choral ensembles.

In contrast to this need for by ear functional proficiency within the practice of contemporary a cappella, the post-secondary aural training received by most music educators often demonstrated emphasis upon notation literacy only (Casarow, 2002) and a disconnect to aural skills applicable within real world musical contexts such as by ear contexts (Baker, 2005; Covington & Lord, 1994). Thus, many music educators may lack the foundational training which equips them to take the lead in facilitating contemporary a cappella groups, as was my experience when beginning this journey a few years ago.

Further personalizing and enriching this problem is my observation over the last few years, particularly in my own teaching, that many students enter post-secondary musical training with fairly well developed by ear music making skills, but under-developed notation literacy. Observance of this phenomenon is supported by Brown (2003),
who stated that though high school students in an English classroom are expected to speak, listen, and read, within a choral music classroom, students often listen and sing, but are not taught the basic skills of music reading and notation.

Although nontraditional music degrees in both popular music and recording arts may not always require notational literacy as part of the required training, traditional degrees in music do. As a formally trained music educator within a traditional program, I value and expect collegiate music students to become proficient in notational literacy; however, I also need to understand and value students’ by ear music making skills. I was enculturated into a system that valued notation literacy as a primary indication of musicianship (Casarow, 2002) and devalued by ear music making; therefore, I have had to change my learned attitude to value by ear skills as worthy of development, rather than inconsequential when compared with notation literacy. In order to follow up with personal changes in attitude toward by ear skills, as a music educator I needed to also round out my musical training to gain understanding of, and proficiency in, by ear skills, thus enabling the ability to help guide and develop by ear skills within present day music students. In order to develop an understanding and proficiency of practice, I needed to study an exceptional by ear model, capable of shedding light on the full range of by ear practice.
Lastly, in my personal experience, performance groups always had a single, primary leader. As I thought about SIX and considered how they might put together complete a cappella arrangements by ear, I assumed that they also likely utilized a single leader in their rehearsal practice; however, after observing them during their interactive stage performances, I wondered if something else might be going on. Study of this group’s function, as part of their by ear arranging, promised to provide answers to these uncertainties.

My discovery of SIX, a professional contemporary a cappella group who creates popular a cappella arrangements through a by ear or aural arranging practice, made me aware of this by ear world. Conducting a case study of SIX promised to shed light on this group’s stated predominantly by ear practice and therefore, to provide an increased understanding of the by ear skills that many of my incoming freshman music students seem to possess and value. As a professional group, SIX provided an exceptional model of practice as a case to investigate my primary research question: how does a group of six singers create intricate, professional sounding a cappella arrangements by ear, without reference to a musical score?
**Description of the Research Approach**

With my primary research question as my only companion, I began this study as an ethnographic case study, first acquiring videotaped footage of SIX’s rehearsals and then conducting personal interviews. At the time, I felt there was a connection between the research in aural learning and SIX’s by ear practice, thus a link to an already established area of academia. In preparation for the personal interviews, I researched literature on procedural musicianship, aural learning, and informal learning. Additionally, I viewed SIX’s rehearsal videos and considered things I might ask regarding the group’s leadership and interpersonal interactions. These preparations aided me in formulating questions I used during the course of these interviews (see Appendices A, B, and C); therefore, I entered these interviews with several preconceived notions.

Upon creating a full ethnographic description utilizing the interview data and a pre-established theoretical framework, I had hoped to discover answers related to my initial research query; however, though I had created a thick description of SIX, this description did not reveal satisfactory explanations for my initial question. Largely, the phenomenon described by Barry and that I had now observed on videotape—how SIX created contemporary a cappella arrangements by ear without reference to a musical score—remained a mystery.
After having explored several other possible theoretical frameworks, I considered use of grounded theory analysis. This analytic approach, as originally espoused by Glaser and Strauss (1967), demonstrated itself as a viable approach to the data analysis. I then dropped all preconceived notions I had regarding my study (Glaser, 2012) and viewed the videotaped rehearsal data, just to see what was there. It was then that aspects of aural arranging, along with some type of interactive leadership activity, began to emerge. This led me to examine the field of leadership, small group interaction, and leadership within musical ensembles to identify other leadership descriptions similar to my observations, as would benefit theory building. Eventually, I discovered a little used term that lacked a fully developed conceptualization, but seemed strikingly similar to my observations, called fluid leadership.¹ Examination of literature on fluid leadership and small group interaction provided me with an initial label for the style of SIX’s leadership I observed in the rehearsal data, as well as additional terminology for describing the components within the multi-faceted grounded theories that emerged from analysis. This classic grounded theory analysis thus

¹ In reference to the term fluid leadership, some instances are italicized while others are not. Italics are used to differentiate the grounded theory of fluid leadership from the term fluid leadership as used in extant literature.
provided a viable and constructive way in which to allow theoretically rich categories and properties to emerge from this study.

**Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to fully explicate SIX’s by ear practice. Though my initial research question was singular and simply stated, the answers that emerged from my analysis revealed the existence of additional, more specific underlying questions. These questions were not evident at this project’s outset; instead, they emerged from the analysis of the rehearsal data and helped define divisions within the grounded theories.

**Initial Broad Research Question:**

How does a group of six singers create intricate, professional sounding a cappella arrangements by ear, without reference to a musical score?

**Questions That Emerged from Analysis:**

1) What does the contemporary a cappella group SIX do that allows them to create, learn, and perform original a cappella cover arrangements?

2) How does the contemporary a cappella group SIX carry out what they do to create, learn, and perform original a cappella cover arrangements?
3) What characterizes how the contemporary a cappella group SIX carries out what they do to create, learn, and perform original a cappella cover arrangements?

The first question emerging from my analysis of video was concerned with the sharing and usage of musical thinking and knowing (Elliott, 1995) I observed during the by ear creation of a cappella arrangements and answered the question “what.” The second question surfaced from observed group interactions, group leadership, and demonstration of leadership exertion that appeared alongside the sharing and usage of musical thinking and knowing and answered the question, “how.” The third question emerged from the various leadership character traits exhibited within the group interactions, group leadership, and leadership exertion.

**Methodology**

This study was carried out as a single, instrumental case study, and as an instrumental case, thus focused on the phenomenon of the case, rather than the case itself (Stake, 1995). In this case study, the phenomenon of aural arranging, for which SIX is known, represents the focus. Data was gathered by direct rehearsal observation, interviews with members of SIX, and interviews with those who could provide different perspectives, thus providing validity through triangulation (Stake, 1995).
As a single case study, an in-depth investigation of one professional contemporary a cappella group and their music arrangement process took place. According to Yin (2003), single case study methodology can be especially apropos if a study is theoretical in nature, as discussed in the next section.

**Theoretical Framework**

I entered this research thinking that the work of Green (2002, 2008) would provide a strong theoretical framework for this project; however, once I began to work with my data, the analysis failed to yield the rich explanation of the phenomena I sought. Likewise, a consideration of collaborative learning (Bruffe, 1995) as a framework also failed to provide a fit for this project.

Although family systems theory (Kerr, 2000) might also have been applied to this study because SIX is a sibling group, my observations and open ended interview questions did not probe into family dynamics, but rather focused on SIX’s rehearsal process as a professional performance group. A couple of the interviews revealed that SIX’s family dynamics used to negatively affect the rehearsal process; however, from the context of my rehearsal observations and the interviews, the potentially negative impact of family relationships no longer appeared to outwardly manifest
within SIX’s rehearsal process. Therefore, this particular theoretical area also did not seem applicable as a framework for analysis of the data.

The search for an adequate theoretical framework eventually led me to consider and apply a classic grounded theory analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), a research method that has been refined over many years of continued development (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2005). I chose grounded theory for the data analysis, in part because of grounded theory’s unique ability to generate theory that specifically fits, has relevance to, and works in the context being studied (Glaser, 1978).

Before beginning a grounded theory analysis, it was necessary to clear my mind of assumptions—to hold no preconceptions—considered the dictum of classic grounded theory (Glaser, 2012). The no preconceptions dictum states that in order to create a truly grounded theory, one must enter research analysis with as little preconception of the general problem, perceived participants’ problems, explanation of phenomenon, codes to reveal theory, or even what theoretical perspective to apply (Glaser, 2012) as is possible.

I could not enter the analysis of this data as a blank slate (no researcher can); however, my personal musical background and experience lacked by ear training. Instead I had a thorough understanding of notation-based rehearsing. As a result, I could forego most assumptions regarding by ear practice as I undertook the process
of coding, categorizing, memoing, and theorizing. As I proceeded with this approach, I used the rehearsal data as the primary data source by which to base theoretical supposition, and used the interview data to substantiate and clarify occurrences within the rehearsal data as well as account for processes described, but not directly observed.

Utilizing classic grounded theory analysis, two stages of grounded theory emerged, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The first stage was a substantive theory, which referred to the emergent theoretical precepts that are embedded and inseparable from the immediate context of contemporary a cappella. The second stage was a formal theory, which referred to the emergent theoretical precepts that are grounded within the data, but represent a higher level of theorizing. The principles that emerged demonstrated relevance both inside and outside of contemporary a cappella. Thus, the substantive and formal theories presented in this document provide the theoretical framework for this dissertation. The substantive theory of the process of aural arranging proposes a theoretical explanation that directly answers my first two research questions addressing what SIX does and how SIX does it. The substantive and formal theories of fluid leadership propose a theoretical explanation that directly answers my third research question, addressing what characterizes how SIX carries out what they do.
Importance of the Study and Choice of Study Participants

In addition to the research problem and purposes described earlier in this chapter, this study also addresses two notable lacks within current music education research (see Chapter 2 for a review of this literature). The first is the lack of academic articles or dissertations to date on the subject of contemporary a cappella. All academic writing at present utilizes the slightly different term contemporary “collegiate” a cappella (Duchan, 2007a, 2007b, 2012a, 2012b; Mayhew, 2009; Paparo, 2013); however, the broader term utilized by CASA is contemporary a cappella, which for practical purposes refers to the same genre. The lack of academic research to date involving contemporary a cappella, when compared to the genre’s popularity, suggests that this area of study needs to be further explored within music education. Contemporary a cappella, given its increase in popularity, increased usage in schools, and high appeal to students, suggests a need for further research.

The second lack within music education research involves studies about ensemble leadership. Though many existent studies involving large ensembles and single leaders within traditional leadership (Allmendinger & Hackman, 1996; Atik, 1994; Hunt, Stelluto, & Hooijberg, 2004; Koivunen & Wennes, 2011; Matthews & Kitsantas, 2007; Mintzberg, 1998; Poggi, 2011; Smaby, 1994) and transformational leadership (Boerner & Von Streit, 2005, 2007; Rowold & Rohmann, 2008; Williams,
do exist, the study of small ensembles and single leaders is very limited (El-Shawan, 1984; Glowinski, Mancini, Rukavishnikova, Khomenko, & Camurri, n.d.). Academic attention to horizontal leadership models within small ensembles is also very limited (King, 2006; Shieh, 2008; Vredendurgh & He, 2003). Interestingly, most of the leadership research within music ensembles, large or small, features instrumental groups.

Discussions within this dissertation of the emerging problem and purpose of this research project address some of these lacks within academic research regarding contemporary a cappella and ensemble leadership. Additionally, my research promises to add to the theoretical richness and understanding of these areas through use of a classic grounded theory analysis. The remainder of this dissertation is dedicated to the realization and theoretical underpinnings of the resulting grounded theories.

Although, it might have been possible to study contemporary a cappella within a student ensemble more closely associated with the context of high school or collegiate music education, I chose to use a professional a cappella group for my case study. Student groups, by nature, represent a constant revolving membership of less experienced musicians and therefore are not as likely to have developed a highly refined practice. SIX, in terms of the by ear skills possessed by each
member, efficiency, and refinement within their process of aural arranging, and their arranging practice of maintaining an original work’s overall feel and recognizability (the common practice within the genre of contemporary a cappella), provided an exemplary model of practice from which I could glean applicable knowledge regarding contemporary a cappella and the process of aural arranging, neither of which is well represented in existing literature.

Setting the Stage: A Brief History of SIX.

SIX² consists of the six oldest of ten brothers born from the same two parents. From oldest to youngest, the membership of SIX includes Barry, Kevin, Lynn, Jak, Owen, and Curtis. Arnold Knudsen, their father, first started working with his oldest sons when Barry was thirteen and Owen was about six (Curtis was too young to participate when Mr. Knudsen began this work). A couple of years prior, in 1973, Joyce Knudsen, their mother, having noticed that her sons often harmonized while playing around the house, taught them a song. When Mr. Knudsen heard them sing, he noticed that they sang in tune and were not afraid to sing out. He commented, “Well, gee. If they have that much talent, well

² Although the performance group SIX did not officially adopt this name until 2006, to avoid confusion, when referring to any combination of singers within this group and regardless of the referenced time period, I will refer to them as SIX.
maybe we ought to do something with it” (interview, June 8, 2010). Starting with his five oldest sons in 1975, Mr. Knudsen taught two hymns by rote on the piano, which they sang in church with good results. He then began expanding their repertoire with some secular barbershop arrangements. Eventually, they attracted the attention of the local Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) chapter and received an invitation to sing. This began a 10-year association with the BHS, wherein four of the six brothers, in a type of rotation, consistently maintained a barbershop quartet. They became a crowd favorite for many of the barbershop shows and competitions (Steinkamp, interview, November 20, 2010).

In 1978, after three years of working with their father, SIX made their debut on the Donnie and Marie Show. The brothers thought that this national exposure would kick-start a professional career as a singing group. Barry, Kevin, and Jak all recall that after this television show aired they were disappointed because, “No one called” (Barry, interview, June 8, 2010; Kevin, interview, June 8, 2010; Jak, interview, June 9, 2010). As teenagers, Kevin, Lynn, and Jak formed a punk rock band with Kevin on guitar, Lynn on drums, and Jak on bass. Additionally, several of the brothers experimented with various singing styles including disco. From a group of approximately 50 competing quartets in 1983 (Barbershop competition trivia, n.d.), SIX placed 38th in the International
Barbershop Quartet Competition sponsored by the BHS. In 1984, after a year of intense barbershop coaching and against comparable odds, Lynn, Jak, Owen, and Curtis were in the quartet that placed 8th. All the brothers took a year off from barbershop competitions, but competed again the following year, placing 8th again.

After this second 8th place ranking, SIX temporarily disbanded as a singing group. Then, early in 1987, Kevin called his brothers, excited about another group of brothers who played trumpets and were currently playing on the streets of Los Angeles, supposedly making well over $100,000 per year (Barry, interview, June 8, 2010). Encouraged by this call and excited to resume singing, Barry, Lynn, and Jak joined Kevin, who already lived in Southern California with his wife, in order to sing for change and pass out business cards in an attempt to make a living as performers on the streets of LA. Before long, they were singing for A-list parties for such people as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Clint Eastwood, Joel Silver, Warren Beatty, and Ronald Reagan. In 1988, they were hired by Disneyland’s “Blast to the Past,” enabling them to develop enough repertoire to compete for yet higher paying gigs (SIX, n.d.).

SIX won the Harmony Sweepstakes in 1990, a “onetime win per group” annual a cappella vocal competition (Harmony Sweepstakes, n.d.). To date, they have created eight professional CDs, produced live performance DVDs, and are currently producing a ninth professional CD.
In the late 1990s, their CD entitled Nu-Wop won the “Best Doo-Wop/R&B Album” award from CASA (1998 CARA Winners, n.d.). In the early years, the group promoted themselves as The Knudsen Brothers, but in 2004, they took the name “SIX Real Brothers,” shortening the name to “SIX” in 2006 (Barry, personal communication, October 17, 2014; Lynn, personal communication, October 21, 2014). SIX has performed regular professional live shows on cruise lines, in Las Vegas, and currently in Branson, Missouri. SIX decided to become a full time performing group in 1996 (Lynn, personal communication, October 21, 2014) and came to Branson in 2006 (SIX, n.d.).

Within the city of Branson, SIX has maintained a reputation as among the top rated shows. Branson, considered among the most active areas in the country for live performance shows, has more than 100 regularly performing professional shows each year (Branson.com, 2015). SIX was recognized as Branson’s Best New Show in 2007, Best Show in 2008, 2009 and 2010, Entertainers of the Year for 2009 and 2010, and Fan Favorite in 2011. This recognition came from the Branson Critic, the formerly accredited entity for such awards, which based these on more than 2000 annual online reviews submitted by fans who attend Branson shows. Upon the dissolution of the Branson Critic in 2011, other entities have continued to rate Branson shows, from which SIX has earned
several notable awards and nominations (State of the Ozarks, 2007–

**Overview of the Chapters**

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on the topics of contemporary a cappella, informal music learning, playing by ear, shared leadership, musical ensemble leadership, and fluid leadership. Contemporary a cappella, playing by ear, musical ensemble leadership, and fluid leadership have little representation within academic literature; therefore, a thorough approach to existing literature within these very closely related fields was undertaken. The areas of informal music learning and shared leadership are represented extensively within academic literature; therefore, a limited examination of the most closely associated pieces of extant literature was undertaken. The examination of this literature will create a foundational definition of leadership in general and contextualize the grounded theories of aural arranging and fluid leadership, found within contemporary a cappella and this study.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and associated methodological literature utilized to acquire, transcribe, and analyze the data toward generation of a grounded theory. This includes a description of case study details, my personal journey from conducting a descriptive case study to application of a grounded analysis, and data collection methods
and timelines. A grounded theory analysis, particularly favored in recent leadership research (Parry, 1998), will be presented in the context of two opposing schools of grounded theory, with an explanation of the researcher’s choice of a classic or Glaserian grounded theory approach. Lastly, this chapter addresses data organization, creation of the Interactive Communication Analysis as adapted from Bales (1950), emergent analytical codes, and primary terms utilized for project description.

Chapter 4 starts with SIX’s rehearsal development, including both SIX’s leadership progression and the establishment of aural arranging as this group’s primary rehearsal practice. Then I present a brief description of areas of procedural musical knowledge as outlined by Elliott (1995), followed by an examination of SIX’s observed musical thinking and knowing. This last section serves as a musical introduction to the members of SIX, thus providing a rich description of this group’s vocal knowledge and functionality as ear musicians.

Chapter 5 begins the process of elucidating the substantive theory of SIX’s aural arranging and the substantive and formal theories of fluid leadership by revealing the existence of three emergent environments. These environments represent the climate by which aural arranging and fluid leadership exist and are perpetuated. One of these environments represents the existence of SIX’s predominant practice of aural
arranging, while the other two represent efforts the members of SIX make in order for *fluid leadership* to function. This chapter first defines and describes these environments in theoretical terms, and then demonstrates their existence within the case data of SIX, through specific examples from rehearsal observations and interviews.

Chapter 6 presents the emerging substantive grounded theory of aural arranging, demonstrating both what SIX does and how SIX does it. What SIX does involves a set of interactive activities including *interactive discussion*, *interactive listening*, and *interactive singing*. SIX utilizes these interactive activities to effectively and efficiently work out an aural arrangement. SIX instigates these interactive activities through a specific set of task and social-emotional leadership roles. Examples of the effective use of these interactive activities and leadership roles are provided from the rehearsal observations. Additionally, this chapter includes a brief description of the leadership knowledge held by each member of SIX. The substantive theory of aural arranging (see Appendices D & E) concludes this chapter.

Chapter 7 reveals the substantive and formal grounded theories of *fluid leadership* as it emerged from the data, and addresses what characterizes the leadership roles identified in the theory of aural arranging. *Fluid leadership* exhibits five principles within SIX’s process of
aural arranging. This chapter defines, describes, and substantiates the leadership principles of *fluid leadership* within the substantive area and then formalizes this theory by removing it from the context of SIX and aural arranging (see Appendix F). The remainder of the chapter presents an overview of the research conclusions of this grounded theory analysis, implications for the theory of *fluid leadership* and the theory of aural arranging within music education, and implications for further research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RELEVANT POPULAR MEDIA

A classic grounded theory analysis of SIX’s rehearsal data revealed aspects of aural arranging coupled with some type of interactive leadership activity. The observation of a process of aural arranging, a topic that appeared to be nonexistent within current literature, seemed to connect with literature involving contemporary a cappella, informal and aural music learning, and playing by ear. Observation of a particular type of interactive leadership activity was a surprise that created the necessity for a second literature review to enable me to describe and support these observations; therefore, an examination of the literature on leadership, shared leadership, and leadership within musical ensembles was undertaken. Descriptions of the term fluid leadership, though not well represented within academic literature, demonstrated close proximity to the specialized type of leadership function emerging from analysis of SIX’s rehearsal data.

Scant areas of extant literature, including contemporary a cappella, playing by ear, leadership within musical ensembles, and fluid leadership, are thoroughly covered. Exhaustive areas of extant literature, including informal and aural learning, leadership, and shared leadership, have been limited to that which is most relevant for grounded theories developed within this dissertation. Because of the dearth of literature
related to contemporary a cappella and its centrality to this study, I also looked to popular culture for information about the phenomenon.

**Visibility of Contemporary A Cappella in Popular Media**

In recent years, contemporary a cappella has enjoyed an exponential increase in visibility as a genre in today’s popular media. The growing presence of contemporary a cappella represents one reason for the need for academic research related to this genre of music making. In order to better understand the phenomenon, I felt it necessary to look at current activity within popular media. Demonstrating the increase in visibility is the jump in popular newspaper and magazine articles about current activity in contemporary a cappella. A search using the term “contemporary a cappella” in the HighBeam Research website (HighBeam Research, 2015) yielded 187 results. From 1995–2003, an average of two articles per year were published; from 2004–2006, an average of ten articles per year were published; and from 2007–2013, an average of 19 articles per year were published. On YouTube, a search for “contemporary a cappella” yielded 1080 results, and a search on Google yielded 1,370,000 results.
CASA: Professional Organization of Contemporary A Cappella

In part responsible for the increase of popular media coverage in the area of contemporary a cappella are the efforts put forth by the Contemporary A Cappella Society (CASA), which promotes the networking and professional development of those interested in this genre. Deke Sharon, recognized father of contemporary a cappella, founded CASA in 1991 (Duchan, 2012a). The creation of this organization allowed the development of community between the singers and fans of contemporary a cappella. CASA’s mission is “to foster and promote contemporary a cappella music around the world through education, recognition, and the creation of performance opportunities” (Mission, Vision, & Core Values, n.d.). CASA promotes this mission through the establishment of its vision and core values, musical resources, a cappella programs, a cappella community and recording awards, a cappella competitions, and online informational resources.

Cultural Popularity of Contemporary A Cappella

National and international broadcasts of television series and motion pictures have both added to contemporary a cappella’s visibility and have made it part of popular culture. Pitch Perfect: The Quest for Collegiate A Cappella Glory, a book by Mickey Rapkin (2008), tells the dramatic, true story of three a cappella groups during a single a cappella
competition season, as they each struggled with personal crossroads and
the collegiate a cappella competition circuit. Rapkin’s book provided the
material for the first full-length musical comedy featuring the genre of
contemporary a cappella music, *Pitch Perfect*, a Universal Pictures
production directed by Jason Moore (Pitch Perfect, 2012). Deke Sharon
served as arranger, on-site musical director, and vocal director for *Pitch
Perfect* (Total Vocal, n.d.). This movie, considered among the most
successful musical comedies of that year, grossed more than 115 million
dollars worldwide (Pitch Perfect, 2012). *Pitch Perfect 2*, directed by
Elizabeth Banks, was released in summer 2015 (Pitch Perfect, 2015).
True to form regarding movie sequels, this film received some highly
positive (Felperin, 2015; Kermode, 2015; Lodge, 2015) and scathingly
negative (Aldworth, 2015; Edelstein, 2015) reviews; regardless, the sequel
actually did better financially than the first with a worldwide gross of 280
million dollars (Pitch Perfect, 2015), certainly indicative of a continued
increase in contemporary a cappella interest.

Though demonstrative of contemporary a cappella’s growing
popularity, the successes of *Pitch Perfect* and *Pitch Perfect 2* occurred
against a backdrop of a relatively recent popular a cappella history. This
history includes contemporary a cappella activity that pre-dates its
appearance as a collegiate phenomenon in the early 90s, including some
chart topping music hits. Among these earlier contemporary a cappella

In 2009, the first of four seasons of *The Sing Off!,* a reality show and contemporary a cappella competition, aired on NBC. It ran for three seasons sequentially, with the fourth season skipping a year to run in 2013. This show, among the top rated television shows in the United States, was adapted for production in France, the Netherlands, and China (*The Sing-Off*, n.d.), thus further indicating growing popularity in this country and abroad of contemporary a cappella.

**Literature on Contemporary A Cappella**

Although the number of articles in popular media referencing contemporary a cappella has greatly increased in recent years, very little academic writing exists. The earliest known academic article published in a refereed journal is “Boy Bands Over Bach” (Sandman, 2005). In this
article, Sandman pointed out the increase in success and numbers of groups within collegiate a cappella in recent years, and encouraged exploring this genre for inclusion within high school choral programs. In support of this assertion, Sandman conveys the wisdom of three a cappella aficionados, David Buffum, Don Gooding, and Deke Sharon, innovative high school teacher, a cappella competition administrator, and founder of CASA respectively. The collective advice of these three a cappella experts indicates that the time was ripe for increased incorporation of contemporary a cappella within traditional music programs.

Promoting the inclusion of contemporary a cappella in schools, a publication entitled “Contemporary A Cappella in the Schools” (Rees, 2010), brings to light two already established pedagogies for enabling contemporary a cappella in the classroom. The first are the pedagogical resources from vocal jazz’s 40-year classroom presence, which may be adaptable for use in contemporary a cappella groups. The second is collegiate a cappella’s useful model of democratic and informal music learning practices. The combination of these pedagogical roots (vocal jazz and democratic, informal music learning practices) offers a strong argument for incorporating contemporary a cappella in the music classroom.

The foremost academic writer in the area of contemporary a
cappella, Duchan, provided the first and most extensive accounting of this genre through a dissertation (2007b) and resulting book (2012a). These two works represent the foundational examples of academic literature on the subject of contemporary a cappella.

Duchan referred to the genre contemporary a cappella consistently as contemporary “collegiate” a cappella, thus demonstrating the collegiate research context and his collegiate a cappella background (Duchan, 2012b). Duchan’s research focused on the analysis of four key considerations of this genre: emulation versus originality, rehearsal process, performance conventions, and recording practices within contemporary a cappella. Emulation refers to making a song sound as much like the model as possible, while originality refers to making a song unique to the performing group. Although the practice of emulation is most common within contemporary a cappella groups, both practices are pervasive and demonstrate inherent tension and sometimes contradiction (Duchan, 2007a). Duchan addressed this issue in the dissertation (2007b), book (2012a), and an article entitled “Collegiate A Cappella: Emulation and Originality (2007a).

Contemporary a cappella groups specialize in the creation of cover arrangements of existing songs, largely emulating original song versions. With this in mind, contemporary a cappella arrangers who create notated arrangements often utilize recordings as foundational source material
(Duchan, 2007a, 2007b). The goal is often to assure that these already existing songs remain recognizable to the audience in basic harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic feel (Duchan, 2012a); however, beyond this adherence to harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic feel, popular music must have a feel of spontaneity and freedom. Duchan (2007a) suggested that a cappella singers use musical quotation, formal expansion, textural variation, melodic sharing across voice parts, and reinterpretation of the lead melodic line as ways to express originality, without destroying a song’s inherent recognizability.

In contemporary collegiate a cappella, groups spend more time together in rehearsal than any other time spent with the group (Duchan, 2007b, 2012a). Analysis of the rehearsal process within the Fallen Angels, the all-female a cappella group that Duchan researched, revealed the importance of this group’s practice of “check in,” a practice of group socialization prior to rehearsal, that was always observed at the start of every rehearsal. In contrast, the mixed group the Treblemakers and the male group VoiceMale valued making music or simply doing things

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3 According to Grove Music Online, Popular music is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide set of variously distinct though often related genres. All of these designations are imperfect, and more nuanced understanding of popular music necessitates recognizing the fluidity of musical boundaries, and the constant transformation, adaptation, and impermanence of musical practices. Definitions of popular music seeking to distinguish it from art or folk music usually emphasize its wide appeal, means of dissemination (in particular, mass distribution), and social structure (music of the people; music for a non-elite audience; music for a mass audience)” (Hamm, Walser, Warwick, Garrett, n.d.).
together more highly than verbal communication. Thus, in Duchan’s analysis, rehearsals possessed social aspects of relationship beyond a group’s musical existence (Duchan, 2007b, 2012a).

Duchan (2012a) also pointed out the importance in using humorous, semi-improvisatory skits or dialogue in conjunction with musical performance within contemporary a cappella. These added skits and dialogue proved an effective performance practice within contemporary a cappella, used to segue from one piece to another in multi-song sets, increase the entertainment value of a concert, and even allow those who are gifted, spontaneous talkers to utilize their unique gifts within this genre. Choreographed moves may also contribute to the humorous aspect of a performance, providing the audience with variety without interruption of musical delivery.

Additionally, Duchan (2012a) examined the recording practices found in contemporary a cappella. Collegiate groups often look upon the creation of a recording as both a way to establish a source of group income and a viable marketing strategy; however, such recording projects yield little if any financial gain for individual group members. According to Duchan (2012a), two social benefits often outweigh financial and publicity considerations. The first includes interpersonal bonding through shared experience and accomplishment, and the second includes gaining personal satisfaction and nostalgia. Both social benefits
derive from the completion of a common goal as a foundational aspect of social relationships. Duchan (2012b) further discussed the practice of a cappella recording in an article entitled “Recordings, Technology, and Discourse in Collegiate A Cappella.” In this article, Duchan first presented a brief overview of contemporary a cappella to set the context of the discussion, and then created a chronology of collegiate a cappella recordings. The Yale Whiffenpoofs’ 1958 LP recording is indicative of the early days, when only groups who had the financial means for such an expensive endeavor released albums.

In the 1980s, the advent of the cassette tape revolutionized collegiate a cappella recordings in at least two ways. First, the user-friendly cassette tape technology allowed recording on a newer and more durable media; therefore, a faster and wider distribution of recorded material became possible. Secondly, stereo systems featuring tape-to-tape duplication further encouraged the creation and sharing of a cappella tracks (Duchan, 2012b). This granted arrangers the ability to make compilation cassettes, thus allowing for convenient comparison of a multitude of a cappella arrangements.

CD technology eventually became the predominant recording medium. In 1995, Deke Sharon created the Best of Collegiate A Cappella (BOCA) as an annual series of collegiate a cappella recordings. This allowed national distribution of the best collegiate recording tracks,
pooled not only from the major centers of collegiate a cappella activity on the East Coast, but also from the Midwest and the West Coast. According to Sharon, these collected recordings were not intended for a cappella enthusiasts, but rather were intended to create new fans of contemporary a cappella (Duchan, 2012b).

Other scholarly articles on the subject of contemporary a cappella are few. Mayhew (2005) conducted a quantitative study probing the contrast in perceptions about contemporary collegiate a cappella ensembles between student ensemble participants and university music faculty. The areas covered consisted of participant perceptions of contemporary collegiate a cappella ensembles in terms of their value to students, compatibility with healthy vocal technique, and affiliation with university music departments. Both faculty and students perceived value for participating students in terms of performance, leadership, and possible teaching experience outside the traditional ensemble. Faculty overwhelmingly perceived that contemporary a cappella style was counter to healthy vocal technique, while students perceived no conflict between the two. When asked about the possible association of contemporary a cappella for credit within university music programs, faculty and students expressed divergent opinions. Mayhew sought to discover faculty and student attitudes only, not the causes of such attitudes, with recommendations that further research could delve into the causes.
Paparo (2012) conducted a qualitative study of a single collegiate a cappella group. Similar in scope to Duchan’s writings, Paparo examined both musical and social aspects of contemporary a cappella within a collegiate context. Five themes emerged from Paparo’s data: music-making culture; fraternity; alumni involvement; autonomy, leadership and hierarchy; and value of participation (Paparo, 2012). Duchan (2007b, 2012a) also discovered an emergent sense of community and support, which translated to fraternity and alumni involvement in Paparo’s terminology. Additionally, Paparo’s findings indicated inherent and perhaps irreconcilable differences between the informal music learning of this student-led collegiate a cappella group and teacher-led groups within the formal music classroom. Regardless, Paparo recommended further research into contemporary a cappella’s informal music practices within formal music education settings.

**Contemporary A Cappella Arranging**

The process of aural arranging, a key element of the emergent grounded theory and primary focus of the study within this dissertation, must be situated within the conventions of current contemporary a cappella arrangement practice; therefore, I reviewed the two primary manuals on contemporary a cappella arranging that exist to date. The first arrangement manual (Callahan, 2000), written specifically as a
practical guide for the prospective collegiate contemporary a cappella arranger, describes a continuum of three arranging types: transcribing, transanging, and arranging. Transcribing is an exact duplication of a voices-only recorded example. Transanging, also akin to Duchan’s practice of emulation (2007a; 2007b; 2012a) and the most common practice in contemporary a cappella arranging, entails arranging from an instrumental/vocal recording example into an a cappella arrangement. Arranging, referred to by the author as “true arranging,” represents the practice of taking the basic design of a piece and freely applying artistic license.

Callahan (2000) includes an instructional CD with many musical examples to allow the reader to practice notating and arranging specific examples, through listening only. Specialized topics, advantageous to producing more professional sounding a cappella arrangements, are also included. Arrangers within collegiate a cappella often double as music directors; therefore, tips on efficient rehearsal techniques increased the practical nature of this manual. Arrangement styles covered within this manual include traditional, rock, reggae, and jazz (Callahan, 2000).

The second and most comprehensive manual on contemporary a cappella arranging (Sharon & Bell, 2012), intended for both novice and experienced arrangers, covers many arranging topics. Among these is an emphasis on the importance of maintaining the integrity of the melody
and bass lines within contemporary a cappella arrangements, to maintain the original feel of a song. In addition, Sharon and Bell (2012) identified different arranging types; some were defined exactly like Callahan’s (2000) descriptions: transcription is like transcribing; adaptation is similar to transcribing but requires a change in voicing format; translation is like transanging, and transformation is like arranging.

Addressing varying arranging roles, Sharon and Bell (2013) described three distinct arranger mindsets: dreamer, editor, and critic. The arranger as dreamer represents pure creativity, whether conservative or wild. The arranger as editor takes a raw and creative product and refines the ideas. The arranger as critic finds fault and does the ultimate refinements needed to make an arrangement the best it can possibly be. All three mindsets ideally function in a single individual at different times during the arrangement process. The manual writers additionally address issues of song selection, distillation of each song’s essence, assembly of pieces, and transitions; thus demonstrating issues apparent within aural arranging. Further, three types of possible medley endings—simple, grand, and wrap-up endings—are included, along with brief coverage of the very popular practice of arrangement mash-ups.
Contemporary A Cappella How-to Guides

During the time span in which I actively researched aspects of contemporary a cappella, aural arranging, and fluid leadership, two books were published that addressed conventions on how contemporary a cappella groups can be formed, organized, and run. Groups formed for high school classrooms and collegiate extracurricular contexts were covered; therefore, a review of what others knew seemed important as I researched the formation, organization, and rehearsal process of SIX. McDonald (2012), a veteran high school choral director and founder of Eleventh Hour, the only high school competitor during the first season of *The Sing Off*, shares tremendous expertise in creating a contemporary a cappella group within a high school choral curriculum. Organized in a logical, systematic format, this source is invaluable for bringing a music educator through all considerations from audition to final performance.

In contrast, Chin and Scalise (2012) addressed forming collegiate contemporary a cappella groups from the viewpoint of the founders of the A Cappella Blog (Chin & Scalise, 2012; The A Cappella Blog, 2007–2015). Though neither Chin nor Scalise appear to have personally participated in any collegiate a cappella groups, their expertise comes from operating The A Cappella Blog, having gone live in 2007, for the five years prior to the book’s publication. During this first five years of the blog’s operation, Chin and Scalise reviewed about two hundred collegiate a cappella group
performances and featured important leaders in contemporary a cappella as commentators in their online forum (Chin & Scalise, 2012). These authors gained broad expertise in the workings of collegiate a cappella from their unique position as reviewers and interviewers. The approach prescribed in this book allows collegiate leaders to enter the field of contemporary a cappella with some knowledge, but states principles with the flexibility needed to make specific collegiate a cappella groups and their unique personalities excel.

**Literature on Informal Music Learning**

Informal learning may be defined as coming from planned and unplanned activities of daily life, related to personal learning drives and motives, and unstructured in terms of learning objectives. Informal learning does not lead to earned degrees or certification as formal learning often does, but it can produce assessable outcomes and therefore plays a part in the formal music classroom (Mak, 2012). In recent years, discussion about informal learning in the music education academic literature has greatly increased. Amidst this discussion, Green (2002) represents a clear and pragmatic voice in the definition of informal music learning:

By “informal music learning” I mean a variety of approaches to acquiring musical skills and knowledge outside formal educational settings . . . . I will in general terms refer to
informal music learning as a set of “practices,” rather than “methods” . . . Informal music learning practices may be both conscious and unconscious. They include encountering unsought learning experiences through enculturation in the musical environment; learning through interaction with others such as peers, family members or other musicians who are not acting as teachers in formal capacities; and developing independent learning methods through self-teaching techniques. (Green, 2002, p. 16)

Green further codified informal music learning practices through a large-scale research project entitled Musical Futures (Musical Futures). This began as a pilot project in 2003 and put into practice the characteristics of informal music learning in select public music programs throughout the UK. This project represented a new type of pedagogy detailed in Green’s (2008) *Music, Informal Learning and the School.*

**Informal Music Learning, Aural Learning, and Playing by Ear**

Musicians situated in informal music learning environments often exhibit the practice of aural learning by listening to recordings and copying what they hear (Green, 2002, 2008). Young people often immerse themselves into the music they would like to perform by listening. This activity, though it represents the first stage in the process of aural learning, is not generally associated with learning because enjoyment, rather than work, is often associated with the practice (Snell, 2007). Mesbur (2006) also spoke in terms of the enculturation into popular
music, which created listening networks wherein the opinions and referrals of others affected further listening behavior and, in turn, affected aural learning ability. Listening networks can include peers, siblings, and musical mentors, each influencing and being influenced simultaneously. Green (2002) put it in a different way when she stated that musicians gain musical skill by immersion in the culture of everyday music and musical practice within social contexts.

Green (2002) further asserted that aural learning often demonstrates assimilation of practical skills, specifically creativity and technical understanding. This type of musical understanding may exceed that achievable through notational learning, because although notation can precisely delineate pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulations, and so forth, it cannot represent tone color, style, microtonal shadings of pitch inflection, and complex rhythmic considerations beyond note values. A musical recording, on the other hand, offers the full gamut of subtle musical nuances, including style, performance practice, tone, tempo, dynamics, and so forth. This availability of a multitude of musical properties demonstrates the value of the recording over a notated score, and hence provides an advantage for those who practice aural learning.

In describing jazz musicians, Louth (2006) found that aural learning, though not used singularly, always preceded notational learning. Notational learning in Louth’s study indicated a practice
wherein the reading of notational symbols on paper included a process of matching symbols to knowledge previously acquired aurally. One of the study participants made a practice of listening to the harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic structure of a piece by way of a recording before attempting an improvisation. This demonstrated an ability to improvise independent of notation, but dependent on aural learning.

Playing by ear, as a type of aural learning, resonates within this research study because SIX refer to themselves as ear musicians. According to Lilliestam (1996), making music by ear means, “to create, perform, remember and teach music without the use of written notation” (p. 195). By ear encompasses the vast majority of music in the context of all the musical disciplines worldwide; however, Lilliestam (1996) further asserted that researchers often neglect such predominant music making methods, possibly because it is easy for scholars to focus on the exceptional, rather than focus on something that occurs every day, is considered too simple, and thus often considered unworthy for research. The existence of other terms that approximate by ear, such as folk music, orally transmitted music, notation-independent music, and so forth (all of which reveal limitations, especially in an overall assumption of notated music being the norm), may explain part of the problem; however, none of these other terms quite achieves the same meaning as playing by ear (Lilliestam, 1996).
The term playing by ear found occasional usage within the academic literature in the mid-20th century, represented first with articles that promoted playing piano by ear (Drew, 1940; Hardy, 1945). Additionally, a program wherein a music teacher taught organ by ear to all of the students in a given district demonstrated positive results concerning the stated pedagogical goals for the program. These included development of musical skills, perception of form, style, and notation, increase in the ability to listen, and increased understanding of musical signs (Blair, 1964). Additional research further supported by ear learning and indicated that, as a method, by ear learning demonstrated benefits in the ability to sight read (Musco, 2009; Woody, 2012), tonal aptitude (Delzell, Rohwer, & Ballard, 1999), and is now often considered the mark of a “well rounded musician” (Musco, 2010, p. 60). Among famous historical musicians who valued by ear learning is the famous Romantic piano virtuoso, Clara Wieck Schumann, who took between 6–12 months of piano lessons before learning to read the treble clef (Selmon, 2007).

To summarize, throughout the literature, references exist to the foundational importance of aural learning and learning by ear in informal music learning practices. These references include listening to recordings and copying them by ear, the manifestation of interactive listening networks, musical cultural immersion, and the value of learning to play by ear. Additionally, aural learning is dependent upon information that is
lacking in notated music such as subtleties of style, pitch inflection, and so forth.

