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Whole school singing at two Canadian independent secondary schools: "it is the life-blood of our school"

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WHOLE SCHOOL SINGING AT TWO CANADIAN INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS: "IT IS THE LIFE-BLOOD OF OUR SCHOOL"

by

ANNE BONNYCASTLE

B. Mus., Curtis Institute of Music, 1987
M.A., Simon Fraser University, 2006

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Approved by

First Reader _____

Mary L. Cohen, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Music Education
University of Iowa

Second Reader _____

André de Quadros, Ed.D.
Professor of Music, Music Education

Third Reader _____

Kelly Bylica, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education

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WHOLE SCHOOL SINGING AT

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ANNE BONNYCASTLE

Boston University, College of Fine Arts, 2021

Major Professor: Mary L. Cohen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Music Education, University of Iowa

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the phenomenon of whole-school communal singing at two Canadian independent secondary schools. Research questions included: What does the practice of whole-school communal singing look like, how is it experienced by participants, and how has the practice been initiated and maintained? Previous research on whole school singing at the secondary school level is scant. This suited an exploratory, phenomenological research methodology for the present study. Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics of singing provided the theoretical framework. The idea that choral singing can be approached through a broader lens than is currently practiced in typical choral education contexts helped to characterize whole school singing as a communal singing practice.

Research literature explored prior to data analysis focused on communal singing, defined as participatory singing by everyone in a non-choir community. Examples included crowd singing at sports games, at protest marches, and in churches. Communal singing in North America was more popular in the early 20th century than today, which may explain its rareness in contemporary secondary schools.

Data were collected through interviews with 17 current and former students, faculty and administrators at two schools. Analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), supported by NVivo software, and resulted in five overarching themes. The first was that all the research participants expressed a strong positive regard for the practice of whole school singing; the second was that communal singing may contribute to student belongingness. The third overarching theme was that communal singing appears to mediate emotions and may contribute to student wellness; fourth, that the approach taken to whole school singing at the two schools prioritizes full participation over achieving aesthetic qualities typically espoused by performance choirs. The fifth theme was that whole school singing at the secondary school level is not easy to initiate and maintain, but requires specific leadership, intention, and strategy in order to create a fully participative, engaging, and joyful experience in a secondary school context. Post data analysis, findings were compared and contrasted with those from related research. Recommendations are provided for educators who may wish to consider incorporating communal singing into school life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 – Introduction

I support creating schools where everyone sings, where it is possible to build more humanistic educational communities that encourage finding, recognizing, listening to, and celebrating every voice. (Pascale, 2005 p. 173)

In many North American secondary schools, students' only access to singing is through school choral programs, available as an elective course or co-curricular activity (Elpus & Abril, 2011). As a result, high school students who choose not to join choir or participate in school musicals miss out on opportunities to participate in school-related group singing. Reasons for not electing choir may include scheduling constraints, self-identity (not identifying as a "singer"), or lack of singing self-efficacy (believing that one is not capable of singing or of learning to sing). Further to this, Elpus and Abril (2019) showed that students from lower SES backgrounds, males, and members of visible minorities are under-represented in high school choral ensembles. A multitude of studies associate benefits with active involvement in music, specifically choral singing. These include physical (Livesey et. al., 2012), mental (Avram, 2014) and emotional benefits (Bailey & Davidson, 2002, 2005; Clift & Morrison, 2011). Group singing has also been shown to increase trust and cooperation (Anshel & Kipper, 1988) as well as social bonding (Pearce, Launay, Machin, et al., 2016). As long as choral music remains an elective offering subscribed to by an unrepresentative subset of the population, a large portion of the student body may miss out on the benefits offered by choral music.

This problem, located within a school context, is mirrored by a larger, societal problem within contemporary Western culture. It can be argued that group singing is a

natural and vital form of community expression practiced by humans, across cultures (Trehub, 2015) and throughout human evolution (Mithen, 2006). In some traditional communities, such those Pascale (2002) described in Ghana, singing is an integral part of everyday life: everyone sings as a matter of course. Historically within Western culture, community singing used to occur regularly in certain contexts, for example, within American training camps during World War 1 (Morgan-Ellis, 2018a), at movie theatres in the 1930s (Morgan-Ellis, 2018b) and in England's community singing movement in the 1920s (Russel, 2008). However, Russel (2008) observed that within contemporary Western culture, outside of organized religious settings, community singing has all but disappeared. The fact that it has appeared occasionally in times of stress, for example, members of the U.S. Congress sang together spontaneously after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Historical Highlights, 2001), suggests that community singing is indeed a vital and necessary form of human collective expression. Nevertheless, some researchers (e.g., Pascale, 2002 and Russel, 2008) have suggested that communal singing is not consistently or generally available within contemporary Western culture.

According to Bailey and Davidson (2002), Blacking (1976), and Elliot (1990) passive music consumption, rather than active participation, is the norm for many people in the Western world. With the advent of technology that permits most of Western society immediate access to vast libraries of digitally-stored music, along with increasingly portable and relatively cheap playback equipment, music listening, rather than creating, dominates musical behavior (Hargreaves & North, 1999; Rinsema, 2017). Pascale (2002, 2005) argued that reduced participation in music-making may be a

consequence of a music education model that puts Western classical music at the forefront, with primary values being skill-building, performance, and perfection (Pascale, 2002, 2005; Sloboda, Davidson and Howe, 1994). For choral singing, this model may be perpetuating an elitist view of musicality, as it creates a bifurcated sense of who is a "singer" and who is a "non-singer" (Pascale, 2005). This results in barriers to participation. Blacking stated of these barriers: "Must the majority be made 'unmusical' so that a few may become more 'musical'?" (p. 4)

Within a few independent schools in Canada, however, I have discovered an alternative approach: regular whole-school assembly singing at the secondary level. In these secondary schools, the entire school community, including students, teachers and administrators, gathers two to three times a week and sings together. While this practice may be found more frequently at the elementary level, its rarity at the secondary level makes it a practice worth investigating, as it flies in the face of how music educators typically conceptualize secondary school choral music education (Pascale, 2005). Unlike typical secondary school choral programs, whole-school singing at these schools is not presented as an elective course or as a vehicle for musical skill-building. It does not build towards a performance and does not separate the audience from the performer. Instead, as I learned from my preliminary inquiries, assembly singing in these schools appears to involve the entire community in an artistic expression whose priorities are inclusion, community building, and fun. Whole-school assembly singing may indeed represent a form of community expression that has shown, over time and across cultures, to be important to humans.

Clarifying the Focus of My Inquiry

As the focus of my inquiry is whole-school singing as a communal participatory activity, I have excluded school-based religious congregational singing from consideration. Singing as an expression of worship is a separate phenomenon, and not the subject of this study. Nor is whole-school singing at the junior or primary school level of interest: This practice seems to be both more common than at the secondary school level, and has already been the subject of research (e.g., Boyack, 2003).

It is at the secondary school level that children often drop out of musical tuition (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Sloboda 2001), and at the secondary school level that whole-school singing seems to be rare. Very few, if any, researchers have rigorously examined whole-school singing at the secondary level. There is historic documentation written that advocates for the practice, and provides advice to teachers and school administrators (e.g., Dykema, 1931; Morgan, 1940; Zanzig, 1933). There are two contemporary accounts of whole school singing at a boys' secondary school in Melbourne, Australia (Bayliss et al., 2009; Bayliss & Stuart, 2012); however, these accounts, written by the school's principal and teachers, made no reference to research methodology, and sent a clear advocacy message. The rarity of schools that practice whole-school, communal singing, and the lack of research on this topic at the secondary level, make this phenomenon suitable for study.

Whole-school Singing in Canadian Independent Secondary Schools

Whole-school singing in Canada was more common 100 years ago than it is today (C. McCauley, CAIS Director of Research, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2019). At

the beginning of the last century, 90 percent of independent schools in Canada were affiliated with the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada or the United Church (MacKay & Firmin, 2008). As such, whole school singing in these schools typically took the form of hymn-singing, scheduled during weekly "Chapel." This hymn-singing was, in effect, whole-school, communal singing; however, it was practiced primarily for the purposes of worship.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, most Canadian independent schools had dissolved their church affiliation, reflecting the secularization of the society in which they were situated (MacKay & Firmin, 2008). However, for most, the practice of weekly assembly meetings continued as a matter of tradition. Hymn-singing during these assemblies, on the other hand, ceased, and with it, whole-school community singing, especially at the secondary level (C. McCauley, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2019).

However, in my work as a teacher in a Canadian independent school, I discovered a few Canadian independent secondary schools have continued the practice of whole-school singing during their regular, secular, school assemblies. I learned that in some of these schools, folk, pop, and traditional songs have replaced hymns; alternatively, hymn lyrics have been deemphasized, in order that whole-school singing continue despite a secular mandate. This practice of whole-school, assembly singing at the secondary (high) school level is the phenomenon of interest to this study.

Community Singing vs Communal Singing

In the research literature, the term *community singing* has been used to describe a range of activities, from the singing endeavors of amateur choirs (Ahlquist, 2006) to the

spontaneous singing of entire stadiums of sports fans (Mihalka, 2012). A substantial body of research has investigated the characteristics, history, ethos, and effects of community singing activities (e.g., Ahlquist, 2006; de Quadros, 2019, Higgins, 2012). This research is located within the larger field of *community music.*

Community Music. Community music (CM) is a concept that defies definition and resists categorization (Higgins, 2012; Phelan, 2017; Veblen, 2013). According to Phelan (2017), "the danger of definition is that it diminishes the particularity of event-based activities, and strips them of the specificity of cultural, social and political context" (p. 145). Veblen (2013) argued that the concept of CM is interpreted in different ways in different parts of the world, and can encompass any and all music-making: amateur and professional music, formal and informal music, music made in institutions and non-institutional music.

One commonly used characterization of CM is that it can refer to the activities of amateur music-makers and ensembles, rather than those of professional musicians and ensembles. The relationship between amateurs and professionals formed the agenda for the Community Music Association commission's first seminar in Wellington, New Zealand, 8–14 July 1988 (McCarthy, 2008, p. 40), and served as the original concept for CM. McCarthy (2008), in documenting the emergence of the CM movement, explained that Einar Solbu, who, from 1982 to 1990, chaired the original CMA commission within the International Society of Music Education (ISME), was particularly concerned with the relationship between amateur and professional music worlds. Solbu (1987) wrote: "In my part of the world [Norway], one of the "problems" in community music life is to

obtain the right balance, or, if you prefer, a sound interaction, between the "local" music enjoyed by every man, woman and child in a community, and the art of music, usually interpreted by the professional musicians" (pp. 58–59). However, some scholars, such as Higgins (2012), do not refer to the professional/amateur dichotomy in their characterization of CM.

Another characteristic that appears in some uses of the term CM is "out of school," that is, music that does not occur within schools. The CMA Commission within the ISME was originally called the Out of School Activities Commission prior to 1982, with its focus on educating the adult amateur musician (International Society for Music Education, n.d.). One reason for the change in name had to do with community music schools wishing to be included within the organization (McCarthy, 2008). If 'out of school' is one of the defining characteristics of CM, then communal singing within independent schools (the topic of my research) is certainly not within the domain of community music.

A less restrictive definition of CM was suggested by Higgins and Willingham (2017), who described community music as "an interventionist approach between a music leader or facilitator and *those participants who wish to be involved* [emphasis added]" (p. 9). This point is particularly salient to my research, because voluntary participation is precisely the characteristic that differentiates community singing from the communal phenomenon I am investigating in this dissertation. The focus of my research is whole-school singing, a context where every person in the community is expected to sing. In the schools I investigated, attendance at Chapel is mandatory. Everyone sings, not because

they chose to join the choir or to show up at a singing event, but because they are part of the community.

Community singing and Communal singing. Situated within the field of community music, Ahlquist's (2006) *Chorus and Community* explored the social phenomenon of community that has developed out of various configurations of amateur choruses, in various cultural and historical contexts. Similarly, de Quadros' (2019) *Focus: Choral Music in Global Perspective* explored the transformational effect of amateur choral communities on their membership. Both authors, in examining the characteristics and the effect of chorus participation, adhered to a definition of chorus (or choir) as "having more or less fixed membership, *distinguishing between preparation and a culminating musical event given for listeners* [emphasis added] . . . (and having) a chosen repertoire" (Ahlquist, 2006, p. 3). This definition highlights another identifiable aspect of community choir activity that distinguishes it from communal singing: Community choirs differentiate between rehearsal and performance; communal singing does not, nor does communal singing distinguish between performers and listeners.

Ahlquist (2006) presented the concept of "chorus-as-community" (p. 7) to highlight the social bonding and sense of community that choir members feel as a result of engaging in chorus activities. In order to distinguish the phenomenon of interest to me from the activities of community choirs, I propose to invert Ahlquist's "chorus-as-community" to "community-as-chorus." Rather than studying the choir as a community, I am interested in what it looks like when a group of people, who have gathered for a different purpose, engages in group singing. For example, while church congregations

may gather primarily for the purpose of worshipping; they may also sing together as a secondary activity in the service of worship. Sports fans tend to gather together to spectate and to support their team; they may engage in singing together, but again, singing is not the primary reason they gathered. Similarly, whole-school communal singing is, for the purpose of my research, the singing activity engaged in by an entire school community. The community is the whole school; singing happens to be an activity the community does, separate from its primary aim which is (arguably) educating students.

Communal singing, as I have described it has appeared in a number of contexts, including:

- church congregational singing
- communal singing by religious communities (congregational singing)
- mass singing by crowds at sports events
- communal singing at summer camps
- singing in English pubs that happens as a matter of course, rather than as a dedicated singing session
- Singing at protest marches and rallies

In all these cases, communities gather primarily for non-singing purposes, and sing together as a secondary activity. Furthermore, the singers do not distinguish between rehearsal and a culminating performance. Neither do they distinguish between performer and audience. They are truly “communities as chorus.”

School Assembly Singing as Communal Singing. In the twentieth century, school assemblies were considered an integral part of the school program (The Assembly: Guiding Principles and Policies, 1941). Currently, some schools continue to use regular (e.g., daily, weekly, or twice-weekly) whole-school meetings in gyms or theatres to communicate information to the entire school body. Alternatively, in schools where there is not a facility large enough for whole-school gathering, information is disseminated over a public-address system. Schmidt (2010) explained that beyond this primary function of information sharing, school assemblies are designed to inculcate students with shared values, norms of reciprocity and socially beneficial behavior, meant to imbue students with social capital, preparing them to actively participate in a democratic society. According to Silbert and Jacklin (2015) the purposes of school assemblies include the carrying of messages of allegiance and belonging, and contributing to schools' efforts to govern student behavior. The ODM school in Odisha, India, provided a list of the 11 purposes of the school assembly. These include: creating unity among students and teachers, imparting discipline, developing a sense of school identity, sharing information (announcements), motivating students with accolades on performing well in academics and curricular announcements, familiarizing students with common rules and ideals of the school, and developing correct audience habits (ODM Public Schools, 2020). The success or failure of school assemblies to fulfill these purposes appears to be mixed: one high school student reported in their school newspaper that school assemblies should be discontinued, as their purpose is to "spread news to students" but they are "draining, ineffective, and a waste of valuable time that could be used to educate

students" (Sherfy, 2019). Nevertheless, it is clear that singing is not the primary purpose that schools gather in assembly, nor do many schools incorporate singing into their school assembly program.

As I explained above, it was difficult for me to locate even two Canadian secondary schools that practice assembly singing beyond the singing of the National Anthem as an expression of patriotism. Schools that do sing in assembly involve the entire community: this is not the choir performing at school assembly, where some students comprise an audience while others perform. Whole-school assembly singing comes with it the expectation that everyone in the school community sings. This is why I characterize whole-school assembly singing as communal singing. Furthermore, the singing that occurs in assembly is not a rehearsal for a subsequent performance. The singing occurs for its own sake.

A Definition of Communal Singing. Thus, for the purposes of my research, I define "communal singing" as follows:

1. singing by a group of people who have gathered for reasons other than singing; and
2. the singing is participatory, not presentational (Turino, 2008); that is, the singing features "the audience as its own performer" (Scholes, 1970, p. 211).

Both of these features must be present to meet my definition of communal singing, which interestingly, corresponds with Zanzig's definition of "community singing" in his 1933 treatise, *Community and Assembly Singing*:

> By community singing is meant singing by a group or assemblage *not organized for that purpose* [emphasis added] . . . It is for the participation of everyone, regardless of his or her musical ability, *and it is not directed toward the giving of a concert* [emphasis added]. The music and the music-makers make up its entire world; the audience, so indispensable and dominating a factor in most music-making, is left out . . . The whole personality can be enlisted, released from mental and emotional tensions, in generous self-forgetful expression. (Zanzig, 1933, p. 5)

Examples of group singing that do not meet my definition of communal singing include:

- amateur choirs, which members join for the purpose of singing, such as the Common Thread Chorus, a "non-audition chorus which promotes a sense of community by performing joyful and empowering music" (Joyce, 2003, p. 308);
- Ubuntu Choirs, a network of community choirs, which, although they prioritize singing to build community rather than primarily for performance (the Ubuntu Choirs network, n.d.), nevertheless consist of members who have voluntarily joined;
- special-purpose choirs, for example, a prison choir, where not everyone in the prison community is part of the choir (e.g., Cohen, 2009a); or choirs for people experiencing homelessness, such as the Dallas Street Choir (Nordberg et al., 2018);
- workplace choirs where employees volunteer to be part of a work-sponsored chorus, such as the Employee Choir at University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer

Center (O'Kane, 2020), or choral circles in early Soviet workers' clubs (Nelson, 2009);

- drop-in choirs or singing-events, such as Beer Choirs (Beer Choir, n.d.), Choir!Choir!Choir, (Choir!Choir!Choir!, n.d.) or Shape-Note "singings" (Miller, 2008), where people volunteer to join for the primary purpose of singing together;
- school choirs that are either an elective course or an optional extra-curricular activity; and
- performances, such as rock, pop or folk concerts, where the audience is distinctly separated from the performers, despite some sing-along activity (e.g., Pawley & Mullenseifen, 2012).

In the first five examples above, the reason the group has gathered is primarily for the purposes of singing. The last example separates the audience from the performer: The focus is on the performer, and not on the group singing. However, as Pawley and Mullenseifen (2012) argue, when spontaneous singing-along occurs at an entertainment venue (such as when revelers sing along to a rock anthem at a night-club or party), this creates a temporary neo-tribe, or community. In these cases, this activity does perhaps resemble communal singing, according to my definition.

Theoretical Framework

My inquiry is framed by Pascale's (2002, 2005) two aesthetics of singing. Pascale (2002, 2005) posited that by framing the purposes and goals of singing in music education into two contrasting approaches, or aesthetics, we can better understand certain phenomena, such as the phenomenon of the non-singer. Pascale's first aesthetic,

Aesthetic A, aligns with a western cultural perspective. It prioritizes certain practices such as improving vocal performance through note reading methods, a focus on beauty of tone and uniformity of vowels, and may incorporate exclusionary practices, such as selecting out the "better singers" and suggesting that others refrain from singing at all. (2002, p. 61). "Success" from an Aesthetic A viewpoint would be determined similarly to the ways that music festival judges typically evaluate school performances at music competitions: through the achievement high standards of performance according to criteria espoused by western art music and other Euro-central traditions.

Pascale (2002, 2005) suggested that if schools were to embrace a broader conceptualization of singing, then a school community might be created where "everyone sings because everyone knows he/she *[sic]* is a singer" (2002, p. 3). Pascale (2005) termed this broader conceptualization "Aesthetic B." The primary purpose of an Aesthetic B approach is to build community and experience the joy of singing together for the sake of joining in song with others, not to prepare for performances according to the aesthetics of Western art music (p. 171).

For Pascale (2002), the idea of approaching singing from a broader perspective arose from her experience of being immersed in music-making in Ghana. After returning to the United States, Pascale realized that "every human being is conditioned, to a degree impossible to fathom, by the assumptions of the culture in which he lives" (Small, 1977, p. 7, as cited in Pascale, 2005, p. 170). Pascale's (2005) epiphany, that Western cultural assumptions underpin music education in our society, led her to conclude that Aesthetic B could be an alternative approach.

Pascale's (2002) research yielded the finding that the concepts "singer" and "non-singer" are contextually bound social constructions. An illustrative example: Pascale described a research participant who considered herself a singer while in Barbados, but not a singer when in the United States (p. 30). Pascale interpreted this paradox to have resulted from the differing approaches to singing in the two cultures: in Barbados, "everyone" sings (Aesthetic B); in the United States, (Aesthetic A), a singer is "someone who sings solos, someone who leads songs, and someone who can sing in tune" (p. 30). By describing and naming these two approaches to music-making, Pascale has provided a useful conceptual framework to guide my exploration of communal singing.

From an ethnomusicology stance, Turino's (2008) concepts of *participatory* and *presentational* music correspond to Pascale's two aesthetics. According to Turino, in participatory traditions "priority is placed on encouraging people to join in regardless of the quality of their contributions . . (it is) more about the social relations being realized through the performance than about producing art" (p. 35). For Pascale (2002, 2005), Aesthetic B is equivalent to Turino's participatory tradition. Inclusion is a key priority in Aesthetic B. Within an Aesthetic B approach, the more people participating, the more people enjoying singing, the more people deriving pleasure, the better.

Pascale (2005) found that the prevalence of Aesthetic A in North American music education revealed the problematic assumption that in order to sing, children require tutelage:

This cultural assumption is based solely on a western frame of reference.

In some cultures, it would not be a consideration to teach children to sing.

> It would be a natural phenomenon . . . the belief that children must learn to sing is one that had major effects on the ways "singing" and learning music are understood and practiced in this culture. (p. 63)

Pascale (2002) identified the communal singing model as an example of Aesthetic B in action: Communal singing, according to Pascale's definition, is "singing together for the sake of building an ensemble, not perfecting the voice, developing vocal range or staging a performance" (p. 12). According to Pascale, the communal singing model, as she portrays it, emphasizes process, uses vernacular repertoire, considers musical ability irrelevant, stresses social value, promotes spontaneous singing, emphasizes singing for spirit of fun and recreation, has no restrictions on who sings or who is a singer, and fosters emotional and spiritual experiences (p. 117). According to Pascale, the traditional music education aesthetic, in contrast, emphasizes product, uses Western classical repertoire, works towards performance, considers musical ability important, stresses skill building and vocal technique, and inherently has two categories: singer and non-singer (p. 117). Pascale recommended that schools embrace the communal singing model as an antidote to the limiting scope of the traditional music education aesthetic.

Written a half-century earlier, Dykema (1931) described the tension between the Aesthetic A goals of a music teacher, and the Aesthetic B goals of a typical school principal in a 1930s high-school:

> To the principal, the chorus [i.e., whole-school singing] exists primarily for its social values; to the music teacher it exists primarily for its musical values. Although these two conceptions are not necessarily in

> conflict, they sometimes tend to become so. Thinking primarily, if not entirely, of social or integrating values, the principal asks for hearty participation, for volume of sound; thinking primarily, if not entirely, of musical values, the chorus director asks for general but considered participation, with emphasis upon quality and beauty of sound. The principal, thinking that a single melody is easier than two or three, and that, therefore, the children will thus more freely express themselves, asks for unison songs, which require no seating according to voice parts; the chorus director, thinking that the richness of interwoven parts with the resulting harmony will better satisfy the desires of the children for beautiful music, asks for part singing. (p. 67)

It is fascinating to see this recognition so long ago of a potential conflict between the Pascale's (2002, 2005) two aesthetics. Similar tension between the two aesthetics may also exist in contemporary, North American singing contexts.

According to Pascale (2002), attempts by music educators to blend the two approaches have failed, as inevitably, the incompatible nature of the two aesthetics results in Aesthetic A "winning out" (p. 122). Instead, Pascale advocated that the two aesthetics be "deliberately and emphatically separated" (p. 127). Pascale proposed that schools deliver classroom singing sessions that minimize risk, encourage participation, and eschew note-reading, as well as providing Aesthetic A pedagogy in a separate dedicated music class.

Although Pascale (2002), recommended that an "all school sing" is a way of

embracing the second aesthetic, the focus of Pascale's work has not been on whole-school singing as a practice. Instead, Pascale's (1999, 2002, 2005) emphasis has been on inclusive singing within the small classroom setting. This is a gap that my research addresses by investigating how and in what ways whole-school singing exemplifies Pascale's Aesthetic B.

It is important to note the limitations of my chosen conceptual framework. Pascale's work does not raise the concern that some people may experience mandated group singing as coercive, nor does her work acknowledge the potential for communal singing as a limitation upon one's personal agency. In most group singing practices, everyone sings the same lyrics and similar melody. Some group singing practices are leader-focused, regimented and lacking in opportunities for creativity by the participants. These points raise some important questions: Who chooses the song? What does the song's text express? Whose culture is represented, and whose culture is excluded in the song choice? Group singing, by its nature, occurs at a mandated time in a mandated place, and usually with a common pulse. Who decides where and when the group is to sing? Finally, given that everyone in the community may not enjoy singing, how is full participation achieved? Through encouragement, modelling, and inclusive behaviors, or are there elements of social pressure, coercion or intimidation?

These questions raise the possibility that communal singing can be, and has been, used for purposes of indoctrination, to impose religious pressure, or to exact compliance. For example, leaders of the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend)* used communal singing as a means to build group cohesion and obedience in youth, and, through the use of song

lyrics, adherence to the Nazi world view (Kater, 1997). Similarly, the Vladimir Lenin All-Union Pioneer Organization, commonly known as the Young Pioneers, that existed in the Soviet Union between 1922 and 1991, used communal singing to coercing its members into expressing political devotion (Siegelbaum & Sokolov, 2004). Missionaries in South Africa imposed group singing on the African inhabitants of Grahamstown in order to publicly demonstrate the "capacity of savages for civilization" (The Grahamstown Journal, Sept. 4, 1863, as cited by Olwage, 2004, p. 25). These very real historic practices of communal singing, while not explored by Pascale, need to be considered in any research examining communal singing. These considerations have informed the critical approach I took to data collection and interpretation.

Positionality Statement

Many decades ago, as a young musician in elementary school, I had the opportunity to attend a week-long music camp. In addition to band rehearsals, sectionals, private lessons and games of kick-the-can, an aspect I adored was the all-camp sing-alongs held before and after meals in the dining tent. Singing songs like "Johnny Appleseed" and "This Land Is Your Land" with every kid and grown-up at the camp just felt wonderful, but I did not think much of it at the time. When I reached high school age, I was permitted to go to the senior music camp held at a different location. Here, the ensembles were larger and more accomplished, the musical settings more challenging, and we had more personal autonomy in general. The meals, for example, were served cafeteria-style, so campers could arrive and eat whenever they wanted. While this arrangement felt more "grown-up," I was nevertheless saddened that there was no pre-

and post-meal communal singing. It struck me at the time that this lack of communal singing time left the whole camp experience feeling disjointed, impersonal and less satisfying on some level.

I did not think much about this again until decades later, when, as a choir teacher in an independent secondary school in Canada, I became very much involved in the development of a high-level choral program. My focus was entirely on Pascale's Aesthetic A: spending my time and energy planning rehearsals for my auditioned choir, so that I could help my students reach the heights of choral blend, tone, intonation, artistry, sight-reading and Western-art-style musicianship. Reflecting on the sense of community that developed within my choirs, I found myself regretting that students not in the choir (the majority of the student population) were not benefiting from the personal connections that seemed to result from singing together. Of course, community can result from all kinds of interactions within schools, and sports teams, outdoor excursions, clubs, and various activities can instill a sense of belonging in students. Still, the kind of whole-community connection that I had sensed at my junior music camp seemed to be missing.

My nephew, meanwhile, was attending an independent secondary school where the entire school sang together at their weekly assemblies. He was the kind of student who was very involved in sports and had not invested much time in developing musical skills. Nevertheless, he spoke with great passion about weekly whole school singing at his school. This piqued my curiosity: how was it possible to get an entire school singing at the secondary level? Did students actually participate, or did they dread it? Was my nephew's experience unique? It seemed too good to be true: I had never witnessed much

less led whole-school singing at the secondary level, and so a certain amount of doubt accompanied me on my research journey.

A positionality statement clarifies the ways in which the researcher is an insider to the subject, the participants, and the research project, and they ways they are an outsider (Holmes, 2020). My position is both as an insider and an outsider. I am an insider in the sense that I have taught at various Canadian independent schools for the last 15 years, schools similar in many ways to the schools I investigated. I am immersed in the culture of independent schools, and understand nuances such as the importance of alumni relations to schools' financial health; the centrality of traditions, ceremonies and rites; and the onus on independent schools to offer "value-added" over and above public schools in order to justify tuition fees. I am also used to working with students whose families who have the ability to pay significant tuition fees, and who can be considered privileged in many senses of the word. While my participants were not all white, many were, and as a white woman, I am aware that my skin colour, like many of theirs, gives me certain privileges that may impact my world view.

I also am familiar with the Anglican roots of both of my participant schools. The school I taught at for 10 years similarly had Anglican roots, as did a community choir I sang with for a decade. I am familiar with Anglican hymns because, while I did not grow up regularly attending Anglican church, my family were nominal Anglicans, sufficient for me to be familiar with the liturgy and musical traditions of the Anglican church. Finally, as a music teacher and choir director, I share a close vocational bond with those participants who are music directors. Like them I am intimately acquainted with the

challenges and rewards associated with running a music program in an independent school setting. And so, in many senses, as a researcher, I am working within my milieu, in a world I know well, and have needed to be vigilant about my objectivity.

I am an outsider in the sense that I am not a member of either school's community. I have visited both schools in the past, so I have a sense of the physical layout at both locations. Both schools are members of CAIS (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools), as are the schools where I have taught for most of my teaching career. Through this organization, I am acquainted with two or three teachers and administrators at both schools, having met at courses and conferences; however, I was not well-acquainted with any of the participants prior to our interviews. I have not experienced the day-to-day life of either school community and am not a trusted member of either community. I am also an outsider in the sense that I came into this work with curiosity, but also with incredulity. I have never led nor participated in whole-school communal singing at the secondary level, and was frankly doubtful that students would participate in such a thing. Certainly I was, and still am, fearful of attempting to initiate the practice in my own school. Nor do I have administrative support to initiate a whole school singing practice. There is no indication that administrators at my school want participatory singing outside the silo of the music program. So, in relation to the specific phenomenon I am investigating, I am positioned as an outsider. According to Holmes (2020) most researchers are simultaneously both insiders and outsiders, occupying several positions at once and moving fluidly between objective observer and joint participant in knowledge creation. This felt true in my experience researching this

project, and likely impacted the way I both experienced and interpreted the data. For example, I found the language spoken by the interviewees very familiar, when they referred to aspects of independent school life with which I was familiar. I also found the level of support for whole school singing surprising, and had to suspend my disbelief that adolescents would enjoy the practice as whole-heartedly as they did.

Nature of The Study and Outline of Chapters

My investigation began with a systematic search of research literature related to communal singing in Western cultural contexts, both within and outside of schools, both historic and contemporary. This literature review is documented in Chapter 2. As a result of this review, I concluded that the literature on contemporary whole-school singing at the secondary level is essentially non-existent. This lack of research offered an opportunity for an exploratory, inductive approach to my research (Stebbins, 2001). My choice of research methodology, along with a clear statement of the purpose of the study and an outline of my research questions, is fully discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 documents the context of whole-school singing at the two schools I investigated. This chapter answers the "what" and research questions, such as "what does communal singing look like at the high schools investigated? What are the logistics? Who sings? Who leads it? What songs are sung?" Also included in this chapter is a description of the schools themselves, and history to elucidate the origins of the schools' tradition of communal singing. The sources of information for this chapter include the interview data from the study participants, as well as information gathered from school websites, from the association of Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS), and

from historical documents.

Chapter 5 presents my analysis of the participant interview data. Here, I present three of the five main overarching themes that I identified as a result of analysis of the interview data. These three themes related to participants' experience of the phenomenon of whole school communal singing. Interview questions such as "what do you like, and not like, about whole school singing?" and "if whole school singing were to disappear from your school, how would you feel, think or act?" were designed to elicit this kind of information from participants. These themes answer the "why" research questions, such as "why do these two schools practice whole school communal singing? To what purpose do schools engage in the practice?"

Chapter 6 focuses on the "how" of whole-school communal singing by presenting the strategies and techniques that, according to my research participants, have created a school culture where everyone in the school community participates in group singing. School administrators and music teachers that are considering implementing the practice at their own schools might find this chapter useful.

Because my research process was inductive, I did not conduct an a priori literature search related to what I thought I might discover as a result of my interviews; instead, I explored the research related to communal singing in various contexts. This follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations for inductive thematic analysis. After conducting my analysis, however, there was a significant amount of research related to my findings that I knew I needed to synthesize in order to fully understand my results. For example, this post-data analysis literature review includes research related to the

benefits of group singing and on school belongingness. I present this literature through the lens of my research findings in Chapter 7. Finally, in Chapter 8, I summarize the analysis, conclude, pose questions that remain, and make recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 – A Review of Literature related to Whole School Communal Singing

In this chapter, I summarize existing literature related to whole school communal singing at the secondary level. There is minimal research on this topic: An extensive literature search yielded only two accounts of the practice in a contemporary context, both of which were descriptions of massed singing at Melbourne (Boys') High School (Bayliss et al., 2009; Bayless & Steward, 2012). However, there do exist a few historic accounts of communal whole school singing in the early 20th century, as well as some contemporary research on whole school singing at the primary level, which I present at the end of this chapter.

Because of the dearth of research directly related to my topic, this literature review opens with an exploration of research on communal singing in non-school contexts, for example, group singing at summer camp, sports games, and pubs, and congregational singing in religious settings. The way that participants experience communal singing in these (non-school) contexts informed my understanding of how participants in my study experience communal singing in school. This review begins with a brief overview of communal singing in secular historical settings, providing the context for the idea that within Western society, communal singing has fallen out of fashion over the last century. Next, I review research on communal singing in secular, contemporary contexts. Finally, I briefly explore communal singing in religious settings. I examine this work through the lens of Pascale's (2002, 2005) two aesthetics of singing. Finally, I provide a review of communal singing within school settings, both historic and contemporary, again through the lens of my theoretical framework.

Communal Singing in Non-School, Secular, Historical Contexts

Public, participatory singing in Western society, in non-religious settings, was more commonplace historically than it is today. According to Wren (2000), "our culture undermines it [communal singing], through social mobility, performance-oriented popular music, electronic discouragement and overamplification" (p. 53). In the United States, a decline in public singing was observed by Gates (1989), who contrasted the prevalence of singing both in and out of church in 18th century Boston with the dearth of contemporary public singing behaviors.

From the 1800s through the 1930s, communal singing in secular contexts was popular in North American and the United Kingdom. Examples of the ubiquity of communal singing at this time include: the popular pastime of family and friends gathering to sing around a parlor piano (Scott, 2001); crowds at rallies, bond drives, and parades singing patriotic songs during World War I (Giver, 2016); spectators at sports events singing in support of their teams (Russel, 2008, 2013); North American audiences at movie theatres singing songs before the start of picture shows (Morgan-Ellis, 2013, 2018b), and U.K. cinema audiences singing along "with the bouncing ball," a technique used by film-makers to visually indicate the rhythm of a song by touching each syllable with an animated ball when it is to be sung (Cook, 2013). During World War I, American training camps hired professional song leaders and led regular morale-enhancing mass sings at training camps (Chang, 2001). Music hall audiences in the United Kingdom regularly sang along enthusiastically to well-known choruses during variety shows (Faulk, 2004). This ubiquity of public singing culminated in the community singing

movement of the 1920s (Russel, 2008). In the United Kingdom, the foundation of the Community Singers Association in 1925 marked this era of participatory, public singing (Cook, 2013). According to *The Times*, "The [Community Singers'] association aims at spreading the practice of community singing in clubs, factories and social organizations throughout the Empire" (The Times, 9 May, 1925, as cited in Russel, 2008, p. 119). In the U.S.A., an official Community Singing Movement was inaugurated in 1913 at the Music Supervisors National Conference in order to make "an immediate and effective start toward community singing" (National Conference of Music Supervisors, 1913, explanatory note). All this points to a period in history in which North American and British society enjoyed, and was accustomed to, secular group singing (Posen, 1975). The prevalence of the Community Singing Movement may be the reason that communal singing in schools was a more frequent occurrence a century ago (Elliot, 1990): group singing in general was a societal norm, and this was reflected in school practice.

The Community Singing Movement in the United States

Morgan-Ellis (2018b) depicted the community singing movement in the United States as the result of a general societal urge to discard the influence of European culture, in favor of a uniquely North American cultural aesthetic. According to Morgan-Ellis, this new aesthetic was intentionally democratic in spirit, a reaction to the idea that "good music" (in the Western Classical sense) had become the demesne of the elite classes. Communal singing, on the other hand, represented access to music by the masses. The gathering of crowds of people to participate in group singing, without the requirement of formal training, became the means of bringing music back to the people. The emphasis

was on mass participation in music-making, rather than passive listening, on accessibility, rather than on high artistic standards, and on the non-musical goals of moral improvement (p. 66). Placing musical technique and artistry lower in priority than participation, the communal singing movement exemplified what Pascale (2005) was later to deem Aesthetic B.

Leaders of the community singing movement in the United States included Peter W. Dykema, Edgar B. Gordon, Gavin James Campbell, and Henrietta Baker Low. These leaders in music education believed that participation in music was a means to moral improvement (Morgan-Ellis, 2019). They advocated that participation in "good music" by the general population would result in a cultural uplift, improving relations between the upper and lower classes, increasing patriotism, and serving as a morally sound recreation for youths and adults. Part of Dykema's plan was to uncover a repertoire of North American folk songs of good quality, and teach it to the people. This resulted in the creation of a community singing canon: *18 Songs For Community Singing* (National Conference of Music Supervisors, 1913), later evolving into *35 Songs for Community Singing* (National Conference of Music Supervisors, 1917). The canon included U.S. patriotic songs, Steven Foster songs, and folk songs such as "Row, row, row your boat," all chosen to be singable in the context of the "natural and spontaneous singing of an untrained but musical group." (National Conference of Music Supervisors, 1913, p. ii). Dykema, who was integral to the creation of these collections, continued to advocate for the country's best composers to create "catchy" and easy-to-sing songs to add to this canon in order to provide repertoire that was both good quality and accessible to

untrained singers (Erb et at., 1916). Through the lens of my theoretical framework, the efforts of the community singing movement in the United States demonstrated values that are consistent with Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B, in its emphasis on full participation, and community.

This community singing movement in the United States is considered to be primarily an effort by music educators to impose white, middle-class values on the populace (Morgan-Ellis, 2019). At the same time, communal singing within Black communities in the United States grew from its roots in collective singing by gatherings of slaves, to gospel-style singing in churches, to communal songs sung during the Civil Rights protests (Eyerman, 2002). Eyerman explained that at these protests, the "collective performances, where the distinctions between players and listeners breaks down and all are performers, [were] vital for creating group solidarity" (p. 450). In this way, communal singing contributed to social cohesion, political solidarity and identity within the Black community in the 20th century.

The Community Singing Movement in the United Kingdom

Russel (2008) thoroughly documented the brief rise and fall of the Community Singing Movement in the United Kingdom during the 1920s. As Russel explained:

> The essence of 1920s community singing was quite simply the performance of popular songs and hymns by large groups of (usually) untrained singers who had gathered together either specifically to sing or for another activity which was then partially appropriated for musical purposes. (p. 118)

The other activity, referred to above, was typically sports spectating: a noteworthy event

was the 1927 Football Association Cup Final, where 92,000 spectators joined in the singing of a number of songs, including "Abide With Me." A recording of this song reveals (in my opinion) truly beautiful singing (EMGColonel, 2010). A member of the local press remarked: "To my dying day I shall remember Saturday's football match . . . because for the first time in my life, I realized that deep in the souls of all of us, is a love of song and singing" (Daily Express, 25 April 1927, as cited in Russel, 2008, p. 121). According to Cook (2013), this event marked the peak of community singing in the U.K.

In 1925, Gibson Young, supported by established musicians including the director of music at Westminster Cathedral and the music director at the BBC, founded the Community Singers Association (CSA) (Cook, 2013). According to *The Times*, "The association aims at spreading the practice of community singing in clubs, factories and social organizations in cities, towns and villages throughout the Empire" (*The Times*, 9 May 1925, as cited in Russel, 2008, p. 119). Through the lens of contemporary critical studies research, we must acknowledge that this aspiration for ubiquitous community singing may have contained the seeds of imperialist motives. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, this supports the idea that communal singing was more prevalent in the 20th century than it is currently.

The CSA organized large and small-scale events during 1926 and 1927, such as singalong concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, lunchtime sings in the courtyard at St. Martins in the Field as well as continued sponsorship of communal singing at sports games. A culminating event was the May 1927 Empire Day concert in Hyde Park, attended by an estimated 80,000 people who came not only to hear musical performances

by Dame Clara Butt, but also to sing along to songs such as "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" and "Land of Hope and Glory," (British Pathe, 2020).

While the CSA continued to sponsor events over the next few years, communal singing declined in popularity soon after the 1927 hiatus. By 1930, even the press had recognized that communal singing had fallen out of fashion. As one reported put it: "Community singing, to be sure, as we recently knew it, had a short and varied life in this country" (*Musical Mirror*, Nov. 1930, as cited by Cook, 2013).

The Singing Army

Morgan-Ellis (2018a) described the significant role that WWI played in contributing to the community singing movement in the U.S. The War Department's Commission for Training Camp Activities (CTCA), advocated singing as an essential component of training:

> A singing army is a cheerful one, and all other things being equal, a cheerful army is an invincible one. Therefore, as a definite part of camp drill, it has a distinct military value [by means of] morale and esprit de corps, on both of which singing has an immense influence. (CTCA, 1918, p. 68)

In addition to building morale and *esprit de corps*, the other function of communal singing within army training camps was the diversion of soldiers from alternative forms of recreation: prostitution and alcohol (Morgan-Ellis, 2018a). So prevalent was the group singing ethos in the U.S. military that group singing was a regular occurrence during training, hiking, drilling, before meals, before dismissal and before nightly entertainment.

In a similar historical analysis of singing within WWI training camps, Chang

(2001) emphasized the importance of the song-leaders in motivating the men to sing, and described the types of strategies that song leaders employed to gain full participation. For example, Warren Kimsey taught the officers in small ensembles and gave them private voice instructions; once these small groups were well-trained, Kimsey then had them sing within the regiment, in order to provide positive modelling from within the group (Chang, 2001). Other examples included the use of rote methods to teach new songs, rather than relying on music notation; organizing regimental singing competitions to instill enthusiasm; and choosing song repertoire that the men enjoyed singing (Chang, 2001). These strategies combined to create a singing environment that instilled confidence in all singers and resulted in full participation. Through the lens of Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics, this focus on inclusive strategies suggest that singing in WWI training camps took an Aesthetic B approach.

Morgan-Ellis (2018a) focused on the career of one particular WWI camp song-leader, Warren Kimsey, in order to investigate song leaders' contributions to both the war effort and to community music initiatives. According to Morgan-Ellis, Kimsey's challenge, upon arriving at Camp Gordon, was to engage 40,000 trainees in communal singing. He received full support from the camp leaders. Major General Leonard Wood, the head of camp Gordon, explained:

> It is just as essential that the soldiers know how to sing as it is that they carry rifles and know how to shoot them. Singing is one of the things they should all learn. It sounds odd to the ordinary person when you tell him every soldier should be a singer, because the layman cannot reconcile singing with killing. But when

> you know the boys as I know them you will realize how much it means to them to sing. (Major Wood, as cited in Morgan-Ellis, 2018a, p. 181)

In addition to organizing community singing within the camp, Kimsey was responsible for creating singing events in nearby Atlanta, in order to provide the soldiers, when on leave, with "wholesome entertainment," as an alternative to drinking and unwanted behavior, such as gambling and engaging with prostitutes.

Kimsey was a song leader capable of motivating non-musicians to participate with enthusiasm. According to a newspaper report of the time, he was

> . . . one of the livest wires that the world of music has produced. . . . Under the magic spell of his baton Kimsey can make people sing who never sang before; and he can manage to abstract out of a bunch of gloomy and forbidding looking old business men a rollicking soldiers' chorus that shakes the roof (*Atlanta Constitution*, June 11, 1919, as cited by Morgan-Ellis, 2018a, p.192).

Morgan-Ellis (2018a) described Warren Kimsey as possessing "energy, enthusiasm and persistence" (p. 189). His choice of repertoire was described by the press as "red-blooded," as opposed to maudlin (p. 181); Kimsey intentionally chose pieces to imbue patriotic or military spirit, to raise the spirits, and to connect the men with U.S. culture, such as "My Old Kentucky Home." Morgan Ellis's and Chang's (2001) works both emphasized the importance of the song leader in building an inclusive, spirit-filled communal singing practice.

Communal Singing as an Element of Entertainment in Picture Palaces

In the United States. Morgan-Ellis's (2018b) investigation of singing-along in U.S. picture palaces between 1925 and 1933 described a communal singing practice that functioned purely as entertainment. According to Morgan-Ellis (2018b), in every city across the United States millions of people sang along every week to popular songs, as one of the elements of a complete picture palace show. These shows included live acts, an organ solo, shorts, new-reels and a silent feature film. The communal singing segment, accompanied by the theatre organist, with lyrics projected on the screen, lasted about 10 to 15 minutes. Either a master of ceremonies or the organist played a significant role in encouraging, cajoling and enticing the audience to sing popular songs of the day. Morgan-Ellis (2018b) described the approach taken by a well-known theatre organist, Henri Keates, on Oct. 18, 1927:

> After getting the participants in the right mood with jokes and compliments, Keates launched into an unconnected set of the hit songs that were popular fodder for picture palace community sings everywhere, including "Underneath the Wabash Moon" (1927), "Bye, Bye Pretty Baby" (1927), and "Side by Side" (1927). (Morgan-Ellis, 2018b, p. 39)

Reviews from the day reported that, in most cases, audience participation was enthusiastic. In fact, audiences enjoyed the community singing aspect of picture shows so much that it continued to be in demand in theatres across the USA until the mid-1930s.

Morgan-Ellis (2018b) noted that, during the community-singing heyday of 1925–1930, while reviewers frequently commented on the overwhelming popularity of

community sings in the theatres, they also criticized the quality of the audience singing for its lack of artistry. A common disparagement made by reviewers was that the audience should not have to pay for a ticket and then be asked to provide the entertainment (Morgan-Ellis, 2018b p. 128). In terms of Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics, this is a clear case of pitting Aesthetic A against Aesthetic B: reviewers bringing Aesthetic A expectations into an Aesthetic B context. Regardless, amongst the patrons, the community singing portion remained a favorite aspect of the show during the 1920s and 30s (Morgan-Ellis, 2018b).

Morgan-Ellis (2018b) explained that the purpose of communal singing at these picture palaces was primarily to make the relatively new experience of going to the movies more palatable for a middle-class audience, who were unaccustomed to attending movies, but used to community singing. Secondarily, communal singing served to raise the level of audience excitement, and to create a sense of friendliness and camaraderie, thus preparing the audience to enjoy the show. As one commentator expressed: "The singing awakens the audience between pictures, puts new life into them and consequently the entertaining qualities of the feature are greatly enhanced" (Weinstein, 1919, as cited in Morgan-Ellis, 2018b, p. 76). Communal singing at picture palaces was used as a tool to regulate affect and to increase audience enjoyment. There were no educational motives, nor were there artistic ambitions in this endeavor; instead, communal singing was employed to entertain audiences and thus to increase ticket sales.

In the United Kingdom. Cook (2013) documented a parallel "craze" for singing along at the cinema in the United Kingdom during the 1920s. According to Cook,

audiences in the United Kingdom in the 1920s were used to being active, vocal participants, from their shared history of participation at music hall shows, where shouting, cheering, and communal singing had been the norm for three generations. Audiences naturally transferred this behavior to the relatively new movie theatres of the 1920s. Cook underscored the influence of the Community Singing Movement in the United Kingdom on audience participation, noting that the rise and decline of singalong behavior in the cinema paralleled that of the movement.

The Demise of Picture Palace Singing. In both the United Kingdom and the United States, with the emergence of sound technology, movie theatres no longer required an organist to play the film music, thus communal singing led by the house organist died out along with silent movies (Cook, 2013; Morgan-Ellis, 2018b). Nevertheless, for about a decade, audiences still demanded live entertainment during the picture show: initially, even the talkies included a community sing between shorts and the feature film. Max Fleischer's Screen Songs (1929–1938) debuted the famous "bouncing ball," giving audiences the opportunity to sing along with the soundtrack to lyrics on the screen throughout the 1930s and 40s (Butsch, 2001). However, Morgan-Ellis explained that as the community singing "craze" died out, the Screen Song tradition transitioned from a "focus on participation to a focus on spectatorship" (p. 224). The more technically evolved animations of the Screen Songs were distractions to an audience, who over time, became unaccustomed to joining in. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, singalong films disappeared about the same time that sound technology became ubiquitous at the cinema, with audiences "increasingly listening rather than singing." (Cook, 2013, p. 236). By

about 1935, the singalong tradition at the movies was over.

To return to my definition of communal singing, which is: participants gather for a purpose other than singing; and the act of singing is neither rehearsal nor performance, singing along at the cinema does seem to fit. The audience assembled in order to view a film, but community singing provided an important aspect of the entertainment. The act of singing together between the shorts and the feature film was not a rehearsal, nor was it a performance. Applying Pascale's (2005) theoretical framework to the phenomenon of picture palace singing, it seems that this activity did exemplify Pascale's Aesthetic B: The goal of communal singing in the cinemas was not to create artistic expression but rather to generate full participation.

A similar phenomenon to the practice of singing along at the movies in the 1920s, is the more contemporary practice of singing along to cult movies, such as the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (e.g., Austin, 2006; Tyson et al., 1980) and *The Sound of Music* (Cook, 2018). According to Tyson et al., singalong behavior by fans is a way of expressing an in-group identity, such as, in the case of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, an anti-establishment sentiment. Arguably, audiences do not attend these events purely for the joy of singing, but for the purpose of communing with like-minded others. Thus, singing at these events is similar to the movie-house singing that took place 50 years earlier, and does in many ways, exemplify communal singing.

Summary

Communal singing within secular settings was a pervasive component of social life in the United Kingdom and the United States through the World War I years, and

peaking in the mid-1920s. Groups of people gathered together for non-singing purposes, such as attending sports games, training for the army, or watching movies, would commonly sing together, for communal expression and for entertainment. In both the United Kingdom and the United States, the "craze" for communal singing was marked by the establishment of a Community Singing Movement by musicians and educators wishing to use communal singing as a means to involve the general public in participatory music-making. The decline in the popularity of communal singing seems to have corresponded with technological advances in sound production, such as the use of sound technology in film. The movement dwindled during the 1920s; by World War II, it was effectively over.

Communal Singing Non-School, Secular Contemporary Contexts

In non-school, secular, contemporary contexts, communal singing is rare. Examples of the practice include communal singing at summer camps, crowd singing at sports games, group singing at protest rallies, and spontaneous singing in pubs. There are examples that straddle my definition of communal singing: drop-in choirs, and communal workplace choirs, where all members of a work community are expected to sing. Each of these examples illustrate, to a certain extent, applications of Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B.

Summer Camps

In Canada and the United States, a significant portion of the population have attended summer camp as children: in 2005, for example, Seeger and Seeger (2006) estimated that 11 million North American children attended summer camps. These widely-experienced programs have a well-documented history of communal singing.

Singing around the campfire is so prevalent as to be considered a cultural icon (Posen, 1975). As a means to including everyone within a camp community, communal singing has a rich and varied history that is well-researched.

Kent (2014) investigated the meaning of communal singing at Jewish summer camps, and found that it enhanced campers' Jewish personal identity and formed the basis for a redemptive community. Seeger and Seeger (2006) documented the musical experiences that occurred at a sleep-away summer camp in Vermont, including the "weekly sing," a 90-minute session involving the entire camp community. The most salient finding to my research is the authors' conclusion: "How easily it [communal singing] can become a vehicle for creating community out of an assembly of individuals" (p. 53). The authors also highlighted the importance of giving children and camp counsellors control over the repertory, so that group singing continually reflects the interests of the participants.

Seeger and Seeger (2006) identified Posen's (1975) master's thesis as the "richest ethnographic treatment of music at summer camps that they had encountered" (p. 62). Posen's research provided extensive descriptions of communal singing at two Canadian summer camps, and established camp singing as an important component of the folk music tradition. In conclusion, Posen reported that

> Camp singing . . . functions for the society as a means of enculturating new members, teaching them the groups' values and giving them a chance to participate on an equal basis with older members in an activity which is important and meaningful within that society. (p. 178)

Posen's finding that the value of communal singing at camp is social, rather than aesthetic, suggests that this activity exemplifies Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B.

Crowd Singing at Sports Games

A further example of communal singing is crowd singing at sports games. Here, the primary purpose of gathering is to watch the sport; singing is secondary. Furthermore, the singing does not take a rehearse-and-perform format. Although the extent to which contemporary spectators at sports events engage in communal singing cannot match the remarkable spectator singing that occurred a century ago at, for example, the Football Association games of the 1920s, nevertheless, there are remnants of this practice in today's sports culture.

