Memetics, Media, and Groove: Musical Experience In Two Florida Steelbands

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MEMETICS, MEDIA, AND GROOVE:
MUSICAL EXPERIENCE IN TWO FLORIDA STEELBANDS

By

KAYLEEN KERG

A Thesis submitted to the
College of Music
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I adopt the musical concept of “groove” to characterize the experience of steelband in local contexts and the related ideas circulating within broader cultural contexts. Each chapter is an ethnographic portrait and exploration of a specific context in which people interact by participating in steelband. I examine the role of individual directors in shaping their steelband’s groove. Employing elements of memetic theory, I identify specific memes and complexes used by directors as they facilitate their own group’s experience to include: “master narrative,” “professional performance,” and “pan appreciation.” I also use the meme hypothesis to evaluate how directors act as agents in the transmission of musical and cultural knowledge.

I will focus on the function of the steelband-related media and materials used in rehearsal by the directors of Lion Steel and Space Coast Steel to communicate musical and cultural information to members. I am interested in understanding the ways individuals encounter and use this information in the course of their participation in steelband and how this process contributes to the groove in their local contexts. In this thesis, I will also explore the ways that individual pannists at the Mannette Steel Drums “Festival of Steel” workshop in West Virginia interact with other players and exchange information beyond distinct local contexts. I examine the ways that the exchange of music-cultural information among different sources shapes the manner in which people “groove” in steelbands and how it connects the experiences of pannists in broader musical and cultural contexts.
INTRODUCTION: STEELBAND, GROOVE, AND MEMES

Purpose

In this thesis I will illuminate elements of the steelband experience that are both unique to local groups and that are shared among bands from different places. I investigate the information exchanged among pannists and directors regarding the practice and performance of steelband in a variety of contexts. Directors play a crucial role in transmitting information about the execution of pan music to individuals who play in their groups. A director’s approach to teaching and managing a band also shapes how and when band members learn, practice, play, and perform music. The choices directors make regarding performance venues and engagements, repertoire, practice routines, and musical and educational media materials shape the contexts in which members experience steelband. In locally unique situations in Tallahassee, Florida and in Cocoa, Florida, the mix of steelband-related media materials and a director’s style influences the musical and cultural “grooving” or experience in steelbands. Although the leader of any musical group certainly plays a significant role in defining the personality of the group, directors in the United States are distinctly situated to proctor information and shape the nature of contemporary expressions of steelband.

I will focus on the function of the steelband-related media and materials used in rehearsal by the directors of Lion Steel and Space Coast Steel to communicate musical and cultural information to members. I am interested in understanding the ways individuals encounter and use this information in the course of their participation in steelband and how this process contributes to the groove in their local contexts. In this thesis, I will also explore the ways that individual pannists at the Mannette Steel Drums “Festival of Steel” workshop in West Virginia interact with other players and exchange information beyond distinct local contexts. In looking at the transfer of culturally-rooted knowledge about music, memetic theory will guide my thinking about steelband performances and experiences. I will identify and describe “memes” by observing and analyzing the exchange of information in the form of media materials between directors and band members.

Memes are the units of data upon which our minds physically and cognitively fashion the course through which we uniquely express ourselves; in the exchange of this information, we situate ourselves within cultural praxes and participate in proliferating the elements of culture. People experience steelband within a variety of contexts and memes are the gestures, phrases,
and ideas that comprise rehearsals, discussions, and performances. Moreover, memes contain bits of information shared with other memes; constellations of memes with related content also inform steelband experiences in significant ways. In this project, I identify memes as well as several prominent meme complexes to include: the “master narrative” meme, the “professional performance” meme, and the “pan appreciation” meme. These three complexes represent important and meaningful themes in the contemporary practice of steelband in the United States. I examine the ways that the exchange of music-cultural information among different sources shapes the manner in which people “groove” in steelbands and how it connects the experiences of pannists in broader musical and cultural contexts.

**Background, Scope, and Significance**

Steelband currently exists in a multitude of forms in the United States; groups and musicians define what steelband is by their localized habits, routines, musical styles, and performance contexts. A pannist, or person who plays a steel drum, may play in a community band, a small jazz combo group, or in a school or university-based band, and instances of pan performance are visible at parties, events, schools, and businesses. Additionally, representations of steelband are present in a multitude of print, audio, video, and digital media materials. Among various other subjects, media contains bundles of information about steelband history, performance, and practice in many contexts. When people encounter this media in the process of learning and performing, it informs and shapes their pan experiences.

Steelband experiences are also influenced by directors’ viewpoints regarding performance and practice, which are unique and widely variable. Directors’ choices about performance venues and engagements, repertoire, practice routines, musical and educational media materials, and the incorporation of certain cultural themes create the distinct local contexts in which members experience steelband.

Directors’ and musicians’ access to a variety of media situates unique local practices of steelband within a global context because, through various media materials, pannists from different places encounter similar ideas and information. Many times directors use print, electronic, and digital media to supplement rehearsals, practices, and performances. Interested and enthusiastic members also seek steelband-related media on the Internet and from other sources. Pannists evaluate and utilize media resources from around the world to practice and perform steelband within unique contexts in their own communities.
Several questions have animated my research for this thesis. What recurring themes emerge in the realm of steelband practice and performance? Why and how do people participate in and experience steelband? How do directors distinctly shape pannists’ experiences in local steelband contexts? What information is contained in steelband-related media sources and how does this information contour the performance and practice of steelband in local contexts?

In this project, I focus on the ways that directors use steelband-related media items, to include the repertoire, videos, books, and audio recordings which communicate musical and cultural information about the practice and performance of steelband to the musicians in their groups. This research proceeds from the perspective that local steelband experiences are widely variable according to the distinct contexts in which people practice and perform it, but that common elements are observable in the steelband experience because media representing elements of steelband performance are circulated globally. To accentuate the uniqueness that characterizes each group, I adopt the term “groove” to characterize the ways that each group operates in unique ways according to the local cultural contexts, but this “grooving” links into broader contexts and perspectives about playing pan. The groove is the experience; it is a composite of performance schedules, practice routines, rehearsal events, and musical repertoire embedded within distinct social, educational, musical, and cultural contexts. Moreover, the groove depends on the coordination of various musicians who espouse individual attitudes toward their own participation in the band. In this way, the director and the media materials he or she uses in administering the group shape the nature of the groove in important ways. The newly-emerging field of memetics guides my thinking about the exchange of musical and cultural information within bands, about the distinctiveness of local steelband experiences, and about the relationship between information and groove. Each chapter of this thesis centers on a music-cultural environment in which people play in a steelband. In each of these chapters, I identify a meme, or a unit of musical and cultural information, that exists within the environment and shapes the experience of playing pan there. I examine how memes are implicated in the

1 I employ the term groove in this thesis as a conceptual framework in which I consider the elements constituting different contexts for contemporary steelband activity in the United States. The concept of groove has been used by scholars to explore the relationships between musical and social processes; see Chernoff (1979), Feld (1984), Keil and Feld (1994), and Keil (1995). Ingrid Monson’s approach to groove as a metaphor for social processes demonstrates that it is a point of departure for analysis of global and local expressions of music and culture; see her “Riffs, Repetitions, and Theories of Globalization” Ethnomusicology 43/1 (Winter 1999), 33.
directors’ approaches to administering each group and how meme complexes shape grooving in steelband.

**Review of Literature**

This project is inspired by the work of several scholars, including research regarding steelband in the United States, the global circulation of media, groove, participatory discrepancies, and memetic theory. In the following pages, I summarize and review their projects in relation to elements of my research in this thesis.

**Pan in the United States: A Variety of Experiences**

There are no studies on the topic of pan in the United States beyond a thesis level. Theses by Lawrence App (1997) and Janine Tiffe (2006) have each outlined issues that are relevant to the present research. The central argument in Lawrence App’s thesis, “The Professionalization and Commodification of Steel Drum Music in Florida: Musical Continuity and Change in the Caribbean Diaspora” (M. M. Thesis, Florida State University, 1997), is that the move toward professionalism by Trinidadian pan players has shaped music, styles, performances, and ultimately, the commodification of pan in Florida: “The collaborative efforts of professional pannists and the music industry have produced styles that are mass marketed to new audiences through the standardization and mediation of performance practices and the use of technology.”

As advances in information and communication technology increase access to a variety of steelband examples and materials, pan players directly and more frequently confront various and sometimes conflicting perspectives about the practice and performance of steelband.

An element of App’s thesis that is particularly significant to my research is his discussion of performance contexts, types of steelband ensembles, and repertoire. At the outset of this chapter, App categorizes types of performance contexts in which pan performances might occur. He distinguishes between performances organized for commercial purposes, including shows at theme parks, resorts, and tourist attractions, and those performances and groups based on community activities, such as steelbands in the school system, church bands, and groups that play for cultural festivals. He identifies ten performance categories, situates them along a continuum, and teases out the emergent frictions between creativity, entertainment, and

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consumerism in his discussion of each context. His thesis includes ethnographic portraits of steelbands and individual pannists working in the commercial market, however in the following excerpt, he indicates the need for future research to delve into the ways commercialized music functions shapes the practice and performance of pan in the United States:

“The phenomenal growth of steelband programs in Florida’s schools and universities has developed a whole new culture, set of practices, and performance contexts around pan. The development of school-based steelbands as both a musical and socio-cultural phenomenon merits a full-length study in and of itself. As such, school-based steelbands have developed parallel to the West Indian pan community and, while they are dependent on each other to a limited extent, their activities intersect only at a few junctures.”

As an extension of App’s research, I will look at the ways commercialized steelband media operates within two Florida high school steelbands. My research will show that, at the same time these groups are largely shaped by unique local conditions, experiences in school-based steelband programs are connected to broader expressions of pan culture.