**Informal Music Learning and Integration**

Green (2002, 2008) described the concept of integration as involving the creative synthesis of listening, performing, improvising, and composing throughout the entire learning process. Integration exhibits the holistic nature of music making, considering music a unified whole rather than an art of properties best learned and absorbed one at a time. Louth (2004, 2006) stated that the idea that music is best learned through real life contexts where practicing, performing, listening and learning are combined in various ways permeates the literature. Jaffurs (2006) agreed with this concept, as she observed research participants integrating performance, practice, listening, and composition simultaneously during the rehearsal process.

Systemization of practice often results from an integrated music making process. Mesbur (2006) reported that as ability levels rose in young popular musicians, they began to systemize their approach to music learning practices. Green (2002) made a similar claim, stating that early in the process, informal learning happened as a jumble of unconscious learning processes. As time and skill levels advanced,
unconscious processes moved to conscious processes and, therefore, became more systemized.

Aside from the integration of musical aspects, aspects of communication also integrate. Communication styles of oral and musical, verbal and non-verbal cues comprised the practice within Jaffurs’ (2006) case study. These aspects of communication included eye contact, body movements, and facial expressions with a minimization of oral communication. Snell’s (2007) in-depth examination of the popular duo “The Dresden Dolls,” emphasized that in popular groups, verbal communication connects directly to active music making. Snell further stated that communication presented itself on recorded DVDs, although it is somewhat less clear than in live concerts.

**Defining Leadership in the Literature**

Once I begun to immerse myself in the data, I came to realize that informal learning theories were insufficient to adequately describe the phenomenon I observed in SIX’s rehearsals; therefore, I undertook a classic grounded theory analysis of SIX’s rehearsal data. From this analysis, a certain type of leadership activity between and among the members of SIX during the process of aural arranging became evident. It was at this time that I began an examination of the leadership literature, both in academic and general sources.
Throughout the leadership literature, one can find a multitude of definitions on the term leadership. According to Northhouse (2010), two main dichotomies exist within leadership definitions that need consideration: trait vs. process and assigned vs. emergent. Another consideration relates to leadership in terms of power. In brief, trait-based leadership conceptualizes leadership as a set of leadership characteristics that are present in varying degrees within individuals, whereas process-based leadership functions in the context of interactions between leaders and followers (p. 4). Assigned leadership refers to assigned or appointed leadership within an organization, whereas emergent leadership comes from those in the group who acknowledge an individual leader regardless of official title (p. 5).

Northhouse (2010) further asserted that leadership can also come about through several power bases, such as legitimate power (same as assigned leadership), reward power (ability to give rewards), and coercive power (ability to use force), which all entail a positional type of leadership and referent (based on being liked), or expert (based on expertise in a particular area of need). Each is a type of power-based leadership.

Lastly, Clark (2004) addressed leadership as being vertical or horizontal in nature. An individual’s leadership exertion can be considered vertical or horizontal. Vertical leadership is generally an assigned and formal position, in common with Northhouse’s view of
assigned leadership, wherein leadership travels up and down within an established hierarchy. In contrast, horizontal or flat leadership, similar in scope to Northhouse’s view of emergent leadership, moves through a network of individuals, with commands and information flowing in all directions.

Within the aforementioned descriptions, what resonated most with the grounded theory that emerged from this study is leadership by interactional process and emergent leadership, both associated with horizontal leaders who possess either referent or expert type of personal power. Winston and Patterson (2006) conducted a study wherein they examined some 160 documents to elucidate the broad spectrum of leadership definitions within the leadership literature. Utilizing a wide range of source material, these researchers arrived at an integrative definition of leadership that provided a broad departure point for the theoretical development of fluid leadership within this dissertation. This definition of leadership is as follows:

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization’s mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives. (p. 7)
Literature on Shared Leadership

Once I established a general definition of leadership, congruent with the type of leadership that emerged from the classic grounded theory analysis of my rehearsal data, I then studied specific styles of leadership that might inform my emergent theoretical suppositions. Leadership, as a general course of study, has received much scholarly attention, as evidenced from the abundance of leadership materials including books, academic journals, degrees, training programs, and so forth; therefore, situating this study amidst the general field of leadership, as well as that of music education, is important.

The vast body of academic leadership literature does not include the term fluid leadership, the term for the horizontal leadership style that forms the basis for the grounded theory within this dissertation; however, the body of academic literature on leadership includes another horizontal leadership style that shares commonality, without duplication: shared leadership. Shared leadership possesses similarities with other identified horizontal leadership styles, including distributed, collective, collaborative, emergent, co-democratic, and democratic leadership (Bolden, 2011); however, unlike many of the aforementioned types of leadership, which address leadership within large organizations, the overall descriptions of shared leadership illustrate leadership typically operating within small group segments. Thus, shared leadership
demonstrates a closer alignment with this study than the other concepts. The following literature review covers definitions, historical development, leadership behaviors, and activities within shared leadership.

**Definitions of Shared Leadership**

After discerning an underlying leadership type within SIX’s process of aural arranging, I examined the literature on shared leadership, which revealed variety among specific definitions. Yukl (1989) recognized a leaning toward a shared leadership style in the description of a major controversy within leadership discussions. The controversy arose between the concept of leadership as operative within social influence processes, promoting horizontal leadership sharing, and the concept of leadership as operative through distinct role differentiation, promoting vertical leadership exertion. Pearce, Manz, and Sims (2008) defined shared leadership in terms of both sides of this controversy.

[Shared leadership is] a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. (p. 354)

Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) defined shared leadership in terms of mutual influence on fellow team members only, with no mention of a hierarchical structure. The perceived advantage associated with
shared leadership makes this leadership style relevant to my thesis:

Shared leadership [is] an emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members. It represents a condition of mutual influence embedded in the interactions among team members that can significantly improve team and organizational performance. (Carson et al., 2007, p. 1218)

Among the most notable similarities found in the Pearce et al. (2008) and Carson et al. (2007) definitions is that leadership connects to both group interactions and influence, rather than to a single, assigned individual. Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, and Bergman (2012) spoke of shared leadership with no reference to a hierarchy and included emphasis on influence, highlighting the complexity and dynamism of shared leadership, specifically the nature of influence and direction among group members:

Shared leadership occurs when two or more members engage in the leadership of the team in an effort to influence and direct fellow members to maximize team effectiveness. Shared leadership is an influence process that is multidirectional, dynamic, simultaneous, and on-going, and it is characterized by the “serial emergence” of two or more members as leaders. (p. 18)

Finally, certain components of shared leadership possess aspects of the fluid leadership emerging from this study’s grounded theory, specifically aspects of exerting leadership at times when the task at hand and the knowledge to carry it out find commonality. Pearce, Manz, and Sims (2009) best summed up this closely related concept of shared
leadership:

[Since] one expert usually does not have the know-how to understand all the facets of the job at hand. . . . [A] better approach is to share the duties, so the person in charge at any moment is the one with the key knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) for the aspect of the job at hand. When the KSAs requirement changes, a new expert should step to the fore. (Pearce et al., 2009, p. 234)

**Historical Development of Shared Leadership**

Pearce and Manz (2005) elucidated the emergence of self and shared leadership in the 21st century as necessities for the current state of leadership needs. Respectively, the 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the birth of the industrial revolution and the establishment of railroads. Both required the development of a new kind of leader. Max Weber, a German sociologist and among the earliest to establish theories of management and leadership, theorized that since mechanization had routinized production, routinized production needed routinized leadership (Stone & Patterson, 2005).

In the area of practical leadership, Daniel C. McCallum, an early American railway engineer, dealt with a host of employees over long distances. In considering issues of leadership, McCallum created the first codified set of management principles, which he and others used to manage large companies (Pearce & Manz, 2005). These principles established a top-down, hierarchical approach to leadership that became
the dominant view of leadership structure into the 20th century. With the creation of the assembly line, focus on efficient production, and increased emphasis on the total organization and scientific principles, the 20th century saw the establishment of classical management theory and scientific management. Classical management theory promoted the creation of bureaucratic leadership methods, while scientific management posited a technical approach, advocating routines that assume maximum productivity (Pearce & Manz, 2005; Stone & Patterson, 2005). Both classical management theory and scientific management advocated a top-down leadership approach.

The historical expression of leadership as a top-down, vertical, or hierarchical phenomenon preceding the 21st century was widely accepted as historical fact (Bergman et al., 2012; Pearce & Manz, 2005; Wood, 2005). Today, teams often lead organizations (Wood, 2005). This switch in leadership style has occurred, in part, from a dramatic increase in competition caused by globalization. Additionally, an overall increase in the education level within the general populace has changed workforce attitudes; people today are less likely to work unless they have a sense of input into the leadership process (Pearce & Manz, 2005). The resulting increased feeling of empowerment in the average worker, coupled with the increase in competition, has encouraged shared leadership (Bergman et al. 2012; Wood, 2005).
Shared leadership effectually “flies in the face” of conventional wisdom prior to this century (Pearce et al. 2009, p. 234); however, the 21st century has witnessed the establishment of exceptionally functional companies who operate through formation of teams and the effective use of shared leadership. These authors cite Panda Express’s CEO, Tom Davin, who stated, “If we are going to address the opportunities we face now and will face in the future, it is by leveraging our individual talent through disciplined team work and shared leadership” (pp. 234–235). Although the existence of a CEO speaks to the continuation of a structural hierarchy, Panda Express has created the concept of a cross-functional team with an appointed leader who does not have hierarchical authority over the other team members. This shared leadership structure creates a highly responsive organization, needed in today’s turbulent and complex business environment (Pearce et al., 2009).

The University of Maryland Trauma Center utilizes shared leadership in situations of crisis inside the field of emergency medicine. In this context, leadership from physician to intern to nurse to anesthesiologist demonstrates a dynamic and speedy ebb and flow of leadership. In this shared leadership context, each team member transfers his or her respective capabilities to the task. The reputation for developing highly capable physicians is a byproduct of this institution’s use of shared leadership practices (Pearce et al., 2009).
Alcoholics Anonymous represents another highly successful organization whose very foundation rests on shared leadership. As a completely self-governed organization with no designated leaders on the local level, Alcoholics Anonymous utilizes the principles of the common welfare coming first, leaders as servants, group autonomy, and group financial independence (Pearce et al., 2009).

**Behavior Characteristics of Shared Leadership**

Within the various definitions of shared leadership in the literature, leadership among group members represents the only solid commonality. With this in mind, particular leadership behaviors exist from which shared leadership develops. First, shared leadership is frequently described in the literature as that facilitated by a single, primary leader who utilizes leadership from others who exert leadership within lower levels of a hierarchical system (Hernandez, Eberly, Evolio, & Johnson, 2011).

Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) suggested that the first step in the formation of a more spontaneous shared leadership model involves designated leaders within a group encouraging a culture of successful shared leadership development. Additionally, leaders outside a group can engage in influencing members inside the group, moving the group in a desired direction. Outside leaders often need to assess environmental
clues and express them in a context, which group members understand and to which they relate. According to Randall, Resick, and DeChurch (2011), when groups accepted external team leadership that both interpreted the situation and imparted a common frame of reference, increased accuracy of group decisions often resulted. Hernandez et al. (2011) stated that shared leadership transpires when group members engaged in their own interpretation of this meaning, facilitated by an outside influence. Similarly, leaders within a group that enacted shared leadership behaviors provided a platform enabling the entire group to move into shared leadership.

The existence of leader–follower relationships, known as dyads, represents another source for shared leadership development. Hernandez et al. (2011) indicated that the development of dyadic relationships, wherein follower and leader roles reverse, could contribute to the emergence of shared leadership. This required both follower willingness to take charge and leader willingness to accept challenge and other viewpoints. Followers, who identified with the goals of the group, rather than maintaining a personal focus, were critical in this process. According to Toegel (2012), ground rules including commitment to a common vision and strategy, alignment of incentives, and a willingness to share the leadership spotlight promote development of an effective and complementary dyad. The increased feeling of empowerment from both
members of a dyad, according to Hernandez et al. (2011), allowed enjoyment of autonomy and independence during work activity, with an increase of confidence as all members of a group got to exercise skills and abilities used to excel.

In addition to a primary leader facilitating shared leadership and shared leadership emerging from an effective, complementary dyad, the last source from which shared leadership may emerge is the group itself. Yukl (2006) pointed out that in the right social context, a group may demonstrate a reciprocal, recurring influence process between multiple members and thus, enact the spontaneous process of shared leadership.

Hernandez et al. (2011) suggested that some social contexts may encourage, while others may discourage, shared leadership. In groups that possess extreme differences in individual leadership influence or contain members with highly individualistic, contrasting viewpoints, shared leadership is unlikely to surface, and if it does, is unlikely to be successful. Shared leadership, enacted naturally by a group, requires members who align with the basic assumptions of power sharing and emphasize group goals over individual preferences. Hernandez et al. (2011) further asserted that shared leadership could become a context itself and therefore become the norm of practice.
Mechanisms of Shared Leadership

The earliest leadership theorists focused on personality traits of leadership as a primary mechanism of leadership operation. Researchers McCrae and Costa (1987) created a list of five personality factors, four of which—conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and emotional stability (p. 81)—have become significantly associated with the broader field of shared leadership research today (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Extraversion proves an especially strong predictor of leadership emergence in individuals, and therefore promotes the development of shared leadership (Hernandez et al. 2011); however, extraverted personalities also tend toward dominance, therefore desiring to lead outright rather than share leadership roles. The ability to be agreeable, on the other hand, expresses itself as consideration, trust, and friendliness, and therefore is especially good for interpersonal facilitation. Those with the ability to be agreeable often seek positive social relationships. Agreeable team members often mean a higher percentage of positive interpersonal interactions and can therefore beneficially affect team performance (Bell, 2007). According to Hernandez et al. (2011), groups with members who have personality trait combinations such as being extraverted and agreeable work best in a shared leadership situation.
A secondary mechanism, based on individual cognitive ability, demonstrates a group’s capacity to allow rotation of leadership roles based on knowledge. Follet (1924) and Benne and Sheats (1948) espoused this leadership mechanism, considered a very early and elementary leadership conception by modern researchers (Hernandez et al., 2011), within their writings. These early leadership researchers stated that individuals should not necessarily follow those with official titles, but should instead follow those who have the most knowledge in a given situation (Benne & Sheats, 1948; Follet, 1924). Shared leadership utilizes this primary concept, based on individual and group understanding of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that are accessible within the group. The group operates through shared judgment, deciding quickly and naturally who should take on the role of leadership depending on the task. This transference of leadership occurs in a fluid, dynamic, flexible, and adaptable manner, responsive to new incoming information and contextual influences (Benne & Sheats, 1948; Follet, 1924). According to Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006), concepts of team mental models addressed this phenomenon as well, stating these mental models “capture the shared, organized understanding and mental representation of knowledge of beliefs relevant to key elements of the team’s task environment” (p. 83). Similarly, Mathieu, Heffner, Goodwin, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers (2000) stated,
Highly similar mental models would suggest that teammates work toward common objectives and have shared vision of how their team will function. Thus, teammates with shared mental models will easily coordinate their actions and be “in sync,” whereas differences in team mental models would likely result in greater process loss and ineffective team processes. (p. 275)

The last mechanism that may influence the emergence of leadership among different group members is leadership of group emotion. Pescosolido’s (2002) research indicates that some group members showed expertise in leadership that addressed group emotional needs, rather than group task needs. Group observations revealed that these leaders were not always the same individuals, but changed according to the exact climate of emotional needs that cropped up. This study set forth three propositions indicating that emergent leaders were more likely to engage in management of group emotion “when the group receives ambiguous performance feedback from relevant stakeholders” (p. 588), “when the group has developed norms that allow and encourage expression of emotion within the group context” (p. 590), and when “emergent leaders . . . exhibit both charisma and empathy” (p. 593). Leaders often modeled appropriate emotional responses during times of high group anxiety, demonstrating ability to manage their own emotions as well as those of others.

Researchers have also found that groups with members of approximately equivalent emotional responses function much better than
those who exhibit emotional diversity. Group emotional uniformity increases group interdependence and thus benefits task execution (Hernandez et al., 2011). More cooperation, less conflict, and higher perception of task performance are byproducts of this overall positive group emotional state. Fredrickson and Losada (2005) discovered that top-level teams who maintained positive interaction realized a depth of inquiry lacking in groups with conflict, who often simply presented opposing options.

**Activities of Shared Leadership**

Shared leadership activities, because of a natural inclination toward positive emotions, encourage leaders to utilize a full range of leadership behaviors and are known to create less group conflict, increase group consensus, raise intragroup trust, and raise intragroup cohesion (Bergman et al., 2012). These activities consist of task-oriented, relations-oriented, and change-orientated activities. Task-oriented activities include doing assigned tasks, determination of task requirements, clarification of task priorities, and clarification of task standards (Barry, 1991; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Task-oriented activities move a group toward goal completion, keep members on task, and maintain a group focus on details and deadlines (Bergman et al., 2012).
Relations-oriented activities both develop and maintain the emotional health of a group (Barry, 1991). Specific activities may include being friendly, supportive, respectful, and concerned for other group members. Sensitivity of member needs, viewpoints, energy levels, and emotional states often play a part of relations-oriented activities and represent a high degree of internal discernment. Among other relations-oriented activities are resolution of conflicts, group encouragement, and consideration of all members’ ideas (Bergman et al. 2012).

Change-oriented activities focus on action regarding evaluated needs. In some respects, this type of activity is focused on creativity and may involve improving strategic decisions, adapting to change, increasing innovation, and fostering commitment to visions and goals (Barry, 1991). The creation of a new vision, facilitation of idea generation, definition of goals, and the encouragement of others to consider alternate points of view represent further activities of change. Inspiring others to participate in the envisioning process and thus take ownership for new ideas represents the end goal of change-oriented activities (Bergman et al., 2012).

**Literature on Leadership within Musical Ensembles**

The leadership activity evident from my grounded theory analysis of SIX’s musical rehearsals prompted me to search for writings related to
leadership and musical groups. Within a limited number of academic leadership articles, there exists research that pertains directly to leadership found within musical ensembles. The majority of these articles addressed the context found in large musical ensembles and as such, specifically dealt with hierarchical types of leadership, wherein one leader, the conductor, took charge of the majority of the leadership interactions. A minority of these articles addressed the context found in smaller musical ensembles and dealt with hierarchical and horizontal types of leadership; therefore, though coverage of this literature was necessary, most did not pertain to the type of leadership emergent from this project.

Among leadership within a large ensemble, a German study by Boerner, Krause, and Gebert (2004) described the interactivity of a directive, yet charismatic type of orchestral leadership that contrasts with non-directive forms of leadership that often emerge in other creative fields. Boerner and von Streit (2005, 2007) and Williams (2014) utilized the term transformational leadership to describe a type of leadership that promoted good results and a positive group mood within orchestral and choral contexts respectively. Although Atik (1994) described a conductor who took charge in a hierarchical fashion, this author conveyed observation of two-way interaction between leader and follower within this hierarchical context. In a similar vein, Koivunen and Wennes (2011)
considered an aesthetic or more interactional approach to the relationship between conductor and musicians.

As a way to examine leadership that originates in creative individuals, Hunt, Stelluto, and Hooijberg (2004) also studied orchestral conductors and found four orchestral conductor types. Among these were conductors who used an open system involving innovation and broker skills, those focused on rational goals involving producer and director skills, those focused on internal processes involving coordinator and monitoring skills, and those focused on human relations involving facilitation and mentoring skills.

Matthews and Kitsantes (2007) indicated orchestra conductors often used two types of leadership activities that address task and social aspects of rehearsal. These address the same aspects found within fluid leadership, called task and social-emotional leadership (see Chapters 6 and 7), and affect the same aspects of rehearsal, group cohesion, and collective efficacy (Matthews & Kitsantes, 2007). Somewhat related to the social aspects of rehearsal leadership, Mintzberg (1998) and Poggi (2011) found that conductors often lead through inspiration or motivation as a primary component of rehearsal leadership.

Leadership research on smaller musical ensembles represented a much smaller number of sources, but described incredible diversity in ensemble and leadership types. El-Shawan (1984) discussed the revival
of two traditional types of Arabic instrumental musical ensembles in Egypt involving a smaller instrumental ensemble intended to accompany a single solo singer. These ensembles, which can include 6 to 30 instrumentalists, traditionally use a hierarchical leadership type. In contrast, the New York Orpheus Chamber Orchestra includes approximately 30 members (Orpheus, n.d.), but has developed a decentralized leadership that encourages input into the leadership process from members throughout the orchestra (Orpheus, n.d.; Vredenburgh & He, 2003). Both advantages and disadvantages to this group’s lack of centralized leadership emerged from this research. The advantages included high quality performances due to artistic input encouraged from a variety of group members, and a high level of commitment coupled with a low turnover within the group’s membership. The disadvantages included repertoire circumscribed by the limited size of this orchestra, rehearsals that lack the efficiency possible with a single leader, and difficulty in marketing and building a single vision for the group’s future (Vredenburgh & He, 2003).

Glowinski, Mancini, Rukavixhnikova, Khomenko, and Camurri (n.d.) and King (2006) both conducted research regarding the leadership phenomenon that occurred within an instrumental quartet. King (2006) discovered that group roles of leader, secondary leader, contributor, inquirer, fidget, joker, distracter, and quiet-one, were evident during the
process of rehearsal. Additionally, groups that evidenced a consistent primary leader exhibited more stable group behaviors, consistency of focus, and better progress than those that did not.

Sheih (2008) addressed strategies found effective in the development of leadership qualities among students in a music classroom situation, with the music teacher taking the role of facilitator. These strategies exhibited harmony with qualities observed in fluid leadership, including encouragement for students to exhibit diversity, flexibility of leadership styles, and involvement in leadership activities. The importance of the music educator, in the role of facilitator, to validate and encourage individual differences represents a key finding in Sheih’s research.

**Literature on Fluid Leadership**

A particular leadership style had emerged from my classic grounded theory analysis of SIX’s rehearsal data. Although the examination of literature had revealed a generalized definition of leadership, a more specific definition of shared leadership, and some descriptions of musical ensemble leadership, I still lacked a descriptive label for the leadership phenomenon emerging from this grounded theory analysis. A search outside of academic literature then took place. The surfacing of the term fluid leadership, a leadership description that
represented the closest approximation to SIX’s emergent leadership, resulted. Mention of the term fluid leadership in any source was rare and within academic sources, virtually nonexistent; however, an account of current usage of this term outside of academia demonstrates its suitability for use within the context of the grounded theories within this project.

The earliest known usage of the term fluid leadership is a direct quote from self-made billionaire, Al West, Jr. (The world’s billionaires, 2008). West, CEO of a highly successful Pennsylvania-based financial services company and a well-recognized innovative leadership thinker (Kirsner, 1998), presents fluid leadership as a practical leadership style by which he runs his highly successful organization. This quote creates a starting point for this term’s usage.

We call it fluid leadership. People figure out what they are good at and that shapes what their roles are. There’s not just one leader. Different people lead through different parts of the process. Al West, Jr. (para. 5)

In my research, I began with the most scholarly sources (Goleman, 2000, 2004, & 2013) and moved to sources that are more informal, found in various business, human resources, and church leadership websites (Duncan, 2013; Kerchmar, 2009; Kosta, 2012; Shea & Gunther, 2008; Taylor, 2010). One book on liquid leadership (Szollose, 2011), which in title and conception is akin to fluid leadership, was also included. From
my examination of the various concepts of fluid leadership, a general sense of the underlying principles of this leadership style began to formulate, thus aiding me in the task of theory building. It should be noted that the term fluid leadership was not fully developed in any of the sources I examined, nor was it utilized in the same context as the phenomenon I observed and identified within the group SIX.

Goleman (2000), a researcher in the areas of organizational leadership and emotional intelligence, uses the term fluid leadership only once in an article to describe a single leader who has the ability to move from one leadership style to another in a fluid manner, as leadership and personality needs dictate. Goleman’s use of the term requires a discerning type of flexibility within the primary leader. In this leadership scenario, leadership is demonstrated by a primary individual who works at the top of a large organization and is responsible for the facilitation of other, lower level leaders who are in turn responsible for leading others. Thus, Goleman, in part, presents a facilitation model as fluid leadership.

According to Goleman (2000), research indicates that leaders are most effective if they possess the ability to lead in at least four different leadership styles; therefore, if a leader moves fluidly from one style to another in accordance with leadership needs and others’ personalities, he or she exercises fluid leadership. Organizational crisis represents the overall environment within which many modern day leaders currently
find themselves. Many top-level leaders do not possess the ability to exercise multiple leadership styles; however, leaders who recognize times when specific styles apply are more common. A leader capable of such recognition without the ability to exercise it personally should assemble a team upon which he can call when needed. The top-level leader then utilizes fluid leadership by wisely using team members’ leadership styles, again dependent upon leadership and personality needs, to the advantage of the organization. Thus, in both the single leader and leadership team approach, leadership skills and leadership styles are highlighted.

In later work, Goleman (2004, 2013) explored the concept of emotional intelligence, outlining five components that he argued were needed for an individual to operate as a fluid leader (Goleman, 2013). Among the five components that Goleman identified, self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skill find commonality and resonate with the concept of fluid leadership that emerged within this research project. Self-awareness involves deep understanding of emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives, whereas self-regulation comprises control of one’s emotions, allowing for the ability to carefully pick words and reactions during times of leadership stress. Empathy and social skill are companion skills, and address the ability to manage the relational or social-emotional aspects of leadership in a way that a leader is not
manipulated by others’ feelings, but considers them in context with the entirety of leadership interactions (Goleman, 2004, 2013).

Shea and Gunther (2008), specialists in professional leadership training, use the term fluid leadership only in the title of an online article, which describes today’s leadership environment as one that is like permanent whitewater. The term permanent whitewater is an analogy comparing the risk and constant change found within whitewater rapids to the modern day leadership climate. Fluid leadership then refers to a turbulent work environment when the mantle of leadership, because of crisis needs, holistically and fluidly transitions from the primary leader to other members of the team as circumstances dictate. Though these authors never utilize the term fluid leadership within the body of their article, they explain that in conditions of turbulence, the relationship of leader and follower constantly shifts. This constant state of shifting requires that current leaders need to be flexible, humble, and most importantly, willing to be followers if the situation demands that someone else take the lead for a time. This particular type of fluid leadership requires that the primary leader train his or her team members in advance for taking on the mantle of leadership.

Kerchmar (2009), an urban planner and strategist, information technology specialist, and political commentator, published an online
article on the empowerment needed for today’s leaders. This article primarily addressed fluid leadership in the context of the changing role of leadership in the climate of today’s societal crisis. Societal crisis, according to Kerchmar, reveals itself in terms of worldwide job loss, deficit spending, and overall dire economic futures. Kerchmar refers to the phenomenon of fluid leadership in terms similar to Goleman (2000), wherein the best leaders are fluid role changers, using different leadership styles for different situations. Thus, leaders adapt leadership to the situation rather than forcing one leadership style to fit. Fluid leadership denotes the emergence of an environment in which leaders can take advice from colleagues and friends, challenge themselves as well as others, empower their constituents, and yet not feel threatened (Kerchmar, 2009). This environment of empowerment requires relationship skills that promote transparency and trust that in turn, promote an increase of leadership prestige.

Additionally Kerchmar (2009) states that fluid leaders use concepts of collaboration to delegate tasks in such a way that those carrying out the tasks feel ownership, have a greater interest in the task, and therefore feel trusted themselves. Crises, technology environments, and politics are considered to have brought on this new style of leadership. Fluidity, adaptivity, transparency, and trust, according to Kerchmar (2009), are all characteristics of fluid leadership that make it a
successful leadership strategy in the 21st century. Kerchmar’s approach to fluid leadership indicates a relational approach where leadership and people skills go hand in hand.

Taylor (2010), an engineer with both business and people management skills, states that fluid leadership allows individuals within an organization “to draw on each other’s strengths whenever those strengths are required” (para. 2). Aside from skills in leadership, the strengths to which Taylor refers may also pertain to skills in the particular field of the organization or the strengths someone has for a given task. Fluid leadership attempts to foster stepping out in confidence during particular situations, time frames, economic climates, business mixes, and so forth. During times of crisis and upheaval, fluid leadership may be especially effective to allow for organizational growth when other, less flexible leadership strategies might fail.

Taylor (2010) further asserts that the antithesis of fluid leadership is title-based leadership. Title-based leadership can be both superficial and ineffective because of its assumption that the same leader must lead in every situation simply because he or she was appointed to do so. Instead, Taylor states that fluid leadership naturally allows the most qualified leader, both in leadership and task skills, to surface at the right time for the right task. According to Taylor, it takes many things to build and maintain an environment that promotes successful fluid leadership.
The first step toward creating this environment is that individuals “identify, develop and live in their area of strength” (Taylor, 2009, para. 4), so that when it is an individual’s time to take the lead, he or she will be prepared. Although Taylor’s definition of fluid leadership had well defined parameters, addressing this leadership style in only a few paragraphs on a blog post lacks the detail and context necessary to create a pragmatically useful and theoretically complete description of this style of leadership.

Szollose (2011), a business consultant, leadership trainer, and Generation Y expert, utilizes a related term, liquid leadership, to describe a type of leadership he states is needed in current society. Szollose describes the current era of rapid change, caused by the prevalence of the electronic age, as responsible for more change in 25 years than the industrial age brought on in 100 years (p. 13). This rapid change has affected leadership styles and their effectiveness in the current workplace. Leaders, in order to adapt to new business practices, must be flexible in order to create viable strategic plans. Szollose offers liquid leadership and its seven guiding principles as the solution. Among these are placing people first, creating a free environment in which it is safe to tell the truth, and creating a leadership style that nurtures a culture of creativity. These principles of liquid leadership coupled with leadership flexibility, fluidity, and adaptability represent Szollose’s main thrust. This
leadership style, though vertical in description, promotes horizontal activity by encouraging leadership from multiple individuals across an organization or group. Szollose emphasizes leadership skills that may apply to any field of leadership.

Kosta (2012), a human resources and talent management trainer, writes of a feeling of encouragement experienced during a recent professional services meeting, when firms reported that employees within their organizations often looked at themselves as leaders. The need for agile and democratized leadership that encourages horizontal leadership within the personnel of an organization is essential in the current leadership climate. As Kosta describes, this climate is volatile with rapid change, has an uncertain future that makes precise prediction unlikely, and includes complex challenges that do not have single causes or solutions. Among the key tasks of today’s leaders is to be “fluid in . . . leadership competencies, moving from small “l” to big “L” leadership roles as confidence, competence and followership increases” (para. 6). Kosta seemed to expect there to be primary leaders (big “L”), but also expects that all members of a group also take on the role of leader (small “l”). According to Kosta, movement of individuals within a team between these two leadership roles is expected in today’s leadership climate. Additionally, Kosta’s democratized and horizontal leadership approach emphasizes the need for relational and leadership skills.
Duncan (2013), an Episcopal priest who uses a faith based leadership model known as C3, has a brief but very practical explanation of fluid leadership within the blog post entitled, “What It Means to be a Fluid Leader.” The expectation that individuals can move in and out of leadership roles based on “gifts and call” (para. 1) is a primary characteristic of Duncan’s model. The concept of leadership roles based on gifts and call finds resonance with Taylor’s (2010) concept of leadership by “unique area of strength” (para. 4) described earlier.

Duncan states that in organizations with designated leaders, fluid leadership requires that each member of the group comfortably come to terms with one’s skills and gifts. The designated leaders must not always take charge, but must be willing to step in and out of leadership themselves, to allow others with perhaps greater gifts in particular areas to lead for a time instead. Fluid leadership thus supports the mission of the group by allowing those most qualified to lead during a given moment in time. Task and relational skills identified within group members seem an important aspect in Duncan’s model, because the named leader appears to be primarily in charge of seeing that the overall direction of leadership continues through utilization of others’ leadership skills.

Duncan (2013) also asserted that an additional benefit to the exercise of fluid leadership is the development of leadership skills among group members. Leadership skills, being complex by nature, for many
require practice; therefore, creation of an environment that allows group members to gain practice and experience in short term leadership activities promotes this added benefit. Thus, according to Duncan, fluid leadership utilizes the gifts of team members through the guidance of a facilitator. This utilization of group members through times of leadership therefore also promotes leadership development. Duncan recommended that opportunities be created for many individuals within a fluid leadership structure, so they may gain experience as leaders, while utilizing task and people skills for particular group activities.

**Comparison of Shared and Fluid Leadership in the Literature**

Along with the detailed account of the literature on both shared and fluid leadership, a brief comparison of these two terms is presented here to clarify basic commonalities and differences. Shared leadership is a designation that describes a horizontal leadership process wherein there is interactive leadership influence among and between group members (Bergman et al., 2012; Carson et al., 2007; Pearce et al., 2008); there can be lateral or upward and downward leadership influence (Pearce et al., 2008), and there is encouragement from the primary leader for others to lead depending upon alignment of specific group member knowledge, skill, and ability with a given task (Pearce et al., 2009). Fluid leadership, on the other hand, describes a horizontal leadership process
that demonstrates an ebb and flow of leadership and followership roles (Duncan, 2013; Shea & Gunther, 2008; Taylor, 2010), leadership that flows from group member areas of strength or gifting (Duncan, 2013; Kirsner, 1998; Taylor, 2010), a leadership process that emerges from environments of risk, change, or crisis (Kerchmar, 2009; Kosta, 2012; Shea & Gunther, 2008; Taylor, 2010), and a leadership process that operates best in environments of safety (Szollose, 2011) and empowerment (Kerchmar, 2009). Fluid leadership as described in the literature represents some of the leadership processes observed within SIX’s practice of aural arranging. As an underdeveloped concept, it allows room for expansion and further augmentation as a specialized term for this project’s grounded theory.

**Summary of Literature Review**

This literature review covers three broad areas: contemporary a cappella, informal music learning and playing by ear, and leadership styles. These areas of existing literature directly impact aspects of the grounded theory of *fluid leadership* and aural arranging emerging from my observations and interviews of the contemporary a cappella group, SIX.

My research of SIX, as a professional contemporary a cappella group, will add to the small quantity of existing literature about the
genre. Duchan’s dissertation (2007b) followed by a book (2012a) and journal articles (2007a, 2012b) represent the first academic treatment of contemporary a cappella. These writings are situated within student-run collegiate a cappella, which represents contemporary a cappella’s beginnings as an identifiable stylistic genre. Within the broader context outside of the university, contemporary a cappella continues to grow in prominence and popularity, demonstrated by increased activity in high schools, an increased number of professional groups utilizing this style, and the appearance of both the movie *Pitch Perfect* and *Pitch Perfect 2* in addition to the popular television series, *The Sing Off*. Books detailing compositional strategies for arranging contemporary a cappella pieces, and books relaying how to form contemporary a cappella groups both inside and outside the formal classroom have been published, thus making information related to the formation of new contemporary a cappella groups more accessible than ever before.

SIX, as a group of ear musicians (though some training came from formal environments), did none of their musical training with degree certification in mind, as also rings true for most informal learning (Mak, 2012). Green (2002, 2008), considered among the foremost scholars within this field, has written extensively on informal learning, positing the existence of five primary characteristics. Two of these, aural learning and integration, resonate with this study.
Shared leadership, leadership within musical ensembles, and fluid leadership represent areas of leadership literature most applicable to this study. Shared leadership has substantial representation in the academic literature. Shared leadership had a rather flexible definition, but in broad terms demonstrates a largely horizontal structure when compared with the earliest codified concepts of leadership theory, which were hierarchical (vertical) in nature. Among the established shared leadership concepts showing the greatest commonality with this study were the reversibility of follower and leader roles (Hernandez et al., 2011), and the establishment of foundational ground rules like commitment to a common vision, common strategy, aligned incentives, and willingness to share the spotlight of leadership (Toegel, 2012). Additionally, shared leadership involves different perspectives such as examination of leadership personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1987), flexibility of group cognitive ability (Benne & Sheats, 1948; Follett, 1924), and leadership of group emotion (Pescosolido, 2002).

Literature regarding leadership within music ensembles included several studies on large instrumental ensembles, especially orchestras. These studies focused on various leadership topics including directive and non-directive leadership styles (Boerner et al., 2004), transformational leadership (Boerner & Streit, 2005, 2007; Williams, 2014), two-way conductor/musician interaction (Atik, 1994; Koivunen &
Wennes, 2011), orchestral conductor types (Hunt et al., 2004), and task and social aspects of musical leadership (Matthews & Kitsantes, 2007; Mintzberg, 1998; Poggi, 2011). Studies involving smaller musical ensembles were limited, but covered diverse topics: the hierarchy found in traditional Arabic instrumental ensembles (El-Shawan, 1984), the leadership within a professional conductor-less orchestra (Vredenburgh & He, 2003), leadership within instrumental quartets (Glowinski et al., n.d.; King, 2006), and teacher as leadership facilitator in the formal classroom (Sheih, 2008).

A limited number of sources define fluid leadership in the literature. Goleman (2000) describes fluid leadership as a type of fluid functioning whereby a single leader is capable of moving from one leadership style to another depending on need. He also describes this same phenomenon, when facilitating a team of leaders and calling on the strengths of others whenever needed, as fluid leadership. Goleman (2013) then explicates components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skill—that resonate within aspects of this research project. The remaining sources are nonacademic, coming from various professional websites and blogs, describing degrees of horizontal leadership involving fluidity between group members. Some aspects of fluid leadership within these articles demonstrate congruence with this research study, such as leadership
existing within today’s turbulent environment of crisis (Kosta, 2012; Shea & Gunther, 2008; Szollose, 2011), leadership undertaken in areas of strengths, gifts, or call (Duncan, 2013; Taylor, 2010), and leadership that needs an ebb and flow of leadership and followership activities (Kerchmar, 2009; Kosta, 2012; Szollose, 2011). None of these sources, however, fully fleshes out the concept of fluid leadership that emerged from my research, as they are confined predominantly to settings in business or industry. I thus seek to define and explicate the concept of fluid leadership within the realm of contemporary a cappella, emerging from my observations and interviews with SIX. I will do this within Chapters 4–7 of this dissertation.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this case study was to gain understanding related to the broad research question, how does a group of six singers create intricate, professional sounding a cappella arrangements by ear, without reference to a musical score? Case study methodology and grounded theory analysis in combination revealed answers to this question in meaningful, pragmatic, and authentic ways. During the course of analyzing the data, additional, more specific questions appeared—what does SIX do, how does SIX carry out what they do, and what characterizes how SIX carries out what they do—along with the emerging answers, thus delineating emergent theoretical divisions.

SIX represents a single, instrumental case within this project. A single, instrumental case study is a two-part designation. First, an instrumental case study focuses on the phenomenon of the case rather than the case itself, wherein a researcher envisions a particular case will provide insight into a particular research question (Stake, 1995). My singular research question arose from a conversation with a member of SIX, and therefore SIX represented a case that promised to provide insight into this particular question. Second, a single case study allowed for in-depth examination of one professional contemporary a cappella group and their aural arrangement process. According to Yin (2003),
although single case studies are typically not generalizable, a single case study methodological approach that is theoretical in nature can be “generalizable to theoretical propositions” (p. 10). As such, use of a grounded theory analysis was complementary to this single case study, providing a powerful tool for the generation of theory and promoting emerging substantive and formal grounded theories. This theory provided an explanation as to what happened, what is happening, and what was likely to happen (Glaser, 1978).

**Rationale for a Single Case Study**

According to Stake (1995), an instrumental case study reveals insight into a particular phenomenon or issue beyond the significance of the case itself. SIX therefore represents an instrumental case that enabled me to study the process of aural arranging, and answered what is done in this process, how this process is carried out, and in what manner this process is carried out. Yin (2003) discusses rationales specifically for single instrumental cases, of which the instrumental case study of SIX illustrates two types: a critical and revelatory case. The focused study of SIX’s primary practice of aural arranging situates this case study squarely into each of these rationales.

According to Yin (2003), to qualify as a critical case study, the case must either be a proving ground for an already established theory, or
indicate promise of theory building. As indicated by the generated substantive and formal theories within this grounded theory study (to be discussed in Chapters 4–7), studying SIX provided an excellent case from which to generate theory. Yin explicates that in a revelatory case, the phenomenon in question must demonstrate a previous lack or inaccessibility of research inquiry. Though the phenomenon of aural arranging has likely existed since the beginning of musical practice, the theoretical study of the actual process involved in aural arranging has never been previously undertaken and therefore qualifies this research study as a revelatory case study.

**Selection of SIX as a Case for Study**

The selection of SIX as a case to be studied involved two primary considerations. The first consideration represents why I selected SIX over other groups I had an opportunity to study. The primary reason was although I had access to other potential cases including contemporary worship teams and other professional performance groups in Branson who practiced some process of music learning and arranging, SIX performed in the style of contemporary a cappella. This style held particular interest to me because I am a choral musician who has extensive interest and experience with various other a cappella styles. Additionally, SIX indicated that the group had a primarily by ear
arranging practice that I did not understand, yet from which I discerned value. These two reasons represented areas of interest sufficient to hold the long-term attention needed for extensive research. Furthermore, with my specific interest in the context of contemporary a cappella, SIX was the only group within geographical proximity that performed in that style. Although there are many contemporary a cappella groups, both professional and collegiate on the East and West Coast, the Midwest has very few, an assertion which Duchan (2007b, 2012a) affirmed in his writing. CASA offers further support by the listing of contemporary a cappella events on their website, most of which occur on the eastern and western edges of North America, with only a few within the Midwest (Festivals and Events, 1992–2015).