National Anthems. The practice of crowd singing the national anthem prior to hockey, baseball, and football games was established in Canada and the United States to instill patriotism during World War II; after the war, the ritual continued, and expanded to other amateur and professional sports, purely out of tradition (Crepeau, 1996). A similar pattern of behavior was established in the crowd-singing of anthems at the Olympic Games (Toohey & Veal, 2007). Crepeau is among many critics who question the authenticity of patriotic motives that compels the singing of national anthems at sports games. For example, according to Crepeau, "it [the singing of the anthem] has become an occasion for entertainers to display their talents or lack thereof . . . and the networks to run commercials. Its symbolic significance has been overshadowed by commercial purposes and public indifference" (p. 3). Recently, support for continuing the practice has been mixed, ranging from making the playing of the anthem prior to games a

legislative requirement (Sparber, 2021) to replacing it altogether with a different song, such as Bill Withers' *Lean on Me* (Rosen, 2020). For the purposes of this paper, this topic extends outside the scope of my research.

Beyond National Anthems. According to Howard, (2004), the most common way that football fans in the United Kingdom (that is, soccer fans) show support for their English Football League team is by singing together songs such as "When The (name of team) Go Marching In"; "You'll Never Walk Alone"; and "Glory Glory Halleluiah." Howard described this phenomenon as involving:

> Thousands of people working together in a highly structured manner, but without any conductor. No starting note is given and the words and music are known by heart. Only very rarely would there be any musical accompaniment. The start is completely spontaneous, often based upon just one of two individuals starting a well-known team song, with the fans in their immediate vicinity soon joining in, and often within just a few bars, thousands can have taken up the chant. (p. 77)

Howard's research applied an acoustic system to measure the tunefulness of spontaneous singing by fans at the English Premiership Football League games from 2001 to 2002. Howard found much to criticize about the intonation of these mass singing efforts; however, he nevertheless proclaimed:

> It is heartening to note the enormous exuberant spontaneity in the fans' singing, born out of their intense corporate thrust of support for their teams. It would be completely inappropriate to do anything to dampen this. The unimpeded, carefree and impulsive nature of their singing is in itself both a joy and a testament to this

most basic of corporate human communication channels. (p. 83)

This description of communal singing matches Pascale's (2005) description of Aesthetic B, with its emphasis on participation, inclusion and "simply experiencing the joy of singing together" (p. 171).

Mihalka's (2012) dissertation investigated the ways communal singing by crowds at United States baseball games has changed over time. Using ethnographic methods, interviews and archival newspaper research, the author observed that the organ, as the primary musical accompaniment to communal singing at United States baseball games, gave way in most cases to recorded music during the 1970s, reflecting the changes in production and consumption of music in North American society over the 20th century. Mihalka wrote extensively on the community-building aspect of communal singing. According to Mihalka, the collective singing of "Take Me out to the Ball Game" as "an opportunity for spectators to reinforce the bonds between them, transcending their background, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status" (p. 113). The author noted that numerous archival records described the practice of communal singing at baseball games as creating social cohesion, lifting spirits, and involving the audience, giving them an opportunity to be active participants instead of passive observers.

Protest Movements

Communal singing, as I define it, refers to the singing that occurs when groups of people gather for purposes other than singing: singing at protest marches and demonstrations certainly fits this description. Further, in protest movement singing there is not typically a division between performer and audience: in most cases, all participants

sing together. Thus, group singing of protest songs during rallies, marches, and protests fits my description of communal singing.

Research on protest singing such as Phul (2008), Ibarraran-Bigalondo (2017), Payerhin (2012), and Garabedian (2016) tends to focus on the songs themselves. Here, however, I summarize some of the research that discusses the act of singing itself during protests, and the experience of the singers. Jolaosho (2019) investigated the phenomenon of protest singing in South Africa from 2009 to 2010, to explore how the specific practices of participatory group singing (such as call-and-response, repetition and embodied rhythm, or dance) affected the act of protest. The researcher found that singing during protest facilitated collective mobilization, shored up individual and communal strength, and increased motivation at protest events. Adams (2019) found that student activists in South Africa experienced a combination of emotions while singing communally at protests: anger and pain at injustice combined with pride and hope for the future. In the context of the American Civil Rights movement, Boots (2014) investigated the practice of communal singing communal singing at sit-ins, in mass meetings, in jails and on marches. Boots described the phenomenon of "spontaneous communitas," (p. 20) that is, the fleeting sense of community that transcended barriers of race, class, age, and gender, created by singing together. Sanger (1995, 1997) found that during the American Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and ‘60s, activists used communal singing as a rhetorical device to create emotionalism, unity and courage in the group. In sum, the research on communal singing in the context of protest movements seems to indicate that group singing has been a powerful tool for uniting people, helping them to feel and

express emotions, and increasing courage and motivation.

Pub Singing

As Bowler and Everitt (1999) explained, the pub in England, Scotland and Ireland is a mainstay of traditional culture. Group singing in these pubs is a common activity (Kearns, 1996), and fits the description I outlined above of communal singing: The primary purpose of gathering is not (necessarily) to sing; the activity is not a rehearsal for a performance, nor is there a separation between audience and performer. The scant research that I could find on pub singing focuses on folk traditions. For example, Heppa (2005) dug deep into the history of pub singing in East Norfolk, United Kingdom, to investigate the process by which folksongs are transmitted. The researcher concluded that people learned folksongs orally from their parents, families and each other; they would also occasionally learn songs from outsiders (p. 589). However, this research did not investigate the singing per se, nor the experiences of the participants in this activity.

Singing Along at Nightclubs and Similar Entertainment Venues

When groups of people are gathered to socialize, such as at a nightclub, and singing along to either the performer or to recorded music emerges, it could be argued that this is a form of communal singing. Pawley and Mullensiefen (2012) investigated such "singing along" behavior at five entertainment venues (pubs, bars, nightclubs) in the North of England. Observing 1,054 song "events," and recording the percentage of people singing along during each song, the researchers were able to determine which factors, both musical and contextual, influenced audiences to join in. While no single "sing-along formula" was found (p. 137), the authors did find that the combination of

male performer (recorded or live), singing in a high chest voice, with few vocal embellishments and clearly articulated consonants were associated with higher audience participation. Notably, the researchers found that in general, audiences tended to not sing along much more often than singing along (p. 134); also, they noted that the more alcohol had been imbibed, the more singing along was likely to occur. This last point of course has little relation to my research topic, other than to suggest that people are more likely to participate in singalong behaviors when their inhibitions are weakened.

Congregational Singing

Within Christian communities, communal singing is commonly referred to as congregational singing. Wren (2000) defined congregational singing as "anything sung by a group of people assembled to worship God, not as a presentation to some other group, but as a vehicle for worship" (p. 48). This aligns precisely with my definition of communal singing: the group has assembled for the purpose of something else (in this case, worship) and the singing is participatory, not performative. For the purposes of my research, I refer to communal singing within a religious context as congregational singing.

Congregational singing played a prominent role in worship since the early Christian church was legalized in the 4th century CE (Page, 2010; Sydnor, 1960; Wren, 2000). Wren explained that singing was essential to monastic life: "It is impossible to conceive of monasticism without corporate song" (p. 50). Furthermore, Wren described congregational singing in the early church as essential, vigorous and frequent. In my literature search, I found that research about congregational singing in historic religious

contexts seems to be of two kinds: one, focused on the repertoire; the other, which is more closely aligned with my research topic, on the singing itself. An example of research focused on historic congregational singing repertoire, Roberts (2014) investigated the hymnal texts used in three historic cases, and compared these to written historic accounts. The author concluded that there was a correlation between a congregation's hymnody and its identity.

In contrast, research on the act of singing within historic Christian congregations is exemplified by Cheng's (2017) investigation of Methodist communal hymn singing in 18th and 19th century British churches. Cheng observed that testimonies from the time consistently revealed that the experience of collective singing was vitalizing, that it conveyed a powerful sense of the divine presence, and created fellowship, a unity of spirit, and a sense of oneness. Cheng's descriptions helped to inform the research questions for my study, in establishing a precedent for researching participants' experience of communal singing.

A tradition of vibrant congregational singing has long existed in churches within the Black community in the United States. The tradition of Black Christian worship music has its roots in the communal singing practiced by enslaved Africans as a response to conditions of slavery (Pollard, 2013). William-Jones (1975) identified expressive cultural elements of Afro-American spirituals, such as the 'ring shout,' call and response and spirit possession, as links a West African heritage. The evolution of spirituals into contemporary Gospel music, according to Johnson (2011), reflected the urbanization of the African-American community. All throughout this evolution, Black Christian praise

and worship music has, in general, remained highly participative, for the purpose of involving the congregation in the act of musical worship, rather than allowing them to be passive listeners (Johnson, 2006). McGann's (2004) ethnography of congregational singing at a predominantly African American Catholic church, positioned communal singing as the sonic embodiment of collective worship.

Within the Jewish tradition, there is substantial evidence that congregational singing did not occur within ancient synagogues (Smith, 1984), especially after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. Instead, cantors sang on behalf of the congregation until as late as the early 20th century. In the second half of the 19th century, congregational singing was slowly introduced to enhance the prayer experience (Cohen, 2019); however, many, including Jassinowsky (1934), were critical of the trend, as group singing diverted attention away from a musically skilled cantor and dedicated choir, resulting in a poorer quality of music performance. However, Cohen observed that in this transition towards group singing, Jewish synagogue musicians sought a balance between artistry and participation. For example, Simon Hecht, musical leader and advocate for congregational singing in synagogues in the Ohio River Valley in the late 1800s, was intentional in choosing songs for his Jewish hymnal that included traditional melodies, shortened and simplified for mass singing (Cohen, 2019). Furthermore, Hecht claimed that the "key to American Jewish self-actualization" was vocal instruction for the masses and group communal singing within the synagogues (p. 164). The ongoing tension in nineteenth century North America, between the high culture and professionalism of music specialists in the larger, wealthier congregations, and the less expensive,

participatory approach of congregational singing in smaller synagogues, seems to illustrate the differences between Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics of singing.

An exhaustive review of the world's cultural worship traditions is beyond the scope of this paper. However, by touching on research that has investigated congregational singing in a few religious settings, I have attempted to highlight some of the ways that groups of people have experienced communal singing in historic contexts outside of schools

Research on contemporary congregational singing appears to fall into two categories: research on the songs sung, and research on the singing itself. Adnams (2008) is a researcher whose work is an example of the former: this research explored the practice of blending of traditional and contemporary worship songs by congregational singers in evangelical Canadian churches. Adnams concluded that the self-centered attitude prevalent in popular culture poses a challenge to congregations that embrace blended musical worship, thus churches that choose to sing contemporary hymns mixed with traditional hymns need to take extra steps to ensure that singing authentically serves the purpose of worship, rather than of exhibiting individual prowess.

An example of research aimed more closely at understanding the congregational singers' experience, Adnams (2013) investigated the idea of "really worshipping" vs. "just singing." In this phenomenological study, the author proposed that "it is possible to be cognizant of some significance of the tune and text and yet not have an adequate feeling of the song" (p. 190). This failure to allow the words of the song text to resonate, observed Adnams, is the barrier to transforming "just singing" into truly worshipping.

This informed an aspect of one of my research questions: To what extent does whole school singing represent worship? I knew that at the schools I was investigating, Anglican hymns comprise part, if not all, of the repertoire. To what extent were students focused on the words? To what extent were they, from Adnam's perspective, "just singing"?

Wald-Fuhrman et al. (2020) were the first researchers to take a quantitative approach to effects of church congregational singing (Wald-Fuhrman et al., 2020). The researchers surveyed 1,996 Catholic participants in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, to determine whether congregational singing in Catholic worship contexts resulted in the kind of social (unifying), emotional (uplifting), and spiritual (feeling close to God) experiences that the Church expects, according to documents from the Second Vatican Council of 1964–1968. The researchers found that congregational singing in Catholic Mass can indeed afford these effects to a large degree; furthermore, the social effect was found to be the most pronounced. In conclusion, the researchers found their data to support the "already well-established assumption" (p. 9) of group singing as a facilitator of social bonding.

In a critique of Christian congregational singing, Whitla (2019) exposed the eurocentrism present in the practice of communal singing in churches, and identified the "coloniality lurking in hymnody," (p. ii). The author presented a case for a liberating singing praxis, one that includes songs from the Global South and other marginalized communities in the hymnody, contextualizes the songs culturally, and shares the power of song leadership among the congregation. Whitla's critical approach to evaluating

congregational singing through a post-colonial and decolonial lens was not one that I took in my dissertation. Instead, my research was focused on describing the practice at two schools, and I purposefully refrained from critique; however, Whitla's post-colonial and decolonial framework could inform future research on communal singing in schools.

Examples of Non-Communal Singing

Traditional Irish "singing sessions," as described by Dike (2017), which often occur in pubs as well as at festivals, community centers and in private homes, seem to me to blur the line between what I consider communal singing and community singing. According to Dike, traditional Irish singers gather purposely in order to sing and to share their music. Because the community is formed for the purpose of singing, rather than being a community formed first for another purpose that also sings, I would exclude such singing sessions from the types of music-making that I am investigating. Furthermore, traditional singing sessions are increasingly performative, according to Dike. In this way, these sessions straddle the communal/community singing divide. Dike explained that there is a constant tension and difference of opinion among participants between aesthetics (good singing) and participation (allowing anyone to sing whether they sing well or not). This is suggestive of Pascale's (2002, 2005) concept of two aesthetics of singing as those who advocate for high quality performances may be taking an Aesthetic A approach, and those who prefer to allow everyone to participate seem to align with Pascale's Aesthetic B.

Similarly, in North America, the “Beer Choir” phenomena (Beer Choir, n.d.) straddles my definition of communal singing and community singing. Beer Choir is a company that hosts drop-in public singing and beer-drinking sessions: people who want to sing and drink beer are welcome to participate (Beer Choir, n.d.). There are no rehearsals, no performances, and no expectation that the participants sing well (Manitoba Music, n.d.): this fits with my definition of communal singing. However, Beer Choir participants are volunteers. Their reason for coming to these events is to sing and to drink beer. Again, like the Irish traditional singing sessions described above, Beer Choir and similar drop-in singalongs, such as Choir!Choir!Choir! (Choir!Choir!Choir!, n.d.) are not examples of communal singing, as I define it, because the community has been formed for the primary purpose of singing.

Other examples of community singing that do not fit my definition of communal singing include community singing groups such as groups related to the Ubuntu Choirs Network (Ubuntu Choirs Network, n.d.), the Common Thread Community Chorus (Common Thread Community Chorus of Toronto, n.d.), and the London City Voices (London City Voices, n.d.), all of whom focus very much on community building and inclusion, rather than prioritizing musical artistry. However, not only do most community groups like these sing in a rehearse-and-perform format, these groups are all comprised of volunteers, who have joined the group because they choose to sing.

Why does it matter?

The thing I find fascinating about whole school singing in the two schools I investigated, is the fact that it is not optional for members of the community. Every

member of the school community is required to attend assembly, and everyone is expected to sing. I find this aspect of whole school singing sets it apart from other forms of community singing, such as Beer Choir, Choir! Choir! Choir! and traditional Irish singing sessions (all described above). These events attract people who want to sing in the first place. The singing is not by a group of people formed for another purpose. The type of singing at Beer Choir may be similar to whole school singing (participatory, no separation between audience and performer, no rehearsal for a final concert), but the fundamental nature of the participation is voluntary.

One Final Example: A Mandatory Workplace Choir

A case study by Balsnes and Jansson (2015) explored two workplace choirs where the entire work community was mandated to participate in a group singing program. The authors were clear in their conceptualization of the nature of the organization: "A choir that constitutes people that happen to work in the same organization but do not necessarily have daily work-related contact will be different than a whole organizational unit that comes together in order to sing" (p. 164). One of their research questions was very similar to mine: "How do the members of a workplace community experience the situation when their *entire community* [emphasis added] engages in choral singing?" These two workplace choirs, one, a regional unit of a governmental agency, the other, the managers of a regional health department, consisted of about 20 members, most of whom had no choral experience. The choirs had been established by their workplaces with the explicit goal of team building. Because the choirs operated within a rehearse-and-perform format, however, these groups do not

specifically meet my definition of communal singing. Nevertheless, this research is similar to mine in a number of ways: the participants did not volunteer to sing, and included individuals who frankly stated that singing is not their "cup of tea." Furthermore, the researchers took an exploratory approach to this investigation, using a descriptive phenomenological approach, as did I.

Through interviews with the participants, and a process of coding interview transcripts, the researchers found that the most apparent effect of singing together was enjoyment. Participants described their experience as refreshing, energizing and enjoyable, although some worried that the work hours spent singing reduced time available for their clinical work. Other findings included: participants experienced a sense of community, participants felt outside their comfort zone engaging in the singing activities, and choir presented a "level playing field," a change from the non-equal roles and identities within the organization. Balsnes and Jansson's (2015) research, because it explored how choir is experienced by people who do not necessarily consider themselves singers, and who would not likely have volunteered to join a choir on their own volition, is very similar to mine, although in a work, rather than in a school, context, and as a performative rather than a participatory practice.

School Contexts: Historic Accounts of Communal Singing

In contrast to the dearth of research on whole school communal singing in contemporary contexts, I found historic accounts of this phenomena to be more numerous. This reflects the assertion that whole school communal singing was more common in secondary schools during the 19th and early 20th centuries than it is today

(Elliott, 1990). In this section, I outline documents that recorded and advocated for whole school singing in previous eras.

Clement C. Spurling, Director of Music at Oundle School in Peterborough, United Kingdom from 1891 to 1936, described the state of music education in England's public schools in his lecture "Music In Public Schools of Today" (Spurling, 1927). Public schools in this context refers to boys' independent schools. In his chapter on whole school assembly singing, Spurling noted the priority of participation and enthusiasm over musical acumen, with a primary goal of building community, quite similar to Pascale's Aesthetic B.

> Whole-hearted singing is therefore expected from every boy, and, if necessary, insisted upon. Probably a small percentage of boys can never hope to get very near a tune, but inability to sing is not admitted for one moment. (p. 7)

This emphasis on inclusion (every boy singing) and learning-by-doing rather than by direct instruction align with aspects of Pascale's Aesthetic B.

Augustus Zanzig, who was instructor in music education at Harvard and Smith Universities, was a champion of community music in the early 1900s (Zanzig, 1928). In his book *Community and Assembly Singing*, Zanzig (1933) stressed that in school assemblies, over all other priorities, "the fun of it (communal singing)" (p. 6) must predominate:

> It's all for fun. Whatever the social values to be gained through community singing, the primary purpose must be the immediate enjoyment of it. Without that, it cannot exist at all. Our first and greatest concern should be to make the

enjoyment as rich as possible, and persistent. (p. 7)

Zanzig claimed that: "in cultivating school 'spirit,' assembly singing is commonly regarded as an unsurpassed aid." (p. 7). Zanzig's short volume is full of advice for would-be song leaders, including recommendations for seating, voicing, accompanists and repertoire lists.

Peter William Dykema, a professor at Columbia University from 1924–1940, offered advice to school administrators on establishing and maintaining music programs in junior, middle, and high schools, in his book *Music for Public School Administrators* (Dykema, 1931). This resource book advocated strongly that community singing in the whole school was a worthy endeavor for U.S. public schools. On pages 66–67 he wrote about the "assembly or chorus": Advice offered therein recommended seating within voice parts, use of specific repertoire suitable for changing boys' voices, and the use of a professional piano accompanist. At the senior high school level, Dykema remarked that in addition to offering elective music classes, all schools should have whole-school assembly singing once or twice a week. Assembly singing, according to Dykema, is sufficient music education for those students who lack both musical interest and ability.

Vincent Morgan, professor of music education at Amherst College, described the state of music education in boys' schools in New England in the late 1930s. His (1940) treatise *Music in the Secondary School* did not document the research methodology used, other than explaining that the author visited 27 boys' secondary schools in New England between 1937–1938, in order to observe and have conversations with music teachers and headmasters. Morgan's treatise, in effect, is a description of the state of music education

at these schools, plus advice for school administrators, based on the author's observations.

Morgan (1940) described "The School Sing" as a means of providing access to music participation to every student:

> The chief justification for school sings is that they give everybody the chance to take part in making music. Lacking good voices and unable to perform on instruments, many boys are excluded from the activities of glee club, choir, orchestra, or ensemble group. Their interest wanes when they believe that theirs is always to be a passive role in music. When surrounded by the sea of sound rising from a hundred throats, however, their technical deficiencies are as naught; their voices seem to smooth out; they dive in and have as much fun as unselfconscious prima donnas . . . This is perhaps their only chance to know participation in music. (p. 29)

While the glee club, choir, orchestra or ensemble group described above may align with Pascale's Aesthetic A, the whole school sing described above provides the opportunity for everyone in the community to sing, suggesting Pascale's Aesthetic B: according to Pascale (2005): "For more inclusive education, we must go beyond those boundaries and embrace the 'multiple voices and multiple realities' that our educational communities comprise" (p. 174). The School Sing, as described above by Morgan, appears to be an example of this Aesthetic B goal.

A 1958 monograph titled *Singing in the Schools* included a five page chapter on "Assembly singing" (Music Educators National Conference, 1958). The chapter included

a listing of the purpose and value of assembly singing, proposing that it is "one of the few common activities that helps to unify the school" (p. 1). The chapter also includes recommendations for scheduling and seating arrangements; and the observation that the leader of assembly singing needs to know the priorities of the activity:

> He (the song leader) should remember that an assembly-sing is not a rehearsal for letter-perfect performance. One of the first objectives is to break down the reserve of the students, get them to participate whole heartedly resulting in real enjoyment. (p. 2)

In sum, the document is a prescription for schools wishing to establish a practice of assembly singing, with recommendations that are consistent with Pascale's Aesthetic B approach.

In conclusion, most of the literature I was able to find on whole-school singing at the secondary level was written over 75 years ago, consisting primarily of prescriptions for school administrators wanting to incorporate whole-school singing into their school practice. These writings are purported to be descriptive, based on visits to schools; however, they do not appear to have used a research methodology, nor do they contain viewpoints of the student participants. Nevertheless, they describe an approach to whole-school singing that is consistent with Pascale's (2005) prescription for a broader aesthetic than espoused within high school music education today.

School Contexts: Contemporary Accounts of Whole-School Singing

Primary School Level

Two studies on whole-school singing at the primary level are Boyack's (2003) investigation of three primary schools in New Zealand who identify as "singing schools" and Lamont et al.'s (2012) description of best practices in classroom vocal tuition at seven primary schools in the United Kingdom. In this section, I outline the findings of this research, and commented on its relevance to my investigation.

Boyack's (2003) research is closest in purpose, design and methodology to mine. Boyack investigated the "songs, practices, beliefs and attitudes of principals, teachers and students from three primary schools which identify as 'singing schools'" (p. 26). "Singing school," Boyack explained, is a descriptor employed by some school principals in New Zealand to identify their pride in the singing practices and attitudes at their school. Similar to my research approach, Boyack stressed the necessity of interviewing the students (as opposed to just the music teachers and/or school principals) in order to understand the students' experience of singing in their schools. The researcher found that points of congruence centered on the participants' positive regard for the practice of communal singing. Differences were most evident when participants discussed suitable and appealing song repertoire.

At all three locations in Boyack's (2003) study, singing is practiced extensively in classrooms and in extra-curricular choir programs; however, the three schools differed in the extent to which they engage in regular full-school communal singing. School A has a school-wide mass once per term, at which religious songs are sung. School B does not

appear to practice full-school communal singing, despite a very active classroom music and extra-curricular choral program. At school C, singing is an important component of weekly full school assemblies. Thus Boyack's research was not focused on whole-school singing per se; rather, the emphasis was on a general school-wide positive attitude towards and frequent practice of singing within the schools.

Lamont et al. (2012) similarly explored seven primary schools in the United Kingdom that self-identified as "singing schools," however, whole-school singing practice was clearly not part of any these schools' singing practices; instead, most of these schools integrate singing on a regular basis into cross-curricular classroom learning. Lamont et al.'s study focused on describing good practice for whole-class vocal tuition. Therefore, relevance to my study, focused on whole-school singing, is perhaps limited. Nevertheless, the non-voluntary aspect of the whole-class teaching context may apply. Lamont et al.' concluded with recommendations that classroom teachers be provided with good-quality support from musical specialists and support from school leadership and faculty, in order to successfully incorporate singing into their classes.

Beyond these two research studies, there are a number of non-research-based pieces in the literature about whole-school singing at the primary level. Two prescriptive pieces appeared in the Music Educators' Journal in 1990, urging primary school music teachers and principals to initiate communal singing at their schools: *Let the Whole School Sing!* (Sins, 1990) and *Singing in America: Reviving a Tradition* (Elliott, 1990). Within the United Kingdom, sources of advocacy include Flying High Music (Marsh, 2019) and the Sing Up! Organization (Sing Up!, n.d.). Flying High Music is a company

that provides resources to primary schools for singing in assemblies and choirs. The website lists “10 strategies for the best whole-school singing,” aimed at primary schools. The strategies are not research-based, and seem to me to be self-evident, for example: “be prepared,” “enjoy it and smile,” “keep the pace moving appropriately” (Marsh, 2019). Similarly, the not-for-profit Sing Up! organization promotes and provides resources for group singing in school (Sing Up!, n.d.). Again, most of the information on this site is prescriptive, not descriptive, and focusses on singing in primary schools. The website Sing Up! (n.d.) presents a number of case studies of whole-school singing; all the case studies (written descriptions, no research methodology) are of primary schools.

Significant differences exist between whole-school singing at the primary and at the secondary level, the most salient being the difference in levels of self-consciousness between children and adolescents. Chong (2010), in a survey of 90 university students, found that the primary reason that some people do not enjoy singing is related to self-conscious feelings and concern about other peoples’ judgements of their voice. It follows, then, that during adolescence, a period of heightened self-consciousness sensitivity to being evaluated by others (Somerville et al., 2013), an aversion to singing in public would be heightened. For this reason, studies on whole-school singing at the secondary level are needed in addition to the research on primary school whole school singing, as the populations are qualitatively different.

Secondary School Level

The one study on contemporary whole school singing at the secondary school level that I was able to find is Bayliss et al.’s (2009) account of massed singing at

Melbourne High School. The contents of Bayliss et al. were repurposed for publication by Bayliss and Stewart (2012). Neither Bayliss et al. nor Bayliss and Stewart disclosed a research methodology used in their investigation. The accounts describe the history of massed singing at Melbourne High School, the logistics and purpose of the mass-singing program, and provide a full description of the school's extensive elective music program. Sources of information include the authors' personal experience. The authors of both publications include the Director of Choral Music at Melbourne High School, the Director of Music at Melbourne High School, and the current principal of the school. Additional sources include some historic documents, such as reports in the Melbourne High School newspaper, from the early 1900s. Aside from the fact that one of the authors also happens to be an alum, the direct voices of the students and alumni do not appear in this account, nor do the points of view of faculty who are not directly involved in the mass-singing program.

According to Bayliss et al. (2009) and Bayliss and Stewart (2012), Melbourne High School (MHS) is an Australian secular, state-funded school for boys aged 13 to 17 (years 9 to 12); entrance to the school is selective, and there is a strong commitment to academic excellence. These factors suggest that MHS is culturally similar to the schools in my research study. MHS has a long history of "expected participation" in weekly house and grade-wide massed singing (Bayliss & Stewart, 2012, p. 342) going back to the school's founding over 125 years ago. The idea that at Melbourne High School, "every student sings," is an important aspect of the school culture (Bayliss et al., 2009, p. 143). Mass singing "links students in each year level and as a whole entity in cooperative

expression" and fosters "cultural solidarity and self-pride" (p. 142).

According to Bayliss et al. (2009) and Bayliss and Stewart (2012), the school's population is about 1400 boys. As such, the school does not have a physical location large enough for whole-school weekly singing. Instead, once per week, one quarter of the school gathers each in four different locations, for grade-wide, or alternatively, house-wide singing sessions. At the end of each term (four times per year) the entire school gathers at an off-campus location in order to sing together as a whole school. In this way, the practice of whole-school singing is somewhat different from the schools in my research, in that it occurs only a few times a year; however, the size of the school makes it such that the populations of the grade-wide and house-wide singing sessions are similar in size to the whole-school populations at the schools I studied.

Bayliss et al. (2009) listed the general aims of mass singing as including "participation and community, and limited but valuable opportunities for music-making for students not enrolled in the curricular music program" (p. 143). To elucidate this balance between "limited but valuable," they explained, "we tread the line carefully between energetic, loud, massed 'bel canto' singing and 'yelling con belto'" (p. 144). Bayliss et al., in discussing the choice of repertoire, acknowledged that there is a balance between choosing songs that the boys enjoy, and including repertoire that will develop musical understanding and technical singing abilities (p. 144). These referents to "balance" echo the tension between Pascale's (2002, 2005) two aesthetics, and suggest that mass-singing at MHS may be an illustration of singing "embraced through the wider lens of two aesthetics" (Pascale, 2005, p. 173).

Limitations of Melbourne High School Singing Study and Differentiation from This Study. In a number of ways, my research is distinct from Bayliss et al.'s (2009) and Bayliss and Stewart's (2012) accounts. The primary difference is that Bayliss et al. and Bayliss and Stewart appear to incorporate only the viewpoints of the authors, that is, the adults involved in the leadership of massed singing. My research investigates whole-school communal singing as experienced by the students, alumni, as well as by faculty and administrators, including teachers not involved in leading the communal singing sessions. In this way, my research provides a multi-faceted look at the phenomenon of communal singing within a secondary school.

Furthermore, three contextual differences distinguish my research from Bayliss et al.'s (2009) and Bayliss and Stewart's (2012). First, Melbourne High School is a single gender school. My research investigates the phenomenon of communal singing in co-educational contexts. Second, my research investigates the phenomenon of communal singing within two Canadian schools; Melbourne High School is located in Australia. Third, the schools I investigated practice whole-school singing regularly: that is, twice or more per week; at Melbourne High School, while mass-singing occurs once per week, whole-school singing occurs only once per term. Finally, the authors did not describe their use of a research methodology. My research was conducted according to the methodology outlined in Chapter 3, and as such, aims to add credibility, trustworthiness and authenticity to my findings.

Conclusion

Communal singing, as I have characterized it, has been the subject of research, particularly investigations of group singing that occurs at sports events, in religious contexts, in pubs, and summer camps, both historic and contemporary. Using Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics of singing as a theoretical framework, these communal singing practices exemplify Aesthetic B, with their emphasis on participation over artistry. Within school contexts, research on whole school singing at the secondary level is scant. Most of the accounts of this phenomenon are historic; contemporary accounts seem to not be research-based, unmethodical and largely advocacy focused. This presents an opportunity for an exploratory study that investigates and describes whole school communal singing at the secondary level. The goal of my study was to describe participants' experience of whole-school singing, as it is currently practiced at two secondary schools, using Pascale's two aesthetics as a theoretical framework. An overview of my phenomenological research methodology, with use of thematic analysis, is provided in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 – Methods

In this chapter I outline my position as a researcher, reflect on different approaches to qualitative data collection and analysis, and explain the methods I selected for this project. I then describe my research methods in detail.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomena of whole-school singing in two Canadian independent secondary schools. Because whole-school singing at the secondary level is rare, providing a rich description of the practice, an exploration of how it is experienced by participants, and an investigation into the drawbacks and benefits, if any, of whole school singing, could give readers an understanding of a practice with which they may not be familiar. School leaders, in particular, might find this information useful if they are considering implementation of this practice in their schools.

Research Questions

The research questions, guided by Pascale's (2002, 2005) conceptual framework of two aesthetics of singing, are as follows, for each location:

1. What does the practice of whole-school communal singing look like? For example:
    a. When and where does it occur?
    b. Who leads it and who participates?
    c. What repertoire is sung?
    d. If hymns are sung, is it singing as an expression of worship, or is it "just singing" for singing's sake?

2. How is whole-school singing experienced by the participants? For example:
    a. What about the practice, if anything, is valued by students, alumni, faculty, and administrators?
    b. What are the benefits, if any, and drawbacks of the practice, as articulated by the participants?
    c. What are the challenges, if any, of implementing whole school singing at the secondary school level?
3. In what ways, if any, does whole-school singing exemplify Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B?

Choice of Methodology

My aim in undertaking this research project was to investigate participants' experience of whole school singing, to describe and understand it through participants' eyes. I was not looking for an objective truth, but rather to uncover the multiple meanings of this practice, constructed through the participants' experiences. This aligns with Schwandt's (1994) depiction of constructionism: that truth is not objective but is the result of human perspectives.

A constructivist stance is compatible with a qualitative research design. Using a qualitative methodology allowed me to focus on participants' experience of the phenomena, in the setting in which the phenomena occurs. This corresponds to Creswell's (2009) view that qualitative research is appropriate for the study and presentation of a detailed view of a program, an event, or of individuals within a

contextual setting. Furthermore, as discussed in the preliminary literature review, research on the phenomenon of whole-school singing has been scant, unmethodical, and largely focused on advocacy. The lack of research on the topic offers an opportunity for an exploratory study (Stebbins, 2001). An exploratory study may inform ongoing discussions about community-as-chorus, and generate questions that can guide future research. Thus, I endeavored to find a qualitative, exploratory research design that would suit my research questions.

When I first discussed my interest in studying communal singing in secondary schools, I was urged by my professors at Boston University to consider using portraiture methodology. This research method, as explicated by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), seemed at the time, to be a good fit. I wanted to discover and describe what the rare phenomenon of communal singing at secondary schools looked like, felt like, and to understand its value (if any) to the school community. I planned to visit the schools in-person, in order to witness the phenomenon for myself and to capture my impressions and experience, as well as conduct interviews and with participants. I wanted to create a complete picture of the phenomenon, with vivid descriptions, in order to provide a "portrait" of this rare practice. Furthermore, portraiture, with its focus on "goodness," that is, on documenting what is strong, resilient, and worthy in a given situation (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2016, p. 10), seemed to resonate with the purpose of my research, given that my preliminary anecdotal conversations with people who engage in whole-school singing at the secondary level indicated that communal singing plays a positive role within the school community.

However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, my plans to visit these schools were necessarily cancelled. As advised by the Internal Review Board at Boston University, I adapted my research design to consist of Zoom interviews only. I realized that cancelling my visits to the schools would remove a component of my personal perspective; on reflection, I realized that this would actually strengthen my research. What I was truly interested in was understanding the phenomenon of whole-school communal singing as experienced by the participants. Taking the focus away from my own observations, and placing it instead on the participants' voices, was a better match for my research purpose. Thus, I replaced visits to the school locations with interviews by zoom.

This shift of focus from documenting my impressions, to understanding the phenomenon purely through the eyes of participants, meant I needed to re-think my research design. Portraiture no longer fit. Portraiture, initially conceptualized by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) and subsequently developed by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), requires the researcher to visit the locale of the phenomenon of interest, in order to observe events, institutions and interactions, and to record their own impressions, in addition to interviewing participants. Without the ability to be physically present at whole-school singing sessions, I needed to find a methodology that would support a sole focus on participants' experience, as revealed through one-on-one interviews.

Returning to my curiosity about communal singing at secondary schools, I clarified what I wanted to know and formulated my research questions, as described, above. These considerations pointed me to phenomenology, a research method designed

to uncover the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group of people. The goal of phenomenology is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon, both what was experienced and how it was experienced, by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Cresswell, 2013; Neubauer et al., 2019).

Phenomenological research methodology was originally developed by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), as a response to the devastation and chaos in Europe following World War II. Husserl felt the need to both honor the lived experiences of individuals, as well as to align with the philosophy that the world exists not as an objective reality (positivism) but as experienced by humans (Husserl, 1970). Thus, phenomenological research is conducted primarily through interviews with people who have experienced the phenomenon: "The phenomenologists are concerned with understanding the social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of the people involved" (Welman & Cruger, 1999, p. 189). A phenomenological researcher typically asks questions such as: What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have influenced your experiences of the phenomenon? (Moustakas, 1994).

Researchers have employed phenomenology for similar investigations within the field of education. An example within music education is Mertz's (2018) study of high school music teachers' experiences selecting band repertoire. The researcher had recognized, from previous personal experience, that a tension exists between music teachers' pre-service educational experiences and the realities of their professional practice, in choosing repertoire for their band students. Mertz identified this tension as the phenomenon of interest to the study, and employed survey methods, along with one-

to-one interviews with four participants, to confirm the existence of this tension and to explore its nature. Based on this work, Mertz was able to provide recommendations to teacher preparation programs and collegiate ensembles that would better equip teachers to select repertoire in realistic, high school programs.

Another example, perhaps closer to the nature of my investigation, is Goenewald and Shurink's (2003) phenomenological investigation of the role of cooperative education in growing talent in South Africa. The researchers included student, as well as faculty voices in their interview process. The research question, "What is the contribution that co-operative education can make in the growing of talent of the South African people?" (p. 95) was similar to mine, in that it focused on a particular educational practice. Questions that the researchers asked participants included "How did/do you experience the joint educational venture [cooperative education]" and "what value, if any has been derived from the collaborative effort?" (p. 95), both questions similar to the ones I asked my participants. Groenewald and Shurink's findings that the cooperative education model is highly valued by program participants, but some organizational logistics require improvement, resulted in recommendations to various educational, vocational and governmental bodies. In conclusion, the phenomenological research approach appears to be a good fit in cases where the researchers' purpose is to discover, describe and summarize an educational practice through the eyes of its participants.

There are two main types of phenomenological research: hermeneutic (interpretive) and transcendental (descriptive) (Neubauer et al., 2019). The latter seemed to suit my research purposes best. According to Giorgi (1985), transcendental

phenomenological research is encapsulated in the word "describe." The aim of the researcher is to describe the participants' understanding of the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the experience of the participants (Giorgi, 2012). Again, this is what I was attempting to do with my research on communal singing in schools, by listening to the voices of participants, and refraining, as much as possible, from applying pre-conceived hypotheses, frameworks, or value systems onto their descriptions. For my research, choosing a descriptive (transcendental) phenomenological approach gave me direction and guidance in clarifying my research questions, designing the data collection method, and choosing my method of data analysis. Furthermore, Moustakas (1994) argued that phenomenology is enriched by examining a phenomenon from many different sides or viewpoints. This supported my decision to interview participants from two different sites, and with potentially differing viewpoints.

Choice of Location and Participants

Multiple Sites

As the researcher of a qualitative study grounded in constructivist epistemology, my role was strictly to draw conclusions from a specific context, rather than to generalize to other settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, it is not the researcher's task to "provide an index of transferability; it is his or her responsibility to provide the database that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1995, p. 316). A database of more than one school allows both researcher and

readers to gain a broader perspective on the phenomenon of whole-school singing. For this reason, I investigated the phenomenon at two different schools. This provides readers with the ability to compare and contrast the findings from two different schools; this information might be useful to readers' own construction of the meaning, purpose and value (if any) of whole-school singing to its participants.

Choosing Sites. The schools I chose to study were secondary schools that engage in regular whole school communal singing, as this is the phenomenon of interest to this research project. Furthermore, in order to study whole school singing as an activity in and of itself, I wanted these schools to be secular schools. I did not want singing as a component of religious worship to confound the phenomenon I was observing. Hence, I looked for two schools that were secondary, non-religious schools, that sing together regularly as an entire community, and where the singing includes repertoire beyond merely singing of the national anthem. Furthermore, this singing is not in preparation for a performance, nor is there any separation between singers and audience. Finally, I wanted to investigate Canadian schools, in an attempt to minimize cultural differences between the schools that would have resulted from their operating in different countries.

Through word-of-mouth, assisted by my extensive networks within the Canadian educational community, I was able to identify two schools that fit these criteria: Lakefield College School (LCS), in Ontario, and Shawnigan Lake School (SLS), in British Columbia. Both schools are independent schools.

Internal Review Board Application and Approval

Prior to submitting my request for participants to the schools, I applied for, and

was granted Internal Review Board (IRB) approval through the Boston University Charles River Institutional Review Board. Given the low-risk nature of my study, the IRB provided an expedited review, and advised me that participants' verbal consent was sufficient. For participants under the age of 18, the IRB directed me to obtain verbal assent, along with their parents' or guardians' verbal or written consent.

Contacting the Head of School

I received written permission to conduct my research study from the head of each school. This person directed me to an individual who acted as a point of contact to assist me in finding participants. At SLS the point of contact was the Director of Music; at LCS it was Director of Spiritual Wellness and Diversity. The head of each school also gave permission to identify the school in the final written report.

Selection of Participants

After receiving IRB approval, I communicated by email and telephone with my points of contact at each school, asking them to recommend eight to ten candidates who would be willing to participate in my research. The nature of my research required that I capture diverse points of view. It was important that I hear the perspective of participants who potentially might not enjoy or value whole-school singing, as well as those who were advocates of the practice. Wanting to capture these varied perspectives, I requested that my contact invite both faculty who were involved in running the whole-school singing sessions, as well as faculty who were merely participants in communal singing at the school; similarly, I asked my contacts to reach out both to students who were avid music students, as well as to students who were not otherwise involved in music.

Students involved in the school choir, for example, might find communal singing too easy, too simple, lacking in artistry, and as a result, may not particularly enjoy it. Similarly, students who were not in the school choir might not enjoy singing in any form, and consequently, may not express positive views of the practice. Therefore, I wanted to include both students who were fully involved in the school music program as well as those who had never voluntarily participated in any kind of music outside of mandatory whole-school singing. Finally, I wanted to hear the perspective of alumni, who would have the perspective of backwards reflection on their school years. Alumni might be able to reflect on the longer-term impact of whole school singing.

Initial communication With Participants and Consent/Assent.

After my contact at each school had heard back from candidates willing to participate, I reached out with an introductory email and consent form, and set up a mutually convenient time for a Zoom interview. I obtained verbal consent at the beginning of the interviews, according to IRB-approved protocols.

The Participants

For purposes of anonymity, I used pseudonyms for each participant: first names for students and alumni, formal address for adults, with their school identified in parentheses. For example, student 1 at SLS, is identified as Alison (SLS); faculty 1 at LCS as Mr. Thibodeau (LCS). In two cases, I used actual participants' names, because it was necessary to reveal their identity in order to give important context for their perspective. These participants are the organist who has led communal singing at LCS for 35 years, Syd Birrell, and the former headmaster at SLS, who initiated the current culture

of whole school singing at SLS, Dave Robertson. Both individuals gave permission for the use of their real names in this study.

Participants at LCS

I interviewed nine participants at LCS (seven men, two women): the Head of School, the Director of Diversity and Wellness; the organist who had led communal singing for 36 years; the Chaplain who had been at the school for over 25 years; one long-term, non-music faculty member, two students, neither of whom had any music background or involvement outside of whole school singing; and two alumni, one of whom was an accomplished choral singer, the other who had no musical experience outside of whole school singing.

Participants at SLS

I interviewed eight participants at SLS (four men, four women): a recently retired Head of School who had been at the school for 25 years; the Director of Music; a non-music faculty member who had been at the school over 30 years; the Chaplain who had been at the school for over 25 years; two students, one of whom was involved in the choir and in musical theatre, the other who had no music background or involvement outside of whole school singing; two alumni, one of whom had been an avid member of the choir, the other who had no involvement in music outside of whole school singing.

Data Collection

Although I collected the most substantial portion of my data through interviews, I also endeavored to find contextual information about the two schools through their websites and historic documentation about independent schools in Canada. The

association of Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) was also a source of information: Interviews with Catherine McCauley, the Director of Accreditation and Research, in November, 2019, and with Patti MacDonald, the Executive Director of CAIS in December, 2020, were very useful in helping me to source historic information about LCS and SLS, as well as communal singing in Canadian schools in general.

Interviews with Participants

I designed the interviews with research participants to be semi-structured in format. Questions were intended to elicit information about both the practice of whole school singing (the repertoire, the song leaders, the times and places that singing occurred, the general logistics of assembly) as well as how individuals experienced communal singing in the school. As intended, interviews diverged from the prepared questions, as participants elaborated on particular aspects of communal singing and told illustrative anecdotes.

Interview Questions. I relied on leaders in phenomenological research for direction in preparing suitable questions. Giorgi (1997) recommended that questions be "generally broad and open-ended so that the subject has sufficient opportunity to express his or her viewpoint extensively" (p. 245). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) advocated for the use of deliberate naiveté in crafting questions, in order that the researcher refrain from the use of personal knowledge, theory or beliefs. Benner (1994) specified that questions be asked in the language of the individual being interviewed. This meant that I needed to craft questions slightly differently depending on the interviewee's background, understanding, and perspective. For example, students with no music background

required different vocabulary than did music teachers (e.g., “songs that you sing” vs. “repertoire”). Particularly helpful to me was Giorgi (1985)’s differentiation between interviewing for context description and interviewing for meaning: this helped me to distinguish between the kinds of information I wanted to collect related to logistical descriptions of how whole-school singing is conducted at each school, versus explorations of participants’ opinions, values, and meanings related to their experience of communal singing.

Bevan (2014) provided a structure for phenomenological interviews that I found particularly helpful. The author recommended that interview questions cover three domains: contextualization of the phenomenon, apprehending the phenomenon, and clarifying the phenomenon (p. 139). This guidance resulted in the following interview questions used to guide my conversations with student and alumni participants:

1. Tell me about your association with the school (how long have/had you been a student at the school).
2. Describe to me how assembly singing happens (how many days per week, what songs you sing, who leads it, how are new songs taught).
3. Are students required to attend? Do you agree that students should be required to attend?
4. Please tell me about your personal experience of whole school singing - what do you like about it, what don’t you like about it? . . . . Is there anything you want to reflect on?

5. How many (or what proportion of) students actually sing on a given day? Is participation in the singing encouraged?
6. What are your favorite songs / least favorite songs?
7. Are there times that you don't feel like singing? What happens if a student isn't singing? Does anyone say anything / give feedback?
8. Do you consider yourself a singer?
9. Imagine that a new Head of School has come in and has decided that this practice is to be discontinued. What would you think? How would you feel?

For faculty and administrator participants, I asked similar questions to those above, and included following clarification questions:

- Given that communal singing takes up valuable time in the school schedule, can you tell me the reasons that you think this practice is continued? Or do you think the school should stop? If so, why?
- What are your aims when leading the sessions (for song leaders)?

Question 9 (above) is an example of what Bevan (2014) calls "imaginative variance." I included this question inspired by Boyack's (2003) study on New Zealand singing schools. Boyack's methods were similar to mine: the researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews designed to elicit information about the nature and meaning of singing in three different primary schools. Boyack concluded interviews with a question about "what it would mean to the participant(s) if singing were totally banned in their school" (p. 27) in order to gain insight into the ways that the participants' valued the

practice. This inspired my question to "imagine a scenario where a new head of school banned the practice of whole school singing," designed to uncover the extent to which participants valued (or did not value) whole school singing.

Interview Process. I conducted the interviews by Zoom, each lasting 30 minutes to an hour. Interviews began with my request for verbal consent; for students under the age of 18, I received either verbal consent from a parent, or written consent via an email prior to the interview. I used the interview questions (above) as prompts, and allowed the conversation to flow. Following Benner's (1994) advice, I endeavored to listen actively: this often led to my asking clarifying and probing questions, such as "can you give me an example of . . . ?" or "what would be one of the songs that made you feel that way?"

Important to phenomenological methodology is the concept of what Husserl (1970) called "bracketing," that is, the requirement that the researcher be aware of their own natural attitude, and overcome the natural inclination to "dig" for preconceived answers (Bevan, 2014). According to Bevan, this is especially important when asking questions that deviate from the listed interview questions. I remained personally vigilant during the interview process: I am aware of my bias, and was very careful to remain open-mindedly curious. As it happened, I found that the participants were effusive and required little probing from me. As a result, my voice was, in the end, a minimal part of our conversations.

Preparing the Interview Data For Analysis. After receiving verbal permission from each participant to record, I used the record feature on Zoom to keep a temporary record of the conversation. After each interview, I created a written transcription from the

Zoom recording. Then I emailed each participant's transcription back to them, with a request that they look it over and correct any errors they found, as well as an invitation to send me any further thoughts they might have. Most of the participants responded; all respondents confirmed that the transcription was correct. Only one participant offered further thoughts and some spelling corrections.

Document Collection and Videos

Davis (1997) recommended that if potentially informative resources are mentioned in conversation, qualitative researchers acquire relevant documents from their participants. It became evident during my interviews that relevant documents at SLS were the song-books; at LCS, these were the spreadsheets in which LCS repertoire is recorded, prepared by the school organist. I obtained copies of these for consideration and analysis. This follows Bowen's (2009) recommendation to use information collected by different methods, such as documentation, in order to triangulate and corroborate data gleaned from interviews and observations. I was also able to gain another perspective into Chapel practices at both schools by viewing publicly-available postings of some Chapel sessions on YouTube. While I did not analyze these videos directly, viewing them after I had completed the interviews gave me a picture to help me contextualize the interview data. Viewing the videos enhanced the understanding I had gained about Chapel practices while completing the interviews. I have supplied links to these videos in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

With transcendental phenomenology as my methodology, I found that thematic analysis, a method of qualitative analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) to be a

suitable method of analyzing my data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke). It is useful for comparing the different perspectives of various research participants, exploring similarities and differences, and developing unforeseen insights (Nowell et al., 2017).

Following this method, the process of transcribing the interviews was the first step of data analysis, and this helped me to become very familiar with the texts. Once transcription was completed, I then proceeded to read each transcript slowly and fully, taking inspiration from Von Eckartsberg (1998):

> One embeds oneself in the process of getting involved in the text, one begins to discern configurations of meaning, of parts and wholes and their interrelationships, one receives certain messages and glimpses of an unfolding development that beckons to be articulated and related to the total fabric of meaning. (p. 50)

Additionally, I alternated between re-watching the Zoom recordings and reading sections of the transcripts, in order to be certain I was interpreting meaning correctly, picking up the non-verbal cues and the inferences of subtle pauses, vocal inflection and emphasis. As I read, I noticed commonalities, general themes, and prevalent motifs. I kept notes and drew diagrams, constantly searching for repeating patterns, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Next, I uploaded the transcripts into NVivo software, to support the code creation and organization process. In my first pass-through, I went through each transcript and

created new nodes whenever I found repeated patterns of meaning. My process was inductive, and so I did not attempt to find themes that related to the specific interview questions. Nor were the themes driven by my theoretical interest or my previous knowledge of the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Instead, I endeavored to let the data drive the process, as I identified interesting aspects in the data that seemed to be pervasive across the data set. NVivo was particularly helpful at this stage: I made frequent use of the software's word-frequency, text-search function, word-tree and matrix coding functions.

Glaser and Straus (1967) referred to the analytic induction that occurs while sifting through data early in the process as the "constant-comparison method." During the process of constant-comparison, I followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) recommendation of writing to help me "move easily from empirical data to a conceptual level, refining and expanding codes further, developing key categories and showing their relationships, and building towards a more integrated understanding of events, processes and interactions in the case" (pp. 158–159). Similarly, Charmaz (2006) recommended the continual writing of memos to capture spontaneous, emergent ideas, categories, and codes. For such writing, I used the notes feature in NVivo, in order to both identify these initial emergent themes and to record my process.

My initial coding process resulted in 47 nodes. Following the method recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), I re-read through the data, compared, contrasted, and then organized these nodes into hierarchies. I identified five overarching themes, with four to five layers within each theme. Finally, I opened up a new file in

NVivo, and started afresh. I used the overarching themes I had arrived at in the first analysis to code any data that I had missed in the earlier coding stage, and to ascertain whether the original five themes still seemed to "work" in relation to the data set. This second pass-through also allowed me to prioritize and organize the discrete datum in a way that would support my final analysis.

Throughout the process, I used the 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) in order to maintain scientific rigour. These criteria include standards for transcription, coding and analysis of the data, and the written report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness, Authenticity, Credibility

While positivist research strives for reliability and validity, research conducted from a constructivist stance aspires to be trustworthy, authentic, and credible (Aguinaldo, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The essential questions to consider are: "Do the findings of the study make sense? Are they credible to the people we study, and to our readers?" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). In order to ensure the qualities of trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility, I employed specific measures to hold me accountable to the high standards required by phenomenological research.

Trustworthiness

To build trustworthiness, I am transparent about the underlying assumptions, personal experiences and theoretical perspectives that might bias my methodology. These are as follows: I am a music teacher at a school that does not practice whole-school singing; I am preoccupied with students who do not elect to take music courses and who

do not believe that they can sing; I am curious whether whole-school singing might be an antidote to these students' lack of self-efficacy for singing by providing them with access to group singing experiences within schools. I know that, as a music teacher and singer, I need to be aware that my belief that group singing can be a joyful, collaborative, and expressive experience, is personal, and not shared by all. I continually questioned and challenged these beliefs during my research process, and stayed vigilant for potential biases resulting from my beliefs. As a result, I believe I was able to keep my inquiry within the standard of trustworthiness.

Authenticity and Credibility

As mentioned earlier, being transparent about my personal biases and preconceptions are imperative for creating authentic work. Authenticity ensues from providing thick description, from fully disclosing the relationships between participants and myself, and from being constantly attuned to the voices of the actors (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 99).