In her thesis “Trinidadian Steel Drum (Pan) Bands in Three Great Lakes States: A Study of Musical Migration” (M. A. Kent State University 2006), Janine Tiffe explores the activities and events contributing to the rapid growth of steelband activity in the American Midwest since the late 1960s. Her research includes interviews with members and directors of three college steelbands in Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. The interviewees in her research discuss the educational and community-oriented elements of steelband including but not limited to performance contexts, the development of musicianship, community pride, educational goals, and bonds forged among band members:

“As the steel band art form continues to spread across the Midwestern and greater United States, one can only hypothesize on its future expansion. While instruments and publications become increasingly accessible and pannists graduate and start their own bands, the sounds of steel will become increasingly audible and visible in American culture. Their versatility and accessibility has proven useful on a number of levels: academic and community-oriented programs, music education, and the music business.”

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3 Ibid., 115.
Tiffe’s research notes the rapid growth of accessible pan resources and implies this has increased the volume and accessibility of such items, although she does not indicate the specific utility of these goods within practice and performance contexts. I am particularly interested in the accessibility of steelband related resources in video, audio, and digital format as well as in printed form. In my research, I refer to these resources in general as steelband-related media. I hope to build upon Tiffe’s research by examining the ways media items for steelband transmit information about the practice and performance of pan and by presenting ethnographic portraits of three contexts in which the culture and practice of steelband currently exists.

A comparison of points made by Tiffe and App in their research highlights the important role of the director in shaping the experience, or “groove” characteristic of his or her group. Tiffe points out in her research that a new generation of steelband directors marked by their musical experiences is emergent in the current practice and performance of steelband in the United States. App also suggests in his thesis that a population of American steelband directors for whom pan is a secondary instrument and who were trained in the percussion and music education departments at universities in the United States was emergent in the mid-1990s. The directors of each of the bands in my study fit this description; I hope to extend ideas shared by Tiffe and App by exploring the ways in which directors’ own steelband experiences inform their choices and perspectives in administering the ways their bands “groove” or exist within local cultural contexts in Florida.

Although some scholars have focused on steelbands in educational contexts, their research does not extend far beyond promoting multiculturalism in educational and musical institutions. The steelband-related material I will examine relates to and extends these studies as well; directors, authors, and pedagogues have published audio, print, and video resources that supplement steelband experiences in the United States.

**Media, “Groove”, and Participatory Discrepancies**

Although I consider the distinct experiences of two bands in this thesis, I will also consider common or shared elements of steelband grooving that transcend local contexts. In fact, by applying elements of meme theory to pan activities, I identify the specific memes, or units of cultural or musical information, that are shared among groups via various media sources. Krister Malm addresses the dissemination of world musics by mass media channels as it is implicated in

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the courses of musical change; he proposes the term “mediaization” to explain this process: “For the first time in history the world had a generation growing up with a common musical experience added to the specific experiences they had within their respective local music cultures.”

The ready access to and expedited exchange of video, audio, and print resources facilitates the movement of music and related practices around the world; mediaization allows music to transcend geographic and cultural boundaries. Advances in information and communication technology enable musicians to cultivate new, or hybrid, music-cultural connections and networks. Malm indicates that transnational “media music hybrid styles” shape local music cultures in a variety of ways. In this thesis, I seek to discover the ways that the mediaized musical and cultural traits related to steelband shape the experiences of pannists in local contexts.

Ingrid Monson discusses the interrelationship between locality and globality in music in the African diaspora via the global circulation of repetitive grooves:

“Riffs, repetition, and grooves—as multilayered, stratified, interactive, frames of musical, social, and symbolic action—might be helpful in thinking through some of the more challenging issues in contemporary critical thinking, including cultural hybridity, economic domination, agency, and the specific cultural complexities of the African diaspora.”

Riffs, repetition, and grooves are fundamental ingredients in the practice and performance of steelband. In addition to the print, electronic, and digital media, my research will explore each group’s repertoires as an element of grooving in steelband. I will consider the ways that repetition and grooving not only frame the music, but I will also consider how these processes inform the band’s activities and their experience of steelband in local, translocal, and global contexts.

Combinations and repetitions of riffs cooperate in generating a groove, in layers of interlocking rhythmic processes, and are identified by specific names. Monson indicates that

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grooves facilitate musical movement of stylized rhythms across cultural boundaries and within local contexts. Asymmetry and stratification characterize the relationship of the rhythms articulated within a groove; rhythms and elements of the experience are exchanged, overlapped, and recombined repeatedly over time and across contexts. She concludes that the ethnographic goal should be to examine the full range of cultural exchange by speaking to the local ways people use music to construct identities and meanings as well as attending to broader social hypotheses about globalization.

Monson’s approach to groove serves as an apt metaphor for the relationship between musical and cultural information and the experience of participation in steelband. In pursuing the groove metaphor, I consider how repetition characterizes the events, rehearsals, and performances that make up steelband experiences and I explore how media punctuates individual and collective experiences of grooving in steelband. My goals are to illuminate the elements shaping the experience of steelband in different contexts, to discover how pannists and directors exchange information within musical and cultural realms, and to examine the multifarious ways people in groups use information to practice and perform steelband.

Charles Keil explores individual and collective experiences of groove in an article about participatory discrepancies in music-making. Keil forwards the idea that groove is unique, created anew every time a group of musicians perform together:

“‘Groove’ or ‘vital drive’ is not some essence of all music that we can simply take for granted, but must be figured out each time between players; music is not so much about abstract emotions and meanings, reason, cause and effect, logic, but rather about motions, dance, global and contradictory feelings; it’s not about composers bringing forms from on high for mere mortals to realize or approximate, it’s about getting down and into the groove, everyone creating socially from the bottom up.”

Keil’s approach to grooving and music is that these activities are not about the end result, but about the process of playing and performing. Discrepancies in players’ feel, time, and timbre combine throughout a performance to create unique textures from moment to moment. Moreover, he argues that experts in musical idioms often disagree about fundamental elements of the experience of musical grooving. Keil acknowledges the difficulty in approaching

8 Ibid., 44.
participatory discrepancies from a theoretical standpoint, yet he calls for the “systematic attention to exactly how groovy processes and mysterious textures are generated and how global feelings are catharsed through music.” 10 I approach steelband in terms of the process, or experience, of performances and activities that create a social or cultural grooving specific to each group. Although directors, who are resident steelband experts, may espouse similar attitudes regarding steelband, they often disagree about basic concepts like repertoire, performance venues, rehearsal schedules, and many other factors. Likewise, pan players develop different perspectives about their own participation in steelband.

Memes

Memetics, the newly-emerging field of study interested in the transfer of information, explains the mechanisms and processes that facilitate culture change. Contemporary modern cultures consist of deeply complex and shifting associations; memetic theory describes how culture is shared, varied, and transmitted between people via units of information called memes. Memes contain a wealth of information representing behaviors, events, and practices and their function is to preserve this information so that it may be copied and propagated by people who encounter them. Many memes contain information that relates to other memes; larger networks of memes connected by their representational content are called meme complexes. They organize and represent more broadly assembled units of information. For example, a “school spirit” meme complex would include, without being limited to, several memes such as football games, graduation, marching band, tailgate parties, or memorabilia. Another example of a meme complex is “democracy,” within which campaign, election, legislation, Main Street, politics, partisan, vote, and a multitude of other memes are contained.

Memes group together in different contexts to form meme complexes in a variety of cultural, ideological, and social realms. These collections are each a patchwork of memes; the constitution of these complexes is negotiated and articulated distinctly within local cultural contexts through exchanges among individuals. As we interact and communicate with one another, observing and imitating each other, we copy and replicate memetic information; through our habits, skills, and attitudes, we represent and share cultural elements. Meme theorists assert that, four specific processes are central to the transmission of culture: “selection,” “replication,” “preservation,” and “variation.” In each chapter of this thesis, I explore how people exchange,

10 Ibid., 5.
articulate, and propagate cultural information. A hotly debated issue in meme theory however is the role of the individual in these processes.

Richard Dawkins originally coined the term “meme” in his book *The Selfish Gene*. He correlates the function of memes in transmitting culture with the behavior of genes, whose function is to replicate biological data:

“Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes, fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.”

Dawkins was the first to propose the analogy between memetic and genetic processes and to explore and identify a wide range of concepts to be the constituent units of culture. Also significant is his assertion that memes are located within and travel between human minds. Dawkins’ work in *The Selfish Gene* is widely recognized by scholars as the seminal work in memetic theory; theorists still reference his work and debate the details of Dawkins’ arguments. Although Dawkins’ assertions that culture is the distinguishing marker of the human condition are insightful and although his meme-gene analogy is powerfully and exhaustively presented, his fundamental position is that human minds do not exert any conscious agency in the selection, replication, or variation of culture: “When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme’s propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell.”

The human brain, according to Dawkins’ theory, is unique in its capacity for accurate replication of cultural information and in its disposition to comply with the replication process; brains are the facilities in which cultural evolution occurs, thus the human mind is an unconscious vehicle through which the reproduction of culture is carried out.

In *The Selfish Meme*, Kate Distin nuances and extends Dawkins’ theory by critiquing his portrait of the memetic process as a mindless proliferation of culture. She asserts that the relationship between memes and the mind is much more complex than Dawkins first described in *The Selfish Gene* and that the meme hypothesis compels us to conceive of the phenomenon of

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12 Ibid.
cultural transmission and change in two ways. We can approach culture change either from the perspective of the meme, an unconscious replicator centrally implicated in the autonomous process of cultural evolution, or we can see it from the point of view of the individual who possesses creative and intellectual impulses to interact with memetic information in deliberate ways. She says, “minds are the unique product of an interaction between two quite independent Darwinian processes, one biological and the other cultural. The first is responsible for the mind’s innate potential, and the other for the realization of that potential.” 13 These two processes are inextricably linked to one another as people grow, learn, and develop understanding about life and cultural practices. Distin contends that, in complex and symbiotic connections, memes are a part of the environment in which human minds develop but that they also depend on the ability of an individual to consciously select, retain, and apply information so that it fits within the cultural environment and thus is preserved.14

Distin further nuances Dawkins’ theory by accentuating intentionality or consciousness in the process of cultural transmission. She argues that personal preference for certain memetic information plays an important role in the meme’s ability to survive and persist: “Information is more likely to be replicated if it is absorbed into a network of accepted ideas or is useful in the context of much-used skills: we tend to pass things on more when we approve of them than when we do not.” 15 By implicating the tendency for people to make deliberate decisions in transmitting cultural information, she improves the ability of memetic theory to explain the complex ways seemingly similar cultural practices can be uniquely manifest in different locations.