The second consideration represents why SIX was particularly appropriate for my decided focus of study. At the outset of my consideration, I was particularly interested in SIX’s by ear process of musical arranging, which I labeled aural arranging. This group demonstrated exceptional fit as a case involving this process because of initial evidence that SIX used this process proficiently, based on Barry’s assertion that as ear musicians, the group arranged music for an entire professional show by ear. Additionally, because I was aware that SIX had been performing together from childhood, SIX promised to have stabilized their usage of this process of aural arranging, therefore demonstrating a
process far beyond stages of early development that might have been observed with an amateur group, for example.

**Participants**

Twelve participants took part in this research study: six primary participants—the performing members of SIX—and six secondary participants—the mentors, coaches, and peers of SIX. Having the members of SIX as the primary participants of this research was foundational to the study. The secondary participants promised the possibility to reveal unique outsider perspectives and insights. The primary participants, from oldest to youngest were: Barry, Kevin, Lynn, Jak, Owen, and Curtis. The secondary participants were Arnold Knudsen, Gary Steinkamp, Randy Stringfellow, Tony Sparks, Gary Bolles, and Doug Lowe. A brief description of the background and relationship of each secondary participant follows.

Arnold Knudsen, the father of the members of SIX, started his five oldest sons singing sometime between the years 1973–1975. Mr. Knudsen represents SIX’s most influential mentor as initiator of the group’s early training.

Gary Steinkamp, a Certified Judge and quartet coach in the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) (Melville, 2015), coached SIX while they prepared to compete in the 1984 Annual International Barbershop
Quartet Competition. Steinkamp served as SIX’s primary coach during their move from 38th to 8th place ranking out of approximately 50 competing quartets (Barbershop competition trivia, n.d.) in the International Barbershop Quartet Competition. This represented SIX’s first time ranking in the top ten barbershop quartets worldwide.

Randy Stringfellow, a longtime friend of SIX, also functions as a BHS Certified Judge and is vocal coach for the internationally ranked barbershop quartet, McPhly (pronounced “McFly”). He briefly coached SIX during a third International Barbershop Quartet Competition, when they placed 9th, again out of about 50 barbershop quartet competitors (Barbershop competition trivia, n.d.). Mr. Stringfellow is also listed as the executive director on SIX’s scrolling credits at the end of each live show.

Tony Sparks and Gary Bolles were barbershop quartet competitors and peers of SIX. Sparks had experiences with members of SIX as they learned and sang barbershop tags, and Bolles observed performance attitudes of the group through brief interactions. During SIX’s 10-year involvement with the BHS, they represented a group of uncharacteristically young barbershop singers.

Doug Lowe, a current contemporary of SIX who is a virtuoso keyboardist, composer, arranger, and songwriter, aided SIX with inputting videography into their live show. Lowe’s unique perspective as a popular performer with extensive classical training and musical
background saw SIX’s music practices from a current and insightful point of view, not embedded in the barbershop context.

**Gatekeepers and Institutional Review Board Permissions**

As I pursued a case study of SIX, I needed to gain permission from SIX to enter their world. Having achieved that permission, I then sought and gained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all aspects of this low risk human subjects research. In order to gain direct access to all primary and secondary participants, I needed people who could serve as gatekeepers, or go-betweens, thus connecting me directly with those whom I needed to interview and/or observe. Several gatekeepers surfaced, providing me with access to the primary and secondary participants for this study.

**Gatekeeper for the Primary Participants**

Curtis, the youngest member of SIX, participated in the production of Messiah I had conducted in the previous year with the Branson Community Chorus and Orchestra. I continued to correspond with Curtis after this event and developed a friendship based on a mutual respect and love of music and singing. This close connection made him the obvious choice as gatekeeper to the primary participants, the performing members of SIX. Thus, a relationship of friendship, trust, and
support had already begun between Curtis and me, which, according to Creswell (2002) must exist between a researcher and his or her gatekeeper. I then asked Curtis if it might be possible to arrange a meeting between his brothers and me (see Appendix G), enabling me to inquire into the possibility of enlisting SIX as the subjects in a descriptive case study.

During our meeting, I described my proposal (see Appendix H), and asked if there were others from whom I needed permission to move forward. I received a resounding no, as SIX seemed to make all decisions as an autonomous group. I requested access to rehearsals for observation as SIX prepared new arrangements, to conduct individual interviews with each performing member of SIX, and interviews with others who may have worked with SIX during their development. I additionally asked for access to physical materials that could include recordings, videos, programs, and so forth that might prove useful as I studied SIX’s music learning practices.

Within a few days of my proposal, I heard back from Curtis, who indicated a unanimous yes from SIX to participate in this study. Since that day, the primary participants have supported all of my research efforts.
Gatekeepers for the Secondary Participants

The secondary participants mostly represented an unknown entity when this study began. I knew from informal talks with members of SIX that Mr. Knudsen likely possessed unique information in regards to the early group influences and training; therefore, Mr. Knudsen emerged as my first recognized secondary participant. Curtis coordinated my ability to interview Mr. Knudsen and was therefore the gatekeeper for this secondary participant.

As I began my primary participant interviews during the summer of 2009, I asked each interviewee for names and contact information of mentors, coaches and peers who might be willing to serve as secondary participants. As I had suspected from informal discussions with members of SIX and from having watched their show, which revealed a previous connection between SIX and barbershop style singing, it appeared that the majority of early coaching and mentoring influences were connected to the world of barbershop harmony; however, SIX’s autonomy as an independent performance group meant they had not maintained ties to most previous mentors, coaches, and peers, creating difficulty in locating and connecting with these influences. Some members of SIX also appeared reluctant to talk about influences from the past; however, Jak provided me with the name and phone number of a fellow performer, Doug Lowe, who also did some video work to be
incorporated into SIX’s current live show. Although I was able to get a few more names, primarily associated with SIX’s former involvement with the BHS, contact information was lacking; therefore, after all interviews with the primary participants were over, I only had the names and contact information for two secondary participants, Mr. Knudsen and Doug Lowe.

Based on the names that I did acquire, it seemed that the world of barbershop held the most promise if I were to locate additional participants. At this juncture, I decided to reach back into my own musical past, during a time when I formed and sang in a barbershop quartet. It was my hope that one of my past barbershop associates might provide me with access to at least some of SIX’s elusive influences.

A few years earlier, while teaching at a state school in Oklahoma, I formed a barbershop quartet with three advanced male student singers. After about a year, our quartet decided to compete in the BHS Southwestern District barbershop competition as the quartet, Mugs and Brushes. Serving as our guide and mentor during our first barbershop competition, the BHS assigned the veteran barbershopper, Charlie Hill, to our quartet. Charlie proved invaluable as he procured free coaching for us, and was therefore instrumental in our quartet placing first in the novice category during that competition.
I knew from my experience with Charlie that he had access to a tremendous network of barbershop contacts. Charlie was also aware I was undertaking doctoral study of SIX, and though he never had direct contact with this group, he remembered the Knudsen Brothers in their barbershop years; therefore, Charlie was an obvious choice to help me find secondary participants that I could not otherwise locate. I contacted Charlie and asked him if he could help me locate anyone in the barbershop world who had worked or interacted with the Knudsen Brothers. Within two weeks, I had e-mails from four barbershoppers who were eager to speak to me regarding their experiences with SIX. Charlie Hill had thus become the gatekeeper for these four, new secondary participants. From this group, I had access to two Certified Barbershop Judges, Gary Steinkamp and Randy Stringfellow, and two former competitors, Tony Sparks and Gary Bolles. Combined with Mr. Knudsen and Doug Lowe, I now had access to six secondary participants.

As part of my research protocol, I asked the primary participants for preference as to privacy and right to anonymity. The group agreed to be identified by their official name, SIX, and individually by first names. I gave the secondary participants the same option and all agreed to identification by name. In order to differentiate members of SIX from the secondary participants, I decided to refer to all secondary participants by last name only. I addressed all three aspects of respect for persons—
right to privacy, right to anonymity, and the right to consent—with both primary and secondary participants through creation of an informed consent form, which participants read and signed. In addition to addressing the minimal potential risks to participants, the informed consent gave permission for individual interviews to take place with each participant, to videotape rehearsal observations during preparations for SIX’s Christmas 2009 and Regular 2010 Shows, and to use this material for both the analysis and reporting stage of this study (see Appendices I and J).

Data Collection

In order to illuminate the processes SIX used to create aural cover arrangements, I conducted interviews, observed rehearsals, and gathered all of the recordings of SIX to which I could gain access. The use of both interviewing and observation represent a commonality within case study research (Bresler & Stake, 2006; Philips, 2008) and grounded theory analysis (Barker, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I initially collected data over the course of an approximate one-year show cycle that included SIX’s Christmas performance season of 2009, regular season of 2010, and the associated preparatory rehearsals.

During October of 2009 and January of 2010, I obtained videotaped footage of preparatory rehearsals, the primary phenomenon I
wanted to understand. During the summer of 2010, I conducted in
person interviews with the performing members of SIX. From June
through November of 2010, I conducted telephone interviews with the
secondary participants. During the summer of 2011, I continued to
solicit data via email from select primary and secondary participants
during the coding of the interview data, in order to obtain clarification on
any points of which I was uncertain (Creswell, 2002).

The final stage in data collection came during the summer of 2013
when I conducted an additional 30-minute follow up interview with each
member of SIX, in order to focus my questions on the group’s rehearsal
methods. All of the individual interviews, which included the primary
participants and secondary participant, Mr. Knudsen, were recorded
using a digital recorder. All of the telephone interviews were recorded
using Skype in conjunction with Pamela Recorder. These included the
remaining five secondary participants. The interview recordings and
videotaped rehearsals facilitated detailed transcription of the data later in
the analysis process.

**Rehearsal Observations: Research Sites**

The videotaped rehearsals took place in three different locations:
Kevin’s house, Owen’s house, and SIX’s live performance venue at the
time, the Hughes Brothers Theatre. Preparations for two live show
seasons transpired during these rehearsals: The 2009 Christmas season and the 2010 regular season. Of the eleven rehearsals videotaped, six occurred at Kevin’s house, one at Owen’s house, and four at the Hughes Brothers Theatre. The rehearsals at the Hughes Brothers Theatre, occurring during October 2009 in preparation for the Christmas season shows, did not focus on learning new music; instead, the focus was on reviewing parts and synthesizing music with staging, stage props, and costumes. Because this rehearsal venue was not used to learn new music, it was the least valuable for the purposes of this study. The rehearsals at Kevin’s and Owen’s houses focused on learning new music and therefore were the most valuable for the purposes of this study.

**Rehearsal Observations: Videotaping Procedures**

Videotaping of rehearsals provided a way to gain both a detailed account of SIX’s rehearsal process and to be less invasive than a researcher taking notes on the sidelines (Harris & Lahey, 1982). In October 2009, I personally videotaped four of the six scheduled rehearsals. The other two rehearsals took place midday on Wednesdays, which would have required that I miss several vital classes and for which I could not find a substitute. My wife, therefore, agreed to travel to Branson and videotape these rehearsals on my behalf.
Before January 2010, I viewed the October videos and noticed that two of these occurred at Kevin’s house; one filmed by my wife and one filmed by me. The one I filmed revealed several instances when members of SIX interacted with me directly or said things during the rehearsal that seemed aimed at explanation, as though to an outsider. The video filmed by my wife appeared to exhibit no interaction between her and the members of SIX. This called to my attention the issue of participant reactivity, a persistent issue within observational research (Fitzpatrick, White, & Roberts, 1996; Haidet, Tate, Divirgilio-Thomas, Lolanowshi, & Happ, 2009; Johnson & Turner, 2003).

Paterson (1994) defines reactivity as “the response of the researcher and the research participants to each other during the research process” (p. 301). Having observed what appeared to be a difference in SIX’s behavior depending upon who was behind the camera, I wondered if my presence was detrimental to SIX functioning in their natural rehearsal process (Johnson & Turner, 2003). Creating distance between the researcher and participants during observed activity can strengthen research results by reducing participant reactivity. I knew that having my wife videotape as opposed to doing it myself represented a tradeoff. Had I videotaped the rest of the rehearsals personally, I might have been able to better witness activities on the periphery; however, the lack of my presence did seem to create more of a sense of “rehearsal as
usual,” allowing me to observe a largely unencumbered rehearsal process.

In January, Curtis called me the week before SIX began rehearsing for their 2010 regular show. When I found out that SIX’s plan was to rehearse on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for the next several weeks, I was agreeable, but worried about negotiating this with my heavy teaching schedule. Additionally, my observation that my wife seemed to attract little or no interaction during SIX’s rehearsals led me to think that it might be better if she videotaped the remaining rehearsals. She agreed to do this and therefore traveled to Branson to videotape the remaining five rehearsals, which occurred over a two-week period.

Although I mentioned to my wife the additional attention I seemed to get when I videotaped rehearsals, we did not discuss it extensively. After all videotaping was complete and I had watched all the videos, I noticed that my wife not only seemed to attract little or no interaction, but also was exceptionally inconspicuous. Observer conspicuousness and observer interactions with research participants represent two of the principle negative effects of participant reactivity (Fitzpatrick et al., 1996). As I spoke with my wife later in regards to these differences, she admitted feeling highly responsible for the outcome of the data she collected by videotape; therefore, she intentionally tried to avoid interaction with members of SIX while setting up, videotaping, and
tearing down. She stated that she attempted to be as inconspicuous as possible during the videotaping process. The effectiveness of her efforts were conveyed to me later when Barry, during informal conversation before his initial interview, commented that often he would forget that my wife was even there during the videotaping of SIX’s rehearsals (field notes).

For each videotaped rehearsal, a small digital video camera was placed on a tripod on or outside the periphery of the rehearsal area. The use of a small, inconspicuous camera and its placement on the periphery of rehearsal activity aided the goal of making the videotaping process as unobtrusive as possible. The resulting videotaped data proved an exceptional source of pertinent information for analysis of SIX’s music learning practice of aural arranging.

**Rehearsal Observations: Description of Pertinent Data**

During October 2009 and January 2010, I videotaped about 16½ hours of rehearsal. Eight hours came from October 2009 and involved about 45 minutes of actual musical rehearsal. Although this was not a lot of time, this data involved SIX setting the last line of the poem, “Twas the Night Before Christmas,” to a melody and then harmonizing this same melody with no score or recording. Though this is not a typical practice of SIX, it yielded a rich set of rehearsal interactions. SIX
additionally took the line, “it must be St. Nick” from this same poem and put together a short passage from the Beach Boys tune, “Little St. Nick.” This used the more typical method for SIX’s aural arrangement process, using a professional recording and creating an arrangement by ear. The rest of the rehearsals for October 2009 involved preparations for a spoken skit and run-through rehearsal of repertoire previously learned.

The January 2010 rehearsals represented about 8½ hours of recorded rehearsal data involving SIX’s annual preparation for their new regular show. This was a more typical representation of SIX’s practice, as the pieces arranged during this time all involved listening to professional recordings and creating, learning, and performing an original arrangement by ear. During these rehearsals, SIX arranged “I Gotta Feeling” by Black Eyed Peas, “THX Sound Test,” a Medley of 60s pieces (including “You Really Got Me” by The Kinks, “Hazy Shade of Winter” by Simon and Garfunkel, and “Happy Together” by The Turtles), “Kiss Him Goodbye” covered by The Nylons, and “Carry on Wayward Son” by Kansas. Additionally, two rehearsal segments provided a snapshot of SIX’s process of repertoire selection, as they discussed possibilities for the second half of the show.
Rehearsal Observations: Videotape Preparation, Transcription, Organization, and Analysis

In preparation for the transcriptions of the videotaped data, I watched these videotaped rehearsals again. I wanted to be very familiar with what I was about to undertake, but I also wanted to make some determinations as to sections of the rehearsals that were important to transcribe and sections that were not. Rehearsal transcriptions involved the transcription of multiple speakers, some additional descriptions, and some musical dictation skills. Therefore, I did the transcription of these videotaped rehearsals myself.

In total, the transcription of videotaped rehearsals involved the following:

- A description of the different rehearsal spaces including where SIX rehearsed, time of day SIX rehearsed, basic seating available for SIX, and prominent furnishings around which SIX formed their rehearsal.
- A description of primary participant seating arrangements in the rehearsal space, including who sat next to whom, who sat in places prominent for interaction, and who sat in places to facilitate easy moving into and out of interaction.
- A transcription of speech for six to eight individuals, including both the members of SIX who were at all videotaped rehearsals and those who would occasionally happen to arrive and provide input into SIX’s
rehearsal. This transcription often included group communication that involved multiple, simultaneous speakers.

- A description of times when SIX played recordings during the process of rehearsal, which includes various activities such as: generalized listening, focused listening, and engaged listening.

- Transcription also included some musical transcription or description, use of electronic devices, and meaningful physical movement during rehearsal.

**Participant Interviews: Research Sites**

I interviewed each of the primary participants twice, once each during two different time periods. The initial interviews took place during the summer of 2010; a follow up interview, in order to focus specifically on aspects of the rehearsal process, took place during the summer of 2013. Both the initial and follow up interviews for the primary participants took place in Branson, Missouri, where the primary participants live. Additionally, because Mr. Knudsen also lives in Branson, I did an initial interview with him during the summer of 2010, but did not conduct a follow up interview.

During the summer of 2010, I interviewed Barry, Kevin, and Mr. Knudsen in Kevin’s living room, the site of most of SIX’s rehearsals. Because Kevin was in his house the entire time during each of these
interviews, Kevin appears in both interview transcripts with Barry and Mr. Knudsen, as he responded occasionally to things that were said. I interviewed Curtis, Owen, and Lynn in their homes. These represented the most private interviews, as only the researcher and the interviewee were present. I interviewed Jak after an evening show at a local restaurant. We stayed until the restaurant closed and completed the interview in Jak’s car. The follow up interviews for all of the primary participants took place in SIX’s new live performance venue, the Mickey Gilley Theatre, after various concerts when the audience had left. These interviews took place in either the lobby or the vacant audience seating in the main theatre. I conducted all secondary participant interviews by Skype from my home, with the exception of Mr. Knudsen, whom I had already interviewed in Branson.

**Participant Interviews: Interview Procedures**

Open-ended questions were utilized during semi-structured interviews (see Appendices A, B, and C). Although a list of specific questions guided both primary and secondary participant interviews, both in person and over the telephone, these questions served as topic reminders, rather than scripts. Deviation from exact written verbiage often occurred to create a natural feel of conversation during the interview process. This interview method encourages research
participants to reveal important issues from a personal standpoint, yet within predetermined subject matters (Bresler & Stake, 2006).

I conducted the interviews of both the primary and secondary participants after having procured the rehearsal observation videos during October 2009 and January 2010. I also conducted a follow up interview with each of the primary participants in order to ask specific questions about SIX’s rehearsal process during the summer of 2013. I conducted the remaining five interviews, all of secondary participants, by Skype, using Pamela Recorder to make an audio file of these calls.

**Participant Interviews: Interview Preparation, Transcription, Organization, and Analysis**

In preparation for the transcription, organization, and analysis of the interview data, I viewed the videotaped rehearsal data several times while taking written field notes. This better enabled me to enter interview transcription, organization, and analysis with a critical eye. Having conducted the interviews personally, I knew there were descriptions of SIX’s rehearsal process within this particular data set. The more familiar I was with all the data as a whole, the greater the likelihood I would understand the verbal descriptions, thus allowing me to transcribe, organize, and analyze in a meaningful way.
Once I was familiar with all of the videotaped rehearsals, my wife and I created written transcripts of all the recorded interviews as suggested by Creswell (2002). Any interviews that my wife transcribed, I also reviewed and edited while listening to the recorded interview. Although I was the one who conducted the interview initially, I reviewed all interviews in an effort to re-familiarize myself with the content as Bazeley (2007) recommends, building a strong knowledge of this data source, and immersing myself into the participants’ view of SIX’s phenomenon. Immersion into the data is considered among the key components of conducting exemplary research (Frost & Stablein, 1992). Additionally, transcription included noting hesitations, interruptions, repetitions, incomplete sentences, and incorrect grammar in an effort to minimize loss of emotional overtones and nuances within the spoken text (Bazeley, 2007).

Once the process of interview transcription was complete, I organized these interview transcripts and the audio files within NVivo 10. I placed all of the primary interviews in one folder and all of the secondary interviews in another folder. This organization of the interview transcripts within NVivo gave me a centralized location for these files and transcripts, thus allowing me to move to the next step of analysis.

Now that all of my interview transcripts were organized within a centralized location, these files could be additionally processed and
searched. I did not use this software for direct analysis of this data, but instead did manual coding of all data sets. The multilayered descriptions, complexity of issues, and development of conceptual theory required researcher attention and presented a challenge outside the capacity of the software; however, the organizational and searching functions proved to be invaluable during the manipulation of large quantities of data created primarily in the transcription process. I employed descriptive coding and analysis to present a thick description of this case (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), through the eyes of the participants as they described activity in its natural context (Creswell, 2002), specifically activities of rehearsal and skill acquisition.

Before this study began, I had become familiar with the research of Lucy Green (2002, 2008) on how popular musicians learn music, and conjectured that SIX learned music in much the same way. Green had found five characteristics of informal music learning that many popular musicians seemed to have in common. Although the initial evaluation of my interview data did not match Green’s findings perfectly, these characteristics created a useful template by which I could analyze the data in an organized manner and in a way that was comparable with other research in the field. I therefore created five themes based on these five characteristics. Nearing completion of this interview analysis, I had created a rich and descriptive account of my case; however, its value
outside describing this particular contemporary a cappella group seemed limited. My real research question pointed toward the rehearsal data I had acquired, with a possible use of this interview data as ancillary to rehearsal findings; therefore, I turned my attention to this yet to be transcribed data set, the videotaped rehearsal observations.

**Research Validity**

Within qualitative research, there are ways in which a researcher can validate findings from within his or her data, thus establishing validity. According to Reason and Rowan (1981), qualitative research represents a type of subjective, yet empirical research, wherein research validity can be captured in the phrase “objectively subjective” (p. xiii). With this idea in mind, Lather (1986) describes three considerations when strengthening validity within qualitative research.

First, data triangulation is imperative in the establishment of data trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lather, 1986). Within this study, triangulation is represented by three sets of data: rehearsal observations, primary participant interviews, and secondary participant interviews. Rehearsal observations often demonstrated consistency with material revealed in the primary participant interview data, which in turn often clarified what occurred during rehearsals. Additionally, some of the
material found within the secondary participant interviews shed light on observational data that was not available in the primary participant data.

Second, construct validity demonstrates an especially high degree of importance, particularly when qualitative research includes theoretical analysis of the data (Lather, 1986). Construct validity involves constant consideration of the reciprocal relationship between data and theory, thus allowing theory to grow out of context-embedded data in a way that both acknowledges a priori theory while simultaneously avoiding distortion of logic based on preconceptions (Glaser, 2012; Lather, 1986). Construct validity requires a balance between these contrasting, yet not exclusive considerations. The amount of preexistent theory on fluid leadership and small ensemble interactions is limited. I attempted in this research study to remain true to construct validity by allowing theory to emerge from the data, without discounting the preexistent undeveloped and underdeveloped theoretical concepts that are in concert with the concepts that emerged from the research.

The third and last consideration affecting research validity is face validity. This aspect of validity allows each participant to give input, clarifying and correcting interpretations of the data from a participant perspective. Face validity is often established by bringing the description, emerging analysis, and conclusions to the research participants with the hope that, after participant input, the research resounds with a “click of
recognition” or a “yes, of course” reaction from the participants themselves (Lather, 1986). Grounded theory methodology encourages the establishment of face validity by naturally creating theories with “grab” that hold meaning and applicability for practitioners in the field (Glaser, 1978, 2001). Face validity occurred as I shared sections of the dissertation pertaining to analysis of rehearsal and interview data to elicit SIX’s feedback. Construct validity was verified when I shared the dissertation’s concluding chapters with SIX in an attempt to carry out member checking (Orcher, 2005). The feedback I received regarding the theory of fluid leadership points to the validity both of the construct and the theory developed from the data (see Appendix K for the actual responses received from members of SIX).

**Brief History and Debate Regarding Grounded Theory**

Classic grounded theory, as originated by Glaser and Strauss, is a method of qualitative analysis that is used to describe emerging categories and properties within the data, rather than describing the data itself (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparison method represents the primary approach to this grounded theory methodology, and the analytical approach I adopted for this research study. Classic grounded theory represents a well-accepted methodology for the analysis of data and is exceptionally suited for case study research (Glaser, 1978),
especially instrumental case study research (Stake, 1995). As I began the process of coding data, I chose codes that fit the data, but also redesigned and reintegrated what I was coding into what I was preparing to code (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), thus using a joint coding and analysis method that tends to allow a gradual generation of theory in a systematic, yet theoretically rich way. This synthesis of analysis in every part of the coding process generates theory that is integrated, consistent, plausible, and close to the data, while delimiting both theory and further categories as theory solidifies. During this process, my resulting substantive theory of aural arranging and substantive and formal theory of fluid leadership represented an inductive method of theory development that made sense of a tremendous diversity of data.

Although Glaser and Strauss developed the concepts of grounded theory together (1967), Strauss eventually parted ways, developed, and then refined a variant form of grounded theory methodology (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser, considered a purist in the tradition of the original “classic” grounded theory, reacted with an aggressive rebuttal, asserting a pure original grounded theory methodology (1992). Though similarities between these two approaches exist, including the use of coding, constant comparison, neutral questions, theoretical sampling, and memoing throughout (Walker &
Myrick, 2006, p. 550), they are incompatible for use as the same methodology.

Strauss’s insistence of a single predetermined coding paradigm (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in contrast with Glaser’s (1978) numerous paradigm options dependent upon theoretical fit represents among the strongest incompatibilities. Strauss’s paradigm utilizes the theoretical traditions of pragmatist John Dewey and social theorist George Herbert Mead (Kelle, 2005) creating what Glaser refers to as forced theory, rather than grounded theory. This occurs through an automatically assumed theoretical perspective, rather than allowing such to emerge (1992). For the analysis of SIX’s rehearsal process of aural arranging, Glaser’s theoretical perspective of “process” demonstrated the theoretical fit I was seeking. This theoretical paradigm provided me with a framework with which to analyze SIX’s process from the problem of an unarranged song, through various intermediate stages, and ending with the solution, which is a completed aural arrangement (Glaser, 1978).

**Grounded Theory: Levels and Mandatory Criteria**

According to Glaser (1978), classic grounded theory analysis using a constant comparison approach demonstrates strong capacity for rigorous theory development, both in substantive and formal areas. The substantive area represents theory development that occurs closest to
the codes, excerpted directly from the data, and thus displays theory most applicable to the current field of research. In this case, two substantive theories emerged, both embedded in the context of SIX’s aural arranging. The first theory provided an explanation as to what was done and how it was accomplished. The second theory of fluid leadership, although indirectly involved in the process of aural arranging and yet still embedded in SIX’s context, provided an explanation as to the principles of leadership SIX exhibited during the process of aural arranging. Both the theory of aural arranging and the theory of fluid leadership as related to the context of SIX represent substantive areas of theory development.

The formal area represents theory development that began as a substantive theory, but is formalized or separated from the particular data. This theoretical area thus displays theory that is often generalizable and applicable to areas outside of the current scope of research (Glaser, 1978). In this case, the concepts within the theory of aural arranging are by nature inseparable from the data itself; therefore, it remains substantive. In contrast, the principles of fluid leadership, though initially described within the context of SIX’s rehearsal process and therefore substantive, demonstrate ability to be generalizable. These principles, removed from SIX’s rehearsal process, become a formalized theory of fluid leadership, which could be applicable in other similar musical ensembles or perhaps dissimilar ensembles and/or groups.
Substantive and formal areas represent a continuum of generality, and as such, grounded theories often exhibit a blending of the two theoretical areas within the scope of a single grounded theory. As will be demonstrated later, this grounded theory project exhibits a theoretical blending of substantive and formal areas.

During analysis, I utilized Glaser’s (1998) four-level approach, intended to generate grounded theory. First, I examined both the videotaped rehearsal transcripts and audiotaped interview transcripts in order to determine an overall conceptual picture of this data. Second, I began conceptualizing the data into categories and the related subcategories, called properties, through substantive and theoretical coding. Substantive coding represented underlying actions, strategies, and attitudes found within SIX, while theoretical coding represented the underlying leadership principles observed as operational within SIX. Third, I integrated categories and properties through a process of coding and memoing the theoretical ideas that emerged from SIX's data. The creation of memos represented a key activity during this analysis level that was invaluable in the process of theory generation. Once theory started to form, the fourth and last level began as theoretical aspects of the study began to emerge, representing the formalization of the substantive area. This represented the formal theory of SIX’s fluid
leadership, a more general and generalizable concept within this research study.

During the constant comparative approach for this research study, I employed both substantive and formal coding to the transcribed rehearsal data. I wanted an answer to my initial research question, “How does a group of six singers create intricate, professional sounding a cappella arrangements by ear, without reference to a musical score?” The emphasis of how revealed my desire to probe underneath the surface, rather than simply describe a situation. Classic grounded theory, through conceptual coding, fractures data into categories and properties. The grouping of these categories and properties, amidst the discovery process, then creates theory. Theory, which simply represents a higher level of conceptualization, explains what is happening in the data.

Substantive coding separates into two distinct phases of coding: open coding followed by selective coding. Open coding codes as many categories as can be found to fit and codes specific instances into as many categories as possible. Open coding addresses relationships between specific instances from the beginning of the process, as new categories emerge and new instances begin fitting into existing categories. During this open coding phase, researchers code and reflect upon the substantive data and freely code for implied or indirect meaning, maximizing best fit. Through this process, the most workable
codes and core relevancies emerge on their own. Open coding also minimizes forced or distorted meaning, which can surface from both researcher preconceptions, best avoided through researcher establishment of no preconceptions (Glaser, 2012), and latent training (Glaser, 1978). Additionally, asking specific questions such as, “What is this data a study of?” and “What is actually happening in the data?” (p. 57) promoted the emergence of a final research focus that was markedly different from my assumed focus at the beginning.

The end goal of open coding is the identification of the core category, in this case, a style of horizontal small group leadership. Once sufficient identification of this core category occurs, selective coding can begin. Selective coding generates emergent theory, usually a social process or condition found to function within the data (Glaser, 1978), by relating all extraneous variables to the emergent core variable. The core variable then guides all future coding, data collection, and data selection within the study. With “horizontal small group leadership” as the core variable within SIX’s rehearsal observations, all musical skills, rehearsal activities, and group interactions were related to this single core variable, allowing a theoretically and conceptually rich grounded theory to emerge. Although gaps will no doubt be evident in this grounded theory analysis, according to Glaser, a grounded theorist needs to remember that it is what is said that matters, rather than what is not said. Selective coding
eventually delimits data if done correctly (Glaser, 1998), and therefore works to leave out items that do not pertain to the generation of theory.

Theoretical coding, the last stage of the coding process, takes the data fractured by the substantive area open and selective coding processes, and weaves the story back together with an increase in theoretical understanding. Though substantive codes can exist without theoretical codes, theoretical codes are dependent upon substantive codes to be demonstrative of emergent, grounded theory. Theoretical codes in the absence of substantive codes represent empty abstractions that do not uphold the criteria of fit and relevancy (Glaser, 1978). Although at the point of theoretical coding, this case study demonstrated a few theoretical options that represented potential explanatory power involving SIX’s rehearsal process, leadership style appeared the most viable. Once I made this determination, fluid leadership earned its way by fitting with the data, being relevant to the data, working with the data, and showing ability to modify during its theoretical development.

**Importance of Memos in Grounded Theory**

Memos involve the written theorizing that goes on alongside the coding and the constant comparison approach, as the researcher entertains ideas about categories and their relationships with one another. The writing of memos represents both the “core stage” in the
process of generating theory and the solid foundation of theory
generation (Glaser, 1978). By consistent memoing as the research
process continues, memos grow in theoretical content and contribute
greatly to the researcher’s growth and maturity, as he or she moves from
preconscious processes to full, conscious, theoretical understanding
(Glaser & Holten, 2004).

Throughout the process of grounded theory analysis, if a
researcher experiences revelation regarding the research, he or she must
stop and memo. A primary source for memos is the constant comparative
process. Additional sources of memos include the process of memo
sorting, writing results, infusion of new data within the academic field,
rememoing, or rewriting memos. The process of memoing during this
study continued even through the process of writing results, as further
theoretical development continued throughout the entire research
process (Glaser, 1978). Memoing was essential while I generated
theoretical ideas through the conceptualizing of SIX’s data; I felt freedom
to express theoretical ideas without thought to the quality of my writing,
and I created a memo fund, which I sorted for reference throughout the
process of writing this dissertation (Glaser, 1978).
Data Examples for Theoretical Support

A classic grounded theory analysis by nature yields results that can easily be supported by examples found directly within the original data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); therefore, during the reporting of analysis results within this dissertation, examples from both the rehearsal observations and participant interviews are used to support grounded theoretical results. The emergent theories of aural arranging and fluid leadership demonstrated tremendous complexity, as did the rehearsal data. As such, examples from the rehearsal observations and participant interviews often supported multiple aspects of these grounded theories, and are therefore sometimes utilized more than once during this dissertation’s theory building to illustrate various aspects of a given phenomenon.

Purposeful Interactions and Musical Knowledge: In Vivo Codes

The highly interactive and musical context of SIX’s rehearsal data was a challenge to code. A coding of the most interactive repertoire segments represents data I examined in detail, with the idea of gaining a rich theoretical perspective about fluid leadership and aspects of “how” SIX negotiated the process of aural arranging; however, I utilized all of the rehearsal observation and personal interview data when looking for
examples that supported emergent categories and properties. Before adapting outside codes that still demonstrated a fit to the data (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I sought conceptual categories and properties that emerged directly from the data, thus referred to as grounded theory “in vivo” coding (King, 2008). These in vivo codes are interactive discussion, interactive listening, and interactive singing (see Chapter 6 for a full discussion of these terms).

**Purposeful Interactions and Musical Knowledge: Pre-Conceived Codes**

Two aspects of SIX’s process were still not clear. One aspect represented leadership activities that seemed so prominent and easy to see, yet complex and elusive to describe. The other aspect represented musicianship so obvious to the eye and ear, yet difficult to grasp and codify. I needed to examine group leadership activity and musical knowledge in a way that would be theoretically generative, would show emergent fit, and make this information manageable. From these needs, two pre-existent codes that demonstrate an emergent fit were utilized. First, a list of properties and categories by sociologist Robert Bales (1950) allowed me to analyze the leadership activities in a way that produced accurate results, but did not require extensive training and was not overly involved. Second, David Elliott’s (1995) writings on the procedural
nature of musicianship allowed me to analyze the musical activities in a way that harmonized with SIX’s natural context.

**Purposeful Interactions: Robert Bales**

The first challenge in understanding SIX’s leadership activities involved uncovering the overarching activity within this data set, purposeful interaction. I needed an analytical tool or list of codes or categories specifically designed to analyze interactive discussion within a small group. Interactive discussion represents one of the three types of interactive activities emerging from SIX’s rehearsals and among the primary ways SIX shares purposeful interactions. During my search for a solution to this analytical problem, I discovered a user-friendly analysis tool specifically geared toward analysis of interaction rather than the subject of the interaction (Bales, 1950) called the Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) (pp. i & 59). Though I found professionally adapted and more complex systems for interaction assessment (Bales, 1999; Bales, Cohen, & Williamson, 1979), the IPA demonstrated itself as a user-friendly, empirically valid, and currently in-use interaction instrument (Aalderks, 2012; Fahy, 2006; Falcon, Leonardi, Pianesi, & Zancanaro, 2005). It was, therefore, adequate for my research purposes.

Bales’ IPA demonstrated fit and revealed itself as an excellent analysis instrument in regards to interaction, yet some of its language
and application did not translate well in the analysis of the interactions found specifically in the goal-oriented leadership context of SIX. Bales (1950) focused exclusively upon small group interactions, not leadership per se; however, according to many authors, interaction represents leadership’s essence. Among those, Pearce, et al. (2008) described leadership as involving “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals” (p. 622) and Carson, et al. (2007) stated that leadership “represents a condition of mutual influence embedded in the interactions among team members” (p. 1218); therefore, I created the Interactive Communication Analysis (ICA) tool using Bales’ model as its basis. I chose “Interactive Communication” as the primary descriptor in this instrument, because my goal was to analyze the aspects of interactive discussion observed within SIX’s rehearsals. Verbal communication, within the context of the goal-oriented activity of SIX, emphasizes discussion, but also includes listening, singing, musical demonstrations, and nonverbal cues. All of these activities are aspects of interactive communication. Before the creation of the Interactive Communication Analysis (ICA) instrument, observations revealed purposeful interaction that represented a high level of goal-oriented leadership activity coming from several members of SIX within single rehearsal settings; however, these initially unguided observations failed to reveal the full meaning and nature of the goal-oriented leadership I observed. Additionally, the
implication of occasional interactions within the group that did not seem to advance SIX’s goal-oriented activity appeared to influence the emotional relational climate, but was difficult to assess.

The ICA helped to shed light on these aspects of SIX’s rehearsal practice. Figure 1 on page 124 represents the adapted system of leadership categories and activity properties used to analyze the nature of interactions within SIX’s process of aural arranging. The adapted ICA instrument is organized into two task related leadership categories and two social-emotional related leadership categories, with three properties in each category. Task and social-emotional leadership are associated with the concept of role differentiation (Bales & Slater, 1955, 1957; Slater, 1955), wherein some types of interaction move a group forward in goal-oriented activity, and other types of interaction affect group cohesiveness by addressing social-emotional aspects of group relationships (Bales & Slater, 1955, 1957; Slater, 1955). Though established by Bales & Slater as a phenomenon of social interaction (Burke, 1967), this concept enjoyed considerable discussion and application to roles of leadership within small groups (Bonacich & Lewis, 1973; Burke, 1967, 1968, 1971, 1973; Lewis, 1972; Wheeler, 1957). An additional category to account for interactions that seemed null in impact is included in the middle of the chart. Two of the leadership areas directly associated with accomplishing goal-oriented activity have been
named *direct task leadership* and *indirect task leadership*. The other two areas are associated with the social-emotional health of a group and are called *positive social-emotional leadership* and *negative social-emotional leadership*. The chart represents a continuum of interactive activity, revealing a group’s overall leadership movement.
Figure 1. Interactive Communication Analysis (ICA) continuum (see Appendix L for full descriptive list of the ICA).
Use of Informal Leadership Statistics

This is not a statistical study; however, in order to better gage levels of group and individual leadership activity within certain areas of the ICA, an informal tally of results was taken. These numbers gave a general sense of the typical time spent in various areas of leadership interactions, and revealed this group’s balance of task and social-emotional activity.

The interaction results table (see Appendix M) includes two versions. The first version allowed tracking by ICA categories and properties in terms of group activity by rehearsal segments, divided approximately as beginning, middle, and ending. The second version allowed tracking of ICA categories and properties in terms of individual activity. I also divided individual activities according to rehearsal segments, in order to better delineate differences in activity by individuals. These informal statistics were used for delineation of time rations spent especially in direct task leadership, indirect task leadership, positive social-emotional leadership, and negative social-emotional leadership.

Procedural Musical Knowledge: David Elliott

SIX demonstrated musical knowledge largely as procedural in nature, rather than spoken and theoretical. Techniques of aural
arranging, knowledge of keys and chords, techniques of singing, and knowledge of stylistic differences between many popular music styles represent some of SIX’s procedural musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995). My awareness of this procedural musical knowledge emerged from the rehearsal data and represented the second area with which I needed help managing and describing, without a loss of theoretical fit.

Elliott (1995) wrote extensively about the procedural nature of true musical knowledge. Elliott asserted that the understanding of musicianship starts with an understanding of its procedural nature as thinking-in-action and knowing-in-action during the activity of making music (p. 55). This concept, which Elliott called procedural musical knowledge, exemplified what I had observed in the rehearsal data. Elliott lists four other kinds of musical knowledge that feed into procedural musical knowledge. These are formal musical knowledge, informal musical knowledge, impressionistic musical knowledge, and supervisory musical knowledge (see Figure 2). A discussion of each of these types of musical knowledge is found in Chapter 4: Brief Description of SIX’s Emergent Musical Thinking and Knowing.
**Summary of Research Methodology**

The study of SIX represents a single, instrumental case study wherein the single case benefits studies theoretical in nature (Yin, 2003) and as an instrumental case, the phenomenon of the case, rather than the case itself, is the focus (Stake, 1995). Through the aid of several gatekeepers, six primary and six secondary participants were located for interviews. These interviews proved secondary to the videotaped rehearsals wherein the primary participants, SIX, were directly observed in their predominant practice of aural arranging.