Two important techniques that help to establish credibility are triangulation (Bresler, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eisner, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; van Manen, 1990, 2015) and member checking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Sandelowski, 2008). To incorporate triangulation into my research design, I investigated interview data about the same phenomena from 3 different points of view: students, alumni, and faculty, and from two different locations, all the while endeavoring to discover and fully acknowledge divergent points of view and exceptions to emerging themes. Member checking occurred as I asked two of the participants to read an early

draft of the analysis: The response from both was "yes, this rings true." As Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) explained, when actors respond to the report with a "yes, of course," they are affirming a holistic resonance with their experience; whereas a "yes, but" would indicate that the report reflects only a fragmented view of their truth (p. 247). While my report cannot fully embrace every aspect of every participants' experience, my hope was that my aggregation, summation, and depiction of the broad range of participants' experiences can accurately and credibly portray the phenomenon of whole school communal singing.

Delimitations

My sampling method, as described above, depended upon the selection of candidates made by a contact person at each school. A delimitation results from the fact that the contact person at each school was a faculty member who had potentially a vested interest in communal singing at their school. At LCS, this was Ms. Stevens, the faculty member responsible for Chapel programming; At SLS, this was Ms. Fields, the school's Music Director, who helps to lead Chapel singing when a new song is being taught (both pseudonyms). Although I was clear in my communication with my contacts that I needed a representative selection of students and faculty, these individuals may have intentionally selected students whom they knew would speak well of the practice, thus potentially skewing the data. However, based on my discussions with Ms. Fields and Ms. Stevens, I feel that they understood this concern, and did try to select a range of appropriate participants. An excerpt of my discussion with Ms. Fields (SLS) illustrates this point:

> Interviewer: [it would also be] good information to have a student's perspective, to say, “oh, actually, I don't care much for the singing and I'd be fine with me if we stopped” or something like that.
>
> Ms. Fields (SLS): I don't know. I don't know if anybody would ever admit that to me. I don't know if I would be able to find that person. But I can try. I'll see if I can. I find often there are people who will say that out loud. But really, behind the scenes, they're the ones that are singing out loud in the chapel, you know? It's hard sometimes to get the truth out of teens.

I included this quote to illustrate the challenges presented by my sample selection method. A more robust sample selection that might reduce the potential for bias would be to observe the communal singing sessions for myself and personally select student participants who appear to represent the group’s level of engagement, or to ask a disinterested third party to make the selection in this way. However, Covid-19 restrictions precluded this approach.

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the phenomena of whole school communal singing at the secondary level. First, I wanted to understand what this practice looked like: logistically, how it ran, where it took place, and what songs they sang, as well as the history of the practice at the schools, in order to gain contextual understanding of the phenomenon. Second, I wanted to learn about the experience of whole school communal singing, from the perspective of its participants. I wanted to know the extent to which they enjoyed and valued the practice, and what aspects, if any, of the practice they

found to be problematic. Finally, through the lens of Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics of singing, I wanted to know to what extent whole school communal singing was consistent with an Aesthetic B approach. Despite my questions, given the inductive nature of this research, I wanted my research to be open to follow the participants' lead, so that their ideas, thoughts and feelings could guide my discovery.

Given the exploratory nature of my inquiry, and my focus on the phenomenon of this rare practice, a transcendental phenomenological approach seemed the best fit for a research methodology. This approach allowed me to truly explore the phenomena of interest, and to be open to the participants' experiences. Guided by phenomenological principles, I gathered data primarily using semi-structured interviews with 17 participants at two schools that practice whole school singing on a regular basis, then analyzed the data using thematic analysis techniques. NVivo software facilitated this process. Trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity, as appropriate to qualitative research, were three standards I endeavored to meet throughout the research process. In addition to interviews, I also gathered relevant documentation, viewed videos of communal singing that occurred in the two schools, and obtained information about the schools' history.

As a result of my data analysis, I identified five overarching themes, and was able to create a rich description of whole school singing at LCS and SLS. Chapter 4 contains this description and provides contextual background information for the two schools. In Chapter 5, I report the first three of the overarching themes, as these relate to participants' experiences of whole school singing. Chapter 6 contains the final two

overarching themes, reporting on the “how” of whole school communal singing at LCS and SLS.

Chapter 4 - Contextual Background

Introduction

This section provides the reader with a profile of independent schools in Canada in general, and Lakefield College School (LCS) and Shawnigan Lake School (SLS) in particular. I describe how, over the course of the 20th century, the changing relationship between the schools and the Anglican church, diversification of the student population, and a desire to provide a more inclusive experience, changed the schools' approach to Chapel; this in turn impacted the practice of Chapel singing at LCS and SLS. Finally, I describe the logistics of Chapel and of Chapel singing at the two schools, including repertoire and current students' stated repertoire preferences.

Independent Schools in Canada

All information in this section, except where noted, was sourced from the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) website (CAIS, n.d.), conversation with the Executive Director of CAIS on Dec. 2, 2020, and information provided by the study participants.

What is an Independent School?

In Canada, as of 2020, there are 93 Independent schools with membership in the association of Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS), the national network and accrediting body for independent schools in Canada. Independent schools are defined by CAIS as:

- not-for profit;
- having charitable status and can issue tax receipts for donations;

- overseen by an elected Board of Governors specific to each independent school;
- licensed by the province in which they operate; and
- complying with provincial standards.

Independent schools differ from public schools in two significant ways: First, they are financed by tuition, charitable donations, and endowment revenue rather than by public funds; second, they have the option of selecting their students from a pool of applicants. Although independent schools are commonly referred to as private schools, there is an important difference: private schools can be for-profit and are not necessarily governed by an elected Board of Governors.

The 93 schools with CAIS membership come from across Canada, with nine of Canada's 13 provinces and territories represented. Neither the province of Prince Edward Island, nor the three territories Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories have CAIS member schools. The smallest CAIS school has 34 students and offers Grade 12 only, the largest has 1,495 students from preschool to Grade 12. While some of the schools have long histories, rich traditions and a broad network of alumni (the oldest school was founded in 1888), others are new (the youngest school was founded in 2004), and are building those traditions from the ground up. The two schools chosen for this study, fit the former description: LCS was founded in 1879, SLS in 1916. Both schools have long-established traditions and broad alumni networks.

Participant school profiles

Lakefield College School (LCS) and Shawnigan Lake School (SLS) are located at opposite sides of Canada: LCS in Ontario, and SLS in British Columbia. Both are CAIS

member schools, offering a co-educational, day and boarding, university preparatory education. Tuition fees at both schools are comparable to similar schools in the country: in 2021, fees at SLS and LCS were approximately $60,000 CAD for Canadian boarders, half that for day students. Both schools offer needs-based financial assistance. Despite these similarities, SLS and LCS have unique institutional identities.

Lakefield College School: A School "Like no Other" (Lakefield College School Website, n.d.)

Lakefield College School is set on a 315 acre natural campus, on the outskirts of a small town in Central Ontario, about two hours' drive north-east from the metropolis of Toronto. A university preparatory school with 380 boarding and day students grades 9 through 12, LCS is known for its vibrant student life experience, and a focus on character, values, and wellness (Lakefield College School website).

Founded in 1879, LCS flourished in the first half of the 20th century as a boys' boarding school, serving Ontario families of high social and economic status who sought a university-preparatory education for their sons. Towards the second half of the twentieth century LCS responded to both dwindling enrollment and a desire to diversify their student body: they intentionally broadened the geographic scope of their recruiting efforts, and in 1985, admitted girls. Its long history has permitted LCS to maintain an active alumni donor base, resulting in an endowment fund that provides student bursaries. According to its website (Lakefield College School, n.d.), in 2020, LCS offered financial assistance of approximately two million dollars to 30 percent of its students. Consequently, today's LCS students are co-ed, from diverse geographic, cultural, and

economic backgrounds. As of 2020, 27 percent of the students are international, representing 43 countries.

LCS's rural setting, village-like buildings, and lakeside waterfront provide the backdrop for the school's outdoor focus. Outdoor ice-hockey, swimming, sailing, campfires, and an extensive Outdoor Education (OE) curriculum are, according to the school website, part of what makes LCS a school "like no other" (Lakefield College School, n.d.). The focus on the outdoors contributes to LCS's "camp-like" feel. This was pointed out to me by participants, for example:

> A big thing about Lakefield is that because of the campus, where we're situated on a lake, it's often been called Camp Lakefield forever by the kids. They call it in the spring term, "Camp Lakefield" because they're outside all the time. (Ms. Stevens, LCS)

There is a strong connection between camp culture and communal singing. One LCS graduate observed:

> Lakefield is very camp-like. And singing has always been a big part of camp, and certainly communal singing happens at Lakefield outside of Chapel as well, like around the campfire. [It's] really very natural for a guitar to emerge and for kids to just kind of [sing, in a] completely unorganized fashion. (Duncan, LCS)

Many LCS students, particularly those from Ontario, are familiar with camp culture. Ontario has over 400 camps in the Ontario Camps Association (OCA, 2020); it is common for children from Ontario families with the financial resources to pay for extras

like private school, to have spent a summer at camp. Often a fondness for camp culture is what draws students to LCS in the first place, according to one LCS faculty participant.

The camp-like feel is reflected in the way that LCS has a less formal feel than some of the other old, traditional, independent schools in the country. For example, although students have a uniform, there is a certain amount of leeway permitted on regular (non-ceremonial) days. One of my alumni participants currently works at another CAIS school, made this comparison:

> There's definitely a formality here [the other CAIS school] that's different [from LCS]. I mean, there's a formality, even in uniform . . . [The other CAIS school] is still like . . . blazer and tie every day. And Lakefield, this is virtually - you can wear a sweatshirt as long as it's got the school color on it. It's very kind of campy and casual. (Duncan, LCS)

Lakefield prides itself on being a “small, caring community” (Lakefield College School, n.d.). The close connections and strong relationships amongst faculty and students were evident throughout my conversations with LCS participants. For example:

> I've always said: this entire campus is basically just a cul-de-sac that we all live on. Like, this is Lakefield Court. We’ve got the outdoor rec center and we all go to the same school, but then we — it's less of a boarding house. It's just home. . . . the people around you become your — they turn from friends to family. Your staff members go from teachers to role models, to people you would qualify as family — much closer than you’d expect because not only do they teach you, but they live with you. They influence your choices, they help you. They're your

guidance counselors. They're eventually just your friends. (Logan, LCS)

Lakefield College School's byline is "a boarding and day school like no other" (Lakefield College School, n.d.) The ingredients that set LCS apart, according to its marketing materials, are its close, caring community, its outdoor focus, and its personalized program.

Shawnigan Lake School: "Shaping the Next Generation of Global Leaders" (Shawnigan Lake School, n.d.)

Shawnigan Lake School (SLS) is set on 150 wooded hectares on the shores of Shawnigan Lake in the middle of Vancouver Island, off Canada's west coast. The school is located about an hour's drive from the provincial capital of British Columbia and offers a grade 8–12 university preparatory education to both boarders and day students.

SLS was founded in 1916 by Christopher Lonsdale, the son of a canon in the Church of England. Upon emigrating to the West Coast of Canada, he discovered a large population of British expatriates living on Vancouver Island wanting English-style schooling for their boys. Responding to this need, he founded Shawnigan Lake School in the tradition of his alma mater, Westminster School (Shawnigan Lake School, n.d.). This set the tone for an English-style, rural boarding school complete with uniforms, a house league, and affiliation with the Anglican Church. As the population on Vancouver Island increased rapidly due to immigration primarily from the British Isles, so did enrollment at SLS. In 1924, the SLS chapel was built to house a daily Anglican worship service (Shawnigan Lake School, n.d.).

SLS continued to grow throughout the 20th century, building its reputation for

providing a rigorous, university preparatory education along with an English-school style decorum, conduct, and discipline. Its students consisted of children from families living throughout the province of British Columbia. In the 1970s, general attitudes toward boarding education declined, resulting in a drop in enrollment in boarding schools across Canada. SLS responded by extending its recruiting efforts outside of Vancouver Island. In 1988, continuing to respond to societal and economic pressures, SLS became co-ed, and increased its efforts to attract international students (Shawnigan Lake School, n.d.)

Today, SLS provides a boarding and day school education for 520 students, grades 8 to 12. Marketing materials claim that SLS is "shaping the next generation of global leaders," by providing an experiential learning program, rigorous and innovative academics, and vibrant student life (Shawnigan Lake School, n.d.). My interviews with students, alumni, and faculty supported this claim. Salient to our conversations about communal singing, especially with the students, was the influence of SLS's house system on the student life experience.

At SLS, boarding students are assigned to houses that correspond to their boarding house. As a result, not only do they engage in inter-house competitions and activities with people in their house, they live alongside their house members. Day students are also assigned to houses, although they do not have permanent lodging within the house. There are 12 houses, each with its own motto, colors, and house-hymn.

I found that house loyalty at SLS was unlike any I have encountered at an independent school. One student, speaking about the house system, explained to me:

> It [the house system] is great for us. We think it's worked really well. And coming through it, I can say your house becomes something that is with you no matter what. . . . I haven't been at the school for months now [due to summer vacation and Covid-19 lockdown]. And . . . last time I was with my guys was back in probably March. But despite that, I still keep in contact with them all the time. I am texting them every day and we're always chatting and staying connected. (Matthew, SLS)

A high level of house loyalty was evident in all my conversations with student and alumni participants at SLS, suggesting that students at SLS are bonded strongly to their houses and very motivated by house pride.

Secularization of Independent Schools in Canada

Of the 93 CAIS member schools, 35 were established before World War I. Of these, 20 were founded as Church-affiliated schools, 14 with the Anglican Church of Canada (P. MacDonald, personal communication, November 19, 2020). Founders of many of these older Canadian schools were typically immigrants from England or Scotland, bringing with them a desire to replicate the "public" school experience of their homeland. ("Public" schools in England and Scotland are equivalent to "private" schools, as currently defined in Canada.) These early Canadian independent schools were typically populated by high SES families, often Anglican Church members with a desire for a distinct education for their children (Maxwell, 1995).

As such, older CAIS schools were founded on an English/Scottish school model, with its ideology of single-gender education, strong traditions, a rigorous curriculum, and

a focus on preparation for university entrance. An important component of this style of education was the inclusion in the school schedule of regular Anglican worship service. The importance of worship was demonstrated by the building of a dedicated chapel, complete with organ and a Christian church aesthetic.

In the second half of the 20th century, many of these Canadian Independent schools underwent a "changing of the guard." As the founders and original headmasters retired or passed away, new school leaders took on the challenge of navigating a changing socio-economic landscape. In the 1960s, government funding for public schools increased substantially, leading to a general perception that public education had improved. This resulted in a decline in independent school enrollment (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995).

Independent school leaders, faced with this increased competition, responded by adapting entrenched school traditions. For some schools, these changes included:

- becoming co-ed;
- modernizing the uniform;
- phasing out the boarding component;
- broadening admissions to include students from diverse cultural backgrounds; and
- weakening church ties.

With the move towards a secular, more inclusive approach to education, the regular practice of a Chapel worship service was, at many schools, discontinued; however, the need to gather as a community remained. As such, Chapel was replaced by Assembly. Whereas the components of Chapel might have included prayers, a homily, and hymn

singing, assembly would more likely consist of announcements, a talk (for example, by the head of school or a student leader, about values, character or citizenship), and sometimes a student musical performance or other entertainment.

For many of these older CAIS schools, the transition from Chapel to Assembly resulted in the discontinuation of hymn singing. As hymn-singing was dropped in the move toward secularism, so too was communal singing. I believe that very few CAIS secondary schools engage in regular communal singing due to a possibly unintended consequence of the schools' transition away from their Anglican affiliation. However, the two participant schools in my study (LCS and SLS) are exceptions to this trend. Despite their transition away from Chapel as a form of Anglican worship, they have nevertheless maintained communal singing in their gathering practice.

Secularization and the Impact on Chapel at LCS and SLS

At both LCS and SLS, the traditional practice of singing at the regular gathering has continued; however, it has manifested in a manner unique to each school.

LCS. The head of school during LCS's initial growth years (1895 – 1924), was the Reverend Dr. A. W. Mackenzie, an Anglican priest. He established the practice of daily Anglican worship service at LCS (LCS website, n.d.). The chapel was built in 1924, and the practice of starting the day with Chapel has continued ever since.

While the school Chapel program has undergone significant transition over the decades since those early years, the school maintains its Anglican affiliation. The current chaplain, an Anglican priest, has been at LCS since 1995. He explained to me that LCS is an Anglican-affiliated school, which means that, historically, there are connections with

the Anglican community. The chapel, for example, is consecrated, and operates under the authority of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. The chaplain was in charge of Chapel programming from 1995 to 2015, at which point, the school hired a Director of Spiritual Wellness, who, according to the chaplain, could offer a broader spiritual perspective for students of other faiths. This shift of focus away from Anglicanism was coupled with the initiation of the "Spiritual Pathways" program. The school website explains:

> As the Spiritual Pathways program was unfolding, it became clear that the school's Chapel program, based in Anglican tradition, was in need of review. This fall, the Chapel program will focus on creating an intentionally safe space that acknowledges that the Lakefield College School community is far more diverse than we were when the school was founded. (Lakefield College School, n.d.)

While Chapel used to consist of a daily Anglican worship service, currently, at the time of writing, the number of traditional Anglican services is limited to about six special occasions, such as the Thanksgiving service, a special alumni service, a Christmas service, and a service on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

Instead, the four-day per week Chapel program is non-denominational, except for the six annual special services mentioned above. According to my study participants, Chapel is much more about community and wellness than religion. Duncan, an LCS graduate explained:

> [The Director of Spiritual Wellness] in effect, oversees the day-to-day chapel program now. And it's much more inclusive of all faiths — it's inclusive of no

> faith. It's more about wellness. It's more about community time, setting up students for a successful day, in different ways. (Duncan, LCS)

Most of the LCS participants remarked that Chapel is in effect just “assembly,” reflecting the secularization of the service:

> Chapel is a loose way of — it's in the chapel. It's a beautiful building, but basically, it is assembly, being held in the chapel, and there's a ton of announcements, and we've abandoned having the Anglican priest taking a service and praying. That happens maybe six times a year, when it's something super-special, and then that will happen. But for the most part, it's assembly in (the) chapel. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

According to a student participant, “Chapel is essentially just morning announcements.” (Logan, LCS). Despite these comments, LCS school leaders are committed to making time in Chapel meaningful. As described on the website:

> Chapel represents a place for our community to learn and grow from the experiences of our local and global community; a space for our community to address religious intolerance and to promote curiosity, compassion and peaceful resolution to conflict. Our Chapel program endeavours to reflect and respond to the current spiritual needs of our diverse cultural community. (Lakefield College School, n.d.)

In other words, regular Chapel meetings at LCS are intended to serve a spiritual, but not Anglican, or even Christian, purpose.

SLS. Similarly, at SLS, once-strong Anglican ties have faded. Chapel at SLS was originally established as a daily prayer service, with a full Eucharist service occurring on a regular basis. Similar to at LCS, Chapel at SLS has transitioned to being less religion-focused, and more centered on community gathering. Although the resident Chaplain, Reverend Jim Holland, is responsible for Chapel programming, and the school retains official Anglican Church affiliation, I learned that Chapel is no longer aligned with any particular faith. For example, I asked a long-time faculty member whether the school had official affiliation with the Anglican Church. The faculty member indicated that their Saturday morning services are a shortened version of the service from the Anglican prayer book, but the twice weekly Chapel:

> . . . is really a gathering, and that could be anything on that given day. Can be the chaplain talking, it could be the headmaster talking about something, it could be some staff member talking about an experience they have. It could be a kid talking. It's a variety of different things. (Ms. Campbell, SLS)

All the SLS student participants described Chapel as non-religious, non-denominational in tone. One student participant commented that

> . . . despite the fact that the chapel is a space that you could call and say is religious or has a religious significance, I don't see it as that. I see it as a place of gathering specifically for our community, our community that is so diverse. (Matthew, SLS)

SLS students appear not to view Chapel as a worship service. In fact, like the LCS students, they consider Chapel to be a kind of regular school assembly, but with the

distinguishing factor being that they also sing:

> I think the singing and singing together as a school kind of sets us apart from just like having a normal "assembly" [air quotes] kind of thing, you know, instead of just like meeting in your grades or whatever or even meeting as the whole school, like, for messages or something. (Alison, SLS)

Participants from both schools affirmed that Chapel is equivalent to a regular school assembly, but with the added element of communal singing. Despite its historical roots as a practice of school-based worship, At LCS and SLS, Chapel is essentially a community gathering, the purpose of which is sharing information, celebrating achievements, delivering lessons of a moral or character-building nature, and community-building.

Clarification Around Language

In common usage, the term *chapel* means a "small building for Christian worship" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). However, at both LCS and SLS, participants use the word *Chapel* to refer to the act of gathering in the chapel building (for example, "We would have Chapel on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday" (Travis, LCS). For the purposes of this paper, I similarly use the term *Chapel* to refer to the event; *chapel* to the building. Furthermore, participants use the term *Chapel singing* interchangeably with communal singing — with the exception that Chapel singing is limited to the location (singing within the chapel building), while communal singing includes group singing in other locations, such as around a campfire, on the sports field, while on a hike.

Chapel Logistics

The way that Chapel operates is slightly different at each of the two schools in my study. This section addresses the particular traditions, norms and expectations around the way that Chapel operates at each school, including scheduling, the chapel building itself, who runs it, what repertoire is sung, and the extent to which Chapel is intended and experienced as a religious service.

Chapel Logistics at LCS

Every weekday, except Wednesdays, Chapel begins the day at LCS. Students and available faculty gather at 8am in the chapel building for a half hour of announcements, readings, occasional musical performances, speeches, and communal singing. Attendance is mandatory for students. Faculty and school leaders typically attend but are not required to do so. Administrative and maintenance staff do not usually attend as they usually have other duties to attend to at that time.

The Building. The chapel is referred to by school alumni as "Heart and Soul of the School" (LCS website, n.d.). Originally built in 1924, it was demolished and replaced with a new building in 1999 (LCS website, n.d.). I happened to visit the space personally a number of years ago. I observed oak interiors, stained glass and a red carpet down the aisle. According to Logan, an LCS student:

> The chapel itself is beautiful. It's got the stained glass windows, and the whole thing started with these pictures lining the walls of all former students, most of whom died between 1914 and 1918 and 1939 and 1945. (Logan, LCS)

The beauty of the space as well as the visual memorials of deceased students create a

powerful setting for group singing to take place. Acoustically, it is resonant:

> I mean, you know, the vibration . . . it resonates. It's a place that's built to have all of those surfaces echo back at you, the things that are happening in it. . . . It's got a hard, hard wooden ceiling. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

and has a beautiful organ:

> The organ itself looks very cool in the chapel. You have the chapel — you're at the front of the chapel, and then you can just turn, there's just this gigantic instrument embedded into the wall . . . and there's this massive pipe organ going all the way up to the top of the chapel. (Logan, LCS)

Who Runs Chapel. From 1995 to 2015, the school Chaplain oversaw Chapel programming at LCS. Three years ago, in an intentional shift to widen the spiritual focus of the school, a new position titled the Director of Spiritual Wellness and Diversity was created, whose mandate was to oversee Chapel programming. The person in this role also supervises a group of students, called the SIC (Students In Charge) of Chapel, who look after the technological requirements (microphones, slide show, loud speakers) for Chapel.

Musical Direction. For the last 35 years, musical direction for the LCS Chapel has primarily been in the hands of Syd Birrell. Syd, a professional organist and choral conductor, is a well-known and well-respected member of the local community. Student and alumni participants described to me the well-loved tradition of Sing-with-Syd in Chapel every Friday, where Syd runs Chapel from beginning to end, using an energetic and innovative approach, described in Chapter 6, to engage students in meaningful music-making.

In 2015, when responsibility for Chapel shifted from the Chaplain to the Director of Spiritual Wellness and Diversity, Sing-with-Syd sessions were shortened, postponed and eventually, in Fall 2019, cancelled altogether. In the 2020/21 school year, at time of writing, there had not yet been a Sing-With-Syd session; however, the Covid-19 restrictions would have prevented this in any case. (This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 6).

A Typical Chapel Session. With the exception of Sing-with-Syd, regular LCS Chapel sessions consist of:

- an opening hymn or song;
- announcements;
- other content, such as a short talk by the head of school, or a student presentation;
- sometimes a student music performance, such as a performance by the school's Rock Choir; and
- Closing hymn or song.*

(*See Appendix A for the list of repertoire typically used for Chapel services.)

According to a long-held tradition, Grade 12s sit in the front few rows, grade 11s behind them, then grade 10s, with grade 9s at the back. Staff and faculty sit, for the most part, in the very back row, although some choose to sit in amongst the student body. Entrance into and exit from the chapel follow a set procedure. Logan (SLS) described this to me in detail. Students proceed into the chapel, while Syd Birrell plays on the organ, and go to their pews: Grade 12 students at the front, Grade 11s behind them and so on, with the newest students in Grade 9 at the back. When the music stops, everyone rises for

the entrance of the head of school and the speakers for the day's Chapel. Then the head of school asks everyone to be seated and Chapel begins. For exiting at the end of Chapel, again, Syd plays on the organ, signaling the front rows to leave first, followed by the next rows down through the middle aisle. The nature of this entrance and exit ritual set a formal, ceremonial tone for the session.

Singing in Chapel: Procedure. A large slide show at the front of Chapel helps students follow the order of the Chapel elements. When it is time to sing, the title and the words of the songs appear on the screen:

> Sometimes someone will stand up, be like "alright we're going to sing this." Usually what happens is — there's a slide show every morning, like, daily announcements, blah blah blah blah, blah blah blah blah, and then the next slide, showing just the title of the song with the lyrics. And everyone knows to stand up. . . . And then the organ would start playing, or the piano would start playing, and everyone would stand up. (Travis, LCS)

This student underscored the importance of standing while singing:

> Everyone stands for every song, and that's something that's very important, like, you get pretty called out by students and teachers if you didn't stand — even if you didn't want to sing, for every single song you stand. (Travis, LCS)

The SICs of Chapel project the lyrics to the songs onto the large screen at the front. Neither hymn-books, nor song sheets, nor written music notation are used.

Accompaniment. The primary accompanist at LCS is Syd Birrell, who usually plays on the organ. However, according to one student, "There are certain songs that he

wouldn't play (on the organ), like, he doesn't play the Beatles on the organ. He goes over to the grand piano to play" (Logan, LCS). Very occasionally, a group of teachers on instruments provide the accompaniment. Travis (LCS) explained to me that the chemistry teacher and the outdoor education teacher are "musically talented" electric guitar players, and that another teacher plays the drum set. This group of teachers sometimes performs live and teaches the students a song for communal singing. In Travis's words:

> They would say 'okay, half the chapel sings this part of the verse, half the chapel sings that part of the verse, let's go — duhduhduhduh — and if it was bad, they'd say, okay, stop, stop, stop, this is dadada, this is zisziszis, let's try this again. (Travis, LCS)

However, according to Syd Birrell, this kind of teacher-band takes enormous amounts of time to prepare, and as a result, can only occur a couple of times a year.

Learning new Songs. Until recently, Syd Birrell has had the responsibility for teaching new repertoire when the occasion arises. He generally taught new songs directly during his Sing-with-Syd sessions using rote teaching methods with the lyrics projected onto the overhead screen. Now that Sing-with-Syd has been curtailed, it is not clear what the process is at LCS for teaching new songs, or for reviewing learned songs. Covid-19 has interrupted Chapel, as well, so how LCS will continue to engage students in communal singing in the future remains to be seen.

Repertoire. At LCS, for generations, Chapel singing was limited to hymns from the Anglican Church canon. As explained by a former student: "All these Ontario schools rooted in Anglicanism — the Anglican faith, and they're all the same five hymns that are

important" (Duncan, LCS). These hymns include "Jerusalem," "I Feel the Winds of God Today," "I Vow to Thee My Country," "There's A Voice in The Wilderness Calling," and "How Great Thou Art." However, as Chapel at LCS has become less Anglican-focused, repertoire choice has also become more diverse:

> Over the last bit of time, we've also sort of embraced more modern kinds of songs, not necessarily ones which have any sort of religious or faith-based kind of connotations to it, but ones which I believe would be more meaningful to current teens, in some ways, you know, ones that at least allow teens to, I think, understand the deeper message, within those kinds of contexts. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

Syd Birrell, the organist, intentionally chooses repertoire that he believes will engage students and motivate them to sing enthusiastically, including songs from contemporary and popular sources (see Appendix A for a complete repertoire list).

From conversations with students, the following contemporary songs are clear favorites: "Sweet Caroline" (by Neil Diamond), "Take Me Home, Country Roads" (by John Denver), "O Siem" (by Susan Aglukark), and various Disney songs (such as "Let It Go" from *Frozen*). Current students seem less attached to the traditional Anglican hymns than to these contemporary pieces. This student's response was particularly insightful:

> Interviewer: what are songs you don't like?
>
> Denis (LCS): . . . "Jerusalem." Yeah. . . . it's mostly that style of songs, and I understand why they have it, because it's very traditional to the school and it's something that's been passed on for every grade group that's been there, but

> especially considering how international the school is, I realize that a lot of students either can't relate or understand them due to everyone's different backgrounds. A lot of people can't understand or relate to it. And then I guess it doesn't become as — it's not as — joyful as it could be.

However, student attachment to the old hymns does seem to occur over time after students have spent years at the school:

> If you're talking about the old stodgy hymns that people don't really care too much about, the participation rate will increase as students get older . . . But it's not uncommon to have the grade 12s — they sit in the front of the chapel — they're booming it out and kind of really, yelling it out, or singing loudly, and then as you go towards the back of the chapel, it gets quieter and quieter, by grade. (Duncan, LCS)

The increase in participation rates over time, and particularly in students coming to embrace the less-familiar Anglican hymns as they spend more time in the school, was observed by every one of the adult participants.

Special Chapel Sessions. At LCS, Chapel diverges from the typical format described above for Chapel Talks, Special Occasions, and (in the past) Sing-with-Syd.

Chapel Talks. At LCS, all grade 12 students are invited to present a talk in Chapel, scheduled between January and May. These are a much-anticipated rite-of-passage, where grads have the opportunity to share a topic of personal importance with the entire school. From watching video footage of a number of LCS Chapel Talks, I notice that these resemble high school valedictorian speeches, including topics such as

"what I learned about myself through my years at LCS"; advice to younger students; and best school memories. There are between 80 and 90 students in the LCS grad class each year; Chapel Talks themselves are 10 to 15 minutes long. Scheduling these talks has a significant impact on Chapel programming.

It seemed to me from conversations with student research participants and from watching the video footage, Chapel Talks are of tremendous importance to both the speaker and the school community. Students appear to treat their Chapel Talks as an emotionally-charged opportunity to share deep personal insights and gratitude. According to participants, the musical recordings they choose to play over the loudspeakers to accompany their walk up the aisle toward the speaker's podium are almost as important as the Chapel Talk itself. After their Talk, another music recording, again chosen by the student, accompanies their walk back down the aisle, into the "hug-line" formed by their peers to express appreciation. This student had clearly given great thought to his future Chapel talk's *walk in* and *walk out* music:

> Interviewer: Have you already picked your music out?
>
> Logan (LCS): I've had a couple in mind, for like, three years. I've had a couple of songs. I've seen it on Chapel speeches: that obviously came across my mind more than once, on what music I want to walk in and walk out to… the one I'm leaving the chapel to is going to be "The Joker" by Steve Miller Band… And this is what I've learned over the years of watching these speeches: you've got to have something with a good bass or a beat drop to enter the chapel on. I'm going to have like a high, and then it hits the top note

> and then you walk in. It's got to be something good.

LCS students typically sing along to these selections: in this way, walk-in and walk-out music become another opportunity for communal singing at LCS.

Anglican Services. About six times a year, Chapel reverts back to an Anglican service, officiated by the school Chaplain. Prayers, a homily, and communal singing comprise the service on:

- school opening Chapel
- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day (Nov. 11)
- Christmas (scheduled before students leave for the holidays)
- the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
- Alumni day

On these occasions, the Chaplain explained:

> So, you know, when I do my Anglican stuff, it's very Christian-centric and it unfortunately does feel a bit exclusive to some who aren't [Christian], right? And we try to explain that to the kids. (LCS Chaplain)

The Chaplain mentioned that this exclusive feeling tends to disappear at the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, with its blessing of the animals, which remains a beloved tradition:

> The blessing of the animals goes over because we have a bunch of animals in there. And the dogs all jump in on the singing… once the organ starts, the dogs get howling and it's hilarious. It literally is. (LCS Chaplain)

During the Anglican services, repertoire choices for communal singing tend to be from the traditional Anglican canon of hymns: “Jerusalem,” “I Vow to Thee My Country,” “Make Me A Channel of Your Peace,” “I Feel the Winds of God Today,” and “Lord of the Dance.” The more contemporary and less Christo-centric “O Siem” appears at these special Chapels as well, with the lyrics “O Siem we are all family” etc.

School Closing. Although the last gathering of the school year, School Closing, does not take place in the chapel, I include it here as it is an important component of LCS’s ceremonial life, and one where communal singing flourishes. School Closing takes place in the school’s theatre in order to accommodate the entire community plus alumni and parents of the graduating class. During the ceremony, the graduating class sits on chairs placed on the stage, facing the podium. As described to me by every one of the LCS participants, a wonderful moment occurs when the graduates stand up on their chairs, turn around to face the audience, and sing out “Land of Hope and Glory” (written by Edward Elgar, text by A.C. Benson):

> “Land of Hope and Glory.” That's one of our ones we sing at the beginning and a couple of times through the year, but mostly at the end. It’s one of our traditional closers, and our grads stand up on chairs in the front of the theater. We have a thrust theater, so the seats are up. They stand up on the chairs at the end of the slide show, and they sing “Land of Hope and Glory” out to the crowd. So, there's key symbolic ritualistic moments, (which) that song is a part of for sure. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

Sing-with-Syd. For 35 years at LCS, every Friday, school organist Syd Birrell has led what became known as Sing-with-Syd. A break from the standard procedure described in the section above, Sing-with-Syd was a 40-minute session in which Syd taught students new songs, engaged students in activities designed to help students overcome their self-consciousness around singing, and delivered bits of educational content. According to student and alumni research participants, Sing-with-Syd was a much-anticipated opportunity at the end of the week to have fun, learn interesting "stuff" about music, and enjoy singing together. Although "Sing-with-Syd" was the name of these special Friday Chapels, I noticed that LCS student and alumni participants used the appellation "Sing-with-Syd" any other time Chapel singing occurred, especially when it was led by Syd Birrell. These sessions no longer take place, the result of a programming decision by school administrators, and temporarily as the result of Covid-19 restrictions. School administrators appear to be reconsidering whether or not to reinstate the Sing-with-Syd sessions when the restrictions are lifted.

A Non-Religious Approach to Communal Singing. Echoing the weakening of the Anglican church focus in LCS Chapel, Chapel singing at LCS has loosened its focus on Christian worship. Every LCS participant, faculty as well as students, confirmed that most students do not experience singing in Chapel as "religious." Logan (LCS) described Chapel singing as "the furthest thing from that [religious]." Similarly, a graduate of LCS remembered:

> It never felt religious, you know, and certainly, in my time at Lakefield, we were students from 30 plus countries of all creeds and faiths, and singing "Shine, Jesus

> Shine," which is incredibly kind of narrow in terms of that lens. It just wasn't that, it just felt like we were all singing a song together. At least to me — certainly from my perspective, it wasn't about religion in any way. Chapel rarely was. (Duncan, LCS)

This disconnection between religious experience while singing a song with a religious text was a commonly expressed contradiction.

Interestingly, the Chaplain's view of students' lack of engagement with song texts aligns with this view:

> The importance of singing isn't necessarily lyrical based. So, kids will sing a good song that they like to sing, so they'll overlook the theology, if it's fun to sing. Like, "Shine, Jesus Shine" — they're right into it. All the kids sing it, because they're not paying attention to the words, like 90 percent of the music they're probably listening to. So if it's a good song, they'll sing it. So when we were starting to think about that, we would rather have them sing, and experience the transcendent, energizing, start to your day [than not sing and engage in Christian worship].

Thus, it appears that Chapel singing at LCS is not presented, nor perceived, as an act of worship or religious expression, whether or not the actual songs being sung have religious texts.

Chapel Logistics at SLS

Similar to the practice at LCS, Chapel at SLS takes place in a dedicated chapel building. All students are required to attend the twice-weekly gatherings in the chapel

building, in addition to a more extensive Chapel on Saturday.

The Building. At Shawnigan Lake School, the chapel is located in the middle of campus, representing, according to one of my faculty participants, the centrality of its function in the life of the school. Built in 1928, the building is similar to the chapel at LCS. Wood timber interior, stained-glass windows and an organ give it an Anglican church aesthetic.

Scheduling. Chapel is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8am for 30 minutes, and Saturday mornings at 11:15am for 45 minutes. Programming consists of communal singing (primarily hymns), talks delivered by the Chaplain, student leaders, or other school faculty, readings from a variety of religious and non-religious texts, and non-denominational prayers. Chapel is overseen by the Reverend Jim Holland (the "Rev"), in collaboration with other faculty leaders. Chapel on Saturdays loosely follows an Anglican order of service; participants described the weekday Chapels as having more of a secular, school assembly feel.

Singing in Chapel: Procedure. Similar to at LCS, students at SLS stand to sing. The hymn is announced by "the Rev" (the school Chaplain), the introduction played on the organ or the piano, and the singing commences. Unlike at LCS, lyrics are not projected on a screen. Instead, SLS uses its own hymn book. The most recent edition of the hymn-book was printed in 2016. Appendix B contains the list of hymns in the current edition.

At the beginning of the school year, during the first few weeks, each house has an opportunity to present their house Hymn in Chapel. The house is asked to stand and to

sing the first verse, after which the rest of the school stands and joins in. A faculty participant explained to me the impact of this method: “And so there's this little bit of pressure, a little bit of competition maybe, for them to know their House Hymn well, when they have to stand up and sing alone in front of the whole school” (Ms. Fields, SLS). The house hymns are permanent fixtures of the house system at SLS. Since their inception 25 years ago, the houses have kept the same hymn (for example, Lonsdale’s hymn is “How Great Thou Art,”). These hymns are published in the front of the 2016 version of the Shawnigan Lake hymn book.

Repertoire. At SLS, songs sung at Chapel are, most of the time, chosen from the SLS hymnbook, which consists of traditional Anglican hymns (listed in Appendix B). Student participants were enthusiastic about their preferences. Consistently, their favorite was their own particular house hymn and the SLS school hymn, “There’s a Voice in the Wilderness Crying.” “Calon Lan” was also mentioned by all participants and alumni as a particular favorite. I asked Ben (SLS) why “Calon Lan was his favourite”:

> What's really fun about “Calon Lan” is [that] it's Welsh. And so, you get to do a funny noise every now and again. You get to go “hghghghg” — you're not really supposed to go like “hghghgh”, but a lot of the guys just really emphasize it and go “hghghghghg.” And so that's really fun.

SLS students appeared to enthusiastically embrace singing songs that Duncan (LCS) referred to as “old stodgy hymns,” such as “I Vow to Thee my Country.” An SLS faculty participant commented on this:

> I've had some staff say, “oh, the stuff is so archaic, can't we do some contemporary music?” And I say, “well, what does that mean?” I said, you know, “you're going to get the whole school together and try and decide what new hymns you’re going to sing?” I said you might as well get people together and decide on what shade of white you want on the walls, you know? So I've come to think that it’s better just to have these traditional hymns that they've always done at Shawnigan, and just leave it alone. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

There are times when Chapel repertoire diverges from the school hymnal. For example, the SLS Music Director explained to me:

> For a few years in a row there, the music team, we got up and sang a contemporary song and we'd have them join in for the “ooo’s” or the chorus or something like that. So occasionally we do stuff that's really not church-related. (Music Director, SLS)

The following student described other times when they sing songs other than hymns:

> There’s moments and very special occasions in which usually there'll be a group that is taking over the chapel service for the day. So like a group of students or, potentially we might have recognition of a certain nationality. And in those moments we'll usually have either a musical presentation, which often people will sing along with, if it's something that they know or be encouraged to do. Or we might literally just be handed out a piece of music in another language that we have very little idea how to sing. And someone will guide us and we'll try and sing it together, which we've done before. (Matthew, SLS)

However, Matthew underscored students' preference for singing traditional hymns:

> They're [the students] more comfortable with the hymn singing [than contemporary songs], I would say. When you sing something that you're not familiar with, it's harder for you to be able to grasp how to do it, and the comfortability with being able to sing that, because singing is something that, I have said this once before to somebody: It's a very vulnerable state that you're in when you are singing. (Matthew, SLS)

I interpret this comment to mean that it almost doesn't matter what the song is, the important thing for full participation and enjoyment is the familiarity with the song. This may be the reason that the "old stodgy hymns" are less popular at LCS than at SLS. Students at SLS have more exposure to the old hymns, because this is almost all they sing during their Chapels, and the result may be that SLS students prefer the well-known hymns to more contemporary pieces.

Accompaniment. Accompaniment in Chapel is on the organ, played by Mrs. Daniel, or on the piano, played by the school's music director, Shannon Tyrrell. At SLS, the role of the accompanist is not as significant as at LCS. At LCS, especially during Sing-with-Syd, Syd Birrell leads from the organ or piano, rather than merely accompanying.

Learning new Songs. The music director at SLS described the circumstances under which a new song might be introduced:

> If there's a hymn in that book [the school hymn-book] that really is very unknown, say that there's a hymn that [the Chaplain] loves, or somebody else on

> staff really loves, that is in our book, if we haven't done it for a few years, they'll ask me to stand up and teach it to the group. And I probably do that a couple of times a year. Not often. (Music Director, SLS)

Because the school's hymn books are words-only, I was curious how the Music Director teaches new songs to the entire school, without the assistance of music notation. She explained that she teaches by rote, and described her method to me:

> So, I'll often do that kind of kindergarten teacher thing: [sings, with hand levels] "So we are going up the scale" or whatever. I'll use my hands a little bit. I'll tell them some of the sort of traps that happen. Or I might tell them in this line, the rhythm is straight, and I'll clap out the rhythm and then I'll say the next line you'll notice the rhythm is dotted. And it sounds like this. Some of the kids in the room will know exactly what I'm talking about. Some of them won't care, but the majority of them will follow along. And then I'll usually get our organist, Mrs. Daniel, to play the melody on the organ for them to hear. And then we'll try the first verse and then we'll kind of reassess. How did that go? Let's do that first verse again a couple of times, maybe until we move on to a new set of words. And I'm standing at the microphone, so I will just sing into the microphone. They can hear me and kind of match — and it usually goes quite well. (Music Director, SLS)

Special Chapel Sessions. Typical Chapel sessions, as described above, are the norm at SLS; however, on special occasions, such as House Chapels, Children's Chapel and Founders' Day Chapel, Chapel logistics are different.

House Chapels. Six times a year, Chapel is given over to one girls' house, paired with a boys' house. On these occasions, Chapel is almost entirely student-led and student-presented: student house leaders give the readings, homily, prayers, and house members will typically perform a piece of contemporary music. Notably, students in the two houses leading Chapel sit in the front rows wearing their house t-shirts. When it is time to sing, the students in the lead houses stand up, turn to face the rest of the community, and sing the first verse of their house hymn. The remainder of the student body then joins in the remaining verses. In addition to leading the house hymn, a musical performance often provides another opportunity for communal singing:

> We have house Chapel presentations every year. Each house has to get up and present, and the Head of House speaks, and they will often do a sing-along of a song that has nothing to do with church, something like a Beatles song. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

Similar to students at LCS singing along to recordings of pop songs, the SLS student community seems to willingly engage in these singalongs. I refer again to my prior observation, that in a school that does not engage in regular communal singing (such as the school I teach at), it is not typical that students will sing along when invited. Whereas at SLS, because of their culture of public singing, it is unusual for students not to participate.

Children's Chapel. Once a year, on or around International Children's Day (November 20), SLS runs a special Children's Chapel for elementary-school-aged children in the neighborhood. All of my student participants spoke fondly of this event,

for example:

> International Children's Day… I think it happens in November, something where everyone's super tired and it's gray outside and it's, you know, midterms and everything. And then they're like: "OK, we're going to sing this song from this children's book. And every time it says the word "sun," you have to stand up and go like that (arm action) and it's so goofy. Like, it's so silly. But once you get doing it, you're like, "OK." You can't help but be in a good mood, I guess, because you have to echo along, and do the Itsy Bitsy Spider and stuff. And it's grade 11, 12, high school students, who are grinding through university (applications), and doing serious stuff. And then it's like, "OK, let's sing Itsy Bitsy Spider! Let's sing this song about the sun, and dance and stuff." So it definitely can turn a frown upside down. (Alison, SLS)

I interpret these adolescents being willing to sing children's songs as an indication that they have forgone their self-consciousness about singing in public. Similar to LCS students singing "Frosty The Snowman," and "making it huge and ridiculous" (Duncan, LCS), this joyful engagement in singing, the willingness to embrace it, perhaps with a bit of irony and with lots of good humor, appears to characterize the culture of singing in both schools.

Founder's Day Chapel. In October of every year (except 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions), alumni return to the SLS campus to celebrate Founder's Day. The program for Founder's Day Chapel typically includes an alumni speaker, special performances by the school choir, prayers, and alumni and students standing together to sing the school

hymn, “There’s a Voice in the Wilderness Calling.” On Oct. 22, 2016, the Alumni Chapel program also included communal singing of “Calon Lan,” and “I Feel the Winds of God Today” (SLS website, n.d.). SLS students seem to enjoy the return of alumni to Chapel once a year, and clearly recognize it as an important aspect of school culture.

A Non-religious Approach to Communal Singing. Similar to what I found at LCS, all of the student and alumni research participants at SLS described Chapel singing as not being an expression of Christian worship. According to them, the words they sing are unimportant; the singing itself is salient. Faculty participants similarly characterized their attitude towards Chapel singing as singing for singing’s sake, rather than as religious expression. For example, Breanna, an SLS graduate explained:

> Yeah, I could definitely see it (Chapel singing) outside of a religious context because I didn't really relate to the lyrics of those songs in any kind of significant way. But I just loved the sounds. I loved the music itself, but not necessarily the lyrics. (Breanna, SLS)

The Chaplain, who oversees Chapel at SLS, shared his perspective on the matter:

> A lot of it (the hymns) we sing, I think: it's that's kind of a theological formulation that I would never ascribe to, really. So that's an odd thing (given that I am the Chaplain) . . . Yeah, it's interesting talking to some of the students and alumni, they say similar things. They just — they love to sing, and then they talk about these hymns, and they kind of say, “well, we don't really pay attention to the words. It's not really about the words. It's just . . .” and I'm suspecting that it's just the quality of these old Anglican hymns. Yes. The quality of the music is really

> very superb. Yeah, like Vaughan-Williams and Beethoven. And, you know, I mean, it's beautiful. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

Ben, an SLS student, was unequivocal in his view that, despite the fact that the SLS Chapel repertoire consists of Anglican hymns, communal singing is about community, not about religion:

> I take new kids around the school and show them [the chapel]. And what I emphasize is that we do have Chapels on Saturdays and Thursdays and Tuesday, but it's not at all Christian-based. You know, all the teachings that the Rev speaks about and whatnot, don't revolve around Jesus. He might bring up God here and there. And I don't think it's necessarily a problem because I think when we sing those hymns, it's all about community, right? (Ben, SLS)

Similarly, Alison spoke about students from other religions who seem happy to sing the Anglican hymns:

> I have a few friends who aren't Christian or, are a different religion, but they just like the songs. So they just, (shrugs) it's not a huge deal. Yeah, it's a pretty fun — it's more of a fun environment, not so much as like a serious: “We're singing this hymn now.” It's like: (friendly tone) “OK, now we're going to sing a song.” Alison (SLS)

This seems to me to be a paradox: the SLS community enjoys singing Anglican hymns; and yet, they do not necessarily subscribe to the meaning of the words. What they value is the singing itself, rather than the theological position expressed by the words. At LCS, however, the songs that Duncan (LCS) described as “stodgy old hymns,” are less

preferred by LCS students than contemporary choices, such as “Sweet Caroline” and “Take Me Home, Country Roads.” If the choice of repertoire is a means to achieving successful participation, then SLS and LCS each demonstrate different modes of achieving a similar result.

Summary

Currently, Chapel at both LCS and SLS continues a tradition that began with the schools’ founding as Anglican-affiliated educational institutions. As the schools have evolved over the decades to embrace a diverse student population and inclusive values, Chapel has similarly transitioned away from functioning as an expression of Anglican worship. Chapel singing at LCS and SLS, originally grounded in Anglican traditional practices, parallels this shift in focus. While maintaining many of the traditions established during the schools’ early years, Chapel and Chapel singing are now less an expression of Christian worship, and more a practice of community gathering. At LCS, this shift includes diversifying repertoire to include contemporary secular songs, while at SLS, the practice of singing almost exclusively Anglican hymns remains; however, the shift of emphasis from singing as an expression of worship, to singing for singing’s sake, is evident from the research data at both schools.

Chapter 5 – Findings Related to "Why?"

Introduction

Why would a secondary school commit time and resources on a regular practice of communal singing? My analysis of the interview data resulted in my identifying five main themes related to participants' experience of communal singing, the first three of which relate to this question. First, in the context of these two Canadian Secondary Schools, communal singing is regarded positively by the participants I interviewed: the students and alumni that I interviewed stated that they enjoy and value the activity; furthermore the interview data support the idea that most of the students in these schools feel this way. Second, communal singing in these schools appears to foster students' sense of belonging, by strengthening their connection to their school and by building community. Third, according to interviewees, communal singing affects their mood and emotions: it lifts the spirits, enables emotional expression, gives comfort, and in so doing, contributes to wellness. These three findings, positive regard, belongingness and emotional mediation, together, provide the answer to the question: Why do whole-school communal singing?

The fourth theme that emerged from my interview data is that communal singing at LCS and SLS exemplifies Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B, in its prioritization of participation over artistry, and singing primarily for emotional and social benefits rather than for performance. The fifth theme to emerge was that communal singing with adolescents requires intentional effort and application of strategic methods by cultural leaders: Communal singing at the high school level does not simply happen "by itself."

Once the culture of communal singing has been established, however, the student body can sustain a culture of singing to a certain extent; nevertheless, continued interventions by adults are required to sustain full student participation in school communal singing. I present these last two themes in Chapter 6, as they answer the question "how:" that is, how does one get hundreds of adolescents to sing, who have not volunteered, and may not have any inclination to do so?

Theme One: Positive Regard

" I just think it's the most wonderful thing in the world!" (Breanna, SLS)

As I began this research, the first and most essential question I had was the extent to which students enjoyed or did not enjoy communal singing in their schools. Secondly, I wanted to know whether the schools, at the institutional level, considered this practice to have value beyond adhering to tradition. As I have mentioned earlier, at the CAIS secondary school where I teach, we do not practice communal singing, other than a half-hearted sing-through of the school song twice per year. Speaking to my colleagues and administrators, I get a clear sense that they do not think that students would embrace or enjoy communal singing. I can picture, as I am sure my colleagues can, a scenario where our student body is asked to stand and sing, and seeing the overwhelming response from students being: "Do we have to?" I anticipate that students would resist. I worry that limited participation, negative attitudes, and various forms of unwanted behaviors would result. As a result, I am interested in knowing to what extent communal singing at the two schools in this study is embraced, or merely tolerated, by the student body; and to what extent faculty and administrators regard the time taken for communal singing as

beneficial or wasteful.

My data analysis revealed that every student, faculty member, administrator, and former student I interviewed was overwhelmingly positive in their regard for the practice. Students and alumni repeatedly told me that they loved it, enjoyed it, and embraced it whole-heartedly. Not only did participants tell me that they personally enjoyed whole-school singing, but also that they believed that the entire student population, with only minor exceptions, also enjoyed it as well. All of the faculty I interviewed clearly valued what the practice brought to the school community. One member of faculty, who had been at LCS for over 25 years, repeatedly described communal singing as "the life-blood of our school." The reasons given for this affinity were varied, and are discussed throughout this analysis.

In addition to direct statements of positive regard, the following sub-themes emerged: communal singing would be missed if it were removed; alumni miss it after they have graduated; student-led, spontaneous singing occurs outside of Chapel singing sessions; positive regard is expressed by both (self-identified) musicians and non-musicians; and participation rates, while variable, are high overall. Where participation in communal singing was reported to be less than full, I have analyzed and contextualized the reasons given. Finally, at both schools, there have been natural experiments in the past when the singing in Chapel has been curtailed. These occurrences were always followed by a return to singing, confirming the importance of communal singing to LCS and SLS.