Memetic theory is an important and effective lens through which to view the steelband experiences discussed in this thesis. The manner in which information about steelband is transmitted and exchanged varies in different locations. Directors and musicians in each group are individuals who intentionally use and deliberately respond to memetic information about


14 Memes differ from tropes, as a theoretical models for the propagation of culture, in that memes function to preserve, sustain, and propel cultural traits. A trope, however, is a literary, rhetorical, or symbolic device whose function is to refer to or signify information, but not to ensure its survival. The strength of Distin’s theory is that it accounts for both physical and cognitive aspects in the process of cultural transmission through memes.

15 Ibid., 45.
playing pan, albeit in diverse and unique ways. By approaching steelband experiences in this way, I hope to strengthen Distin’s implication about people’s role in the manifestation, composition, and shaping of culture in local situations and in broader contexts.

**Theoretical Approach**

Distin’s version of memetic theory resonates closely with the purposes of my thesis, which are to observe and examine the exchange of information about steelband and to better understand how this transfer of knowledge shapes steelband experiences locally and in broader musical networks. She indicates that studies in the realm of memetics must look at the ways cultural information is preserved, selected, replicated, and varied in order to address cultural change and exchange. Because culture is a complex and dynamic phenomenon at work everywhere in our contemporary world, a closer look at memes in specific group contexts might yield a deeper appreciation for the intricate ways that information is organized and shapes the way people experience and practice steelband today. Ensemble directors and the music-cultural media they use are significant sources through which memes are transmitted for selection, preservation, replication, and variation within specific contexts of steelband. Although a central question to this project involves the nature of memes implicated in the practice and performance of steelband, I will also consider the ways in which pan-related memes are both preserved and are varied in musical behaviors and actions among local contexts in Florida and broader contexts like the Mannette Steel Drums Festival of Steel.

Since people in local contexts espouse diverse attitudes toward music, performance, education, competition, and a myriad of other realms connected to steelband, I contend that the experience, or “groove,” of such a group is not only constructed through memes themselves, but it is also the operative and intentional use of certain information by directors that affects the nature of the experience of participating in the band. Each player in a group receives, processes, and relates to memetic information about steelband in unique and individualized ways.

**Methodology**

In looking at the practice and performance of steelband, my research entails my observations during ethnographic fieldwork in Tallahassee, Florida with Lion Steel, a high school steelband program at Leon County High School, during fieldwork in Cocoa, Florida with

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Space Coast Steel, a school-based steelband at Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School, and fieldwork in Morgantown, West Virginia with the participants at the “Festival of Steel” workshop sponsored by Mannette Steel Drums, Inc. I have drawn from interviews with directors about their own personal background and involvement in steelband music in Florida and elsewhere, about their approach to teaching steelband, about the resources they use to coach the ensemble, about the music they choose to perform, and about the way they structure rehearsals. I have also drawn from interviews with directors about their bands’ performance schedules, about the involvement in the communities in which they play and practice, and about their observations of band members. I have observed and interviewed participants at the Mannette workshop and I have video taped concerts, rehearsals, and clinic sessions at this festival. I also video taped each high school bands’ rehearsals, practices, and performances in several contexts, including music competitions, conference performances, festivals, community concerts, and paid gigs.
CHAPTER 1:
THE MASTER NARRATIVE MEME COMPLEX

Case Study #1: “Lion Steel”, Tallahassee, Florida

Lion Steel is a steelband in Tallahassee, Florida that exists both as a class and as an extracurricular activity at Leon High School. The members that make up the band are high school students that, in addition to steelband, take many academic courses related to music. Below is a blurb from their website; it is a portrait of the Lion Steel experience:

*Lion Steel is the curricular steel pan program at Leon High School in Tallahassee, FL. As part of the esteemed performing arts department, Lion Steel is dedicated to enriching its students' liberal arts education by challenging them with a musical instrument and culture outside of their normal experience.

The group, directed by David Knapp, was begun in 1991 by Nancy Marsters with the generous donations from individuals and school organizations. Today, the program has grown to two student ensembles, the Jouvert and Canboulay bands, and the adult band Steel Crazy. The program also has a smaller chamber ensemble called Lion Steel Pan Groove. Throughout the year, Lion Steel performs regular concerts and can be heard performing at a variety of events in the community. The repertoire of Lion Steel reflects the diverse repertoire being played on pan today, including soca, calypso, reggae, classical, jazz, R&B, and pop. If you would like Lion Steel to perform at your next engagement, please visit the contact page.17

Students’ experience in Lion Steel is predicated on playing music and learning about the cultural contexts in which steelband has existed in the West Indies and in the United States. Each day in class, students meet to rehearse and discuss the music they play. In addition to this classroom context, the students often perform for the school community and for other groups and events in the Tallahassee community.

Not only is the Lion Steel experience marked by its rehearsals and performances, but it also includes lessons specifically designed by David to communicate cultural and historical information about pan to his students. David’s own steelband experiences have been informed by his knowledge of this type of information; a specific meme complex, representing information related to the history of the idiom informs the way David facilitates the Lion Steel experience. In this

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chapter, I consider the ways the “master narrative meme” has influenced David’s goals for his students, the media he utilizes in introducing social-historical information about steelband, and the choices he makes in selecting repertoire for the band.

Figure 1.1 David Knapp and Lion Steel in 2006. (Image used with permission. http://leonperformingarts.org/lionsteel/?q=gallery&g2_itemId=369).

**Community and Cultural Learning**

David Knapp became the director of Lion Steel in August 2002 after graduating from the Florida State University and earning Bachelors degrees in Music and Anthropology. He also earned a Masters in Music Education from Florida State while he began his directorship of the steelband at Leon High School. When I interviewed him in the spring of 2007 about his approach to instructing the group, he emphasized his intention to communicate the importance of community, responsibility, and fostering students’ agency in facilitating steelband experiences. His general
approach to administering the group is to encourage students’ initiative in practicing, playing, and organizing performances:

*I try to help them understand the concepts of community, responsible decision-making, being nice to each other. I put a lot of responsibility on my students; there’s no way I could do what I’m doing unless I had them do some of the work for me. I have a small group that will compete in a solo and ensemble concert. They have the responsibility of filling out the paperwork and everything. I started out rehearsing them, but now they are getting it taken care of…Also, with things like setting up for a gig, I will often put my president, or captain, in charge. I used to go nuts trying to micromanage…and now I just delegate out. That’s something that steelband has to offer that other ensembles don’t…. agency in decision-making processes.*

When I asked David about his reasons for choosing to be a steelband director, he sited a few reasons why he accepted the position as director of Lion Steel after graduating from Florida State; he welcomed the challenge, the offer for the position was at the right time, and he had been in the group when he was in high school. He played in Lion Steel under the direction of a woman named Elizabeth Delmater, a graduate of Northern Illinois University who studied with steelband composer, arranger, and performer Cliff Alexis. David’s experience in the group in high school with Elizabeth made a positive impact on him as a musician, as a scholar and as the current director of Lion Steel. In addition to inheriting a value for community and individual agency in steelband experiences, he feels his interest regarding the cultural history of steelband was peaked under her direction. During a conversation I had with David, he recalled that Elizabeth often called the group’s attention to important social, historical, and cultural elements to playing pan.

*She instilled lots of history and the steelband master narrative. When I took it over, that was something I wanted to emphasize to the students. She was also a really good person, so I certainly inherited an idea of community. Since Lion Steel is relatively small and insular the whole community thing was a present idea.*

A meme that is particularly important in shaping the educational and performance aspects of the experience at Lion Steel is what I identify as the “master narrative meme complex.” Throughout our conversations, David has frequently mentioned the “master narrative.” Also known as “metanarrative” or “grand narrative,” the phrase “master narrative” emerged from postmodern critical theory to signify a comprehensive or totalizing picture of culture history, knowledge, and

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18 David Knapp, interview recorded by author (Tallahassee, Florida, 11 February 2007). Personal collection of author. See Appendix A for a full transcript of the interview.
19 Ibid.
experience. Grand narratives include and often subsume individual, diverse, and particular histories.

The history and practice of steelband has been characterized by social struggle. Men and women of all ages participate in steel band performances in Trinidad and Tobago; this music-cultural tradition has become a symbol of national identity for Trinbagonians and has gained international popularity. The details of stories about the steelband cultural idiom vary according to the person presenting it or the media representing it. This information is exchanged in a variety of musical, cultural, and educational contexts. The steelband master narrative could be generally summarized in the following way:

Steel bands originated from festive traditions practiced in colonial Trinidad and Tobago. African slaves on sugar cane plantations used hand drums for communication, worship, and celebration. Since they were not permitted to participate in French festival activities associated with Lent, slaves developed their own celebratory traditions in which drumming accompanied choruses of singers and chantwells, or soloists.

During the late 1800s, Carnival was born out of the blending of the African canboulay celebrations with French pre-Lenten celebrations. In 1880, the British colonial government banned the use of hand drums as a response to the Canboulay riots during Carnival that year. In response, musicians began to express themselves with alternatives to drumming. One alternative was tamboo-bamboo, a practice in which bamboo of various lengths and densities were cut so that the ensemble could achieve an array of distinct percussive sounds. By the mid-1930’s musicians were also using small bottles and found objects in tamboo-bamboo bands as well during Carnival. Tamboo-bamboo bands also accompanied the chantwells, who would later be called calypsonians, throughout this period. Songs by chantwells included topical lyrics, political and social commentary, and utilized double-entendre; chantwell lyrics many times antagonized other musicians. Bands from different neighborhoods in Trinidad developed a competitive and even combative attitude toward one another, and many times bands fought violently with one another using their sharpened bamboo or weapons hidden in the bamboo.

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Tamboo-bamboo was outlawed in the mid-1930s. Once again, musicians created instruments from objects they found. By the early 1940’s, people were using biscuit tins, car parts, trashcans, and an array of metal objects. During the World War II era, oil production in Trinidad increased and an abundance of empty 55-gallon oil containers accumulated near the United States Naval Base near Port of Spain. By 1946, several people, including Winston “Spree” Simon and Elliot “Ellie” Mannette, had developed instruments out of these barrels by hammering out a dome shape in the barrel and fashioning note-areas on the dome. These instruments quickly became popular with neighborhood bands; musicians and groups could now play popular music, European art music, and dance music for Carnival.