The constant comparative method, as described in the classic grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), was applied to the
rehearsal transcripts in order to extract theoretical concepts grounded in the data. The emergence of leadership interactions involving the sharing of musical knowledge prompted the use of two analysis instruments. The first involved the Interactive Communication Analysis, adapted from Bales’ (1950) analysis instrument intended to assess the nature of interpersonal interactions without regard to subject matter. The second was Elliott’s (1995) concept of procedural musicianship, which emerged from the data and provided a cogent way in which to identify SIX’s shared musical knowledge. Through the use of the ICA analysis instrument based on Bales’ preexistent instrument (1950), Elliott’s preexistent theoretical foundation of procedural musicianship (1995), and in vivo codes in conjunction with a classic grounded theory approach, analysis of this research study’s data was accomplished. The remaining chapters of this dissertation represent the findings and the resulting emergent substantive theory of aural arranging and substantive and formal theories of fluid leadership (see Appendices D, E, and F for theory diagrams and Appendix N for a listing of theoretical terminology).
CHAPTER 4
SIX's DEVELOPMENT:
THE ROAD TO AURAL ARRANGING AND FLUID LEADERSHIP

Before explicating the concepts of aural arranging or fluid leadership, it is important to understand the background that led SIX to the proficient practice of both. Within this chapter, I provide a roadmap of sorts to reveal the sources of SIX's musical development. This chapter thus begins with an account of SIX's exposure to musical concepts and leadership through mentors and coaches. A brief explanation of Elliott’s (1995) four concepts of musical thinking and knowing follows. Next, I describe the musical thinking and knowing possessed by each brother with respect to normal vocal range, musical specialties, vocal instruments, types of individual musical training, and so forth. Before beginning my research, I thought SIX functioned as a group of highly skilled professional musicians with no apparent formal training; however, this chapter reveals experiences in both music and leadership that, though not typical, well equipped this group for their success as a professional a cappella group.

SIX's Earliest Influences and Inclinations

The contemporary a cappella group, SIX, consists of the six oldest of ten brothers from the same two parents. Although SIX has gone by
several names in their history as a performance group, I will refer to the group only as SIX to avoid confusion. From oldest to youngest, the group members are Barry, Kevin, Lynn, Jak, Owen, and Curtis. Both parents were musically inclined. Arnold Knudsen, their father, took piano lessons and was a member of both high school band and chorus; Joyce Knudsen, their mother, was a member of her high school choir and was an experienced vocal soloist.

Mrs. Knudsen was the first to notice that her oldest three or four sons sang and harmonized as they played around the house. Her observation finds commonality with other research in popular music (Mesbur, 2006; Snell, 2007). She then taught them a song with harmony. Mr. Knudsen remembered when his wife asked him to “come and hear them sing,” at which time he commented that his sons “actually sang in tune and weren’t afraid to sing” (interview, June 8, 2010). Lynn also recalls this ability that he and his brothers had to harmonize naturally at an early age:

When we were left to ourselves one time, one of the brothers started running around the house singing this little song that he made up. And then I think Kevin started harmonizing. I think it was Barry singing the song and then Kevin started harmonizing and then Kevin told me a part to sing so . . . we had at least three and then I think we had four parts going on. (interview, July 30, 2013)4

Long quotations and examples from interview and rehearsal observation data appear in 10-point typeface in order to differentiate these from long quotations from the literature, which appear in 12-point font.
SIX’s earliest musical influences came from their parents. Additionally, when the elder members of SIX were quite young, they showed a propensity for self-guidance and the ability to sing and harmonize by ear as a group, with Kevin’s help as one who could hear harmony.

**SIX’s Leadership from Mr. Knudsen**

In 1974, when Barry was 14, Mr. Knudsen started teaching the oldest five of his musically astute sons pieces of music by rote using a piano. The repertoire he taught them included church hymns and some secular barbershop arrangements. Mr. Knudsen, over several years, taught his sons to sing as an ensemble, instilling in them a simple but strong foundation based on two principles: singing in tune and singing out. Mr. Knudsen’s ability to hear and assess tuning issues seems to be a natural gift that his sons still recognize and admire.

As time progressed, Mr. Knudsen’s sons developed strong intonation skills, while he continued to teach them pieces of music by rote. On a couple of occasions, Mr. Knudsen left four of his sons, Kevin, Lynn, Jak, and Owen, alone with a recording of one of his favorite barbershop quartets, the Suntones. He instructed them to listen to the recording and copy it by ear. Learning a piece by listening only was a difficult task for SIX at the time, with success in this endeavor primarily
dependent upon Kevin’s strength (see Chapter 7) to hear the parts and teach them to his brothers. According to Lynn, “Kevin seemed to have a talent for hearing parts and pointing them out to people” above the rest of the brothers, and still does to this day (interview, July 30, 2013).

Mr. Knudsen, therefore, first exercised vertical leadership as he chose repertoire and directed all musical choices for his sons. On a few occasions, Mr. Knudsen facilitated the practice of copying a piece of music by ear using a recording, a practice Green (2002, 2008) described as a feature of informal learning. Kevin emerged as the one capable of hearing individual parts and helping to teach them to other group members. In this area of strength (see Chapter 7), Kevin exhibited a type of horizontal leadership (Taylor, 2010) that occurred from within the group.

**SIX’s Leadership from Barbershop Coaches**

As SIX enjoyed an increasing number of performances within their church and for local organizations, someone from the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) took notice and invited SIX to participate in the society. A 10-year association with the BHS followed, which began in 1976. This association not only availed SIX of performance opportunities, but also provided opportunities for them to learn how to sing in barbershop choruses using sheet music, and to obtain coaching from
experienced barbershop quartet coaches. Although while living in Provo, Utah, SIX was able to avail themselves of some barbershop coaching, when the family moved to Phoenix, the home of the international barbershop chorus champions, the Phoenicians, SIX gained greater access to BHS certified barbershop quartet coaches.

In the barbershop style, only four brothers at a time could sing in an official quartet; therefore, as brothers did or did not want to sing, members rotated in and out of the group. SIX was now under the leadership of barbershop coaches, especially from 1983–1984 when Gary Steinkamp, Phil Winston, and Paul Graham, associated with the Phoenicians and considered among the top barbershop coaches in the nation, took on the responsibility of coaching SIX in preparation for the upcoming International Barbershop Quartet Competition. During this time of intense coaching, wherein the coaches became primarily responsible for selection of repertoire, musical interpretation, musical phrasing, and how the group looked on stage, SIX moved from 38th place in the previous International Competition to 8th place in the 1984 International Competition (out of approximately 50 other competing quartets) (Barbershop competition trivia, n.d.). Two years later, in 1986, SIX again placed 8th in the Barbershop Quartet International Competition.
Although Barry was rarely involved in any of the rotating quartets during the time of barbershop coaching (barbershop style was never an interest of his musically), he nevertheless witnessed some of the benefits the group received from this type of professional leadership. As he explained:

[Once] the group had hooked up with the Barbershop Society, there were plenty of . . . vocal coaches within the society [that offered] coaching on phrasing, for instance . . . I am grateful to the Barbershop Harmony Society that taught us about things like vowel migration; you know, trying to form the same vowels at the same time. (interview, June 8, 2010)

Jak was directly involved in the quartets that received coaching, and therefore commented in a personal way on the leadership and benefits SIX received from the professional barbershop coaches:

[Among barbershop coaches who were most helpful], I would say Gary Steinkamp . . . We had moved to Phoenix [and] got lined up with a large barbershop chapter called the Phoenicians . . . They had won Internationals, so there were a lot of talented guys in that chorus [that provided] some good coaching.

We'd have our one coach who helped us with our sound, which was Gary . . . Then we brought in Phil . . . who would work with us on our interpretation. The most influential guy was an older, sharp gentleman, Paul Graham. He was in the Western Continental International Championship Quartet [and] a real classy guy [who] taught us a lot about all of the surrounding nebulous stuff . . . not specific things, but worked with us on stage presence. He taught us a lot about the craft. (interview, June 9, 2010)

During this time, SIX’s rehearsal leadership had moved from the purview of Mr. Knudsen only, to that of professional barbershop coaches.
SIX’s Independent Leadership between Coaching Sessions

Leadership from the barbershop coaches only occurred once or twice in a week; therefore, SIX spent a significant amount of time in independent rehearsal between coaching sessions, learning not only new pieces of music with sheet music to guide them, but also adding, by ear, tag endings on existing pieces that were often better than what was written. During this period, SIX developed independent rehearsal practices not connected with their father or the barbershop coaches.

Gary Steinkamp commented:

They would rehearse in my living room sometimes twice a week to get ready for competition . . . [Often], when they would come over to the house with a new piece of music, somehow they had much of it learned and at times Jak or Lynn would have a guitar and they would pick out the notes on the guitar. Even if they didn’t sing the notes on the page . . . they would often improvise a much better arrangement of a tag or a finish than what was on the paper. (interview, November 20, 2010)

It appeared from Steinkamp’s description that although the members of SIX were not proficient music readers, they were able to figure out a score and create portions of a song by ear. Additionally, there appeared to be self-guided leadership occurring within the group, enabling them to work together and make progress on music between the agreed upon coaching sessions. Elliott and Silverman (2015) indicate that mentoring and coaching that fades in and out of the learning environment allows students to take more ownership of the teaching and learning process,
thus becoming an “educative and ethical mentoring or ‘leadership’ in the best sense” (p. 273).

SIX’s Self-Guided Leadership

In early 1987, having grown tired of what barbershop had to offer, the four older brothers of SIX met in Los Angeles to begin a self-guided career as street singers. Although they occasionally used other methods to learn music, including sheet music and woodshedding harmonies when there was no access to a recording, they adopted a primary practice of aural learning by listening to recordings. When first starting out in Los Angeles, SIX duplicated by ear other a cappella quartet recordings. One model quartet, The Nylons, provided particular inspiration to SIX. The Nylons were a predecessor to modern day contemporary a cappella, as this group sang popular pieces a cappella with the inclusion of instrumental sounding background vocals and an electronic percussion track. SIX began to emulate this style by listening to the Nylons, as well as learning from recordings that included instrumentals that could be arranged as voice parts.

From this period as street singers, SIX moved to being invited to sing at A-list parties. They also performed as a 50s group for Disney’s “Blast to the Past,” and for state fair, corporate, and cruise ship gigs. They eventually became an established show in Las Vegas. During these
various transitions, SIX’s membership varied from four to six voices, depending on who was available to sing at a given time. It was during 1995 that SIX became a consistent group of six singers, and in 1996 the group was able to go full time as professional entertainers. In 2006, SIX established themselves as among the most successful shows in Branson. Since the time SIX first moved to Los Angeles to begin their professional career as street singers, they have maintained and refined a process of aural arranging in order to create original, a cappella cover arrangements using model recordings. This process of aural arranging was successfully undertaken through a self-guided, horizontal group leadership wherein there was no single, primary leader. Leadership instead arose from individual areas of strength, with different members taking the lead as different rehearsal tasks were undertaken.

**Brief Description of SIX’s Musical Thinking and Knowing**

SIX’s prowess in techniques of aural arranging, knowledge of keys, techniques of singing, knowledge of popular styles, and so forth, as evident in the data, demonstrates what Elliott (1995) described as procedural musicianship or *musical thinking and knowing.*\(^5\) Musical

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\(^5\) For this dissertation, I use Elliott’s first edition of Music Matters (1995), which uses the terms musical thinking and knowing (p. 56) to explain the concepts of procedural knowledge and procedural musicianship. The second edition of Music Matters (Elliott & Silverman, 2015) goes into significantly more detail in regards to musical thinking and knowing, now abbreviated MTK. I decided to stay with the first edition since Elliott’s work was ancillary to my established grounded theory.
thinking and knowing encompasses a variety of musical proficiencies. These musical proficiencies are explored in Elliott’s (1995) description of four types of procedural musical knowledge, which feed into the concept of procedural musicianship. Procedural musicianship is multifaceted and encompasses all aspects of SIX’s procedural musical knowledge. Elliott describes procedural knowledge as practical, reflective, and procedural by nature. SIX’s musical knowledge similarly is largely nonverbal and situated in the musical world of aural arranging. In procedural musicianship, thinking and action are not separate activities, but thinking and action occur simultaneously; therefore, action represents a nonverbal form of thinking and knowing. SIX’s aural arranging process requires a high level of musical thinking and knowing, which is in turn represented in SIX’s musical actions of doing and making music; in other words, SIX’s musical thinking and knowing occur simultaneously with SIX’s musical doing and making and are, in fact, synonymous (Elliott, 1995). Each member of SIX exhibits a unique combination of Elliott’s four subcategories of procedural musical knowledge—formal, informal, impressionistic, and supervisory musical knowledge. Following is a brief description of each of these forms of musical knowledge. After this discussion of the forms of musical knowledge, I describe each member of SIX’s specific forms of procedural knowledge, as it emerged from my observations and from interview data.
**Formal Musical Knowledge**

Formal musical knowledge includes any kind of musical knowledge that can be learned from a book, such as verbal facts, concepts, descriptions, theories, etc. Formal musical knowledge without procedural musical knowledge is inert and in essence, unmusical; however, formal musical knowledge used while musically thinking-in-action (musical thinking and knowing) increases reliability, accuracy, authenticity, sensitivity, and so forth, thus benefiting a person’s procedural musicianship (Elliott, 1995, p. 61). Formal musical knowledge certainly exists within SIX; it surfaced in the interview data and was observed occasionally within the rehearsal data. Evidence of formal knowledge is demonstrated in the rehearsal observations and interview excerpts provided throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

**Informal Musical Knowledge**

Elliott (1995) stated that although informal musical knowledge equates loosely to knowledge through experience, three unique aspects of this type of knowledge need consideration. These are the ability to reflect critically in action, to know when and how to make musical judgments, and to understand the musical situation or context (p. 63). Thus, informal musical knowledge expresses itself as a kind of musical thinking-in-action (musical thinking and knowing) or strategic musical
judgment. Musical problem solving demonstrates this type of procedural musical knowledge. SIX carried out the practice of musical problem solving each time they rehearsed; therefore, informal musical knowledge was fully evident in the rehearsal data.

**Impressionistic Musical Knowledge**

Elliott’s (1995) concept of impressionistic musical knowledge demonstrates the sense or intuition that one course of musical action may outperform another. Musicians often have nonverbal impressions or a heightened sense of things while making music in particular contexts. Impressionistic musical knowledge demonstrates this sense of musicianship by feel. Representing a situated and procedural knowledge that cannot be learned through formal abstraction, and similar to informal music knowledge, impressionistic musical knowledge occurs in the context of actual music making and can be described as a particular type of musical thinking and knowing (pp. 64–65). Demonstration of SIX’s overall musical sense or intuition regarding musical decision making revealed a high degree of impressionistic musical knowledge.

**Supervisory Musical Knowledge**

Supervisory musical knowledge is a kind of meta-knowledge or metacognition. This type of knowledge entails the ability to regulate one’s
musical thinking, both while involved in active music making (musical thinking and knowing) and when contemplating one’s musicianship over its long-term development. It includes things like the disposition and ability to monitor, adjust, balance, manage, and oversee one’s musical thinking. Supervisory musical knowledge also cannot be learned apart from musical actions, interactions, and transactions within real life musical challenges (Elliott, 1995, pp. 66–67). Several members of SIX demonstrated a musical meta-knowledge that exemplifies a supervisory musical knowledge.

**Summary of Musical Thinking and Knowing**

Musical thinking and knowing encompasses the concepts of procedural musicianship and procedural musical knowledge and are used in this dissertation as interchangeable terms. Although Elliott conceived particular types of musical knowledge as five co-equal types—procedural musical knowledge, formal musical knowledge, informal musical knowledge, impressionistic musical knowledge, and supervisory musical knowledge—for my purposes I incorporate the last four of these into a primary category of procedural musicianship with the four subtypes as properties of this category (see Figure 2, p. 127). Elliott (1995) depicts these forms of musical knowledge similarly (p. 54). I observed the category of procedural musicianship and the properties of
formal, informal, impressionistic, and supervisory musical knowledge as utilized by the members of SIX throughout all primary rehearsal activities within this study’s data. By utilizing these four properties of procedural musicianship or musical thinking and knowing, I discerned SIX’s use of procedural musical knowledge throughout their process of aural arranging, and therefore better understand how this process functions.

As demonstrated by the multitude of styles, sounds, and performance levels heard across the five seasons of NBC’s *The Sing Off*! (The Sing-Off, 2009–), every contemporary a cappella performance group appears unique in regard to specific proficiencies of musical thinking and knowing. As such, specific aspects of SIX’s musical thinking and knowing do not appear within my grounded theories explicitly; regardless, a brief look at SIX’s unique expression of procedural musicianship will introduce the reader to its centrality to the grounded theory of aural arranging and fluid leadership.

**Barry’s Musical Thinking and Knowing**

Barry normally sings in either a first or second tenor range, although his voice type would technically be considered baritone based on vocal timbre. Barry possesses among the largest vocal ranges in the group and is capable of singing full voice from the bass range to the first
tenor range. Extending his upper range even further, Barry has an easy sounding yet strong falsetto. Among Barry’s featured pieces are the “Frankie Valli Medley” and “Carry on Wayward Son” by Kansas. Both of these arrangements require an extremely high tessitura and use singing techniques of full voice, mixed voice, and falsetto. His featured vocal instrument is the horn, but Barry can also do vocal percussion and a buzzing sound with his lips that is reminiscent of 70s funk. He shares these last two vocal instruments with Owen and Kevin respectively.

Although Barry has a small amount of formal collegiate training in music, this training is largely not applicable to his current daily musical practice. In my discussions with him, Barry remembered receiving some formal musical instruction from involvement in barbershop, especially the technique of vowel migration, which exemplifies a type of formal musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995). Barry’s vocal technique, especially what Kevin termed as “power singing” in his upper register, exemplifies Barry’s informal musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995). Barry’s ability to find pitches from piece to piece demonstrates impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995). Barry shared that as a performer, remembering items like lyrics requires him to “just let it come out and let it happen,” rather than over thinking (interview, June 8, 2010). This is another example of impressionistic musical knowledge.
Kevin’s Musical Thinking and Knowing

Kevin’s musical thinking and knowing involves a midrange voice part, which he often uses as part of the trio of background vocals, as well as for vocal instrumental parts. When Kevin sings lead, he specializes in a kind of pushed, rock and roll vocal sound that he seems to manage quite well. Elvis Presley’s “Jail House Rock” and Dion’s “The Wanderer” are two of the pieces that Kevin performs in his signature rock style. During the rehearsal observations, Kevin took lead in the rap section of “I Gotta Feeling” by the Black Eyed Peas. Even though Kevin specializes in rock style leads, he also is very capable of singing in a traditional, resonant, lyric baritone voice, as demonstrated when he sings lead in a portion of the barbershop-style arrangement of Mallotte’s “The Lord’s Prayer,” performed in the last part of SIX’s live show. Kevin’s signature instrumental sound is what he calls a funk buzz, a kind of buzzing sound effect that is reminiscent of 70s funk music, which Barry can also sing.

While growing up, Kevin received some private lessons on the guitar; in high school he was involved in jazz band and had some training in barbershop. These experiences provided Kevin with formal musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) including guitar technique, reading jazz band chord charts, in-depth knowledge of chords, and singing techniques associated with barbershop. In guitar, Kevin’s ability goes
beyond his formal training, as he learned informally how to play many songs by ear, to play multiple chords and many chord progressions. An extension of his informal training in guitar came with his involvement with a punk rock band in which he played with Lynn and Jak. He also appeared to have some informal knowledge on keyboard; Kevin used the keyboard as a tool when searching out arrangement harmonies during the rehearsal of “Carry on Wayward Son.”

Likely associated with his formal and informal knowledge of guitar, Kevin’s unique impressionistic musical knowledge of chords enabled him to recognize many chords by the color of the sound alone. During rehearsal observations, Kevin often demonstrated a further supervisory musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) of chords by hearing and singing various voice parts, while keeping up with chord changes, others’ parts, and his own. It is Kevin’s exceptionally high level of musical thinking and knowing, demonstrated by his formal, informal, impressionistic, and supervisory musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) of chords, that is of particular value and benefit to SIX during the process of aural arranging.

**Lynn’s Musical Thinking and Knowing**

Lynn’s traditional voice part is also midrange (as is Kevin’s), although Lynn is also capable of high parts, especially using his strong falsetto. Lynn has a highly refined lead voice style and specializes in
realistic vocal impersonations. Among the vocal impersonations Lynn does exceptionally well, particularly demonstrative of his musical thinking and knowing and featured in SIX’s live show, are “My Way” (Frank Sinatra) and “It’s a Wonderful World” (Louis Armstrong). In “My Way,” Lynn demonstrates his exceptional ability with breath support in the final sustained note, which consistently lasts thirty seconds or longer. Lynn is skilled as a jazz singer and features scat singing as his vocal instrument. He shares the vocal horn sound effect with Barry, and performs imitations of a funk guitar in some of his background instrumental parts. Lynn received substantial formal training in barbershop during SIX’s ten year stint singing as a quartet, but tends to discount the value of this training as only relevant to the barbershop style. Lynn learned guitar informally from Kevin and learned drums on his own, which he played in a punk rock band that included Kevin and Jak. Lynn’s ability in lead singing, vocal scat singing, consistent long sustained notes, and vocal impersonation represents his impressionistic musical knowledge, (Elliott, 1995), as these abilities appear to come second nature to Lynn.

**Jak’s Musical Thinking and Knowing**

Jak sings the bass voice part because he has the lowest voice in the group. As SIX began the process of transitioning to contemporary a
cappella as their signature style, Jak adopted an increasingly instrumental style of bass singing that emulates a stand up or electric bass—Jak’s primary vocal instrument. As such, Jak with Owen on vocal percussion make up the group’s rhythm section. Jak and Barry have the largest vocal ranges in the group. Jak’s range extends well below the bass clef and upward into the tenor range. Jak often utilizes the upper end of this vocal range in his one featured lead each show, rendering a popular song in a humorous style with many energetic and entertaining dance moves—another of Jak’s specialties. Jak, along with Lynn, received a substantial amount of formal training in barbershop during SIX’s ten-year involvement in this singing style.

Jak learned to play the electric bass in the punk rock band that he, Kevin, and Lynn formed. This punk rock band experience and his self-taught use of some technologies like Garage Band as an individual rehearsal tool demonstrate Jak’s informal musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995). His informal knowledge of the electric bass has further become impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995), from which he draws for sung bass lines, in that he is able to create bass and melodic lines by feel. The bass and melodic lines he originated during the observed rehearsals were always well constructed, including the implied harmonic progression. Jak’s ability and propensity to work on the vocal bass part on his own influences his ability to exercise supervisory musical
knowledge (Elliott, 1995). This was demonstrated during the rehearsal of “Carry on Wayward Son” (see Chapter 6), when Jak was able to skillfully guide SIX in the creation of the arrangement’s formal structure, because he had already learned his own bass part and possessed a thorough knowledge of this piece’s structural components before the first rehearsal. This last example is particularly demonstrative of Jak’s use of musical thinking and knowing.

**Owen’s Musical Thinking and Knowing**

Owen demonstrates musical thinking and knowing primarily in his role as SIX’s vocal percussionist, wherein he arranges stylistically appropriate vocal percussion parts for each song. Owen’s arrangement of a percussion part often sounds surprisingly like a real drum kit with an unusually dynamic kick bass. Owen and Jak make up this group’s rhythm section. Among the drum effects, Owen produces realistic high hats, cymbal crashes, pitched tom sounds, and other percussion effects. Owen takes on the responsibility of remembering the multitude of tempo changes in SIX’s live show and always maintains a solid, steady beat. His strong, but lyric, tenor voice can provide both background vocals and strong lead vocals, depending on SIX’s needs and his availability to sing. For several years, Owen’s signature piece on lead vocals was the U2 piece “With or Without You.” In recent years, Owen has performed a medley of
pieces by the group Cold Play, one of the highlights of SIX’s current show. In this Cold Play medley, Owen uses both a beautiful lyric tone and dramatic high notes.

Owen had extensive formal training in barbershop from SIX’s 10-year involvement in this style of singing. Owen’s experience with vocal percussion was initially self-taught and so therefore began as informal musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995). After about six months on his own, he took 9 hours of private instruction over three days from one of the earliest master beat boxers, Andrew Chaikin, also known as Kid Beyond. After this formal training, the other members of SIX noticed a tremendous improvement in Owen’s musical thinking and knowing involving vocal percussion. Owen now shows an impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) of vocal percussion in his ability to feel how to create a percussion part that is stylistically appropriate, and complements SIX’s arrangements without being overbearing. Owen’s supervisory knowledge of vocal percussion was demonstrated during one of SIX’s observed rehearsals, as he instructed the other members in ways in which they could add percussion into an arrangement, while simultaneously singing background vocal harmonies.
Curtis’s Musical Thinking and Knowing

Curtis shares the high first and second tenor parts with Barry, and has the most lyric tenor voice in the group. Among the songs that utilize Curtis’s lyric sound is “Unchained Melody” by the Righteous Brothers. Curtis has an especially keen ear, capable of picking up subtlety within melodic lines, and can correct melodic mistakes in real time, much like Kevin can correct harmonic mistakes in real time. Curtis has an exceptionally high falsetto range and is often placed on the top note of dramatic final chords. His vocal instrument is the electric guitar, which he performs with exceptional realism with the aid of a distortion effect on his microphone. This use of an electronic distortion emulates the technology used to distort the sound from a real electric guitar.

Curtis has the most formal training in the group, having received about a year and a half of collegiate music theory and a semester of applied voice. His formal musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) of music theory gives him knowledge of chords and harmonies similar to Kevin’s knowledge, and helps him in the function of giving pitches in SIX’s live show. Interestingly, Curtis does not feel that having taken voice lessons was very helpful to his daily life as a singer of popular music, similar to the experience of several of the popular musicians studied by Green (2002). He finds the technique of classical music and the production of a classical type tone more difficult and harder on his voice than the types
of tone and technique he uses in SIX’s repertoire. Curtis’s ability with melodic material represents impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995), as he seems to pick up melodic subtlety with little effort. Curtis also demonstrates supervisory musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) when he negotiates multiple parts, normally between himself and another singer.

**Summary of SIX’s Arranging and Leadership Development**

SIX’s musical arranging began as boys who could make up melodies, which they could harmonize by ear while playing around the house, using a type of self-guided, horizontal leadership. Mr. Knudsen, recognizing his sons’ musical abilities, took on the task of choosing SIX’s repertoire and taught notated arrangements by rote using the piano; therefore, Mr. Knudsen employed a vertical leadership style as he guided the young singers. After some time, Mr. Knudsen prompted the group to listen to some recordings on cassette in order to learn some barbershop arrangements by ear. The members of SIX had to figure out on their own how to copy parts from a recording (Green, 2002, 2008) as a group, and thus a horizontal type of leadership began to emerge, in which Kevin took the lead as one who could hear harmonies, representing his area of strength (Duncan, 2013; Taylor, 2010). Throughout their boyhood, SIX showed strong inclinations towards self-guided, horizontal leadership, but with the ability to also respond well to vertical leadership.
Prior to the preparations for the International Barbershop Quartet Competition in 1984, SIX experienced vertical leadership when they sought coaching from a team of professional barbershop coaches, who helped them to greatly improve their international ranking among other competing quartets. During this time, SIX also exhibited evidence of continued horizontal leadership, as they often showed musical advancement from one coaching session to the next on both new and previously rehearsed pieces. A continued strong propensity toward horizontal leadership remained, while SIX also gained the advantage of professional vertical leadership influences.

Lastly, SIX decided to pursue a self-guided singing career, singing in the style of contemporary a cappella, wherein they created their own arrangements through a primary process of aural arranging (see Chapter 6). SIX’s use of musical thinking and knowing exemplify SIX as a group of procedural musicians who demonstrate the various aspects of formal, informal, impressionistic, and supervisory musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) in their daily musical lives. SIX developed a horizontal style of rehearsal leadership with no single, primary leader and with leadership arising from areas of strength (see Chapter 7 for detailed explanation) as a way to effectually operate in this group’s highly interactive rehearsal practice. With the foregoing background describing SIX’s propensity to horizontal leadership and their highly developed musical thinking and
knowing within the context of creating arrangements by ear, I will next examine the foundational environments that emerged from the data, which seem to promote SIX’s aural arranging process.
In this chapter, I examine the foundational environments that I observed in SIX’s musical practice of aural arranging. Initially, I explain the environmental context of SIX’s rehearsals, aspects of their expression, and collective influence on the process of aural arranging. Next, I label these environments, discussing their influence individually. Although I have included examples from rehearsal observations and personal interviews throughout each section of this chapter exemplifying aspects of the existence of these environments, full support of these environments is often not evident until the end of each main section. At the end of each section, I describe the cumulative effect of each of these environments.

The practice of aural arranging encompasses a multifaceted, goal-oriented rehearsal process that includes a synthesis of creative, musical, and leadership activities. I observed an overall environment of immense interactive complexity during this process, characterized by a sense of comfort, ease, mutual support, and empowerment between and among members. The presence of these environments appeared to encourage the efficient functioning of the process of aural arranging. In essence, this
chapter is about the environments that support the creation of viable aural arranging.

**Interactive Environmental Context**

Within SIX’s rehearsals, there appeared to be three operational and highly interactive environments that enabled SIX to move through various creative activities, share leadership, utilize musical knowledge, and do so with a sense of mutual support that promoted this group’s longevity and consistently produced excellent final products—creative a cappella arrangements. These interactive environments appeared to provide the context within which SIX’s aural arrangement rehearsals operate.

Collectively, these interactive environments supported an exceptional flexibility and adaptability within and between the group members (Goleman, 2000; Kerchmar, 2009; Szollose, 2011). SIX’s leadership activity displayed a lack of centralized control (Shea & Gunther, 2008), which in fact heightened the sense of interactivity, one of the key features of SIX’s aural arranging process. In my observations, leadership came from one individual, and then shifted to another. These shifts occurred repeatedly without a sense of the power struggle one might associate with leadership change (Taylor, 2010). This is exemplified during the beginning of SIX’s process of woodshedding a
newly set melody put to the lyrics “Happy Christmas to all and to all a
good night,” the last line in the famous Christmas poem, “T’was the Night
Before Christmas.” In the following rehearsal observation, Curtis, Kevin,
and Jak demonstrate flexible and shifting leadership roles.

Curtis: Let’s woodshed it.

[Each member of the group demonstrates preparation for this process.
Jak goes from reclining to a full sitting up position, while Barry
and Curtis, the high voices, begin working out where their parts
might be. Kevin and Lynn, as the middle voices, also confer.
Owen, sitting on his own, also sits to the front of his chair
indicating attention to this upcoming process.]

Kevin: [After a few moments, Kevin begins arpeggiating an A minor triad
as the first viable chord for harmonizing this melody the group
has already decided should be in G major.]

Barry: Are we going to have the melody up on the top?

Curtis: Let’s just you and me double up on the top.

Barry: Okay, so the melody hangs out on the top.

[As Kevin continues to arpeggiate an A minor triad, the group begins
singing and filling in harmonies by ear.]

Jak: [After two rough attempts, Jak suggests:] How about we all start
on the same unison note and then go down? [Jak demonstrates
by starting on La, the first note of the melody, and moving in
scale wise motion down into his bass part and resolving into an
implied V I cadence.]

[SIX then tries a third attempt using Jak’s suggestion and the harmonies
largely solidify into a progression that sounds good and has solid
functionality]. (rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)

The example above illustrates how the brothers moved between
leadership actions through the comments and questions that guided this
part of the rehearsal. Each of the brothers who took leadership did so in
their areas of strength: Curtis in his strength regarding melodic
construction and placement, Kevin in his area of strength related to
harmonic understanding, and Jak in his understanding of the
construction of viable bass lines with strong implied harmonic progressions. I began to realize this represented a fluid leadership style, but first I wanted to better understand the environments within which it operated.

Identifying the Environments

The first environment (which I later came to understand as foundational to the process) appeared to me to be a given because it encompassed SIX’s process of aural arranging as the primary rehearsal practice. I identified this first environment, based upon the practice of aural arranging, as the environment of complex challenges.

SIX depends upon the arrangement of several new musical pieces every year to keep live performances exciting; this choice for their primary rehearsal practice represents a constant, all-inclusive environment. This environment of aural arranging demonstrates high interactivity, and possesses a host of complex, interconnected, and ever-changing challenges (Kosta, 2012; Szollose, 2011). These complex and interconnected challenges share many of the same characteristics required for creating a written arrangement (Callahan, 2000; Sharon & Bell, 2012). Such challenges are made ever changing by the aural nature of SIX’s arranging, wherein every arranging decision put into practice by the group affects all future decisions. For SIX, these challenges include,
but are not limited to, the aural lifting of stylistic traits and harmonic structure, deciding which instrumentals to include and which to leave out of the arrangement, what sounds and syllables to use, how to build dynamics with voices only, and what parts of the formal structure of a song to keep and what parts should be left out or abbreviated.

The remaining two environments run concurrently, appear to be of equal importance, are the result of deliberate actions on the part of SIX, and seem to live underneath the umbrella of the environment of complex challenges (the primary practice of aural arranging). One environment emerges from the concept of not preventing or not discouraging. This environment is not a given, as it must be created by the members of SIX. During the practice of aural arranging, although there is a creative drive that may cause conflict, the members of SIX intentionally create a sense of comfort and ease among themselves that allows a climate of free expression. This environment promotes feelings of safety within creative activity (Szollose, 2011); therefore, this environment is the environment of safety.

The other seemingly equal environment appears to be an active environment based on the concepts of enabling and encouraging, with the end result of empowerment of group members to act (Kerchmar, 2009). This environment is also not a given, as it must be created by group members. During the process of aural arranging, group members
must not only feel safe to be active, but also empowered to act in their respective areas of strength, creativity, and knowledge; therefore, this last identified environment is the *environment of empowerment*. The presence of complex challenges, safety, and empowerment combined to favorably influence the goal-oriented activity found in aural arranging, as the following excerpt illustrates. This rehearsal segment comes from my first rehearsal observation involving preparations for SIX’s regular show in 2010.

Curtis: [Turns to the camera and speaks to the video camera.] We’re working on a song that’s by the Black Eyed Peas called “I Gotta Feeling.” We just found some versions on the internet and listened to them yesterday. We’re continuing where we left off.

Kevin: [Starts to play a recording from YouTube on his computer. He then speaks to Jak.] Can you hear the bass on this?

Jak: [Leaning forward and shaking his head yes, Jak starts singing the bass line with the recording on bah, bah, bah syllables.]

Curtis: See, this is in G. This version is in G, see. [As he plays a G on his pitch pipe.]

Kevin: [The recording continues to play and gets to a point beyond the introduction.] Okay, so there are three parts, then four parts.

Curtis: [Speaking to Lynn, the chosen lead for this piece.] Uh, do you prefer up an octave, cause this one’s in G?

Kevin: I like it better in G.

Lynn: [Upon the first entrance of the lead, Lynn asks,] What’s that first note again?

Kevin: [Searches for the first note.]

Curtis: [Comes in immediately after Kevin’s attempt and sings the opening phrase of the lead, dwelling on the first note in answer to Lynn’s question.]

Kevin: [As the recording continues through the main lead verse, rap section, and high lead verse, there is focused listening with a mix of occasional speaking and light laughter as each member occasionally inserts opinions about parts, general groove of the piece, lyrics, and sections to be left out or included]. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)
In the next three sections of this chapter, I illustrate these three environments—environment of complex challenges, environment of safety, and environment of empowerment—as they function within the context of SIX’s aural arranging, from which fluid leadership emerges.

The Environment of Complex Challenges

The environment of complex challenges in this analysis emerges from the process of aural arranging which SIX undertakes. Specifically, aural arranging involves aural, group vocal arranging. As a group of self-described ear musicians, SIX represents an optimal group for studying this aspect of aural, or by ear, a cappella arranging.

The constituent parts of the environment of complex challenges may be identified as multiple problems, multiple solutions, and multiple possible outcomes. These constituent parts paint a backdrop against which fluid leadership is encouraged and can operate (Kerchmar, 2009; Kosta, 2012). In SIX’s environment of complex challenges (aural arranging), the main problem is an ongoing need for new a cappella cover arrangements; the solution is represented by arrangements of new a cappella covers, and the multiple outcomes are the multitude of different ways an arranged new a cappella cover could turn out. The outcome of SIX’s final product, an aural arrangement, remains unknown until that arrangement is finished, learned, and memorized, ready for the addition
of choreography. The environment of aural arranging thus presents multiple problems requiring multiple solutions with multiple possible outcomes. The existence of multiple problems and solutions finds similarity in the field of human resources leadership training, wherein leadership trainers teach to prepare for a work environment that presents complex challenges with no single cause and therefore no single solution (Kosta, 2012). Likewise, trainers further train to deal with uncertain futures, which make precise prediction of outcome unlikely (Kosta, 2012). Though different in context and activity, the world of human resources leadership training mirrors the uncertain and unpredictable nature of a final aural arrangement.

Once SIX decides to incorporate a new song within their live show, they must go through a process of discussion, listening, and singing, or in other words, the process of aural arranging. This process works out the final product, a performable a cappella cover arrangement. Descriptions of predominant organizational environments that respond well to fluid leadership in the modern work place portray crisis (Goleman, 2000; Kerchmar, 2009), upheaval (Taylor, 2010), volatility (Kosta, 2012), and chaos (Shea & Gunther, 2008). Though the practice of aural arranging cannot be described with these somewhat dire sounding attributes, the attribute of rapid change (Kosta, 2012; Szollose, 2011) does fit. The following list of problems that SIX must address in the
process of aural arranging illustrates this environment of complex challenges, an environment filled with multiple problems, needing multiple solutions, and having multiple possible outcomes.

1. SIX must determine show position, show function, song form, and song length for each arranged piece. Each of these decisions affects the others.

2. SIX must determine a model recording or recordings for each piece to be arranged. Sometimes the chosen model recording does not translate well into an a cappella arrangement, requiring the search for another version.

3. SIX must decide which singers in the group should sing lead, bass, vocal percussion, and background vocals. Sometimes this is a straightforward issue and sometimes these decisions occur during rehearsal.

4. SIX must decide how each part should sound, including pitches, lyrics, rhythms, special effects, and so forth, in an effort to discern the musical essence of a piece that will make it recognizable to an audience. This must be determined for the lead, bass, vocal percussion, and background vocals. Although the bass and the lead can generally lift their parts directly from the model recording, the background vocals must work out their parts as a group. The overall finished arrangement determines the shape of the vocal percussion part.

5. Once an arrangement is complete, SIX must determine the need for transitional material or another strategy going into and out of the new arrangement. This always requires a consideration of key

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6 Show position refers to where SIX places a particular piece and show function refers to how a song functions, such as in a themed set, for comedy, for the highlighting of member skills, or as an opening or closing song. Both show position and show function affect what type of song SIX is looking for when considering incorporation of new repertoire.

7 Within SIX, Jak is the consistent bass and Owen is the consistent vocal percussionist. The other members hold less static positions, changing between lead and backup as needed; however, within every show, Jak and Owen have at least one featured lead. When this occurs, the group selects another bass, another vocal percussionist, or they create the arrangement without using these parts.
changes from one piece to another and sometimes requires additional arranging in order to bridge a gap with musical material.

From this list of problems found within the process of aural arranging, it is evident that SIX indeed addresses an environment of complex challenges each time they undertake arranging a new piece. The next sections of this chapter address each of these five problems faced in aural arranging, providing examples of both individual and collective complex challenges from the data.

**Song Function, Form, and Length**

Professional singers creating a live show cannot pick new repertoire based on personal likes and preferences alone, although these are considered. First, SIX repeats many songs and elements from year to year. Among the first decisions SIX must make when choosing new repertoire is what songs in their present show need to be replaced. Judicious selection of these changes can create the effect of a new show, without replacing everything.

Song function thus emerged as a primary aspect of deliberation when SIX reviewed possible repertoire replacement. Both Kevin and Curtis discussed SIX’s struggle when deciding to replace their current Act One show closer “Shout!” with “Kiss Him Goodbye,” with the song’s function (i.e. closing Act One) as a primary factor:
We really struggled trying to figure out what we were really gonna close with and replace “Shout!,” because “Shout!” is a strong number . . . but it’s overdone. (Kevin, interview, June 8, 2010)

“Kiss Him Goodbye,” we weren’t really sure where we were going to put that, but we had been doing this song “Shout!” (he immediately sang the opening lines) and we’ve been doing it for a long time . . . and we just felt like it was old, it’s worn out, it’s tired . . . “Kiss Him Goodbye” fit the ticket. (Curtis, interview, June 9, 2010)

Although SIX often enters the first rehearsal having a general idea of the desired form, a new song’s exact form can fluctuate during the process of aural arranging. This was certainly true in the following rehearsal excerpt of “I Gotta Feeling.” Barry discusses options affecting the formal structure of the arrangement’s instrumental introduction, while Kevin discusses using Jak as opening lead, rather than Lynn, also affecting the formal shape of the arrangement.

Barry:  Okay, well then here’s an idea. Drums in the beginning. No drums and then the chord with the drums and then in order to do as full a sound as possible, we put a hold on lead and the drums drop out. We just try to figure out how to do vocals to be rhythmic for a little bit.

Kevin:  [changing subjects] Well, my son thinks that Jak ought to sing the first “I gotta feeling.” I mean, he could, ‘cause there’s no bass yet. Just for some difference. I mean, just for the opening lines. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

Additionally, most of SIX’s arrangements are considerably shorter than the original, similar to the arrangement practice of many other contemporary a cappella groups (Callahan, 2000; Chin & Scalise, 2012; Duchan, 2007a, 2007b, 2012a; McDonald, 2012; Sharon & Bell, 2012).
Barry also reported his perception that often “People’s attention spans don’t last long enough to get through an entire song” (interview, June 8, 2010). Thus, most of the repertoire SIX arranges represents abbreviated versions of the originals.