It Would be Missed if it Were Removed

The consistent response from participants to interview question #9 ("Imagine that a new head of school has come in and has decided that this practice is to be discontinued. What would you think? How would you feel?") was either outrage or a flat denial that such a thing could even be possible. The following response from Matthew, an SLS student, was the most extreme response that I recorded. It eloquently expressed the sentiments shared by all 18 participants:

> One: they [the new head of school] would not be hired in the first place. Two: I would furiously rampage over to their office and explain to them all the reasons why singing is a benefit to our school. I would write them email after email and spam them entirely so that their inbox would be so full with digital news from me telling them the reasons why they are wrong and why they are making the worst mistake of their entire life professionally. And I would also explain to them everything possible to try and convince them that this is what we need. This [whole school singing] is something that is ingrained in the identity of Shawnigan Lake School. It is so valuable to its students that if it is ever taken away in any way, shape or form, it will be a tragedy, and it will be a loss that the school will never be able to recover from. That's simply what I would do. I would even go so far as to not even write an email. I would hand-write letters, and pile them up in whoever's office they're in at that time. I would stack them to the ceiling and throw them onto the hallways if I needed to. I would put up posters and put them around the school. (Matthew, SLS)

Matthew then explained that this attitude is shared by others in the student body:

> I guarantee, I would guarantee you, that I would not be the only one [who would object strongly]. There would be so many other students, so many, and especially who I am connected with, that would rise up, and start screaming to the heavens to make sure that that would not happen. (Matthew, SLS)

Every other participant, in response to this hypothetical question gave a similar kind of response, making their objections very clear, although none with such vehemence. From conversations with LCS student interviewees, it was evident that students at LCS were not aware that Sing-with-Syd had been cancelled. I was not in a position to communicate this to LCS students, and so their comments about cessation of communal singing at LCS remained hypothetical.

Alumni Miss it When They Graduate. Strong evidence of students' positive regard for Chapel singing was the frequent expression that it is missed by alumni after they leave the school. Mr. Birrell, a faculty member at LCS, explained to his current students:

> These songs now will not mean anything to you. But I can guarantee by the time you get to the end of grade 12, the last day of school, you're going to be bawling your eyes out as you sing this stuff. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

Similarly at SLS, Ms. Fields, spoke about the graduating class, anticipating how much they will miss singing together after they have graduated:

> Many, many, many Closing Day, Graduation Day ceremonies have happened (when) the grade 12's go into the chapel with their families, and the very last thing

> they do before they leave that chapel and go to the graduation ceremony in the afternoon is sing the school hymn, and they can barely get through it. Every year, they're all sitting there sobbing as they sing their school hymn, because to them that represents something really unique and really special. I'm not even sure that it's the words or even the music itself but just the idea that they have this thing that connects them. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

And years later, faculty noted that the graduates of SLS confirm how much they miss Chapel singing:

> I can't tell you how many times I've run into alumni and they'll - they're always very gracious - but very often their comment will be what they missed is the singing, the hymn singing. And that's people who are 23 and people who are 83. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

A frequent observation by faculty at both schools was that communal singing is not always something that students, especially the younger students value at the time they are students, but it is something they miss after they graduate. For example:

> And one of the things that I've noticed, after being there for many, many years, is, its Chapel itself — and singing is such a huge component of this — Chapel is the thing that the kids whine and complain about the most, but it's the thing that they miss the most when they leave the school [graduate]. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

An almost identical response came from a faculty member at LCS:

> Kids will often say that they don't like Chapel, right? They want to sleep in and they don't [get to on Chapel days]. But when people [alumni] come back to the

> school [after graduation], that's what they talk about. And they want to go to the chapel and they remember the songs. (Ms. Taylor, LCS)

The fact that students miss the singing after they graduate is a strong indication of their positive regard for the practice, even if during the time they were students, they did not fully appreciate its value.

Missing Communal Singing Due to Covid-19. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought a temporary curtailing of group singing across Canada, as group singing is considered to be a risk factor in the spreading of Covid-19. This seems to have crystalized the research participants' nostalgia for communal singing, especially amongst the students. For example, as Logan (LCS) was explaining to me that singing in Chapel was cancelled, due to restrictions imposed by Covid-19 protocols, his voice and posture drooped. I changed the subject:

> Interviewer: So let's go back to the pre-Covid times.
>
> Logan (LCS): Happy days. When Chapel was terrific.

Similarly, during other interviews, when participants' reflections on the inability to sing due to Covid restrictions seemed to create sad emotional responses, I offered to stop the interview process. I was concerned that this nostalgia might create distress; however, all participants wished to continue the interview.

One faculty member at SLS talked about his conversations with students through the summer of 2020, prior to school opening under Covid restrictions in September 2020:

> I did talk to the kids this summer, a group of — I don't know — they were prefects or just kids that were around. And I said, "Well, what's the most important thing

> for you about Chapel? Because, Chapel is going to be different next year because of the Covid protocols that we're required to follow, so… we're going to have to modify things." And they all said: "We want to sing in Chapel, we want to sing together as a school." And I said, "I don't think we're going to be able to do that." And they all said, "Well, that's what we want. That's what Chapel is for us. We want to get together and sing." Which again, like I say, it always surprises me the kind of passion about that. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

As of September 2020, singing in Chapel is prohibited at both LCS and SLS due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, this SLS faculty member mentioned:

> What I'm hearing from a few different House Directors, [is that] they [the students] are singing in their houses. They'll finish a house meeting, and then they will burst into song — because the kids miss it. They're the ones instigating it. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

These descriptions of students' sense of loss provides strong evidence that students highly value the practice of whole school communal singing.

"Experiments" with Cutting Back on Communal Singing. At LCS, natural experiments have occurred in the past when Chapel singing has been intentionally curtailed. These experiments seem to indicate that chapel singing is missed when it is removed. Mr. Thibodeau (LCS) has been at LCS for 35 years, so was able to comment on this. He explained that there have been times when talking, storytelling and readings have taken the place of communal singing. He felt that this approach was not successful:

> I believe that what ended up happening during those times was, you know,

> you'd spend more time in your head as opposed to spending time, you know, in group, you know, some sort of participatory activity. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

I asked for an example of such an "experiment." In response, Mr. Thibodeau (LCS) related a time, in the early 1990s, when LCS had hired a new Chapel leader:

> We had a fellow [Anglican minister, T.T.] who was leading Chapel, and his emphasis was not on the singing. He didn't do a lot of that kind of stuff. He only lasted two years, but had an incredible impact, I think, in terms of - because [D.H., the Head of School at the time] was also interested in trying to get away from the Anglican, you know, sort of high mass, traditional kind of Chapel kind of thing. And he [D.H.] wanted to beef it up a little bit, and he wanted to create a different experience within the chapel walls. And he thought maybe [T.T.] could do that. But I think he lost something in there, and [the Head of School, D.H.] had to then rebuild it back up again. So he [D.H.] brought back people that were able to at least start to . . . reintroduce singing in some sort of capacity. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

I was able to examine letters and communications from T.T., which corroborate Mr. Thibodeau's report that T.T. intentionally discouraged Chapel singing from 1990 to 1991. Mr. Everett (LCS) also confirmed that during this two year period, Chapel singing was severely curtailed. Subsequently, in 1995, the Head of School hired John Runza as Chaplain. According to the LCS faculty I spoke with, Runza worked closely with Syd Birrell to revitalize Chapel singing in the aftermath of T.T.'s term. With Runza's and Birrell's efforts, communal singing at LCS was restored, providing opportunities for the

full student body to participate in song.

Spontaneous Singing

Spontaneous singing occurs when students initiate communal singing without being asked or directed. The spontaneous "bursting into song" at the end of house meetings at SLS, described above, is an example. I heard consistent and numerous accounts of spontaneous singing occurrences from almost all the participants at both schools. I believe that this behavior provides evidence of a positive attitude towards communal singing.

Spontaneous Singing Within Chapel. At LCS, the practice of Chapel Talks (described in Chapter 4) affords an opportunity for spontaneous singing when the "walk out" music is played over the loudspeakers. According to LCS student participants, spontaneous singing tends to erupt when these songs are played, provided it is a song that everyone knows and likes. I was curious about this kind of spontaneous singing, because at my school, when popular music is played over a loud-speaker, students rarely sing along. At LCS, however, spontaneous singing-along seems to be a normalized part of their culture:

> Interviewer: Do kids tend to sing along to those (pop songs played over the loudspeaker)?
>
> Logan (LCS): If they know the song, yeah . . . their walk-out song will usually be something that everyone knows, and people will be singing to that for sure.
>
> Interviewer: If you were at a school that didn't ever do this Chapel singing, and a song starts playing that people know, they might not just start singing along.

Logan (LCS): Whereas with us it'd be more surprising if no one sang along.

Similarly, according to one LCS student, the students in charge of Chapel "tech" (microphones, amplifiers and slide show) play recorded music over the loudspeakers before Chapel begins and at the end of Chapel. During these times, like the Chapel Talk walk-in / walk-out moments, if the song is one that students know, they will often spontaneously sing along:

> So at the end of chapel, sometimes, at the end and the beginning of chapel, we put songs on that, you know, everyone knows and likes. And so, on some days, if it's songs that everyone knows and likes — so a little more popular songs — you'd have everyone singing and going along with it at the very beginning and end… And when we did play these songs, we found that everyone sort of came together and sang these without even actually being asked. And it was pretty magical to me, actually. (Denis, LCS)

Students initiating group singing without adult direction is, again, strong evidence that this is a practice they value and enjoy, when the choice of music is one that is popular and that students know and enjoy.

Spillover: Spontaneous Singing Outside of Chapel.

> Certainly communal singing happens at Lakefield outside of Chapel as well, like around the campfire. [It's] really very natural for a guitar to emerge and for kids to just kind of [sing, in a] completely unorganized fashion. (Duncan, LCS)

Similar to the description of spontaneous singing within Chapel above, a "spillover" effect appears when students spontaneously sing the songs learned in Chapel in other

locations: in their residence houses, on the way to class after Chapel, on sports fields, around the campfire, in busses when travelling to sports games, and at school dances. The fact that students appear to willingly sing the songs learned in Chapel in other locations without prompting from adults is strong evidence of students' positive attitude towards communal singing. Denis (LCS) described communal singing breaking out at the end of school dances:

> So, there's a whole tradition whereby at the end of a dance - school dance, of course - there'll be a series of songs that are played that everyone will sing together Like . . . "Sweet Caroline" . . . "Take Me Home [Country Roads]" . . . the whole school, or at least everyone at the dance, would form a very big circle and then the grads would be in the middle, and there'd be everyone singing, and right after we get to the "pom pom pom," everyone, we sort of jump in . . . and just start, like, dancing . . . [this] is actually one of my favorite parts of it. And, because it really does bring us all together. (Denis, LCS)

Travis, a recent LCS graduate, described the spontaneous singing of Chapel songs that occurred at an outdoor-ed experience:

> I'm remembering [a camping trip] in Algonquin [Provincial Park] we had this super-long portage where we had the canoes overhead and the backpacks on, and everyone just started singing, like, everyone started singing the songs from Chapel. (Travis, LCS)

Another particularly poignant moment stood out in Travis's recollection of his years at LCS. Travis was on the LCS hockey team, and a peak moment occurred when the LCS

team won the provincial championships. At the end of the game, when they were on the ice shaking hands with this opposing team, someone in the tech booth started to play "Sweet Caroline" over the loudspeakers. Everyone on the LCS hockey team, and all the LCS supporters in the crowd spontaneously joined in singing, passionately and enthusiastically. Travis described this moment as "super-awesome" and "a cool memory."

Similarly at SLS, spontaneous singing often breaks out at school sports competitions. Alison (SLS) described the times when at various field hockey and basketball games, someone in the crowd would begin to sing the school hymn ("There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying") and all the SLS supporters and SLS team athletes would spontaneously join in. She said that while this was "kind of cringey," she felt strongly that it "brings school spirit together and it's just something that everyone can share."

Faculty participants at both schools reported hearing students continue to sing on their way to class, after Chapel is over. For example, Ms. Campbell (SLS faculty) mentioned that as students come into her class, they often hum or sing the hymn that had been programmed at Chapel that day. The fact that students willingly, spontaneously and of their own initiative, sing the songs learned in Chapel outside of Chapel, could indicate their positive attitude towards Chapel singing and their connection to the songs.

At LCS, alumni events often take place off-campus, such as an alumni dinner at a restaurant or a pub. Duncan, an LCS alum, reported that spontaneous singing of Chapel songs frequently occurs among LCS alumni at these events. He explained that after

dessert has been served and the brandy poured, someone will spontaneously begin singing "Jerusalem" and the other alumni join in. This example of "spillover" indicates that not only do LCS students enjoy singing in Chapel, but they feel so strongly about it that they continue the practice beyond their years at LCS, when it is no longer a mandated part of their lives. This continuing to sing at alumni events may indicate that students associate singing with positive memories and a sense of belonging, a theme that I revisit later in this chapter.

Spontaneous singing occurring outside of the temporal and physical space of the chapel provides strong evidence that students and alumni positively regard the practice of communal singing.

Positive Regard from Non-Musically-Involved Students

As explained in Chapter 3, it was an important part of my research design to include participants who both were musically involved (e.g., members of the school choir) and those who were not, in order to capture diverse points of view. I was curious how students who had never sung before, or had not chosen to join choir, would feel about communal singing. These students are: Travis (LCS), Denis (LCS), Logan (LCS), and Ben (SLS). All four described a strong positive regard for Chapel singing. The most reserved comments came from Denis, an exchange student from Tanzania:

> Yeah, I actually find that it [Chapel singing]'s one of the very good perks of Lakefield . . . there's some joy to me, at least starting the day when we all come together and, you know, sit down and have songs we sing and everything. And I just really like it. (Denis, LCS)

This student had never experienced group singing before attending LCS, other than singing the National Anthem at his old school in Tanzania (an activity he described as "joyless"). His musical background was minimal, and he described himself as "not a singer," with a "terrible voice." However, at LCS, "I love singing, and given the opportunity, I will gladly do it." (Denis, LCS)

Logan, another LCS student expressed doubts at the beginning of the interview: "I'm not sure how much of a help I'm going to be given that I have the musical capabilities of a teaspoon." Logan went on to express a tremendous positive regard for communal singing, and shared insightful thoughts about the practice. For example, in reply to my comment that some administrators might consider whole-school singing a waste of time, he countered: "You feel so much better after [the singing is] over, because you realize what you actually have there. It's not just a waste of time singing. It's the community coming together." The fact that the students whose only experience of musical participation is within whole-school communal singing enjoy the practice is strong support that not only do they regard it positively, but also believe it is something they are capable of doing.

Positive Regard from Musically-Involved Students

Students who are musically inclined also expressed a great affinity for whole school communal singing. This also surprised me, as I anticipated that students who were members of the choir, who had strong musical skills and enjoyed singing more advanced musical selections, might find the lack of challenge, lack of finesse, and lower level of musical performance in whole school communal singing frustrating. Instead, I found

these students to be as passionate about whole school singing as the non-musically inclined participants. For example, Matthew (SLS) explained to me that he was very much involved in choir and musical theatre at the school, had elected for two years to take the vocal arts class offered by the school, and that he has a great passion for music, especially for singing. He explained that "for that reason . . . when we do sing in an entire group with the whole school, it is something very powerful and it is something that means quite a lot to me when we are able to do that." Matthew explained that what he values about group singing is the "way that it is our community gathering and our sense of coming together and showing our support for one another." For Matthew, these benefits powerfully outweigh any musical deficiencies resulting from whole school singing. The other musically inclined students and alumni responded with a similar passion for the practice of whole school communal singing.

Participation Rates

Despite the fact that all the student research participants expressed regard for the practice of whole school singing positively, I did want to get a sense of the broader student population's attitude towards communal singing at SLS and LCS. With this in mind, I intentionally asked participants about the level of participation they observed in the practice of whole school singing on a day-to-day basis. This prompted my interview question: "How many students would engage in communal singing on a typical day in Chapel?" The response was fairly consistent within and between the schools: participation rates vary significantly on any given day, depending on the grade level, the particular song, and the kind of day the students are having. An overall rate is, as a result,

impossible to provide, but participants' comments at both schools did paint a picture of fairly full student participation.

At LCS, the following are examples of comments that paint a picture of fairly full participation, depending on the song choice and the kind of day the students are having:

> I would say, three quarters of our community (would sing). But at any given time, unless the song is really bad that we've chosen or Syd's chosen, you're looking at an average of about 75 percent participation. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

LCS student participants' estimates correspond with Mr. Everett's: Travis estimated "high eighties" for songs that students particularly enjoyed, Denis suggested a range of 65% to 90%, but said that on "down days," this could go down to 50%.

The descriptions of participation rates at SLS were less specific than at LCS. For example:

> So, there are definitely some people that, you know, don't sing - they don't want to embarrass themselves or anything, you know? But then you kind of, like, I think it's more "weird" [air quotes] if you don't sing, because everyone is singing. (Alison, SLS)

Consistently, SLS participants stated that on any given day, most, but not all, students sing. Like at LCS, participation rates will depend on students' grade level, choice of repertoire, and the general level of energy amongst the student body, with "down days" negatively impacting participation. Other less-frequently mentioned factors for decreased participation were language barriers and religious objections.

The Effect of Grade Level on Participation Rates. LCS has students in grades 9 to 12; SLS offers grades 8 to 12. A consistent observation at both schools was that students in the younger grades typically participate in communal singing less and that participation increases as the grades go up. At both schools, the most enthusiastic singing and fullest participation came from the grade 12s (the "grads"). For example, Travis (LCS) observed that:

> I also find that kids in grade 9 tend not to sing, and then as they get older, like, every grad sings. . . once you start getting into those older grades, even grade 11, because you're not a grad yet, but you're excited to become one, you start singing more. (Travis, LCS)

At LCS, chapel seating is by grade, youngest at the back, oldest at the front, with grads sitting at the front of the chapel, the grade 11s behind them, and so on. Every LCS participant confirmed that the loudest singing comes from the grads at the front of the room; the next loudest from the grade 11s; moving from there to the back of the chapel, the singing becomes quieter and quieter, by grade. Duncan, an LCS alum observed that "there are probably 10 kids sitting in the back who are that interested in singing." These students would be in grade 9, by virtue of where they are sitting.

At SLS, although seating is by house, rather than grade, the same pattern occurs: students who have been at SLS for longer tend to sing louder. Ben, an SLS student observed:

> And you can really tell like, that in your first two to three months, kids don't really grasp it, and they don't really, like, enjoy it that much. Like: "I have to go

> to Chapel." But as you further progress at Shawnigan, you really start to enjoy it, and you really get to start to like Chapel singing. (Ben, SLS)

Although participation rates are lower for younger students, the fact that by the time they are in their final years, almost every student sings willingly and enthusiastically, is evidence that at least over time, most students appear to develop a positive regard for the practice.

The Effect of Repertoire Choice on Participation Rates. The participation rate in communal singing appears to be somewhat dependent on the choice of song. Almost every participant reported something similar to these statements:

> On the Disney days, it's like, when we're singing a Disney song, or a song that they're into, it's got to be close to 90 percent [of students who are singing]. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

> But that one's definitely more fun because it's one in Welsh ["Calon Lan"]. So it's — spicing it up. And then it's also - the chorus is super powerful and for that one [everyone] just — not screams, but like, everyone really sings it. It makes such a difference because sometimes people will be half-singing or, you know, not fully singing, but that one just gets everyone together and it makes just like, [big arm motions] you know, it's really good. (Alison, SLS)

Thus, participation rates may be less an indication of positive regard for communal singing than an indication of song preference.

The Effect of "Down-days" on Participation Rates. The type of day the students, as a whole, are having also impacts participation. An LCS student who had

grown up in Africa used the expression *down day*s to describe a pervasive feeling of low-energy amongst the student body.

> Interviewer: and what would make it a “down day”?
>
> Denis (LCS): Well, sometimes it just — everyone's not really in the mood. The weather, sometimes it’s after the weekend or long periods of work I guess . . . there would be these periods throughout the year where we have a lot of work assigned to us. And so - it sort of becomes a theme around those times where, that everyone is sort of a little - has a little less energy. . . And for me at least, I find that going to Chapel actually, sometimes helps this, and starts the morning off pretty well. But we do see a decrease in participation at those times. Yeah, I think it's called winter depression, they call it?

This concept came up consistently: Students do not always fully embrace Chapel singing, which occurs at the start of the day at both schools, at least initially, when the weather is poor and when students feel tired.

> I mean, there are definitely times where, you know, you're like, running to chapel in the freezing rain on a Tuesday morning, and it's kind of the last place you want to be. (Breanna, SLS)

However, all of these reports were followed by a statement that nevertheless, once the singing started, moods improved. For example:

> In Chapel, we'll start by singing a hymn with everyone, which can be a lot at 8:00 in the morning. But usually, you know, like you're having a rough start to the morning and then you're like, oh, I actually really like this hymn and everyone's

> singing together. And then it just kind of, can kick start your day in the right way, which I really love. (Alison, SLS)

Similarly, at LCS, students reported that there are days when they, or their peers, don't feel like singing; however, once they start to sing, their energy, spirits, and mood lift. Logan (LCS) described how the students lift each other up:

> I'm having a crappy morning and I'm just like: "I really do not want to sing right now. That's not something I want to do. I got a test here and an assignment due here. Like, I just want to get through this Chapel." But then it's the people around you. They start singing, they're poking you to get up, they're trying to lift you up themselves, and eventually you're standing and singing along with them. You feel so much better after that. (Logan, LCS)

Thus, it appears that the time of year, general student energy, and the weather can impact levels of participation, particularly when the group initially gathers in the Chapel. Once people start to sing together, participants noted that their spirits are lifted, their mood improves, and participation increases.

The Effect of Self-Consciousness on Participation Rates. Most participants recognized that the fear of singing in front of peers was one of the main reasons that some students might not participate in communal singing, particularly when they first arrive at the school. Mr. Thibodeau, a long-time teacher at LCS observed that:

> Teenagers are teenagers, you know, and I think they come to that sort of space, with an incredible amount of doubt . . . There's definitely a discomfort experienced by new students, I think, coming to the school, and being presented

> with this uncomfortable moment of, “well, do I stand and join my peers and sing and expose myself?” (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

Almost all of the student participants, at both schools, commented on this sense of vulnerability. Matthew (SLS), a grade 12 student and a confident singer, recalled that in his early years at the school, singing made him feel “petrified”:

> It's a very vulnerable state that you're in when you are singing. I have found on numerous occasions, when I go up in chapel, to be absolutely petrified . . . even if you're just standing on your own, surrounded by other people, it's still very scary to be able to, because if you're worried that maybe you're going to sing something wrong, maybe you're going to have a voice crack, maybe you're going to suddenly keel over. (Matthew, SLS)

However, equally common was the report that with time, most students overcome this fear. Being surrounded by peers who are all singing creates a space where those new to the practice become acclimated. One SLS faculty member observed:

> An awful lot of kids are very self-conscious, as we know, in those teenage years. And so, they are quick to tell themselves - they're too quick to impose limitations upon themselves, as you well know. They're quick to tell themselves: “I'm not good at that, I can’t do that. I don't have a good voice”, et cetera, et cetera. And I think if you - if they find themselves part of a growing swell of beautiful noise that they are contributing to, I think their confidence increases, and they get that wonderful sense of joy that music brings us anyway. (Mr. Robertson, SLS)

Consistently, participants observed that at both SLS and at LCS, all the grade 12s (the

"grads") sing whole-heartedly. This speaks to the change over time in individual students' attitudes toward communal singing, as a result of enculturation into the prevailing attitudes.

The Effect of English Lyrics on Participation Rates. Given the high percentage of international students at both LCS and SLS, it is not uncommon for English language learners to struggle with singing songs in English. Mr. Everett (LCS) observed: "All the songs are in English. And we have some kids that are English-language-learners, so they're not able to keep up. And we do have the lyrics up, but it's still hard for them maybe, to sing." As a result, language might be a barrier to participation for some of the student population, at least until they have had time to become more comfortable with the language and the lyrics.

The Effect of Religious Lyrics on Participation Rates. Almost all of the songs sung at SLS are Anglican hymns, as are many of the songs sung at LCS. While repertoire choice is discussed in other sections of this analysis, it is important to note here that one reason for some students' non-participation may have to do with the religious content of the songs:

> The religious ones — we'll have a few people that will say they have to stand, but they might not sing, because it's not consistent with their own faith tradition. So if there's something that's Christo-centric, which we try to stay away from a little bit more now, then they're allowed to opt out. So obviously, those hymns would be a little bit less engaged by others. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

In contrast, a number of students and faculty reported that they believed that the religious

content of the songs was not, in fact, a barrier to participation. I discussed the concept in Chapter 4, that the students at SLS and LCS seem to pay little attention to the content of the song texts. Logan (LCS) described how he became inured to the religious texts of the songs:

> At the beginning, I don't really follow any — like I'm not a religious person, I don't really follow any faith. So I felt a bit off singing certain religious hymns. I don't know, it might have been "Land Of Hope of Glory" at the start, just how it had a certain Christian connotation. I was kind of like: "I don't know if this is really for me." And then I kind of got past that idea, and [realized] it's not even about the religion. It's like: you think of religion as a community instead of instead of a faith. So you kind of get past it. It was basically just my arrogance of me saying, "oh, I'm not going to sing Christian music". But it's not even about that. It's the furthest thing from that. I don't think there was a song I generically disliked. (Logan, LCS)

It does appear that, despite Mr. Everett's comment that some students might not sing because it is not consistent with their faiths, from the perspective of the students that I interviewed, they shared Logan's view that they, along with their peers, did not pay much attention to the words they were singing. Therefore, according to the students I interviewed, religious content in the songs did not impact on their or their peers' participation.

In conclusion, participation rates indicate, for the most part, students' positive regard for Chapel singing. Based on the data, it appears that most of the time, most

students sing willingly, depending on a number of factors, such as the song itself and the general mood of the student body. The theme "vulnerability" arose as a reason why some students, especially students who are new to the community, are hesitant to join in; however, participants reported that most students overcome these feelings with time. Consistently, participants report that by grade 11 and 12, everyone sings. So while 100% participation does not occur 100% of the time, the reasons for non-participation seem to support the idea that most of the students, most of the time, enjoy and value communal singing at LCS and SLS.

Institutional Value

Frequently, participants from both schools talked about their belief that "the school" values communal singing. This was distinct from their personal enjoyment of the practice, and from their sense that this affinity was shared by the student body. Instead, participants reported that communal singing is important to the school "as an institution," which includes generations of alumni, and years of tradition, as well as the current population of students, teachers, staff, and parents that comprise the school community. For example, an LCS alum explained:

> So I mean, it was already well established [when I arrived as a student to the school] and so it was really great because it felt like you were coming, particularly as a new grade 9, in to be a part of a moving train, like something that already had a great momentum, and you felt a really cool sense of purpose in joining something that was valued within the community and made you want to learn. (Duncan, LCS)

Teachers also noticed the deep value of communal singing to the school community. Ms. Fields (SLS) indicated that when she was a new teacher at the school, she "quickly started to realize how important singing was to the school." Both of these comments point to the idea that the school, as a corporate body, values the practice of communal singing.

Further evidence of institutional value is the fact that communal singing is scheduled into the timetable at both schools. At LCS, Chapel singing occurs four times per week in half hour Chapel sessions; at SLS, Chapel singing occurs three times per week, during half hour to 40 minute sessions. The fact that at both SLS and LCS time is set aside within the weekly schedule for Chapel singing is a strong indication that it is valued by "the institution."

At SLS, it is clear that Head of School from 2000 to 2018, and Deputy Head for eight years prior, David Robertson, definitely supported communal singing. He was referenced as the individual responsible for getting communal singing going over the 25 year period that he was in office. For example, the SLS Chaplain commented:

> The former headmaster, David Robertson, really believed that singing, communal singing, was a critical element of creating the community that would then allow the school to function in the way that he saw it needing to function. And so I, like I say, I almost feel like in a weird way [because I am the Chaplain, with the responsibility of overseeing Chapel], I'm not the big advocate for congregational singing. And he [David Robertson] would be the one actually that would stop them sometimes and say, "What are you doing? What is this? This isn't what we

do. We sing, let's hear it." (SLS Chaplain)

From comments made by long-time faculty SLS participants, there was no question that David Robertson valued and intentionally initiated the practice. Since Robertson's retirement in 2018, the school has carried on with the practice, with, it seems, no less institutional commitment.

At LCS, however, there is some murkiness on the topic of institutional commitment to communal singing. Although, as discussed earlier, all of the participants in my study from LCS were entirely enthusiastic about Chapel singing, organizational changes have recently brought into question whether the school administration continues to value practice of whole school singing in Chapel. The current Head of School at LCS joined the school in 2017. In conversation with her, she was adamant that singing is a necessary component of their work at LCS: "I think children should sing like - teenagers should sing, period. That's it . . . if our job in schools is to transform teenagers, this [communal singing] is how it's done" (Head of School, LCS). However, despite the Head's commitment to Chapel singing, time given to Chapel singing has had to compete with other priorities, such as Chapel Talks, and meditation sessions. Mr. Birrell (LCS) explained to me that the time given to Sing-with-Syd has been eroded over the last few years, and as of 2019, effectively cancelled. The decision to cancel Sing-with-Syd could be the end of successful communal singing at LCS. Thus, the extent to which LCS as an institution values communal singing, is not clear at present. The evidence may emerge after Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, and we see whether or not the decision to cancel Sing-with-Syd is reversed.

Summary

All participants from both schools reported that they personally like, value, and enjoy communal singing, and that the student body as a whole, for the most part shares this sentiment. Evidence of this pro-singing attitude emerged in the form of students and alumni missing singing when no longer able to practice it, students' spontaneous singing both within and outside of Chapel, and high levels of student participation, especially in the upper grades, despite new students' occasional feelings of vulnerability. The issue of religious content in the text of some songs emerged as a potential barrier for students who do not identify as "religious;" however, students consistently explained that the positive feelings they associated with communal singing caused them to overcome their initial misgivings about singing religious texts. There is a pervasive sense that communal singing is important to the entire school community at both SLS and LCS; however, some recent decisions at LCS to curtail Sing-with-Syd may threaten the long term sustainability of the practice.

Theme Two: Communal Singing Can Create Belongingness

The second theme that consistently emerged from my research data was that whole school communal singing can create feelings of belonging. Every participant spoke about this idea, that singing together as a whole school had a significant impact on their sense of belonging to the school community, in some way. For example, Travis, an LCS student, described a memory of being new to the school:

> When I was a new student [at LCS], I didn't know anyone, I was very nervous, and there were a lot of kids that were older and bigger than me, obviously,

> because I was one of the younger grades. So, I remember the first time I went into the chapel, and I remember the first song, and the whole school sang, and I didn't know any of the words, but all the older kids knew all the words, and it made me feel kind of safe. It made me feel involved, it kind of made me feel I was part of this community, that wasn't just everyone for themselves, like we're all in this together. (Travis, LCS)

This section explores the ways that communal singing at these two schools have contributed to student belongingness. Related sub-themes that emerged from the data supporting the theme of belonging are: because it is an important component of the school culture, communal singing helps define the school identity; and the act of singing together as a school builds school community.

This Is Our Culture, It's Who We Are

Consistently in the interviews, research participants expressed the view that whole school singing created a strong, identifiable school culture, which gave them something identifiable to belong to.

> I couldn't imagine the Shawnigan identity without having our whole school singing our hymns and Chapel. It wouldn't be Shawnigan, without that. (Matthew, SLS)

But it's just something that's so important to the culture of this place because it just brings

> us together in that voice. It's like having little flames and putting them all together and they're inseparable. . . It's the life-blood of the school. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

A sense of belonging can emerge when there is a strong institutional identity to belong to (e.g., Bilal, 2021). As discussed in Chapter 2, schools with a strong identity give young people seeking group-membership something to cling to, something that separates them from others. The idea that communal singing is an essential component of the school culture at LCS and SLS emerged consistently from all participants at both schools.

Participants described elements of their school culture through how they talked about the way they sang the songs, the particular behaviors they engaged in during certain songs, and the Chapel repertoire itself. For example, at LCS, the tradition of singing "Land of Hope and Glory" at graduation appeared to be integral to LCS culture, as it was mentioned by every LCS research participant:

> "Land of Hope and Glory," I don't know if anybody's mentioned that one to you [note: every LCS participant but one mentioned this], but that's one that is sung at the beginning and at the end of the year, and it's sung with the grade 12s, like in the theater - our theater is a thrust shape, so the stage comes out of the three sides of the audience, really, and the grade 12s all sit at the bottom, and turn and sing it back to the grade 11s. Yeah, that's a very important cultural kind of moment. (Duncan, LCS)

The Chapel repertoire itself is a cultural marker. At SLS, the data revealed that the singing of old, traditional, Anglican hymns contributes to the school's identity. For example:

> At one point, about three chaplains ago when I was first here, there was a chaplain who got into some of the more modern kind of sing-along kind of

> hymns, and didn't go down really well. The kids like the traditional ones. Isn't that interesting? And that's what we do, and that's what we sing. (Ms. Campbell, SLS)

In contrast, at LCS, students consistently spoke to their sense that the singing of classic popular songs like "Sweet Caroline," "Country Roads Take Me Home," and "Let It Go" (from *Frozen*), is a cultural marker of Lakefield, in addition to the singing of traditional Anglican hymns, like "Jerusalem."

I wondered whether the Chapel services themselves could be considered the cultural marker; however, from students' comments, it seems that it is the singing in Chapel that creates school identity and the feeling of belonging. Students from both schools spoke about this, for example:

> We do these Chapels, which is like the heart of the school, [but] without the singing, then you lose all that amazement that comes from it. (Ben, SLS)

> I think the singing and singing together as a school kind of sets us apart from just like having a normal "assembly" [air quotes] kind of thing, you know, instead of just like meeting in your grades or whatever or even meeting as the whole school, like, for messages or something. (Travis, LCS)

Finally, singing out (as in fully participating, singing loudly) emerged as normal behavior at both schools. For example:

> It's weirder if you don't sing, than if you do sing, because everyone's like, "yeah, it's the normal," like, "why aren't you singing out?" (Alison, SLS)

According to the American Psychological Association (2020), a cultural norm is "a societal rule, value, or standard that delineates an accepted and appropriate behavior within a culture." Like Alison's comment (above), Denis's (LCS) description of singing loudly seems to fit this definition of a cultural norm:

> When I'm with my friends and everything, we're just singing at the top of our lungs, all together . . . singing at the top of our lungs. It's weird if you don't. (Denis, LCS)

These norms contribute to a strong sense of school identity. A strong school identity gives students something to belong to (Bilal, 2021), and thus creates feelings of "belongingness." Social identity theorists argue that the belongingness that stems from close group ties is vital to self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Further analysis of research literature related to belongingness is explored in Chapter 7.

Communal Singing in Schools is Rare, It Makes our School Special

> It's something that separates Lakefield from other schools. (Travis, LCS)

> We've been singing in school for one hundred years and it's one of the things that makes our school different, is that we [sing] these hymns. (Ben, SLS)

Almost all of the participants observed that few secondary schools engage in regular communal singing. They reported that the uniqueness of this practice makes their school special. In this way, it separates insiders from outsiders, members from non-members. As such, the uniqueness of the practice cements belonging, because it gives students something special to belong to.

> I think it is something that feels like a differentiator. Like, I don't know many schools who sing with the same regularity. (Duncan, LCS)

> It's something really special for Shawnigan to do . . . I think it's an essential part of the Shawnigan community because it really is unique, in a way that not a lot of other places do the same thing. (Alison, SLS)

If communal singing were a common practice in secondary schools, then perhaps students at LCS and SLS would not feel this sense that their school is unique and special in this way. At LCS and SLS, this uniqueness seemed to create a sense of pride, evident in this alum's comments:

> I certainly felt a sense of pride in - I can remember certain weekends, like when parents would come or alumni would come and, I think a lot of people were really kind of like - not impressed - but sort of like, "wow, you guys all sing together, in Chapel," and I think it's this tradition, this sort of, ritual of being together, of making music together. . . It's a really signature part of the experience. (Breanna, SLS)

Alison (SLS) described a moment when spontaneous singing of the school hymn emerged publicly on the sports field at an away-game. She was initially embarrassed, because to outsiders, she imagined that it would seem an unusual thing to do. And then, Alison described her embarrassment turning to pride, as she embraced the school's unique singing identity:

> There's a couple of times where we'll be at rugby games, or like, at an away, like at Brentwood or in Victoria, and then someone will start the school hymn. And at first you're kind of like "Really? Like, we're in Victoria!" I'm like, "uuuhhhgh", but then everyone just gets together and you're like, "Well, I guess we're doing this now". . . It's definitely like a school moment, you know? (Alison, SLS)

Uniqueness contributes to a recognizable school culture at both SLS and LCS, again, giving something that students to which they can feel belonging.

Communal Singing Contributes to House Identity. At both LCS and SLS, the house system creates another layer of "belongingness," that is, a smaller community within the larger school community that students connect to. At SLS, for the last 30 years, each house has had a particular hymn assigned to it. Because these hymns are sung regularly in Chapel, the singing strengthens house identity. This is evident in Ben's comment:

> Like, one of the first things a Shawnigan kid will ask you, if you meet a Shawnigan kid outside of Shawnigan, is what house you're in. And then once you hear that, you instantly relate it to a song. (Ben, SLS)

For Matthew, singing "loud and proud" is clearly connected to his house identity:

> For us, we have the identity of being the house that is proud of our singing. Despite our ability. We know that we love to sing. And when we get to sing together and when we get to sing to our fullest potential . . . That's something for us that we truly value in our house. (Matthew, SLS)

Interestingly, at LCS, the Director of Spiritual Wellness and Diversity, who is responsible for Chapel programming, spoke of plans for implementing a similar system of house hymns at LCS, but explained that this has not yet happened. This plan may result in furthering students' sense of belongingness with respect to their house identity at LCS.

Singing Connects Students to School History, Traditions, and Alumni. Students' emotional connection to their school is strengthened by the recognition that Chapel singing is part of a long-standing tradition. Logan (LCS) explained:

> The type of passion that we have for the singing also comes from the 100 and however many years that people have been singing here. There's a history to it. It's been the same song for over a century. So, you know, there is a bit of a reputation to hold up. (Logan, LCS)

Connection to the school through the practice of communal singing also emerged as an important way that alumni maintain connection with the school. Alumni from both schools were clear that the communal singing experience forged stronger links with their alma mater than they might not otherwise have had. Breanna, an SLS alum, described the way singing connects her to her fellow alumni:

> When I see other Shawnigan grads after years, or I go to any type of reunion event, I mean, those kinds of experiences really connect to you in some way, that you've all had that collective experience of practicing [communal singing], and being a part of that kind of community. (Breanna, SLS alum)

As for singing together after graduation, SLS alumni often return to campus for the annual Founder's Day service, where they join the students in singing school hymns;

LCS alumni will sometimes sing the school hymn, “Jerusalem,” at alumni events, such as at networking dinners. My study participants who are alumni reported that singing these old songs has the effect of kindling good memories and strengthening their commitment to their alma mater.

Singing Together Creates Community

The idea that the act of singing builds community, creates a bond, and brings people together was the most commonly referenced theme in my data analysis. It was spoken about by every one of the participants. For example, Matthew, an SLS student, described the feeling of belonging that results from singing together:

> When it all comes to the end of the week and we go into the chapel on Saturday, and we're all in our number one [uniform], and we're all coming together to sit with one another and sing, together, we know that we're still there for each other. We know that we're still supporting one another. We know that we're still brothers in the end, and in that moment. (Matthew, SLS)

Frequently Occurring Concepts Related to Community. A word count of all the interview transcripts resulted in 125 uses of the word “community,” 140 of the word “together,” 53 “connection” or “connect,” and 20 “family.” Additionally, the concepts of “synchronicity” and the “power of the group, or the collective” emerged as strong sub-themes. The following are examples, one from each school, of how these concepts appeared in the context of our conversations:

"Community Building."

I think many of them [the students], by the time they've been with us for a number of years, understand and recognize what the importance is of community building, and certainly community building through song. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

I also think there's an element of community-building [in communal singing] . . . it's a powerful, powerful way of building a community (Mr. Austin, SLS)

"Together."

When we sing together as a community, it's just all the individuals coming together in one voice. And it's a symbolic, unifying experience for us. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

When everyone's singing, and everyone's together, even if it's been a terrible day, or it's a beautiful day, or if it's Christmas, or if it's graduation, I think singing's one of those things that the whole school can kind of come together and do at once. (Alison, SLS)

"Connect."

And when we get to sing together and when we get to sing to our fullest potential, we can make something that is truly beautiful and a moment in which we can all connect together as brothers. (Matthew, SLS)

> But it was this amazing ability to be all doing something together, you know, which was more meaningful than just doing something apart. So. Yeah, I definitely see music as that connector. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

"Family." A frequently referenced concept at SLS was "family," in that singing together contributed to the feeling that the school community was a family. For example: "So, there was this, almost like, this family kind of feel. . . I think the practice of gathering, and the practice of singing really made me feel closer, I guess, to my housemates and my schoolmates." (Breanna, SLS). A particularly passionate speech by Matthew (SLS) described the concept of family in detail. He began by explaining the nature of his relationship with the other students in his boarding house:

> It's something that has transcended a normal, like friendship, or something that you have. It goes beyond that. . . because it's something that never leaves, something that sticks with you forever. (Matthew, SLS)

I then asked if the singing contributed in some way to this closeness. His answer was:

> Definitely. I have found personally that going through Lonsdale's [house], and going through the motions of understanding what our idea was with singing, and how we associated that to our house and to our values. It really emphasizes our idea of respect for one another and respect for who we are. (Matthew, SLS)

The concept of family came up frequently in my conversation with LCS participants as well. For example, when Logan was describing the close connection he felt to his school, I asked him if Chapel singing in any way contributed to this feeling. His response:

> Absolutely . . . like certain songs or, just that whole, like, watching the [older] guys [in the front rows] sway back and forth, and then eventually the back-rows start doing it, so we get in on it. It does. It feels much more close. You feel like family. (Logan, LCS)

By using this language, referencing concepts such as community building, together, connect and family, all these participants were essentially speaking about how communal singing contributes to students' belongingness.

Synchronicity. A number of participants referenced, or hinted at the concept of synchronicity. For example:

> I would even liken whole school singing to the practice of chanting "om" in a yoga class. I find for me there is something really powerful about that kind of synchronicity, of when everyone is kind of together in making sound. (Breanna, SLS alum)

> [When] everyone is breathing together, moving together, making the same sounds, singing the same words, it's a powerful, powerful way of building a community. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

This physical, embodied connection that occurs when people sing together, and its effect on group cohesion is the subject of much research (see Chapter 7). I find it noteworthy that participants, who may not be aware of this body of research, noticed and commented on this effect. Mr. Everett (LCS) extended the idea of embodied synchronicity to incorporate a transcendent, spiritual dimension:

> When you have a lot of people singing the same words and as close to pitch as possible, in key, it's such a unifying, energizing, spiritual connection that happens . . . because there's a transcendence when the individuals come together and form a whole body. And I think that's why it's so powerful for our community is that it reminds us — and again, it's more than just symbolic. There's a spiritual connection that happens when you sing together. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

These kinds of comments emerged primarily from the adult participants' interviews but not from students.' It might be that the student participants, younger and potentially without the sophisticated reflective capacities of the adults, perhaps were not yet able to access this level of nuanced observation. However, the following students' observations hint at something akin to synchronicity:

> So if you may not be the best singer yourself, you can start to tune into what other people are doing and follow along. And it becomes a very rhythmic and very harmonic state when you're actually able to do that with one another. (Matthew, SLS)

> Definitely the energy that stays in the chapel when we start singing is something I haven't experienced before, and it's something that I really enjoyed at Lakefield. (Travis, LCS)

While not all participants' interviews contained references to synchronicity, I did find it interesting that the concept was mentioned at all, as it is subtle, and not directly observable. I am intrigued by the idea that a group of people aligning movements and

vocalizations creates a sense of group collectivity. It is pertinent to note Mr. Thibodeau's (LCS) comment that group singing is "a very human-making kind of activity," anticipates my discussion in chapter 7, that the synchronicity that occurs during group singing is a mechanism evolved in human beings, during our ancestral evolutionary past, in order to create belonging (e.g., Launay et al., 2016).

Collective: Individual vs. Group. A number of the adult participants spoke about the idea that communal singing helps people to understand the power of the collective, that it provides the opportunity to feel the importance of something "bigger than yourself":

> Something that for me that I noticed was just that sense of the collective. I think I really got a sense of being part of something bigger than myself. And you just feel that power of everyone else's voices and yours. (Breanna, SLS alum)

> There's a transcendence when the individuals come together and form a whole body. And I think that's why it's so powerful for our community . . . and again, it's more than just symbolic. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

Like synchronicity, this concept of connecting to something "bigger than yourself" is a concept that emerged only from the adult participants (faculty and alumni). I would suggest that perhaps the students may have experienced the power of the collective when they sing communally but were not yet able to interpret or express the meaning of this experience.

How Else Would You Build Community, if Not Through Communal Singing? One of the participants, a long-time member of the LCS faculty, asked me a particularly powerful question. I had commented that I had found the practice of communal singing to be rare among Canadian Independent Schools. His reply:

> But what I'm interested in, is how they [schools that don't sing] do community building? And what kinds of things do they do that intentionally put you into a community mode as opposed to into an individual mode? . . .And I kind of wonder, what are those mandatory moments in a school's life in which everybody is together doing something as a . . . apart from Opening and Closing (assembly)? There's rare moments. And I wonder if you can actually call that valid community-building, if you're not doing repetitive kinds of things, which . . . deepen your understanding of what it means to be a community. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

Most Canadian independent secondary schools do have a regular whole-school gathering, typically called an "assembly," once or twice per week. While I assume one of the purposes of such assembly is to build community, lacking an effective means of active participation, students at an assembly are, essentially, members of a passive audience. At the school assemblies at my school, for example, opportunities for participation are limited to applauding after assembly components (for example, applauding after the speaker is done, or cheering when sports team wins are announced, etc.) Mr. Thibodeau (LCS) described this lack of embodied participation in non-singing school assemblies:

> Most of the time those kids in that large group setting are expected to sort of sit

> quietly and listen, as opposed to be vocal in some sort of way . . . we've played a little bit with times in which there's been very minimal singing, depending on who the Chapel leader has been, and lots more talking and lots more sort of storytelling and things like that. And I think it wasn't quite as successful. I believe that what ended up happening during those times was, you know, you'd spend more time in your head as opposed to spending time in group participatory activity. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

This idea was echoed by students at both schools, for example:

> And I don't actually believe that the sense of community comes from the Rev. speaking, standing in front of everyone and giving his stories. I think it comes from the singing, actually. (Ben, SLS)

One faculty member at SLS described communal singing as being the ingredient in Chapel that makes the chapel significant:

> I think for congregational singing, it is what makes the chapel "Chapel" rather than an assembly or whatever. I mean, we do prayers and we do musical presentations. But, you know, I've been to other, kind of, student gatherings, they weren't necessarily a chapel gathering, but they would be a gathering of a kind of, you know, a gathering just to bring people together . . . And I always think that the communal singing is what makes this unique, uniquely a Chapel service. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

Participatory activity, such as communal singing, in a whole-school setting seems to be a uniquely effective way of building community in these two contexts.

I suggested to Mr. Thibodeau (LCS) that in my conversation with colleagues at other schools, outdoor education (OE) programs are often touted as community-builders. However, outdoor education rarely operates as a regularly occurring, schoolwide endeavor. Mr. Thibodeau (LCS) similarly countered:

> We (LCS) have a very strong Outdoor Ed. program, and we tend to use that more for leadership building, as opposed to community building. And not every kid does that, you know, depending on when they enter into the school, unless there's a mandatory component. And that's the thing, right? Because Chapel's mandatory. (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

Thus, whole-school singing, as a mandatory activity, that the entire school community actively participates in on a regular basis provides a unique way to build community at SLS and LCS.

Summary

At both schools, every participant in this study mentioned that communal singing creates feelings of belonging to the school community. Participants observed that communal singing is a vital component of their school culture and school identity; as such, the regular practice of communal singing creates something to which students can belong. The act of singing together itself appears to create bonds: through the mechanism of synchronicity, communal singing contributes to the sense of belonging to something larger than one's self. Some participants suggested that communal singing may be the only effective mechanism available for schools to actively build community amongst hundreds of students at the same time.

Theme Three: Communal Singing Mediates Emotions and Contributes to Psychological Wellness

Every participant at some point in their interview described the effect of communal singing on emotional states. The most common comment was that communal singing lifted spirits, energized the mood, and set students up to have a good day. For example, Travis from LCS noted how singing gets him excited and makes his days better. He said, "everyone who's willing to sing, I think it does them good." In addition, some participants reported that communal singing enables a range of emotions. Specific emotions commonly mentioned were joy (including awe and wonder), pride, and comfort (including stress relief), as well as sadness when appropriate to the occasion (e.g., Remembrance Day, funeral services). Another frequent comment was that communal singing provides an opportunity to experience aesthetic beauty.

Lifts the Spirits at the Start of the Day

At both LCS and SLS, Chapel occurs first thing in the morning (8:00am at SLS, 8:30am at LCS). The student participants from both schools described this early start as challenging for themselves and their peers:

> It is a bit tiring at times to wake up early and meet-up, and everything. (Denis, LCS)

> I mean, there are definitely times where, you know, you're like, running to Chapel in the freezing rain on a Tuesday morning, and it's kind of the last place you want to be. But there was a certain kind of warmth and comfort, I would say, to that

> practice. (Breanna, SLS)

All of the students I spoke to, after speaking about Chapel being "tiring," added the proviso that Chapel singing had the effect of transforming low energy into an enjoyable, up-beat mood.

> In Chapel, we'll start by singing a hymn with everyone, which can be a lot at 8:00 in the morning. But usually, you know, like you're having a rough start to the morning and then you're like, "oh, I actually really like this hymn and everyone's singing together." And then it just kind of, can kick start your day in the right way, which I really love. (Alison, SLS)

Similarly, Duncan, an LCS alum recalled:

> It's a physical activity that is communal, that gets everybody in a — really raises the spirits, because a lot of days, Lakefield had Chapel at that time for 40 minutes every morning at 8:10 [am]. It was — a lot of people would be here [demonstrates a despondent posture, leaning head on hands] kind of sitting, and coming in with that [very low] energy level, or sitting on both knees. And, you know, you wouldn't leave a Sing-with-Syd Chapel without having that level of communal energy raised. It just buoys everything up. (Duncan, LCS)

While singing early in the morning may not feel like something one initially wants to do, all of the study participants reported its energizing effect on their emotional state.

Enables Emotional Expression

> Once you have 50 other boys standing up here beside you and singing your hymn from your house, you feel a lot of pride and emotions coming out, and you just

> start belting it out, you know? (Ben, SLS)

This description of "emotions coming out" was also reflected in adult participants' observations as well, for example: "And I think the singing — it kind of opens them up in a way, emotionally, and it allows them to express some emotions – you know, they are so full of emotion" (Mr. Austin, SLS). Another long-time faculty at SLS referenced the breadth of emotions that communal singing enables:

> Music and singing bring us joy and, and — other emotions, when the time is appropriate for other emotions, as well. (Mr. Robertson, SLS)

In my analysis, I found prevalent comments related to the idea that communal singing enables "other emotions," including sadness, pride, transcendence, feelings of comfort, and aesthetic emotions.

Sadness.

> Another hymn that I really enjoyed, which is — we only sing it on a somber day, or for any occasion where there might have been a passing [when someone has died], but it's just so beautiful: "Be Still My Soul." It's so beautiful and I love it. It's, in my opinion, I think, the best hymn that we sing because when we sing it, we know why we're singing it, and it really reflects on the words and in the tone. The volume drops and everybody sings so much more softly and eloquently when we do it. So, you really get a good feeling for it. (Matthew, SLS)

Similarly, at LCS, sad feelings were mentioned in conjunction with singing of certain songs. For example:

> "I Feel The Winds of God Today" . . . is sung at the opening Chapel, and it is

> sung at happy times, and sad times, like, one staff member died of an anaphylactic reaction. And that was sung there. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

Thus, at LCS and SLS, communal singing provides the opportunity for the expression of emotions other than joy.

Pride. Many of the participants mentioned the concept of *pride*, as an emotion evoked by the practice of communal singing. At SLS, participants commonly referenced pride in their house; at both schools, pride in their school and pride in self were mentioned frequently.

Pride in Their House. Breanna (SLS) explained that communal singing is used to instill house pride and house identity:

> We had certain hymns that were associated with our houses. And so there was a certain sense of pride, I think, in that when we would sing the hymn that was associated with our boarding house. (Breanna, SLS)

Matthew (SLS) was very clear about the way that communal singing evoked house pride, and vice versa:

> So then for someone who wasn't really into it, we'd be like: "Guys, guys, let's look at this. Who is the loudest in the chapel? Us [Lonsdale's House]. We have been the loudest in the chapel, Lonsdale's, and we are proud of that. We hold that to a T. That is our gold standard. And we are going to hold on to that because that's our tradition and something that we value in our house. (Matthew, SLS)

Similarly, Ben (SLS) spoke about the process of teaching the house hymn to the younger students in his house:

> So, yeah, we want to make sure the kids know it and they know that it's their song and that they should feel pride when singing it. And normally they do. They understand that, themselves, after being here for a couple of months. (Ben, SLS)

Pride in students' houses did not emerge in conversations about whole-school singing with LCS participants, because LCS has not (yet) linked repertoire to their house system; however, the faculty member who oversees the LCS Chapel has been considering implementing this strategy.