Soon after the first drums with tones were created, steel bands gained international attention. The Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO), comprised of musicians from different areas in Trinidad, traveled to Great Britain to play. Many neighboring islands in the West Indies were soon featuring steel bands too. The United States Navy also formed a band in the 1950s. In the later years of this decade, the national Panorama competition was established as an element of Carnival; bands from different neighborhoods began to benefit from corporate sponsorship and could hire full time arrangers, builders, and tuners to service the band and prepare them for the annual competition.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s in Trinidad and Tobago, steelbands played in a greater variety of contexts as the middle classes began to accept and promote the art form. Performance of steel bands has included playing “bomb” tunes “on the road” on trucks or on foot with the instruments around musicians’ necks, playing technically difficult arrangements of calypsos and socas on stage at the national Panorama competition, and playing many types of American and Caribbean popular music on the backs of large trucks in the Carnival parades. Contemporary steel bands in Trinidad and Tobago play in a variety of contexts outside of Carnival as well. Performers and bands from the islands play in international competitions, concerts, and celebrations.

David uses the term “master narrative” to represent a large body of historical and contemporary information that pertains to steelband practices. The above description outlines the information that David incorporates into rehearsals and classes for his band. As he guides the band

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21 A “bomb” tune is an arrangement of a popular tune using calypso rhythms in the harmonic and percussive accompaniment. Many times bands would practice these tunes in secret before Carnival in order to “drop the bomb” by playing a familiar tune in the calypso style.
through learning repertoire, David refers to elements of carnival history; the historical relationship between Trinidadian festive practices and the development of steelband; the intimate link between calypso and pan; the historical role of competition in musical practices in Trinidad; value for individuals who have contributed to the practice and performance of pan in Trinidad and throughout the United States and Europe; and a myriad of other historically situated social and cultural units of information about steelband that are contained within the master narrative meme complex. As an aspect of the band’s experience, David often also presents lectures on these topics instead of rehearsing on certain days. The master narrative is an important meme complex that punctuates and is present in the Lion Steel experience.

From his experiences and for his students’, David values the exposure to and interaction with the master narrative meme and the information it represents. The master narrative meme was particularly influential in directing his attention to a multitude of aspects involved in participating in steelband, including themes and information associated with: the expression of identity; struggle and triumph; community aspects of participation in steelband; innovation within restricted creative and expressive contexts; competitive contexts for playing pan. He incorporates what he calls “cultural learning” into the experience of Lion Steel so that students might consider and absorb elements of the master narrative meme into the fabric of their own perspectives regarding steelband.

One specific example of print media that David has used in his class to implement cultural learning via the master narrative is *The Steelband Movement: The Forging of a National Art in Trinidad and Tobago*, by Stephen Stuempfle. In this book, Stuempfle fuses several personal accounts, anecdotes, and memories by Trinidadians with written histories, news stories, and documents to trace the origins and development of steelband. It is a version of the steelband master narrative that attempts to portray a comprehensive picture of the parallel histories of the emergence of steelband and national identity in Trinidad and Tobago:

“The panmen’s transformation of objects from their environment into musical instruments is one representation of the whole creative process by which Trinidadians have defined themselves as a people. In fact, the emergence of the steelband and its development up to the present parallel the emergence and development of Trinidad and Tobago itself as a nation. To a large extent, nation-building has involved negotiations between Trinidad and Tobago’s various ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes; and patterns of conflict and consensus in these
negotiations have, at the same time, been played out in the dramas of the steelband movement.”

Stuempfle’s book is an example of a resource used by David to communicate information about the practice and performance of steelband in Trinidad and Tobago to his students. David has used other media containing memetic information related to the master narrative in his band’s experience of pan. He utilizes his own photographs and video of his trip to Trinidad in 2006, video clips and audio recordings of bands from around the world, and other texts, like Shannon Dudley’s Carnival Music In Trinidad: Experiencing Music Expressing Culture (2003). In an interview, he elaborated his use of media resources to implement cultural learning:

*Man, two years ago, I was the star technology teacher. I was using the Dudley book, it was the basic curriculum outside the practice and performance of music. That was really the biggest example of what I was doing. I did other things, like if we were doing I’d Rather Be in Trinidad, I’d bring in a recording like Rudder’s Autobiography of the Now and talk about his career with them. Then for the Dudley stuff, it was awesome. They had to read a chapter each week. Monday there would be a lecture, and Wednesday there’d be a quiz. I went through and made a PowerPoint presentation of each chapter, and it was partially based on the content from the chapter along with my own thoughts and viewpoints. For example, chapter 4 is something about music for the road versus music for the tent. Here’s the road, the music is going to be more upbeat, nowadays more soca than calypso. I’d show them pictures, and talk about the characteristics of the road, performance context and function. Then I’d show them the tent, play a recording of the Mighty Sparrow, the oldest recording of a chantwell, Julian Whiterose. I embedded all the media in there. They’ve got a sheet of paper with guided questions on it. Then they did a take home quiz that would be due in the middle of the week. At the end of the chapter, we’d play the game “road or tent?” I used LCD projectors, my laptop, and the media. It was pretty effective.*

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In directing the group, David sets out to include cultural learning as an aspect of participating in Lion Steel. He has selected the master narrative meme complex, elements of which he gleaned from his own teacher, for variation and replication to his own students so that they can better understand the complicated ways in which steelband is situated in historical, musical, and cultural terms.
Selection and Preservation: Dialogue about Performance and Repertoire

In the previous section, I explicated the processes by which David has chosen and uses the master narrative complex to facilitate cultural learning for Lion Steel. In the present section, I will explore the ways he selects music and performance opportunities for his group. I will also consider how ideas and information in the master narrative complex are preserved in the discussions, rehearsals, and performances that punctuate the Lion Steel experience.

Because of his experiences in high school with Elizabeth Delmater, David values knowledge about the cultural and historical contexts of pan performance for his students. Not only does he use the master narrative meme to facilitate cultural learning in his band, his value for this type of learning informs his choices regarding repertoire and performance milestones for the band. He explained his perspective about the relationship between playing pan and acquiring cultural historical knowledge to me in an interview:

I’d like to think that performance and cultural learning are connected. I guess I should say that I know they are, just based on faith, I know they are. I don’t know this from research, but I am willing to bet they are connected. I know that students care more if they know what’s going on, rather than some disconnected, decapitated, musical experience that has no meaning to them. So that’s why I do the cultural stuff. As soon as you do the cultural stuff, you have to use this stuff: I can’t just sit there and tell them, I was in Trinidad once and saw this. Its much better to show them photos of someone breathing fire. In terms of performance, I have to play that stuff for them. First of all, I don’t have all that knowledge. My drum set player last year played on Fall From Grace. I’m not going to tell him what to play on the drum set, there’s no way. I have no idea what’s going on. Instead I give him a copy of the mp3, he studies it and plays exactly what the drummer on the recording plays. Our program is at the point where it would be a lot better to mimic good things that have been done rather than try to completely reinvent it ourselves, although to some extent we do that.  

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24 Ibid.
Figure 1.3 Drum set player listens to musical examples in David’s office. Another student practices cello pan. (Image used with permission. http://leonperformingarts.org/lionsteel/?q=gallery&g2_itemId=509). By learning and understanding about the historical, social, cultural, and contemporary elements
contained in the steelband master narrative, Lion Steel can assign meaning to what they do and to situate their practice of steelband within these various contexts. David incorporates cultural learning in his design for Lion Steel in order to encourage students to think more deeply about the elements related to the music that they play. In this way, the Lion Steel groove, or the character of their experience, is shaped by the values passed on to David from his director, most significant of which is the value for knowledge and information regarding the musical cultural history of steelband.

David uses media related to the master narrative meme complex within his band’s experience, not only because he values the benefits of cultural learning, but also because students gain a better understanding how to execute and perform steelband music when they observe and hear other people playing pan and discussing pan performance in videos and audio examples. He stated that, with this information, students could better approximate the performance of musical grooves by adjusting the way that they play to fit the style of the music they observe in media sources. As well as containing information about history and culture, the media which David uses often contains information about performance practices as well.

The master narrative meme shapes how the students play, but it also influences what and where they perform. The master narrative had been a distinct element marking David’s steelband experiences in various ways. His choices as a director regarding performance context and repertoire for the band reflect his encountering the master narrative meme. Moreover, he discusses his values and attitudes about steelband repertoire during rehearsals with students:

I’m surprised how much they don’t get tied up with the trite parts of the master narrative. The whole oppression thing, the struggle narrative, they don’t dwell on that too much. I’m not sure if it's because students are more sophisticated in their concepts of race and class, because if I was their age, I would obsess on that and that would be the only thing I talk about. Growing up in the nineties, there was always a concert for something, a concert for Tibet, it was always about oppression. But they're not about that. Everyone was genuinely interested in the way things actually were, what was it like to be a performer in a steelband, why do people go to the panyards, what kinds of people go, why people choose to be in different bands. They are more concerned with the realities of the environment. In Dudley’s book, social identity, performance context, and function—they got into that. In the chapter about the road versus the tent, about performance context, they really got into that because we had a string of gigs where we had to bust out Tequila, Hot Hot Hot and all this other stuff I really try to get away from, and they really got into that. In
terms of reflexivity, talking about ourselves, why are we performing this music, what are the demands being placed on us that are similar to the demands on steelbands since day one and how, do we negotiate that, and also we talked about me as the director—why do I not like to play that kind of music, and why am I now capitulated to playing it. They got into that, I didn’t foresee it coming. A few students started relating themselves, and I thought it was the perfect conversation. That was definitely something.25

Since Lion Steel is a class during the regular school day at Leon High School, David has incorporated cultural lessons using various print, audio, and video resources in addition to rehearsing music. He introduces the information so that he can guide and encourage the students to develop an informed critical perspective of steelband and the music they perform and rehearse. Moreover, his incorporation of the master narrative meme complex has prompted students to consider the ways in which their own participation in the activity is situated within the complex grand historical narrative of steelband.