**Model Recording – Original vs. Remake**

The model recording may often be the original version of a song, and its choice already determined before the first rehearsal. Owen and Lynn both discussed that SIX often uses “the original hits” or “original recordings” as a foundation for their aural arrangements (interviews, June 9, 2010); however, once rehearsals start, members may locate optional preferred recordings. Arrangers who create written contemporary a cappella arrangements also state this principle of finding a recording that “works” (Callahan, 2000; Sharon & Bell, 2012). The primary objective is to find a version that is most easily adaptable as an a cappella arrangement. SIX often accesses dance remix recordings. SIX found that with the substitution of voices for real instruments, a song’s sound sometimes loses dynamic power; therefore, the addition of a rhythmic background not found in the original, along with a faster tempo, helps the group rectify the absence of instruments. Both in interviews and in the initial rehearsal of “I Gotta Feeling” (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010), Barry expressed the need to use a dance
remix recording as a supplement to SIX’s model recordings, in order to add vitality to their aural arrangement (interview, June 8, 2010; July 30, 2013). Curtis indicated that if more than one artist has reached the top charts with the same song, sometimes SIX picked their favorite version instead of the original, as they did in “Kiss Him Goodbye,” wherein they used the 80s version Nylons recording rather than the 60s original Steam recording (interview, June 8, 2010).

**Part Distribution and Makeup**

In selecting who will sing what, Jak and Owen normally default to their traditional parts, the bass and vocal percussion respectively. Both Jak and Owen always have at least one featured lead in the live show and a few partial leads in song medleys, representing exceptions to their traditional roles. When these exceptions occur, the group often leaves out the associated bass and vocal percussion parts, as allowed by the arrangement. If the arrangement needs bass or percussion, someone else, often Barry, steps in to fill these voids. Most of the time, Barry, Kevin, Lynn, or Curtis performs the lead. Once the selection of lead, bass, and percussion voices has taken place, the three remaining singers decide how to cover the background parts. Left with the task of listening to the background instrumentals, duplicating the important harmonic, rhythmic, and stylistic characteristics, and thus creating a backdrop for
everything else, these three singers must utilize interactive creativity to produce a unified background part. This is, in part, what Owen and Curtis referred to as the process of extracting the musical “essence” of a song; during the process of aural arranging, the singers decide what to use, what not to use, and overall how to make an arrangement sound authentic with voices only (interview, June 9, 2010). Usually, determination of the lead occurs before the first official rehearsal; however, this is not always the case, and once the rehearsals start, adjustments to the lead may be undertaken.

The singers chosen for the lead, bass, and vocal percussion parts can learn these somewhat independently. Both the lead and bass parts can be taken largely “as is” from the recording, without interaction with other singers; however, the three voices singing the background parts depend upon each other as well as the lead and the bass parts in order to negotiate the arrangement of these voices. The vocal percussionist, who must adapt an instrumental percussion part for voice, can listen for general feel from the recording, but must wait until most other parts of the arrangement solidify to determine the precise needs required of his part. Thus, the negotiation of specific parts in the background vocals, which come from the instrumental accompaniment parts, suggest it may be the most difficult aspect of aural arranging, as my rehearsal observations seemed to indicate (see Transitions and Full Arrangements
later in this chapter for examples). These three singers must interact intensively, demonstrating an environment of complex challenges, as they excerpt and arrange the harmonies, rhythms, syllables, and so forth in order to fill in and enliven the musical texture. The complex challenges faced by these three background singers and the other singers in the group will be illustrated in the next two chapter sections.

**Transitions**

The last individual task involved in SIX’s environment of complex challenges is the arranging of transitional materials that enable SIX to move smoothly and effectively from one musical arrangement to another within the context of a live show. Although there may be talking between some numbers, talking every time would make for a choppy show; therefore, creation of some musical transitions produces the impression of a seamless performance. From my observations of many of SIX’s live shows, a musical transition most often included either a simple vocal drumbeat, which Owen produces alone, or a sequence of repeated chords. These transitions sometimes cover physical motion between pieces or may create a transition to a new key or tempo. Sometimes, no transition is needed, as SIX simply moves from one to piece to another.

**Creation background.** In January of 2010, SIX arranged two new additions to the beginning of their show. The first of these was the
vocally produced “THX” chord progression. “THX” is the high-fidelity audio/visual reproduction standard found in movie theatres across the country (Crabtree, 2002). SIX thought it would be interesting to duplicate this at the opening of their show with voices only and an accompanying video image similar to that of “THX,” but spelling SIX. Second, SIX was replacing the first song of the show with “I Gotta Feeling” by the Black Eyed Peas. “THX” ends with voices on three octaves of Eb, from Eb2–Eb5, and “I Gotta Feeling” started on a G major triad. Rather than go directly from one to another, SIX decided to sing a rhythmic chord progression between the two to allow time between the “THX” sound test and the start of the opening song. The outcome of this activity was not entirely known until SIX successfully completed their aural arrangement. The following series of rehearsal observations illustrates SIX’s process connecting “THX” and “I Gotta Feeling” through the use of transitional material, and provides an excellent synthesized glimpse into SIX’s environment of complex challenges.

**Initial creation.** SIX began the process of determining how the group would transition from the vocally reproduced “THX” sound test show starter to the first song of the show, “I Gotta Feeling.” Barry had discovered a dance remix recording of “I Gotta Feeling” that included rhythmic chords between sung sections. While Kevin discussed the possible use of a 9th in the G major chord, the opening chord of “I Gotta
Feeling,” Barry began to play this recording, forwarding immediately to these rhythmic chords. Kevin and Curtis began to focus on the recording, discussing its possibilities. Curtis also started arpeggiating between a C major triad in root position and a G major triad in first inversion, back and forth. These chords are the same as the ones played in the recording. In arpeggiating these chords, Curtis used the recording as a model to create transitional material. While the recording played, Kevin started to sing a part on the notes B and C alternately. Curtis then started singing a high G sustained on a syncopated rhythmic motive above the chord. Arpeggiations from both Kevin and Curtis continued until Barry turned the recording off. Kevin confirmed with Lynn and Curtis who should sing what (rehearsal observations, January 26, 2010).

Considering options for transitional material, using a dance remix recording as a transitional material source, determining chords to use within this recording, determining usable parts from within these chords, and dividing usable parts among specific members represents an environment of complex challenges, as the following example from the early stages of transition work between “THX” and “I Gotta Feeling” illustrates:

SIX: [Kevin starts the group singing with himself, Lynn, and Curtis alternating a G major chord in first inversion and C major chord in root position. The group sings these as sustained chords on oo as they work out what the notes should be. The chords are sung in patterns of four measures and four chords; G, C, G, C. (see}
Figure 3 for the chord rhythm.) Curtis sustains a high G as the common tone between these two chords, Kevin alternates between the notes B and C, and Lynn sings D and E. Kevin, with his hands only, indicates to Lynn to move with him, for Curtis to remain on G, and Barry to join and sing a sustained G an octave below Curtis. Owen then fades in with a quiet, basic drumbeat with Jak following soon after, coming in to provide a G at the bottom of the bass clef. (rehearsal observation, January 26, 2010)

Although discussed prior to singing, the 9th was not included in the G major triad in this early attempt:

![Figure 3. Transition chords and rhythm.]

**THX connects to transition.** SIX, with the help of performance colleague Doug Lowe, replicated the “THX” sound test chord progression. “THX” consists of two electronically produced, nontraditional chords. These chords start with a group of three clustered pitches, related by a minor second and a tritone from the bottom pitch. This initial chord is connected to the second chord by a distinctive glissando in which the lowest note slides upward and the highest note slides downward, ending in four unison pitches spanning three octaves.

SIX needed to work out the “THX” chords and the progression from one to another in order to move into the transitional chords, and finally lead into “I Gotta Feeling.” SIX exhibited the ability to conquer this environment of complex challenges in part because the group is willing to
seek outside help if a challenge merits it. The “THX” chord progression, created from nontraditional chords, presented such a challenge; therefore, according to Jak (interview, June 9, 2010), SIX sought outside help from Doug Lowe, and in one session received the help they needed to vocally reproduce the “THX” sound test.


Curtis: [Curtis plays the final destination note for the “THX” chord progression on his pitch pipe]. (rehearsal observation, January 26, 2010)

The octave Eb that represented the final destination note for the “THX” chord progression is not in the opening chord, whose notes are a tritone, major third, and perfect 4th from this final pitch. Playing a note unrelated to the opening chord as the starting pitch is unusual, but in this nontraditional progression, represented the best option. Because the given pitch was not part of the opening chord and because the distinctive connecting glissando between the two chords required that the lowest voiced singers start on the highest pitch and the highest voiced singers start on the lowest pitch, moving in contrary motion to the final chord, there was initially some confusion finding individual starting pitches. After some searching and with Kevin’s help, everyone found the correct pitches:
SIX: [SIX spontaneously starts singing the "THX" series of sliding pitch changes and ending on three octaves of Eb. After the group has sustained the Eb for some time, Lynn indicates by arm gesture that Owen needs to start the percussion and then the group stops singing.]

Barry: We can't hold it out much longer than that. [pause]
Kevin: [to Barry] We need a metronome beat.
Barry: [Barry, almost immediately, starts a metronome beat on his computer.]
Owen: [Starts a percussion beat on the metronome’s tempo.]
Kevin: Let's get the pitch.
Curtis: [Plays a G on his pitch pipe.]
Owen: [Continues the beat while the group starts to sing.]
SIX: [SIX sings the first of the transition chords on “oo” using a G major triad with the 9th now clearly present. Curtis slides up to a high G with the full group going to an “ah.” With the presence of vocal percussion underneath this chord, SIX starts a syncopated rhythmic pattern, alternating between a G major chord in first inversion and a C major chord in root position. The group sings this progression only twice before stopping]. (rehearsal observation, January 26, 2010)

Transition connects to I Gotta Feeling.

SIX: [SIX sings the transition chords on a sustained “oo” and then moves to a syncopated “na, na, na, na, na.” They falter going into the “I Gotta Feeling” instrumental introduction. They start again, this time making it successfully through the “oo’s” and “na-na’s,” transitioning into “I Gotta Feeling” by singing a unison “Tonight’s gonna be a good night,” continuing through this piece. SIX then sings the opening chorus with Jak on lead, repeats the chorus with Lynn on lead, moves to the rap section with Kevin on lead, and ends on the Let’s Do It closing. An ineffective portamento brings them to the repeat of the opening choruses. Barry eventually drops out and Curtis sings both the chorus descant and the lead part in octaves intermittently. The piece ends, with Lynn comically singing the last lines of the lead like a classical singer]. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

During the previous rehearsal segments, SIX had determined two things: first, the exact transition chords, and second, how they would build these chords dynamically as an effective transition tool. The exact
timing of the transition chords into the transition ending, “tonight’s gonna be a good night,” leading into “I gotta feeling,” was a complex challenge requiring each individual to understand and feel the rhythm and harmonic changes as a group. With a notated score, one finds security in the definitive nature of the notated music; however, in aural arranging, no concrete written version stands as the existing model for what needs to happen. This is another way in which aural arranging represents an environment of complex challenges.

**THX and I Gotta Feeling connected.**

SIX: [SIX sings “THX” going from the opening dissonant chord to octave Ebs. The glissando still needs work in sliding each at the proper speed together. Curtis gives a G for the transition and the group sings a G major triad with an added 9th. After an “oo” and then “na, na, na, na, na” singing of the transition chords, SIX ends with Curtis singing a high lead on the lyrics "Tonight’s gonna be a good night." They then go to the introduction of “I Gotta Feeling,” singing the opening instrumental section on “dah.” Jak starts the lead on the first hearing of the chorus with Lynn singing lead on the second hearing of the chorus. Curtis adds a high descant for the first half of this chorus and does octaves with Lynn during the second half. The group does the chorus again on ah vocals, but Lynn drops out on lead until resuming about half way through. Kevin comes in with the rap section with the background vocals singing “do do doot” in an active, rhythmic rendering. The group stops as Jak addresses some issues]. (rehearsal observation, January 27, 2010)

In the last rehearsal segment, illustrating their process of transition development, SIX has already largely worked out “THX,” the transition, and “I Gotta Feeling.” Each of these individually represents a
set of complex challenges; however, once each constituent part is created, the task of fitting them together to create a seamless show segment reveals a complex challenge of its own. “I Gotta Feeling” had been refined in dedicated rehearsals during the previous week. “THX” evidenced work outside of my observations, but was refined the day before this last rehearsal observation; also, on the day before this particular observation, SIX appeared to initiate and refine the transition. In the rehearsal segment discussed above, SIX approached completion, as their work on the individual constituent parts has paid off, and the melding of these parts appears complete. Thus, the preceding four rehearsal segments illustrate the environment of complex challenges—a multiple step process that needs constant reevaluation as SIX undergoes aspects of aural arranging.

**Full Arrangements**

Though a glimpse into the creation of a transition illustrated an environment of complex challenges, the creation of a full a cappella arrangement presents many more challenges and entails an outcome that is even more unknown until completion (Kosta, 2012; Shea & Gunther, 2008). The choices and direction of a given musical arrangement cannot be entirely known in advance when created through the practice of aural arranging. This is because no one person makes all
of the arrangement decisions. Within SIX, individuals may have opinions and influence, but the outcome results from input provided by all members of the group.

In my observations of SIX, the process of arranging, learning, and memorizing took place simultaneously, as Green also observed with popular musicians who seemed to make music as an integrated whole (Green, 2002, 2008). One benefit of this process is that often after only one rehearsal, all that had been learned and arranged during that rehearsal was also memorized. Woody (2012) also found that playing by ear, which is akin to what SIX does, was beneficial to performance memory among other things.

Although I witnessed SIX create several complete aural cover arrangements within the space of a single rehearsal, “Carry on Wayward Son” presented extra challenges in terms of creating an a cappella arrangement. Even though in the original recording, the opening of this piece exhibits a beautiful a cappella chorus, the riff and the bridge sections include thick orchestration played with heavy electric bass, pads, and guitars; therefore, this piece requires a multitude of arrangement decisions representative of an environment of complex challenges, as the following example illustrates:

Kevin: Here we go, 5, 6, 7.
SIX: [SIX begins singing the opening a cappella chorus of this piece, demonstrating a solid performance, with Barry on the lead,
followed by a less solid bass led instrumental riff section. The riff section exhibits a strong steady bass and vocal percussion line sung by Jak and Owen respectively. Kevin, Curtis, Lynn, and Barry struggle in pitch and syncopated rhythms throughout the accompanying instrumental pad parts. The bridge, also led by a strong, steady bass and vocal percussion, presents a more solidified background vocal part with rhythms that accentuate the metrical accents, though pitches still need work. The portamento going into the chorus is well coordinated and strong. Barry’s lead in the verses is strong, but the arpeggiated chords, imitating an arpeggiated piano accompaniment, are not solid. Kevin begins playing these on his guitar, improving the group’s performance. During the second verse, the arpeggiated accompaniment exhibited greater solidity. The group’s return to the a cappella chorus is as strong as before. Barry goes straight into the coda, without a return to the riff. The arrangement almost falls apart until the final dramatic chords, which are sung well. The song fades out without a conclusive ending. (rehearsal observation, January 20, 2010)

Among the challenges SIX undertook for this arrangement was deciding what elements were characteristically essential and which ones were not. Curtis and Owen referred to this process as taking the musical essence from a piece.

We look at a piece of music, we listen to it, and then we just kind of hear it, and just try to capture . . . the essence, the musical essence of that song. (Curtis, interview, June 9, 2010)

Now take a song like “Carry on My Wayward Son” for example, by the group Kansas. Now there are a lot of different guitar parts to that song and I’m not sure if there are [other instruments] . . . but for that as an example, it seemed like a difficult challenge to take the essence . . . the instrumental basis of the song and kind of whittle it down a little bit, and make it fit what we do. (Owen, interview, June 9, 2010)

“Carry on Wayward Son” possessed distinctive bass riffs in both the riff and the bridge sections. The bass riffs represented part of what
SIX considered to be the musical essence of these instrumental sections; therefore, the final aural arrangement utilized these bass riffs. SIX then carefully voiced the syncopated and metrical pad chords, another part of the musical essence needed to provide harmonic and counter rhythmic structure to the bass and percussion parts. In the original recording, the riff and bridge sections made use of extremely high-pitched electric guitar solos. The group removed most of these, with the exception of a couple of licks that Curtis decided would heighten SIX’s a cappella arrangement. In addition, the group decided to emulate the arpeggiated piano accompaniment in the verses. This first rehearsal did not accomplish the incorporation and refinement of all these essential aspects; however, this was accomplished within a few more sessions.

In summary, the environment of complex challenges entails the multitude of tasks involved in the process of aural arranging. Among these are selection of new songs dependent upon function and placement, selection of model recordings most viable as aural arrangement sources, assignment of individuals to specific parts, the working out of notes, rhythms, lyrics, and syllables for each of these parts, and the creation of transitional material in and out of given pieces dependent upon needs within the show. Each of these decisions affects the others, creating an environment that exhibits challenges with no single cause, no single solution, and therefore, a final outcome (a fully
formed a cappella arrangement) that cannot be completely known until it is performance ready (Kosta, 2012).

**The Environment of Safety**

The environment of safety that emerged from the data promotes a group feeling of comfort, ease, and freedom. This environment allows individuals within a group to act naturally and to feel free to be active during goal-oriented activity without negative consequences (Szollose, 2011). This environment is characterized by an absence of the behaviors that discourage others from active participation. Because this environment specifically represents an absence of behaviors, the evidence I will present for this environment is indirect. The environment of safety within SIX’s rehearsals entails an overall sense of freedom, observed in members of SIX as they ask questions, make suggestions, express opinions, reject ideas, and exert individual leadership without inhibition. The presence of questions, suggestions, opinions, ability to reject, and an overall freedom to act, all indirectly support an environment of safety. If the environment were not safe, these things would not happen so freely. Within the environment of safety, characteristics of *fluid leadership* are much more likely to emerge (Szollose, 2001).
Questions

During the process of aural arranging, members appeared comfortable asking questions for confirmation, information, opinions, and help throughout the rehearsal process. Asking questions is not only indicative of the environment of safety, because the one asking the questions must feel secure to do so, asking questions may also impact the environment of empowerment. Asking someone a question subtly suggests that his or her opinion is valued and what he or she has to say is of interest. Thus, by sincerely asking someone a question, that person’s sense of empowerment may increase. Additionally, according to Cohen (2011), insightful questioning represents a form of leadership exertion, especially in an environment in which no one individual has all the pertinent knowledge. The next section describes the types of questions that can build the environment of safety.

For confirmation. Questions for confirmation are intended to help confirm understanding of previous instruction, activity or perception, allowing the questioner to move forward and assure he understands what is happening and are on the same page as other group members. This type of questioning occurred during the first observed rehearsal when SIX listened to “I Gotta Feeling.” When the lead melody came in, Kevin asked Curtis to confirm the first note of the melody, which Curtis promptly sang (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010). Additionally,
as SIX negotiated pitches between “THX” and “I Gotta Feeling” with no reference to a recording, Curtis brought out his pitch pipe, Kevin sang a note, guessed it to be a C, and then asked Curtis what the pitch was. Curtis indicated that Kevin’s sung note was a D instead (rehearsal observation, January 26, 2010).

**For information.** Questions for information entail asking for information that is not yet known by the questioner. Curtis stated that he had an idea for the melody to use in the line “Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night.” Having not yet been given the chance to actually sing his melody, Jak turned to Curtis and asked:

Jak: What was the melody line you were thinking of?
Curtis: Me? I was remembering . . . there was a Disney version of it. You know. [Curtis sings the lyrics “Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night” on the notes (La do, Ti la sol, La ___, Ti do, re ___, ___Do ti, Do ___). This was sung in triple meter and in syllabic fashion]. That’s the melody I’ve heard before. (rehearsal observation, Oct 14, 2009)

**For opinion.** Questions for opinion specifically entail asking questions from a desire to know what someone else would advise in a certain situation. Questions for opinion indicate the confidence the questioner has in the one being asked. An illustration of questioning for opinion occurred near the beginning of the first rehearsal on “I Gotta Feeling,” when Barry asked Kevin’s opinion about what instrumental might be ideal for a specific section of this piece.
Barry: [Speaking directly to Kevin] Am I a pad or a hit? Or should I start out as a hit and then go into a pad? (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

For help. Questions for help specifically pertain to a need on the part of the questioner for guidance and/or instruction. A question for help occurred in the first rehearsal of “I Gotta Feeling,” when Curtis asked,

Curtis: When do we go back to the two-note chord, after what? . . .
Kevin: After the rap. [Sings; "let's break it down" and starts singing the beginning "dah, dah, dah, dah"]). (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

Questions of confirmation, information, opinion, and help are each indirectly indicative of an environment of safety. An environment that feels safe enough for individuals to ask pertinent questions encourages this very important form of solution seeking. Questions make up a vital part of SIX’s rehearsal process and contribute greatly to the interactive nature of aural arranging. An environment of safety creates, at least in part, the relational climate that encourages group members to ask questions of one another.

Suggestions, Opinions, and Rejection

In SIX’s rehearsals, there appeared to exist a high degree of freedom to present ideas verbally and demonstrate ideas musically. When ideas were presented, there was neither an air of ego nor an
expectation that the idea would be adopted. In fact, it was not uncommon for an idea to be met with silence and initially rejected, adopted only later (sometimes in a different rehearsal) into the arrangement without comment. In the context of musical rehearsal, ideas presented and demonstrated had a better chance for inclusion in the final arrangement. These had a higher likelihood of usage possibly because they were often better thought out—the individual proposing the idea already had a strong concept of how it would be enacted.

**Suggestion, acceptance, and dissenting opinions.** During the following example of the woodshedding process for “Happy Christmas to All,” Jak presented and then demonstrated an arrangement idea about how to start this piece. He was met with immediate acceptance and the idea became part of the final arrangement. On a different arrangement issue, Owen also felt free to voice an opinion in opposition to the placement of the melody. Both Curtis and Barry countered Owen’s idea. These suggestions and opinions are interwoven within the discussion and demonstrate safety to present ideas and opinions, both for and against.

Jak:  How about we all start on the same unison note and then go down.
Barry:  Peel off?
Jak:  [Jak demonstrates by starting on La, the first note of the melody, and moving in scale wise motion down into his bass part and resolving into an implied V-I cadence.]
Barry:  Isn’t that high?
Jak: [Sings the high note again.] I can sing it and I'm the bass. [Jak inflects his voice low on the last word.]
Owen: I don't like the melody up . . . I don't like the melody up that high.
Jak: [Demonstrates again.]
Owen: It's . . . I mean, it's like uh . . . like singing like the Vienna Boys Choir.
Curtis: Alright.
Barry: Well, the Beach Boys sang up this high
Curtis: I like it up this high. (rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)

**Rejection then acceptance.** Barry never seemed reluctant to give a suggestion, regardless of the outcome. He had found a dance remix recording of “I Gotta Feeling” in which the instrumental background was punctuated with chords and percussion, adding to the rhythmic background of the accompaniment. Barry, Kevin, and Curtis listened intently. Speaking over the recording, Barry stated, “The rhythm structure will drag a number of people in.” Curtis then sang the top part of the chord on a neutral sustained vowel, Kevin began indicating off beats with his hands, and Barry then took the dominant pitch on a syncopated off beat rhythm.

Having created a trio, Barry, Kevin, and Curtis continued singing a three part rendition of these rhythmic chords: Curtis on a sustained neutral vowel and Barry and Kevin on “nnah, nnah, nnah,” emphasizing the off beats. This had the effect of a synthesizer-like sound, rather than sounding purely vocal.

Barry: It's just a subtle thing but it adds to the structure of the rhythm . . . But you still need to keep some rhythm going. [Barry demonstrates what was done earlier to add rhythm to otherwise sustained parts.]
Kevin: That just sounds hokey to me. [Barry stops]
Barry: Okay, well then here’s an idea. Drums in the beginning, no drums, and then the chord with the drums, and then in order to do as full a sound as possible we put a hold on lead and the drums drop out. We just try to figure out how to do vocals to be rhythmic for a little bit. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

Although Kevin flatly rejected Barry’s suggestion to add rhythm into the a cappella texture, later during that same rehearsal, Kevin made a similar suggestion that more rhythm is needed.

Kevin: [to Curtis] That’s what’s in it. [to Barry and Lynn] You’ve got to figure something with him, not just an “ah.” You can’t keep pulling an “ah,” you got to do a rhythmic thing there that’s going to add more stuff. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Exerting Leadership**

Perhaps the most important aspect of an environment of safety is that group members feel at ease to exert individual leadership. For this to occur, all group members must avoid feelings of possessiveness, ownership, and ego when assuming leadership roles. Demonstration of these attitudes among any members of a group negatively affects the freedom to exert leadership for all members (Duncan, 2013; Kerchmar, 2009). The members of SIX, those who often find themselves in leadership and those who rarely take the lead, were each observed exerting individual leadership at one point or another during aural arranging. I observed smooth transitions from one leader to another during the aural arranging process. This ability for each member to feel
capable of exerting leadership fuels SIX’s aural arranging process. Though I will not address all aspects of leadership at this time (see Chapters 6 and 7 for a full account of SIX’s leadership), leadership in the rehearsal segments is defined as any activity that directly or indirectly moves the group towards completion of the stated task or maintains a healthy social-emotional climate needed for the group to continue to function (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Chapter 6). Although these appear to be simple yet highly interactive set activities, they demonstrate effectiveness to move a group toward the fulfillment of its goal-oriented activity while maintaining healthy group relationships (Bales, 1950; Bales & Slater, 1955).

In “Happy Christmas to All,” the process of agreeing on a melody, determining melodic placement in the harmony, and deciding in what key the melody should be sung took only 7 minutes. The last 45 seconds, shown in the proceeding excerpt, showed several group members, Jak, Curtis, Barry, and Kevin, in acts of leadership as they offered direction, information, or opinion.

Kevin: Kay so, what are we doing to this music piece here?
Jak: [Sings; “Happy Christmas to All” phrase to Curtis’s melody.]
   “Happy Christmas to all” ( __ La do | Ti la sol | La _____)
Curtis: Let’s see. Go into that key [plays C#] or that key [plays C]? [Curtis hums his melody, then fading in words by the phrase end. He continues singing while Barry speaks.]
Barry: Higher keys sound better.
Curtis: [continues exploring keys and finally plays an Eb.] That’s an Eb [continues singing, now in the key of Eb]
Barry: Don’t we do a lot of songs in Eb?
Jak: Why don't we try to peel off "and to all, and to all, and to all a
good ___ night _____. [Speaks lines, but gestures with hands showing the
dramatic effect the "peel off" would have.]

Owen: So . . .

Curtis: If we're going to put the melody in the tenor voice then we should
probably do it in the key of G, but if we put it in the second tenor
voice then probably put it in C or D.

Owen: So we all sing "Happy Christmas to all ___" then "and to all, and
to all, and to all" three times?

Jak: Yeah. [5 second pause]

Kevin: Let's sing the melody first, so we know the melody.

Curtis: [plays middle C; sings melody starting on C, then drops a minor
third when he realizes that his melody starts on La of the key.
[Owen, Barry, and Jak have a general discussion about the key.]

Kevin: Those are gonna be the top voices? If so everything's gonna be too
low.

Curtis: I know . . . well . . .

Owen: Well, we putting the melody right in the middle there?

Barry: The lower the melody the less dynamic the song sounds.

Curtis: [plays a G and sings: "Happy Christmas to all and to all a good
night" a fifth higher than before. He stops singing and states,]
Let's put it up there then.

Barry: [sings "Happy Christmas to All" up in the key of G]

Curtis: So, what key was that, G? [pause and no answer to his question].
(rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)

The flow of discussion exemplifies the environment of safety to ask
questions and offer direction, information, or opinions.

The Environment of Empowerment

The environment of empowerment that emerged from the data both
encourages and enables fellow group members to be active in agreed
upon goal-oriented activity. Goal-oriented activity and the corresponding
applied group leadership knowledge affect this dynamic environment, but
are not synonymous with this environment. Instead, the environment of
empowerment emerges from a climate of positive encouragement that empowers and promotes confident, forward motion toward shared aspirations and goals. The group members’ various displays of mutual support and team building further the group’s activity. Fluid leadership, within an environment of complex challenges, needs group members who feel both safe to act and empowered to do so. SIX actively demonstrates an environment of empowerment both inside and outside of rehearsals through the following attributes:

- Mutual support
- Highlighting strengths of others
- Knowing own strengths and weaknesses; Self-empowerment
- Transparency and trust during leadership

Those taking positions of leadership frequently showed a willingness to take advice, listen to other’s ideas, and therefore enacted qualities of transparency and trust (Kerchmar, 2009). These qualities have created and nurtured an environment of empowerment within SIX.

**Mutual Support**

Mutual support was evident during SIX’s aural arranging process on several occasions. Questions, opinions, and ideas were greeted with respect and sincere consideration, accompanied by a willingness to share an unusually heavy vocal load, demonstrating this mutual support.
Members of SIX often highlighted each other’s strengths either by direct encouragement or by giving behind the scenes acknowledgements. Although during rehearsals, I rarely heard members of SIX give out compliments, in the interviews, most of the brothers made specific comments complimenting other members. These compliments were often confirmed as valid when other brothers complimented the same member for the same thing, or when I witnessed the strengths mentioned during rehearsal observations. In rehearsals, rather than direct compliments, members often asked for the opinions, help, or advice of others, helping to create an environment of empowerment.

Encouragement of group members during times of problem solving demonstrated an environment of empowerment. During “Carry on Wayward Son,” Jak noticed the rehearsal bogging down and encouraged everyone to keep going. Owen, knowing that Jak was instrumental in SIX’s decision to work on this particular piece, encouraged Jak:

Jak: Let’s just keep going over this, so it will work its way out.
Owen: [This piece is] gonna be really awesome. (rehearsal observation, January 20, 2010)

Curtis and Barry sometimes carry a heavy load of high vocals. Lynn, whom I observed in rehearsal expressing his willingness to Barry to help carry some of this burden (rehearsal observation, January 21, 2010), also expressed similar sentiments in an interview:
I would say the majority [of the parts I sing], even though it’s not a vast majority, maybe a 60% majority, I’m singing in more of the high baritone range. I can’t sing low and I can’t really sing high, unless I’m using my falsetto. There are a few songs where I’ll be up there using my falsetto giving somebody else like Curtis or Barry a break. I’m actually doing it more this year it seems like and it took my voice a few months to get acclimated to that. I was feeling pretty strained for a couple of months singing higher stuff than I’m used to. Barry’s voice was under a real heavy load last year and I knew he needed some relief so it seems like I’m carrying a little more of that burden this year. I can sing high with falsetto. My voice is in decent shape, but I typically sing the lower stuff. (Lynn, interview, June 9, 2010)

**Highlighting Strengths of Others**

The following quotations from my interviews with the individual members of SIX illustrate how the recognition of others’ strengths contributes to the environment of empowerment:

Barry: [As far as] the arranging process goes, Kevin seems to have come up with a lot of the chord structuring ideas, ‘cause he seems to have a good ear for remembering the chord progressions and the chord structures.  
*************  
[Also] between Curtis and Kevin and their understanding of chords, they can usually [figure out what the parts are].  
*************  
Jak has written probably the most original songs.  
*************  
Curtis took a little bit of college, mostly music, and so he learned how to read sheet music. (interview, June 8, 2010)

Kevin: Curtis reads music probably the best and then probably myself after that. I think Lynn can read some music too.  
*************  
My older brother Barry has a very powerful voice. He likes to power sing as we call it; sing at the top of his volume and really blast it. None of the rest of us can really sing like that.  
*************  
Barry and Jak, I think, have the larger ranges [in the group].  
*************  
I think Jak is probably the best dancer by far.
I think Lynn has the best voice, the best finesse. He's really worked at it harder than any of the rest of us.

Lynn’s really good at mimicking Tom Jones and Frank Sinatra. He can take a song like that, and make it his own yet people still think, "Oh, it sounds like Tom Jones, sounds like Frank Sinatra.” None of the rest of us is really good at mimicking that way or impersonating somebody, though we all have our own way of impersonating or putting our style into a song. (interview, June 8, 2010)

Lynn: Barry gets . . . the guy’s got such a good range, he gets selected for a lot of songs. He really has the best top 40 voice in the group. (interview, July 30, 2013)

Kevin seems to have a talent for hearing the parts and pointing them out to people. I think that still carries on this day. He knows how to hear the different notes better when they’re simultaneously there. He seems to have that gift over anybody else.

[Owen has] just gotten better over the years. He has kind of developed his own style. Owen is really not even a beat boxer. He’s a vocal drummer. He makes drum sounds. (interview, June 9, 2010)

Owen: Kevin and Lynn, for example, were learning to play guitar. Lynn was actually pretty good as a drummer back then. He seemed to pick up that pretty well. So I think actually Kevin, Lynn and Jak started to dabble a little bit of playing as a band, with a couple of other guys not related. And they enjoy doing that. They were actually trying to play punk rock music. (interview June 9, 2010)

Curtis: And [the vocal percussionist for the House Jacks] actually was, you know, the foremost expert on vocal percussion, or recognized as that. And so, Owen went and spent three days with him and he came back and just blew us all away, with the improvement that he made. You know, just a few little techniques that he was shown and instantly he was 10 times better than he was.

But, [Barry] actually can sing higher in his natural voice than I can. Even though he’s a baritone. (interview June 9, 2010)
Knowing Strengths and Weaknesses: Self-empowerment

Another aspect of the environment of empowerment is that of self-empowerment. Within SIX, each member showed a strong acuity to assess their personal strengths and weaknesses accurately (Duncan, 2013). Each member told me comfortably what his strengths were, but without an egotistical attitude that can sometimes accompany such confidence. Likewise, members willingly indicated their own weaknesses, considered a form of transparency in leadership (Kerchmar, 2009). As illustrated below, group members have the knowledge to compensate for weaknesses by knowing others’ strengths. Along with this self-empowerment of honestly evaluating one’s own strengths and weaknesses, those who take leadership positions within SIX demonstrate transparency and trust. Transparency and trust go hand in hand. Members of SIX clearly see what needs accomplishing during aural arranging. They do not continue in leadership when outside the strengths of their own thinking and knowing, thus engendering trust. Trust comes from being comfortable in your own strengths and weaknesses and the willingness to let others know what these are (Duncan, 2013; Kerchmar, 2009). Thus, when a member of SIX takes the lead, other members can be confident in that member’s ability to do so.
Transparency and Trust During Leadership

During interviews, Barry and Kevin showed exceptional transparency regarding their own strengths and weaknesses:

Barry: Somehow, I got gifted with the strongest voice, with the widest range, [but] I cannot hear in real time any chords . . . I just have a difficult time with real time music trying to break it down. I would have to listen to it, slow it down, maybe even have a computer turn it into arpeggios, so I could hear the different notes, instead of hearing the full chord. (interview, June 8, 2010)

Kevin: Yeah, [the ability to hear chords and sing individual notes from those chords is] just my natural ability. Yeah, I can break down a chord, hear it. I think it’s just something, just a talent I was given. But like I said, I can’t write words. I mean, I try to come up with lyrics and they just sound clumsy and klutzy.

I think because I’m the only choleric or red in the group, I just naturally take the leadership position. I just spear head stuff and try to make stuff happen and sometimes I’m unsuccessful because either my method is no good or my idea is bad, but I try to always keep us on task.

[My normal range is] just midrange stuff. I do some lower stuff, some higher stuff. My falsetto is not what it used to be so I try to stay away from that. I have one of the smaller ranges in the group. Barry and Jak, I think, have the larger ranges. (interview, June 8, 2010)

Additionally, Kevin often took a leadership role within the group, normally in an unassuming manner. As the group member who was able to list the most strengths possessed by his brothers, as well as having

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8 Kevin’s use of the terms choleric and red refers to personality type. He conveyed to me, during his first interview, a detailed personality analysis of each member of SIX. He used the terms choleric, sanguine, melancholic, and phlegmatic, which originated with Hippocrates ca. 400 BC (Merenda, 1987). Kevin used these first terms interchangeably with the easier to remember, personality colors red, yellow, blue, and white respectively (Hartman, 1998). It was apparent that Kevin valued knowing his brothers, as they enjoyed a very close and interactive working relationship.
taken the time and effort to do an overall personality analysis of the group, Kevin demonstrated exceptional leadership ability.

Curtis also often showed a self-empowering attitude by his willingness to be open and transparent, even in the midst of group rehearsal, as demonstrated in the following example regarding Barry’s particular gift of power.

Curtis: You know, Barry could sing the lead on “Hazy Shade of Winter.” He’s got a bigger voice than I do. (rehearsal observation, January 21, 2010)

Summary of Environments:
Context of Aural Arranging and Fluid Leadership

The grounded theory analysis of SIX’s rehearsal data revealed the existence of three interactive environments that support the functioning of SIX’s fluid leadership. First is the overarching environment of complex challenges, which in this case is represented by the process of aural arranging, SIX’s predominant rehearsal process. The environment of complex challenges includes multiple challenges, multiple solutions, and an outcome that remains uncertain until achievement of the final goal. Created by the group members and promoted by avoiding behaviors that discourage, the environment of safety is marked by freedom to ask questions, present ideas, express opinions, and exert leadership. The dynamic environment of empowerment created within SIX’s rehearsals consists of mutual support, team building, knowing one’s own strengths.
and weaknesses, and leadership activities involving transparency and trust. This environment is largely promoted by activities that encourage others.

Having described SIX’s propensity for horizontal, self-governed leadership, their musical thinking and knowing in the context of procedural musicianship, and SIX’s foundational rehearsal environments of complex challenges, safety, and empowerment, I next examine SIX’s creative and leadership activities. These creative and leadership activities enable this group in the process of aural arranging. Through the explication of these activities, which are carried out through SIX’s procedural thinking and knowing and within the foundational environments, the substantive theory of aural arranging emerges.
CHAPTER 6
THE SUBSTANTIVE THEORY OF AURAL ARRANGING:
WHAT SIX DOES AND HOW SIX DOES IT

The theory of aural arranging represents the primary substantive level of theoretical development in this study. As such, it exemplifies the level of theorizing most applicable to the immediate area of research—the substantive area (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)—and applies specifically to the musical context of SIX’s process of aural arranging. Arranging, in terms of SIX’s practice of aural arranging, refers to what Duchan (2007a; 2007b; 2012a) called emulation, Callahan (2000) called transanging, and Sharon and Bell called (2012) translation. These types of a cappella arranging involve taking a piece written for a band and arranging it for a cappella voices without significant changes in melody, harmony, and feel (Callahan, 2000; Duchan, 2007a, 2007b, 2012; Sharon & Bell, 2012). According to Sharon and Bell (2012), this is the most common arranging practice when referring to the genre of contemporary a cappella, thus situating SIX’s goal in arranging as representative within the larger field of contemporary a cappella.

The substantive theory of aural arranging, grounded in the observational data and supported through the interview data, is divided into two large segments that address the first two questions that emerged from the classic grounded theory analysis I utilized to explicate my initial
research question: how does a group of six singers create intricate, professional sounding a cappella arrangements by ear, without reference to a musical score? These two questions are as follows:

1) What does the contemporary a cappella group SIX do that allows them to create, learn, and perform original a cappella cover arrangements?

2) How does the contemporary a cappella group SIX carry out what they do to create, learn, and perform original a cappella cover arrangements?

Preparatory and Creative Activities within the Process of Aural Arranging

In response to the first question—what does SIX do—two sets of activities emerged: preparatory and creative activities. I recognized the exemplary expertise of SIX who exert musical thinking and knowing (Elliott, 1995) in all aspects of their musical practice, including formal, informal, impressionistic, and supervisory musical knowledge as expert procedural musicians (Elliott, 1995; in this document see Chapter 4: Brief Description of SIX’s Musical Thinking and Knowing). However, SIX’s musical thinking and knowing is unique to them specifically. In comparison to SIX, other groups might function to a greater or lesser degree as procedural musicians, but the specific levels and types of
musical thinking and knowing will be different. As such, while some mention of SIX’s procedural musicianship is necessary, SIX’s specific expressions of musical thinking and knowing are not directly applicable to the establishment of a theory of aural arranging. This portion of the substantive theory of aural arranging, dealing specifically with “what does SIX do to create an aural arrangement?” emerges from examination of the preparatory and creative activities that activate (see Appendix D) and utilize SIX’s musical thinking and knowing.

Within these two larger categories, SIX used three main activities, under the three contextual environments, to efficiently instigate and share the groups’ musical thinking and knowing. These three main activities are interactive discussion, interactive listening, and interactive singing. A full explanation of each of these interactive categories, along with various subcategories called properties within classic grounded theory, follows.

**Preparatory Activities**

For SIX, the process of aural arranging begins with certain preparatory activities. The first of these involves choosing a piece they have heard before and would like to arrange, and then finding a model recording to be used as source material to create an aural arrangement. The choosing of a piece presupposes that the group is already familiar
with the piece and likes it, or it would not have been chosen. This is similar to the repertoire selection process found in many popular music contexts (Green, 2002; 2008; Mesbur, 2006; Snell, 2007). SIX’s process of song and model recording selection occurs through a process of interactive discussion regarding repertoire choices, with decisions reached either through a democratic vote or through a prevailing consensus (interviews, June 8 & 9, 2010). Chin and Scalise (2012) indicate that although repertoire choices may be determined in contemporary a cappella groups through a democratic or consensus process, many other methods are also found to be effective within these types of groups.