Pride in School. Comments made by students suggest that the act of communal singing fosters a sense of pride in their school. For example:

> I certainly felt a sense of pride in — I can remember certain weekends, like when parents would come or alumni would come and, I think a lot of people were really kind of like - not impressed - but sort of like, "Wow, you guys all sing together in Chapel!" (Breanna, SLS)

Pride in Self. Pride in self, as an emotion that was evoked by whole-school singing, also emerged as a sub-theme. Logan (LCS) described the journey from being a new student to one who is more comfortable singing. He expressed pride in his ability to lead others in a situation that he used to find intimidating:

> And then you learn the songs, and then you know what you're singing, and then you're the one who doesn't have to look at the projector with the lyrics on it, and is looking around at all their friends saying, "alright guys, let's get louder here." (Logan, LCS)

Similarly, at SLS, Ben expressed pride in the fact that he no longer needed to use the

hymn book, as he had all the words memorized:

> Myself personally, I haven't picked up a handbook since grade 10, maybe, like the beginning of grade 11, just because I made sure that I knew those songs, just because it's a lot better when you don't have to look down at the words. (Ben, SLS)

The pride referenced by these students appears to be an authentic, rather than a narcissistic pride (see Tracy et al., 2009, for a differentiation of these terms); scholars consider authentic pride to be a social emotion associated with a feeling of accomplishment, self-confidence, and productivity (e.g., Wubbin et al., 2012). This does seem to encapsulate the pride described by the students.

Joy, Magic, Wonder. A number of participants spoke about communal singing producing feelings of joy, magic, and wonder. *Joy* was mentioned 16 times by participants, for example:

> But, there's . . . joy to me, at least starting the day when we all come together and, you know, sit down and have songs we sing and everything. And I just really like it. (Denis, LCS)

Joy was referenced by adults as well. The Head of School at LCS as well as the Head of School at SLS specifically mentioned joy in their comments:

> If they [the students] find themselves part of a growing swell of beautiful noise that they are contributing to, I think their confidence increases, and they get that wonderful sense of joy that music brings us anyway. Music and singing bring us joy. (Mr. Robertson, SLS)

Three participants (two from LCS, one from SLS) used the word *magic* to describe the experience of Chapel singing, for example:

> I think it's definitely something really magical in a way, because it's — this going to sound so cheesy, but it's a way that the whole school comes together, and it's not — like, as opposed to a normal assembly or like, a meeting kind of thing — I don't know, like everyone is doing the same thing, everyone's singing, and singing and music is such a heartfelt thing . . . when everyone's doing it together. (Alison, SLS)

Wonder appeared in SLS participants' discussion as well. For example:

> When everyone's standing up and singing, either house hymns or school hymns, because in that Chapel, with so many people singing, with a huge organ in the background, it does create just a sense of wonder, actually, like it's — because I've never experienced it before. (Ben, SLS)

Transcendence. From the tone of speech, the grasping for words, the body language in these moments in the interviews, it seemed to me that the participants - teachers, students and alums - were struggling to describe something ineffable as they shared their experiences with communal singing. Listening to these voices describing feelings of joy, magic and wonder, I am tempted to suggest that the word *transcendence* might capture what they were struggling to express. Transcendence, from the Latin *trans*, meaning "beyond", and *scandare*, meaning "to climb," conveys the idea of climbing up, moving beyond, and experiencing the extraordinary. To say that whole school singing at SLS and LCS creates transcendence is to suggest that it transforms the experience of the

group from that of being a normal assembly, into the magical, wondrous, joyful experience described by the research participants.

Aesthetic Emotions. It appears that Chapel singing, at least at SLS, can produce emotions that respond to the aesthetic aspects of participating in aesthetic activity, which Menninghaus et al. (2019) refer to as "aesthetic emotions" (p. 171). According to Menninghaus et al., aesthetic emotions always include an aesthetic evaluation or appreciation of the events under consideration, are attuned to and predictive of an aesthetic virtue, are associated with subjectively felt pleasure or displeasure during the event, and predict the resulting liking or disliking of the event. For example, speaking about how new students learn to embrace communal singing, Matthew (SLS) explained:

> When we have our Founder's Day Chapel, when we have alumni who return and who are singing to their fullest potential, and the sound is absolutely, like, jaw dropping, beautiful and astounding. (Matthew, SLS)

The "jaw dropping, beautiful and astounding" nature of the Founder's Day Chapel singing, for Matthew, could comprise the "aesthetic evaluation" described by Menninghaus et al. In a quote referenced earlier, Matthew also referred to beauty as the trigger for emotional response in his description of his favorite hymn "Be Still My Soul": "It's just so beautiful: 'Be Still My Soul.' It's so beautiful and I love it" (Matthew, SLS). Similarly, Alison (SLS) expressed her love for "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind": "I don't know why I like it so much, but I think it's like the chord progression, or something. But it's just like, — oh — (claps hands to heart) I love it." These descriptions suggest an emotional response to aesthetic beauty.

Unlike SLS participants, the LCS students did not mention whether the aesthetics of the music contributed to their emotional responses to Chapel singing. Logan (LCS), however, did talk about the aesthetics of the chapel space:

> The chapel (building) does play a big part in the atmosphere of the community and being together. Everyone is under one roof. The chapel itself is beautiful. It's got the stained-glass windows and the whole thing. (Logan, LCS)

Why an aesthetic response emerged from one school's data, and not from the other's, is a question that is beyond the scope of this paper, but fodder for future research.

Comfort, Stress Relief, Healing. One SLS graduate remembered that Chapel singing induced feelings of calm and comfort:

> I, for me, found it to be a little bit of a solace . . . there are definitely times where, you know, you're like, running to chapel in the freezing rain on a Tuesday morning, and it's kind of the last place you want to be. But there was a certain kind of warmth and comfort, I would say, to that [whole-school singing] practice. (Breanna, SLS)

Ms. Taylor, a school administrator at LCS, recalled an event when a school tragedy struck: The school's response was to come together to sing, which seemed to provide comfort and to aid communal healing:

> We had had a really traumatic tragedy . . . where a boy attempted to harm himself and so . . . We weren't sure if we should still be sitting there singing. Right? And yet we did. And we said this really is what we need to do as a community. And it was part of a healing . . . And so for us, that communal singing was like healing

and restorative as a community. (Ms. Taylor, LCS)

Ms. Taylor (LCS) also spoke about the calming, comforting effects of engaging in a regular routine, and claimed that the singing of the same songs over and over on a regular basis contributed to emotional regulation and student wellness. The idea that singing facilitates the expression, range and depth of emotions in the singers seems to be the common thread in these statements.

Summary

All of the participants in this study spoke in some way about the effect of Chapel singing on enabling, moderating, or amplifying a range of emotional expression. Primarily, participants viewed Chapel singing as a mood enhancer: a way to lift the spirits at the start of the day. In addition, participants described a broad range of emotions elicited from and expressed through Chapel singing, from sadness to joy, instilling pride, and providing comfort and healing. In addition, at SLS, students described how Chapel singing evoked aesthetic emotions.

Conclusion

My thematic analysis of data from 17 interviews resulted in five overarching themes. The first three (positive regard, belongingness and affects emotions) relate to how participants experience whole-school communal singing. First, all the students at SLS and LCS that I interviewed stated that they enjoy and value communal singing, and they reported that most of their peers seem to enjoy and value communal singing most of the time. Interviewees indicated that by the time students reach their senior years and reflect back on their time in Chapel, most students regard communal singing as having

been a very positive component of their school experience. Similarly, the schools' faculty and administrators stated that they value the practice. Second, students' emotional connection to the school community seems to be significantly enhanced by the regular practice of whole school singing. Whole school singing strengthens school culture, which gives students something to belong to; in addition, the act of singing together seems to produce feelings of belongingness. Third, participants consistently reported that communal singing affects their emotional states: improving moods, providing opportunities for emotional expression, and, at SLS, evoking aesthetic responses. This ability to "lift the spirits" makes communal singing a potentially powerful addition to student wellness initiatives. These three themes reflect the interview data that answer my second research question: "How is whole-school singing experienced by the participants?" Given the positive responses from participants, particularly the social and emotional benefits from communal singing that they spoke about, in effect, this section provides answers to the question "why would a school practice whole-school singing?" Whole school singing can provide the opportunity for everyone in the school community to experience the positive benefits that the research participants described, including students who may not be able, due to scheduling conflicts, to participate in school choir, or other electives in the arts.

The other two themes that emerged from my data analysis relate to the "how" of whole school singing: How, given that in most schools, adolescents do not necessarily love to sing in front of their peers, can a school create a culture where adolescents embrace the practice of whole school communal singing? Chapter 6 presents these two

themes.

Chapter 6 – Findings Related to "How"?

The final two themes to emerge from my data analysis answered the question "How does it (whole school singing) happen?" This question was implicit in the second of my three research questions: "What are the challenges of implementing whole school singing at the secondary school level?" Denis's comments below illustrate the contrast between whole school singing that "works" and whole school singing that is less "successful.".

> Every time we sang in my old school or anywhere else I've been, it was more out of pure tradition I'd say, not joy. And it was more to represent the school. So sort of a national anthem or the school's anthem, and that's about it. And I found that to be more tedious than anything, as there was no significance to it, in my opinion, other than patriotism. . . . [in contrast] in Lakefield, not only do we enjoy it, but — well, we enjoy it. (Denis, LCS)

How does one induce an entire school of adolescents to sing, willingly, with enthusiasm and joy, so that the benefits described in the above analysis can emerge? What is the secret? Is it even possible to initiate this in a school that does not have a hundred-year old tradition of communal singing? The evidence from the interview data supports the ideas that first, communal singing at LCS and SLS exemplify a Pascale's (B) approach (theme 4); and second, that communal singing in a secondary school context does not just happen on its own, but that there are specific strategies and tactics that can be used to create a fully participative, joy-filled group singing experience (theme 5).

Theme Four: Alignment with Pascale's Aesthetic B

> And so there was a great focus on participation rather than quality, which I think was inclusive, a really nice inclusive way. (Duncan, LCS alum)

One of my research questions was how, and in what ways, communal singing at LCS and SLS aligns with Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B. Pascale (2005) identified two viewpoints, or aesthetics, of music education. The first, *Aesthetic A,* typifies the approach used in school choirs and choral classes. Aesthetic A, according to Pascale (2005), typically prioritizes musical ability, performance, as well as building skills, such as note reading and vocal technique. In contrast, an Aesthetic B approach values process and participation. Inclusion is the priority, as there are no restrictions on who can or cannot sing. From the Aesthetic B viewpoint, the primary purpose of singing is not to reinforce musical skills or to create art, but to build community; not to rehearse for a performance, but to experience the joy of singing together (Pascale, 2005).

From my data analyses, it is clear that almost exclusively, the approach, attitudes, and priorities of the leaders and participants of Chapel singing at LCS and SLS align with Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B approach. Consistently, participants' comments supported the idea that the success of Chapel singing was determined not by how well the group was singing, or on how beautiful the quality of the singing, but on how many people were participating, and how enthusiastic the singing was. Further indication of Aesthetic B is the lack of division between audience and performer during Chapel singing. At both LCS and SLS, during Chapel, everyone in the room is expected to sing. Faculty and staff as well as students participate. There is no audience. Nor is Chapel singing a preparation for

any kind of performance. Chapel singing occurs for the sake of singing together, a key component of Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B.

An exception to this at SLS is, that at the beginning of the year, student leaders spend time outside of Chapel teaching new house members their house hymn in preparation for presenting their house hymn in Chapel. When a house hymn is presented, those house members stand and sing the first verse of their house hymn, alone. For the first verse, then, there is a momentary separation between performer and audience; however, this separation is fleeting, as the rest of the school joins in for the subsequent verses. I feel that this rehearsal and performance aspect of SLS's practice is more the result of an employment of a strategy of friendly competition than indicative of an Aesthetic A approach.

Other indications that Chapel singing exemplifies Aesthetic B include: School faculty members value participation over singing quality; the feedback given by song leaders to the students is focused on levels of enthusiasm and participation rather than musical concerns; there is minimal attempt by song leaders to develop students' vocal technique; sheet music is not used, nor is there tutelage in note-reading; and singing is primarily in unison, with occasional use of canon and partner-songs. The simultaneous existence at both schools of a separate elective co-curricular choir, which does rehearse and perform, provides an aesthetic A contrast to Chapel singing's aesthetic B approach. Finally, I address the question that I asked my research participants, "Are you a singer?," in order to consider Pascale's (2009) proposition that within an Aesthetic B context, everyone is a singer.

School Faculty: Valuing Participation Over Quality Singing

> When you have a lot of people singing the same words and as close to pitch as possible, in key, it's such a unifying, energizing, spiritual connection that happens. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

Based on this statement, it appears that Mr. Everett is not concerned about phrasing, intonation, vowel shape, tone, balance or rhythmic accuracy. Instead, he values that people are singing together, rather than that they are singing well: this strongly speaks to the Aesthetic B approach in Chapel singing. This perspective was taken by each of the faculty and administrators I spoke with at both schools.

SLS: Student and Faculty Feedback Is Focused on Participation, Not Singing Quality. At SLS Chapel, the kind of feedback that students might receive after singing was described by Ms. Campbell (SLS): "Everyone traipses into Chapel, and you sing the first verse, and then the Headmaster or someone will say 'well, that wasn't very exciting, let's do it again.' " Participants confirmed that feedback given to the group was only ever concerned with the level of enthusiasm, not with musical or artistic concerns.

In a typical Aesthetic A-type choir rehearsal, the conductor or song leader gives the group regular feedback to help improve some aspect of the quality of singing or musicianship (Pascale, 2005). I was interested in the nature of the feedback given by the song leader to the whole school in Chapel during the singing sessions, as the type of feedback would reflect the leader's aesthetic (A or B). However, who the "leader" was, was not always clear from the participants' descriptions. Unlike a typical Aesthetic A choir, in Chapel, no one actually conducts the singing. Instead (as explained in the

Chapter 4), students are told the name of the song, are asked to stand, and the instrumental accompaniment (piano or organ, typically) begins, alerting everyone when it is time to sing. So who would be the person who might be in a position to give the group feedback? I asked the question directly.

At SLS, it is clear that Dave Robertson, the Head of School from 1993 until he retired in 2018 served as the leader of communal singing at SLS. While he did not "conduct," he was positioned at the front of the Chapel, would model "hearty" singing, and from time to time, and would speak to the community about their singing. The nature of his feedback was solely about participation and enthusiasm, rather than about quality of singing or musicianship. Ms. Fields explained this:

> Dave (Robertson) at that time was definitely the driving force behind it. He would do things like stop them if he didn't think they were singing particularly well, or nicely. He's not a particularly musical guy himself and he'll tell you that himself. But he knew when they were under-doing it and just kind of going through the motions of "blah blah blah". And he would stop and say: "we're going to do that again, and we're going to do it with more gusto." And for him, you know, gusto and loud volume was better. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

After Robertson's retirement, this leadership role fell to the "Rev," the school Chaplain. Alison (SLS) described the kind of feedback one might hear, now that the "Rev" was in charge of Chapel:

> Usually, in our chapel services, the Rev., Mr. Holland runs it, and like: "OK, now we're going to do this, now we're going to do this" — he kind of oversees

> everything. So then sometimes after a hymn he'll be like: “wow, like that was really, like, powerful” [said in a slightly sarcastic tone], like, you know, like just make a comment. But it's not like: “Don't do that, that's too violent, like we don't want that kind of stuff,” so it's just kind of like, “Oh, OK, you know” But he doesn't say “that was too loud.” (Alison, SLS)

As observed by Alison (SLS) above, occasionally the singing at SLS gets loud and boisterous: too loud, possibly, from an Aesthetic A perspective. It appears, however, that volume is encouraged, nevertheless. Alison (SLS) observed:

> I have seen a couple of times where it gets kind of like, “OK, we know that you're proud of your house, like, calm down a bit,” you know, but most of the time it's more of a positive reaction. . . And I know some people do [care about the singing quality], but a lot of people are like, “Yay! The boys are singing!” [clapping], “they're giving their all!” (Alison, SLS)

In interviews, I asked probing questions to gather a sense of whether good, high quality, singing, as encapsulated by an Aesthetic A approach, was encouraged, taught, or expected. A typical example of this questioning:

> Interviewer: Is there any effort by anyone running it to make the kids sing well?
>
> Ms. Campbell (SLS): Well, every so often, if we haven't been, you know, she [the music teacher] might say “just to go over this hymn, you take a breath here, let's all try that” or if she's introducing a new hymn or something like that, new to the kids, she'll just go through it line by line.
>
> Interviewer: But there's no attempt then by whoever is leading it to - educate

> about tone or breathing?
>
> Ms. Campbell (SLS): Not too much. I mean, just as I say, it's more with the new [songs], you take a breath here and say that, but generally there's not really too much instruction with that.

The music director at SLS was one of my participants. During Chapel, from time to time she is asked to stand up at the front to teach a new hymn. I wondered whether at these times she also attempted to help students with their singing technique. She explained that the extent of her efforts was to try, often unsuccessfully, to keep students from breathing in the middle of a phrase. The following statement identifies her recognition that as a music teacher, her Aesthetic A goals did not align with the community's, including the Head of School's Aesthetic B priorities:

> I guess the goal of it is not - in anybody's mind but mine - the goal is never to sing it perfectly, and have good singing technique. It seems like everybody else's goal is just that community building camaraderie of singing together. It could be a bit frustrating, though, at times for [myself as] a singer. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

This statement echoes Dykema's (1931) observation that "to the Principal, the chorus (i.e., whole-school singing) exists primarily for its social values; to the music teacher, it exists primarily for its musical values. Although these two conceptions are not necessarily in conflict, they sometimes tend to become so" (p. 66). The SLS music director, in the context of Chapel singing at SLS, is aware of this, and does not push her agenda, in recognition that the Aesthetic B goals of communal singing need to take priority.

Alison (SLS) had been in the school choir and had taken vocal lessons at school and had an understanding of the differences between feedback based on participation and feedback based on musical priorities. She explained that some of the students do not have well-developed vocal technique, but nevertheless, as long as they sing loudly, they receive positive feedback from the Chapel leaders.

At SLS, feedback also comes from the students themselves. For example, Ben, an SLS student leader described his approach to teaching new students their house hymn:

> We want to make sure the kids know it [the song] and they know that it's their song and that they should feel pride when singing it. And normally they do. They understand that, themselves, after being here for a couple of months. But, yeah, we're not we're not trying to — like, we want everyone to sound good, but we're not trying to single out a kid, like: "you're screeching too much," right? "You've got to be lower." Like, we just encourage kids to sing loud and proud, but just not to screech it in Chapel. (Ben, SLS)

The priority is on singing "loud and proud," while improving vocal technique is limited to "just not screeching it," again points to the priorities of Chapel singing aligning with Pascale's Aesthetic B.

LCS: Feedback Is Focused on Participation, Not Singing Quality. Similar to SLS, at LCS, the only critique of the singing quality that I ever heard from participants was that from time to time, the singing was not enthusiastic enough. I heard no reports that students were given corrections to help them achieve an Aesthetic A style result. Communal singing at LCS is not conducted, but rather, accompanied, typically by Syd

Birrell. As I explain in the next section of this chapter, Syd's approach is intentionally designed, first and foremost, to improve participation.

No Music Notation, No Tutelage in Note-Reading

> I just remember, too, like it took me - at least, I would say, probably a year, a year and a half, to get enough sort of familiarity with the tune and the words. And obviously you have the hymnbook [words only], but, you know, you're just trying to listen and to learn the different notes. So, I think there is another inherent challenge in and of itself (which is) teaching hundreds of people a song who don't read music. (Breanna, SLS)

Aesthetic A approaches to singing typically involve the use of music notation, with an emphasis on teaching and learning note-reading (Pascale, 2005). Music notation is not used in Chapel singing at either SLS or LCS. At LCS, words are projected onto a screen at the front of Chapel; at SLS, participants use a words-only hymn-book. Students learn to sing the songs primarily by rote, or simply by listening and mimicking, suggesting that in this way, communal singing practices at SLS and LCS align with Pascale's aesthetic B approach.

Minimal Harmonies in Chapel Singing

> Interviewer: Do you do any harmony [in Chapel singing]?
>
> Matthew (SLS): No, no. My God, if we tried! [Laughs] We tried doing that once, and it was really, really awful. [Laughs more.] Like, I can't express to you how amazing it would be if we were able to have that happen, and have it work, but, it's just so difficult to try and orchestrate that. . . But if I think the fact that we all

> do sing just the melody . . . is fine. I think it doesn't make a difference, in my experience of what I share with those people, and in our opportunities that we are coming together and singing as a school.

Matthew's (SLS) description implies that he believes that singing in harmony is not necessary to achieve the goal of community building. Community building, according to him, is the primary aim of Chapel singing. According to Pascale (2005), "the purpose of the gathering . . . in Aesthetic B, is not to reinforce musical skills but to build community and simply experience the joy of singing together" (p. 171). Matthew's statement seems to align Chapel singing at SLS with Pascale's Aesthetic B.

I asked an LCS student whether any harmonic part-singing took place at the LCS Chapel. He was initially unsure of what I meant:

> Interviewer: And does anybody sing in harmony?
>
> Travis (LCS): Uh — yeah! [Long pause]. What do you mean?
>
> Interviewer: Um, so there's the tune, like um, so you sing the tune, but somebody's singing a different part that kind of goes . . .
>
> Travis (LCS): Yeah, we have songs – Sometimes one of these teachers stand up and they're like, right, we're singing this — you gotta sing this — you guys sing this part – like, one side of the chapel, the other side of the chapel. So they would sing, people would sing other parts and we would try to get them at the same time. They get pretty creative with trying to mix people up, in the sense of harmonies and stuff.

I interpret this description to mean that some of the songs at LCS are sung in rounds, or

as partner-songs. This type of harmonizing is easily accessible for singers without extensive choral or music training, and doesn't require the ability to read western classical music notation. Similarly, at SLS, Chapel singing occasionally includes partner songs and rounds. The Music Director at SLS described one of these:

> It's like a round. There's an "A-lle-lu-ia" that goes over top. We teach them both sections. We'll have like, this half of the room sing the Alleluia part while the other half sings the seek ye first [part], and we'll switch, and then we'll do boys and girls, go juniors and seniors. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

The use of partner-songs, rounds, and descants is typically recommended for developing choirs, as harmonies are considered to be more advanced, requiring a higher skill level (e.g., Chosky, 1974; Smith & Staloff, 2013). As such, the choice of these modes of harmonizing aligns with Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B approach, as it is accessible to all levels of singers.

The Existence of a Separate School Choir

According to Pascale (2005), both approaches, Aesthetics A and B, can co-exist within a school. This appears to be the case at both LCS and SLS: both schools have a school choir offered as a co-curricular activity in which students can choose (or choose not) to participate. Choir at LCS and SLS, like at most secondary schools, follows an Aesthetic A approach: The choir meets regularly to rehearse primarily Western style music and these pieces are typically performed at a later date for an audience. Students in choir learn to read from music notation, sing in multi-part harmony, and strive to reach Aesthetic A goals of good vocal tone, intonation, and musicality. The choir director

conducts the group and provides feedback to help the students reach these goals. At LCS, in addition to Concert Choir there is a Rock Choir, where students learn to sing contemporary pop and rock pieces. Like Concert Choir, this group rehearses on particular pieces of repertoire for extended periods of time in order to polish and prepare for performance.

At both LCS and SLS, the choirs occasionally perform for the rest of the school community at Chapel, demonstrating skills learned over months of preparation. The fluid way that an Aesthetic A performance by the choir in Chapel is then followed by an Aesthetic B style of communal singing by the entire school community realizes Pascale's (2005) vision of schools' accommodating both aesthetics.

Are You a Singer?

> Again, that camp-like philosophy, like it's very much like "I don't care, I don't have to be a good singer, I can sing. Let's just do this together." (Duncan, LCS)

One of the key points of Pascale's (2005) thesis is that in Aesthetic A environments, a dichotomy between *singers* and *non-singers* develops. According to Pascale (2005), within an Aesthetic A context, individuals identify themselves, and identify others, as either a singer or a non-singer, and in so doing, place limits on their, and others' potential. In contrast, in Aesthetic B environments, the singer / non-singer dichotomy is irrelevant. Everyone sings, because there is no such a thing as a non-singer (Pascale, 2005).

I was curious to learn whether this aspect of Pascale's Aesthetic B was evident at the schools in my study. For this reason, I purposefully asked participants "Are you a

singer?" (or, "Do you consider yourself to be a singer?") For those participants who had entered the school with previous choral singing experience, or who were members of the school choir, the question was moot, for example: "I was always a singer. I came into Lakefield as a strong choral singer and a strong solo singer" (Duncan, LCS). However, intriguing responses came from those participants who were not involved in music or singing outside of Chapel singing. For example, Travis (LCS) made a clear distinction between students who were, as he described, "musically talented" and those who were not: "Lakefield has a lot of musically talented students, and a lot of musically talented teachers as well" (Travis, LCS). To me, this suggested a singer/non singer dichotomy, so I probed further:

> Interviewer: The way you mentioned all these musically talented singers, and musically talented teachers – I have a question about kids who are not musically talented . . . how would you identify yourself? Are you a singer?
>
> Travis (LCS): Like, I would describe myself as "musically excited." So, I don't think I'm musically talented, but I love, like, I love, love music. So, whenever they do play these [songs], I love to sing along, I usually always do, unless it's been, like, a rough morning or something, but I always, I always did sing the songs . . . I wouldn't get up and join the choir, I wouldn't get up and sing in front of the school, but for me personally, I will join in and sing with the community . . . So yeah, I wouldn't call myself, like, Lakefield's top singer, but I definitely think that I am a person that enjoys singing in chapel.

This response seems to conflate the idea of being a "good" singer with being "a singer."

Another LCS student, in response to the question “are you a singer” replied: “I have a terrible voice, I am not a singer, but I love singing, and given the opportunity, I will gladly do it” (Denis, LCS). At SLS, a similar response came from Ben (SLS), who did not identify himself as a “singer,” but was clearly enthusiastic about singing within the Chapel context.

> Interviewer: Can you tell me: do you do music outside of the whole school singing?
>
> Ben (SLS): No, not really. I helped my buddy out with Rock Band every now and again and I'll sing for him when he doesn't have his singer. But outside of that, no, not really. Not much of a singer.
>
> Interviewer: So if I were to ask you: do you consider yourself a singer?
>
> Ben (SLS): No. God, no. No, no, I'm not - I am not a singer. It’s quite painful for my friend when I have to sing, but someone has to keep the tempo and what-not. So that's me.
>
> Interviewer: So when everybody's singing well together in Chapel though — you don't have a problem with that?
>
> Ben (SLS): No, no I don’t. My voice is actually really raspy right now or I don't know what it sounds like over the mic, but because we were practicing our house hymn, and we practiced it, and I just belted it at the top of my lungs for the past couple of days and kind of lost my voice.

Ben, despite his claim that he is “not a singer” nevertheless sings willingly in communal settings, and in fact, sings so much that on this occasion, lost his voice. These responses

seem to indicate that some students who do not self-identify as singers nevertheless enjoy singing, and will sing, in a communal singing context. This does not align with Pascale's (2005) theory, which would predict that in a community that takes an Aesthetic B approach to singing, everyone in the community would either identify as a singer, or would not distinguish between singers and non-singers. However, I suspect that these participants interpreted the question "are you a singer" as meaning "as you a good singer," which in Pascale's (2005) framework, are not equivalent concepts. The fact that participants who do not think they are good singers, nevertheless willingly engage in and enjoy communal singing, underscores the extent to which the practice of Chapel singing exemplifies an Aesthetic B approach.

Pascale's (2005) claim that within an Aesthetic B context, the singer / non-singer dichotomy disappears, may be based on a conceptual language usage that differs from that used by my participants. Pascale describes a non-singer as someone who shies completely away from singing "to the point of running from the room at the mere suggestion that they might be asked to participate in singing" (p. 166); on the other hand, she describes a singer as someone who experiences singing as an enjoyable activity, and is willing to participate. According to these descriptions, all of the participants in my study do identify as "singers," despite their claims that they are not, because they willingly sing and enjoy singing with their community in Chapel.

Pascale's Aesthetic B Gives Access for Everyone to Sing. As I considered the answers, described above, to the question "Are you a singer?" I realized that the students who identified themselves as non-singers, but who nevertheless described a strong

affinity for communal singing, might never have had the opportunity to experience making music in school if it were not for their schools' practice of singing in Chapel. In most secondary schools in North America, students' participation in school music is through elective courses or extra-curricular music ensembles, such as band, choir or orchestra. Furthermore, many of these opportunities require auditioning, which puts an additional barrier to participation in place. Because of the elective nature of music-making, students can go through high school without participating in school music-making at all. At both LCS and SLS, however, Chapel attendance is mandatory; as a result, every student experiences communal singing.

Travis (LCS), Denis (LCS), and Ben (SLS) all explained to me that their priority in high school was sports: The scheduling conflicts between athletics and music made it unlikely that they would ever join the choir or take a music class. And yet, through engaging in Chapel singing, all three had discovered a love of singing. In this way, the broad reach of their schools' Aesthetic B approach to Chapel singing has created an opportunity for students who might otherwise never have had the chance to experience it.

Summary

In many ways, whole-school communal singing at LCS and SLS exemplifies the approach to singing that Pascale (2005) described as Aesthetic B. While Pascale (2002) provided a description of what Aesthetic B might look like in action in a primary classroom, my research presents an illustration of an Aesthetic B approach at the secondary school level: A whole school communal singing practice where feedback focuses on participation and energy level, where music notation is not used, where the

songs are sung in unison or accessible canons or partner songs, and where an Aesthetic A approach can be taken in a separate school choir program. Pascale (2005) explained that embracing Aesthetic B opens "the possibility of creating a school community where everyone sings and everyone values singing" (p. 172). This appears to be a characteristic of whole school singing at both LCS and SLS.

Theme Five: It Doesn't Happen on Its Own

> Honestly, you can't just go in there and say, "OK, let's turn to number 200 and we're going to learn that one today." This is just not possible. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

Every adult participant in this study confirmed that due to natural adolescent self-consciousness, successful whole-school singing at the high school level does not naturally occur without extensive interventions. For example, right at the beginning of his interview, Mr. Thibodeau (LCS) explained: "Teenagers are teenagers, you know, and I think they come to that sort of space, with an incredible amount of doubt and not really wanting to be part of that entire thing." Related to this, Mr. Everett, another long-time LCS faculty explained to me that in Western society, singing together is simply not a cultural norm:

> It's a dearth of singing in our culture in North America. I walked on the Camino Santiago a couple of years ago with a bunch of young Spanish kids, not religious kids. They're all smoking pot and they're all just kind of normal young adults. And they just sang all the time, you know, and just singing whatever traditional Spanish songs, The Doors, whatever. But one of them would just burst into song as you're walking along and the rest would start singing . . . we don't have that in

> our culture. We don't have that kind of natural tendency to express ourselves in song, here. We listen to music — we're such consumers in this culture. And music is just another consumer item for us. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

As Mr. Everett described, the non-singing culture in North American society impedes the success of communal singing practices: Adolescents entering a school community that engages in a counter-cultural activity like communal singing will not necessarily participate. Whole school singing in North America just doesn't happen on its own, whereas, in Mr. Everett's opinion, it might, in a school in a country like Spain, where singing may be a generally accepted cultural norm.

The theme of "self-consciousness," discussed earlier in the section on participation rates, is important here. Natural adolescent self-consciousness can be a tremendous barrier to teenagers' engagement in communal singing. All of the student interviewees referenced this concept. They either remembered the feeling of being vulnerable when they started school, or they recognized that some of their peers feel self-conscious, at first, singing during Chapel. For example: "I'm just this squeaky little guy, right? So it was a little uncomfortable at first to sing with all these people" Ben (SLS).

All of the participants (adults and students) reported that this feeling of self-consciousness dissipates over the years, the result of being surrounded by older peers singing out and a growing confidence in one's own voice. It may be that once the practice is initiated, and a singing culture in the school has been developed, incoming students will more easily embrace the practice as they can be immersed in a large cohort of older students embodying the practice. But how does it start, and how is it sustained? How do

you get a large group of teenagers to get past their discomfort, self-consciousness and uncertainty, to let their guard down, and sing?

It Doesn't Happen on Its Own, So How Does it Happen?

> It's weirder if you don't sing, than if you do sing, because everyone's like, "yeah, it's the normal," like, "why aren't you singing?" (Alisons, SLS)
>
> Whereas with us it'd be more surprising if no one sang. (Logan, LCS)

From participants' comments such as those above, at both LCS and SLS, a culture of singing has been created. At both schools, it became evident to me from interviews with the research participants that one faculty member was primarily responsible: Syd Birrell, the organist at LCS, and Dave Robertson, the Head of School from 1993 to 2018 (now retired) at SLS. Research participants repeatedly referred me to these individuals, and I was fortunate enough to be able to include them as interviewees. Based on data primarily from my interviews with Syd Birrell and Dave Robertson, as well as with the other participants, it emerged that Syd Birrell and Dave Robertson had intentionally, over the course of many years, systematically and purposefully laid the foundation for a pro-singing culture within their schools. I refer to these individuals as *cultural leaders,* as their individual impact on the culture of singing at their schools has been so significant.

Cultural Leader at LCS: Syd Birrell

In my interviews at LCS, the person who was most often credited with creating a successful communal singing culture was Syd Birrell, the long-time organist at the school. Syd has accompanied (on organ and/or piano) Chapel singing at LCS for 36 years, and has personally taken on the responsibility for instilling in LCS students a love

for communal singing:

> But most of all, I would make sure by the end of Sing-with-Syd, they're leaving Chapel, they don't want to stop singing, they just keep singing all the way to their classroom for first period. And so that's what I do. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

Until 2018, in addition to accompanying regular chapel services, Birrell led a weekly Chapel session called Sing-with-Syd. Syd Birrell dedicated these sessions to teaching repertoire and raising students' enthusiasm for singing. Although regular Sing-with-Syd sessions were about 40 minutes every Friday, Syd would often also lead within the regular Chapel services. Duncan, an LCS graduate explained to me that "any time Syd was leading Chapel would really be Sing-with-Syd," and that even during a regular Chapel, Syd might pop out and "do his Sing-with-Syd" routine to teach a new song or to lead the communal singing.

> Like, if Syd's up there, you know . . .when Syd's on, it just kind of lives in its own bubble, whether it's one hymn during a very serious chapel or whether he's running the entire program for the day. (Duncan, LCS)

Essentially, Chapel singing at LCS is equated, in most of the participants' conception, with Sing-with-Syd. The other students' usage of the term Sing-with-Syd seemed to confirm this.

Syd Birrell's impact on the success of communal singing at LCS was mentioned by almost all of the LCS participants. For example, Mr. Thibodeau described Syd as "a pretty special kind of guy" who has helped students to enjoy singing, especially encouraging them to sing songs they would not traditionally sing of their own accord.

From the LCS interview data, it clearly emerged that Syd, through his Sing-with-Syd program, exemplified the role of cultural leader in his creation of a pro-singing environment in Chapel at LCS. Syd explained his purpose to me:

> If I could back up, and say what I think I'm doing here. No one has ever given me a mandate. So, I kind of figured out: they want teenagers to sing. And OK, next step: teenagers do not sing when there are adults around. That's against their belief. So, somehow I have to create an environment where singing is fun, and singing is really exciting, and they can belt it out. So, over the years, I think I was allowed a lot of leniency, and could do a number of things, because I got them singing. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

LCS interviewees consistently corroborated this claim that Syd Birrell "got them singing." In addition to participants' statements, Syd shared with me the feedback he himself has received from students:

> Just not too long ago, I just handed out stickies and said "What is Sing-With-Syd - what is it?" And everyone was just saying all these things [Syd reads off the sticky notes] like "you bring joy", "It's such an amazing tradition", "sense of community," "a great way to start the day," "It makes me happy," "makes the school a better place," "makes it happy and friendly." Just ask them to jot down things: "it makes my day better," "Starts the day off in the right way," I mean, I could read you a whole bunch more of those things. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

From this, and from consistent evidence from the interview data, it seems that students enjoyed Syd's sessions. Sing-with-Syd was enormously popular, and the sessions

contributed to students' happiness and well-being.

Unconventional Activities. A defining characteristic of Syd's leadership style was the unpredictable nature of the sessions, coupled with unconventional activities. Syd explained to me: "So, Sing-With-Syd is very unorthodox, as you probably would have gathered, and I do a lot of things that are off the wall." The students I spoke to seemed to delight in Syd's "off the wall" approaches. Every LCS student participant mentioned the fact that Syd brought a dozen doughnuts to every Sing-with-Syd, and gave them out as prizes. To illustrate the kind of "unconventional activities" that Syd employed, some examples:

- Syd would ask trivia questions, and give out a doughnut to whomever first answered correctly. For example, one LCS student participant described the time Syd awarded a doughnut for spelling *antidisestablishmentarianism.*
- Syd made up fun, silly songs for students to sing; but always, Syd explained to me, with some "learning" attached. One example that Syd described to me: Syd wrote a ditty to address a common, but unfortunate peccadillo of peppering speech with "um." The lyrics to the song are: "You better not "um," you better not "um", 'cause Syd don't like it when you um." Syd then asked for a volunteer to stand up in front of the assembly and talk for 60 seconds on a neutral topic, such as "Why I love LCS," without once saying "um." The volunteer inevitably said "um," at which point there was an "uproar," and the entire school joined in singing: "You better not um, you better not um, cause Syd don't like it when you um."

- This next example is best described in Syd's words:

  Like, I'll bring in my parents' Borneo poison dart spear that they bought from a head- hunter, and it's like eight feet long, with a really razor sharp spearhead, but it's hollow, and I blow up balloons, and we'll sharpen some pencils, and you blow a pencil and try and - 50 feet away - pop a balloon with a pencil. So that's a good example - that's just the sort of whacko thing I might do to change the mood. (Syd Birell, LCS)

- Syd taught camp songs with kinetic involvement, such as "There Ain't No Flies on Us." This song was mentioned by every LCS student participant as a great favorite. Travis (LCS) explained in detail that one side of the chapel sings a refrain, then the other side of the chapel tries to "out-sing" the first group while standing up on the chairs, or getting up onto the backs of their friends, and so on.

These "unorthodox" methods of raising energy, engaging students' interest, and encouraging participation in the singing, have, according to Syd, raised eyebrows amongst the school's administrators. However, Syd's methods apparently work: based on feedback from student, alumni and faculty participants, his unconventional approach has resulted in student buy-in to communal singing.

Boisterous Activity.

> You wouldn't leave a Sing-with-Syd chapel without having that level of communal energy raised. (Duncan, LCS)

Syd explained that his primary goal was to get kids singing; not singing well, in terms of vocal technique or other Aesthetic A-type criteria, but singing "out," that is, with

confidence and joy. The kinds of boisterous activities described above were, Syd explained, designed to get students' energy up, their engagement raised, their voices going, and their self-consciousness and inhibitions weakened, so that they would be primed to engage in group singing. Syd described how this kind of preparation works to engage adolescents in singing:

> So, someone in higher up [an administrator] has asked for a certain song. And, I know it's a bit of a dog, and it's not really going to appeal to them. . . .like: "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." Beautiful, gorgeous, great. But not exactly teen. That type of thing. It's good. It's good — and it'll fail. So, [after the students have sung the song, but unenthusiastically] I'd say: "No OK, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop." I'll just make a big crash on the organ: stop. And we'll get out there, and I say, "OK, so we need to get things moving here" and, we'll do a camp chant. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

At this point, he explained to me, Syd had the students sing "There ain't no flies on us," starting with the right side of the chapel; then the students on the left side would try to out-sing the first group. Then the right side would stand up and sing louder; followed by the left side, now standing on their chairs:

> . . . and they're absolutely belting it out. Then the other side shouting . . . [big hand gestures] . . . And then, [after that intervention] they will sing "Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace" . . . They did it, and they did it enthusiastically. And they left Chapel on Friday morning just on cloud nine. And it was a really positive thing. (Syd Birrell)

Syd Birrell did not reference sources of inspiration for his techniques. Instead, I suspect that decades of directing choirs and working with adolescents has given him an intuitive sense for what works best. Possibly through trial-and-error, Syd has learned that boisterous activity and kinetic involvement can be effective in engaging otherwise non-participating adolescents in singing.

Another faculty participant described Syd's strategy of employing kinetic involvement in order to engage all kinds of students:

> We do have kids with ADD and ADHD here, and when they can get more kinetic and they're singing, they like that. They need to bring more of their body and soul into it, because for some of us, singing's not just some intellectual exercise, right? It can be really kinetic. So, we try to allow them to do that as much as possible. So, yes, we get the clapping and banging and stuff. So — and there's a lot of . . . like, they would be arm-in-arm. And especially with things like "Sweet Caroline," arm-in-arm, like, arm-over-shoulders, rocking back and forth. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

Student participants noted that punctuating songs with banging and clapping is particularly engaging. For example, participants mentioned the "clap-clap clap-clap" during "Shine, Jesus Shine," and the "pom pom pom" during "Sweet Caroline," for example:

> And there's also this very part, very exciting part where it goes "Sweet Caroline, pom pom pom." And at that point, everyone in unison would clap their hands, or hit the chairs. So I'd sort of go along with it, and I don't know, that really

> stuck with me, and it's something that just makes me really like the song "Sweet Caroline." (Denis, LCS)

Other kinetic actions mentioned by student participants included standing up onto the chairs, fist pumping at certain points in the songs, and stamping feet. This activity is similar to the "stomping and banging" described by Kent (2014) in an investigation of group singing in Jewish summer camps. Kent explained that the kinesthetic actions combined with song promoted a fully embodied experience, which forged a collective cultural identity among the campers. I would argue that this description may fit the phenomena of kinesthetic actions that accompany communal singing at LCS.

Repertoire Choice. Syd's choice of repertoire was carefully and intentionally chosen to increase students' participation and engagement. He chose popular songs both as a means to then encourage students to sing the old traditional hymns, and also to raise general enthusiasm. Duncan, an LCS alum observed:

> Now, what Syd does also, which I think is very strong, is he mixes in popular music very tastefully, and he — what's been huge over the last couple of years is "Let It Go" from *Frozen*. Like, that would be a real energy pick-me-up thing, that even if you're a curmudgeonly grade 11 boy, and you have no interest in singing, you can't help yourself when you're surrounded by three hundred and fifty people singing "Let It Go." It just buoys everything up. (Duncan, LCS)

Mr. Everett, a long-time LCS faculty member, similarly understood and confirmed Syd's approach to repertoire selection. He explained that Syd

> . . . started bringing in some more secular options because we thought the gifts

> that came with singing a song we all like to sing together, versus the imposition of having to sing a song that no one wants to sing. Compromise the experience. So, you're better off finding that sweet balance between having the community sing, you know, energetic, uplifting, transcendent-bearing songs, versus making them sing and only 10 people are singing begrudgingly or whatever. So, yes, we try to find that balance. (Mr. Everett, LCS)

Repertoire from the "popular" genre that Syd Birrell has programmed for Sing-with-Syd sessions has included:

- Disney songs (e.g., "Let It Go" from *Frozen*; "How Far I'll Go" from *Moana*; "I Can't Wait to be King" from *The Lion King*);
- Beatles songs (e.g., "Here Comes the Sun"; "Hey Jude"; "Yellow Submarine");
- Classic pop songs (e.g., Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline"; Journey's "Don't Stop Believing");
- Country songs (e.g., Susan Aglukark's "O Siem"; John Denver's "Country Roads")
- Seasonal pop songs, such as Halloween-themed, or secular Christmas Carols (e.g., "All I Want For Christmas Is You");
- Modern worship songs (e.g., "Shine, Jesus Shine").

Besides the aforementioned "Flies on Us," two songs in particular stand out as being guaranteed spirit raisers at LCS are "Sweet Caroline" and "O Siem." Syd explained that he intentionally employed these songs to increase participation, either when the student body seemed low in energy, or to prepare them to sing another, less popular, song.

Every LCS student participant named “Sweet Caroline” as one of their personal favorite Chapel songs, and confirmed that it is a general favorite amongst the student body. The introduction of “Sweet Caroline” to the Chapel repertoire was Syd’s doing, according to Duncan, an LCS alum. This has become the song that students sing on the ice if they win an important hockey game or sing on the bus or around the campfire. “It's just become the unofficial anthem of the school” (Duncan, LCS). One LCS student described the banging on the front of the pews that accompanies this song: “we bang on the front of the pews in the chapel for “Sweet Caroline,” and then you'll be going back and forth against the opposite pews to see who can be louder” (Logan, LCS). “Sweet Caroline” is a song that has been adopted in other crowd singing contexts: It is the unofficial anthem of the Boston Red Sox, for example. The song is particularly suited to crowd singing, with musical characteristics, such as simple lyrics and melody, that encourage participation (Mihalka, 2015).

“O Siem” was another song that LCS student participants consistently mentioned as being particularly popular amongst the students. Asked which was his favourite song, Denis (LCS) replied:

> “O Siem,” because of the theme it gives, and everything, especially for me when I'm with my friends and everything, we're just singing at the top of our lungs, all together — and oh I miss them! Yeah, we’re all together, singing at the top of our lungs. (Denis, LCS)

O Siem was written by Susan Aglukark, an Inuk musician, and one of Canada’s most decorated recording artists. The title, O Siem, is from the Sk̲wx̲wú7mesh or Coast Salish

language for the joyful shouting when seeing friends or family. It is a powerful anthem with a strong beat, simple words and the repeating message “we are all family.” Again, this is one of the songs that Syd mentioned that he intentionally programmed when needing to raise the enthusiasm. He believes that subsequent songs were more successful after the students were “primed” to engage.

Syd’s Personality. Participant reports suggested that Syd’s personality is a factor in the success of communal singing at LCS. Student participants described his quirky, fun, idiosyncrasies with affection. Syd talked about this:

> You have to develop a relationship with the kids. You have to be even more outrageous than they are in one sense, because kids — they think they're pretty cool. So, if you can out-cool them, or do something even more outrageous, and they think, “OK,” I think that they like that, that's fun. Some people talk about it. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

Duncan, an LCS alum explained to me: “Syd is a larger than life character, super quirky and super endearing . . . Oh, yeah. He's an amazing person, the whole family. Pam too, his wife” (Duncan, LCS alum). All of the LCS students similarly spoke fondly of Syd.

There is more to Syd Birrell, however, than I have captured thus far. Syd described to me his connection with his son’s childhood cancer. He lost his son, aged 8, in 2001 to neuroblastoma. Syd told me that his life, and the life of his wife and surviving children, is defined by this loss. Their journey through the battle with cancer to ultimately losing their son James was documented in the book *Ya Can’t Let Cancer Ruin Your Day: The James Emails* (Birrell, 2006), a book I found to be both inspiring and heartbreaking.

After James' death, Syd and his family worked tirelessly, creating the James Fund for Neuroblastoma Research, and raised over $6,000,000 for cancer research. Ever since the loss of his son, Syd shares his story with the student body at a special Chapel session every September. As a result, he explained:

> The kids, they know that I'm not just a fun guy being stupid and being silly . . . So that is there as a backdrop. And so, when I'm having fun, they know I care. They know I've been through something. They know it's not just, I'm having a great life, and it's funny and all that. They know there's a real serious side. So I do have their respect, and things never get out of control at Sing-with-Syd. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

One of the student research participants confirmed this sense of connection to Syd, explaining that the students' relationship with Syd deepened their experience of communal singing:

> And then you become comfortable with Syd himself very early on in the year, as he does his James Fund Foundation. And he tells that story, which gives you another personal connection, which only makes Sing-with-Syd that much more special, because you feel like you're sharing that with him. (Logan, SLS)

Encouraging a large assemblage of adolescents to "buy in" to group singing is a challenge. However, Syd's eccentric, fun personality, his passion for music, and the way he has shared his personal story has gained students' respect and trust. It seems that this trust has helped Syd to break through adolescents' reticence to sing.

Educational Aspects. Syd had described his primary mandate as "we want teenagers to sing and make Chapel a really vibrant place" (Syd Birrell, LCS). However, Syd had secondary goals, including: teaching students the repertoire of traditional Anglican hymns that are connected to LCS's history, helping students to understand and appreciate these traditional songs, teaching students a little bit about music in general, and providing an education beyond music.

Teaching Students the Songs. Some of the traditional Anglican hymns that connect LCS to its past are "Jerusalem," "Land of Hope and Glory" and "I Feel the Winds of God Today." Unlike the popular songs that appear in LCS's Chapel repertoire (e.g., "Let It Go" from *Frozen*), these are songs that students would not likely already know from prior experience. These traditional hymns are also not as quick and easy for students to learn on their own, as the melody and texts are more complex than those of the more accessible LCS songs, such as "Sweet Caroline." Thus, at Sing-with-Syd sessions at the beginning of the school year, Syd has traditionally spent time teaching LCS's collection of Anglican hymns. These Sing-with-Syd sessions are especially helpful for students who are new to the school, and who are most likely encountering this repertoire for the first time.

Syd is also adamant that students understand the historic and cultural context of the Chapel repertoire. For example:

> Never will we sing a song like — if we're going to do 'Shine, Jesus, Shine," which is blatantly evangelical, then I don't want to just sing it out of the blue. I want to talk about Dublin after the mass IRA killings, where as a peace thing,

> they sang the thing. So, all of a sudden it's got a context, that means it's not just an Evangelical shout-out. I mean, we have Evangelicals in the school. I'm not knocking it, but it's very easy for things to be portrayed in an intolerant way if you're not careful. So, I do want to talk about these things . . . So, I will never ask them to sing something which doesn't have a powerful reason to be sung. . . . This "Shine, Jesus shine" [clap-clap]. They're making a lot of noise and it's really great. But I have set it up so that there is respect and there's an understanding, and no one in the room would feel embarrassed, or [say] we're picking on evangelicals or making them look stupid because we're singing that song so enthusiastically and aggressively. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

Similarly, Syd explained to me that the song "Jerusalem" is connected with the suffragette movement and was a marching song for Women for World Peace. When he taught "Jerusalem" in a Sing-with-Syd session, Syd made sure to explain this context, so that students understood the significance, meaning and cultural context of the song. This practice of explaining the songs' context to the singers is redolent of one of Whitla's (2019) recommendations for liberating congregational singing from colonialist practices.

Teaching Students About Music. In his interview, Duncan, an LCS alum, reflected on all the things he had learned about music during Sing-with-Syd sessions. For example:

> He [Syd] would play [the organ] with a camera on the organ or on the pedals, and he would live-stream video of the pedals while he was playing through a Bach toccata, so that people could really see what was going on and all four

> levels. It was beyond singing, this overall music appreciation [that Syd taught] was really strong. (Duncan, LCS)

I characterize Syd's teaching at these sessions as anecdotal rather than systematic and comprehensive: Syd's method was to introduce students to interesting and curious aspects of music that related to the songs they were singing, or to present to what he surmised would arouse students' curiosity. Syd's priority was to engage students: what he chose to teach was intended, first-and-foremost, to be interesting to students, rather than adhering to a predetermined music curriculum. Syd provided me with some examples, to illustrate the kind of "tidbits" he has shared during Sing-with-Syd sessions:

- That "Here Comes the Bride" was written by Wagner, a virulent anti-Semitic composer, and that alternative wedding music exists;
- How a pipe organ works;
- What a Tierce de Picardie is;
- J.S. Bach's fascination with the number 14.

Syd described the way he weaves such tidbits into the singing sessions as follows:

> OK, so now they're getting a little bit bored, and you pull out the next trick, and it might be Bach. "Here's a picture of J. S. Bach." But there's only one official picture of J. S. Bach. Count the buttons, and there's fourteen buttons on his waistcoat. And it's so it turns out that Bach had this thing, that if you alphabetize it, he's always into numbers and he never talks about it. But B is two, A is one, C is three, and H is eight. Add those up, you get fourteen. So, Bach has all this fourteen stuff hidden in his music, and this gets them all intrigued. Now we're

> ready to sing again. (Syd Birrell. LCS)

Peppering Sing-with-Syd sessions with these curiosities was one of Syd's methods for keeping students engaged, interested, and participating. In addition, he explained to me that knowing some of this music-related trivia might in some way, enrich students' lives. For example, "Someday when they're at a cocktail party, they can expound upon the Tierce de Picardie, and impress everyone" (Syd Birrell, LCS). However, according to him, Syd's primary goal was to "get kids singing" and to give them the experience of the joy that can come from singing all together.

Teaching Students About Life. Syd Birrell consistently found opportunities during his Sing-with-Syd sessions to teach students about the world beyond music: In this way, he tried to make what they were doing in Chapel relevant, connected, and meaningful. For example, Syd described to me that when he taught students about the Tierce de Picardie, a musical feature in one of the school hymns, he intentionally pulled in a life lesson:

> It's . . . not random [just to] be stupid. It is carefully [conceived and intentional… for example]: The Tierce de Picardie is . . . a lovely illustration of major, minor. Minor pieces going to end with the major chord. So, the sad piece ends happily. And so, we start off "major or minor? And you can't answer this question if you take music lessons. Happy or sad?" So, they get it. And someone who's never had music lessons is getting the right answer. OK, it's a sad, minor, happy major and all that stuff. OK, here's the end of a piece and it's "I See The Winds of God Today in E Minor." "Is this a Tierce de Picardie, or is it just regular? You tell

> me.”... And they get that: “Oh, so the sad song becomes happy.” Yes. “So Syd's sad story about James, becomes happy.” And life, you can overcome. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

My conversations with student participants confirmed that they learned, and enjoyed learning, from Syd Birrell during Sing-with-Syd. Along with the donut prizes, interesting ideas, anecdotal knowledge, and life lessons “sweetened the deal,” making them that much more engaged in communal singing than if Syd had simply directed them to sing.