David’s musical tastes and values for certain styles and genres have compelled him to program new steelband music, like Sojourn, written by Chris Tanner and The Passage, by Andy Narell, and Two Brazilian Dances by Ney Rosaro for Lion Steel performances. In a conversation we had about repertoire selection, David explained his perspective on steelband music:

In the last several years since I came back to this job, I tried hard not to do the Disney kind of steelband stuff; and focused solely on the good Panyard charts and Ramajay stuff. I think that stuff is sort of the zenith of steelband stuff. I guess what I mean is new music for steelband. That’s what I want to do. But new music for steelband, first of all its going to lose its meaning if you don’t do this other stuff and that other stuff is not only what pays the bills, but it also is what draws people into wanting to do it in the first place. So if you want to transcend people’s expectations for steelband, you have to first meet them at their expectations. Also, it gets the students in the steelband in the first place. Last year, my students complained because we did too much Sojourn and The Passage, they literally said, we want more Disney tunes. And yeah, so this year we are doing the Lion King, more upbeat socas, like Rant and Rave.26

From David’s critical perspective, including a variety of styles within the band’s repertoire is important because it facilitates an educational experience for his students, as performers, and it informs the audience for which they play. In order that his students and the audience better

26 Ibid.
understand the complex historical and cultural contexts in which steelband is rooted, he programs music for performances that reflect the kaleidoscopic variety of styles associated with the steelband idiom. He also notes that his students prefer and enjoy playing in a wide range of styles and genres. They like music that is fun, challenging, catchy, new, unusual, exciting, or familiar, depending on the contextual variables. Via cultural learning and the discussions David initiates with students in Lion Steel, the master narrative meme complex is implicated in encouraging his students to develop individual interpretations of and attitudes toward the repertoires and performance contexts associated with steelband experiences.

**Replication and Variation: Rehearsal, Self-Evaluation, and Competition**

Previously I explored the ways memes are selected and preserved within the Lion Steel experience. In the following portrait, I consider the ways memes circulate within the rehearsal setting and I observe how the band uniquely rearticulates the information in various contexts.

People began talking and making noise outside the building and in the cafeteria; soon I would see David and his students. Quickly, I made notes about the setup of the room, the condition of the red spray-painted pans with black lion paws stenciled on the skirts of the pans, and the lack of an engine room. I’d played pan on a few small gigs with David in the Tallahassee area since I moved here in 2006; I had talked with him about traveling to Trinidad since he’d gone there in February of 2006 and I was planning to go in the spring of 2007. He had given me advice about getting around Port of Spain during Carnival and shared some of his stories about his trip. We also briefly played together in Mas N Steel at Florida State.

I arrived at Leon High School about twenty minutes early just to make sure I had enough time to check in at the front office, make my way to the rehearsal room, and set up my video camera. When I got to the rehearsal space, I waited and listened to the noises of students changing classes before the lunch period started. A student opened the door and went over to a filing cabinet in the middle of the room. The door slammed shut and was immediately swung open by three more students chatting as they too went to the filing cabinet for music. More students came through the door and David followed. Time to start, I thought.

David immediately greeted me with a smile and a wave. I finished setting up the camera and my notepad while students filled the room with talking, laughing, and the cacophonous sound
of dozens of people warming up on pans. The sound of one student’s loud and persistent hammering on a slightly out-of-tune six-bass note cut right through the aural chaos. I looked at him from the corner of the room; he appeared to be trying to judge the tone quality of the bass note as if he had some intimate knowledge or profound insight into the sour note problem. Maybe all that hammering and “testing” is why it was out of tune, I thought critically to myself. David made his way over to talk with me as he answered a student’s question and organized the papers in his hands.

David conducted the rehearsal that day with a quick pace giving specific instruction to players on how to improve the sound only as necessary. He kept the students playing and/or air panning for most of the rehearsal. Air panning is a technique used by industrious and efficient or otherwise unprepared pan players at rehearsals. During periods of time when the director isolates and works with separate voices or groups, players in other sections simulate playing their part motioning their hands and mallets without striking the surface of the pan. Air panning allows players to practice the physical motion of executing certain difficult passages, rhythms, and licks without creating extraneous sound in rehearsal. That day, many students air panned to perfect their parts, or to possibly cram in some quick last-minute preparation, while David stopped to rehearse different sections.

David stopped to clear up confusion in the notation or to demonstrate correct rhythmic articulation. On two occasions during his explanations, he sidetracked to tell a funny story and laugh with the students. However, the momentum of the rehearsal did not break at that point; the students were not waiting to play longer than three or four minutes at a time. David expected the students to engage actively in the rehearsal by asking questions, by actively listening and air panning, and by being, or appearing to be, prepared.

Halfway through the rehearsal, David asked the students to rate the efficiency of their efforts last week given that the normal percentage would be about 95% efficiency with him at rehearsal. The students discussed this amongst themselves and estimated that they were about 80% efficient during rehearsals last week without David. “Section A, for a grade” he exclaimed as he began to rehearse them again. They started playing with intense focus as David cycled around the ensemble, notepad in hand. As some students concentrated more on their playing in this “grading” context, they became less active in moving with the beat of the music they played. A few of the students appeared to be more confident and relaxed with the material, despite the pressures of
David’s evaluation of their playing for a grade, and these students kept the beat in their bodies by tapping a foot or stepping to the groove. In an interview we had after this rehearsal, David explained his approach to grading with me.

*On at least half a dozen occasions during the semester, I give them playing assessments within the large ensemble and some opportunities in small ensembles. That’s the best way I have found to foster some personal responsibility to practice. This year, more than any other year, there’s more than likely one or two students hanging out after school practicing. I try to give them some affirmation through their participation; if I get them hooked like that, they are more likely to come and practice.*

The students have many opportunities to learn and play their repertoire during in-school rehearsals, which last for an hour every school day. David addresses musicality, note and rhythmic accuracy, sight-reading, and musical decision-making to the band in general and coaches individual students as they play with the ensemble. Although David does not offer private lessons to students, many times he coaches smaller groups of students who practice together after school occasionally to perfect parts and to work on extra music.

David evaluates students’ performance competence throughout the semester both within the large ensemble context and in a small ensemble setting. Within the smaller groups, students work on a piece they may choose from the Lion Steel library, which contains, in addition to the large ensemble repertoire, music composed for small steelband groups as well as arrangements for wind and string ensembles. It is not unusual for students to also create their own arrangements to play in this context as well; since many of his students also happen to take the Advanced Placement Music Theory class at Leon High School, David welcomes students to apply the skills they have developed in other music classes to their steelband experience.

David has established an environment in which he encourages students’ enthusiasm for improving their individual and collective skills in performing steelband music. He expects the students to develop their self-evaluative skills and he often appraises and responds to their performances during rehearsals. He also chooses performance opportunities for the group, including adjudicated events by the Florida Bandmasters Association (FBA) and the Florida Music Educators’ Association (FMEA), in which they play for audiences who will assess and reply to their ability in ensemble and solo contexts.

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27 Ibid.
The elements of evaluation and competition are significant within the Lion Steel experience. Among other historically and musically relevant themes, David uses rehearsal time to present, discuss, and rehearse music that Lion Steel plays. The band often performs in contexts in which they are evaluated by the audience or a panel of judges. The discussion and preparation during rehearsals that is related to the master narrative meme contours the character of the band’s experiences; their heightened awareness of socially, musically, and historically relevant information has shaped their attitudes toward what they do as a member of the group.

In the spring of 2008, David took the group to Virginia Beach, Virginia to participate in the 6th Annual Panorama Caribbean Music Fest. David had been considering taking the group to this competition for at least two years; a colleague of his, and fellow Lion Steel alum Adam Grise, had taken his steelband to the competition and told David that it was a worthwhile experience for his band. David chose to take the band this year because they were playing exceptionally well together this year and many students were eager to supplement their experiences with extra opportunities to learn about and perform in different contexts of steelband. In order to prepare for the competitive performance event, David scheduled extra rehearsals after school every day for two weeks before traveling to Virginia. The students worked hard to learn the repertoire and perfect their performance of it and practiced more intensely than they usually might for a school concert or other local performance. Before leaving for Virginia, David also discussed with the students the reasons why he chose this opportunity for the band, who the judges would be and what performance elements that might capture their attention, what to expect from the other bands’ performances, and why they should interact with and talk to other panists while in Virginia.

At this event, his band competed against nineteen other high school and community steelbands from around the United States. They played a difficult Panorama competition piece by Amrit Samaroo called “The Challenge is Minor,” an arrangement of “Seasons of Love” from the Broadway musical Rent, and an arrangement of Camille Saint Saens' "Danse Bacchanale" from Samson et Delilah. David selected these tunes because he felt that they would showcase the group’s technical ability and well-rehearsed ensemble playing. At the same time, this repertoire allowed him to address memes within the master narrative meme complex including competitive performance contexts, Panorama, arrangement of classical pieces and popular tunes in steelband, and any other themes he could apply to the group’s situation in preparing for the Virginia trip. The process of rehearsing, discussing, and performing these pieces is an example of the ways the
master narrative meme complex operates in the Lion Steel experience.

Figure 1.4 David and Lion Steel members after winning the Virginia Arts Festival 6th Annual Panorama. (Image used with permission. http://leonperformingarts.org/lionsteel/).

Summary

The Lion Steel experience is marked by its curricular and extra-curricular function. It is a high school class in which students learn about and rehearse steelband music, but students also perform in a variety of contexts outside of school. In addition to helping students develop musical skills and technical facility, the director David Knapp, chooses to incorporate cultural learning as an element of the experience in his steelband.

The master narrative meme complex informs his choice to facilitate cultural learning because of values he inherited from his director. While he was a high school pan player, David learned about social and historical contexts in which steelband developed. He incorporates the master narrative in class to enable students to know about and discuss the music they play and to encourage them to situate themselves in broader pan milieus. By interacting with the various elements of the master narrative meme complex through repertoire, textbooks, recordings, and
David’s lectures, students in Lion Steel select, replicate, and preserve in rehearsals and performances.