SIX’s interactive discussion involving the choice of a new piece is also guided by a set of understood criteria, some of which finds commonality with criteria reported in the existing contemporary a cappella literature. In short, these criteria revealed in the interview data and corroborated in the rehearsal observations includes selecting songs that are:

- Well-known (Paparo, 2013) and preferably sung by multiple artists (McDonald, 2012)
- Doable with vocals only (Callahan, 2000)
- Liked by group members (Paparo, 2013)
- Pop, rock, or 50’s
- Aimed at an audience demographic (McDonald, 2012; Paparo, 2013)
- Lyrically clean (McDonald, 2013)
• Functional in the show
• Mostly up-beat (Chin & Scalise, 2012)

Selection of a model recording always entails listening to possible recordings for use in aural arranging, but also utilizes verbal discussion as members talk about the advantages and disadvantages of different recordings. Often the model recording is an original artist recording, considered the definitive sound and style of a particular song. Lynn and Owen both indicated that often songs were arranged by listening to recordings of the original artists (interviews, June 9, 2010); however, if multiple artists have covered a song since the original recording, Barry stated that they would “listen to the [various] versions and pick their favorite” (interview, June 8, 2010). In contemporary a cappella, with the absence of accompaniment instruments, dance remix recordings sometimes offer an additional rhythmic feel that provides a better model for creating an aural arrangement. In SIX’s aural arrangement of U2’s “Beautiful Day” and Black Eyed Peas’ “I Gotta Feeling,” the lack of rhythmic drive in the original recordings became problematic for creating a viable aural arrangement, thus prompting SIX to select dance remix recordings to use as source material instead (Barry & Lynn, interviews, June 8 & 9, 2010; rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010).

Once a piece and a model recording are selected, SIX follows what I have termed a process of interactive, generalized listening followed by
interactive discussion regarding part distribution. Interactive, generalized listening represents activity of group members, individually and corporately, wherein enough familiarity with songs and recordings is gained in order to enter interactive discussion regarding part distribution to make choices about lead voices, bass, vocal percussion, and backup voices. Although Jak and Owen usually assume the roles of bass and vocal percussion respectively, some flexibility exists in deciding parts for particular pieces. This group maintains a certain flexibility of parts even after entering the process of putting together the arrangement, allowing adjustments of assigned parts until an arrangement is completed.

**Creative Activities**

SIX’s process of aural arranging continues with a set of *creative activities* that enable the creation of an aural contemporary a cappella arrangement. This process happens through the utilization of three specific interactive activities, which I have labeled *interactive discussion*, *interactive listening*, and *interactive singing*. Both verbal and nonverbal activities exist in each of these activities; the prominence of one or the other depends on the focus of the particular activity. Through usage of these interactive activities, SIX demonstrated an efficient and effective arrangement process.
**Interactive discussion.** SIX’s usage of interactive discussion, the most central interactive activity during the process of aural arranging, exhibited predominantly verbal communication; however, during interactive discussion, nonverbal communication also included gestures, vocal tone, physical posture, laughing, inarticulate sound, singing of notes, singing of phrases, and singing of harmonies. Some of these activities aligned with the findings of current research studies on communication within garage band rehearsals (Jaffurs, 2004, 2006).

Within aural arranging’s creative activities, interactive discussion works out the multitude of details within an aural arrangement that are pre-determined in a written arrangement. Some of these details may be the excerpted form of a piece, chords used as background harmonies, individual parts that are not explicitly played in a recording, the essential musical characteristics recognizable as familiar to an audience, and special effects that can highlight an overall arrangement. The realization of many of these details rests heavily on those singers who are doing the background vocals, because they must figure out the chords and how to emulate the background of a piece so as to make up for the lack of instrumentals. I observed these details being worked out during rehearsal observations; many of these observations were confirmed through the personal interviews.
Exemplifying interactive discussion was the adjustment of the primary lead and assignment of the rap lead during SIX’s arranging of “I Gotta Feeling.” Lynn had been chosen for lead during preparatory activities, with Jak and Owen relegated to their standard parts—bass and vocal percussion respectively. After SIX had worked on the opening chorus several times, the following interactive discussion ensued:

Kevin: Well, my son thinks that Jak ought to sing that first “I Gotta Feeling.” I mean, he could ‘cause there’s no bass yet . . . just for some difference, just for the opening lines.”

Barry: [Barry mildly supports the idea with his comment,] Keep them guessing.

SIX: [From this time forth, Jak sang the first entrance of the lead with Lynn coming in for the rest. When the rap lead came up, Kevin asks,]

Kevin: Okay, so whose gonna do that part of the song? Someone else (other than Jak or Lynn) should come in and do that part.

Lynn: Maybe someone who can shout and [still] have their voice . . . Maybe you. [He looks directly at Kevin, as Kevin accepts the rap lead]. (rehearsal observation, January, 19, 2010)

SIX’s use of interactive discussion, including some nonverbal expressions, is further exemplified in the following excerpt as SIX worked out what key would be best for a newly proposed melody, before the woodshedding of harmonies took place. This also exemplifies Curtis’s formal musical knowledge regarding keys and orientation of a melody within a given key, while Barry and Kevin demonstrate impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995).

Curtis: Let’s see. Go into that key [plays C#] or that key [plays C]? [Curtis hums his melody, then fading in words by the phrase end. He continues singing while Barry speaks.]
Barry:  Higher keys sound better.
Curtis:  [continues exploring keys and finally plays an Eb.] That’s an Eb
[continues singing, now in the key of Eb]
Barry:  Don’t we do a lot of songs in Eb? . . .
Curtis:  If we’re going to put the melody in the tenor voice then we should
probably do it in the key of G, but if we put it in the second tenor
voice then probably put it in C or D. . . .
Kevin:  Let’s sing the melody first, so we know the melody.
Curtis:  [plays middle C; sings the melody on C, then drops a minor third
when he realizes that his melody starts on the La of the key.]
[Owen, Barry, and Jak have a general discussion about the key.]
Kevin:  Those gonna be the top voices? If so, everything’s gonna be too
low. . . .
Barry:  The lower the melody is the less dynamic the sound.
Curtis:  [plays G and sings: “Happy Christmas to all and to all a good
night” a fifth higher than before. He stops singing and states,]
Let’s put it there then. (rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)9

Interactive listening. SIX’s interactive listening involves a
primary activity of listening to model recordings in order to determine the
essential musical elements for vocal reproduction within an aural
arrangement; however, discussion and singing parts along with the
recording also occur during the listening process, facilitating effective use
of model recordings as source material in the process of aural arranging.
In my rehearsal observations of SIX, three distinct levels of listening
emerged: generalized listening, focused listening, and engaged listening.
Generalized listening, discussed previously in the section on preparatory
activities, allows SIX to listen with the idea of familiarizing themselves

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9 This excerpt appears earlier as an example of SIX’s leadership exertion. Within
qualitative research, data often illustrate multiple aspects of a given phenomenon.
with a piece, toward the end of making initial decisions regarding assigned parts (interviews, June 8 & 9, 2010).

Focused and engaged listening occurs within the creative activities portion of aural arranging. Focused listening involves each member listening with focused attention to the part which was assigned to that individual, or to specific aspects of the recording of which everyone needs to take note, either for decisions to be made or to instigate within individual parts. The end goal of focused listening is for each singer to move forward in extracting his specific vocal part from the recording or giving input on overarching arrangement decisions, allowing them to adapt and arrange as needed for voices only. This activity is largely tacit, as each member takes mental notes as to what his part is doing and ways he might actively engage that voice part. During my observation of SIX’s practice of focused listening, though some light humming and singing occurred occasionally, this stage was largely filled with silence from the members while the recording played.

Engaged listening, another level of listening, occurs when focused listening has already taken place, and when the members of SIX are ready to try their parts but still want the support of the model recording; therefore, SIX engages with the recording by trying to sing their parts while the recording plays. This is much like the stage in rehearsing a traditional chorus when using the piano to play voice parts while singers
sing. As opposed to focused listening, SIX’s practice of engaged listening was not silent, but exhibited each singer trying to sing his part while the recording played, providing a type of aural support. Although in the beginning phases of interactive listening, SIX may listen to an entire piece, when intensely involved with focused or engaged listening, SIX often breaks down a recording, working with sections at a time.

Exemplifying the focused listening stage of interactive listening, I observed SIX listening to a recording of “Carry on Wayward Son” by Kansas, while Jak asked the group to focus on his suggestion about what parts of the recording to arrange and which parts of the recording to leave out of the arrangement. Some of Jak’s suggestion emphasized elimination of entire sections of the recording, while other parts of his suggestion involved eliminating only certain parts from the recording, while maintaining others. In this leadership role, Jak also exemplified both internal supervisory musical knowledge of form and guided others through his impressionistic musical knowledge of this arrangement’s structure (Elliott, 1995).

Barry: [Starts the recording at the verse 1.]
Jak: Okay. [The opening Chorus is playing.] So we’ll do this part in here. [Chorus draws to close and goes into the first riff section.] Okay. Delete button right here.
Barry: [Pauses the recording.]
Jak: No, just keep it going. Keep it going. [Barry un-pauses the recording which plays the first riff section all the way through.] We’re not going to do this. . . . [Then the first bridge section comes up.] Ignore this. Ignore all this. When we come out of “Carry on my wayward son . . . there’ll be peace when you are
done." ... [pause] And then ... we start right here. [Times "here" and a downward motion of his hand with the beginning of the second riff.] ... Without all of this crazy guitar stuff. [Then the second half of this second riff section comes in with the electric guitar solo that Jak wants to include. Jak is enthusiastically conducting this section. Kevin and Owen are saying things to Jak in support of this idea. Curtis and Lynn are quiet. Barry has his face in his hands.] ... There we go. Here's the intro right here. [Then verse 1 starts.]

Kevin: This is all easy. It's this. [Kevin plays the arpeggiated piano part on his guitar. Owen and Jak talk more, with great animation. Kevin lays down his guitar.]

[The recording continues as it goes through verse 1, verse 2, chorus, bass guitar riff, verse 3, verse 4, chorus, bass guitar riff, organ riff, bass guitar riff, lead guitar riff, bass guitar riff, pre-chorus, chorus, coda.]

Barry: [Barry stops the recording.] ... Kevin: That's about it man. We can't do more than that. Jak: We gotta, we gotta. We've just got to take those cool elements, hit on them quick and keep the song about 3:50 band; it will be a total jaw dropper. (rehearsal observation, January 20, 2010)

**Interactive singing.** SIX's practice of interactive singing occurs when information and decisions stemming from both interactive discussion and interactive listening develop enough for the members to attempt singing a section without the support of the recording. At this stage, SIX continues to arrange, work out, and refine or confirm parts without the help of a recording. This represents a strong parallel to a traditional chorus who feels confident enough to independently maintain parts, without the support of the piano playing their pitches. This move away from a recording often occurs as SIX gains confidence in individual parts and deviates enough from the form of a piece that singing with the recording is no longer possible or helpful. Deviation from the form is
normal for SIX, because their arrangements are invariably shorter than the original piece (Barry, interview, June 8, 2010). Sharon and Bell (2012) noted this tendency among a cappella groups, indicating that a cappella demands more of the listener, and therefore, consideration of listener fatigue influences arrangers to often shorten cover arrangements.

Interactive singing allows singers to negotiate parts in a real-life context. Informed trial and error singing, the first of these interactive singing activities, demonstrates aural arranging in its early stages, when SIX has exercised interactive listening to a point of readiness to attempt a cappella singing. Experimentation, as SIX tried different arrangement options, characterized the majority of my observations of trial and error singing. During this process, the singers learned what did and did not work by simply singing parts that they thought might work during interactive listening. As such, trial and error singing is unstable and time consuming, as the group cycles through ideas that work and ideas that do not, incorporating things members think could be viable. It is through trial and error singing that SIX eventually achieves an arrangement that has been thoroughly tried and tested. Within SIX, trial and error singing attempts may occur between bouts of interactive discussion and interactive listening, but may also happen in quick succession, with intense and focused interactive discussion only between attempts. Trial
and error singing often, but not always, produces results of gradual progress. This type of progression from trial and error has been identified as well in informal music learning (Green, 2002, 2008) and is indicative of reflective thinking (Elliott, 1995).

*Refinement singing*, the next stage of interactive singing, occurs once the group has settled on certain arrangement ideas, and a song or section of a song has reached a point of relative stability in pitch, tempo, rhythm, and so forth. Refinement singing addresses issues beyond basic parts and notes. This stage represented the most prolonged phase of interactive singing, during which SIX addressed issues of tuning, vowel uniformity, stylistic issues, entrances, cut offs, and the need for additional, more subtle musical properties. In the early stages of refinement singing, trial and error singing can easily take over again when any of the elements that have changed or have been adapted cause instability.

*Confirmational singing* normally comes either at the end or the beginning of a given rehearsal session and is utilized to confirm or set the arrangement or portion of an arrangement which was created earlier. During confirmational singing activity, the introduction of changes does not occur. At the end of a rehearsal, one or more members of the group often record the attempt as a memory aid for use during the next rehearsal. Before an arrangement became rock solid, confirmational
singing sometimes showed a propensity to move into either trial and error singing or refinement singing, depending on the stage of readiness of that particular song.

Immediately following SIX’s use of a recording of “I Gotta Feeling” and indicative of trial and error singing, I observed an attempt to sing a portion of this arrangement without the recording as support. Much experimentation and back and forth singing of parts was evident during these unstable first attempts. An impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) is evident in several of the singers here, including in Owen’s initial insertion of vocal percussion and Curtis’s impressions of the musical essence involving the high harmonies and how the lead line fits with the rest:

SIX: [Barry and Kevin start singing the Intro to “I Gotta Feeling,” Barry on Do and Kevin So, Fa, Mi, Fa on quarter note pulses. Jak joins within the first two measures singing Fa, down to La and back up to Do. Curtis starts singing above everyone Re Do, but stops. Then Barry stops singing while Kevin continues. Then Kevin stops while Barry and Jak continue. Kevin says something to Owen. Then both Owen and Kevin come in on vocal percussion and a sung part respectively. Curtis comes in occasionally on a high Re Do motive. Lynn eventually comes in with the lead, making it the first entrance of the chorus. Curtis periodically jumps in with melody to help Lynn in one particular spot. Curtis then starts singing 8va with Lynn’s lead part, but then sings the Re Do above everyone else again. The group stops singing as Kevin’s rap lead approaches]. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

“Carry on Wayward Son” demonstrated evidence of work that had taken place prior to my first observed rehearsal. Therefore, early in the
rehearsal process, some sections of this song quickly moved to refinement singing, demonstrating a relative stability, while other sections verged on trial and error singing. Impressionistic musical knowledge (Elliott, 1995) is again evidenced as Kevin senses what chord to arpeggiate as the most viable first chord.

Kevin:  Here it is. [Arpeggiates an Am chord on his guitar twice and then repeatedly strums the chord.] It’s a major chord, but its a minor chord, okay? [Though confusing, this piece is in a minor key, but the melody arpeggiates the relative major tonic triad]. (rehearsal observation, January, 21, 2010)

Confirmational singing was demonstrated at the end of the first rehearsal I observed. SIX had set a newly proposed melody to the lyrics, “Happy Christmas to All” and worked out harmonies by ear. Once they had established the melody and harmonies, they took a break and did other aural arranging. At the end of the rehearsal, they ran this newly arranged piece one more time, to confirm that they would remember it the next time they came together.

SIX:  [Curtis gives a G and sings “Happy Christmas to all.” Then he sings Barry’s part. Kevin arpeggiates an Am triad. Jak starts the group singing and they run through this piece flawlessly, just the way they had done the last time they sang this piece earlier in the rehearsal]. (rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)

**Summary of Preparatory and Creative Activities**

SIX’s preparatory and creative activities represent the activities that answer the first question emerging from the grounded theory
analysis of this dissertation, “What does SIX do to create an aural arrangement?” This is a set of highly interactive activities—interactive discussion, interactive listening, and interactive singing—that SIX uses to effectively and efficiently negotiate the process of aural arranging. As SIX goes through this process, these activities produce a continuous interactivity between and among one another as different arrangement needs come into focus.

Interactive discussion is the central activity of this process and as such serves to plan, organize, evaluate, and summarize as SIX works through the many interwoven challenges presented by aural arranging. Interactive listening represents involvement with the model recording as group members familiarize themselves with a recording both initially and when making arrangement decisions, as well as utilizing the recording as an actual rehearsal tool, much like a written score is used in a traditional performance group. Finally, interactive singing occurs when singers move away from the recording in order to try out established arrangement ideas without the support of a recording, thus moving toward a completed aural arrangement. These interactive activities emerged from the data as the first building block necessary for establishment of the substantive theory of aural arranging (see Appendix D).
Leadership Activities within the Process of Aural Arranging

Although I have discussed the preparatory and creative activities in answer to the first question that emerged from the classic grounded theory analysis within this project, a response for the second—how does SIX carry out what they do—reveals in what ways these activities were activated (see Appendix E). As I watched activities within SIX’s rehearsal videos, I became even more aware of the highly interactive nature of the environment I witnessed. Over time, it became apparent that what I observed were not just interactions between group members, but purposeful interactions that could easily be viewed as a style of horizontal leadership. This resonates with a prevailing school of leadership theory that considers leadership to primarily consist of social interactions and influence processes (Yukl, 1989). This leadership seemed to operate in a procedural way, much like the musical thinking and knowing I had already witnessed, and could easily be said to be leadership thinking and knowing (see Chapter 6: Brief Description of SIX’s Areas of Leadership Strength). Thus, SIX instigates its variegated set of preparatory and creative activities (what they do) through a set of four unique leadership activities (how they do it) in order to carry out what I observed as a highly efficient and effective means of musical arranging, which I have called the process of aural arranging.
According to Bales (1950), regardless of the subject matter involved in its specific goal-oriented activity, generic task related interactions and social-emotional related interactions exist between members within small groups (p. 8). The leadership activities observed within SIX’s rehearsals seemed to emulate these two large leadership expressions: task related interactions that moved the aural arrangement process forward, and social-emotional related interactions that maintained a healthy rehearsal or relational climate. The examination of these task and social-emotional interactions within SIX promised to reveal, in part, how this group functions.

Task leadership and social-emotional leadership relate to interactions of influence among individuals in a group (Bales, 1950; Burke, 1967; Burke, 2003; Lewis, 1972; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2007). Task leadership includes the procedural thinking and knowing needed for the accomplishment of goal-oriented activities or the task needs of the group. Generically these include but are not limited to the ability to guide, direct, analyze, evaluate, inform, and confirm (Bales, 1950; Stater & Bales, 1955). Task leaders within SIX advanced or accomplished the task of aural arranging. This type of leadership is emotionally neutral, although any type of task-related activity may put a strain on relationships and move a group to a negative social-emotional status.
Social-emotional leadership includes all the procedural thinking and knowing that affect the relational aspects of the group—how members feel and relate to each other—during the course of goal-oriented activity. The overall goal of social-emotional leadership is to encourage, build, and maintain positive relationships within the group through alleviating frustrations, disappointments, and hostilities, which can arise naturally from the stress of goal-oriented activity (Burke, 1967; Burke, 2003; Lewis, 1972). Social-emotional leaders within SIX are the members who soothe and heal stresses that come from the efforts of the task leaders and followers during goal-oriented activity; however, social-emotional leadership can also include disagreements, negative reactions, and group distraction while the group accepts or rejects ideas during goal-oriented activity. These ways of leadership thinking and knowing, task leadership and social-emotional leadership, function in two distinct roles in SIX’s aural arranging process and are both involved and beneficial to specific types of goal-oriented activity. Used in balance, they simultaneously help members achieve goals and hold a group together (Bales, 1950; Burke, 1967; Burke, 2003; Lewis, 1972; Slater & Bales, 1955).

The Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) involves the analysis of social interaction found in small face-to-face groups (Bales, 1950) and is an instrument capable of identifying the active use of both types of
leadership. Considering the prominence of leadership interactions within this study, the application of an analysis tool to help illuminate this phenomenon was imperative. Bales’ IPA, though demonstrating fit, needed to be adapted in order to utilize it with the rehearsal data of SIX; therefore, I created the Interactive Communication Analysis (ICA) based on Bales’ IPA for the examination of SIX’s leadership thinking and knowing (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L).

**Direct and Indirect Task Leadership**

Direct and indirect task leadership involves movement in goal-oriented activity towards completion of a stated objective (Bales, 1950; Bales & Slater, 1955) and represents categories in this grounded theory. Both types of task leadership (Lewis, 1972) involve three subdivisions, also considered properties of each category (see Figure 4 and Appendix L).
Direct task leadership. Direct task leadership in its most direct form is called *gives direction*, and entails giving directions, providing inspired impetus, taking charge, and implementing thought-out problem solving strategies. It represents the strongest leadership role an
individual can take within aural arranging, as it often precedes decisive problem solving strategies (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). Within this study, and based upon analysis using the ICA, I determined that musical activities such as calling a rehearsal to order, directing musical sections, giving out parts, providing solid musical advice, or correcting parts represent *gives direction* forms of direct task leadership. This highly assertive form of task leadership is the most indicative of strong outward leadership thinking and knowing in an individual. Several members of SIX use *gives direction* often, but seem careful not to cross the line into being too dominating.

*Gives opinion* is a moderately direct form of direct task leadership that involves giving opinions, evaluations, and analyses. The expression of feelings, beliefs, wishes, and ideas falls into this same category (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). Though this leadership strategy may appear unable to move rehearsals in the same way as *gives direction*, *gives opinion* is a way to present ideas and solutions without imposing opinions on others; therefore, *gives opinion* can help with feelings of leadership acceptance, while acknowledging expertise to address certain issues. *Gives opinion* suggests a more subtle leadership style when used in balance with *gives direction*.

*Gives information* is the least direct form of direct task leadership and can convey, repeat, clarify, and confirm information that is pertinent
to goal-oriented activity. This aspect conveys factual material needed, especially in the beginning phases of goal-oriented activity (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). *Gives information* as a form of direct task leadership is essential for progress toward a goal.

In the rehearsal data, direct task leadership was the most observed leadership activity, representing from 60% – 72% of the interactions, depending on the rehearsal set being analyzed (see Appendix M). Those who demonstrated the most direct task leadership were Kevin, Curtis, Barry, and Jak. Lynn and Owen also demonstrated this type of leadership, but much less often than the other four. A few examples of direct task leadership follow.

**Barry’s direct task leadership using online recordings.** Barry is adept with technology, demonstrated by his utilization of GrooveShark, an internet site for accessing a multitude of original and remastered recordings, as a rehearsal tool. The following rehearsal observation represents one of the many instances when Barry used GrooveShark as an effective rehearsal tool for the entire group, thereby demonstrating all three areas of direct task leadership during rehearsal of “I Gotta Feeling."

Barry: **GIVES DIRECTION** – Let me see that. [Barry takes Kevin’s computer.] Let’s go to GrooveShark. We don’t need my computer (which had pre-downloaded recordings), let’s just bring up GrooveShark (on Kevin’s computer).

[There is a span of time while Barry finds the site and a recording. Other discussion and rehearsal interactions continue.]
Barry: **GIVES INFORMATION** – [Barry finds a version of “I Gotta Feeling” that uses significant rhythmic aspects, quite different from the original recording. The full group listens with focus to this new recording of “I Gotta Feeling,” Barry comments.]

Barry: **GIVES OPINION** – The rhythm structure will drag a number of people in. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Kevin’s direct task leadership in harmonic arranging.** Kevin’s natural leadership ability is evident in nearly all observed rehearsals. His use of direct task leadership surfaces especially in rehearsals that involve arranging vocal harmony parts. Here, Kevin instructs his brothers on possible arrangement ideas while the recording of “I Gotta Feeling” plays.

Kevin: **GIVES INFORMATION** – So, it starts out with two voices, and the bass, and the lead. [The recording goes on to play the Rap, Female Lead, and the Male Lead returns, ending with “Let’s do it.” Then the recording is turned off.]

Kevin: **GIVES OPINION** – I think it’s pretty simple. [Kevin then sings one of the harmony parts in a steady quarter note rhythm on the syllable Da. (Kevin’s sung line in solfege; |Sol sol sol sol | Fa fa mi mi | Fa fa fa fa | Fa fa fa fa|)]

Kevin: **GIVES DIRECTION** – I’ll take that one, you take the lower one. [Kevin sings a G and speaks to Curtis and Barry.] One of you guys are going to have to take the high stuff and who wants to rest? (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Lynn’s direct task leadership in lyrics selection.** Lynn, though often the quietest member of SIX, exerts direct task leadership when he thinks it necessary. When Lynn *gives direction* or ideas, they are usually accepted and incorporated into the final arrangement. During the first rehearsal of “I Gotta Feeling,” a short discussion ensues to decide who should rap, with further discussion on the specific lyrics to excerpt for
use in SIX’s arrangement. Lynn exercises direct task leadership to affect both decisions.

Lynn: **GIVES OPINION** – Maybe someone who can shout and [still] have their voice. .
Lynn: **GIVES OPINION** – Maybe you. [He looks directly at Kevin, as Kevin accepts the rap lead.] [Several minutes of rehearsal pass, by which time Kevin’s wife has printed off rap lyrics and distributes them to SIX. Lynn takes the rap lyrics sheet and quickly decides what words Kevin should sing.]
Lynn: **GIVES DIRECTION** – Here’s the words you should sing. [There is a pause while Lynn finishes marking the words Kevin should sing on the lyrics sheet.]
Lynn: **GIVES DIRECTION** – Just combine all of that.
Kevin: **SHOWS AGREEMENT** – [Kevin begins reading the lyrics Lynn has marked. Kevin learns these selected lyrics, which end up in the final arrangement]. (rehearsal observation, January 20, 2010)

**Jak and Barry’s use of interactive direct task leadership.**

Jak, as the bass for the group, largely learns his part on his own; therefore, he can decide to be heavily involved in the rehearsal process or not. He proposed learning “Carry on Wayward Son” and therefore was unusually active in the rehearsal of this piece, showing ability in direct task leadership. Below, Jak shows a fully detailed concept for the form of the piece, using certain sections of the recording that sound similar, yet not quite the same. Jak, knowing his own bass part perfectly, also has studied this recording enough to know it intimately and to be able to use it much like a written score. Though Jak is the main contributor below utilizing **gives direction**, Barry also **gives information** via his function as
recording operator. This entire excerpt occurs while SIX listens to a recording.

Jak: **GIVES DIRECTION** – This is just the opening of the song. We’re just going to go into it [sings; “Once I rose up from the noise and confusion.”] Okay, play the whole song from the beginning. Listen to this structure, okay.

Barry: **GIVES INFORMATION** – [Barry starts the recording at the Verse.]

Jak: **GIVES DIRECTION** – No. [Does a “go back” motion with his hand.] Go back to the very beginning.

Barry: **GIVES INFORMATION** – [Barry quickly goes back to the beginning.] Okay. [The opening Refrain is playing.]

Jak: **GIVES DIRECTION** – So we’ll do this part in here. [Refrain draws to a close and goes into the first riff section.] Okay. Delete button right here.

Barry: **GIVES INFORMATION** – [Barry pauses the recording.]

Jak: **GIVES DIRECTION** – No, just keep it going, keep it going.

Barry: **GIVES INFORMATION** – [Barry un-pauses the recording which plays the first riff section all the way through.]

Jak: **GIVES DIRECTION** – We’re not going to do this. . . . Well, we’re doing this, but . . . [Then the first bridge section comes up.] Ignore this. Ignore all this. When we come out of “Carry on Wayward Son” . . . there’ll be peace when you are done.” . . . And then . . . we start right here. [Jak times the word “here” with a downward motion of his hand and the beginning of the second riff.] . . . Without all of this crazy guitar stuff. [Then the second half of this second Riff section comes in with the electric guitar solo that Jak wants to include. Jak enthusiastically conducts this section.]

Kevin & Owen: [**SHOWS SUPPORT** – Kevin and Owen appear to support Jak’s idea by smiling and nodding their heads. Curtis, Lynn, and Barry are quiet.] . . .

Jak: **GIVES DIRECTION** – There we go. Here’s the intro right here. [Then the Verse section starts.] We gotta, we gotta. We’ve just got to take those cool elements, hit on them quick and keep the song about 3:50 in length. It will be a total jaw dropper. . . . Hey, then maybe end the song there [Recording plays; “Don’t you cry” and sings final chords high note bah dah on a high B.] . . . and then just end the song. (rehearsal observation, January 20, 2010)

**Owen’s direct task leadership in area of rhythmic expertise.**

Owen, in his role as the vocal percussionist, is always present at rehearsals, but not always heavily involved in the beginning phases of
the rehearsal process. He often waits until the arrangement begins to solidify sufficiently before determining how he will adapt the percussion to fit SIX’s arrangement. During the arrangement of “I Gotta Feeling,” the group was still struggling with rhythmic issues for this piece, when a question arose about how they might be able to add a rhythmic aspect to their sound through the syllables they planned to use. Owen instructed the other group members on how he would add rhythm using a “t sound.” Below Owen gives direction to the entire group:

Owen: ASKS INFORMATION – Well, can you make the t t sound?
Kevin: SHOWS AGREEMENT – I’ll try. [Lynn and Curtis join in using t. Barry is using a variant ts sound. Owen speaks to Barry.]
Owen: GIVES DIRECTION – Now the percussion sound you’re making is, it’s like, stretched out. It should be like t t t t.
Kevin: GIVES DIRECTION – Just say ta ta ta.
Owen: GIVES DIRECTION – Just do a t sound.
SIX: SHOWS AGREEMENT – [Group sings; Kevin, Curtis and then Barry start with a t sound. Lynn joins in. There is significant increase in the underlying rhythmic intensity]. [rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010]

Curtis’s direct task leadership in area of melodic expertise.

Curtis has an exceptional ear for melody and is always among the first to be able to hear and accurately sing the nuances in melodic lines. Thus, when SIX had the task of setting the text “Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night” to a melody, Curtis became active in direct task leadership.

Curtis: GIVES INFORMATION – So, this is building something from scratch . . . [and] we don’t have a tune for it . . . it’s the last line of [the poem “Twas the Night Before Christmas”], “Happy
Christmas to all and to all a good night.” . . .

Owen: **GIVES INFORMATION** – Well, Curtis said there’s some kind of melody that he’s heard before that would probably [work]. . . .

Jak: **ASKS INFORMATION** – What was the melody you were thinking of?

Curtis: **ASKS INFORMATION** – Me?

Curtis: **GIVES INFORMATION** – I was remembering . . . there was a Disney version of it. You know . . . [Curtis sings: “Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night.” Lyrics are set in a syllabic fashion. 3/4 time as below:

La do | Ti la sol | La ____ | __ Ti do | Re ____ | __ Do ti | Do ____ | ||]

Curtis: **GIVES INFORMATION** – That’s the melody I’ve heard before.

(rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)

**Indirect task leadership.** Indirect task leadership refers to a leadership strategy based on asking questions. Asking questions is often an effective tool that progresses goal-oriented activity (Kerchmar, 2009). Questions can shed light on the problems of goal-oriented activity and lead to direct task leadership. Asking valuable, insightful, and pointed questions requires a great deal of thought and discernment on the part of the one asking. In musical rehearsals, questions can often reveal musical issues and speed up viable solutions and strategies.

As can be seen on the Interactive Communication Analysis continuum (see Figure 1, p. 124), in its least indirect form, asks *information*, indirect task leadership is just below neutral interactions, which is just below direct task leadership’s least direct form, *gives information*. Asks *information* entails asking for information, repetition, clarification, or confirmation of material needed to proceed with a goal-
oriented activity. *Asks information* assumes that the individual asking is on board with the goal-oriented activity and is therefore ready to move into or respond to direct task leadership. This category is entirely informational and deals with verifiable facts one can obtain through observation, experience, or research.

In its moderately indirect form, *asks opinion*, indirect task leadership first includes asking someone else’s personal beliefs, feelings, wishes, or ideas. The answers to *asks opinion* may casually reveal others’ thoughts and desires or may be in response to a perceived issue needing others’ input. *Asks opinion* asks questions to solicit the opinion, evaluation, or analysis of others in the group. Opinions, evaluations, and analyses are commonly asked of those who are most likely to have ideas that would help in revealing solutions or alternative problem solving strategies (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L).

The most indirect form of indirect task leadership, *asks direction*, indicates the need for guidance by asking for direction, impetus, or solution strategies. These often straightforward and practical questions simply ask what someone else wants to do about any of the question types: what, which, who, when, and how. Generally, the question “why” is not a concern once *asks direction* is applied. *Asks direction* is normally sought from specific group members and indicates confidence in that member’s expertise in the area of the inquiry. Requiring a humble spirit
on the part of the asker, *asks direction* has great power to move a group forward to attain task goals by unifying the group’s efforts.

In examining SIX’s rehearsal data, indirect task leadership was found to represent from 12%–18% of the interactions (see Appendix M), depending on the rehearsal segment. In the order of activity level, Kevin, Barry, Curtis, and Jak were the most active in indirect task leadership. Lynn and Owen, though less active in indirect task leadership than the others, nevertheless also skillfully used this type of task leadership. A few examples showing each member’s contribution to indirect task leadership follow.

**Barry’s use of indirect task leadership.** Barry does not hesitate to ask questions along the way to confirm information or determine his best course of action. As Barry looks for “I Gotta Feeling” in GrooveShark, he has difficulty finding the piece and so asks a pertinent question about the exact title of the song.

Barry: **ASKS INFORMATION** – “I’ve” got a feeling?
Kevin: **GIVES INFORMATION** – I . . . I, not “I’ve” gotta feeling. . . .
[Other rehearsal activity occurs and the lyrics are addressed again.]
Lynn: **ASKS INFORMATION** – I gotta?
Kevin: **GIVES INFORMATION** – It’s [he spells] G-O-T-T-A.
Barry: **SHOWS AGREEMENT** – Oh, it’s I G-O-T-T-A. That’s why it wouldn’t come up. One word, got it. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Kevin’s use of indirect task leadership.** Kevin, the most active overall in indirect task leadership, asks questions that always seem
intended to move rehearsal forward. Kevin asks about the importance of
remaining true to the exact text of “Happy Christmas to All.”

Kevin: **ASKS INFORMATION** – Merry Christmas to all and to all a good
night. Is that all we’re trying to do?

SIX: **SHOWS AGREEMENT & SHOWS DISAGREEMENT** – [Everyone but
Lynn chimes in to agree that this is the extent of the setting, but
also voice disagreement about use of “merry” over “happy.”]

Kevin: **ASKS OPINION** – [Kevin responds with a question.] So, are people
really going to care whether we say happy or merry?

SIX: **GIVES OPINION** – [The overall consensus was that people might
care, so the group kept “happy”]. (rehearsal observation, October
14, 2009)

*Lynn’s use of indirect task leadership.* Lynn’s activity in
indirect task leadership is focused and can quickly provide the answers
he needs to solidify his vocal part. Additionally, Lynn uses indirect task
leadership to discover other members’ needs. In “I Gotta Feeling,” Lynn
and Kevin sing lead and vocal background respectively during the
chorus; however, during the rap, Kevin and Lynn switch roles. Because
the chords are much the same in each section of the piece, Lynn asks a
question in order to find out what his part might be.

Lynn: **ASKS INFORMATION** – [Speaks to Kevin.] So, what is your part?
Kevin: **GIVES INFORMATION** – [Kevin sings; (on quarter note Da’s) Sol sol
sol sol | Fa fa mi mi | Fa fa fa fa]
Kevin: **GIVES OPINION** – [But if you guys [he indicates Lynn, Barry, and
Curtis] just hold the chord while I rap it. [Kevin then sings Fa and
Mi as a repeated sequence]. (rehearsal observation, January 19,
2010)

*Jak’s use of indirect task leadership.* In “Happy Christmas to
All,” Jak began the activity of determining a melody for this line of lyrics
by asking a question. Thus, he used indirect task leadership in a way that had the effect of direct task leadership. Jak’s use of this form of questioning made others think and enabled him to gain information he needed.

Jak: **ASKS OPINION** – Yeah, so “Happy Christmas to all” . . . do we want to work on it?” [This prompted immediate goal-oriented activity between Owen, Barry, Curtis, and Jak]. (rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)

**Owen’s use of indirect task leadership.** Owen did not ask questions often, but when he did, his questions brought to light pertinent issues that often had not yet been addressed.

Owen: [In “I Gotta Feeling,” Owen was the first to ask directly about the rap lyrics. His questioning precipitates Jak’s reading of these lyrics to the group.]

Owen: **ASKS INFORMATION** – The words?
Curtis: **GIVES INFORMATION** – Yeah, it’s “I Gotta Feeling, tonight’s gonna be a good night.”

Owen: **ASKS INFORMATION** – What are the other lyrics? What’s the rap part? [Jak then finds the lyrics on his phone and reads the rap lyrics to the group]. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Curtis’s use of indirect task leadership.** Curtis is the second most active member of SIX overall in indirect task leadership. During “Happy Christmas to All,” after Kevin and Curtis had presented their melodic ideas, Kevin told Barry to play a G. Curtis, knowing that the key of G meant placing his melody on top, asked a question to uncover Kevin’s opinion about the consequences of that key choice for Curtis’s melody.
Kevin:  *GIVES DIRECTION* – [Speaks to Barry.] Go to G. [Barry plays a G.]
Curtis:  *ASKS OPINION* – Is that a good key? . . . Do you want to put the melody up top like that? (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Positive and Negative Social-Emotional Leadership**

*Positive* and *negative social-emotional leadership* are at the extremes of the Interactive Communication Analysis instrument. As an extension of task leadership, they affect the emotional climate of a rehearsal. Specifically, social-emotional leadership impacts group cohesiveness, overall social-emotional health, and longevity as a functional goal-oriented group (Bales, 1950; Bales & Slater, 1955; Lewis, 1972). SIX demonstrates solid group cohesiveness and good social-emotional health, having existed as a performance group for more than 30 years.

The primary function of social-emotional leadership is to maintain an overall positive emotional dynamic as the group actively moves toward completion of goal-oriented activity; however, some aspects of social-emotional leadership, like disagreement and disapproval, are negatives that may be necessary to move a group toward the attainment of task goals, much like task leadership. A balance of positive and negative social-emotional leadership is essential for moving towards a task goal that results in a refined, polished final product. For SIX, this is an aural a cappella arrangement. As the group approaches the final product,
negative social-emotional leadership often lessens, with an increase in positive social-emotional leadership. This leaves the goal-oriented group with an overall positive impression of both the product and the process. As SIX approaches a completed aural arrangement, any tendency toward negative reactions lessens while the tendency toward the positive increases. One exception to this may be as SIX approaches the arrival of their professional choreographer; if an arrangement is not yet where it needs to be, negative social-emotional activity may occur related to approaching the final aural arrangement. For the most part, however, SIX’s ability to work through these interactions and still maintain an overall positive social-emotional climate remains high.

The descriptors positive and negative aptly describe these two types of social-emotional leadership, but need further clarification in the context of a goal-oriented group. Positive, in terms of social-emotional leadership, may refer to a neutral expression of agreement, an expression of agreement with positive emotion, or an interaction that has a positive effect on the relational climate. Interactions that promote a positive relational climate may be conducive of more efficient task leadership and therefore more efficient goal-oriented activity. Negative social-emotional leadership may refer to an expression of disagreement, an expression of disagreement with negative emotion, or an activity that has a negative effect on the relational climate. Negative in context with social-emotional
leadership is not necessarily synonymous with something that needs to be avoided. Negative responses to less than ideal solutions and ideas are sometimes necessary for developing an excellent final product; however, too much energy expended in negative social-emotional leadership can create a negative relational climate detrimental to efficient task leadership, and therefore detrimental to efficient goal-oriented activity.

In brief, positive social-emotional leadership indicates a promotion of positive reactions with a positive effect on group emotional climate; negative social-emotional leadership indicates the promotion of negative reactions, which if over emphasized may have a negative effect on emotional climate. The emotional climate of a group affects its short-term efficiency and its long-term viability. Both direct and indirect task leadership lie squarely between positive and negative social-emotional leadership and represent an emotionally neutral area of leadership activity (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). These social-emotional leadership areas, like their counterparts, the task leadership areas, represent parts of a continuum and include three subdivisions, which are loosely compared in reverse order. The subdivisions of positive social-emotional leadership, on the top extreme of the Interactive Communication Analysis instrument, are listed from top to bottom: shows enjoyment, shows support, and shows agreement, with shows enjoyment being most positive and shows agreement being least positive.
Likewise, the subdivisions of negative social-emotional leadership, on the bottom extreme of the Interactive Communication Analysis instrument, are listed from bottom to top: shows digression, shows disapproval, and shows disagreement, with shows digression being most negative and shows disagreement being least negative (see Figure 5).
Positive social-emotional leadership. Positive social-emotional leadership, in all three of its subdivisions, provides emotional support and healing that may be helpful when addressing the natural stresses and frustrations that the normal course of goal-oriented activity may precipitate. It also directly supports task leadership in the attainment of task goals in two of the three subdivisions, shows agreement and shows support. In its least positive form named shows agreement, positive social-emotional leadership represents activity that shows agreement, passive acceptance, understanding, and compliance. Shows agreement, accompanied by a matter of fact attitude, is generally devoid of emotion (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). Simple responses of “I agree,” “okay,” “fine,” and “all right” are examples of this level of positive social-emotional leadership.

Moderately positive social-emotional leadership, named shows support, includes showing support, solidarity, approval, or encouragement as a reaction to information, opinions, or direction presented by someone else. This level of positive social-emotional leadership, normally accompanied by positive, supportive, and friendly feelings, has a powerful positive effect on the emotional climate of the group dynamic (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). “Excellent,” “great,” and “I think you are right,” are all examples of shows support. Shows support can also be expressed by a quick change of discussion
topics. This is normally in response to a discussion that has grown heated on one topic; changing the topic helps to calm things down. In addition, shows support can be expressed by the acceptance of blame by one individual in order to take blame from someone else. Both shows agreement and shows support help support the achievement of task leadership goals by being agreeable to direction, opinion, or information given.