Without Syd. Syd Birrell has been at LCS for 36 years. For the first 35 of those years, he engaged the student body in singing through his Sing-with-Syd sessions, as described above. I wanted to know how much of LCS’s passion for singing was the result of Syd’s influence. I asked an LCS alum this directly:

> Interviewer: How much is Sing-with-Syd, whether you want to call it Sing-with-Syd, or Syd’s leadership, how much of the success of this community singing is dependent on him, would you say?
>
> Duncan (LCS): I would say it's pretty big, I would say he has pretty big shoes to fill, if he were to be, you know, to disappear . . . in terms of this really popular, communal: “We're all going to sing ‘Let It Go,’ we're going to sing ‘Frosty the Snowman,’ and make it huge and ridiculous”: Syd is a lot of that. He is a kind of a joie-de-vivre guy, and a very big character. And he is - he just is special. So that is for sure a factor. (Duncan, LCS)

Interviews with student participants seemed to confirm Duncan’s point of view. When students spoke about communal singing at LCS, the conversation naturally led to talking

about Syd Birrell and Sing-With-Syd. It appears, then, that the success of communal singing at LCS hinges on Syd's efforts.

Aside from Syd's influence, however, there appeared to be another factor that sustains successful communal singing at LCS: enculturation, that is, the way that a positive attitude toward communal singing is passed down from older to younger students. Without Syd working his "magic" on a regular basis, it is possible — but by no means certain — that the spirited way in which Syd has led LCS students to sing might be preserved through enculturation. Logan (LCS) observed that the graduating class contributes leadership and modelling alongside Syd:

> At first it [communal singing] was a bit off-putting. I was like, why am I standing up in a room with 350 people, singing songs about an ancient city that doesn't pertain to me at all? And then it starts with Syd himself, and then it starts with the grads, and seeing the passion that they have for it. (Logan, LCS)

I prodded Logan further to consider the impact of Syd's influence:

> Interviewer: The Sing-with-Syds on Friday: Do they impact the singing that happens on the other days, like the fact that you've got this guy once a week boosting everybody up?
>
> Logan (LCS): I think people feel more comfortable singing on the days that aren't Syd's days.
>
> Interviewer: As a result of Syd's days?
>
> Logan (LCS): As a result of Syd taking charge and doing that, and making people feel good about it.

> Interviewer: So if the Sing-with-Syds on the Fridays were to stop happening, you might lose some momentum, you think, during the rest of the week?
>
> Logan (LCS): Definitely, because people — especially if they just stopped entirely, if Syd hadn't introduced it at the beginning of this year, if it hadn't been introduced at all, then you'd see a lot of the younger grades and newer students, they'd feel so much less comfortable with that one song where it's more of a serious tone, than they would if they have a Friday where they're singing songs that they recognize, songs that are fun or they can joke around with, and then also they'll learn "Jerusalem," they'll learn "Land of Hope and Glory," and they'll feel somewhat more comfortable when it comes time to sing that in a bit of a more official capacity.

Based on this exchange, and on similar comments made by other research participants, it appears that without Syd and his Sing-with-Syd sessions, the success of communal singing at LCS could be at risk.

Push-Back from the School Administration.

> . . . *but last year, Sing-with-Syd was cancelled.* (Syd Birrell)

Syd reported that some of the school administrators perceive his way of engaging the students in high-energy participatory activity as problematic. In Syd's view, the problem some administrators have with his approach is that "It's going against the culture of quiet, respectful, inner reflection of 'it's quiet time'" (Syd Birrell, LCS). The faculty that I interviewed did not share this perception: two of the three were highly supportive of Syd's work with the students. The third appeared to also be supportive, but was less

enthusiastic than the others. The push-back that Syd described appears to be coming from school administrators whom I did not interview for this research study.

The other faculty I did interview reported that the Head of School was supportive of communal singing at LCS; however, according to Syd, the middle-managers charged with overseeing Chapel activities have increasingly reduced the time allotted to Sing-with-Syd in favor of alternative activities, such as meditation and mindfulness training. The result is that Sing-with-Syd sessions have been curtailed over the last few years. Sing-with-Syd used to be 30-40 minutes every Friday. In 2018/19, according to Syd, this was reduced to 10-20 minutes. As of the beginning of the 2019/20 school year, there were no Sing-with-Syd sessions: Syd told me that he was asked only to provide accompaniment for Chapel. In March 2020, the Covid pandemic lock-down and implementation of remote-learning caused all in-person activities to halt, along with Chapel singing. Beginning in September 2020, Covid restrictions continued to render Chapel gathering, along with group singing, impossible.

Syd mentioned to me that there has been some investigation by the Head of School into the reasons why, during the 2019/20 school year, students had been reporting that they no longer enjoy Chapel. It may be that the drop in Chapel engagement is the result of the significant reduction in time for Sing-with-Syd sessions, and their ultimate cancellation. Whether or not LCS decides to reinstate Sing With Syd after Covid restrictions are lifted remains to be seen.

A Final Thought. I close this section with Syd's words:

> Singing when it happens well, really changes you and makes you feel good and that lasts for a lifetime. So these teenagers, unlike the teenagers in many other schools, understand how important group singing is, how it can lift your life, and send you on your way to class on Friday morning or whatever. And how much fun it can be. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

As a researcher, it has been an honor to get to know Syd, to read his book and to hear about his work through conversations with members of the LCS community. Thirty-five years of leading LCS students to learn to love singing is a significant accomplishment.

Cultural Leader at SLS: Dave Robertson

At SLS, successful communal singing has not always been the norm. Head of School from 1993 to 2018, Dave Robertson, described arriving at SLS 25 years ago in the role of Assistant Head of School, when the students were required to sing in Chapel, but sang with a lack of enthusiasm:

> Interviewer: So when you came in 25 years ago, was there not chapel singing at that time?
>
> Dave Robertson: There was, but it was pretty mediocre.

According to Dave, and to other faculty and alumni remembering the years during Dave's tenure, *mediocre* equated with a lack of enthusiasm, with a lack of gusto. Along with the mediocre singing was students' negative attitude toward Chapel:

> But really, as I talked to them — and one of the things I spent a lot of time in those early years was talking to kids — was they didn't get anything from it

> [Chapel]. And some of them didn't agree with it. Some of them resented it. (Dave Robertson, SLC)

And so, Dave explained to me, he realized that he needed to change the school culture.

At SLS, every faculty and alumni participant confirmed that the person who "got the singing going" was Dave Robertson. For example, Ms. Fields (SLS) described Dave Robertson as "the driving force behind it [communal singing]." Student participants, however, did not mention Robertson's influence on communal singing. Because Dave Robertson retired in 2018, the current students may not have witnessed, or been aware, of Dave Robertson's direct influence on communal singing at SLS, especially during the early years when Dave was creating the shift in the school's singing culture.

The current head of school at LCS is well-acquainted with Dave Robertson, and has visited SLS from time to time. She also acknowledged the profound impact of Robertson's leadership in singing at SLS. The LCS Head of School described to me a visit to SLS a number of years ago, when Dave was still headmaster. She reflected on a memory of sitting in the front row next to Robertson while the school was singing "Amazing Grace," and she thought they were "belting it out." But, she recalled, Robertson then stood up and said to the students "I know you can do better." The resulting singing was so powerful, that she was moved to tears. Even upon reflecting on this experience in the interview, the LCS Head of School said she would cry right then.

My curiosity was piqued. I was very interested in how, 25 years ago, Robertson went about changing the school's culture so that adolescents would come to love communal singing.

Robertson's Methods. Dave told me in his interview that when he first arrived at SLS, and observed the "mediocre" singing in Chapel, as well as a poor attitude towards Chapel in general, he asked a guiding question: "How can we make Chapel meaningful if we are going to require students to go to it?" And then, he explained:

> All else flowed from there. Because when you set yourself that question to begin with, then you say: "Well, OK, what we're doing is actually making it more about the gathering, the community gathering together to learn something, to feel something, to experience something." So it's more about the community, and less about any particular religious component. (Dave Robertson, SLS)

Dave explained to me that this line of thinking led him to come up with two "agenda items." First: to improve the quality of the messaging that was delivered in Chapel; second, to:

> . . . introduce them [the students] to the physical benefit of singing together, and experiencing communal singing, the shared — so that we're in this together, we're actually taking pride in it . . . [and learning] the value of the shared experience and joy of singing together. (Dave Robertson, SLS)

Once he had set these goals, Dave came up with a set of 10 tactics, which he generously shared with me.

(1) Competition Between the Houses. Dave knew that the students' house loyalties were very strong, so he noted that he "played unashamedly on their [the students'] competitiveness." At the beginning of his first year at SLS, Dave instructed the house directors to each select a hymn for the students in the house to memorize. Then, in

the early weeks of the school year, as soon as a particular house was ready, that group of students would sit together at the front of the Chapel, wearing their house t-shirts. At the appointed time, they would stand up, turn around to face the rest of the school, and sing the first verse of their house hymn. Dave set this up in a way that harnessed students' house pride, and "singing out" became a badge of honor. The rest of the school would then join in singing the remaining verses of the hymn. These house hymns then became the staple repertoire for the remainder of the year. Dave reported that this strategy worked very well to raise the general level of enthusiasm for singing in that initial year.

These house hymns have remained permanently attached to each house. The practice of re-introducing the house hymns at special house assemblies at the beginning of the year continues to occur, and students note that the houses continue to try to out-do each other in singing with "gusto." This idea of having the houses "own" a song, teaching it to the rest of the school and harnessing the power of house competition, is one that LCS is planning to adopt, according to both the LCS Head of School and the LCS Director of Spiritual Wellness and Diversity.

(2) Modelling. In order to demonstrate the concept of singing with vitality and vigor to the students, Dave Robertson asked some "charismatic and talented" individuals to model the desired behavior. When introducing a new hymn, he asked the Director of Music to sing the first verse on her own so that the students could "marvel at her voice and her talent . . . and marvel at the beauty of the hymn." In this way, Dave explained, they expanded the repertoire, as well as showed the students how beautiful singing could be. This modelling of beautiful singing is redolent of Pascale's Aesthetic A, and might be

considered to push against the other aspects of communal singing at SLS that seem to align with Aesthetic B.

(3) Sing-Squads. Dave recognized that some of the students lacked confidence when they sang. In order to develop their confidence, he created what he referred to as "mobile sing-squads." These "squads" consisted of a group of three or four staff and/or students whom Dave knew had (in Dave's words) "good, strong voices." He placed these squads at different spots in the chapel where he sensed there was a group of students who lacked confidence. Dave's direction to the students was:

> Just join in with them, just follow them, just follow their lead and try and harmonize with what they are doing, and hit the same key and the same notes as they are doing. You can do it. You can do this. (Dave Robertson, SLS)

According to Dave, three or four "good" singers, standing together, can have a very positive impact on the confidence of those around them. Dave reported that this worked extremely well, especially in the early years when he was establishing the singing culture.

(4) Give Them a Point of Reference. Dave described a strategy that had a particularly powerful effect: He led a school trip of 125 SLS students on a rugby tour to the United Kingdom, where the students had the opportunity to attend (as spectators) an international rugby match in Cardiff, Wales. Rugby games in Wales are famous for their crowd singing, and so the students were able to witness, first hand, the power of 60,000 people singing the very same songs that they sing in Chapel, such as "Calon Lan" and "Guide Me Oh Thou Great Jehovah." In Dave's words: "And it was a pretty special

feeling, and they brought that back to [SLS] Chapel. They had a point of reference, now, of the power of communal singing."

This strategy could be a challenge to implement for schools wishing to establish a communal singing practice, as overseas travel is costly. However, there may be other ways to immerse students in successful communal singing contexts. A possibility might be to bring a group of students to a school where communal singing is already well-established, in order to witness the phenomenon for themselves. This might provide that point of reference that Dave found so valuable in establishing a singing culture at SLS.

(5) Insist on "Gusto." Dave Robertson stood and sang at the front of the Chapel during communal singing and gave students feedback when the vitality of the singing wasn't up to his expectations. He admitted that he tried not to do this too often, but from time to time, if students were not singing with enthusiasm, he would make a comment to the school, such as:

> Really? We're going to leave this chapel this morning, feeling as flat, and as self-absorbed as we came into it? Or are we going to take the opportunity, the opportunity to rise to the standards that we've embraced and we've set for ourselves? There's the choice, people. Are we going to do the former, or the latter? I know you well enough to know that you're going to respond. So let's do the last verse of that last hymn again. Let's send us on our way with a little spring in our step. (Dave Robertson, SLS)

Dave reported that students responded "brilliantly" every time, suggesting that this strategy, used sparingly as Dave described, was successful in improving participation.

(6) Promote the School Choir. Dave made a point of promoting the school choir. When the Head of School sets the tone by esteeming and valuing the choir, Dave noted, choir membership tends to increase. In the context of Chapel, he sometimes asked the school choir to sing the first verse of the hymn and then had the rest of the school join in for subsequent verses. This had the effect of raising the profile of the choir and of providing a positive singing model for the rest of the school.

(7) Create a Catch-Phrase. "At Shawnigan, it's cool to sing." I heard three SLS student participants say this in their interview, although I'm not sure they realized that it had been originally coined by David Robertson, 25 years ago. In his initial years at SLS, Dave spoke directly to the students in Chapel explaining: "I'm going to have the audacity to tell you about how to be cool." Dave then he listed various ways students could be "cool," including "at Shawnigan, it's cool to sing." This catchphrase "stuck": Dave heard student leaders using it the following year when speaking to new students. Based on participants' comments, the catch-phrase does seem to have become something passed down from class-to-class, year after year. One faculty member observed: "Dave always said: 'It's cool to sing at Shawnigan.' Again, I'm not sure it's 'cool' . . . but there's an essence around the place that this is something that we do together*"* (Ms. Fields, SLS). The use of this catch-phrase seems to have had a significant influence on the development of a singing culture at SLS.

(8) Focus on The Feeling. Dave spoke eloquently and fervently about the necessity that Chapel be a transformative experience. He explained that students need to feel something during their time in Chapel, so that when they leave the building, they are

"ever - so - slightly - *changed."* He explained that he wanted students to always "leave chapel slightly different from when they arrived." This meant that the emotional response to Chapel activities, including the communal singing elements, was paramount. The challenge for those who orchestrate Chapel, he explained, is to ensure that students feel the emotion behind the songs they are singing. This requires appropriate framing, such as an explanation of the historic and cultural context of the hymns, like "Abide With Me," so that students can access the depth of feeling associated with these songs.

(9) Take Baby Steps. I asked Dave what advice he would give to a school leader wanting to start, from the beginning, the practice of whole-school communal singing at their school. His response was to first, take some "baby steps." Harkening back to point (8) above, he reminded me that the students "have to feel it, for it to work." Therefore, he advised, start with just one or two songs. He explained that it is important to keep coming back to these songs until the students feel confident and proud of it, and until they begin to attach feeling, significance and meaning to the songs. He pointed out that "it's better to become really good at one hymn, than to be mediocre at six." I believe that here, Dave's use of the descriptor "really good" refers to confident singing, full participation and familiarity, rather than to qualities inherent in an Aesthetic A approach.

(10) When a Lift Is Needed, Choose Repertoire That Will Be Successful. At SLS, at times when enthusiasm was lacking, Dave and the "Rev" (the Chaplain) would intentionally program one of the popular hymns in order to raise engagement. According to students, the hymns most likely to "raise the roof" are Lonsdale House's hymn ("How Great Thou Art"), because the boys of Lonsdale House are so committed to singing their

hymn loudly and proudly. As mentioned in the background section, at SLS, songs sung at Chapel are almost always Anglican hymns from the SLS hymnbook. However, to raise spirits, there is an occasional aberration. The music teacher at SLS explained to me that last year, on a very grey day, when the students were "down in the dumps," she got up and taught them a children's song, called "Baby Shark." She said that they "loved it, they went nuts." This tactic mirrors Syd Birrell's approach to repertoire selection at LCS, as described in the previous section: get the energy up first with songs that are popular, then students will be primed to engage in songs that are less immediately favorites.

I interviewed Dave after I had completed all my other SLS interviews; however, aspects of these "tactics" had already been mentioned by the student participants. This suggests that their effectiveness was sustained, even after Dave retired. For example, competition between the houses for singing "well" (that is, loudly, with gusto) continues to contribute to the level of enthusiasm according to the students I interviewed. For example, Ben (SLS), who is in Duxbury House, commented on Lonsdale House's singing:

> I'd have to agree that Lonsdale's did do really well last year with their singing. And I think what they did is they practiced it a lot outside of Chapel, and they made sure the boys understood the significance of singing that song. But with me in grade 12, and some of the other boys in grade 12, I'm going to have to assume that Duxbury will be one of the leaders this year. (Ben, SLS)

At the time of our interview (summer, 2020), Ben did not realize that Covid-19 restrictions would curtail singing activities in the coming year. Nevertheless, his

commitment to his house's singing was evident. He explained to me how the student leaders lead the house-hymn practices: running around the house, gathering up the students, testing the new students on the song, assigning push-ups or running if they don't know the lyrics; all this in an effort to "look good in front of the school" (Ben, SLS). This level of student ownership over the singing of house hymns demonstrates the effect of Dave's strategy of attaching hymns to the houses, and of harnessing the spirit of house competition. Similarly, participants referred to the other tactics throughout their interviews, demonstrating that Dave's ten strategies are still being used to foster communal singing at SLS.

Without Dave. Similar to the discussion earlier about Syd Birrell's impact on communal singing at LCS and the possible effects of cancelling of Sing-with-Syd, David Robertson's retirement in 2018 provided an opportunity to consider what happens to communal singing when a cultural leader leaves the community. I followed up with interview questions designed to help understand who is leading Chapel now at SLS, and what has been the impact of this personnel change on communal singing.

At SLS, Chapel continues to be overseen, as it was while Dave was head of school, by the school chaplain. The director of music continues to teach new songs, when the occasion arises, as she did during Dave's tenure. I asked her if anyone else takes on this role of encouraging the students to sing "with gusto," now that Dave has retired. Ms. Fields explained that the current head of school is very different from Dave, as he has a less directive style, and has not taken on the role of encouraging students to "sing out." The Chaplain has given feedback to the students a couple of times since Dave left,

“almost,” she described, “like he wants to carry that through.” However, she explained that the Chaplain is not as strict as Dave was, and is much more gentle; as a result, she admitted: “we're losing a little bit, I'm going to be honest, we're losing a little bit of the — the rigour, I guess, for lack of a better word, with Dave gone.”

My sense is that Dave’s leadership was indispensable in getting “the ball rolling” 25 years ago. However, although Ms. Fields observed that some of the “rigour” has been lost, it nevertheless appears that community singing is well-enough established at SLS, for the practice to be sustained through enculturation.

A Final Thought. Like the section above, on LCS cultural leader, Syd Birrell, I close this section with Dave’s words:

> So I feel that there is a tremendous sense of community that comes from the shared endeavour of singing, because singing together, we affect each other in a positive way. And I think that it also helps kids’ confidence, because an awful lot of kids are very self-conscious, as we know, in those teenage years. And so, they are quick to tell themselves — they're too quick to impose limitations upon themselves, as you well know. They're quick to tell themselves: “I'm not good at that, I can’t do that. I don't have a good voice”, et cetera, et cetera. And I think if you - if they find themselves part of a growing swell of beautiful noise that they are contributing to, I think their confidence increases, and they get that wonderful sense of joy that music brings us. (Dave Robertson, SLS)

Student-to-Student Cultural Transmission at Both Schools

Once a community has embraced a practice, in this case, the practice of enthusiastic communal singing, then the way it is sustained, passed on to, and absorbed by, incoming members of the community can be considered enculturation (Tan, 2014). At LCS, Sing-with-Syd was an effective tool for bringing new community members into the practice. This program ensured that new students learned the songs, understood the culture, and learned to embrace the practice of enthusiastic singing. In addition, at LCS, the immersion of new students in the practice and surrounded by older peers has a significant effect:

> I think the biggest factor in getting excited for that [communal singing] is older students. Like, especially coming in as a grade 9 student, I remember not really knowing what to do in certain situations as far as the community went. And I was new, right? I didn't have any real connection to this place yet. But being able to look up at the front of the chapel and seeing those kids, and some of them that had been there for four years, and me thinking eventually I'm going to be them. And that's the passion that they have for it — that's what I want to feel. (Logan, LCS)

At both schools, almost every one of the participants described this process of younger students becoming enculturated into the practice of enthusiastic communal singing through following the example of the older students.

In my discussion of theme 1, under “Participation Rates,” I explained that at both schools, participants remarked on the fact that participation increases through the years. As the following LCS alumni pointed out:

> If you're talking about the old stodgy hymns that people don't really care too much about, the participation rate will increase as students get older. So a lot of them, even the grade 9s and 10s — and to be honest, part of that is literally teaching. Sometimes the [songs] that are so close to the fabric of our institution, we forget to teach to new students. And there are more 9s and 10s that just might not know it as well. But it's not uncommon to have the grade 12s all — they sit in the front of the chapel — they're booming it out and kind of really, yelling it out, or singing loudly, and then as you go towards the back of the chapel, it gets quieter and quieter, kind of by grade. (Duncan, LCS)

This progression of not-singing in the younger years to fully engaging in the upper years illuminates the process of cultural transmission, from student-to-student, from upper years to lower years. Enculturation is often characterized as a socialization process whereby older peers help younger peers become "insiders" of the culture (e.g., Mobasseri, 2019; Tan, 2014).

Younger Students "Picking up" How to Sing Through Enculturation. At both schools, participants described how new students would "pick up" the culture of singing, simply by being surrounded by a singing student body.

> If you . . . come in and sit in on what's going on, you would see a significant difference between the singing first day of school, compared to the last day of closing Chapel. Like, those two moments are so incredibly different from one another . . . the main thing that I find, which is volume, how people project and how passionate they are for the singing and what they are singing. And then in

> another way, it's also the quality. I have found that in whole groups singing, there has been so much connection between each individual singer and each person that is partaking in that, in whatever song or hymn we are singing within our space that over time you start to pick up on the ability of those around you. (Matthew, SLS)

This echoes what Dave Robertson had said about "singing squads": students' singing out with confidence raises up the level of those around them. Matthew's (SLS) observation of the progression of singing from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, attributed to enculturation, shows how strong this effect seems to be.

Older Students Directly Teaching Younger Students. At SLS, I heard frequent references to older students explicitly teaching younger students lyrics, melody, and other idiosyncrasies specific to particular songs. For example:

> I found it's also a way for the younger students and older students to just be together and like, connect through music, which I think is really cool, because as a grade 12 this year, like teaching some of the grade nine to grade eights, like, "oh, like this hymn, you have to do this" or like, "you have to do — sing this part, but don't sing this part", you know, because then you learn the rhythms and different "formulas" of different hymns. (Alison, SLS)

At SLS, the House Captains in particular are given a mandate to teach their house hymn to their house members, specifically to the new students. At the beginning of the year, this is particularly important, as each house will sing their hymn for the rest of the school, and, as described in the previous section, things get competitive. Ben (SLS) provided a

rich description of organizing and leading a session of his Duxbury House peers, which I repeat here, to illustrate the intentional teaching (and "testing") by the older students:

> We get a couple of the younger guys to run around the house screaming: "House Meeting!" And then we just kind of tell them to do it . . . So you're expected to know (the words) within your first couple of weeks of being here. So, I learned mine in grade 10. And then we actually did testing last night, and so, if you didn't know the words, you had to do punishments, like push-ups or running or something. . . . We [the student leaders] do the testing by grade, so we'll have all the new grade nines sing it and then all the new grade 10s and 11s sing it, and you can tell quite easily who knows the words and who doesn't. And then once you get past, you go like, "OK, you guys have another hour to learn this song. If you don't by then, you're going to do more push-ups or do more running and stuff." But everyone actually got it pretty well. We're going to do testing part-two tonight, so hopefully everyone knows it by tonight. . . . And you know, it's a big competition thing because all the other houses are doing it, too. . . . But if we were the first house to be called on in Chapel to sing, there's a lot of — the other kids don't want the younger kids to mess up. We want to look good in front of the school. (Ben, SLS)

If as a researcher, I were approaching this work through a critical lens, examining a social construct such as power dynamics within schools, this description would warrant further examination. However, as the focus of my research is how communal singing is experienced by the participants, and as none of the research participants expressed any

indication that they perceived communal singing to have coercive elements, I will not examine this issue further.

I did not hear from LCS participants that older students teach the new students directly. Enculturation at LCS seems to be more of an organic process: newer students learning by observing and emulating the older ones during Chapel.

Older Students Giving Direct Feedback To Younger Students. At SLS, students described how they would give feedback to their younger peers, in order to improve the singing. Note that, consistent with my findings earlier on "participation vs. quality," this feedback is not about the quality of singing, but about the level of energy, the engagement, the enthusiasm that the peer displays: "And then and there's those moments when you have the interjection . . . like me telling another student, 'Hey, please sing loudly. We would like that'" (Matthew, SLS).

At LCS, Logan recognized that student-to-student feedback is in fact, more effective than adult-to-student feedback:

> Interviewer: Does anybody make an attempt to bring that energy up?
>
> Logan (LCS): Yeah, and that falls mostly on the grad class. To try and keep spirits high because no one — the last thing — a staff member isn't going to want to get up and say, "all right, everyone, we need more energy," because that's the last thing any student wants to hear on top of that. It just makes them feel worse — they're like: "so now I really don't want to do it, because you're telling me to." But when they see their peers getting excited and trying to bring energy up, it's

> different. It's not — it's less of an order and more of like a call to action, I guess. So, yeah, it usually follows in the grad class.

However, there are limits to how sustainable this peer-to-peer cultural transmission model is. I wondered: can enthusiastic and joyful singing continue through enculturation alone? Or are the kinds of specific interventions, such as those used by Syd Birell and Dave Robertson, described above, required?

I spoke about this directly with one student at LCS, as I wondered about cultural transmission surviving the cessation of singing due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

> Logan (LCS): Yeah, it's going to be interesting because usually, the great 11s will learn from the previous grad class, and if they have no one to look to or that, you might see a couple of practices go away, right? . . . if there is no Chapel for us this year and there's no chapel next year, you might lose certain practices that went on, like doing "No Flies on Us," banging on the front of the pews for "Sweet Caroline," little things like that we've grown accustomed to, but because there was no one to pass it along, it might not happen.

This student then expressed his confidence that Sing-with-Syd sessions would quickly bring back what might be lost during the Covid restrictions. Ironically, the student was not aware that Sing-with-Syd has possibly ended. The Covid lockdowns, combined with administrators cancelling Sing-with-Syd, may have an impact on successful communal singing at LCS.

Summary

In the secondary school context, successful communal singing is neither simple nor easy to establish and maintain, and requires intentional efforts and strategies by school leaders. In other words, it does not "happen by itself." I described the ways that leaders at two Canadian independent schools have managed to create a culture where teenagers embrace communal singing, where it is "cool to sing." What is most important that school administrators recognize that successful communal singing doesn't happen on its own, and that school administrators prioritize those interventions that keep the flame of communal singing alive.

Conclusion

Thematic analysis of data from 17 interviews resulted in five overarching themes, the first three of which were presented in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I presented themes 4 and 5, both of which pertain to the "how" of communal singing. The data revealed that the approach taken to communal whole school singing at LCS and SLS aligns with Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B, in that full participation is prioritized over musical excellence. Within Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B paradigm, the success of the practice is measured by participation rates, and by levels of enthusiasm ("gusto") in singing, rather than by quality of tone, intonation or musicality. At both LCS and SLS, through Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B lens, it appears that whole school singing is successful, most of the time. Finally, my investigation revealed that whole-school communal singing in secondary schools is neither easy nor simple to implement within a North American context, where singing in public is not necessarily a cultural norm. At

both LCS and SLS, specific individuals have been instrumental in creating a culture of singing, through the use of clear tactics and strategies, as well as through leveraging their charismatic personalities. In addition to this leadership, student-to-student cultural transmission sustains the practices of communal singing at LCS and SLS.

I used an inductive process to uncover these five themes from my research data: As such, I did not explore research related to these findings prior to conducting this research. However, in order to gain further insight into the findings I reported, I conducted a post-data-analysis literature review. Although very little research exists that explores whole school singing at a secondary school level, there is much to be learned from the research literature related to each of the five themes in other, non-school contexts. The extent to which my findings, in the context of secondary school communal singing, are consistent (or inconsistent) with findings in other group singing contexts may assist in more clearly and effectively applying these findings to music education, school administration practices, and other related fields.

Chapter 7 – Post Data Analysis Literature Review

In this chapter, I revisit the findings from my analysis in light of related research literature. Appropriate to the inductive process, I intentionally did not anticipate what I might discover prior to data collection and analyses. After analyzing the data, it became apparent that a full understanding of my findings required an additional investigation of literature related to the five themes that had emerged. I align this critical review of the literature with the five major themes I discovered. To reiterate, the five themes are:

1. Communal singing is regarded positively by participants.
2. Communal singing fosters students' sense of belonging, by strengthening their connection to school identity, and by building community.
3. Communal singing mediates the emotions: it lifts the spirits and creates opportunities for participants to experience and embody a range of emotions, thus contributing to well-being.
4. Communal singing at the two schools resembles Pascale's Aesthetic B, with a focus on participation rather than on achieving high levels of musical expertise.
5. Successful communal singing with adolescents does not happen "by itself" but requires leaders to employ intentional strategy, pedagogy, and methods. Student-to-student, and alumni-to-student cultural transmission then contributes to sustaining the practice.

Theme One: Research Related to Positive Regard

My data analysis revealed that every student, faculty, administrator, and alumni I interviewed was overwhelmingly positive in their regard for whole-school singing. This may not seem to be a surprising finding, given that choral singing is a popular recreational activity. In Canada (population 37.6 million), 3.5 million people sang in choirs in 2017, which is about twice the number of recreational hockey players for the same year (Hill, 2017). However, the unique nature of the phenomenon I studied, whole-school singing, is not a voluntary activity; it is mandatory. The fact that every person I interviewed regarded group singing so positively in this mandated context is, I believe, an important and unique finding.

Very little research exists that examines attitudes towards group singing in the general (i.e., non-choral) population. One piece of related literature is Chong's (2010) investigation of non-vocalists' attitudes toward singing. In this study, 90 university students gave written responses to an open-ended question that asked whether or not they enjoyed singing, and why/why not. The researcher completed a content analysis of the responses. Eighty respondents reported that they enjoyed singing, for reasons including self-expression, aesthetic experience, interpersonal relationships, stress reduction/mood change, spirituality, empowerment/identity, and self-actualization; seven responded enjoying singing only when singing alone; three reported not enjoying singing. Participants in these last two categories indicated that they did not like how their voice sounded, and that they were self-conscious and concerned about negative judgements from others about their singing. Chong's (2010) findings were limited to a university-age

population, with a skewed female to male ratio (61 female, 29 male), so would not necessarily reflect the populations I studied (adolescent, equal gender ratio). Furthermore, my study, as it was qualitative by design, had too small a sample size (18) to report on frequencies. However, that 100% of my respondents stated that they enjoyed singing differs from Chong's (2010) 88%. This difference in findings, 88% in Chong's research and 100% in mine, lends some support to the idea that whole school communal singing, as practiced at LCS and SLS, is successful in building more positive attitudes to singing than is found in the general population.

In a study designed to explain declining enrollment in choral activities in U.K. schools, Turton and Durrant (2002) studied British adults' perceptions of their school singing experiences in secondary schools. Structured interviews with 60 adults aged 20 to 40 revealed that:

- Almost 80% of females and just under 50% of males remembered enjoying singing in secondary school;
- Reasons given for those who did not enjoy singing in school included not liking the style of music sung (the reason given by females), and embarrassment related to perceived inadequacies concerning their own voice (most of the males). For about 20% of respondents, the negative response was the result of the fact that there had been no singing in their secondary school;
- 100% of the participants agreed that "singing is something worth doing in schools" (p. 46).

The third point above, that self-consciousness about their singing voice causes people to dislike singing, echoes Chong's (2010) finding. This point is in contrast to my research findings, where four of the participants (Travis, Denis and Logan at LCS and Ben at SLS) told me that they are not good singers, but nevertheless, they do enjoy singing. As Denis (LCS) explained: "I have a terrible voice, I am not a singer, but I love singing, and given the opportunity, I will gladly do it." It could be that the ways in which communal singing is practiced at LCS and SLS, permits these self-identified "terrible" singers to enjoy singing. I will come back to this point further on in my analysis.

The final point in Turton and Durrant's (2002) findings (above) was that whether or not they remembered enjoying singing in school, 100% of the participants reported that they valued the activity in retrospect. This finding reflects the consistent comment from the faculty participants in my study that "even when they (students) don't like it, when they come back (as alumni), they want to sing" (Mr. Everett, LCS). A similar observation was made by another LCS faculty member who observed:

> It's really interesting when alum come back to work at the school, and they try to reconcile what Chapel was for them, and what it is for the kids, and how they disregarded it for the most part when they were students and how they were adamant that the kids have to sing now. Like, "I wish I saw the value of it then." (Ms. Stevens, LCS)

It is important to note that Turton and Durrant's (2002) participants did not specify what kind of singing they did in high school (i.e., whether participants referred to whole-school singing in assemblies, or to voluntary singing in school choir). Because 20% of Turton

and Durrant's participants mentioned that there "was no singing in their school" (p. 41), at least in those participants' schools, it seems that there was neither whole-school singing, nor was there school choir.

A finding from my research that I found interesting was that all of the male students I interviewed were very enthusiastic about singing, including those who did not consider themselves to be very good at it. There has been much research on the "missing males" in school choral programs (e.g., Connell, 2000; Freer, 2006; Miziner, 1996). According to Green (2001), writing about school choral programs in the United Kingdom:

> Singing is one curriculum area towards which secondary boys are notoriously disinclined…The pupils agreed: a large number of girls expressed a readiness to sing, and many said that singing was seen as a girls' activity, or in the words of one 11 year old, 'singing is girls' jobs' . . . for a boy to join a choir involves taking a risk with his symbolic masculinity. (p. 54)

In contrast, the male students I interviewed at SLS and LCS were notably enthusiastic singers in the context of Chapel singing. Recall the observation that "singing loud and proud" was an important aspect of Lonsdale's House (a boys' house) identity. I did not enquire whether the elective school choirs at these schools had a more even gender distributions than typical elective school choirs.

One of the indicators of positive regard for group singing in my research was participants' expressing that they missed it, now that singing had been halted due to Covid-19 restrictions. Related to this, Theorell et al. (2020) surveyed 3163 Swedish and

1881 Norwegian choral singers (professionals and amateurs), asking the question: “Now, when you are not allowed to participate in choir singing (due to Covid-19 restrictions), what is it that you miss the most?” (p. 2). Note that Theorell et al. (2020) assumed that their study participants did miss choral singing. Theorell et al.’s (2020) research was an attempt to determine the aspects of singing that participants valued (i.e., missed) the most. Participants used a Likert scale to rate seven aspects related to three factors: social bonding, aesthetic experience and voice training. Multivariate analysis revealed that singers in all categories of choirs and backgrounds missed social bonding significantly more than the other aspects of singing. The importance of aesthetic experiences and physical components rose with the increasing number of years that an individual had engaged in choral singing. Although the population Theorell et al. (2020) studied (adult and elderly singers, members of extant choirs, predominantly female, Scandinavian) was different than mine (adolescents, not necessarily choir members, mixed gender, Canadian), this finding highlights how participants' positive regard for communal singing is related to social bonding and a sense of belonging that emerged as the second principal theme in my research, discussed in the next section.

Conclusion

Research related to group singing preferences in non-voluntary settings is scant; however, the available research on singing preferences in the general public has revealed lower preference rates, especially from males, than emerged from my research data. Although I only interviewed 17 participants, every interviewee, including those who are male, expressed a strong positive regard for communal singing. The way that communal

singing is practiced at LCS and SLS, with the focus on participation rather than artistry, may be responsible for this difference in preference rates from what has emerged from other research studies.

Theme Two: Research Related to "Belonging"

In my data analysis, I identified "belonging" as a second overarching theme. This theme includes participants' perception that group singing builds community, increases feelings of belonging to the school, and strengthens students' connection to their school community. The theme "belonging" led me to look briefly at belongingness theory, and at its application to two distinct areas of the literature related to my research: first, research on the effect of group singing on social cohesion, and second, the research on the beneficial outcomes of school "belongingness."

Belongingness Theory

Belongingness theory posits that humans have a strong emotional need to be an accepted member of a social group (Baumeister, 2011; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Belongingness theorists posit that the motivation to belong is fundamental in that it drives other human needs such as approval, intimacy, achievement, affiliation and power, countering the Freudian theory that aggression and sexuality are the major drivers of the human psyche (Allen, 2020). Through the lens of evolutionary psychology, an individual's access to resources, and hence, survival, depends upon their belonging to a social group. As a result, the drive for belonging has evolved as a powerful adaptive trait in humans (Walton, 2019). While a comprehensive review of the belongingness literature is beyond the scope of this paper, it is apropos to note that extensive theoretical and

empirical research have resulted in broad acceptance of the idea that having a feeling of belonging is of vital importance to individuals' psychological and physical health (Allen, 2020).

The Effect of Group Singing on Social Cohesion

Willem Van de Wall, a pioneer in the development of music therapy in the U.S. in the early 20th century, stated that "singing together fostered feelings of belonging together and of loyalty" (Clair & Heller, p. 171). Much of the more recent research on the benefits of group singing confirms Van de Wall's sentiment, reporting, along with beneficial effects on mood and psychological health, a positive association between group singing and social connectedness (e.g., Batt-Rawden & Andersen, 2020; Bullack et al., 2018; Clift et al., 2008; Clift et al., 2010; Gosine &Travaso, 2018). In contrast, O'Toole (1994) supports the view that choral singing can be disempowering and disconnecting; however, O'Toole is critical not of singing in groups per se, but of the kinds of choir experiences result in highly polished musical performances. Thus, in this section, I present a critical analysis of research that has focused primarily on the social bonding effects of group singing.

Research That Uses Biological Markers of Social Bonding. According to Kreutz (2014), the hormone oxytocin is associated with social affiliation, and thus measures of salivary oxytocin (OT) can be used as a biological measure of social bonding. When Kreutz found measures of subjects' salivary oxytocin (OT) to be significantly higher after a group singing intervention than after a chatting-only activity, the researcher concluded that group singing increases social bonding. However, I

examined Kreutz's source for the claim that OT is associated with group bonding: According to Feldman (2012), OT can indicate dyad-specific affiliations, such as parental, romantic, and filial attachment but does not necessarily indicate levels of bonding towards a group. Furthermore, Schladt et al. (2017) compared the OT levels in subjects after both solo singing and choir singing: results indicated that the social experience of choir singing does not increase salivary oxytocin (OT) levels. It seems to me that Kreutz's biological markers thus provide only weak evidence that group singing facilitates social bonding.

Research Using Methods Other Than Biological Markers. Other research, however, that uses survey and other methods to measure belongingness and related constructs, rather than salivary measurements, appears to offer strong support for the hypothesis that group singing can facilitate trust and cooperation, belongingness, social bonding and social cohesion. I discuss each of these in turn.

The Effect of Group Singing on Trust and Cooperation. Because trust and cooperation are characteristic of a socially bonded group, Anshel and Kipper (1988) investigated the association between group singing and measures of cooperation and trust scores. The researchers randomly assigned 96 Israeli adult males to either a group singing intervention, a music listening activity, a poetry reading, or a film viewing session. After the interventions, participants played a Prisoner's Dilemma game: Their scores were used to measure cooperation and trust. The researchers found that group singing yielded significantly higher trust and cooperation scores than the other activities.

In a study involving children ages 6–11, drawn from socioeconomically and

ethnically diverse families in Toronto, Good and Russo (2016) also found that group singing promoted cooperation. Like Anshel and Kipper (1988), Good and Russo used scores on the Prisoner's Dilemma game to measure cooperative behavior; however, Good and Russo employed a child-friendly version. The researchers compared results after children participated for 30 minutes in one of three activity conditions: competitive games, group art, or group singing. Children in the singing group exhibited significantly higher levels of cooperation than those in the other activities. The authors concluded that the group singing may have helped foster a sense of collective identity: the resulting social cohesion was manifested in the observed higher levels of cooperation. These results contribute support to my research findings that whole school group singing increases participants' feelings of belonging to the school community.

The Effect of Group Singing on Belonging. Gosine and Travasso (2018) investigated the emotional, psychological, and social benefits of participation in the Treehouse Choir, a choir open to adult service users and staff at a hospice for children with life-limiting and complex health conditions. The researchers analyzed data from questionnaires as well as data from interviews with Treehouse Choir members in order to identify broad themes related to participants' experiences. The authors reported that the most frequent comments made by the choir members referred to a sense of "belonging," which they described as a feeling of being part of an extended family, providing emotional and practical support for the choir members (p. 21). This sense of "belonging" identified in the Treehouse Choir is consistent with the finding from my research about group singing in a communal singing context. However, it is difficult to know whether

the singing, in and of itself, or the social interactions during choir practices with other people in similar circumstances, provided this sense of support. For example, Gosine and Travasso's (2018) participants mentioned making "wonderful friends" through the Treehouse Choir. In my research, however, Chapel singing would not necessarily provide social interactions that differ from normal day-to-day school life: Communal singing at LCS and SLS does not provide opportunities to meet and socialize with new people, as it would at the Treehouse Choir, and thus Gosine and Travasso's (2018) results may not apply to the whole school communal singing context.

Similarly, Clift and Hancox (2001), Joseph and Southcott (2014), Grindley et al. (2011), Dingle et al. (2020) and Weinstein et al. (2015), report findings of perceived "belongingness" resulting from choir membership, along with other perceived benefits such as improvements in mood, in studies of members of existing choirs, both amateur and professional. Again, this raises the question to what extent the singing itself is the mechanism for building community, and how group membership, social interactions, preparation for performances, and concert experiences provide this sense of belonging. Would joining a curling team, or a quilting bee, both examples of a regular, social recreational activity, result in a similar sense of belonging and social connection found by these researchers, or is there something about the singing itself that contributes to belongingness?

Pearce et al. (2015) investigated this very question in a quasi-experimental study that compared measures of "belongingness" between members of a newly formed weekly singing class, and a newly formed weekly non-singing class (crafts or creative writing).

Participants were predominantly female, with an average age of 60. Measures of belongingness, or "closeness," were taken before and after each class, using a modified version of the pictorial Inclusion of Other in Self 7-point scale. While both singers and non-singers reported a similar increase in closeness to their classmates over the course of seven months, there were significantly greater boosts in closeness during the initial month in the singing condition, compared to the non-singing conditions. The researchers interpreted these results to signify that singing fosters group bonding more quickly than does other group activities. While the non-singers, through multiple dyadic social interactions were able to develop a comparable sense of belonging over time, the singers, through shared group singing activities, bypassed the need to get to know everyone in the class individually. Pearce et al. proposed that the synchronous nature of group singing causes the release of neuropeptides, which in turn causes relative strangers to quickly create social bonds (p. 7). The authors dubbed this "the ice-breaker effect," as group singing is an effective way to speed up the group bonding process. It may be that it was the "ice-breaker effect" that research participants in my study were describing when they spoke of the sense of togetherness, collective, community that they got from singing. For example, the idea expressed by Breanna (SLS) below, were in some way communicated by every research participant:

Something that for me that I notice [from singing together in Chapel] was just that sense of the collective. I think I really got a sense of being part of something bigger than myself. And you just feel that power of everyone else's voices and yours. (Breanna, SLS)

Furthermore, Pearce et al. (2015) suggested that group singing may have conferred an evolutionary advantage on modern humans, as groups that are able to bond quickly may have outperformed groups that were required to slowly accumulate dyadic relationships. This theory, combined with my research finding that group singing at LCS and SLS increased "belongingness," led me to consider the work of other researchers who have explored the idea that group singing is an evolved adaptation that confers the benefit of group cohesion.

Group Singing as an Evolutionary Adaptation. Launay et al. (2016) proposed that group singing, specifically, is a technology that modern humans developed during our evolutionary history to encourage group cohesion. Like Pearce et al. (2015), they posited that the efficiency of group singing, compared to the time-consuming work of building a network of one-on-one dyadic relationships, permits the development of larger social networks. Grooming and conversation, both methods of building one-on-one dyadic relationships, are costly from a time-perspective. Launay et al. (2016) proposed that synchronicity is the mechanism through which group singing causes these group cohesion effects.

Synchronicity and Group Music-making. McNeill (1995) examined evidence of synchronous body movements throughout human history and proposed that "muscular bonding" (moving our muscles rhythmically in a synchronous fashion) and "giving voice" (vocalizing synchronously) consolidates group solidarity. McNeill suggested that muscular bonding and giving voice are tools that humans have used throughout history (and prehistory) in situations where social unity is advantageous. Mithen (2006) extended

this argument, pointing out that the primary dilemma facing our human ancestors was how to ensure that cooperation, rather than defection, occurred. Cooperation benefited the group; individuals who defected from the group, would have benefited individually, but ultimately harmed everyone. Mithen concluded that through the mechanism of synchronicity, group singing forges social bonds and group identity. The author pointed out that chimpanzees are unable to synchronize their vocalizations, making this an adaptation unique to humans among primates. Mr. Austin's (SLS) comment: "I think it's really a shame that more people aren't doing it (group singing) because, taken completely outside of the religious context, it's a very human-making kind of activity," reflects these comments. It may be that Mr. Austin was suggesting that group singing is not only what makes us human, but increases our humanity, linking us to our ancestral roots.

Empirical Studies of Synchronicity and Its Effects on Social Bonding. Given that the synchronous nature of group singing may be one of the mechanisms that induces social bonding, it is important to consider the body of empirical research that investigates the effects of synchronous activity on group cohesion and pre-social behaviors. Kirschner and Tomasello (2010) investigated young children's behavior in order to explore the idea that music and dance are human adaptive tools that create a collective experience among many people at the same time. The researchers reasoned that young children, because they lack the socialization of older subjects, behave in ways that are more likely to indicate inherited, that is, evolved, traits. The participants, 96 four-year-old children, were selected from German urban daycare centers and came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The children were divided into two matched groups, and participated in

pairs in either a short (20 minute) musical activity, designed to produce synchronous vocalizations and actions, or a similar, but non-musical activity. For the dependent measure, the researchers recorded the children's spontaneous responses to a helping task and a cooperative problem solving task. The results supported Kirschner and Tomasello's hypothesis: children demonstrated significantly more extensive pro-social behaviors after the music intervention than the non-music condition. The researchers concluded that these enhanced pro-social behaviors in the music condition may be evidence of some evolved psychological mechanism. They highlighted the efficiency with which music coordinates voice and actions, creating a shared intention between humans. This mention of efficiency is redolent of Pearce et al.'s "ice-breaker's effect," described above, and is consistent with the findings of my study, which supported the idea that group singing enhances social connectedness.

Rabinowitch et al. (2012) investigated the effect of music activities on measures of empathy in an experimental study with 56 children, aged 8-11. In contrast to Kirschner and Tomasello's (2010) 20-minute sessions, their intervention consisted of a year-long, weekly music class, consisting of group music games designed to encourage entrainment, imitation, shared intentionality and synchronous musical behaviors. A control group participated in a similar program of stories, drama games, and other forms of interaction, with no musical aspects. Both before and after the intervention, researchers measured the children's empathy using both non-verbal tests and verbal tests. The researchers found that the music group's empathy scores increased significantly after the intervention; the control group's did not. Rabinowitch et al. argued that because empathy is a critical

factor in mediating pro-social behaviors, these results suggest that music activities that involve children in synchronous behaviors are effective in developing social cohesion. While Rabinowitch et al.'s music intervention did not employ group singing specifically, it was designed to evoke the kind of synchronous entrainment and mimicry involved in group singing.

Research using adult subjects has also explored the idea that group singing evolved as an adaptive behavior capable of enhancing social bonding. Weinstein et al. (2015) proposed that music-making, and choral singing in particular, may have allowed groups of early humans to expand their size beyond the limit imposed when social bonds have to rely on a series of dyadic grooming interactions, such as the mutual grooming processes observed in non-human primate groups (Nelson & Geher, 2007). To support this claim, Weinstein et al. measured social connectedness within 10 London-area choirs, using members' self-report data. Singers were adults, aged 21–68, predominantly female. A few times per year, these smaller choirs rehearse together as a larger, combined choir comprised of 232 singers. After a large choir rehearsal, the researchers collected similar self-report data about social connectedness. Significantly higher social connectedness scores resulted from the large group than the small group condition. The researchers suggest that this supports the idea that social bonding effects are more substantial in larger groups of individuals who do not know each other personally, compared to smaller, familiar groups. The authors concluded that their results support the notion that group singing may have played a crucial role in human evolution, by allowing modern humans to increase the size of our communities beyond those found in other primate

species who lacked this adaptation. This result is consistent with the finding from my research that communal singing in a large, whole-school group, appears to foster a sense of belonging in participants. Based on Weinstein et al.'s result, it is possible that the larger the group, the more substantial are the social bonding effects, thus whole-school singing may facilitate group bonding more effectively than singing in smaller groups.

In his writing on the effect of synchronicity on group cohesion, McNeill (1995) expounded upon the concept of "boundary loss." According to McNeill, boundary loss in the context of synchronous dance and drill leads to "a blurring of self-awareness and the heightening feeling of fellow feelings with all who share in a dance" (p. 8). This "blurring" was observed in a study by Osaka et al. (2015) who demonstrated that two subjects engaged in cooperative singing and humming (subjects singing or humming the same song at the same time) produced observably greater neural synchronization, as measured by functional near-infrared spectroscopy, than subjects engaged in solo singing or humming. The idea that two brains singing together creates one observably synchronized mind, elegantly illustrates McNeill's point regarding the effects of synchronicity, and again, is consistent with my finding that singing together creates group cohesion and belongingness.

Wiltermuth and Heath (2009) conducted three experiments to test the hypothesis that acting in synchrony with others (walking in step, moving plastic cups in time to music, singing a simple anthem along to pre-recorded music) strengthens group cohesion. Furthermore, the experiments were designed to determine whether physical synchrony ("muscular bonding" as proposed by McNeill, 1995), collective joy ("collective

effervescence" as proposed by Durkheim, 1965) or just singing along to music, synchronously with others, were necessary mediating mechanisms. The results suggest that acting in synchrony with others can indeed facilitate cooperation among group members; interestingly, neither muscular bonding nor collective joy were required to produce the group bonding results. This last point is pertinent to my research, as it suggests that the kinds of group singing schools choose may result in social cohesion whether or not the songs involve kinetic actions (muscular bonding) or joyous repertoire. Thus, Wilternuth and Heath's research would suggest that in a whole-school communal singing context, singing sad songs together, or singing without kinetic actions, may have similar group bonding effects as singing upbeat songs or songs with actions and movement.

Research Comparing Group Singing to Group Sports. By comparing the effects of group singing, which is synchronous, to group sports activities, which are usually asynchronous, researchers have attempted to isolate the effects of synchronicity on measures of social cohesion. Stewart and Lonsdale (2016) compared measures of connectedness between choral singers and team sport players. Self-reported questionnaire data from 125 choral singers and 125 amateur team sport players (all adults aged 18 to 78) revealed that the choral singers experienced a significantly greater sense of being part of a meaningful or "real" group than team sport players. The researchers suggested that the synchronous nature of choral singing, missing from team sport activities, was responsible for the difference in perceived social bonding. Again, this points to the potential benefit of whole-school singing for schools wishing to foster belongingness in

their community. Stewart and Lonsdale's results would seem to support group singing over alternatives, such as athletics programs, for building community and social bonding.

Research Associating Group Singing with Success in Team Sports. Finally, in an investigation of singing and sports phenomena, Slater at al. (2018) compared the level of passion demonstrated by team members' singing of their national anthem and subsequent game success. The researchers had two independent observers view video footage of each team in the 2016 UEFA Euro Championship singing their anthem prior to each of the tournament's 51 games. The observers, using a detailed rubric that defined passion in various ways (volume, spirit, physical manifestations etc.), then rated the level of passion for singing on a scale from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). Regression analysis revealed that teams that sang their anthems more passionately conceded fewer goals, and that passionate singing predicted a greater likelihood of winning in the knockout stage. The authors suggested that an explanation for these results might be that team members' enthusiastic singing indicates their passion for the collective effort, thus their singing predicts the subsequent team performance. I propose that alternative interpretation might be that enthusiastic group singing preceding a game causes subsequent cooperative behavior, based on the growing evidence that group singing facilitates social bonding. If there were a true cause-and-effect relationship between group singing and collective success, then again, schools wishing to foster a connected, functioning collective school community, may benefit from incorporating whole school group singing into their practice.