The presence of the master narrative meme complex within the fabric of the Lion Steel experience shapes the character by which the group grooves, or operates. Not only do print, video, and audio resources contain information regarding the execution of the music played by Lion Steel, but exposure to these sources provides the opportunity for students to contextualize their own participation in relation to the master narrative.
CHAPTER 2:

THE PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE MEME COMPLEX

Case Study #2: “Space Coast Steel”, Cocoa, Florida

“If you wish to make a living doing this as an entertainer, this is stuff you have to know.”28

Space Coast Steel is a steelband in Cocoa, Florida that exists both as a class and as an extracurricular activity at Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School. The members that populate the band are high school and junior high school students that, in addition to steelband, take at least one other music class or ensemble. Below is a short blurb from their website about the band authored by their director, Ed Anderson:

Space Coast Steel is the steel band comprised of students from Space Coast Jr. / Sr. High School. The group has performed for the Florida Music Education Association State Convention and The All-American Music Festival, where they won the “Most Outstanding Performance” Award. The group has been featured for the past 3 years as part of Walt Disney World’s Christmas Atmosphere in which the band has performed at Disney World’s Downtown Marketplace, Old Key West Resort, and the Caribbean Beach Resort.29

Figure 2.1 Ed Anderson and Space Coast Steel in 2008. (Image used with permission. http://www.spacecoast.brevardschools.org/clubs/steel/index.htm).

Performance and preparation for performances comprise a significant portion of the Space Coast Steel experience. The band plays in a variety of contexts associated with educational institutions, including performances for the Florida Music Educators’ Association (FMEA) conventions, for the Space Coast school community, and in contexts in which they are paid to play music for entertainment at several locations in the Disney World theme parks and in other locations in Central Florida. The director Ed, whose own steelband experiences have been characterized by professional playing, utilizes a meme complex representing various bits of information related to his perspective of what professional playing entails, including performance techniques, broad knowledge of repertoire and how to execute it, and the earning of money for entertainment. In this chapter, I consider the ways the “professional performance meme complex” has influenced Ed’s goals for his students, the skills he focuses on in rehearsals, and the choices he makes in scheduling performances for the band.

The convention center lobby was loud, very live, and teeming with people. Music teachers, students, parents, and vendors bustled, all wearing the obligatory around-the-neck name-tags, some even toted Florida Music Educator’s Association (FMEA) gift canvas bags. Groups of goers lounged or waited on the couches in the atrium. A dozen people congregated around the information booth. Streams of folks negotiated the stairway. What an exciting place this would be to perform, especially for students, I thought. The main space inside the center was wide open; standing in the middle of the space, I could see the stairways and the perimeter of the second floor. Everyone was talking at once and the layers of conversation bounced off the glass outer walls filling the building up with sound. I looked around to see if I could spot anyone moving pans or cases anywhere. Although Ed and I had talked over the phone at length earlier that week about his band, FSU’s band, repertoire, and several other topics, we hadn’t discussed the details of Space Coast Steel’s performance at the FMEA convention. I had, however, discovered on the band’s website that Space Coast would play at 2:30pm.

It was ten minutes past two o’clock. As I worried that I wouldn’t get far finding them without a Florida Music Educator’s Association name-tag badge and a master schedule, my ear caught the sound of a pan, just a few notes; it was a high voice, a lead or a double second. I looked around to ascertain the direction from which the sound came. It was hard to tell – so much aural activity already pervaded the building. More notes, lower notes. Double seconds, I thought. I heard another pan and decided that I would head upstairs to look for Ed, or someone from Space Coast Steel.
I took the left stairway to the second floor and saw several people moving equipment around a stage. Parents and students were unpacking pans and stands behind the stage backdrop and setting up the band onstage. I looked around to see if I could spot Ed in the backstage mix and noticed the calm purpose with which everyone was getting ready. They must be used to this, I thought.

I scoped out a spot to set up my video camera. The stage was set up at one end of the long open hallway on the second floor of the convention center. Rows of chairs were set up along the wall of windows that line the upstairs hallway; ten minutes before Space Coast Steel would play, the audience was filling up with FMEA goers. I made small talk with a middle school music teacher from South Florida as I put the tape in the camera. He said he was excited to see this steelband play at FMEA and that he always wished he could start a pan group at his school, but he hadn’t the experience or information to start one yet. Before I could muster a concise response about resources this teacher could investigate in that regard, I spotted Ed walking quickly by me to the backstage area. A few seconds later, he came around to the front of the stage and talked with some students and parents. Although I hadn’t met him in person before this day, I immediately recognized him from some photos of him on the Space Coast Steel website. I had spent some time during the week before this performance looking around the site; it contains pictures of the band at different gigs in Central Florida, including the Walt Disney World Christmas shows, and Ed’s biographical information was listed on a page within the site:

*Ed Anderson is the Director of Space Coast Steel of Space Coast Jr. / Sr. High School in Port St. John, Florida. A native of Mobile, AL., Mr. Anderson has been performing with various professional musical organizations since the age of 15.*

A graduate of Florida State University, Ed holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education. Also, Mr. Anderson learned the art of steel drum performance from Darren and Jennifer Duerden and became a member of Mas’ and Steel; the FSU Steel Band. Later, he went on to play professionally in Sunset Steel throughout the Southern Georgia and Central Florida Area.

*In 2000, Mr. Anderson founded Space Coast Steel, the steel band comprised of students from Space Coast Jr. / Sr. High School. The group has performed for the Florida Music Education Association State Convention and The All-American Music Festival, where they won the “Most Outstanding Performance” Award. The group has been featured for the past 3 years as part of Walt Disney World’s Christmas Atmosphere in which the band has performed at Disney World’s Downtown Marketplace, Old Key West Resort, and the Caribbean Beach Resort.*
Mr. Anderson currently maintains an active performing schedule as a member of the T. Scott Walker Band, a Buffet-style rock band and as a solo artist. He has performed in such venues as Universal Islands of Adventure, Jimmy Buffet’s Margaritaville, Universal Citywalk, and in various venues on the east coast. He has recently had the honor of performing with Greg “Fingers” Taylor, one of the worlds finest Harmonica Players.

An accomplished arranger, his steel band arrangements are available through Hillbridge Music. Additionally Mr. Anderson has published an article on starting and teaching a steel band in the secondary school system in the Florida Music Director.

Ed’s biography highlights the integral details about his development and career as a professional pan player and arranger and in the above portrait, he orients his success as the director of Space Coast Steel with the types and number of performances his group has given. Since I began talking with Ed before the Florida Music Educators Association performance, many of his values for music and performance in steel band have become evident to me. His experiences playing pan at Florida State University with Jennifer and Darren Duerden have shaped his approach to teaching pan and to playing professionally. His years of experience as a professional player in several small combo groups for resorts, restaurants, bars, and private events informs the way he plans for and instructs Space Coast Steel. His values for entertaining through music by frequently performing in specific contexts and for the knowledge of how to function as a musician in a professional setting shape his students’ experiences in his band.

After he finished his conversation with the parents and students, I approached him to introduce myself. He was excited to meet me in person; he was so glad that I was there to see his group perform and he was quick to introduce me to the parents and students who were near. He spoke quickly and talked about his students, the instruments, and the Florida Music Educators Association conference. I knew I would have to ask him about all of this again after the performance. There was only a minute or so before Space Coast was scheduled to begin playing. The students had finished setting up the stage and were onstage preparing to start. I went back to where the camera was set up and looked over the program as they began to play.

It was the first time I saw the group perform. They played well and with great energy; I didn’t notice many weak spots in the music; those that I detected were brief and quickly fixed by

the band. Of the twenty-five students on stage, only one or two didn’t dance while they were playing. In fact, several students danced on the side of the stage during tunes they weren’t on stage playing. I wondered if their rehearsals and other gigs were marked by the same enthusiastic participation.

After the performance, the students and parents packed up the equipment and loaded the truck and bus to leave. The band had another performance the next day; they had to drive back to the school in Port St. John from Tampa that night and then wake up early the next morning to drive to another gig in Orlando. With several performances each year, the students and their parents had learned to become efficient in loading and unloading the band. I stood off to the side of the truck and watched the orchestrated effort.

Selection and Replication: Space Coast Steel Auditions and Goals for the Class

In Space Coast Steel, performance is a significant part of the experience. They perform often and with confidence and enthusiasm, as manifest in their body movements while they play. Previously, I considered how Ed has selected the professional performance complex in crafting his students’ experience. In this section, I explore how he selects each future Space Coast Steel member based on their ability to replicate the information communicated to them and modeled for them by Ed and the current members.

During a conversation we had about his students in Space Coast Steel, Ed shared with me his perspective on selecting students to play in the group. At Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School, the steelband is a popular group; even though membership requirements dictate that students must have prior musical training and that they must be enrolled in another music class at Space Coast, more people audition for the ensemble each year than Ed can accept. This year, eleven students auditioned to be in Space Coast Steel; I was able to observe the audition session in late-May in which Ed and several of his current members evaluated the potential members for the upcoming school year starting in August. After school that day, I met Ed in the room where Space Coast rehearses during the school day. He told me that in order to be eligible to audition students had to obtain recommendations from each of their teachers. Ed distributed a form to each student interested in being in Space Coast Steel; this document indicates the student’s current grade in each of their classes and signatures from each of their teachers indicating their recommendation of the student for Space Coast Steel.
Several people were in the rehearsal room practicing and waiting for the auditions to start. At four o’clock, Ed addressed all the students who were there to try out. He explained that a few of the current members of Space Coast Steel would help him evaluate each audition and decide on who would be accepted. Next, he had each new person introduce himself or herself to everyone at the meeting while he went to get some paperwork for the auditions. When he returned, all the students who were trying out went out into the hallway to wait. He explained the audition sequence to the current students, who were there to help him evaluate prospective members. They sat next to one another at a long table set up in front of the area in which students would be auditioning. First, each candidate would have to execute a repetitive pattern on the triple guitar after watching one of the current members demonstrate it. After attempting to play the pattern on the guitar pan, they would repeat the process with a different rhythmic pattern on a bass pan. Ed kept time by playing a conga pattern during both the demonstrations and the attempts on each instrument.