The most positive form of this social-emotional leadership, shows enjoyment, can break tension or simply add levity to intense goal-oriented activity. This is the most positive form, and is characterized by jokes, laughing, and a show of great satisfaction (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). This particular type of positive social-emotional leadership is the only one that is not associated with any direct support of task leadership goals, but functions for social-emotional benefit only. Careful use of shows enjoyment allows goal-oriented activity to resume in a reasonable time; however, shows enjoyment can also deteriorate into shows digression, as explained in the section on negative social-emotional leadership. Additionally, shows enjoyment often comes on the heels of negative social-emotional leadership, which needs shows enjoyment to reestablish a positive relational climate.

All three subdivisions of positive social-emotional leadership—shows agreement, shows support, and shows enjoyment—are
advantageous to a positive emotional climate and therefore the overall effectiveness of a goal-oriented group. Below are examples from SIX’s rehearsals that highlight *shows agreement* and *shows support*. *Shows enjoyment* not connected with negative interactions is demonstrated as well. *Shows enjoyment* used to recover from negative social-emotional leadership will be illustrated later in the chapter.

**Curtis exemplifies shows agreement.** During “I Gotta Feeling,” Lynn reminds Curtis what is going on in a particular section of the song. Curtis acknowledges that he remembers.

Lynn:  *GIVES INFORMATION* – I can do the pad stuff.
Lynn:  *GIVES DIRECTION* – You just stay with him [points to Kevin].
Curtis: *SHOWS AGREEMENT* – Oh, right, right. (rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)

**Jak and Owen use shows support and shows enjoyment.** At the end rehearsal for “Happy Christmas to All,” SIX runs the harmonization one final time. At the conclusion, Jak and Owen express satisfaction with positive emotion.

SIX:  [SIX sings the final run of “Happy Christmas to All”
Curtis: *GIVES INFORMATION* – Curtis gives a G and sings “Happy Christmas to All.” Curtis: *GIVES DIRECTION* – Then he sings Barry’s part.
Kevin:  *GIVES INFORMATION* – Kevin arpeggiates an Am triad.
Jak:  *GIVES DIRECTION* – Jak directs the group in and they run through this flawlessly and just in the way they did the last time they sang it, earlier in the same rehearsal.]
Jak:  *SHOWS SUPPORT* – Good.
Owen:  *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – Wow! (rehearsal observation, October 14, 2009)
Jak, having just lead the group through intense direction in terms of his idea for the excerpted form of “Carry on Wayward Son,” has a humorous exchange with Owen that SIX add the phrase “in Dixieland” to the end of this song. This had the effect of restoring a positive social-emotional climate to the rehearsal after intense work.

[Jak makes his last comment about the form of “Carry on Wayward Son.”]
Jak: *GIVES OPINION* – Hey, then maybe end the song there [sings; "Don't you cry" and sings final chords high note bah dah on a high B.] and then just end the song.
Owen: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – [Says something softly to Jak.]
Jak: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – In Dixieland
Owen: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – "Don't you cry no more" "in Dixieland."
Jak: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – Yeah.
Curtis: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – Yeah.
Owen: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – Isn't "don't you cry no more" a double negative. [Owen laughs.]
Lynn: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – [Lynn joins in by smiling at the thought].
(rehearsal observations, January 20, 2010)

**Negative social-emotional leadership.** Negative social-emotional leadership, though in some aspects necessary, puts a strain on the overall positive social-emotional climate of a goal-oriented group. As will be illustrated, some of these activities, wisely utilized, move a group toward completion of task goals. Some negativity during any type of goal-oriented activity is normal.

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10 “In Dixieland,” or a reference to the old south, is a common phrase found in barbershop style music, in which SIX, especially Lynn, Jak, Owen, and Curtis, were heavily involved for about ten years. Until recently, SIX always had one piece in each show call “Barberock.” This piece was sung in a barbershop style, but paraphrased a famous rock and roll piece. SIX would often end these humorous arrangements with the phrase “in Dixieland.”
The least negative form of negative social-emotional leadership, *shows disagreement*, is characterized by a show of disagreement, passive rejection, resistance, or sometimes even simple confusion over another's task leadership. *Shows disagreement*, devoid of emotion yet evaluating fault in a musical plan, represents the majority of negative social-emotional leadership in SIX (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L).

In times when individuals in a group are not responsive to *shows disagreement*, a judiciously used, more aggressive, yet moderate form of negative social-emotional leadership called *shows disapproval* may be utilized. *Shows disapproval* is characterized by a show of opposition or disapproval and often possesses a feeling of negative emotion, or at least a semblance of such. An air of antagonism accompanied by negative, unsupportive, even unfriendly emotions may be evident (see Figure 1, p. 124, and Appendix L). *Shows disapproval* should generally be avoided, though occasionally, wise usage of its milder expressions can sometimes yield results.

The last and most negative social-emotional leadership form, *shows digression*, differs in scope from the other two. *Shows digression* is not necessarily negative emotionally, but may be detrimental to the healthy functioning of a goal-oriented group. Its characteristics are interrupting activity, detaining activity flow, or showing lack of focus that is self-distracting and a distraction to others (see Figure 1, p. 124, and
Appendix L). This type of leadership is usually associated with topics unrelated to the goal-oriented task. In other words, *shows digression* involves group members who cannot maintain focus or tend to get off topic, therefore becoming a distraction to themselves and others.

Ironically, *shows digression*, the most negative subdivision of negative social-emotional leadership and *shows enjoyment*, the most positive subdivision of positive social-emotional leadership, have similarities. Both involve activity that does not directly move towards a task goal, and both often involve unrelated subject matter; however, the effect of *shows digression* is to create unproductive and inefficient activity, while *shows enjoyment* creates a healthier social-emotional climate, therefore increasing both production and efficiency. A brief period of activity that can seem like *shows digression*, but creates relief and enjoyment for others in the aural arranging process, is actually *shows enjoyment*.

Likewise, *shows enjoyment* can turn into *shows digression* if a group does not know how to move back into goal-oriented activity in a reasonable time frame.

Negative social-emotional leadership, in the category of *shows disagreement*, addresses the normal negative aspects of disagreement within goal-oriented activity. If *shows disagreement* is ineffective, judicious application of a mild form of *shows disapproval* may work.

Unless *shows digression* is actually *shows enjoyment*, it should be
avoided during designated goal-oriented activity, with care taken not to allow *shows enjoyment* to fall into *shows digression*. Careful usage of some aspects of negative social-emotional leadership may be of value in the pursuit of goal-oriented activity.

SIX generally did not demonstrate *shows digression*. The few times they did were mostly because I, as the researcher, videotaped some early rehearsals personally. Because I am also a musician, a few times members of SIX engaged me in conversation over subjects unrelated to the current rehearsal; however, my wife recorded all of the later video footage. In her efforts to be as unobtrusive as possible and avoid engaging members of SIX, *shows digression* initially caused by the researcher’s presence ceased to be a problem.

**Kevin’s usage of *shows disagreement***. *Shows disagreement* may be as simple as two members disagreeing about a perceived vocal part, as shown in “I Gotta Feeling” below.

Kevin: *GIVES DIRECTION* – Let’s try this from the beginning. Try this verse here. Try the four parts. [Kevin raps, showing the section wants to work on. “Tonight’s the night.” He also sings some parts to confirm what the brothers should do.]

Curtis: *ASKS OPINION* – [Curtis sings what he thinks his part is.]

Kevin: *SHOWS DISAGREEMENT* – No, I think that’s . . .

Curtis: *ASKS OPINION* – [tries again]

SIX: [Group sings for short while.]

Kevin: *SHOWS DISAGREEMENT* – I don’t think that’s what he does. That sounds cheesy.

Kevin: *GIVES OPINION* – I think he stays [sings one note, dah. Then arpeggiates a major triad from the root with an added 6th up top].

(rehearsal observation, January 19, 2010)
Shows disagreement with shows enjoyment response. During the process of arranging “Carry on Wayward Son,” Barry, having just sung the opening high lead in a fully projected voice, has a small disagreement with Curtis. It ends with Curtis making light of the subject and thus turning the situation to shows enjoyment.

Barry: GIVES INFORMATION – I can do it, but I can’t keep doing it. [Plays recording, stops it, and sings “Carry on my wayward son” in full voice.]
Curtis: GIVES OPINION – [Talking to Barry.] Yeah, you don’t need to blast it like that.
Barry: SHOWS DISAGREEMENT – [Replying to Curtis.] You have to give it the power. If you . . . [Barry sings the opening phrase again, but this time in a mixed voice], then it turns into some madrigal.
Curtis: SHOWS DISAGREEMENT – Well, that’s not what I’m suggesting. [Curtis: SHOWS ENJOYMENT – Then Curtis actually does sing the phrase like a renaissance madrigal, in a very light sotto voce style and ending the phrase with “huh, uh, uh, uh,” much like you might hear in a madrigal]. (rehearsal observation, January 20, 2010)

Negative social-emotional leadership, ending in positive social-emotional leadership. During the arranging of “I Gotta Feeling,” there were negative comments first about what Owen was doing in vocal percussion, and second, about the recorded version SIX was using to create the arrangement.

Lynn: SHOWS DISAPPROVAL – You need to go over the snare style. Instead of that (t - tch) [gesticulates like holding drum sticks].
Kevin: SHOWS DISAPPROVAL – It’s too small.
Owen: SHOWS DISAGREEMENT – That’s the kind of sound that //
Kevin: SHOWS DISAPPROVAL – [Shakes head no.] Not necessarily.
Barry: SHOWS DISAGREEMENT – You are getting too hung up on that//
Kevin: SHOWS DISAPPROVAL – That’s not necessarily going to work for us.
Owen: *GIVES INFORMATION* – Well, I could do a better beat if someone else could do that.

Curtis: *SHOWS ENJOYMENT* – [Speaks toward camera.] Did you get that? [Curtis laughs at the minor conflict over vocal percussion style taking place.]

Owen: *GIVES INFORMATION* – If someone else could do the [interrupted]

Kevin: *GIVES DISAGREEMENT* – It would modify the song.

Owen: *GIVES OPINION* – [Owen gives an example of an alternative vocal percussion style than the one he was using. (Percussion hi hat pattern of 4 steady quarters, followed by two eighths and three steady quarters notes; ts ts ts ts)].

Lynn: *SHOWS SUPPORT* [Lynn changes the subject, from the researcher’s vantage, to take the heat off Owen.] *GIVES OPINION* – [Lynn expresses his preference for another model recording.] Well personally, I like the other version. I think we need to brace the arrangement more.

Curtis: *GIVES OPINION* – Yeah, I like that one better too.

Kevin: *SHOWS DISAPPROVAL* – [Kevin raises his voice.] Okay, that’s fine, but you need to [next four words are punctuated with right hand chopping into the left] start this song off the way people are used to hearing it start off. If you change it right off the bat people won’t like it.

Lynn: *SHOWS DISAPPROVAL* – Whatever, whatever.

Lynn: *SHOWS SUPPORT* – [Lynn changes the subject and Kevin immediately lowers his voice and agrees.]

Lynn: *GIVES DIRECTION* – The melody. The lead vocals need to come in sooner.

Kevin: *SHOWS SUPPORT* – I agree.

Kevin: *GIVES DIRECTION* – It should be one time through and then it should come in. We’re going to have to cut everything almost in half on this. [talks to Barry] You ready to start this again? (rehearsal observations, January 19, 2010)

**Brief Description of SIX’s Areas of Leadership Strength**

Following is a brief description of SIX’s leadership thinking and knowing. These will be described in terms of both direct and indirect task leadership and positive and negative social-emotional leadership. SIX demonstrates a leadership style that utilizes these task and social-emotional leadership roles, creating a situation wherein there appears to
be no single, primary leader, members tend to lead in areas of strength, each member demonstrates an accurate awareness of procedural knowledge, there is an overall practice of unassuming leadership, and group members seem cognizant of a need to maintain a healthy relational climate. It is this leadership thinking and knowing that make it possible for SIX to consistently and efficiently work through the process of aural arranging.

**Barry’s Leadership Thinking and Knowing**

Barry shows strong activity in both direct and indirect task leadership, often found as the second or third most active member in task leadership activities overall. He shows exceptional ability in the area of technology. By using websites like GrooveShark, Barry enables SIX to utilize various recordings as viable rehearsal tools for aural arranging. He demonstrates an exceptional ability to go back and forth to specific parts of a recording, sometimes even being able to replay specific chord progressions within a recording. In efficient manipulation of the recording and in his insistence upon remaining true to certain performance details on recordings, Barry demonstrates his primary roles in task leadership. He also shows ability in positive social-emotional leadership, often being second to fourth most active in this category. Barry is often responsive and occasionally instigates this type of
restorative leadership by laughing with the group or making a statement that brings a smile. Barry, in his insistence on staying true to detail on model recordings, can sometimes exercise negative social-emotional leadership; however, this type of leadership is normally brief and often followed up with positive social-emotional activity.

**Kevin’s Leadership Thinking and Knowing**

Kevin demonstrates a strong propensity for taking on task leadership roles, demonstrated by being the most active in this type of leadership for two of the four analyzed repertoire segments, and second and third most active in the other two. During SIX’s rehearsal activities, Kevin is unassuming during task leadership and often gives direction to other members while maintaining his own part. Kevin’s lead roles in interactive discussions often guide both interactive listening and interactive singing (see Chapter 3: Purposeful Interactions and Musical Knowledge: In Vivo Codes; Chapter 6: Process of Aural Arranging: Creative Activities, for discussion of these terms). Kevin’s leadership is also evident in social-emotional leadership. Though infrequent, Kevin’s negative social-emotional activity is the highest in SIX; however, he also has the highest or second highest activity in positive social-emotional activity for every repertoire segment. Kevin feels free to be honest during
rehearsals, whether his comments are positive or negative, but seems cognizant of the need for an overall positive relational climate.

**Lynn’s Leadership Thinking and Knowing**

Lynn is the quietest of all the members of SIX and therefore does not appear to be outwardly active in task leadership during much of SIX’s process of aural arranging. Though he is not usually in the position of task leadership, his advice on those occasions when he does carries weight and is often followed. He is also one who, through quiet insistence, helps SIX to maintain a focus on the accomplishment of an aural arrangement, helping to maintain discipline within the group. Additionally, he is sensitive to the social-emotional relational climate, and occasionally says things in sincere support of others, the effect of which is the maintenance of a healthy relational climate.

**Jak’s Leadership Thinking and Knowing**

Jak is capable of strong goal-oriented leadership, but can decide to exercise this ability or allow others to take the lead. As such, he is the member who demonstrated the most variation in leadership activity. In “Carry on Wayward Son,” Jak demonstrated the most direct task leadership in his role as the one who determined the formal structure of SIX’s arrangement. During both rehearsal sets for “Happy Christmas to
All,” Jak demonstrated a medium level of task leadership activity when compared with the other members of SIX. During “I Gotta Feeling,” though Jak contributed to this arrangement, he was the least active in task leadership interactions. This may have to do with the fact that as the bass, Jak learns his part largely independently from the other members, and seems to know his part before each first rehearsal involving new repertoire. In contrast, the trio of background singers requires a corporate learning of parts, as these singers need to negotiate notes found in a piece’s harmonic progression to work out the individual parts. Jak’s enthusiastic personality was notable within the group, thus making him an exceptional group leader when he takes on this task related role.

Jak is also aware of the social-emotional relational climate. For example, during “Happy Christmas to All,” while the group was setting the lyrics to a melody, Curtis was interrupted on several occasions; however, Jak encouraged Curtis to present his melodic idea and thereafter showed enthusiastic support of Curtis’s melody, even augmenting it with his own sequential, melodic tag ending.

**Owen’s Leadership Thinking and Knowing**

Owen’s vocal percussion part is neither needed for the working out of other parts, nor can it be constructed independently like the bass part.
Owen often observes the process of aural arranging much as Jak does, but must wait until he hears SIX’s aural arrangement before making the critical decisions about how to construct his vocal percussion part to best function in the group; therefore, Owen does not normally take a major role in direct or indirect task leadership. Owen, however, often takes a positive social-emotional leadership role, lending his support for others’ ideas. When other, more assertive leaders present ideas, Owen often quietly supports these ideas with favorable comments. His occasional expression of task leadership is often in conjunction with this support, by bringing others’ ideas to the group later. Owen exerted direct task leadership on one occasion during “I Gotta Feeling,” when he instructed the group on the addition of percussion to already sung background parts.

**Curtis’s Leadership Thinking and Knowing**

Curtis was the most active in task leadership only once during my observations. This involved setting the lyrics, “Happy Christmas to all and to all a goodnight.” During this rehearsal, Curtis came well prepared with a melody he had heard previously that would fit the text. This rehearsal segment demonstrated Curtis’s natural strength in melodies. He exerted this direct task leadership confidently, yet demonstrated an unassuming attitude in stating on several occasions that if someone else
had a melody, the group could use that instead. In other rehearsals, Curtis took a supportive leader role and showed ability in indirect task leadership. Curtis, like the other members of SIX, was sensitive to the need for a positive social-emotional relational climate. As an example of this sensitivity, he once took the blame for a problem that created negative social-emotional activity between two other members.

Jak: [to Owen] Can you please not sing?
Owen: Huh?
Jak: Can you please not sing because you don’t know what you are doing yet?
Curtis: No, I screwed up. I didn’t know where I was at all. (rehearsal observation, January 21, 2010)

**Summary of Task and Social-Emotional Leadership**

In answering how SIX creates an aural arrangement, four leadership activities emerged, revealing how SIX instigates these interactive activities. These leadership activities are called direct task leadership, indirect task leadership, positive social-emotional leadership, and negative social-emotional leadership. Both direct and indirect task leadership are concerned with the forward motion of SIX’s goal-oriented activity of aural arranging, whereas positive and negative social-emotional leadership affects the maintenance of the group’s overall social-emotional health. Both were needed in balance in order for SIX to accomplish its goal-oriented tasks while maintaining unity as a group. SIX’s success in its practice of both task and social-emotional leadership
is evidenced by SIX’s ability to create viable aural arrangements over this group’s more than 30-year history as a performance group.

**A Substantive Theory of Aural Arranging to a Theory of Fluid Leadership**

The establishment of the substantive theory of aural arranging emerged from a foundational examination of SIX’s musical and leadership influences in Chapter 4, from which three emergent environments were identified within SIX’s rehearsal process and described in Chapter 5. The environment of complex challenges represented SIX’s predominant method of musical arranging, the process of aural arranging. Within this given environment of complex challenges, multiple problems, with multiple solutions, and multiple possible outcomes represented its primary characteristics. The environment of safety represented a created environment that encouraged a group feeling of comfort, ease, and freedom, thus allowing group individuals to act freely and naturally during goal-oriented activity without anxiety or fear of negative consequences. The third and last environment, the environment of empowerment, represented another created environment that demonstrated mutual support, highlighting the strengths of others, an honest knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses, and leadership carried out in transparency and trust.
From within these environments, the substantive theory of aural arranging emerged in answer to the first two questions, through utilization of a classic grounded theory analysis of SIX’s rehearsal data. The theory of aural arranging operates within two primary and simultaneously utilized activity groups: preparatory and creative activities, and task and social-emotional leadership activities. These two activity groups directly answer what SIX does and how SIX does it respectively.

First, in answer to “what does SIX do,” a specialized set of activities—interactive discussion, interactive listening, and interactive singing—emerged. During preparatory activities, interactive discussion involving the choosing of possible new repertoire, utilizing a set of criteria, takes place followed by interactive discussion and interactive listening involving the choice of recordings for use as models for the final arrangement. Further interactive listening and discussion then occur as part of preparatory activities, in order for all group members to familiarize themselves with the model recordings, and to make group determinations of who will sing lead, bass, vocal percussion, and backup parts. Once successful accomplishment of the preparatory activity goals occurs, with all pertinent preparatory decisions made, the group moves into creative activities. Aural arranging demonstrates a fluid nature; therefore, even though the group has moved into the area of creative
activities, movement back into preparatory activities can occur if a selected model recording or given piece is found to not work, or if adjustment of parts is needed during the arrangement process.

Within the creative activities, interactive discussion is central to the planning, organizing, evaluating, and summarizing of presented arrangement ideas. The environments of safety and empowerment are especially important during this activity, as these environments allow interactive discussion to occur efficiently and unencumbered. Between times of interactive discussion, times of interactive focused and engaged listening occur, as members listen for specific parts within the model recording and sing with the recording respectively. As the aural arrangement advances, interactive trial and error and refinement singing take place as the group attempts to sing without the support of a recording. Lastly, usually at the end or the beginning of a rehearsal, this group uses confirmational singing, also with no recording, in order to determine an aural arrangement’s state of readiness. Within the creative activities, the fluid nature of aural arranging is demonstrated throughout the process, as the group can move among and between any level of interactive activities, until a final arrangement is finished, learned, and memorized. These interactive activities, used in concert with one another, create part 1 of the theory of aural arranging (see Appendix D).
Second, in answer to “how does SIX carry out what they do,” a specialized set of leadership activities—direct and indirect task leadership, and positive and negative social-emotional leadership—emerged. Within any group formed to work toward achievement of given goals, goal-oriented activity must take place. Additionally, for a group to continue to work effectively over time, the group must ideally build and maintain positive intergroup relationships; therefore, a balance of task leadership, intended for movement toward achievement of group goals, and social-emotional leadership, intended to build and maintain positive intergroup relationships, is needed.

Task leadership, the activity that involves movement of goal-oriented activity towards completion of a given goal (Bales, 1950; Bales & Slater, 1955), can be both direct and indirect. Direct task leadership represents the strongest exertion of leadership from an individual and was demonstrated within SIX by those who gave directions, opinions, or information. Indirect task leadership represents leadership by asking pertinent questions. Therefore, those who ask direction, opinions, or information exercise indirect task leadership. Though not overt in leadership expression, leadership that demonstrates fluid movement between several individuals who lead in their areas of strength can often be effectively carried out through a practice of indirect task leadership (i.e. asking questions). SIX exhibited a proficient use of both direct and
indirect task leadership while involved in both preparatory and creative activities and making progress within goal-oriented activity.

Social-emotional leadership, as a needed companion to task leadership, involves leadership that affects group cohesiveness, social-emotional health, and longevity as a functional goal-oriented group (Bales, 1950; Bales & Slater, 1955; Lewis, 1972). The goal of social-emotional leadership, therefore, is the maintenance of an overall positive emotional group climate while a group successfully completes stated goals. Negative social-emotional leadership, though seemingly unnecessary, was occasionally needed while SIX refined an aural arrangement. When working out divergent arrangement ideas, the showing of disagreement or disapproval of one idea over another demonstrated needed negative social-emotional leadership; however, a show of digression, representing activity that simply distracts from efficient goal-oriented activity, demonstrates no benefit. Positive social-emotional leadership demonstrates leadership activity that shows agreement, support, or enjoyment. Often, positive social-emotional leadership occurred, especially showing enjoyment, during times of intense task leadership, when emotions and stress were high. A well-placed humorous comment, compliment, or show of agreement often increased the overall healthy emotional rehearsal climate. These task and social-emotional leadership activities, used in concert to activate the
preparatory and creative activities, create part 2 of the theory of aural arranging (see Appendix E).

The theory of aural arranging, as it emerged from SIX’s practice of by ear, aural arranging, demonstrates interactive activities that utilize SIX’s unique musical thinking and knowing. Interactive discussion, interactive listening, and interactive singing, within both preparatory and creative functions, represent these activities used to create aural arrangements. Additionally, a balance of task and social-emotional leadership, used to simultaneously instigate the activities that create aural arrangements and activities that promote emotionally healthy relationships between members, describe this group’s leadership activities. This description of preparatory and creative activities, coupled with specialized leadership activities, answers what SIX does and how SIX does it (see Appendices D and E). In the next chapter, the third of these questions is addressed within the substantive and theoretical theories of fluid leadership.
The substantive theory of aural arranging, as established in the previous chapter, represents a theory that directly explains and codifies SIX’s primary arranging practice. As such, it represents a substantive area that is inseparable from the immediate context from which it comes; therefore, it cannot be directly formalized, since formalized theory becomes so by removing it from its immediate context and representing its concepts in generalizable terms (Glaser, 1978). Upon intense examination of SIX’s process of aural arranging, notable characteristics of leadership exertion became apparent, that revealed the third research question that emerged from this classic grounded theory analysis, as follows: “What characterizes how the contemporary a cappella group SIX carries out what they do to create, learn, and perform original a cappella cover arrangements?

Use of the constant comparison approach to data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), revealed SIX’s process of aural arranging as highly interactive and exhibiting multiple problems, with multiple solutions, with outcomes that were hard to predict (Kosta, 2012). As such, this process of aural arranging creates an environment of complex challenges (Kosta, 2012; Szollose, 2011). Additionally, environments of safety
Szollose, 2011) and empowerment (Kerchmar, 2009) enabled a fluid function of creative and leadership activities, thus further promoting SIX’s process of aural arranging.

During the process of aural arranging, SIX’s leadership functioned with no single, primary leader and demonstrated ebb and flow while individuals moved fluidly between leader and follower roles (Shea & Gunther, 2009). Additionally, members of SIX often led in areas of strength (Duncan, 2013; Taylor, 2009), with individual members demonstrating accurate assessment of personal, others’, and group procedural knowledge, further promoting ebb and flow leadership. In addition, members of SIX took on leadership roles in an unassuming manner (Kerchmar, 2009) and maintained a balance of task and social-emotional leadership, thus maintaining an overall healthy relational climate (Duncan, 2013; Szollose, 2011).

From SIX’s process of aural arranging, a style of leadership emerged that demonstrated a fluid style of horizontal leadership (see Appendix F), especially effective in small groups steeped in highly interactive activity. Grounded in the rehearsal observations and substantiated by personal interviews, the principles of a substantive and formal theory of fluid leadership emerged (see Appendix F for formalized theory). Formal theory, though grounded within the data and demonstrating a substantive area, also demonstrates the ability to rise
above the substantive area, thus demonstrating applicability to other contexts (Glaser & Holten, 2004).

**Substantive Theory of Fluid Leadership**

In the following five sections, I explain and substantiate the principles of *fluid leadership* within the original context from which they emerged, as illustrated in the data. This represents the substantive theory of *fluid leadership* most directly associated with SIX’s process of aural arranging.

**Principle 1: No Single, Primary Leader and Ebb and Flow Leadership**

Among the first principles observed with respect to SIX’s *fluid leadership*, and additionally demonstrating itself as foundational to the entire function of *fluid leadership*, was that no single, primary leader guides the process of aural arranging. Depending upon the specific rehearsal or rehearsal segment, repertoire rehearsed, or issue addressed, different group members took on the mantle of leadership. This contradicts the style of rehearsal leadership with which I am most familiar and that I had observed in other groups. From my experience, a named or tacitly understood primary leader (or leaders) operates within an understood hierarchy of leadership structure. Although other leadership may surface temporarily within a group, the primary leaders
always remained evident. In contrast, SIX demonstrated leadership that moved from member to member, not in an unorganized or haphazard manner, but in a way that effectively directed the application of SIX’s procedural knowledge to various rehearsal activities. It merits mention that SIX is a sibling group, but these familial relationships were not the focus of my research, nor did SIX’s aural arranging or fluid leadership seem to be either negatively or positively impacted by this relationship.

I observed many examples throughout the data of this characteristic of no single, primary leader, including variation in primary leadership from rehearsal to rehearsal or from piece to piece in the creation of aural arrangements. Curtis demonstrated primary leadership during “Happy Christmas to All” as a melody for the pre-given lyrics was determined. Kevin demonstrated primary leadership in both “Happy Christmas to All,” during the harmonization of the melody, and during the process of aural arranging in “I Gotta Feeling.” Jak demonstrated primary leadership during the process of aural arranging in “Carry on Wayward Son.”

Even though primary leadership from a single individual was demonstrated in each of these rehearsal segments, fluid shifts in primary leadership, indicating an ebb and flow of leadership, sometimes occurred within a single rehearsal segment, precipitated by change in repertoire or change in rehearsal issue (see Chapter 5: Exerting Leadership). This ebb
and flow thus represents a subset of no single, primary leader. During “I Gotta Feeling,” Kevin maintained primary leadership; however, during a section of this rehearsal, Owen took over leadership to instruct in methods of adding rhythmic energy into a section of this song (see Chapter 6: Owen’s direct task leadership in area of rhythmic expertise), and Lynn took over to make the final decision in regards to the song’s rap lyrics (see Chapter 6: Lynn’s direct task leadership in lyrics selection). During “Carry on Wayward Son,” Jak maintained leadership concerning the form of the song (see Chapter 6: Jak and Barry’s use of interactive direct task leadership), but Curtis often took a lead role with the rhythm of the syncopated background vocals. Kevin kept the group on track with the correct underlying chords, while Barry negotiated the model recording accessing specific recording sections as needed.

**Principle 2: Lead in Areas of Strength**

The second characteristic observable in SIX’s *fluid leadership* suggests that when members exerted leadership, they did so in their areas of strength (Taylor, 2010). SIX developed these areas of strength over time, though some areas of strength stemmed from natural gifts or inclinations (Duncan, 2013). These areas of strength included music-specific thinking and knowing related to aural arranging, and the leadership-specific knowledge related to task and social-emotional
leadership. Ability to lead at a given time depended upon the task need and combinations of the unique procedural knowledge a member offered. Leadership exertion seemed to involve a balance of subject matter and leadership thinking and knowing and a seemingly natural, but skillful application to a task. The characteristic of no single, primary leader exists, in part, from SIX’s corporate ability to apply individual strengths and knowledge to a given task.

Although as a professional group of musicians, members of SIX possess strengths in all of the musical and leadership areas discussed, some members possessed knowledge combinations that were demonstratively effective in the process of aural arranging. Combining the strength of task leadership with his supervisory knowledge to identify chords and harmonies by sound color, Kevin took a lead role in the harmonizing of “Happy Christmas to All,” “I Gotta Feeling,” and “Carry on Wayward Son.” Jak combined his strength of task leadership with his impressionistic knowledge of form and his sung bass line, as he took a lead role in the final excerpted form of “Carry on Wayward Son.” Taking a lead role in setting to melody the lyrics of “Happy Christmas to All” and reproducing and guiding melodic elements in both “I Gotta Feeling” and “Carry on Wayward Son,” Curtis combined both task leadership and his impressionistic and supervisory knowledge of melodic material. All members of SIX occasionally took lead roles using positive social-
emotional leadership, demonstrated by a well-placed humorous comment or unassociated musical reference, often at times when disagreement or rehearsal intensity had reached an unusually high level.

**Principle 3: Accurate Awareness of Strengths**

In support of the previous characteristic whereby members of SIX lead in areas of strength, accurate awareness of other members’ strengths emerged as a pivotal requirement within the function of SIX’s *fluid leadership*. Accurate awareness of others’ strengths involves awareness of personal procedural knowledge, others’ procedural knowledge, and group procedural knowledge. Accurate awareness of personal procedural knowledge is contingent upon the ability of members to assess their own abilities to determine where personal strengths and weaknesses lie. Individuals need to know their personal strengths and weaknesses in order for a group with no single, primary leader, dependent upon members to lead in areas of strength, to achieve success in goal-oriented activity. Members cannot lead in areas of strength if they do not accurately understand what those strengths are. Likewise, knowledge of areas of weakness allows members to know when to avoid asserting leadership and instead look to others. Accurate awareness of others’ procedural knowledge is contingent upon the ability of individuals to assess the abilities of other group members. Additionally, this
awareness of others’ procedural knowledge makes it possible for members to assess general group knowledge.

SIX’s propensity for fluid leadership that aligns with individuals who lead in areas of strength supports assertion of this group’s accurate awareness of knowledge in all three areas: personal, others’, and group. Analysis of the data revealed that individual members of SIX were indeed highly aware of their own personal strengths and weaknesses. After conducting individual interviews and studying rehearsal videos, it became obvious that many members of SIX had accurately assessed their own personal procedural knowledge, but had also been modest in their statements. Often, strengths stated were conservative and weaknesses slightly exaggerated.

Additional inquiry and analysis revealed that SIX’s acute awareness of procedural knowledge also extended to the accurate assessment of others’ procedural knowledge, which in combination with trustworthy assessment of personal procedural knowledge allows the accurate assessment of group procedural knowledge. Although it is reasonable to assume that members of SIX were aware of others’ weaknesses, almost no mention of these weaknesses surfaced during data collection, thus supporting SIX’s maintenance of a healthy relational climate. Within SIX’s fluid leadership, accurate awareness of personal abilities involved both strengths and weakness, but accurate
awareness of others’ abilities mostly entailed strengths. This characteristic of accurate awareness of abilities—personal, others’, and group—allows the members of SIX to live, function, and lead in their area of strength, and encourage others to live and function in theirs, therefore encouraging the efficient functioning of fluid leadership during the process of aural arranging.

**Principle 4: Practice of Unassuming Leadership**

The general tone of leadership evident within SIX was unassuming. Unassuming leadership exemplifies attitudes of humility and unpretentiousness. These attitudes make possible a fluid exercise of leadership, easily allowing different group members to lead at different times. Without these unassuming attitudes, fluid leadership cannot operate well. Several members of SIX mentioned that Kevin can easily assume a primary leadership role and often does exert strong leadership within the group; however, his attitude was always unassuming, whether functioning as primary leader or as a supporting leader. There were also times when Kevin took on a follower role as he took direction from others in their areas of strength. This type of unassuming leadership should not be mistaken for weak leadership, but rather leadership capable of flexibility as goal-oriented activity progresses and changes.
Aural arranging frequently requires leadership from various group members with various abilities. This fluidity of leadership requires leaders to be unassuming to facilitate an ease of leadership ebb and flow. Curtis exemplified this style of unassuming leadership while operating in his area of strength of melodic expertise during the melodic setting of the lyric, “Happy Christmas to all.” Curtis was the only member to come prepared with a melody to which this lyric could be set. After the initial presentation of his melody, he stated on several occasions that if someone else had a melody in mind, the group could use that instead. After Kevin took on leadership by also offering melodic ideas, eventually the group selected the melody Curtis suggested, but throughout the process, Curtis demonstrated an unassuming leadership attitude. The successful operation of fluid leadership depends on each member practicing unassuming leadership when exerting a leadership role.

**Principle 5: Maintenance of a Healthy Relational Climate**

Maintenance of a healthy relational climate—in the context of SIX, a healthy rehearsal climate—is essential for SIX to have existed as a performance group for more than 30 years and for more than 15 years as a full time professional group. Efforts from all group members toward maintaining a healthy rehearsal climate emerged during analysis of the data, first as evidence for both the environments of safety and
empowerment and then as leadership thinking and knowing:
observations revealed the usage of positive social-emotional leadership
between members of SIX. The purpose of a goal-oriented group is the
accomplishment of the group’s stated goals; however, as negotiation of
positive and negative decisions refines a group’s final product, stresses
and disagreements may occur. These stresses and disagreements are
normal within the context of goal-oriented activity, but need to find
resolution, healing, or a way to move on regardless of the disagreement. I
observed in SIX’s fluid leadership two highly effective subdivisions of
positive social-emotional leadership: shows support and shows
enjoyment. Shows support is illustrated when one member agrees with
another in a way that shows supportive and friendly emotions. This
activity has the dual purpose of advancing goal-oriented activity and
creating a positive climate within which work may be productive. Shows
support commonly occurred as SIX came to agreement on various issues
found in the process of aural arranging.

When members of SIX made a humorous comment or sang a
humorous phrase, the group often reacted by laughing, thus
demonstrating shows enjoyment in action. Although shows enjoyment
does not advance goal-oriented activity, its effect on relational climate is
beneficial. Shows enjoyment often lightened the mood after an extended
period of intense rehearsal activity or after minor conflicts; even so, the
more common tactic after a minor conflict was for a member to change the subject. This happened on several occasions, and had the effect of refocusing everyone’s attention elsewhere, allowing the negative effect of the conflict to dissipate, while continuing to accomplish goal-oriented activity.

Summary of Emergent Leadership Style: Formalized Theory of Fluid Leadership

Following is a summarized account, wherein I present the formalized theory of fluid leadership (see Appendix F), describing the principles without reference to the substantive area or the data, thus demonstrating application outside the context of aural arranging and contemporary a cappella. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), rewriting a grounded theory emerging from a substantive area by omitting substantive words represents a valid grounded theory methodology for the creation of a formal theory; however, this rewriting can still demonstrate a theory that is firmly grounded in the original data.

Fluid leadership is a style of leadership that demonstrates leadership exertion through the use of five principles. These principles are as follows: 1) the existence of no single, primary leader and an ebb and flow of leadership, 2) leaders who lead in areas of strength, 3)
accurate awareness of personal, others’, and group strengths, 4) a practice of unassuming leadership, 5) and group maintenance of a healthy relational climate.

Leadership that utilizes no single, primary leader and demonstrates an ebb and flow of leadership is the first and most foundational principle of fluid leadership. This leadership principle demonstrates leadership that moves from member to member in an ebb and flow of leader and follower roles, allowing the function of an effective and efficient process within small groups who operate within highly interactive and complex environments. This fluid movement of leadership from member to member does not occur in an unorganized or haphazard fashion, but rather is guided as members lead in areas of strength, the second principle of fluid leadership. Dependent on context, these areas of strength include subject specific forms of thinking and knowing, as well as leadership forms of thinking and knowing associated with both task leadership (leadership exerted with specific goal-oriented tasks in mind) and social-emotional leadership (leadership with specific social-emotional goals in mind).

Accurate awareness of procedural knowledge, the third principle of fluid leadership, facilitates this exertion of leadership in areas of strength, dependent upon the group’s task needs and the unique procedural knowledge combinations group members offer. Regarding
self-knowledge, it is important that members possess the ability to evaluate both strengths and weaknesses accurately, which facilitates leading in areas of strength. Knowing both others’ and group strengths is also necessary to allow a group to function efficiently as a unified whole. Accurate knowledge of personal, others’, and group strengths promotes an expression of unassuming leadership, fluid leadership’s fourth defining principle. Unassuming leadership promotes the fluidity or ebb and flow of leadership by exertion that exemplifies leader attitudes of humility and unpretentiousness. This leadership principle feeds back into both the principles of no single, primary leader, and leading in areas of strength, as unassuming leadership demonstrates a humbleness to move in and out of leadership as group goals are achieved, rather than leadership guided by the fulfillment of ego.

The last principle of fluid leadership is the maintenance of a healthy relational climate. This principle requires a balance of task and social-emotional leadership that allows a group to successfully achieve goal-oriented tasks, while also maintaining healthy social-emotional relationships. It is this last principle that allows a group, through a predominant use of positive rather than negative social-emotional leadership, to enjoy longevity as a group who can function in a productive manner over a long period.
Conclusions Drawn from the Research

This research involving contemporary a cappella, though different in focus, demonstrates an extension of Duchan’s (2007a, 2007b, 2012a, 2012b) study, especially in terms of the discussion of emulation vs. originality and rehearsal process. In regards to emulation vs. originality, Duchan’s research involving several collegiate a cappella groups revealed the pervasiveness, inherent tension, and contradiction of these two distinct practices (2007a). My research, focusing on one professional a cappella group, revealed SIX’s primary practice of aural arranging, demonstrating contemporary a cappella’s most common arranging practice of emulation (Duchan, 2007a), also called transanging (Callahan, 2000) and translation (Sharon & Bell, 2012). In terms of rehearsal process, Duchan’s (2007b, 2012a) research pointed broadly toward the significance of social relationships within the rehearsal process, though the exact expression of significance differed from group to group. My research of SIX also revealed the importance of social relationships, primarily within SIX’s leadership functions.

Within the environments of complex challenges, safety, and encouragement, SIX demonstrated an efficient and effective process of aural arranging. This process was carried out through interactive discussion, interactive listening, and interactive singing, was instigated by task and social-emotional leadership, and in turn, facilitated and
encouraged by the principles of *fluid leadership*. From my perspective as an observer of SIX’s efficient and effective process of task and leadership thinking and knowing, and as the director of a student a cappella group that is still developing in task and leadership thinking and knowing, I noticed several things that seemed necessary for the process of aural arranging and principles of fluid leadership to work well. Within a mature group, these can simply be agreed upon ground rules, but within a student group, likely need to be established through a facilitation model. Regardless, both the process of aural arranging and the principles of fluid leadership demonstrate potential for use in groups beyond the professional a cappella ensemble.

First, there needs to be an overall willingness to function as a group, with a primary focus on a common goal. In such contexts, groups are more likely to work as a unified whole and successfully agree upon and reach common group goals. This does not mean there should be a lack of individuality, but rather individuals need to be willing to use unique ways of thinking and knowing as part of a cohesive group dynamic. This dynamic should ideally permeate all aspects of task and leadership thinking and knowing during the process of aural arranging including; repertoire selection, part distribution, and the working out of specific notes and rhythms. This type of group-centered attitude,
whether agreed upon or created through facilitation, also encourages the principles of fluid leadership.