People Derive Satisfaction from Being Part of Something Larger Than Themselves. My reading in the evolutionary advantages of group singing led me to Haidt et al. (2008), who posited that humans have evolved to enjoy those activities that confer an evolutionary advantage. Because strong social connections and social cohesion are beneficial to survival in human ancestral environments, Haidt et al. argued that psychological well-being is therefore enhanced by engaging in synchronous activities, such as group singing. Haidt et al. described the kind of synchronous activity that results in social bonding as losing oneself in a larger social organism.

McNeill (1995) illustrated this idea, with a recollection of enduring basic training in Texas in 1941:

> We drilled, hour after hour, moving in unison and giving the numbers in response to shouted commands . . . Hut! Hup! Hip! Four! . . . somehow (it) felt good . . . a sense of pervasive well-being is what I recall; more specifically, a strange sense of personal enlargement; a sort of swelling out, becoming bigger than life, thanks to participation in collective ritual. (p. 2)

Durkheim (1965) described the intense joy that results from synchronic group rituals as "collective effervescence," and similarly suggested that collective effervescence contributes significantly to the maintenance of cohesive groups. These concepts resonate with the observations of one of my participants in particular: the LCS faculty member who had taught science for 39 years, and who articulated their perception of the power of the practice of communal singing:

And it is just the experience [of singing together]. I mean, you know, the

> vibration, it resonates . . . in order to diminish the person and to have you experience something which is bigger than yourself. . . there are very magical moments . . . certainly during that time that really helped me understand the power of group. And the power of what it is that we could do. I mean. Not possible to do these things on your own, right? (Mr. Thibodeau, LCS)

In summary, there is a significant body of research that suggests that group singing promotes social bonding, cooperative behavior, and feelings of belongingness to a group. It may be that group singing, through harnessing the mechanism of synchronicity, endowed an evolutionary benefit to early human beings, as the practice contributed to group cohesion. This is consistent with my finding that participants felt that communal singing at their school enhanced their sense of belonging to the community. What follows is a look at research on two related questions: whether group singing in a competitive context, compared to a cooperative context, produces similar bonding effects, and whether the body of group singing research can be applied to non-voluntary groups of singers, such as the participants in my research.

Competition versus Cooperation. As a strategy to encourage enthusiastic singing, SLS relies on the friendly competition between its houses. This strategy is also familiar to faculty at LCS, who are considering use of the competitive-house-singing model in the future. An investigation by Pearce et al. (2016) is pertinent to this strategy. These researchers considered whether group singing would promote social bonding in competitive, compared to cooperative, conditions within a naturalistic setting of pre-existing singing groups at a German university. The researchers asked singers (96

fraternity members, aged 18–25) to rate their closeness to members of both their own and another team, before and after singing together for six minutes. There were two conditions: competitive (the teams attempted to out-sing each other) and cooperative (the teams sang together). Participants reported feeling significantly closer to other group members after singing than before singing, regardless of whether they competed or cooperated with the other group. The authors concluded that the synchronistic aspect of group singing creates a general positivity towards others, and whether or not the singing is done in a competitive or a cooperative setting. This result seems related to the competitive strategy employed by SLS to incite full participation and enthusiastic singing.

Mandatory versus Voluntary. Finally, in an in-depth qualitative study, Camlin et al. (2020) collected and recorded the experiences of 78 adult participants in an outdoor singing project in the U.K. All participants were long-time members of amateur choirs and had voluntarily signed up for the mountain-top singing event. Thematic analysis resulted in the following key themes: 'communitas' (belongingness, social cohesion, and bonds of trust and attachment between people), and 'transcendence' (a fully aesthetic experience, peak, magical moments). The authors concluded that this study confirmed the social bonding effect of group singing. In discussing the research's limitations, the authors underscored that the participants were already "members of the choir," that is, having volunteered for the outdoor singing project, and being long-term choristers, participants were already firmly committed to group singing. The authors raised the question: "Singing appears to be good in a number of ways for those who participate in it,

but what about those who feel unable to participate in it, or who simply don't want to? Is singing only good for those who it's good for?" (p. 12). These questions reinforce my concern that almost all the research related to group singing (including Camlin et al.) involves members of extant choirs, or volunteers, who presumably already enjoy singing. Again, the mandatory nature of the communal singing at LCS and SLS may make my research unique in this regard.

Summary. There is appreciable support in the research literature for the idea that group singing facilitates social bonding, social cohesion and other constructs related to "a sense of belonging." This corresponds with and affirms my research findings, as "belongingness" was the second over-arching theme that emerged from my data. Based on my research and the broader body of research literature reviewed here, it would seem that whole-school singing, when developed as a culture norm over time, could potentially increase belongingness.

However, to what extent is "belongingness" important in a school context? Why should school administrators care about the extent to which students feel a sense of belonging to their school and school community?

School Belongingness

In the research literature, various constructs have been used to indicate students' feeling of belonging to their school, including *school belonging*, *a sense of community*, *school bonding*, *school engagement*, *connectedness*, *a psychological sense of community*, *school membership* and *school attachment* (Osterman, 2000). Both Furman (1998) and McMillan and Chavis (1986) related belongingness to sense of community, by

demonstrating that community is not present until members experience feelings of belonging. Similarly, Allen and Kern (2017) equated *school membership, sense of community, connectedness* and *school attachment* with the construct *school belongingness*. For the purposes of this paper, given the close association between these terms, I use the term *belongingness* to signify all these concepts.

School belongingness is associated with a variety of positive outcomes for students, including adolescent mental health (Bond et al., 2007; Shochet et al. 2006), general adjustment and well-being (Van Ryzin, 2009), and academic achievement (Bond et al.; Degelsmith, 2000; Goodenow, 1993; Roeser et al., 1996). Battisch and Horn (1997) and Bond et al. found school belongingness to be significantly (negatively) associated with drug use and delinquency; Gillen-O'Neel and Fuligni (2013) found a positive association between school belongingness and academic motivation. Studies have also shown that belongingness provides a buffer against loneliness (Chipuer, 2001) and depression (Anderman, 2002). Furthermore, Goodenow (1993) proposed that belongingness in school is particularly important for adolescents, as they come to rely on extra-familial relationships through the process of individuation. Finn (1989) identified school belonging as a protectant against dropping-out behavior. Catalano et al. (2004) reported the results of a series of longitudinal studies, in which interventions designed to increase school bonding in elementary students resulted in improved outcomes, both academic and behavioral in secondary school. From this research, it seems that school belongingness is a desirable trait associated with a wide range of positive outcomes for students. It would appear that schools should attend to and actively promote their

students' sense of belongingness.

What can schools do to make a difference in students' sense of belonging to school? Ma (2003) investigated this question using survey data from 6,868 Grade 8 students in 92 schools and 6,883 Grade 6 students in 148 schools in New Brunswick, Canada. Comparing student self-reports of belonging to school with both student and school characteristics, the author found that students' self-esteem was the single most predictive variable, followed by students' general health. The author explained this result by suggesting that students with positive self-image and in good health may have more mental and physiological resources for participating in school activities, both curricular and extra-curricular. Student participation, the author concluded, is key, as students who participate more in school curricular and co-curricular activities, feel more connected to their school. I argue that this result might lend support to the idea that participative activities, such as whole-school singing, foster school belongingness.

In terms of school characteristics, Ma's (2003) results showed that school climate also showed a statistically significant association with school belongingness, specifically "academic press" (the extent to which teachers appear to care for their students' academic endeavors) and "disciplinary climate" (the extent to which students viewed school rules as fair and consistently applied). The author concluded that schools with a climate that makes students feel that they are treated fairly, safely, and cared for, support student belongingness. The author gave no indication of the kinds of school practices (such as whole-school singing) that might contribute to this climate, other than recommending that schools focus on building strong, interpersonal relationships and affective bonds between

all members of the school community.

Other studies have investigated the traits of schools whose students experience high levels of school belongingness, and reveal primarily supportive dyadic relationships between students and teachers. Findings from this research are similar to Ma's (2003), discussed above. McNeely et al. (2009) found positive classroom management practices, high levels of student participation in extracurricular activities, and tolerant disciplinary policies in schools where students experience high levels of belongingness. Ahmadi et al. (2020) reported that the presence of teacher behaviors that support students' academic self-efficacy, sense of fairness, and close teacher-student relations, predicted strong student belongingness. Again, the results of this work highlight the importance of one-to-one interpersonal relationships. There was no mention in either of these studies of the contribution of practices such as school assemblies, school traditions, or whole-school singing to students' sense of belongingness.

I propose that whole school communal singing contributes to belongingness in a way that is qualitatively different from the accumulation of multiple dyadic relationships described by Ma (2003), McNeely et al. (2002), and Ahmadi et al. (2020). I propose that communal singing builds community all at once, as described by Pearce et al.'s (2016) "ice-breaker effect" (discussed in Chapter 6): Pearce et al. (2015) demonstrated that group singing is a powerful way to develop group cohesion efficiently, compared to the slower process of building a series of one-to-one relationships. It is an effective way to quickly establish feelings of belongingness among large groups of people.

Conclusion

Research indicates that school belongingness is an important contributor to both student well-being and to academic outcomes, and communal singing as I observed at LCS and SLS, appears to enhance belonging efficiently and effectively. The research on group singing supports this idea that singing together enhances feelings of belongingness. The LCS Head of School asked me, rhetorically: "How do you ensure joy with hundreds of people? How? I just can't think of anything else [other than communal singing]." While there may be many routes to creating a close sense of community and belongingness in schools, it appears that communal singing may be one of them.

Theme Three: Research Related to "Emotional Mediation and Psychological Wellness"

The third overarching theme that I identified from the interview data was the effect that communal singing has on emotions. The sentiment that "singing puts me in a good mood" was expressed consistently in every student's and alumni interview. Recall these quotes from my analysis, one by a student at LCS, one by a student at SLS:

> My mood, in some cases, it [Chapel singing] is what made my days better, it's got me, like, excited, it's gotten, I think it's gotten everyone, like everyone who's willing to sing, I think it does them good. (Travis, LCS)

> It [Chapel singing] can really set the mood for the rest of chapel in our first hymn, or in our closing hymn, it's like: "OK, now we're going to go out and have a good day" or something because everyone's like: "OK, like we're in the mood," I guess. It can really lift your spirits. (Alison, SLS)

The head of school at LCS explained to me that there is a certain amount of pressure on secondary schools to address wellness. This comes from parents, educational oversight bodies and from society in general. For example, the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) accreditation process requires its member schools to have in place specific measures to promote and act upon the "emotional and social potentials" of their students and staff (CAIS website, n.d.). In the opinion of the head of school at LCS, group singing should be considered such a measure:

> Everybody's doing mindfulness programs, wellness, we call it [LCS's wellness program] "Thrive," but sometimes we forget that singing together is a great form of mindfulness and wellness . . . And I remember actually talking with the Head of Shawnigan a number of years ago, the old Head, David Robertson . . . And his staff was complaining that they didn't do enough in terms of wellness. And he said to me - and it really sticks with me, now that I'm here in this job, is like, "are you kidding? Like every day or however many times a week we're in chapel, singing. That is a wellness program." But it doesn't fall into sort of the modern category of what a wellness program is. (LCS Head of School)

The idea that group singing may contribute to psychological wellness is supported by research that has emerged from the literature demonstrating that listening to music can produce emotional responses (e.g., Baumgartner et al., 2006; Craig, 2009; Fuentes-Sánchez et al., 2021; Van Goethem & Sloboda, 2011) and regulate emotions (e.g., Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007; Saarikallio, 2011). At the same time, a recent investigation by Kinghorn (2021) suggested that for some people, music listening can reproduce

unhelpful thought patterns, resulting in detriments to their well-being. This connection between emotions and music listening stimulated researchers to investigate the effect of group singing on singers' emotions and well-being. This work has emerged primarily since the 2000s, led by Stephen Clift's expansive research program at the Sidney de Haan Research Centre, at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Stephen Clift's Research on Group Singing and Well-being

Stephen Clift's foray into the field of group singing and wellness began with an initial study (Clift & Hancox, 2001) in which the researchers surveyed 84 members of a university college choral society about perceived benefits from singing in choir. The participants reported on social and emotional benefits of choral singing, along with, to a lesser extent, physical and spiritual benefits. Themes that emerged from an analysis of the written comments were: meeting new people, feeling more positive, increased control over breathing, feeling more alert and feeling spiritually uplifted. These results provided the impetus for Clift and associates to develop a broader research program to investigate the impact of singing on psycho-physiological functioning. Under the auspices of Canterbury Christ Church University, Clift established the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health in 2005 in order to develop a full research program on the potential value of music and other participatory arts programs to health and well-being (Canterbury Christ Church University, n.d.).

For the first step of this undertaking, Clift and associates completed a comprehensive literature search in order to synthesize all available non-clinical research that investigated the association between group singing and wellness (Clift et al., 2008).

This systematic search identified 36 papers for analysis, mapping and review. Most of these studies appeared from the 1990s onwards, and consisted of:

- 7 qualitative studies
- 5 surveys employing specifically designed questionnaires
- 19 quantitative studies
- 4 large-scale epidemiological studies (Clift et al., 2008)

The most significant studies in terms of robustness of methodology, size of sample and clear results, were identified by the researchers as: Clift and Hancox (2001) (discussed above), Beck et al. (2000), and Bailey and Davidson (2002). Bailey and Davidson used a phenomenological approach to interview members of a choir for men experiencing homelessness and found that group singing appeared to positively influence members' emotional processes. Using a quantitative research method, Beck et al. measured antibodies and cortisol in the saliva of professional choristers, and had singers fill out a Likert-scale survey before and after rehearsals and a performance. Results supported the hypothesis that participants' immune systems were strengthened as a function of the pleasure of the group singing experience.

Synthesized findings from Clift et al.'s (2008) review of all 36 studies identified 17 recurrent themes related to the perceived or reported benefits of singing. Some of these overlap with the findings from my analysis, including:

- a sense of happiness, positive mood, joy, elation and feeling high;
- an increased sense of arousal and energy;
- a sense of greater personal, emotional and physical wellbeing;

- a sense of collective bonding through coordinated activity following the same pulse;
- a sense of contributing to a product which is greater than the sum of its parts; and
- a sense of personal transcendence beyond mundane and everyday realities, being put in touch with a sense of beauty and something beyond words, which is moving or "good for the soul" (p. 8).

The first of these three results, as well as the last are consistent with my third theme (communal singing mediates emotions and contributes to psychological wellness); items three and four are consistent with my second theme (communal singing creates belongingness).

Some of Clift et al.'s (2008) findings did not align consistently with my findings as a consistent theme, but were nonetheless evident in my data. For example, one of Clift et. al.'s findings, "emotional release and reduction of feelings of stress" was mentioned directly by one of my participants (Breanna, SLS), but not by others. The following 5 themes emerged from Clift et al.'s research that did not appear at all in my data:

- A sense of therapeutic benefit in relation to long-standing psychological and social problems (e.g., depression, a history of abuse, problems with drugs and alcohol, social disadvantage);
- A sense of contributing to the wider community through public performance;
- A sense of exercising systems of the body through the physical exertion involved in singing - especially the lungs;

- A sense of disciplining the skeletal-muscular system through the adoption of good posture; and
- Being engaged in a valued, meaningful, worthwhile activity that gives a sense of purpose and motivation (p. 9).

The absence of these themes in my research data, I believe, can be explained by the nature of the population and of the group singing context that I studied, which differs in a number of ways from those in the papers analyzed by Clift et al. First, most of the research in Clift et al.'s analysis studied members of extant choirs: The participants consisted of individuals who presumably already valued choral singing sufficiently to invest in choir membership. In my study, participants' involvement in group singing was not by choice: at SLS and LCS, Chapel attendance is a mandatory requirement for every student at the school. Second, the choirs studied in Clift et al.'s review follow a rehearse-and-perform format; as discussed in my introduction, the communal singing at LCS and SLS occurs for its own sake with no performances or rehearsals. Third, Clift et al. explained that across all the studies, there was considerable gender imbalance amongst the subjects, with women out-numbering men on an average of 3:1. LCS and SLS, in contrast, are co-ed schools with approximately equal gender ratios; furthermore, although not by design, more of my participants happened to be male. The importance of this factor is underscored by Clift and Hancox's (2001) finding of significant sex differences in the perceived benefits associated with singing, with women finding more pronounced benefits than men. Fourth, my study is concerned with adolescents and their experience of communal singing; the studies in the Clift et al. analysis all investigate adult singers,

with more than half consisting of elderly populations. The differences between the populations in the Clift et al. studies and mine reasonably account for the differences in the findings. For example, the second point listed above, a sense of contributing to a wider community through performance, does not apply to whole-school communal singing, as there are no performances involved in the whole-school communal singing.

In their conclusion, Clift et al. (2008) described the field of research on the benefits of group singing as being in an early stage of development. They argue that there is a need for a collaborative and progressive research program that will address not only the effects of active involvement in group singing on wellbeing and health, but also what mechanisms are at work. They described the field, as of 2008, as "haphazard, unconnected and non-cumulative" (p. 114).

Because Clift et al. (2008) have completed extensive review and analysis of research on the effect of group singing on wellbeing published up to February 2008, I did not attempt to duplicate their work. What follows, instead, is a summary of research on the topic since that date. Much of the research has been undertaken by Clift and colleagues, as they have worked to develop the research program for which Clift et al. (2008) identified a need. These papers include Hancox and Clift (2010); Lob et al. (2010); Clift and Morrison (2011); Clift et al. (2010, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2017); Clift (2012); Livesey et al. (2012); a doctoral dissertation, under Clift's supervision, Bento (2013); Hinshaw et al. (2015); and Skingley et al. (2016). Pertinent to my research, none of these investigations study adolescent populations: Hinshaw et al. (2015), studied children aged 7–11; the remainder investigated older adult populations. Nor do the

studies investigate the experiences of participants in mandatory communal singing settings: The populations studied are in every case, voluntary members of extant choirs. Furthermore, the gender balance within these choirs is in most cases, heavily skewed towards female membership; whereas in my research, the gender balance is even, with full representation by adolescent male singers. This points, once again, to the uniqueness of the population studied by my research project. Nevertheless, all of this research identified a connection between group singing and well-being, which supports the findings from my research. I discuss each of these papers in turn in the following section.

Papers Within the Clift et al. Body of Research. Hancox and Clift (2010) reported on the initial results from a large-scale investigation of the perceived benefits associated with choral singing. Drawn from 21 established choirs in Australia, England and Germany, 1124 choral singers, responded to the World Health Organization's Quality of Life (WHOQoL) questionnaire, and provided written accounts of their perceptions of the effects of group singing on their physical, psychological and social well-being. Participants' average age was 57; women outnumbered men by more than 2:1; all participants were members of extant choirs, and most singers had been involved in choirs for many years. Results overwhelmingly supported the hypothesis that the majority of choristers experience group singing as beneficial for well-being; women reported stronger benefits than men. Particular attention was paid to choristers with low general well-being, as measured by the WHOQoL. Notably, this subgroup highly endorsed the benefits of group singing. This might be important for considerations of psychological wellness for adolescents in a school context. If group singing does indeed

produce significant benefits for people with low general well-being, communal singing could be an important intervention in secondary schools.

Follow up analysis of this data set was published in Clift et al. (2010), which focused on the 633 participants from English choirs. In the following ways, this study's participants differ from those in my research: the participants' average age was 61; women outnumbered men by a ratio of 3:1; all were voluntarily members of existing choirs; and one quarter of the participants were described as having particular challenges in their lives (significant mental issues, health problems, disability, bereavement). Nevertheless, the survey results from Clift et al. resemble those from my study, specifically: reports of improved mood, enhanced quality of life, greater happiness, stress reduction and emotional well-being resulting from participation in group singing. Again, a significant gender difference was found, with women reporting higher measures of well-being resulting from choral singing than men. Clift et al.'s qualitative analysis of the written accounts in the data revealed six potential generative mechanisms, linking singing with well-being:

- Choral singing engenders happiness and raised spirits, which counteracts feelings of sadness and depression (p. 29).
- Singing involves focused concentration, which blocks preoccupation with sources of worry (p. 29).
- Singing involves deep breathing, which counteracts anxiety (p. 29).
- Choral singing offers a sense of social support and friendship, which ameliorate feelings of isolation and loneliness (p. 30).

- Choral singing involves education and learning, which keeps the mind active and counteracts decline of cognitive functions (p. 30).
- Choral singing involves a regular commitment to attend rehearsal, which motivates people to continue to be physically active (p. 30).

The first of these themes (choral singing promotes raised spirits) was one that I identified as an overarching theme in my study. The others seem to reflect the older ages of the Clift et al. (2010) participants and the lifestyle characteristics of older adults, which is perhaps why these generative mechanisms were not mentioned by the participants in my study.

Livesey et al. (2012) explored the benefits of choral singing in another subset of participants from the Clift et al. (2010) study: those choral singers who had reported particularly high emotional well-being along with those who had reported very low emotional states. These participants were primarily female and older in age (average age was 60 years). Results identified social and emotional benefits of choral singing as well as adding meaning and purpose to life. There seemed to be little difference in the results between the high and low group, suggesting that people at both ends of the mental health spectrum benefit in similar ways from group choral singing. Applying this to a school context, Liveley et al.'s findings might suggest that whole-school singing would confer benefits to the entire school population, not just those at one end of the mental health spectrum or the other.

Other studies within Clift's research program targeted specific populations. Lob et al. (2010) investigated the effect of group singing on 16 adult members of existing choirs

(average age 52) who suffered from adverse life circumstances. The researchers used a grounded-theory approach to interview data analysis. Lob et al. found that the social connection provided by choir membership was paramount; other themes included "competence," "purposefulness," and, consistent with those found in my research, positive emotions and well-being. My research, then, extends these findings by suggesting that the positive emotions and well-being may apply to a broader range of the population than suggested by Lob et al.'s findings.

Clift and Morrison (2011) described the evaluation of a community singing initiative for adults with serious and enduring mental health issues. Participants (average age 59.6, predominantly female) rehearsed and performed with the East Kent (U.K.) "Mustard Seed Singers" project over a period of eight months. Responses to surveys demonstrated clinically significant improvements in measures of mental distress. The researchers concluded that group singing can confer a wide range of benefits, both social and emotional, to mental health service users. Clift et al. (2015, 2017) documented similar findings in the West Kent and Medway (U.K.) singing projects. Similarly, Skingley et al. (2016) found that voluntary participants in singing groups for older people (average age, 67) reported increases in their psychological well-being. Similar results were described by Dingle et al. (2020), with older participants (average age, 81) living within a retirement village. Although the populations in these investigations are dissimilar to mine, the results corroborate my argument that group singing can contribute to wellness, and in the words of Travis (LCS), "Does them good."

In Clift et al. (2016), the research team turned to a different choir membership

profile: the wives and partners of members of the armed forces who participate in the Military Wives Choirs in the U.K. Six hundred thirty-seven participants responded to a survey and questionnaire designed to evaluate the effect of choral singing on these choristers' wellbeing. Participants were entirely female, most in their 40s. Analyses revealed large majorities of choir members experienced positive effects on health, confidence, well-being, and personal identity, as well as release of tension and coping with stress related to military life, again, adding to confirmation of the salutary benefits of group singing.

Bento's (2013) doctoral dissertation investigated the relationship between group singing and well-being. Thirty two members of English choirs responded to a written survey; participants were adult (mean age = 50) and predominantly female (81%). Bento (2013) analyzed the responses, and found results that essentially replicated those of Hancox and Clift (2010), that psychological well-being and social connection are promoted by group singing, both results consistent with my research findings. Bento also reported on negative aspects of the experience of group singing, such as difficulties in relaxing, frustration with self and others, and posture- and vocal-related physical pain (p. 122). None of these negative effects were mentioned by participants in my study: This could be due to the difference between Bento's population (older adults, primarily female) and mine (adolescents, mixed gender) and the situational context of the group singing experience: Bento's singers were from choirs that were working in a rehearse-and-perform model, with high expectations placed on them by the choir director, self, and peers for the quality of their vocal and musical performance. In contrast, my research

investigated a group singing phenomenon more focused on participation than on performance. I would suggest that the tendency of communal singing at LCS and SLS to approach Pascale's aesthetic B rather than aesthetic A might explain the differences between Bento's findings and mine.

Hinshaw et al.'s (2015) study was the first from Clift's research program to investigate the experiences of younger people. Their mixed-method study measured the impact of singing on 60 U.K. children aged 7 to 11 who volunteered to participate in a group singing project. Quantitative analysis of the resulting questionnaire data was supplemented with qualitative analysis of a sample of the children sharing their experience in a focus group setting. The researchers found that quantitative data showed no evidence for increases in psychological well-being following participation in group singing; qualitative data however revealed a range of beneficial outcomes for participants. The researchers concluded that group singing may have only a subtle impact on children with already high levels of psychological well-being. This would seem to contradict the findings from my study, as I found psychological well-being resulting from communal singing to be a pervasive theme in my research data. However, given the limitations of the qualitative approach I took to data collection and analysis, it is impossible to conclude, as did Hinshaw et al., whether the benefits I found in my analysis were subtle or significant.

Contributions To The Research Subsequent To Clift et al. (2008), From Outside The Clift Research Group

After Clift's 2008 literature review, other contributors to the field of the beneficial effects of group singing include Reagan et al. (2016), Judd and Pooley (2014), Moss et al. (2018), Bullack et al. (2018), Maury and Rickard (2020), Camlin et al. (2020), as well as a number of studies involving special populations. I discuss each of these in turn; pertinent to my research is the lack of research on the effect of group singing in predominantly healthy, gender-balanced adolescent populations.

Research on the Effects of Group Singing on Adult Populations with Chronic Health Conditions. Reagan et al. (2016) conducted an extensive literature search to uncover research conducted prior to February 2014 that focused on Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in adults with a chronic health condition (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, quadriplegia, dementia) who engaged in therapeutic group singing. The researchers uncovered 18 experimental, observational, and qualitative studies that met these conditions. Of the quantitative studies, results were mixed: only a few of the studies showed improvements of HRQoL compared to no intervention. In the qualitative studies, benefits of group singing appeared to be universal. Benefits included enjoyment, improved mood, and sense of belonging, all findings consistent with mine. The authors were critical of some of the researchers' methodology choices, and concluded that larger, well-designed randomized controlled trials, as well as in-depth qualitative investigations were required before being able to conclude that group singing is a beneficial intervention for adults with chronic health problems. This criticism of

research methodology may well apply to my study, and is a reminder that my research results cannot be generalized to broader populations than the research participants at the two schools I investigated.

Studies investigating the beneficial effects of choral singing on special populations published after Reagan et al.'s (2016) search include:

- Fancourt et al. (2019): adults suffering from bereavement
- Warran et al. (2019): adults suffering from cancer
- Perkins et al. (2018): mothers suffering from postnatal depression
- Baird et al. (2018): adults with Parkinson's
- Galinha et al (2020): adults over the age of 60
- Maury and Rickard (2020): older adults, average age of 66
- Williams et al. (2020): adults with chronic mental health conditions

All studies reported positive outcomes in measures of wellness, psychosocial and psycho-emotional variables, as a result of choral singing, consistent with my research findings, except for Maury and Rickard (2020). That these positive outcomes have been found in populations that are quite different from the ones I studied suggests a broad applicability of the idea that communal singing may benefit participants' psycho-emotional wellness, regardless of their physical and mental health status.

Maury and Rickard (2020), in contrast found the increase in measures of emotional wellbeing of participants assigned to a choral group were no different than those of participants in an exercise group, where participants exercised to music and experienced similar social interactions to those in the singing group. This suggests that

over the long-term, the benefits of social interaction and exposure to music were comparable. However, in Maury and Rickard (2020), the choir group reported greater increases in emotional well-being and social connection than the exercise group earlier in the intervention. The researchers considered this an anomaly; I would suggest that this may be consistent with Pearce's (2015) "ice-breaker effect," discussed earlier in this review. In a subtle way, this result might relate to a school context, as athletic endeavors are typically incorporated into school life. Maury and Rickard's results might suggest that communal singing could bring about similar kinds of social connection that are typically associated with school athletics (e.g., Eime, 2013), and perhaps more quickly.

Research on the Effects of Group Singing on Healthy Adult Populations. Judd and Pooley (2014) conducted in-depth interviews with 10 adults (average age 54) who were members of community choirs in Australia, in order to explore their experiences and to describe their perception of the psychological benefits of group singing. Findings were similar to those found in my research: The authors reported that participants consistently expressed a love of group singing, found that it was both uplifting and stress-relieving, and that group singing created a strong sense of community. It is important to note that members of existing choirs may have experiences qualitatively different from the population of interest to my research, where singing is mandatory for all members of the community, rather than a voluntary activity, and where the format is not rehearse-and-perform. Furthermore, the small sample size of Judd and Pooley limits the applicability of their findings.

Moss et al. (2018), however, offered evidence from a much larger sample:

Responses from self-reports by 1,779 choristers overwhelmingly supported the hypothesis that choral singing increases social connection, physical benefits, cognitive stimulation, mental health, enjoyment and transcendence: all, with the exception of physical benefits and cognitive stimulation, consistent with my research findings. The sample represented an international chorister community with participants from choirs in 18 countries. Participants were predominantly female and aged 18 to over 80. The authors noted that women reporting wellbeing benefits more highly than males. This is consistent with Clift et al. (2010)'s findings. The authors acknowledge a possible bias in their findings given that their sample consisted of people who already sing in choirs. Again, this highlights a significant difference between the participants in my study and those in Moss et al.'s (2017), but nevertheless, supports the finding from my research that group singing seems to have a beneficial effect on participants' psychological well-being.

Batt-Rawden and Andersen (2020) added to the body of research related to group singing and emotional states by exploring women's perceptions of how their participation in choral singing affects their health and wellbeing. Sixteen women aged 21-75, members of existing choirs in Norway, participated in semi-structured interviews. Emergent themes were similar to the ones I discovered in my data, including experiencing a joy of singing and group singing as a route to social connection and an enhanced sense of belonging.

Beyond merely looking at the benefits of group singing, Bullock et al. (2018) explored a more nuanced question: are the benefits reported by these studies the result of actually singing, or of merely being present in the midst of a group singing setting? To

investigate this, the researchers randomly assigned 54 singers in a large amateur choir to either a full participation group, or a non-singing rehearsal attendance group, where participants would follow all the rehearsal instructions (hold musical scores, stand up, etc.) but not sing. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 85 years; 80% were female. Two experiments, one of 30 minutes, the other of 60 minutes duration, allowed researchers to compare the effect of the length of the intervention, as well as the effect of the condition. After 30 minutes of rehearsal, the researchers found a non-significant trend in the singing group's change in positive affect compared to the non-singing group. After 60 minutes, however, effects were more pronounced: while the non-singing group showed beneficial changes in affect, the reduction in negative affect as well as the increase in positive affect were significant in the singing group compared to the non-singing group. The researchers concluded that singing for 60 minutes during choir rehearsal, compared to refraining from singing within choir rehearsal, resulted in positive changes in affect. This finding is pertinent when considering the findings from my research: at both schools, participation is rarely 100%. As one LCS student reported: "there are two or three kids that never ever sing." How does group singing impact these students? The Bullock et al. (2018) results suggest that these students may not benefit as fully as those who sing, especially during Chapel sessions that are about 30 minutes long.

Research Studies on Adolescent Populations. As observed by Dakin et al. (2017), research on outcomes of group singing tends to recruit participants in existing community choirs who are female and older. This section looks at the limited research on the benefits of group singing on younger people.

Similar to the Clift et al. (2008) extensive review, Glew et al. (2020), conducted a review of studies which examined wellbeing or psychosocial outcomes for children and young people up to the age of 18 involved in non-therapeutic group singing. Echoing my earlier observations, the authors pointed out that:

> While singing together has always been prolific in childhood in some parts of the world, in many Western countries the group singing that had been commonplace as part of collective worship in school assemblies has rapidly reduced with the secularization of schools and society. (p. 3)

Nevertheless, the authors were able to uncover 13 peer-reviewed studies that used a quantitative, qualitative, and/or mixed design to investigate outcomes of group singing in young people. After evaluating these studies, the authors concluded that the current body of research relating to the psychosocial effects of group singing in young people is limited in size, scope, and methods used. For example, the authors reported that studies using quantitative methods were small-scale or pilot studies using pre-formed, non-randomized singing groups.

None of the study populations included in Glew et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis resembled the co-ed, high school populations of my study. Of the 13 studies included in the Glew et al. (2020) review, eight papers involved primary-aged school children (one of which was Hinshaw et al. (2015) described above); only five researched an adolescent population. Of these five, four (by the same author) investigated the experiences of adolescent females within an existing, auditioned girl choir (Parker 2009, 2010, 2014, 2018).

Parker (2009, 2010, 2014 & 2018) employed inductive thematic analysis to assess interview data from conversations with members of a high-level girl choir. All of these studies revealed themes that in some ways resembled the findings from my analysis. These included singing as a therapeutic outlet for emotion; music-making as uplifting, and the social-bondedness that results when singing together. The choral experiences of the young women studied by Parker in these studies are qualitatively different from the communal experiences that my research investigated, as the choirs of interest to Parker are auditioned, top-level choirs that rehearse and perform advanced choral music. This is different from the inclusive, communal singing experience at LCS and SLS; nevertheless, Parker's findings are consistent with mine. Parker's auditioned, high-level choirs were presumably pursuing Pascale (2005) aesthetic A goals, in contrast to the primarily aesthetic B approach in Chapel at LCS and SLS. It may be that any benefits resulting from group singing do not depend upon the pursuit of either one aesthetic or the other.

The only other paper involving adolescents that was included in the Glew et al. (2020) review, was Grebosz-Haring and Thun-Hohenstein's (2018) experimental pilot study of hospitalized young people with mental disorders. The researchers compared outcomes related to mood and well-being in participants who were assigned to either a singing, or a music listening intervention. While results of this study indicate that music-related interventions are beneficial for this population, the authors concluded that the sample size was too small (n=23) to differentiate between the singing and the music listening conditions. Grebosz-Haring and Thun-Hohenstein (2018) plan to replicate this study with a larger sample size: findings from this follow-up might well inform my

research; however, as the population of interest to my research is non-hospitalized adolescents, applicability will be limited.

Conclusion

There is substantial research supporting the idea that group singing can have beneficial outcomes on participants' mood states, emotions, and psychological wellness. This is consistent with the second overarching theme that I identified in my research data, and so, my research has added nothing new to the literature. However, most of the research I examined in this review investigated singers in pre-existing choirs. These individuals are potentially biased, as they had already chosen to join a singing group. By exploring communal singing where all are mandated to participate, my research was able to investigate the experience of participants who may not necessarily be predisposed to sing. In this way, my finding that group singing mediates emotions (improves moods, lifts the spirits, enables emotional expression, and contributes to psychological wellness) in a non-voluntary, adolescent population, contributes uniquely to this field. It suggests that communal singing may be beneficial not just for those who are motivated and able to join a choir, but potentially, for everyone.

Theme Four: Research Related to "Pascale's Aesthetic B"

Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics of singing provided a theoretical framework for my inquiry. One of my research questions was: "How and in what ways, if any, does whole-school singing exemplify Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B?" In Chapter 5, I documented my findings related to this question. In sum, I found that whole school communal singing at SLS and LCS exemplifies the qualities that Pascale (2005)

described as an Aesthetic B approach to singing in the following ways: the focus on inclusion, participation, enjoyment, and community, the absence of focus on development of musical skills and performance. Other research literature that has referenced Pascale's two aesthetics of singing seems to fall into one of two categories: research on inclusionary approaches to singing (and the resulting tensions that arise when embracing both aesthetics), and research on singer/non-singer identities.

Research on Inclusionary Approaches to Singing

In an analysis of the Foundation Music Program (FMP) at the University of Winchester, Boyce-Tillman (2016) employed Pascale's (2005) conceptual framework to depict "radical inclusion," (p. 72). The author explained that within the FMP, teacher-leaders espouse aspects of both of Pascale's aesthetics in their approaches to musicking: oral as well as notation-based music learning, improvisational as well as composed approaches, art music as well as folk traditions. Because it eschews auditions, focuses on collegiality, and embraces diversity and social justice, Boyce-Tillman argued that the FMP can be considered an example of "radical inclusion" (p. 72).

It is important to note that while the FMP described by Boyce-Tillman (2016) is indeed inclusive, and does provide an exemplar of Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B, it is not as fully inclusive as communal singing, as I have defined it. The FMP is an elective, co-curricular music program. Students at the University of Winchester may choose to partake in the program, or choose not to. Whole-school singing, because it includes every student at the school, not just those who choose to join, may present an alternative interpretation of the concept "radical inclusion."

Alternatively, because singing is mandated, if students at SLS and LCS felt coerced to sing, then the descriptor "inclusion" would not apply. However, I had no interview data that suggested that students felt coerced. The students at SLS all engaged in house singing practices, and expressed that they enjoyed learning their house hymn, enjoyed feeling included in house singing, and valued feeling part of the house and school community. The students at LCS who described "down days" when they occasionally did not feel like singing, appreciated the support their peers gave them by pulling them up and encouraging them to sing. If I had interviewed students who responded negatively to the practice of whole school singing, who described feeling bullied, or pressured to sing, then this suggestion, that communal singing at LCS and SLS is inclusive, would be false. However, none of the research participants expressed this point of view, despite my repeated questioning to uncover this possibility. As a result, Boyce-Tillman's (2016) concept of radical inclusion appears to apply to communal singing at LCS and SLS.

In a subsequent paper, Boyce-Tillman (2018) further explored the concept of radical inclusion by investigating three collaborative projects involving professional musicians, music teachers, and students in rehearsals and performances of composed and improvised music. The author explained that these projects, in effect, combined both of Pascale's (2005) aesthetics as they bridged the gap between improvised and composed music, world music, and Western classical music, and involved both amateurs and professionals. Evidence of this "meeting of the aesthetics" (p. 115) included the resulting frustrations experienced by participants, as well as compromises that had to be made by

various types of musicians. For example, Boyce-Tillman explained that one professional musician was uncomfortable with the request that they walk while improvising music. This musician had only ever played from a written score, the result of their training within a purely Aesthetic A paradigm. The author concluded that tensions inevitably result when the two aesthetics collide. Boyce-Tillman's observations are consistent with tension that one of my participants — a music teacher at the SLS - described:

> I guess the goal of it is not — in anybody's mind but mine - the goal is never to sing it perfectly, and have good singing technique, it seems like everybody else's goal is just that community-building camaraderie of singing together. It could be a bit frustrating, though, at times for a singer. (Ms. Fields, SLS)

This awareness and reconciliation of competing goals when the two aesthetics are embraced, may be an important key to successful whole school communal singing. Boyce-Tillman (2018) concluded that "conservatoire training needs to include reflection on the often-unquestioned value systems that underpin them" (p. 117). This advice may be pertinent to would-be leaders of communal singing as well.

In the context of community choirs, Rensink-Hoff (2009) explored similar tensions between the pursuit of musical achievement and the goals of leisure participation. Rensink-Hoff gathered questionnaire data from 457 choir members, as well as conductors, of 11 amateur community choirs in Ontario, Canada. The researcher compared choristers' perceptions of the musical and non-musical benefits of participating in choir rehearsals and performances with those of the conductors. The chasm between the two groups was significant: Conductors reported experiencing tensions between

striving to be inclusive, while also striving for musical excellence; choosing repertoire that suited the ability and preferences of the group, while providing musical quality; and balancing social as well as musical needs. The author, referencing Pascale (2005) in depicting this tension, concluded that:

> Mediating one reality—that many people want to sing for the sheer pleasure of singing—with another—that singing is a skill that can be refined and developed—is a difficult task, particularly in amateur music-making contexts. (p. 194)

Similarly, writing about community choirs, Bell (2008) explained that "in their quest for choral performance perfection, some choirs actually marginalize adult amateur singers" (p. 229). By instituting auditions, the author explained, these choirs sacrifice inclusion for musical achievement. Similarly, Joyce (2003) observed that community choirs' focus on public performances results in a tension between musical excellence, versus singing for pleasure: a tension that is often resolved by the exclusion of less musically able participants.

This tendency to exclude singers for musical reasons is entirely bypassed by both LCS and SLS in the way they practice whole school communal singing: There is no exclusion, as complete participation by the entire community is the primary goal. Without the pressure of upcoming performances, the focus in communal singing is shifted away from musical excellence and put entirely onto inclusion. It may be that radical inclusion is possible only when the tension between Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics is removed, by eliminating Aesthetic A considerations entirely. At LCS and SLS during communal singing, all the emphasis is on Pascale's Aesthetic B: This may be a way to promote

"radical inclusion."

Research on Singer / Non-singer Identities

Pascale (2005) explained that the concept of two aesthetics of singing emanated from her investigation of the non-singer phenomenon: "What does the term "non-singer" mean? Where do beliefs about singing originate? What does a classroom teacher mean when she or he [*sic*] says, 'Oh, sorry, I can't sing.'" (p. 167). These and similar questions form the basis of a body of research that has investigated why some people regard themselves as singers and some as non-singers. This research relates to my investigation, as I, too, attempted to determine whether within Pascale's aesthetic B environment of whole-school communal singing, individuals would self-identify as singers or non-singers.

Richards and Durrant (2003) observed rehearsals and interviewed 40 members of the "Can't Sing Choir" in London, U.K., in order to investigate the experience of people who self-identify as non-singers. The Can't Sing Choir had been advertised in an adult education prospectus as a choir "for those who really feel they can't sing or pitch a note properly" (p. 78). Members of the choir were primarily women between the ages of 40 and 60. The researchers found that most participants based their non-singer self-attribution on negative comments about their singing voice that they had received during their youth or childhood. In-depth interviews with choir members confirmed what researchers observed over six months of rehearsals: That during their time in the Can't Sing Choir, participants grew significantly in both skill and confidence. Furthermore, the singers' causal attributions of singing ability changed from believing failure was due to

their own shortcoming (internal attribution), to understanding that singing is a developmental process requiring time and effort (external attribution). In conclusion, Richards and Durrant suggested that the term 'non-singers' should be abandoned (p. 87). Interestingly, the authors did not cite Pascale (2002), who had previously raised the concept.

Nevertheless, Richards and Durrants' (2003) points apply to my research directly. Students do not necessarily come to LCS and SLS with the belief that they can sing. As observed throughout this thesis, it takes time for the younger students to "warm up" to the idea of singing, and to gain confidence. The idea that singing is a learnable skill that takes time and effort was emphasized by Dave Robertson (SLS). As he said to the students: "Just join in, just follow them [the sing-squads of competent singers that Dave had planted throughout the room], just follow their lead and try . . .you can do it. You can do this." By making this concept explicit, that singing is a learned skill that takes time and effort may be the key to gaining full participation and "radical inclusion."

Other research related to the non-singer phenomenon includes Whidden's body of work. Whidden (2008) investigated the narratives of five adult women who identified as non-singers. In every case, similar to Richard and Durrant's (2003) findings, the researcher discovered that participants labeled themselves as non-singers after hearing a teacher or influential adult make a negative comment about their singing voice when they were a child. Whidden (2008) underscored the longevity of the effect of such comments, an argument the author subsequently presented in similar investigations (Whidden, 2009, 2010, 2013). In similar research, Hennessy (2000), Hogle (2020) and Knight (2010,

2013) also reported that the cause of non-singer identities was typically a negative experience in youth or childhood, usually involving an authority figure.

Looking beyond just singing to musicality in general, Ruddock and Leong (2005) reported the results of a multiple case study of people who label themselves as unmusical. The researchers found that the participants' self-limiting beliefs reflected a determinist view that musical abilities are dependent upon innate talent. Ruddock and Leong explained that rather than questioning these beliefs, their informants simply accepted their non-musical status. The idea that Western society perceives musical ability to be a fixed trait is well documented (e.g., Austin & Vispoel, 1998; Joyce, 2003; Shuter-Dyson, 1999; Sloboda, 1996).

Finally, Ruhnke (2020) investigated the personal journeys of three adults as they engaged in a singing program designed for people who self-identify as non-singers. Through in-depth interviews, Ruhnke discovered that in their youth, these individuals had experienced school music programs characterized by exclusivity, a focus on competence and ability, a product-driven rehearsal process, and elitism. These past experiences had contributed to the participants' identities as non-singers.

The results of this research on the topic of singer / non-singer identities would suggest that adults in school and music leadership positions would do well to heed the following advice, in order to avoid creating non-singer identification amongst their students:

- Refrain from making negative comments about students' singing abilities.
- Explicitly frame singing ability as a learned skill, not an innate talent.

- Focus on inclusion and full participation.
- Focus on process, learning and growth, not product (Richards & Durrant, 2003)

These points align with the strategies and approaches employed by the leaders of whole-school singing at the two schools I examined. There is no focus on performance in Chapel singing at LCS and at SLS, as the singing happens for its own sake. Leaders and students alike limit their feedback to encouraging full participation and loudness, for example, Dave Robertson's exhorting SLS students to "sing with gusto!" and Logan's (LCS) observation that student to student feedback is only ever given to encourage participation. The focus of whole-school singing at LCS and SLS puts priority on building confidence and full participation, rather than on building vocal and musical skills, which is consistent with Pascale's aesthetic B. Therefore, by taking an Aesthetic B approach to communal singing at LCS and SLS, the leaders seem to have created a space where everyone can be a singer, according to Pascale's (2005) definition.

Conclusion

Research related to Pascale's (2002, 2005) two aesthetics suggests that an Aesthetic B approach that focuses less on acquiring musical skills and preparing for performance, and more on singing for enjoyment, may be the more effective approach for bringing about "radical inclusion" in a whole school communal singing setting. Tension between the two aesthetics may be reduced when all acknowledge that the focus is entirely on Aesthetic B priorities. The concept that singing is a learnable skill, requiring time and effort, aligns with this approach. Making this concept explicit in a communal

singing context creates an environment where students may develop the belief that they can sing and the attitude that they enjoy singing. Schools wishing to initiate whole-school communal singing are advised to consider a Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B approach, based on the results from this research.

Theme Five: Research Related to "It Doesn't Happen on its Own"

How does one initiate communal singing with a large group of self-conscious, adolescents, who may or may not have had positive singing experience in the past, and who have not elected to sing (as they would if they had signed up for an elective choir)? From my research, it was clear that enthusiastic, fully participative communal singing does not just happen on its own. In Syd Birrell's (the organist at LCS) words:

> Honestly, you can't just go in there and say, "OK, let's turn to number 200 and we're going to learn that one today." This is just not possible. (Syd Birrell, LCS)

Similarly, Dave Robertson at SLS was very clear that initiating communal singing at SLS required that he implement a series of intentional strategies. At LCS and SLS, successful whole-school singing did not happen by accident but as the result of specific leadership, intention and method.

In this section, I consider research related to the importance of leadership and the use of intentional strategies in implementing a practice of successful communal singing. Note that this is qualitatively different from encouraging participation in a community singing context. In community singing spaces, participants are volunteers. For example, they join an amateur community choir because they want to sing; they have turned up at the Beer Choir event because they enjoy singing; they sign up for the "Can't Sing Choir"

because they are willing to learn to sing. In contrast, in communal singing contexts, the group's willingness to sing, or even to try, cannot be assumed.

Related research to the challenges of leading communal singing primarily consist of historic accounts. For example, Morgan-Ellis (2014) described opening night, October 1921, at the Harding picture palace, when the organist, Edward K. House, led the audience sing-along. After House's efforts met with an "icy reception," House tried to engage the patrons in a song contest. Nobody sang, and the session "concluded in dead silence, all applause withheld" (p. 181). Fear of an outcome such as this may be the reason why more secondary schools do not attempt communal singing, and why this concept of how to lead and implement communal singing is so critical.

The Importance of the Song Leader to Successful Communal Singing

According to the standards of Pascale's (2005) second aesthetic of singing, "successful communal singing" means full participation, enthusiasm, and singing "with gusto," as Dave Robertson (SLS) indicated. There is scant research on this topic, particularly in contrast with the significant body of research that investigates successful choir leadership in an Aesthetic A context. Choir leadership, according to Aesthetic A priorities, requires competencies such as repertoire knowledge, score proficiency, error detection and aural skills, gestural skills, vocal technique, and conducting skills (Jansson et al., 2019). Leading communal singing, in contrast, has different requirements and priorities, and is less represented in the research literature.

Contemporary resources offer guidance to aspiring leaders of community choirs, such as the Community Choir Leadership Training Course (CCLTC) offered by Siobhan

Robinson and Dennis Donnelly, that has grown into the Ubuntu Choirs Network (Ubuntu Choirs Network, n.d.). The focus of the CCLTC is on both artistic choral conducting skills and community-building techniques. Although aimed at community singing leadership, this course may well be applicable to leading in a communal singing context. However, community choirs consist of people who have elected to sing, are willing to sing, and are wanting to sing; research on leading true communal singing, where participants are not volunteers, is scant.

Historically, communal singing in North America was more common at the beginning of the 20th century than it is currently, as explained in Chapter 1. As a result, as explained in Chapter 2, I did find texts written in the first half of the twentieth century for leaders of summer camps, boys and girls clubs, church organizations, recreation centers, and other organizations, wishing to lead "informal group singing:" *Lead a Song! A Practical Guide To Organization and Conducting of Informal Group Singing* (Wilson, 1942), *How to lead group singing* (Eisenberg, 1955) and *Music in Recreation, Social Foundations and Practices* (Kaplan, 1955). Although "informal group singing" could refer to the activities of community choirs or voluntary singing events (where people gather for the purposes of singing), these texts also refer to contexts that fit my definition of communal singing. For example, Eisenburg's (1955) recommendations were intended for situations where "you may be requested to lead fifteen minutes of singing at a banquet, to direct a few songs at the opening of vespers . . . to lead the singing 'to get our meeting started off in a good mood' . . or as a preliminary part of an evening-long recreation program" (p. 42). In these circumstances, the participants have not gathered for

the purposes of singing. Like students at a school assembly, they may not be willing or comfortable singing.

Similarly, Wilson (1942) provided advice to leaders of many different kinds of "sings," including times when "people may be brought together for social occasions, and group singing can be one of the planned features" (p. 49). Wilson also addressed situations such as "when large groups of people meet together for religious and patriotic services, the incidental hymn or song is usually most appropriate . . . the school assembly, the classroom, the civic club, the camp, the industrial meeting, where group singing may be the highlight of the occasion" (p. 49). Note Wilson's comment that group singing is the highlight, but not the *raison d'etre*, of the gathering. As such, the participants, not in attendance primarily for the purpose of singing, may in fact be unwilling, or need persuading to participate. As a result, these historic texts, though dated, may be useful sources for evidence of "best practices" in achieving successful communal singing.

Eisenberg's handbook *How to lead group singing* (Eisenberg, 1955) expressed that the leader is critical to the success of group singing. The author described an anecdote where a visitor had turned up at a communal singing event, and observed that the group was particularly unimpressive, until the moment when they began to sing, at which point "they lighted up like Christmas trees! They had a group personality!" (p. 11) One of the singers was observed to only be able to sing one note, but "he gave it all that he had" (p. 11) The visitor asked what the secret was. The answer was unequivocal: the leader.

Wilson (1942) was similarly adamant that success of group singing depended on

the leader. According to these texts, two factors are cited as crucial characteristics of these successful leaders: personality and use of particular strategies and tactics. Musical ability was consistently cited as being of secondary importance.

Personality. Wilson (1942) declared that "the first requirement of the song-leader is enthusiasm for music and people" (p. 1); after this, the author listed sincerity, naturalness, and sense of humor as secondary requirements, and finally, musical and vocal skills. Similarly, Kaplan (1955) wrote:

> The most important qualification for the leader (of communal singing) is enthusiasm, friendliness, sincerity, good sense, good humour, appearance, good speaking voice, confidence in himself and a liking for people. Musical knowledge and quality of his singing voice are secondary. (p. 93)

Eisenberg (1955) made a similar claim: The song-leader's personality was more important than musical skill to the success of communal singing.

Similarly, in contemporary research on historic communal singing, the personality of the song-leaders emerged as a notable feature. Morgan-Ellis (2018a) depicted Warren Kimsey, the popular song-leader at training Camp Gordon prior to and during WWI, as energetic, enthusiastic, and persistent: "Pep, and a whole lot of it, is the only way to express Warren Kimsey's manner of leading songs" (*Atlanta Constitution,* 1918, as cited by Morgan-Ellis, 2018, p. 189). Similarly, Morgan-Ellis's (2018b) investigation of community singing in picture palaces in the U.S. from 1925 to 1933 described Henri Keates, the organist at the Chicago Oriental theatre, as a jocular, high-energy, charismatic song-leader. Through jokes, anecdotes and compliments, Keates created a bond between

himself and the audience/participants. For example, according to one newspaper review from 1927, Keates "completely won over his audience" when he answered a fake telephone call from a salesman offering singing lessons, and announced (to the audience) that "his audience did not need any such thing." (*Exhibitor's Herald*, 1927, as cited by Morgan-Ellis, 2018b, p. 38). This gag was intended to inspire hearty participation in singing, and it worked, according to a number of contemporary reviewers (Morgan-Ellis, 2018b). High energy, upbeat mood, comedic touches, and a great rapport with the group seem to characterize the song-leaders' personalities in these accounts of communal singing in historic contexts.