The time it took each student to audition was brief; they had limited time in which to process, imitate, and execute the performance modeled for them by a current member. Within this short time, Ed could observe each person’s response to the situation and the way they performed under these circumstances. Some students quickly understood the patterns that were shown to them and how they lined up with what Ed played on the congas. Other students struggled to imitate and execute rhythms, to find the correct pitches on the pans, and to fit the patterns with Ed’s conga part.

After the final person auditioned, Ed caucused with his helpers, the students to whom Ed has given the responsibility of determining the newest members to the group. They discussed each candidate’s audition and debated about their musical background and ability to quickly adapt to the rhythmic, technical, and stylistic demands of playing pan in Space Coast Steel. They also considered the difficulty level of some repertoire Ed mentioned that the band would play next year. Elements frequently mentioned in this post-audition discussion were each candidate’s capacity for body movement while playing and their ability to observe and replicate the skills demonstrated to them by the current members, or veterans as Ed often calls experienced members. In evaluating potential members, Ed and the student helpers are impressed by candidates who appeared to be quick and accurate in imitating Ed and the veteran players.

When I interviewed Ed later, I asked him about his audition rubric. Ed considers each student’s grades, recommendations from other teachers about behavior, and, because of the time commitment to participate in the steelband, the other activities each student is involved in when
deciding on whether to admit a new person to the band. However, he explained that the most important factor in accepting a student is his intuition about their potential as a performer.

*What I am looking for, because I am familiar with a lot of these kids, just through school, I am looking for the right kind of person who can feel the music, who has a very good sense of rhythm. You can teach them how to read it, you can teach the parts, that’s never a problem. You just gotta get someone who can accept it. You don’t want someone who is gonna sit there and be stiff. It’s not just how you play it, it’s how you sell it. If you don’t show that you believe in what you are doing, the audience is not gonna believe it. Part of our success is selling that music. I always get compliments about how the kids, in their faces, you can see that they love what they are doing.*\(^{31}\)

![Figure 2.2 Members of Space Coast Steel dance during rehearsal. (Image used with permission. http://www.spacecoast.brevardschools.org/clubs/steel/index.htm).](image)

The “professional performance” meme, which has been important in Ed’s development as a player and a director, influences his choices about selecting people who will populate his group. He chooses students based on their aptitude for absorbing, learning, and using several skills that Ed has found useful as a professional player. Ed looks for students who will be able to demonstrate their enthusiasm for the music during the performance; he wants students who are eager to “sell” the image of steelband in performance through their movements, facial

expressions, and general stage presence.

Preservation and Variation: Learning Skills and Developing as a Professional Player

Beyond selecting members for their capacity to sell the music, Ed’s goals are to develop students’ proficiency in reading musical notation, improvisation, playing by ear, and transposing music by sight. In order to discern these qualities in the students who audition for the group, Ed relies on his knowledge of each students’ musical background, his impressions of their abilities to quickly learn and execute new musical material during the auditions, and the observations of the current members, who help him during the auditions, regarding each candidates potential as a performer. When I asked him to share his goals for the group, he responded:

For me, I want to have solid players. My experience has been that it is good to be able to read the music, but I also want them to be strong in several areas. Being able to play by ear, being able to read music, being able to improvise. I don’t want to have what I call, robotic players; there’s a piece of music, now we’re gonna play that. From playing in Orlando like I do, I’ve seen the benefit of being able to play by ear. Some of the best musicians I’ve ever met do that. Now, I want my guys to be very solid in all of those areas. I also want them to be able to know, if they want to play professionally, like what we do here in Orlando, there are certain tunes that you have to know. If I have to play Margaritaville again, I’ll scream. But that’s a tune you have to know. You have to know Brown Eyed Girl, you have to know Breezin’. You have to know the Goodbye Look, Hot Hot Hot, Shaker Song, Morning Dance, all those standards you have to know. I want my guys to know those as well so if they do want to go out and play, they’ll have a bit of background in it. So that will help them get started, not to be so unsure of their footing if they ever try to do it by themselves.32

Elements of Ed’s own experience inspire his approach to forming goals for his students’ participation in the group. The class is designed in regard to elements involved in pan performance in a professional context. He aims to facilitate the development of students’ ability to read music; he often teaches by rote to encourage students to learn by imitation and by ear; he encourages students to exhibit body movement as an element of showmanship in performance; he uses a wide variety of music in rehearsal to build the students’ repertoire; he trains them how to play from music in lead-sheet format; he utilizes other local professional musicians by inviting them to share their experiences with his students:

32 Ibid.
I had a professional musician come to speak at our school, and he spoke to my steelband class. He told them about lead sheets, and he explained that when you go out that this is all you get sometimes. The I’m Tore Down that we did at our spring concert last year was done entirely by lead sheet. The basses learned how to play a walking bass line in the blues form and all the strums were done by the kids themselves.33

Ed includes music in Space Coast’s repertoire that he frequently plays on gigs and that audiences in and around Orlando typically request for him to play because he feels that this is an effective way to prepare his students for what they might encounter, if they choose to continue playing pan after their experience in Space Coast Steel. He stated in an interview: “Whenever I play at resort, I’ll do Al Jarreau. I’ll do Lionel Richie, because that’s stuff that they want to hear. I’ll do Spyro Gyra. You have to vary it up. I’ll play maybe three or four calypsos on a gig. And it’s the same thing here. Variety is the key.” The students experience in Space Coast is punctuated by testimony and instruction from Ed and from other musicians who play professionally. This instruction frequently involves rehearsing, playing, and learning a variety of styles of music. Although some of the music the band plays has sheet music with notated individual parts, much of the music Ed chooses for Space Coast is notated in lead-sheet format. In this format, the pitches of the melody are notated on a treble staff while symbols for the chords are indicated above the melody.

Figure 2.3 “Jamaica Farewell.” This is an example of a lead-sheet. The melody is notated on the staff and the chord indications for each measure are indicated by chord symbols (C, F, G, Am, Dm). (Personal collection of author).

33 Ibid.
Ed teaches the students various ways to realize the harmony and bass line in the appropriate voices:

*Every year I introduce standards. We play standards on our concerts. One year we did Brown Eyed Girl, but we did it in the key of G, because that’s the standard key that is played in. Girl From Ipanema we’ve done one year, and these are arrangements that I’ll write. I will try to make it so that everyone will have the melody, inside the arrangement, things like that. I try to do that so they know, if they are going to go out and play. I introduce them to the repertoire, stuff that I write out for them. They have a Jamaican Farewell arrangement, they have a Yellowbird arrangement that we do. There are some directors I’ve known that don’t really want to do this because these are some of the simpler tunes. But still, I can’t count the number of times when I’ve been playing at Margaritaville or I’ve been playing up at the Villages somewhere where a couple goes, can you please play Yellowbird for us, we’d really like to dance to it.*

In addition to helping students become proficient in performance skills, Ed also strives to build the body of repertoire the students play, including the standard tunes that a professional pan player should know in order to entertain audiences in specific contexts. Space Coast’s repertoire includes music in a variety of styles including soca, calypso, pop, bossa nova, funk, and jazz. Ed shared with me his reason for including several musical styles:

*I like to do a little bit of bossa, an island tune, a popular tune. I like to vary it during the concerts, to do a little bit of everything – so we get something for everybody. Because your average audience hasn’t heard Sunset or Fire Down Below, I rarely will concentrate on a panorama. The reason being is that they are very long and they can get very boring sometimes. The audiences that we play for can’t get into that. This year is an exception, we are working on Plenty Lovin’, both the abridged version and the panorama. You have to be entertaining as well as good in order to have a successful ensemble in the school setting. Because, we don’t get any funding from the school, we get nothing from the county. We try to do stuff that is going to bring everybody in. Last year we did the Police, just a little bit of everything.*

Although the “professional performance” meme has inspired the structure and content of the Space Coast Steel experience and is used by Ed to train the students to be capable and self-sufficient musicians, an additional implication of the professional performance meme complex is the element of playing as a means to ensure self-sustenance. Ed began the group at the school after having several years of experience playing professionally already; he had also had a few years of

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34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
experience teaching concert bands at Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School. By a stroke of good fortune, a band parent donated enough money for Ed to start a steelband at Space Coast. He had been talking with her about his experiences as a student in Florida State University’s Steel Band Mas N Steel. She was impressed by how he recalled fond memories of these experiences and subsequently donated $6100 to Ed in order that he would start a group at Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School. Since that school system had not approved any additional funding for a band at that time, Ed planned to sustain the group’s financial needs by booking them for frequent paid performances. By performing in this way since they began, they have been able to generate enough money to meet the costs they incur to maintain, tune, repair, and replace their instruments, to travel for performances, to pay guest musicians to play with them on concerts and gigs, and to pay for sheet music, mallets, and other equipment.

Ed’s approach has been popular within the school community. The band gains new members as the number of students who audition for the group each year increases. The parents of students are very supportive and energetic about the music and activities of the band; many parents volunteer to help Ed chaperone and coordinate during performances and travel. Space Coast Steel’s fall and spring concerts at the school’s auditorium are also popular and well-attended by students, faculty, family, and friends.


**Summary**

The professional performance meme complex shapes the Space Coast Steel experience. Although students rehearse every day during school hours much like they take other classes, their participation in the group is tailored according to Ed’s goals in preparing them to be
confident performers in professional realms. Their performances at school concerts, at Disney World, and at other paid engagements in Florida are informed by Ed’s value for this meme. Of course, not every student who has been a member of Space Coast Steel pursues playing in professional contexts; a few of his students own their own instruments and play for parties and other special events in Cocoa when they get called. However, his students are all familiar with and thoroughly trained in the aspects of professional playing that are directly associated with Ed’s own experience as a gigging pannist in Orlando. Their experience in Space Coast is characterized by Ed’s application of the professional performance meme.
CHAPTER 3:
THE PAN APPRECIATION MEME COMPLEX

Case Study #3: Mannette Steel Drums "Festival of Steel", Morgantown, West Virginia

The Mannette Steel Drums (MSD) “Festival of Steel” is a context in which memetic information about steelband abounds and it is a place where people come to celebrate, appreciate, and exchange ideas about pan. The festival occurs annually during July in Morgantown, West Virginia. Below is a brief description of the festival that appears on the festival’s homepage:

FESTIVAL of STEEL

Mannette Steel Drums and Dr. Ellie Mannette invite you to Morgantown, West Virginia and West Virginia University’s Creative Arts Center for a week-long celebration of the steel drum art form.