Second, there needs to be a group consensus to avoid individual and group activities that distract from accomplishment of the group’s goal. Within aural arranging, this means that group members should feel free to discuss preferences when initial repertoire selection is being made, but demonstrate willingness to go with the rest of the group, even when the repertoire is not what they personally advocated. Additionally, once parts have been decided, the listening task for each individual must shift from generalized listening to focused listening—no longer to the piece as a whole, but instead focusing on what pertains to the group member’s specific part or assignment. This type of individual flexibility—to go with the group as well as the individual’s ability to shift activity focus—can be encouraged and taught, possibly through a facilitation model, wherein a teacher first presents a set of basic ground rules and then models these ground rules through his or her own interactions and encouragement of others who do the same.

Third, aural arranging and fluid leadership seem to work most effectively if individual group members aims to operate at their highest level of musical thinking and knowing possible, and most efficiently if each group member aims to operate at the highest level of leadership thinking and knowing possible. SIX, as a professional group, share
procedural musical and leadership knowledge as a unified whole; therefore, SIX seems to have developed the ability to apply principles of *fluid leadership* in a very natural and holistic way. From my experience, although student groups tend to operate in a much less efficient and effective way (not every group member may operate at his or her best, and individuals’ procedural musical and leadership knowledge have not yet been fully developed), these groups can still realize wonderful results. I have witnessed in student groups, as group proficiency increases, efficiency and effectiveness also increase; thus, a potentially holistic emergence of the principles of *fluid leadership* become more likely.

The process of aural arranging and principles of *fluid leadership* appear capable of being facilitated and taught to groups willing to attempt a group dynamic different from other group dynamics or types of leadership they may have previously encountered. Individuals whose attitudes express willingness to work closely with others and to function in both leadership and followership roles is key, both for the process of aural arranging and the principles of *fluid leadership*.

Group size represents a key consideration when determining whether the process of aural arranging and *fluid leadership* presents a viable option. Although no maximum group size can be determined from this research suggesting a limit to the effectiveness of horizontal group leadership activity like *fluid leadership* and aural arranging, as group size
increases, its ability to function without centralized leadership becomes more cumbersome. SIX demonstratively functions well as a group of six. Larger groups must account for a larger pool of opinions and those vying to exert leadership; however, as addressed above, individual attitudes toward horizontal leadership sharing play a key role, regardless of group size.

**Limitations of the Study**

In this study, I have created a grounded theory that explains the unique leadership interactions within one contemporary a cappella group. Because of the nature of qualitative studies, the first limitation of this, as a case study, is that the findings are not generalizable. SIX is a single, professional, contemporary a cappella group made up of six brothers. Although the particular findings cannot be generalized to other contemporary a cappella groups or small group contexts, the emergent theories of aural arranging and fluid leadership may be used to help structure aural arranging and leadership principles that could be applied elsewhere, including the music classroom. As well, the principles of *fluid leadership* represent a formalized theory that conceivably has application in many contexts beyond musical ensembles and classrooms.

A second limitation was my inability to follow SIX over several seasons to see if, over time, this group consistently practices aural
arranging in the same manner. Although I did not obtain additional rehearsal data beyond one year, in SIX’s interview data, the general descriptions of rehearsals from some of the members described a consistent rehearsal process over several years. In this sense, the data I collected represented that of a well-formed and mature system of fluid leadership and aural arranging, rather than an emerging practice, which may be of benefit for those attempting to encourage fluid leadership and aural arranging in their own ensembles.

**Implications for Music Education**

There are two main implications for music education emerging from this grounded theory study, one narrow and one broad. These implications are associated with the two emergent theories, the theory of aural arranging and the theory of fluid leadership. The narrowest implication involves the theory of aural arranging, as this presents a viable structure for creation of aural arrangements, specifically in other a cappella vocal groups or perhaps other by ear only musical ensembles. Fluid leadership illustrates a rather broad implication as it reveals potential as a leadership model within small musical ensembles both outside and within the formal music education classroom.

As I have researched this phenomenon, both theories have affected my own teaching, as I have utilized principles from each as I established
my own contemporary a cappella group, utilizing a high dependence upon aural arranging and a fluid leadership style from within its membership. In this section, I discuss what I have learned and have tried to introduce into my own teaching. Additionally, I address possible implications for the broader context of music education.

From my personal experience as a university professor, I have in recent years noted an increasing number of students who now enter college with a sincere desire and passion to study music, but do so from the vantage of extensive experience as ear musicians rather than proficiency in traditional notation. A few years ago, I was likely to discount these students’ ear skills as invalid or inconsequential as indicative of readiness to enter traditional, notation-based collegiate music study; however, in the last several years, as I experienced creating a new contemporary music worship service at a church, began my research with the group SIX, and began teaching at a school whose student demographic often demonstrated stronger by ear skills than notational reading skills, I have adopted a different position. It was in 2012 that I created a university-level contemporary a cappella group. I specifically modeled this group after SIX’s process of aural arranging and a leadership model wherein I served as facilitator, rather than authoritative director.
Although the theory of fluid leadership, as observed in SIX, is not a facilitator model per se, facilitation as a way to provide leadership without actually taking authoritarian charge is in concert with the principles of fluid leadership. Facilitation within fluid leadership and aural arranging involves communicating the principles and activities, aiding students in determining both musical and leadership thinking and knowing, and modeling various creative and leadership activities. My experience thus far indicates that principles of fluid leadership and aural arranging can be promoted through the use of facilitation, with the facilitator eventually becoming able to step out of the situation and allow continued development.

Although the theory of fluid leadership and aural arranging was not fully developed when I began this facilitation process with my own contemporary a cappella group, I found both theories to be moderately effective even from the beginning. It was, in part, some of the successes and difficulties I experienced with this group that enabled me to more fully recognize these rehearsal and leadership principles as they emerged from my observations of SIX. Overall, my collegiate contemporary a cappella group thrived, with several within the group taking on leadership roles, enabling the group’s creation of several original aural arrangements. These results prompt me to encourage other music educators to consider the theory of fluid leadership and aural arranging,
and the possible application of these principles within their own educational performance ensembles, especially contemporary a cappella.

Although the theory of aural arranging is fairly narrow in its application, the theory of *fluid leadership* is much broader. As a model of small group, horizontal leadership that encourages the active involvement of all group members, this theory offers promise as a non-traditional leadership model for many types of small ensembles within the broader field of music education. Presently, within the context of many music education environments, my experience is that a student’s normal performance group experience is one in which the teacher assumes sole leadership, often even in a small ensemble context like a chamber choir or quartet. As a model wherein the teacher is intent upon the development of subject specific thinking and knowing only, this type of guided approach may be effective; however, for the teacher intent upon student development of both subject specific and leadership knowledge, *fluid leadership* appears to provide an alternate, viable model. *Fluid leadership*—with its principles of ebb and flow of leadership, leadership within areas of strength, necessity for individuals to be accurately aware of abilities, encouragement of unassuming leadership, and intentional maintenance of a healthy relational (rehearsal) climate—represents a leadership style by which students can develop subject specific
procedural knowledge alongside the leadership knowledge necessary in many other real life contexts.

In order for fluid leadership to be operational within a small educational performance ensemble, the foundational environments must be in place. The environment of complex challenges, in the context of a musical ensemble, will often take care of itself. Although the theory of aural arranging exemplified a rather extreme case of complex challenges, the very nature of preparing any musical ensemble for performance represents an environment of complex challenges. The remaining environments of safety and empowerment require facilitation by a teacher in a way that would establish a group’s ground rules and thus encourage the establishment of these environments. Through the existence of these environments, group members may feel safe and encouraged to share their subject specific thinking and knowing as well as to participate in group leadership.

In addition to these environments, in order for fluid leadership to emerge in educational settings, each specific musical ensemble needs to establish the subject specific knowledge most valuable for that group. In the genre of contemporary a cappella, relying upon either notated scores or a process of aural arranging, keen ear skills for style are necessary (Deke Sharon, personal communication, June 25, 2013), because an aural assimilation of the stylistic traits needed for a given popular piece
represents part of the expected arrangement outcome. In this and other vocal styles that could include, but are not limited to gospel, jazz, classical, and barbershop, an ability to adjust vocal tone, hold an independent part, modify vowel shapes, affect tuning, adjust diction style, adjust vibrato, properly place tone, adjust blend, and demonstrate notational literacy, could be included as abilities that potential members need to develop.

Instrumental ensembles might also operate within these environments, although subject specific knowledge may differ in some ways from vocal ensembles. Knowledge of specific instrumental technique, production of special effects, and so forth, could all be part of the needed understandings within an instrumental ensemble. *Fluid leadership* works best among group members who are mature enough to function with self-initiative and willingness to share leadership; however, through proper teacher facilitation, it might even be possible to establish the practice of *fluid leadership* within elementary musical ensembles such as Orff ensembles, recorder groups, hand chime choirs, or vocal ensembles.

With the establishment of the foundational environments and the identification of needed procedural knowledge, the teacher then needs to facilitate effective use of direct and indirect task leadership and positive and negative social-emotional leadership. Part of this facilitation could
include a modeling of these leadership types and the encouragement of others to do the same. During this stage, the teacher needs to be mindful that leadership activities should coincide with areas of strengths and/or, especially in the case of students, potential. As with any ensemble, task leadership produces the results desired in rehearsals, while social-emotional leadership maintains a healthy relational climate. Successful rehearsals must include a balance of both leadership activities, thus providing both rehearsal results and group longevity.

Implications for Further Research

Several aspects of this study suggest potential for further research. First, with the existence of only one other dissertation involving research into contemporary a cappella (Duchan, 2007b), this genre represents virtually untapped research potential. The number and breadth of groups specializing in this genre continues to increase worldwide. Extracurricular collegiate groups, collegiate groups for credit, high school groups, and an ever-expanding number of professional groups exhibit a strong presence in our culture. SIX, in its almost exclusive use of aural arranging, is unique when compared with the many other existing contemporary a cappella groups (Sharon, personal communication, June 25, 2013); however, all contemporary a cappella groups utilize ear skills and reference recordings to one degree or another when learning a piece
(Sharon, personal communication, June 25, 2013). It follows, then, that a host of projects dealing with music learning practices found in the world of contemporary a cappella would be greatly welcome.

Second, the existence of by ear musicians suggests potential for research regarding how they operate in daily life. According to Lilliestam (1996), academic study of by ear music learning has been severely neglected. Part of the reason rests in the number of more academic sounding terms used by researchers when studying by ear phenomenon. Some of these terms are improvisation, orally transmitted music, unnotated music, and so forth; however, none of these exactly encapsulates the concept of by ear learning (p. 195). Much of the limited by ear literature that does exist focuses on playing an instrument or “playing by ear.” More study on the phenomenon of being a vocal ear musician could be very enlightening, covering parameters differing from those of the “teaching by rote” approach often associated with concepts of vocal by ear learning.

Elliott and Silverman (2015), in the second edition of Music Matters, indicate that “leadership in the best sense” (p. 273) can most effectively be delivered if the teacher can allow students room to take more ownership of the teaching and learning processes. Teachers that know how to, from time to time and as appropriate, fade in and out of the learning environment in a flexible manner, even to the point of
allowing students to teach classes, run rehearsals, and so forth, provide students an opportunity to develop independent “musicing” which may promote a lifelong participation in music (p. 273). Further research, associated with this study’s theory of fluid leadership, might examine the effects of facilitating student leadership within ensembles and classrooms on student learning outcomes and the development of leadership and subject specific knowledge. Aspects of group size and personality characteristics within groups could also represent areas of influence within the function of fluid leadership. Similar studies from all age ranges from elementary to higher education would likely benefit our knowledge of such flexible and fluid teaching strategies. Additionally, since some members of SIX indicated that fluid leadership seemed active in the nonmusical aspects of their lives as well, further research on whether a non-sibling group might similarly develop fluid leadership could shed light on how a close familial bond might affect this phenomenon.

In conclusion, the theory of fluid leadership and the theory of aural arranging which emerged from this study of the contemporary a cappella group SIX has opened my eyes as a music educator to areas of leadership and by ear learning that were previously outside my understanding. The study of the genre of contemporary a cappella, the process of aural arranging, and the function of fluid leadership has
greatly influenced my own teaching. This study has also favorably informed my view of musicians in the popular world and students with strong by ear skills entering the world of university music study. Within the field of music education in the 21st century, it is important that music education as a profession continue to research and seek understanding of music genres, music practices, and leadership styles that seem apropos to this time. Contemporary a cappella, the practice of aural arranging, and fluid leadership are representative of these areas. Further study in these and other areas in close alignment may bring us closer to understanding effective ways to teach and learn music in the 21st century, and to develop the leadership styles best suited to that music teaching and learning.
Appendix A: Interview Questions for Primary Participants

(Ask about any CD’s and recordings of the group that researcher does not currently own. Ask this of each primary participant.)

Describe from your perspective how the group SIX started, including an outline of how you have come to where you are today and different phases when the group included various numbers of singers.

What was your dad’s role in your early development musically, and how long did this last?

What type of music lessons have you had, with whom, and for how long? How has this affected what you do professionally today? Are there any additional mentors or coaches that have had some effect on your group’s development and if so who are they, what members of SIX were involved, and for what duration did this occur?

In a broad sense, what does your group do when learning a new piece or pieces? Please describe the choice, initial practice, the refinement, and final polish.

How are new pieces picked? By the group, by individuals, or some of both? Does anyone outside of SIX ever pick pieces the group performs? If so, who and why?

What sources are referenced when choosing pieces? Recordings owned? Internet sites and which internet sites?

What are the criteria for pieces selected? Personal taste? Audience appeal? A combination? Other criteria?

Are any pieces picked by means other than what is normal for SIX? How and what pieces?

What is used normally in order to learn new pieces? Is notation ever used? When?

Are recordings normally used to learn music? Do you normally seek out different versions and pick the favorite? Do you sometimes use a combination of versions making one that is unique from any other versions? How much does your group try to duplicate recordings exactly as opposed to adapting what is heard?

How much is learned individually versus learned as a group?

Please describe the types of things learned as a group and the types of things you personally work on your own as an individual.

If there is a division of things you work on individually and as a group, where is most of your alone time spent as compared to your group time; music choices, first rehearsals, middle rehearsals, final polish?

What kind of skills and knowledge do you bring into rehearsals? Where did you get these skills and knowledge?

How do you figure out what parts to sing? Do you have a normal role or is there switching of roles? Who normally sings what part in your group?
How are solos divided up?
What is your and your group’s knowledge about music theory? Chords? Intervals? Rhythms? How are chords figured out when listening to a recording? Is there a leader in figuring out the chords in a particular piece? Does the work of figuring out chords and parts occur as a group or with individual work?
What would you consider your specialty skills? How did you develop these? Have you had lessons to help you with these skills? If so, for how long and with whom? Have you had any voice training per se? What type of styles are your forte? What type of instrumental sounds can you produce?
Would you say that SIX tends to learn music as entire pieces or in segments? Is there a point where a piece is broken down into elements in order for each member to know what they are doing in a piece?
How many rehearsals does it take to put together a typical piece of music? How many rehearsals does it take to put together a typical medley?
To what extent is listening, performing, improvising and composing part of the process as you learn new music?
Would you describe learning new music as a process of duplication, process of creativity, or a process that uses both duplication and creativity?
Appendix B: Interview Questions for Mr. Knudsen

(Ask about any CD’s and recordings of the group that the researcher does not currently have.)

What are the ages of your first six sons?
How old were your sons when you began working with them musically? Which of your sons were of an age to be singing? Who sang on the Donnie and Marie Show? Was singing something that your boys enjoyed or did they sometimes not want to sing together?

How did you work with your sons? What were practices like? What did you do with them? How often did you practice with them? How long were the practices? Where did they perform initially? When did the group begin to practice and sing on their own? Were there any of your sons who took leadership of these practices, or did they all lead together?

At what point did you stop activities with your sons musically? Do you still have input today, or are you there primarily to support?
Did you encourage music lessons of any type? What types of lessons did each of your sons end up taking? How long did they take lessons? Did your sons desire lessons, or did they just want to develop without lessons?

Are you aware of others who coached and mentored your sons as they moved toward being professional performers?
Did you notice particular strengths in each of your sons, especially musical strengths? What were these for each one of your sons?
How would you describe the way your sons learn music now? Do they seem to have a method and if so, could you describe their method?
Appendix C: Interview Questions for Remaining Secondary Participants

What was your relationship to the group SIX and/or its members?
At what stage in their performance career were you involved?
What was your input into how this group does and learns music?
How would you describe the music learning practices of SIX and/or each individual?
What would you say is most notable in the music learning practices of SIX?
Do you perceive a particular leader or leaders in this group?
Can you describe a development of this group while you were involved? Are you aware of a continued development after you were no longer involved?
Appendix D: Diagram of Substantive Grounded Theory: Part I.

Process of Aural Arranging: Interactive Activities
What SIX Does.

Process of Aural Arranging: Leadership Activities

How SIX Carries Out What They Do.

**Fluid Leadership**

*What Characterizes How SIX Carries Out What They Do.*

**Environment of Complex Challenges**

*Environment of Safety • Environment of Empowerment*

- **Practice of unassuming leadership.**
  - Leadership from an attitude of humility and unpretentiousness.

- **Maintainance of a healthy relational climate.**
  - Judicious application of positive social-emotional leadership activity.

- **Lead in areas of strength.**
  - Both subject specific and leadership strengths considered.

- **Accurate awareness of strengths.**
  - Group members aware of personal, others' and culmulative strengths.

**No single, primary leader, ebb & flow leadership.**

Fluid movement of leadership from group member to group member.

*Foundational Principle of Fluid Leadership*
Appendix G: Introductory Letter to Curtis

April 28, 2009
Curtis,

I left a message on your phone to call me whenever you get a chance. I also thought I would e-mail you so that if you see this, you would know "what" I want to talk with you about.

Since I am now done with my qualifying exams, I am now moving on to my dissertation topic. This has been a long and difficult road for me to pick a topic, as I have already gone through two topics, neither of which seems to be moving me forward. However, after praying, thinking and reading a lot, I might have an idea.

In my own background as a church worship leader in both traditional and contemporary worship styles, I have found two things to exist. The traditional music I seem to be able to deal with in terms I understand. I understand how traditional music styles are notated and learned, and seemed to be comfortable with how that music is taught. However, in the contemporary styles, those that are interested in doing these often don’t learn in the same way. This group tends to learn more by ear and in an informal way. Even those of us that read music are much more dependent on absorbing style and rhythm by listening, rather than by reading the music off the page. This has been a brand new area for me in the last year and a half, as I have organized contemporary worship music for the contemporary worship service at the Methodist Church.

So, here is my idea. As I remember talking to your brother Barry after the Christmas show this past December, I recall that he said you are "ear" musicians, not necessarily learning music from notation. Also, I recall you talking about how SIX learns new pieces and how you "work" out the final outcome, rather than necessarily learning from printed music. So . . . I am considering, if it would agreeable with you, your brothers and any other powers that be, of doing an Ethnographic Case Study on the group SIX. I would be examining exactly how your group learns music in an informal environment (meaning, not in a classroom), would like to interview each of you, and perhaps observe rehearsals as you learn new music.

I have seen dissertations that name specifically who is being studied and also seen many that the identity of the group is not mentioned. I think this would be an exciting research project, and would shed much light on successful informal learning of music in an a cappella vocal group. I would love to research you and your brothers because of your long standing success and use of learning music in a
way that would benefit me in my future as a music teacher and could also benefit the entire field of music education.

So, that is what I would like to talk with you about. I just need to talk with you in the next day or so, as unfortunately my time line is short. Let me know when I can talk to your brothers about this idea to see if it might be agreeable to them.

Sincerely, Jonathan
Appendix H: Introductory Letter to SIX

April 30, 2009
To the Knudsen Brothers: A Possible Research Project
An Ethnographic Case Study of SIX (a.k.a. The Knudsen Brothers)
How does this a cappella vocal group learn music using informal learning techniques and styles?

Since I am now done with my qualifying exams, I am now moving on to my dissertation topic. This has been a long and difficult road for me to pick a topic, as I have already gone through two topics, neither of which seems to be moving me forward. However, after praying, thinking and reading a lot, I might have an idea.

In my own background as a church worship leader in both traditional and contemporary worship styles, I have found that traditional worship music is learned more formally and contemporary worship music is learned more informally. This last style and its informal style of learning, even for those of us that read music, is my area of interest for this dissertation.

So, here is my idea. I remember talking to Barry after the Christmas show this past December; I recall that he said you all are "ear" musicians, not necessarily learning music from notation. Also, I recall Curtis talking about how SIX learns new pieces and how you all "work" out the final outcome, rather than necessarily learning from printed music. So . . . I am considering, if it would agreeable with the entire group and any other powers that be, of doing an Ethnographic Case Study on the group SIX. I would be examining exactly how your group learns music in an informal environment (meaning, not in a classroom). This would be done in several ways:

Observing Some Rehearsals
Interviewing Each of the Brothers Individually
Interviewing Musical and Vocal Coaches (if there are any)
And collecting information like past repertoire, programs, etc.

(Whatever I do, I would strive to interrupt the normal flow of your daily lives as little as possible. The goal in ethnographic research is to research in as natural of an environment as possible.)

I have seen dissertations that name specifically who is being studied and also seen many that the identity of the group is not mentioned (like a professional American a cappella vocal group). I think this would be an exciting research project, and would shed much light on successful informal learning of music. I would love to research SIX because of your long standing success and extremely effective use of learning music in a way that would benefit me in my future as a music
teacher and could also benefit the entire field of music education in informal learning processes.

If I have your permission to pursue this topic, I would write a proposal and to submit to Boston University. Then I would go to Boston for 10 days, either in June or August, and defend my topic proposal. Once this passes through the committee, I could begin the project. There would be no particular rush to do things on a specific time line. I could do the interviews any time and then observe rehearsals whenever is convenient and you are working on new music.

Thank you very much for considering this!!! Jonathan Stewart
Appendix I: Permissions Letter to SIX

Barry, Kevin, Lynn, Jak, Owen and Curtis,

Although I know that you have already seen my initial e-mail telling you of the recent acceptance of my dissertation topic, “Music Learning Practices in Contemporary A Cappella,” I now need your help in making some final decisions before submitting my IRB (Institutional Review Board) paper work.

IRB paper work is required by Boston University if research involves any contact with human participants. Even though this paper work was originally intended to protect participants in medical research, it has now been extended to include any type of research involving people.

It can take some time to get this paper work looked at and approved. In order be efficient, I have listed items below for which I need your input and/or approval. Nothing is in stone, so feel free to express your ideas.

Input/Approval List:
First, I need to decide how to refer to you as a group and as individuals in my dissertation. There are examples of dissertations that use only real names and others that use only aliases. Some use a combination, referring to the group by name but to the individuals by aliases. How would you like your group referenced? Would you like me to use the name SIX or The Knudsen Brothers or would you prefer something like “a contemporary a cappella group in the Midwest”? In talking about what you say in your interviews, would you like to be listed by your real names or would you prefer to choose personal aliases?

Second, I would like to interview each of you privately for about an hour. I will be asking questions about how you learn music, how you work out musical arrangements, how you practice technique, your past musical training, etc. I would also like to record each of these interviews for ease of transcription. These recordings can be kept for archival purposes or destroyed at your discretion. The transcripts I would like to keep permanently for future reference. These would not be shared with anyone else unless you wanted a copy for yourselves. None of these interviews will be utilized for any other purpose aside from my personal research.

Third, I would like to observe rehearsal sessions as you prepare music for performance. Specifically, I would like to see the process you use in order to bring a new song from having never been worked on to fully polished. I would do my best not to interfere with these rehearsals, but only quietly observing what you do in your natural setting. I would
also like to bring a video recorder with me in order to tape these rehearsals. This would help me in my accuracy of observations in terms of what you do and how you do it. These video tapes would be transcribed and used for research purposes, being viewed by myself only. Upon the completion of my dissertation, I would destroy these video tapes or give them to your group as you see fit.

If there is something that I have over looked, please let me know. I will publish nothing from the data that I obtain without first having shared it with you and giving you a chance to correct and revise my findings.

I will sign a written letter that would confirm things like my promise to keep the audio and video recordings confidential, using them for my own research and destroying them after my research is done.

Thank you so much for your time. I am truly excited about this next year as I study what your group does musically as well as getting to know you personally. Feel free to call at 417-739-9620 or 505-903-7073, or e-mail at jonathanstewart_online@yahoo.com.

Sincerely, Jonathan Stewart
Appendix J: Informed Consent Form

Protocol Title: Aural Collaboration within Contemporary A
Principal Investigator: Jonathan Stewart
Description of Subject Population: The Performing Members, Mentors and Contemporaries of the Contemporary A Cappella Group SIX
Version Date: 07/09/2013

The purpose of this study is to discover the overall music learning practices of one specific contemporary a cappella group with an intentional focus on one specific, operational aspect found within many contemporary a cappella groups called aural collaboration. Aural collaboration can be defined as the effort of a group of singers who collaboratively select music, collaboratively select a specific recording to model, and then collaboratively put together a voices-only arrangement by ear, in absence of a musical score. This practice is used to a limited degree by all contemporary a cappella groups in order to emulate styles and inflections of performance that cannot be notated in a score. For a few select groups, this practice is the primary means by which musical arrangements are created. SIX, the case study for this project, is among these select contemporary a cappella groups that operate almost entirely through aural collaboration. The data collected from the performing members, mentors and contemporaries of SIX will be used in the writing of the final dissertation project in completion of a DMA in Music Education from the College of Fine Arts at Boston University.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop your participation at any time. If you are a performing member of SIX, you will be asked to participate in one, approximately sixty minute long interview, provide the researcher with substantial video footage of one season’s rehearsal preparation, and, if deemed necessary, participate in one, two hour participant observation with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon time and place which will be videotaped. If you are not a performing member of SIX, you will be asked to participate in one, approximately thirty minute interview. During the transcription and qualitative analysis, you may be contacted occasionally by the researcher to clarify results at your convenience. When a finished draft is being approached, you may also be asked to check use of your interview and/or video data for accuracy. Completion of this dissertation is expected to be May 2014.

Since this study is of a well-known, professional performance group, you are additionally giving permission to be identified by name in this study. However, as a participant in this study, you may ask for anything considered private, proprietary or a professional trade secret to be omitted from the final reporting of results.
If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact the researcher, Jonathan Stewart by e-mail at jonathanstewart_online@yahoo.com or by phone at 918-289-2805. You may also contact this researcher’s dissertation adviser, Dr. Deborah Bradley by e-mail at deborah.bradley@utoronto.ca or by phone at 905-276-5732. You may obtain further information about your rights as a research subject by calling BU CRC IRB Office at 617-358-6115.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the information in this consent form. I have been given the chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of this form.

**SIGNATURE**

________________________________________
Name of Subject

________________________________________   _________________
Signature of Subject       Date

I have explained the research to the subject and answered all his/her questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject.

________________________________________
Name of Person Obtaining Consent

________________________________________   _________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent       Date
Appendix K: Personal Communications Regarding Construct and Face Validity

In order to establish both construct and face validity regarding the grounded theory of fluid leadership emergent in this dissertation, I pasted into an e-mail the five principles of fluid leadership as contextualized within SIX’s process of aural arranging. I asked each member of SIX to read this and provide feedback as to their personal reactions to this theory. Below are the responses I received.

Lynn: I think your analysis is pretty accurate Jonathan. There isn't anything in that summary that I disagree with. In fact, the theory/pattern established is very similar to leadership style in our church as I've witnessed and experienced it. Moreover, years ago (late 90's) at a time of unfortunate upheaval and conflict within our ranks, when perhaps egos had gotten out of hand, it was pointed out in an almost "save the day" way that we had all gravitated towards certain areas of leadership according to strengths and that everyone had an important somewhat unique role to play in leadership on and off stage. Of course, the theory of Fluid Leadership as it applies to aural arranging is pretty narrowed down for obvious reasons here, but to me the theory applies all across the board more or less to our whole operation. I believe you have discovered and elucidated truth and true principles here. (personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Owen: Hi Jonathan, I am quite amazed you were able to arrive at this theory based on our group’s method of musical learning/rehearsal which really has no rhyme or reason! (Just kidding about the ‘no rhyme or reason’ but it seems like that sometimes.) Actually, I found the summary of your dissertation very interesting. I think it's harder for me as a SIX member to recognize or identify the structure and organization that actually exists within our learning/rehearsal process while I'm in the midst of said process, which is a subjective position that I see it from. So I probably never thought about it too much in the way you've theorized. Anyway, I don't really have anything to add or subtract from the summation of your theory. It appears the several points you have outlined are very sound and well constructed so it seems about right. (personal communication, October 22, 2014)

Curtis: Jonathan, I am impressed with your analysis. I didn't know we did all that, but I think you've quantified and explained it quite well. Thank
you for doing this. I hope it proves to be very useful and valuable research. (personal communication, November 4, 2014)

Barry: Thank you for choosing our group, Jonathan. Everything you said in your dissertation made sense to me and I certainly don’t see how it could be improved. (personal communication, November 4, 2014)

Jak: Thank you Jonathan. It's quite interesting to read about what we do and have it quantified so well. I don’t really have anything to add other than thank you for selecting our group for your project. (personal communication, November 4, 2014)

Kevin: I think it’s great Jonathan and thank you for selecting our group. (personal communication, November 4, 2014)
Appendix L: Interactive Communication Analysis (ICA) based on Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) (Bales, 1950, p. 9)

Detailed View

Shows Enjoyment – An interaction that shows enjoyment. This interaction can be characterized by jokes, laughing and a show of satisfaction. It is often precipitated by the insertion of related or unrelated humorous material into goal oriented activity that creates levity. The overall effect of this interaction is to break tension and does not seem to negatively affect activity flow. This interaction can also be during a stated or spontaneous break time where Neutral Interaction is replaced by Shows Enjoyment.

Shows Support – An interaction in a sequence of goal oriented activities that shows support, solidarity, approval or encouragement with another person’s information, opinion, or direction. This support is usually accompanied by positive, supportive, and friendly emotions; enthusiasm.

Shows Agreement – An interaction in a sequence of goal oriented activities that shows agreement, acceptance, understanding or compliance with another person’s information, opinion or direction. This agreement is matter-of-fact and devoid or mostly devoid of emotion.

Gives Direction – An interaction of leadership that offers impetus and direction by taking control of communication and directing the attention of the group to the creation of problem solving strategies to be applied to goal oriented activities getting started or presently underway. Common expressions of this interaction would be calling a rehearsal to order, opening, directing or ending a phase or focus of activity, or other activities that could be termed “taking charge.” This is the primary interaction that precedes practical implementation of decided problem solving strategies.

Gives Opinion – An interaction that expresses personal opinion, evaluation, analysis, beliefs, feelings, wishes or ideas in regard to guiding goal oriented activity getting started or presently underway. This is the primary interaction in the interim stage between acquired information and directional impetus.

Gives Information – An interaction that offers, repeats, clarifies or confirms information pertaining to the goal oriented activity getting started or presently underway. This information is normally considered factual in character (although not necessarily true) and potentially verifiable through observation, experience or research. This is the primary interaction during the formational portion of goal oriented activity.
Neutral Interaction – An interaction that seemingly does not detain nor advance the present goal oriented activity nor express either agreement or disagreement. Neutral Interaction can characterize a section of time if either a stated or spontaneous break in goal-oriented activity has occurred. It can also indicate a Mutual Interaction between two or more members of the group as they interactionally break away from the group and focus outside the larger group, but without affecting the larger group. Simple Acknowledgement, Plays Recording, Stops Recording, and Working It Out are all part of Neutral Interaction.

Asks Information – An interaction that asks for information, repetition, clarification, or confirmation pertaining to the goal oriented activity starting or presently underway. This inquiry is normally asking for factual information that is potentially verifiable through observation, experience or research.

Asks Opinion – An interaction that asks for someone else’s personal opinion, evaluation, analysis, beliefs, feelings, wishes or ideas in regard to goal oriented activity getting started or presently underway.

Asks Direction – An interaction that asks for someone else’s impetus and direction by an inquiry for guidance in terms of the goal oriented activity getting started or presently underway. It is a request for leadership from another member in order to know how to personally proceed with the current goal oriented activity in order to personally prepare for practical implementation of decided problem solving strategies.

Shows Disagreement – An interaction in a sequence of goal oriented activity that shows rejection of another person’s information, opinion or direction. This disagreement is matter-of-fact and devoid or mostly devoid of emotion.

Shows Disapproval – An interaction in a sequence or goal oriented activity that shows rejection of another person’s information, opinion or direction in a disapproving manner. This disapproval is usually accompanied by negative, unsupportive, and possibility unfriendly emotions.

Shows Digression – An interaction that creates digression from the goal oriented activity, interrupting or detaining the activity flow by suggesting an unrelated activity or subject, inserting related activities with incorrect timing or a member changes direction because of a disapproval from another member. This type of interaction is often accompanied by tension between members.
### Appendix M: Interaction Results Tables

**Interaction Results Table – Happy Christmas, Melody**

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<th>Second 1/3</th>
<th>Third 1/3</th>
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<th>Cumulative &amp; Percent</th>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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## Interaction Results Table – “Happy Christmas to All,” Woodshed

### Table of Task and Social Emotional Leadership by Approximate Time Period

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<th>Cumulative &amp; Percent</th>
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### Table of Task and Social-Emotional Leadership by Performance Member of SIX

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<th>Lynn</th>
<th>Jak</th>
<th>Owen</th>
<th>Curtis</th>
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Leadership Rank, w/o DG: 4th / 18  1st / 50  6th / 0  3rd / 21  5th / 16  2nd / 25
Interaction Results Table – “I Gotta Feeling”

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Table of Task and Social-Emotional Leadership by Performance Member of SIX

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### Interaction Results Table – “Carry On Wayward Son”

#### Table of Task and Social Emotional Leadership by Approximate Time Period

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<th>Second 1/3</th>
<th>Third 1/3</th>
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<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
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#### Table of Task and Social-Emotional Leadership by Performance Member of SIX

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<th>Task &amp; Social-Emotional Leadership</th>
<th>Barry</th>
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<th>Lynn</th>
<th>Jak</th>
<th>Owen</th>
<th>Curtis</th>
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<td>Shows Enjoyment (SE)</td>
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Appendix N: Key Terms Utilized in Aural Arranging and Fluid Leadership

I. Environments of Aural Arranging and Fluid Leadership
   a. Environment of Complex Challenges
   b. Environment of Safety
   c. Environment of Empowerment

II. Thinking and Knowing within Aural Arranging and Fluid Leadership
   a. Musical Thinking and Knowing: Procedural Musicianship
      i. Formal Musical Knowledge
      ii. Informal Musical Knowledge
      iii. Impressionistic Musical Knowledge
      iv. Supervisory Musical Knowledge
   b. Leadership Thinking and Knowing
      i. Direct Task Leadership
         1. Gives Direction
         2. Gives Opinion
         3. Gives Information
      ii. Indirect Task Leadership
         1. Asks Direction
         2. Asks Opinion
         3. Asks Information
      iii. Positive Social-Emotional Leadership
         1. Shows Enjoyment
         2. Shows Support
         3. Shows Agreement
      iv. Negative Social-Emotional Leadership
         1. Shows Digression
         2. Shows Disapproval
         3. Shows Disagreement

III. Activities Involved in Fluid Leadership during Aural Arranging
    a. Preparatory Activities – Preparing for Aural Arranging
       i. Selection of Repertoire
       ii. Selection of Model Recordings
    b. Creative Activities – Process of Aural Arranging
       i. Interactive Discussion
       ii. Interactive Listening
          1. Generalized Listening
          2. Focused Listening
          3. Engaged Listening
iii. Interactive Singing
   1. Trial and Error Singing
   2. Refinement Singing
   3. Confirmational Singing

IV. **Principles of Fluid Leadership**
   a. No Single, Primary Leader and Ebb and Flow Leadership
   b. Lead in Areas of Strength
   c. Accurate Awareness of Strengths
      i. Personal Procedural Knowledge
      ii. Others’ Procedural Knowledge
      iii. Group Procedural Knowledge
   d. Practice of Unassuming Leadership
   e. Maintenance of a Healthy Relational Climate
References


Szollose, B. (2011). *Liquid leadership: From Woodstock to Wikipedia: Multigenerational management ideas that are changing the way we run things*. Austin, TX: Greenleaf.


Curriculum Vitae
JONATHAN DAVID STEWART
Bartlesville, OK 74006
jonathanstewart_online@yahoo.com

Education
Doctorate of Musical Arts in Music Education
Boston University, 2016
Dissertation: SIX: Fluid Leadership and Aural Arranging in the Context of Contemporary A Cappella

Master of Music in Choral Conducting
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 1998
Thesis: Mehrstimmige Gesänge: The Part Songs of Franz Joseph Haydn

Graduate Studies in Vocal Performance
Indiana University, Bloomington, 1986–1987

Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance
SE Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, 1998

College Level Experience
Music Program Chair, 2009 – Present:
Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Bartlesville, OK.

Instructor of Music, 2004 – 2007:
SW Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK.

Professor of Music, 2002 – 2004:
Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma City, OK.

Vocal Music Instructor, 1999 – 2002:
Crowder College, Neosho, MO.

Church Experience
Music Ministry Coordinator, 2007 – 2009:
Kimberling City United Methodist Church, Kimberling City, MO: Coordinator and Director of Music Ministry for Traditional and Contemporary Worship Services.

Director of Music, 1989 – 1999:
Centenary United Methodist Church, Cape Girardeau, MO: Program expansion from two choirs to more than 10 ensembles for children, youth, collegiate, and adults including groups for voices, handbells, and instruments.

Minister of Music, 1983 – 1986:
First General Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, MO: Chancel and Youth Choirs.
Select Conducting Experience

Conductor, OKWU Chorale & Bartlesville Symphony, Dec. 2015:
A Musicological Journey through the 12 Days of Christmas by
Craig Courtney, Bartlesville, OK.

Director, OKWU Relentless, Contemp. A Cap., 2012-Present:
Varied Repertoire, Bartlesville, OK.

Conductor, OKWU Chorale, May 2012:
Thoughts and Remembrances by Jackson Berkey,
Bartlesville, OK.

Conductor, OKWU Chorale; May 2011:
Feel the Spirit: A Cycle of Spirituals by John Rutter,
Bartlesville, OK.

Conductor, Branson Community Chorus, Dec. 2008:
Messiah by G. F. Handel, Adoration Parade, Branson, MO.

Conductor, SWOSU Community Chorus, Apr. 2007:
Oklahoma Centennial Celebration excerpts from Oklahoma,
Music Man, Big River, and George M. Cohan, Weatherford,
OK.

Conductor, SWOSU Community Chorus, Apr. 2006:
A Showcase of Gilbert and Sullivan, Weatherford, OK.

Conductor, SWOSU Chamber Choir; Nov. 2005:
L’Amfiparnaso, Madrigal Comedie by Oratio Vecchi,
Weatherford, OK.

Conductor, OCCC Chamber Singers, Dec. 2003:
Reluctant Dragon by John Rutter, Oklahoma City, OK.

Conductor, OCCC Community Chorus; Nov. 2003:
Gloria by Vivaldi, Oklahoma City, OK.

Conductor, Crowder College Community Chorus, Apr. 2002:
Gospel Mass by Robert Ray and
The Seasonings by P.D.Q. Bach, Neosho, MO.

Conductor, Crowder College Community Chorus, Dec. 2001:
Many Moods of Christmas by Shaw/Bennett, Neosho, MO.

Conductor, Crowder College Community Chorus; Dec. 2000:
Fantasia on Christmas Carols by Ralph Vaughan Williams,
Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten, Neosho, MO.
Select Solo Singing Experience

Soloist, OK Mozart Festival, June 2015:
Baritone Sings Broadway, Bartlesville, OK.

Soloist, Choral Society and NY Amici Orchestra; June 2013:
Old American Songs, Aaron Copland, Bartlesville, OK.

Soloist, Choral Society; December 2011:
Messiah, G. F. Handel, Bartlesville, OK.

Faculty Recital, SW Oklahoma State University; Apr. 2007:
Varied Repertoire, Weatherford, OK.

Faculty Recital, SW Oklahoma State University; Feb. 2005:
Varied Repertoire, Weatherford, OK.

Soloist, Western Oklahoma State College; Dec. 2004:
Messiah by G. F. Handel. Altus, OK.

Faculty Recital, Oklahoma City Community College; Feb. 2003:
Varied Repertoire, Oklahoma City, OK.

Faculty Recital, Crowder College; Feb. 2001:
Varied Repertoire, Neosho, MO.

Soloist, Cape Girardeau and Jackson Muni Bands; 1994 – 1999:
Varied Repertoire, Cape Girardeau and Jackson, MO.

Soloist, SE Missouri State University Choral Union; Apr. 1997:
Creation, by Franz Joseph Haydn, Cape Girardeau, MO.

Soloist, SE Missouri State University Choral Union; Apr. 1995:
Carmina Burana by Carl Orff, Cape Girardeau, MO.

Masters Voice Recital, Southern Illinois University; Spr. 1993:
Varied Repertoire, Carbondale, IL.

Select Ensemble Experience

Sound Emporium (Barbershop Quartet) 2015 – Present:
Varied Repertoire, Bartlesville, OK.

Mugs and Brushes (Barbershop Quartet), 2004 – 2006:
Varied Repertoire, Weatherford, OK.

St. Louis Voices at Webster University, 1993-1994:
Varied Repertoire, St. Louis, MO.

St. Louis Chamber Chorus, 1990-1994:
Varied Repertoire, St. Louis, MO.

Musical Theatre Experience

Musical Director, Crowder College, Mar. 2002:
The Fantasticks by Schmidt and Jones, Neosho, MO.

Musical Director, Crowder College, July 2001:
Babes in Arms by Rodgers and Hart, Neosho, MO.