Some of the literature related to historic whole-school communal singing that I examined in Chapter 2 also highlighted the importance of the song-leader's personality and abilities to the success of communal singing in school assemblies. Vincent Morgan, professor of music at Amherst College, wrote in his *Study of Musical Education in Private Boys' Schools in New England*, that the "school sing" is, for the majority of students, "absorbing or dull according to the talents of the director" (Morgan, 1940, p. 27). Furthermore, the author reported that:

> Ability to lead the whole student body in such a manner that there is a real esprit de corps is a rare gift. Schools having a man [*sic*] with this gift should make the most of their good fortune; other schools may wisely omit community singing, for this activity cannot be of much value unless it is carried on with general enthusiasm. (p. 27)

It seems that in in Morgan's opinion, the ability to generate participation and enthusiasm

is a talent that song leaders must possess — and that such a talent is rare. Whether or not song-leaders can learn to lead successful group singing within a secondary school context, or whether it is indeed an inborn talent or personality trait, is beyond the scope of this paper.

Similarly, Augustus Zanzig, director of music at the National Recreation School (U.S.), wrote in 1933:

> In leading community singing, the possession of sincere good will, enthusiasm, humor, personality, and freedom of spirit and manner, is so important that the musician without any one of these qualities is likely to be less successful than the musically untrained person who has them all, and is able to sing accurately, freely and dominantly enough to be a stimulating model. (Zanzig, 1933, p. 10)

Again, this prioritization of personal qualities above musical abilities is consistent with the descriptions of successful song-leaders examined above. The 1958 monograph titled *Singing in the Schools* observed that

> . . . The success of an assembly sing depends on a good leader. He [*sic*] should have definite leadership ability and be able to inspire confidence in the singers. He must forget himself. Personal magnetism is an important quality of his leadership and unless he has enthusiasm for the work, results are much less than satisfactory. Good musicianship is, of course, a qualification . . . To further characterize the good leader, he must be sincere, natural, sensitive to the group, must possess a sense of humour, and display good taste in all matters. (Music Educators National Conference (U.S.), 1958, p. 2)

Similar characteristics were described in Bayliss and Stuart's (2012) depiction of mass singing at an Australian boys' school. The authors stated that "keep(ing) a sense of humor and positive good-will" (p. 343) was an important strategy for the leader of a massed singing program.

Sense of humor, sensitivity to the group, positive good-will and personal magnetism: these characteristics all seem to me to be similar to the descriptions of Syd Birrell, the organist and song-leader at LCS. Recall the description by one participant: "Syd is a larger than life character, super quirky and super endearing" (Duncan, LCS graduate). Syd's sense of humor, from the amusing ditties he writes, to the sight-gags involving Borneo darts, is redolent of the jokes, antics and gags used by the picture-palace organist-song leaders to incite audience participation, described by Morgan-Ellis (2018b).

The "personal magnetism" referred to (above) in *Singing in the Schools* (Music Educators National Conference, 1958) also seems an apt description of Dave Robertson, the individual credited with being the "driving force" behind communal singing at SLS. While not a musician (as is Syd Birrell is at LCS), Dave was evidently a leader who instilled confidence and enthusiasm for singing in his students at Chapel. Dave's expectation of the assembled student body was high, recalling Morgan-Ellis's (2018a) depiction of Warren Kimsey, the song-leader at a WWI training camp:

> He [Warren Kimsey] makes them [the audience] sing. If they don't suit him, he'll stop them in the middle of a verse with no compunction, and he illustrates the "expression" he wants in a song both muscularly and vocally. (Atlanta

> Constitution, December 8, 1917, as cited in Morgan-Ellis, 2018a)

Similarly, Dave Robertson was willing to stop the group to make his expectations clear. Recall the words of this faculty member:

> He [Dave] would do things like stop them [the students] if he didn't think they were singing particularly well, or nicely. He's not a particularly musical guy himself and he'll tell you that himself. But he knew when they were under-doing it and just kind of going through the motions of "blah blah blah". And he would stop and say: "we're going to do that again, and we're going to do it with more gusto." (Ms. Fields, SLS)

This underscores the importance of having a leader capable of instilling confidence, inspiring enthusiasm, and being willing to hold the group to expectations of high energy and full participation. In a similar vein, Eisenberg (1955) supported this idea in the opening paragraph of *How To Lead Group Singing:*

> To lead group singing . . . you don't have to be an expert musician, you don't have to swish your hands like an oratorio conductor, you don't have to warble like an opera star or be glamorous like a movie star to get creditable results in group song leadership. If you can furnish the pitch, the rhythm, the sense of fitness, and the spirit of enthusiasm and can sing along with the crowd, your group will be off to a happy, satisfying period of song. (p. 7)

In conclusion, descriptions of successful communal song-leading underscore the importance of the leader's personality in creating a singing culture of full, enthusiastic participation. Furthermore, the leader's personal qualities may be more important than

their musical skill. This certainly reflects the findings of my research: that whole school communal singing does not happen on its own, but requires a leader with certain personal qualities, in order to be successful.

Specific Techniques. Song leaders in communal singing contexts use specific techniques to raise participation and enthusiasm. Distinct from choral conducting techniques for choirs with Aesthetic A priorities, these techniques are designed to engage everyone and to create a safe environment for taking risks. The techniques that participants in my study described are comparable to those described elsewhere in the communal singing literature.

Use of Sing Squads. At SLS, Dave Robertson employed "sing squads:" small groups of three to four strong, capable singers that he would position within the assembly, in order to build up the community's confidence in singing. This is similar to Chang's (2001) description of a strategy used in communal singing within WWI training camps, where song-leaders gave the officers private voice lessons and trained them to sing in small ensembles; subsequently, these small groups sang within the regiment in order to provide positive role modelling. Note that Dave Robertson was not deliberately building on the practices followed by communal singing leaders in WWI camps; rather, he had intuitively discovered this technique, one that had actually been used to great success almost a century earlier.

Use of Rote Methods to Teach New Songs. At both LCS and SLS, melodies to new songs are taught by rote. The Music Director at SLS explained "So, I'll often do that kind of kindergarten teacher thing: (sings, with hand levels) 'So we are going up the

scale' or whatever. Right? I'll use my hands a little bit," (Ms. Fields, SLS). This is similar to the way that communal singing was taught in WWI training camps, using the hands to indicate the melodic line (Chang, 2001). At both SLS and LCS, song leaders provide the text-only (text-only hymn books at SLS, words projected onto a screen at LCS), rather than providing music notation. This is consistent with the method followed by song leaders of communal singing in the picture palaces (Morgan-Ellis, 2018b), and communal singing in WWI army training camps (Morgan-Ellis 2018a). The "how-to lead community singing" manuals from the early twentieth century, such as Eisenberg (1955) and Wilson (1942) advocate a similar method. That the practice I observed at SLS and LCS is consistent with historical communal singing practices, might suggest that notational literacy is not important to communal singing.

Use of Singing Competitions. Dave Robertson's tactic of "playing unashamedly on their (the students') competitiveness" by having the houses compete with one another in singing their house hymn, is similar to WWI song leaders' use of organized regimental singing competitions to instill enthusiasm (Chang, 2001). At LCS, Syd Birrell also harnessed the students' competitive spirit in the way he led the singing of "There Ain't No Flies On Us": This was "a game that would happen. Like you'd go back and forth across the pews and see who could be louder" (Logan, LCS). Similarly, Edward Meikle, organist at The Harding picture palace in Chicago, 1925 to 1929, harnessed competitive spirits as an audience-boosting tactic (Morgan-Ellis, 2014). Meikle's method was to put a question to the audience, attach a song to each answer, and ask the audience to "vote," by singing loudly for their choice. This encouraged loud singing, as the audience was eager

to voice their opinion by out-singing the competition. This is consistent with Pearce et al.'s (2016) finding, in a naturalistic experiment, that positive social connections result whether or not group singing is done in a competitive or a cooperative setting. It is important to note that in all of these contexts, the competition was characterized as fun and light-hearted, and purely as a strategy to incite enthusiastic participation, rather than as a fiercely competitive endeavor.

Similarly, the harnessing of light-hearted competition to motivate students to sing might seem to place communal singing at LCS and SLS at odds with Pascale's (2002, 2005) aesthetic B, which stresses the social value of singing together as an inclusive, joyful endeavor. When Ben (SLS) described wanting his house to "look good" in front of the school, and assigned push-ups to students who did not know the words to the house hymn, this might suggest a straying away from the spirit of aesthetic B. However, it may be that employing light-hearted competition in this way is a means to an end. As observed by Syd Birrell, teenagers will not fully engage in singing without specific, intentional intervention. It may be that, paradoxically, light-hearted competition and resulting peer pressure could produce an end-result of full participation and joyful music-making. Both Dave Robertson (SLS) and Syd Birrell (LCS) expressed this view. Returning to my stance as a phenomenological researcher, that is, tasked with exploring phenomena as it is perceived and experienced by the individual participants, rather than describing the phenomena through the lens of my, or others' value systems, I refrain from imposing judgment on these strategies.

Repertoire Choice

It was evident from my conversations with the research participants that repertoire choice was a significant factor in the success of communal singing at their schools. Certainly the student participants had favorite songs, and they were able to identify which songs elicited more enthusiastic singing from the students than others. Chapel leaders (the adults responsible for Chapel programming) were similarly consistent regarding which songs resulted in the most enthusiastic singing with fullest participation. Reports were consistent from both schools that Chapel leaders choose repertoire strategically, for example, programming particular songs on "down days" (days when student energy was low) in order to bring up the energy. At LCS, the boisterous "No Flies on Us" is an example of an energy-raising piece that Syd Birrell employed when energy was low; similarly, at SLS, Lonsdale's hymn was frequently employed as a means to incite enthusiastic singing when "gusto" was lacking.

This strategy is consistent with the emphasis in the "how to lead communal singing" manuals on choosing appropriate repertoire. For example, Eisenberg (1955) recommended that song-leaders choose songs according to the needs of the group: "Usually on the first few songs, you will be singing for spirit, volume, enthusiasm . . . use songs that you like and that they like" (p. 31). Eisenberg advised that although "there is no such thing as a sure-fire song" (p. 31), the author did recommend "Funiculi, Funicula, Home on the Range, Dear Hearts and Gentle People," as pieces that would likely incite crowds (in the United States of 1955) to sing.

The strategy of choosing songs based almost entirely on the songs' ability to

increase enthusiasm, energy, and participation, differs from the factors considered by music educators in Aesthetic A contexts. For example, H. Robert Reynolds made clear recommendations regarding repertoire choice to high school band teachers in his well-known and oft-referenced article "Repertoire *Is* the Curriculum" (Reynolds, 2000), stating that choosing the right repertoire is the most important decision that music educators make:

> Our primary purpose is to help individual students receive a musical education through experience and information . . . in order to achieve this lofty goal, we must strive to select the finest repertoire, for only through immersion in music of lasting quality can we engage in aesthetic experiences of breadth and depth. (p. 31)

The concepts of "quality" music and "finest repertoire" are pervasive in Reynold's (2000) article. In particular, Reynolds stated that "While you should consider the students' enthusiasm for the music, the intrinsic merit of the music has a much higher level of priority" (p. 33). What is meant by "intrinsic merit" is beyond the scope of my research, as this judgement is based on a contested hierarchy of value; however, it is important to point out that the priorities for repertoire choice, according to Reynolds are entirely different from those in a Pascale's Aesthetic B, communal singing context.

Despite Reynolds's (2000) influence on music educators, there is research that suggests that high school ensemble teachers actually take a broader approach to repertoire choice for school music ensembles than Reynolds would advocate. Rotjan (2017) investigated how high school orchestra teachers negotiate repertoire choice with their

students, in ways that balance music "quality," culturally responsive practices, pedagogical appropriateness and students' preferences. Similarly, Mertz (2018) investigated the tension experienced by high school band teachers between expectations to teach "quality" repertoire (as defined by their teacher training experiences) and their recognition that student needs may require different priorities. For high school music ensemble directors, clearly a number of factors beyond "quality music" (as Reynolds might define it) informs repertoire choice decisions, including educational, aesthetic, and suitability considerations, as well as cultural and stylistic diversity in style (Carney, 2005; Gossett, 2015). Nevertheless, because the goals and objectives of high school music ensembles differ from those of whole school communal singing, the repertoire choice process is necessarily different.

Choosing Songs That Are Familiar. Research on song choice in communal singing contexts suggests that one of the primary repertoire considerations should be familiarity. Pawley and Mullensiefen (2012), investigated factors that were conducive to crowds' singing along to pop songs at entertainment venues (nightclubs, pubs etc.) in the North of England. The researchers recorded the percentage of people singing along and compared this to contextual features of the venue, and musical features of the songs. Regression analysis yielded a number of factors; pertinent to my research was the result that more familiar songs, such as those at the top of the U.K. pop charts, were more likely to incite audiences to singalong than less-familiar songs. This result was reflected by the comments by my participants, for example, Ben (SLS) explained the reason why he prefers singing the familiar Anglican hymns:

> I like it when the school tries to bring in new songs. Except the problem is it sounds terrible the first couple of times, right? And the thing is, we try to rotate through all the house hymns every year, and a bunch of other songs, so you don't really get a good school voice when you're singing a new song that no one knows. (Ben, SLS)

Dave Robertson's (SLS) piece of advice for schools starting up communal singing reflects this focus on familiarity. He advised that leaders start with just one or two songs, and work on these until they are very familiar. Like Ben, above, he was clear that communal singing is much more successful when the group is familiar with the repertoire. Similarly, Syd Birrell (LCS) programmed songs that students were likely to already know, such as "Let It Go" from *Frozen*, as part of his strategy for inciting participation. Syd explained that he knew that participation would be higher when students were familiar with the song.

Should Students Have Agency in Song Choice? At neither SLS nor LCS is repertoire choice left entirely up to the students. The adults remain in full control of the repertoire choice process for Chapel singing. This approach seems contrary to Seeger and Seeger's (2006) advice. Seeger and Seeger investigated communal singing at a children's' sleepaway summer camp in Vermont and highlighted the importance of giving children and camp counsellors control over the repertoire, so that group singing continually reflects the interests of the participants. This contrasts with the fact that students at LCS and SLS appear to have limited agency in repertoire choice.

Why Does SLS not Incorporate Secular Songs? I would imagine that given the choice between singing "Let It Go" from *Frozen* (a song that adolescents in 2020 know well) and singing an old Anglican hymn, students would more likely choose the former. At LCS, my student participants reported that they preferred to sing the contemporary secular songs in the LCS repertoire. At SLS, however, secular contemporary songs simply are not sung in Chapel, with a few exceptions (for example, at the Children's Chapel). The SLS Chaplain explained to me:

> I didn't pick the hymns. The hymnbook was established before me and I don't know what I would do. And I've had some staff say, "oh, the stuff is so archaic, can't we do some contemporary music?" And I say, "well, what does that mean?" I said, you know, "you're going to get the whole school together and try and decide what new hymns you're going to sing?" I said you might as well get people together and decide on what shade of white you want on the walls. You know, so I've come to think that it's better just to have these traditional hymns that they've always done at Shawnigan and just leave it alone. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

Although Mr. Austin's argument for continuing to sing the hymn-book songs may not be sound, this is nevertheless his opinion, and it seemed to express the viewpoint of the SLS research participants. As pointed out throughout my paper, SLS student interviewees did report enjoying singing these "archaic" hymns. Based on participants' comments, SLS students appear to sing their hymns as enthusiastically as the students at LCS sing their contemporary songs.

Interestingly, student reports of aesthetic responses to group singing occurred at

SLS, but not at LCS. For example, Alison's (SLS) comment is suggestive of aesthetic emotion:

> I really like one called "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind." And it's a really sad one. Like, I don't know why I like it so much, but I think it's like the chord progression, or something. But it's just like, — oh — [claps hands to heart] I love it. (Alison, SLS)

Similarly, Matthew (SLS) reported:

> When we have alumni who return and who are singing to their fullest potential. And the sound is absolutely, like, jaw dropping, beautiful and astounding. . . .And when we get to sing together and when we get to sing to our fullest potential, we can make something that is truly beautiful. (Matthew, SLS)

Comments about the music's beauty, or a love for the music itself, did not appear in LCS students' reports. It occurs to me that perhaps because SLS students spend more time singing the traditional Anglican hymns, they are more familiar with those songs, and as a result, are able to access an aesthetic associated with the Anglican musical tradition. One SLS faculty member commented:

> The quality of the music is really very superb. Yeah, like Vaughan-Williams and Beethoven. And, you know, I mean, it's beautiful. (Mr. Austin, SLS)

Mr. Austin's opinion may be based on flawed colonialist assumptions that music from the Western Art tradition is beautiful. Assessing the aesthetic worth of one repertoire set (SLS's Anglican hymns) over another (LCS's mix of Anglican hymns and contemporary secular songs) is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it may be worth considering

that perhaps, student agency in the choosing of repertoire is not as important in achieving successful communal singing in high schools, despite Seeger and Seeger's (2006) advocacy for participant control over the songs in communal singing contexts. This could be the focus for future research.

Similarly, it is beyond the scope of my research to question LCS and SLS's use of primarily Eurocentric, largely white repertoire in their whole school singing sessions. (Notable exceptions within the LCS whole school singing repertoire include "O Siem," by Susan Aglukark, a Canadian Inuk artist, songs by African American artists, such as Bill Withers' "Lean on Me," and occasional Jewish folk songs, see Appendix A). Rather than critiquing repertoire choice through an anti-colonialist lens, my focus has been on describing and understanding the phenomenon of whole school singing through the eyes of the participants. As a result, my discussion has been primarily about my interviewees' preferences and thoughts about the repertoire. Again, discussions of repertoire choice for whole school singing can be the focus for future research.

Cultural Transmission: The Role of Students Themselves

Although adults, and specifically the adults whom I identified as "cultural leaders," intentionally direct the transmission of cultural norms around singing, one of my findings at both schools was that students themselves, also play a significant role in this work. Through behavior modelling (which new students mimic, consciously or unconsciously), as well as direct and indirect teaching, older peers play a significant role in enculturating the newer students to Chapel singing. New students, through engaging in the cultural practice of communal singing, learn the cultural norms of attitude (e.g., "it's

cool to sing at Shawnigan"), traditions of practice (e.g., at LCS, banging on the pews during "Sweet Caroline"), and mindset (e.g., at both schools, it's okay to "sing out," whether or not you self-identify as a "good" singer). Literature on the topic of student enculturation is extensive. The most pertinent to my research are Rogoff et al. (1998), Van Meijl (2008), and Hogle (2018).

Rogoff et al. (1998) distinguished between learning as a consequence of participation in sociocultural activities (participation theory) and learning that occurs as a result of a one-sided process of transmission of knowledge from teachers or acquisition of knowledge by learners (transmission theory). The enculturation described by my research participants seems to align with Rogoff et al.'s participation theory: Although there is direct teaching involved, a significant component of students' learning occurs simply by participating in Chapel singing.

Van Meijl (2008), exploring the ways that Maori children learn, used the term "education through exposure" to describe the learning that results from participating:

> Prospective learners are found, thrown into a situation in which their participation is needed and expected, given some help by the others involved to develop the skills needed and to make sense of what is going on but left to a large degree to 'pick it up' and 'work it out' by themselves. The emphasis is on letting things happen naturally, and taking advantage of them when and as they do. (p. 87)

Van Meijl's description seems also to apply to the enculturation that occurs during LCS and SLS Chapel singing: New students are "thrown into a situation" (i.e., Chapel singing) in which their participation is expected; they are given some help by their surrounding

peers, but they are to a large degree left to “pick it up” by themselves. Matthew (SLS) used the term “organic” to describe this process.

The way that older peers enculture younger peers at SLS and LCS is similar to Hogle’s (2018) description of “learned helpfulness” (p. 16) in an elementary school choir, where older students helped to scaffold younger students’ music learning. In Hogle’s (2018) case study, however, the observed peer-to-peer scaffolding, shared problem-solving strategies, and peer coaching behaviors were related to music performance goals, rather than to the cultural norms, such as attitudes towards singing and traditions of practice that are transmitted at SLS and LCS. In Hogle’s study, the peer teaching was scaffolded by extensive teacher direction; again, this contrasts with the limited teaching that occurs in whole school singing at SLS and LCS. However, Alison’s (SLS) description of the role she anticipated playing, now that she was in Grade 12, could be described as “learned helpfulness” and is a clear example of peer-to-peer teaching:

> As a grade 12 this year, like, teaching some of the grade nine to grade eights, like, “oh, like this hymn, you have to do this” or like, “you have to do - sing this part, but don't sing this part”, you know, because then you learn the rhythms and different “formulas” of different hymns (Alison, SLS)

LCS students gave similar examples; there were frequent mentions of students in Grade 11 and 12 showing the younger students how certain songs, such as “Ain’t No Flies on Us” were meant to be sung.

New students, through engaging in the cultural practice of communal singing, learn the cultural norms of attitude (e.g., “it’s cool to sing at Shawnigan”), traditions of

practice (e.g., at LCS, banging on the pews during "Sweet Caroline"), and mindset (e.g., at both schools, it's okay to "sing out," whether or not you self-identify as a "good" singer

I believe that the nature of whole-school singing, because it seems to be approached with a Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B viewpoint, lends itself to Van Meijl's (2008) "education through exposure," to Rogoff et al.'s (1998) "learning as a consequence of participation," and Hogle's (2018) "learned helpfulness." Older peers at SLS and LCS create a powerful context in which the younger students learn the cultural norms of attitude (e.g., "It's weird if you don't sing out"), traditions of practice (e.g., at LCS, getting up onto the pews to sing "No flies on us") and values (e.g., at both schools, attaching great meaning to singing certain songs, and missing the singing when they graduate). New students, through their participation in communal singing, are, over time, and with student-to-student support, brought into the "fold" of these unique cultural practices at SLS and LCS.

Summary

I presented a thought experiment at the beginning of this paper: I imagined getting up at the front of an assembly at the school where I currently teach and asking the 500 adolescents gathered there to stand and sing. This imagined scenario played out as follows: the students would groan, would unwillingly stand up, if at all. The resulting singing, if there was any, would be timid and unenthusiastic, and thus fail to achieve the kinds of benefits that appeared to derive from whole school singing at LCS and SLS. It seems to me, based on both the interview data from my research, as well as insights from

research on communal singing in historic contexts, that whole-school singing does not happen by itself. At LCS and SLS, specific adults, whom I identified as cultural leaders, create the communal singing experience through their use of specific techniques and strategies. Once established, the cultural norm of "singing loud and proud" is sustained to an extent through peer-to-peer transmission: New students are expected to participate in the practice, surrounded by older peers who model, provide feedback, and in some cases, teach.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the research literature related to my research findings. Although there is very little research on whole school, communal singing at the secondary school level, there is a certain amount that illuminates the findings from my research. Given that communal singing (where everyone in the community is expected to sing) is distinct from community singing (where volunteers have chosen to join, for example, a community choir), the first of my findings, that all of my research participants, male and female, indicated that they enjoy and value the practice, is surprising. Research in other non-voluntary contexts, such as (e.g., Chong, 2010), has revealed much lower levels of positive regard for singing in the general population than my findings. It seems reasonable to conclude that at LCS and SLS, communal singing may be practiced in a way that has resulted in noteworthy levels of participation and enjoyment. Secondly, my finding that, according to the interviewees, communal singing at LCS and SLS instills feelings of belongingness in students, is consistent with a large

body of research associating group singing with social bonding. Third, extensive research aligns with my finding that group singing enables emotional expression, improves mood, and contributes to psychological wellness. My fourth finding was that LCS and SLS appear to have taken an aesthetic B approach to whole school communal singing, which seems to remove the tension between Pascale's A and B approaches, and appears to have created a space where all members of the community, not just the “good singers,” participate. Finally, a look at the “how” of communal singing at LCS and SLS revealed the importance of song leaders in its success, a finding consistent with historic accounts of communal singing. Strategies and tactics used by these leaders seem to echo those described by “how to” manuals from the early 20th century, as well as methods employed by communal song leaders in the past. One possible inconsistency between my findings and the research literature is the concept of student agency in repertoire selection. Some researchers (e.g., Seeger & Seeger, 2006) advocate participant choice of repertoire as a means of encouraging full participation. Participant choice of repertoire is not extensively practiced at either SLS or LCS, according to my interviewees’ reports. While future research may investigate this issue further, the purpose of my research was to describe the practice at SLS and LCS, not to evaluate it or to recommend improvements. In conclusion, while this research study was distinct in the phenomenon investigated, i.e., whole school communal singing at the high school level, the findings were relatively consistent with and supported by the research literature on group singing in other contexts.

Chapter 8 – Summary, Limitations, Recommendations for Future Research and Conclusion

Summary

This dissertation was an exploration of the practice of whole-school communal singing at two Canadian independent secondary schools. Pascale's (2005) two aesthetics of singing provided the conceptual framework: One of the research questions was whether, and to what extent, communal singing at these high schools exemplifies Pascale's Aesthetic B. Other questions were related to the "what" of whole school singing at SLS and LCS, such as: what does the practice of whole-school communal singing look like at these schools? When and where does it occur? Who leads it and how, what repertoire is sung, and who participates? The final group of questions related to the research participants' experiences of the practice, and included questions such as: What about the practice, if anything, is valued by students, alumni, faculty, and administrators? What do the research participants perceive to be the benefits (if any) and drawbacks of the practice? What are the challenges of implementing whole school singing at the secondary school level? Ultimately, I was hoping to determine whether this was a practice that other schools might consider emulating; if so, for what purpose, and how?

Using data from semi-structured interviews with 17 student, alumni, and faculty participants, I applied thematic analysis to uncover five consistent underlying themes. These themes emerged:

1. Research participants regarded the practice of whole school communal singing positively;

2. Research participants indicated that communal singing creates feelings of belongingness within the school community;

3. According to the interviewees, whole school, communal singing mediates emotions and contributes to psychological wellness;

4. The practice of whole school, communal singing at LCS and SLS appears to align with Pascale's (2005) Aesthetic B approach; and

5. Whole school communal singing does not appear to happen on its own but through intentional leadership and strategy.

The first, most evident, and most ubiquitous theme that emerged from the interview data was that every research participant was unequivocally positive about the practice of whole-school communal singing. I had purposely selected participants who had no musical background other than singing in Chapel (where whole school singing was predominantly practiced), as well as those who had experience singing in other choirs, in order to tap a potentially broad perspective on this issue. All of the students I interviewed, regardless of their musical background, reported that they enjoyed and valued communal singing. The adults I interviewed, both those with musical expertise and those without, expressed strong beliefs that communal singing was good for students and for the community. Interviewees reported that amongst their school populations, communal singing participation rates were relatively high, with most students participating in Chapel singing most of the time. One indication that many students at these schools seemed to enjoy communal singing were the reports that students regularly sang the Chapel songs spontaneously, without adult direction, outside of Chapel: for

example, on the sports field, while riding on busses, on outdoor education trips, and on their way to classes. For some of the student and alumni research participants, memories of singing together with their friends has remained a highlight of their school experience. Finally, the fact that the practice of communal singing has been given valuable time in the schools' schedules indicates the importance of communal singing to the schools. Heads of school at both schools spoke positively of the practice of whole-school singing; they also expressed their belief that it should be common practice at all schools because of the benefits that they felt communal singing has brought to their school.

The second theme that emerged from the interview data was the extent to which communal singing seems to have affected the research participants' mood and emotions. Every interviewee commented on the ways in which whole school singing improved their mood, cheered them up, energized them for the day, calmed them, and/or reduced anxiety. Many interviewees also observed that communal singing enabled emotional expression: for example, at both schools, in times of strife or anguish (death of a community member, for example), interviewees expressed that singing together seemed to help alleviate despair, and contributed to healing. At times when students found school stressful, for example, at the end of the term when homework, tests, and assessments seem overwhelming, many research participants reported that whole-school singing was particularly beneficial, as it calmed them and contributed to their psychological wellness. Research on the effects of group singing mirrors these findings. In a variety of contexts and populations, group singing has been found to produce beneficial outcomes on mood and emotions (e.g., Clift & Hancox, 2001; see "Theme Three: Research Related to

Emotional Mediation and Psychological Wellness" section in Chapter 7). In addition to providing academic programs, schools are increasingly expected by oversight bodies and funding agencies to actively foster students' psychological wellness. According to the interview data, at SLS and LCS, whole-school singing seems to be a means of contributing to students' positive emotional state.

Every research participant spoke extensively about the impact of communal singing on feelings of "belonging": this is the third theme that emerged, and it manifested in two ways. First, because they believe that communal singing is unique to their school, student interviewees explained that the practice creates cultural norms that separate insiders from outsiders and gives students the sense that they belong to something special. Second, interviewees reported that they felt that the act of communal singing itself produces strong feelings of community, of belonging, and of feeling like part of a family. This theme is consistent with research that has found positive effects of group singing on group cohesion and cooperation (e.g., Pearce et al., 2015; see "The Effect of Group Singing on Social Cohesion" section in Chapter 7). Researchers have gone so far as to propose that group singing is an evolutionary adaptation, suggesting that early human groups that sang together were more likely to behave in cooperative ways, thus giving them a competitive advantage over less coordinated groups (e.g., Launay et al., 2016, see "Group Singing as an Evolutionary Adaptation" section in Chapter 7). In the context of secondary schools, feelings of belongingness that result from group singing are important: Research has demonstrated that school belongingness is correlated with a host of desirable outcomes, such as staying in school, avoiding drugs, and achieving academic

success (e.g., Bond et al., 2007; see “School Belongingness” section in Chapter 7). Schools, along with other institutions such as workplaces, organizations, and community groups, desire to create a climate in which everyone feels they belong. At SLS and LCS, according to my research participants, there is a strong feeling of community, and based on the interview data, it appears that whole school singing may be a contributor to this positive climate.

The fourth theme I identified as a result of my analysis was the ways in which the whole-school singing practice at LCS and SLS exemplified Pascale’s Aesthetic B. Pascale (2005) identified two approaches to singing: Aesthetic A, which emphasizes musicianship, development of vocal technique and note reading skills, and performance, while Aesthetic B prioritizes participation, fun, and singing for the joy of it. While this binary depiction of approaches to choral music may misrepresent nuanced reality of choral singing in practice, communal singing at LCS and SLS appeared to be characterized by an Aesthetic B approach, based on interviewees’ descriptions. According to the interview data, success of whole school singing appeared to be measured by the extent to which students sing “loud and proud” (Mathew, SLS), as opposed to the extent to which the ideals of Western art music are met (e.g., vocal blend, tone, and intonation). During whole school singing at LCS and SLS, there was generally no attempt by song leaders to teach students to read music notation, there was limited teaching of vocal technique, and limited feedback given by song leaders regarding musical concepts. According to the interview data, the purpose of Chapel singing at LCS and SLS was not to prepare for a performance; but rather, for everybody to sing together,

for the joy of it, and to develop a feeling of community. While Chapel singing at both schools appeared to exemplify an Aesthetic B practice, both schools also have an elective choir program which pursues Aesthetic A goals. At choir rehearsals, unlike during whole-school singing, the choir director coached the group in musicianship, note-reading, and vocal technique; choir rehearsals typically culminated in a performance of some kind. Interestingly, the student participants in my study who were not in their school choir, and who had no intention of ever joining the choir, either because they did not consider themselves to be particularly good singers or because they could not fit it into their schedule, nevertheless expressed a passion for communal singing. It could be that by taking Pascale's (2005) B approach to whole-school singing, school leaders at SLS and LCS were able to give a positive singing experience to students who, otherwise, might never have had the opportunity to sing in school.

The fifth overarching theme that I identified as a result of my data analysis was that communal singing at the high school level seemed neither simple nor easy to implement; however, it did appear to occur successfully, from a Pascale's aesthetic B viewpoint (that is, measured by levels of participation rather than of artistic achievement) at LCS and SLS. This "success" seems to have been significantly affected by the leadership of one individual at each school who intentionally worked to establish a culture of singing. The idea of an individual actively establishing a group singing norm has historical precedent, for example, Morgan-Ellis's (2018a) description of Warren Kimsey and community singing at a WW1 training camp. I think that Dave Robertson at SLS, and Syd Birrell at LCS have provided models of a way to create a positive singing

culture in a contemporary secondary school. Their strategies, according to my analysis and description in Chapter 6, may be worth considering by anyone wishing to establish a culture of singing in their school. Additionally, an important consideration is the personality of these leaders: I would suggest that it may take a certain kind of character to instill a norm of singing "with gusto," where there was no such tradition before. The historic accounts of group singing that I described in detail earlier in this paper are consistent with this claim. For example:

> Ability to lead the whole student body in singing in such a manner that there is real esprit de corps is a rare gift. Schools having a man [sic] with this gift should make the most of their good fortune. (Morgan, 1940, p. 27)

The leader's gender and its impact on group singing is beyond the scope of this dissertation; nevertheless, based on my analysis, I believe that Syd Birrell (LCS) and Dave Robertson (SLS) are two such people. School leaders wishing to initiate a whole school singing practice at their school might wish to consider whether there is such a leader in their school community who has the personal qualities, skills, and motivation to lead the practice, if they wish to establish a communal singing practice similar to the ones at LCS and SLS. However, it is also important to consider that there may well be other, less leader-centered ways to establish communal singing in a secondary school context, such as building participant interest in communal singing through a cooperative process. Dave Robertson described using one such strategy: his "sing squads" which employed student leaders spread throughout the group, is an example of distributed leadership; nevertheless, it took Robertson's sense of vision and purpose to lead this practice.

Exploring further pathways into the building of a communal singing culture can be the subject of further research.

At the two schools I researched, it appears that once established, the culture of enthusiastic communal singing has been sustained, to a certain extent, by the students. At LCS and SLS, almost every one of my research participants explained to me that students tended to embrace communal singing more enthusiastically as they ascended in grade level: grade eight and nine students tended to participate relatively less, and the students in their graduating year seemed to participate most fully. My research participants consistently described a process whereby the older students at both schools took a role in enculturating the newer students into the practice, through direct teaching, modelling, providing feedback, and communicating expectations. Interviewees explained that new students to the school often arrive lacking confidence in their singing voices. Learning to overcome feelings of self-doubt, and learning to feel safe enough to let their voice join the song, appeared to be an important aspect of joining the LCS and SLS community. By the time they reach the upper grades, according to my research participants, almost all the students not only joined in singing, but turned to their younger peers and mentored them. This growth of participation up through the grades may indicate one means of cultural transmission within these two schools.

Limitations and Delimitations of my Research

By design, this research is characterized by a narrow scope and specificity of purpose, in order that the work be feasible within the constraints of a single dissertation project. The approach I have taken has been limited by my positionality, my theoretical

framework, my choice of research methodology and my research methods. As such, any findings that I have described need to be accompanied by appropriate caution.

Positionality

As a researcher, I designed this study to respond to my curiosity about a phenomenon with which I have had no personal experience: whole school singing in a secondary school context. As a music teacher, choir director, and passionate choral singer, I have often reflected on the fact that while I can share my joy of singing together with students who elect to join the choir, I am unable to reach the many more students who do not, or are not able to, elect to join the choir. When I heard about the practice of whole-school singing at LCS, I was curious: Was the practice of whole school singing a means for all students to enjoy what I believe are the benefits of singing together? Or do students find the practice tiresome, painful, or a waste of time? Given the opportunity, would participants do away with the practice, or would they recommend it as a worthwhile school activity? Prior to doing this research, my personal beliefs were such that I felt it unlikely an entire student body of adolescents would willingly sing together. I certainly could not imagine initiating this practice at the secondary schools I am familiar with. I feel that in general many adolescents may be too self-conscious to embrace whole school singing. Thus, in the sense that this was a phenomenon that I had not personally experienced, nor could I imagine possible to initiate, I was positioned as an outsider in this research process.

At the same time, I am an insider from a cultural perspective. As a white woman with some Anglican affiliation, and as a teacher at a Canadian independent school, I am

well-acquainted with the traditional, Canadian, university preparatory environment of the two schools that I investigated. My personal enjoyment of choral singing and my experience directing choirs also positions me as an insider, as I have personally benefitted from group singing. Thus when my interviewees expressed to me positive feelings about group singing, it was, in a sense, "preaching to the choir." While I was aware of and tried to bracket my positionality throughout the research process, it nevertheless colors my research, and to some extent impacts the level of reliability of my findings.

Theoretical Framework

I chose Pascale's (2002, 2005) two aesthetics of singing as a framework to focus my investigation, as the communal singing practices at two schools I investigated appeared, at the outset of my research, to resemble Pascale's descriptions of aesthetic B. After a career of preparing choirs for polished performances, mostly from within the formal Western musical tradition, it was helpful for me to use this framework in order to clarify the approaches, priorities and goals for communal singing. However, this framework limited the scope of my analysis. For example, with a broader or an alternative framework, I might have taken a critical look at the impact of colonialism on the repertoire choices made by the schools' song leaders; I might have investigated the effect of the song choices on students' sense of inclusion or exclusion. Or, I could have investigated the phenomenon of whole school singing through the lens of critical race theory, with research questions such as: to what extent do participants' and song leaders' race intersect with the way that whole school singing is practiced? However, I intentionally limited my investigation to my chosen framework in order to focus and

clarify my research process, and left these questions for future research.

Choice of Research Methodology

As my chosen research methodology, phenomenology allowed me to focus on the lived experiences of my participants. I sought to document the phenomenon of whole school singing, as it seemed to be experienced through my participants' eyes. This did limit my ability, however, as a researcher, to be critical of the practices my participants reported. For example, if I were a member of the SLS community, I might question the continuance at SLS of singing almost exclusively Anglican hymns; I might also question the use of peer-inflicted consequences such as the push-ups described by Ben (SLS), used to motivate new students learn the songs. Similarly, I might suggest that engaging students more in the choice of repertoire at LCS could be a way to further increase student participation and inclusion; and that including songs from faiths beyond Christianity, such as including Hindu and Muslim songs, might contribute to developing students' religious tolerance. However, I purposefully aimed to limit my research to describing the phenomenon, as participants described it to me, and am leaving these critical considerations for further research efforts.

Delimitations Related to my Choice of Research Methods

Selection of Participant Schools. In the planning stages of my research, I intended to visit the schools selected for my investigation, in order to observe the practice of whole school singing in person. Thus, I selected schools in Canada so that travel to the locations would be feasible. Then, in order to choose the specific schools within Canada, I used purposeful sampling: the practice of whole school singing is fairly rare in Canada,

so I used word-of-mouth to identify candidate schools. When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March, 2020, the IRB required that all research be conducted remotely, by Zoom, but at this point, I had already chosen the two schools and begun the research process. As it turned out, both schools chosen for my research project were similar in a number of ways. LSC and SLS offer both day- and boarding education in a co-educational, university preparatory environment. Tuition fees at both schools are high, so despite bursary opportunities, the student populations tend to represent wealthier families. Culturally, both schools were founded originally by English colonists who wished to offer a British-style education with Anglican affiliation for Canada's white, upper class children. Although the schools' ties with Anglicanism and English colonialist culture have weakened over the generations since each school's founding, many aspects of English grammar school culture remain, such as the wearing of uniforms, division of the school into "houses" to provide a focus for group loyalty, and whole-school singing at regular gatherings in a chapel, including, but not limited to the singing of traditional Anglican hymns. The ways that whole school singing functions in these two institutions are inseparable from the overall schools' culture and traditional roots. As such, generalization to schools that are, for example, rooted in a different cultural milieu, are impossible to make.

My research may have resulted in different findings if the schools chosen for this research study had represented more diverse cultural, national, racial, religious, and socio-economic profiles. Ideally, I would have surveyed every secondary high school, in every country, to find out whether they practice whole-school singing or not. Then, from

the set of schools that responded affirmatively, I could have chosen a purposeful sample, representing a broad array of school cultures. This might have afforded a less-culturally restrictive investigation than the one I pursued in this dissertation. I plan to follow this approach in my next research project, and recommend it to others for future research of the topic.

Selection of Participants. A contact from each school selected research participants for me, as I did not have permission to directly initiate the initial communication with potential participants. Although I requested that my contact at each school choose participants that represented a broad range of profiles (faculty, students, alumni, administrators, students involved in the school music program, students not involved in the school music program, faculty responsible for leading whole school singing, faculty not involved in music teaching or song leading), my contacts may well have been biased in their selection, purposely choosing participants whom they knew would speak well of whole school singing. This may have resulted in reports of more positive overall attitudes towards the practice than if participants had been selected by some other means. Ideally, as was my original plan prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, I would like to have personally observed a whole school singing session, and chosen (or had an impartial observer choose) participants who were visibly not engaged (if any) as well as participants who were visibly engaged (if any) in communal singing. This, plus an in-depth investigation of the experience of students who visibly do not engage (if any), could be a direction for future research.

Limits of Methodology

The data used for this research were gathered primarily through semi-structured interviews. In general, interview data, while a rich source of nuanced and layered information, has limited reliability. Participants tend only to report their views of the experience at the time of the interview: for example, alumni reports could have been clouded by rosy retrospection. Participant bias may have crept in, as participants may have felt compelled to say what they believed I wanted to hear. This may have been especially so in the case of student interviewees: given their young age, they may have experienced a power imbalance with me as the interviewer, especially as they knew me to be a teacher at another independent school. Furthermore, while I was careful to fully communicate the guarantee of confidentiality of interview data according to IRB requirements, it is possible that participants may have nevertheless hedged their responses in fear that the data might not have been truly confidential. Thus, the data I collected needs to be considered with caution, as these concerns limit reliability.

It would be interesting to consider what data would have resulted had I personally not been the interviewer. If students were interviewed by a peer, for example, would they have provided a truer depiction of their experiences? (Peer-pressure, however, can also cause participant bias.) Or had the data been collected via anonymous written responses, would the resulting narrative been the same? These will be important considerations in future research.

Further Thoughts

A question at the heart of this study was whether whole school singing is a

practice that other secondary schools might consider adopting. Based on my research data, as well as supporting evidence from the research literature, I would suggest a cautious "yes, however." For the purposes of creating strong social bonds among the school community, enhancing students' sense of belonging, and contributing to students' emotional wellness, it appears, based on my interviewees' reports, that whole school singing may be an effective practice. Whole school communal singing may give every student the opportunity to enjoy the social and emotional benefits of group singing, not just those who elect to join the choir, and not just those who believe that they are "good" singers. If approached with a Pascale's B aesthetic, whole school singing might exemplify "radical inclusion," at a time when inclusion is a much needed attribute in our communities.

However, there are reasons to be cautious about this conclusion. First of all, the two schools I investigated have a long tradition of communal singing, rooted in the schools' founding historically as Anglican-affiliated institutions in the English educational tradition. A school leader considering whether or not to initiate a practice of whole school singing at their own school would need to consider both their schools' own culture and their lack of a communal singing tradition. Secondly, the practice at LCS and SLS appears to have ebbed and flowed over the years, and the current seemingly "healthy" state of communal singing at these two schools appears to have depended significantly on leadership by Syd Birrell at LCS and Dave Robertson at SLS. It may be that the presence of such a leader is a necessary condition for whole school singing to flourish – then again, it may not. I certainly do not possess the personality or leadership

capacity of a Syd or a Dave; however, if I wished to establish communal singing at my school, I might consider a more collaborative, student-led way to engage the community in the practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

The beauty of this type of exploratory study is that it provides a platform for many different research directions. First, I would recommend research that involves direct observation of whole school singing. Not only would this permit the researcher to choose participants based on their observed levels of participation, but also, would enable the researcher's own views and observations to emerge, resulting in a more critical and in-depth look at the practice than relying solely on participant accounts.

Second, it would be fascinating to observe the initial establishment of whole school singing at a school where the practice has not been part of the school's tradition. Travis (LCS) had said: "When you have a school that is so built on traditions, and when songs are so important to the school, and kids realize that, then they all sing." But how would one "get kids to sing" without a history and tradition of whole school singing? Dave Robertson, the former head of school at Shawnigan Lake School, mentioned to me that he is now working as interim head of school at another Canadian independent school that does not practice whole school singing. As soon as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, Mr. Robertson plans to initiate the practice at his new school. It would be valuable to observe this process, to witness and document the initiation of a cultural phenomenon that is not sustained by tradition.

Related to this, it would be interesting to see the impact of the long cessation of

singing during the Covid-19 pandemic on whole school singing at schools like LCS and SLS, when the restrictions are finally lifted. Will the temporary abstinence from communal singing cause these schools to lose some of their cultural practices? What will the reestablishment of the practice look like?

Third, it would be interesting to compare participation rates in the elective choir program at LCS and SLS to choir participation rates in schools that do not engage in a whole school communal singing practice. Does the practice of mandatory communal singing foster, or hinder, participation in the voluntary choir? Furthermore, how does a whole school communal singing practice impact males' participation in the school choir program? It is well-documented that choral directors struggle to recruit male adolescents as choir members (e.g., Quin, 2004); however, the male participants in my study at LCS and SLS were all strong advocates for communal singing. I wonder whether the choirs at schools where whole-school singing is successful, have more adolescent male members than in schools that lack an enthusiastic whole-school singing culture.

And fourth, I am interested in taking a quantitative approach to investigating the effects of whole-school singing on variables such as measures of school belongingness, sense of community and self-identification as a singer. Comparing such data to that gathered from schools that do not practice regular whole school singing, such a study could address whether the effects revealed in my present exploratory investigation can be corroborated using quantitative measures.

Finally, I would like to investigate whole school singing in other cultural contexts than the schools I studied in this work. A clearer understanding of whole school singing

may emerge by comparing the practice in schools across different countries, and with various religious affiliations, languages, racial and ethnic make-ups of student populations. For example, I currently work at a Jewish secondary school that does not engage in communal singing. How would the initiation of a communal singing practice function within this community?

In addition to these five possible research directions, many other questions emerge, including:

- What is the impact if any, on the long-term singing lives of students after they graduate from schools where whole-school singing is successfully practiced? Do alumni tend to join community choirs, sing to their children, send their children to schools where whole-school singing is a priority? Do alumni from these schools remain more connected, donate more money, and attend more alumni events, compared to schools without a singing tradition?
- To what extent might whole school singing at the secondary level be a vestige of historic religious affiliation? Are there any high schools without these prior ties to church or religious affiliation that practice whole school singing? If so, what were the reasons for initiating the practice? What purpose does whole school singing serve in these schools?
- What are the problems with whole school singing? One context comes to mind: the Canadian residential school system, which was established in the 1880s, and continued into the late 20th century, in order to remove

indigenous children from their homes and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. The purpose of these schools was to "kill the Indian in the child." (Prime Minister Stephen Harper, official apology, June 11, 2008). Did communal singing occur in these schools? If so, what was its function in indoctrinating indigenous children into Euro-Canadian and Christian culture? Similarly, to what extent can whole school singing be considered a coercive practice? In what ways does the practice embody exclusionary policies?

- What is the role of student agency in whole school singing? I briefly explored this idea at LCS and SLS: At these schools, students do not choose repertoire; instead, adults control the repertoire choice, albeit in response to their perception of what songs they believe students will enjoy. A study that focuses on this concept could compare and contrast outcomes of whole school singing in schools that allow varying degrees of student agency in the whole-school singing repertoire choice.
- My research finding, that a "cultural leader" seems to be critical to the success of whole school singing, raises further research questions, such as: To what extent is the ability to lead whole school singing in a way that generates participation and enthusiasm an inborn talent, versus a learned skill that can be developed? What kind of training, mentorship and practice can be effective in developing such a skill set in potential song-leaders of whole school communal singing? Is leadership required, or can

a collaborative approach be used to develop a communal singing practice?

Conclusion

In conclusion, this investigation of whole school communal singing at LCS and SLS has permitted me to explore a practice that was described by a long-time faculty member at LCS as “the life-blood of our school.” The head of school at LCS explained to me: “Look, we all need joy. We all need joy in our days. And I don't know - how do you ensure joy with hundreds of people? How? I just can't think of anything else [other than communal singing].” While there may be many effective ways of creating joy with hundreds of people, it seems to me, after doing this research, that communal singing may well be one of them, if practiced in a way that is appropriate to the community, such as, at LCS and SLS, with Pascale’s (2002, 2005) aesthetic B approach. While this research project aimed to document the way communal singing is experienced by participants at two independent Canadian secondary schools, communal singing may well function differently, and participants’ experiences may be vastly different in other contexts. I am excited to explore in future research projects what communal singing looks like in other schools, and to what extent any of the characteristics of whole school singing that I identified through this research project apply to diverse types of schools and communities.

Appendix A – Repertoire Used for Communal Singing at LCS, 2019–20

Sacred and Hymns:
School Hymn: "Jerusalem"
Gather Us In
Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee
Here I Am Lord
Land of Hope and Glory
I Feel the Winds of God Today
Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu
Amazing Grace
Haida (Israeli song)
Shine Jesus Shine
Battle Hymn of the Republic
Lord of the Dance
O Siem
Jesus Christ Has Risen Today
Make Me A Channel of Your Peace
Here I Am Lord
Let There Be Peace on Earth

Secular:
Don't Stop Believing (Journey)
Country Roads Take Me Home (John Denver)
What A Wonderful World (Louis Armstrong)
Learning to Fly (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers)
Imagine (John Lennon)
Here Comes the Sun (Beatles)
I Will Survive (Gloria Gaynor)
Wonderwall (Oasis)
O Canada
Sweet Caroline (Neil Diamond)
Let it Go (From Disney's *Frozen*)
Part of Your World (From Disney's *The Little Mermaid*)
Under the Sea (From Disney's *The Little Mermaid*)
Carry On (Fun.)
Home (Phillip Phillips)
Ghostbusters
Hakuna Matata (From Disney's *The Lion King*)
It's A Small World (Disney)
Lean on Me (Bill Withers)
Somewhere Over the Rainbow (From *The Wizard of Oz*)
There Ain't No Flies on Us (Camp song)

This is Halloween (From *The Nightmare Before Christmas*)
Where Everybody Knows Your Name (Theme from *Cheers*)
You've Got a Friend in Me (From Disney's *Toy Story*)

Christmas/Hanukkah:
Feliz Navidad
Hanukkah oh Hanukkah
Frosty the Snowman
Good King Wenceslas
Jingle Bell Rock
Jingle Bells
I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus
O Christmas Tree
Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
Santa Claus is Coming to Town
Sleigh Ride
Up on the Rooftop
We Three Kings

Appendix B – Repertoire Used for Communal Singing at SLS

From: The Orders of Service and Hymnal, Shawnigan Lake School, 2016.

1. School Hymn: "There's a Voice in the Wilderness Calling"
2. Lift High the Cross (Copeman's)
3. I Vow to Thee my Country (Duxbury)
4. I Feel the Winds of God Today (Grove's)
5. Jerusalem (Kaye's)
6. Amazing Grace (Lake's)
7. How Great Thou Art (Lonsdale's)
8. I Hear Thy Welcome Voice (Ripley's)
9. Joyful, Joyful (Renfrew)
10. Be Thou My Vision (Strathcona)
11. Calon Lan
12. Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
13. Be Still My Soul
14. O Canada
15. The Star-Spangled Banner
16. God Save the Queen/King
17. Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
18. He Who Would Valiant Be
19. Eternal Father, Strong to Save
20. O Valiant Hearts
21. Zion's King Shall Reign Victorious
22. For All the Saints
23. Come, Ye Thankful People Come
24. We Plough the Fields and Scatter
25. For the Beauty of the Earth
26. All Glory, Laud and Honour
27. Morning Has Broken
28. You'll Never Walk Alone
29. Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
30. Lead Us, Heavenly Father, Lead Us
31. Summer Suns Are Glowing
32. Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
33. O God of Bethel
34. The Lord's My Shepherd
35. Thy Hand, O God, Has Guided
36. All People That on Earth Do Dwell
37. Crown Him with Many Crowns
38. God Who Gives to Life its Goodness
39. Hark! A Herald Voice is Calling

40. Holy, Holy, Holy
41. Praise My Soul the King of Heaven
42. Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise
43. Now Thank We All Our God
44. O God, Our Help in Ages Past
45. O Worship the King
46. Praise to the Lord, The Almighty
47. Rejoice, the Lord is King
48. Tell Out My Soul
49. The King of Love My Shepherd Is
50. Thine Be the Glory
51. Make Me a Channel of Your Peace
52. Abide with Me
53. Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God
54. Dona Nobis Pacem
55. Adeste Fideles
56. It Came Upon A Midnight Clear
57. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
58. Joy to the World
59. Silent Night
60. Good King Wenceslas
61. O Come All Ye Faithful
62. The Huron Carol
63. O Little Town of Bethlehem
64. Once in Royal David's City
65. The First Noel
66. While Shepherds Watched
67. What Child is This?
68. O Come, O Come Emmanuel
69. We Three Kings
70. Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Appendix C – Links to YouTube Videos of Chapel Singing at SLS and LCS.

All videos are publicly available.

Chapel Talks at LCS. June 6, 2019.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjXOEDU8_AI&t=300s Tour of the LCS Chapel,

Dec. 16, 2009. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsyqnjW4Rwo

LCS communal singing, Dec. 19, 2019.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5elRRmHqn8

SLS Chapel, Oct. 15, 2018.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGFwWqEnkhc&t=1469s

SLS Chapel, Jan. 25, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbBt3C9PkkA

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Curriculum Vitae

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