For more than a decade, Dr. Ellie Mannette, widely regarded as the "Father of the Modern Steel Drum", has been training a team of gifted apprentices in Morgantown. These apprentices are now master craftsman and comprise the staff of Mannette Steel Drums, Ltd. under the leadership of Chanler Bailey, President and CEO. They are devoted to crafting the finest steel drum instruments in the industry and continuing the legacy of Ellie Mannette.

Each summer for the past 16 years, Dr. Mannette and these dedicated colleagues have hosted a summer workshop designed to celebrate the steel drum art form and to provide a venue for enthusiasts, educators and professional players to exchange information.

PERFORMANCE

The workshop is a highly performance oriented experience. Whether you are a professional musician seeking other players of your caliber and a challenge, an educator looking to collect information to better your program and expand your repertoire, or a beginner with no musical background at all, you will find this an incredible experience. World renowned performers, lecturers and clinicians will be leading Advanced, Intermediate and Beginner bands in daily rehearsals, culminating in a performance at the end of the week.

HISTORY

Would you pass up a chance to meet Stradivarius? Shake hands with Einstein? Not many legends are recognized for greatness during their lifetime. Dr. Ellie Mannette is one of the fortunate few. Lectures will cover topics on:
• Steel band's early history
• The evolution of the various instruments
• Mannette's personal experiences and observations of steel band's development in the US and abroad
• Trinidad's Carnival and Panorama
• Current building and tuning demonstrations with the staff of Mannette Steel Drums, Ltd.

Did you know that steel drums are the only family of acoustic instruments invented in the twentieth century? Dr. Mannette is responsible for much of the innovation of the family of steel drums, and for taking them to an unparalleled level of tonal sophistication

EDUCATION

Daily seminars will be led by some of the most well respected and talented steel band directors and performers in the industry. Integral to the week-long immersion in this art form is the provision of additional information in a lecture setting for the music educator as well as the steelband performer.

Topics may include information on:

Arranging Techniques
Performance Techniques
Engine Room fundamentals
Repertoire
Fundraising

Every steel drum player is an educator. As performers, we must be aware that many in our audience are experiencing this instrument for the first time. With this awareness comes the responsibility for providing more information about its origins and capabilities than that of musicians of more familiar instruments.36

The MSD “Festival of Steel” experience is anchored in the appreciation of steelband through performance and education. People who want to celebrate and take part in steelband beyond local contexts come to the festival to rehearse music with professional musicians, composers, and arrangers; to meet and talk with historically significant people in the pan idiom, including Ellie Mannette and Ray Holman; and to learn about different approaches to incorporating an educational element in the experience of steelband from published pedagogues like Tom Miller and Chris Tanner.

Selection, Preservation, and Replication of Ideas, Information, and Resources

In 2007 I attended the Mannette Steel Drum “Festival of Steel” Workshop, an annually occurring weeklong clinic hosted by the staff at Mannette Steel Drums, Ltd. in Morgantown, West Virginia. Mannette Steel Drums, Ltd. (or MSD) is a company that manufactures and sells steel drum instruments, equipment, and music to an international market of performers and educators. Dr. Elliot “Ellie” Mannette, the company’s founder and namesake, as the “Father of the Modern Steel Drum” is often credited in resources generated by his company with having created the first pan instrument from a 55-gallon oil drum in Trinidad in 1946, although this issue is hotly debated by historians and pannists worldwide since other individuals have claimed credit for building the first steel drum.

With encouragement from Murray Narell, a community activist and teacher in New York City, Mannette moved to the United States in 1967 and began crafting instruments for several steel band programs on the East coast and throughout the Mid-west. He became an Artist-In-Residence at West Virginia University in 1992 and in that year he began an apprenticeship program called the University Tuning Project, teaching students how to build and tune instruments. Throughout the 1990s, the program flourished and Mannette Steel Drums, Ltd. became an incorporated entity in 2000.

In 1992, Mannette’s company also began to host a workshop that offered opportunities for people to learn about his building and tuning process and to play and perform steelband music. This workshop now occurs annually in Morgantown during early July and, as stated in the text from the website above, as a celebratory event in which people can share their enthusiasm for pan. The crux of the celebration is in the exchange of information among festival attendees and the faculty and MSD staff, builders, and tuners. A meme complex significant to the character of the festival is the “pan appreciation meme complex;” this constellation subsumes and includes a number of other memes, several of which are included in both the master narrative meme complex discussed in Chapter 2 and the professional performance meme complex explored in Chapter 3 of this project. Within the context of the “Festival of Steel,” the pan appreciation meme complex involves any number of memes containing information about the history, performance, or educational development of pan.
High school students, steel band directors, and pan enthusiasts from Alaska, Florida, California, and many other places around the country attended the festival in the past two years to learn about, perform, and celebrate steelband. Festival participants espouse diverse attitudes about pan, which are rooted in their unique local steelband experiences. Yet each year people congregate for the common purposes of celebration and appreciation through exchange of the information.

Memes abound in the workshop atmosphere, particularly in the scheduled rehearsals and lecture sessions each day. Within the context of pan appreciation, faculty and attendees dialogue about the character and function of steelband in its contemporary practices and performance contexts by playing, teaching, and exchanging ideas. Memes associated with pan appreciation and other musical and cultural realms inform and organize people’s attitudes, modes of participation, and the ways they discuss their experiences of playing pan. These participatory discrepancies characterize the MSD “Festival of Steel” groove.

Participants in the “Festival of Steel” choose to perform in a beginning, an intermediate, or an advanced ensemble. In the summer of 2007, I chose to perform in the advanced ensemble. I was excited to play new and challenging steelband music and to network with Andy and Jeff Narell, Robert Greenidge, and Ray Holman, artists who I knew would all be working with the advanced group. Moreover, I knew that many of my friends and steelband mates from various places would also participate in the advanced band at the festival in 2007.

For the festival, each faculty member selects music that they have arranged or composed to be included in the workshop repertoire, which typically includes calypsos, socas, compositions for the Panorama competition in Trinidad, arrangements of popular music, and new steelband music. Although they can choose the pieces that they deem suitable for the educational and performance aspects of the festival, Tom Miller, who coordinates and selects faculty for each festival, encourages them to select music that is best suited to participants’ skill and facility. “Ideally, the repertoire should challenge each group sufficiently without being too simplistic or overly strenuous given the one week time frame.”

37 Typically at the festival, each band plays three to five pieces, depending on the length and difficulty level of the music. Most of the

37 Tom Miller, personal e-mail 10 February 2008.
festival time is comprised of rehearsal blocks;\textsuperscript{38} faculty members rehearse in a rotation with different groups each day for over 5 hours to prepare music for the final Saturday night concert. Although several performances punctuate the week’s activities, including the faculty showcase concert, a mid-week jam session, and the final festival performance, the final concert features repertoire by each band and encapsulates the weeklong efforts of all of the musicians at the festival.

Figure 3.1 Master Schedule for the Mannette Steel Drums “Festival of Steel” 2008. Sunday July 6 – Saturday July 12. (Personal collection of author).

Each faculty member presents one or more lectures, demonstrations, or seminars in an area or areas of their expertise. Tom Miller, the coordinator of the festival faculty, indicates that he and the staff at MSD select the clinicians based on their professional accomplishments and past experiences at the festival. Ray Holman, a noted Trinidadian musician, composer, and

\textsuperscript{38} In addition to morning, afternoon, and evening rehearsal blocks, each festival day is also punctuated by early morning seminars, noontime master classes, and evening lectures or concerts given by the faculty members and staff at Mannette Steel Drums, Ltd. See Figure 3.1.
arranger for Trinidad’s Panorama competition, was a festival clinician at the workshops in 2007 and 2008. Ray’s sessions often include his personal anecdotes about playing and composing in Trinidad and many times he presents information about compositional and performance techniques. Andy and Jeff Narell were also faculty at the 2007 and 2008 festivals. Andy and Jeff, two brothers who are professional jazz pan musicians and composers, are the sons of Murray Narell, the man who was instrumental in bringing Ellie Mannette to New York in 1967. They both present sessions on topics including improvisation, jazz theory, musicality, developing technique, and other themes related to the contemporary professional idioms in which Andy and Jeff create pan music. Chris Tanner, an educator and steelband pedagogue, and author of *The Steelband Game Plan* (2006), was a clinician in both 2007 and 2008. Tanner’s sessions typically involve information for people interested in starting or maintaining a band, including: arranging techniques; repertoire selection; considerations about personnel, rehearsals, and performances; technique development; engine room logistics. Tom Miller, Jim Munzenrider, and Alan Lightner, three members of Pan Ramajay, a group of educators and professional pan players, were also clinicians at the 2007 Festival of Steel. Many of the sessions they present include topics that other clinicians cover; in fact, many areas of expertise are overlapping among the faculty. Tailored each according to their unique experiences, these sessions allow the faculty to talk about their music, to communicate information about steelband, and to promote the exchange of ideas and dialogue about pan. The clinicians’ success at the festival is rooted in their ability to fluently use steelband memes in communicating and celebrating pan with the festival attendees.

The workshop also maintains a store area where participants can purchase pans and equipment made by MSD; scores, sheet music, and other materials authored by the clinicians; and audio and video recordings of music by the workshop faculty. Typically festival attendees are also invited to tour the MSD shop and company facilities where the staff builds and tunes pans. The workshop is a context in which people can learn about, observe, purchase, perform, discuss, and celebrate steelband. In various capacities, the faculty and attendees are educators, composers, students, performers, enthusiasts, or directors; they each espouse unique attitudes toward the music and practice of steelband, which are connected to their individual experiences and shaped by memes. The festival is saturated in memetic information; the exchange of this information allows people to reexamine their own experiences in light of their knowledge and
exposure to the experiences of other pannists.

**Negotiating Memetic Information and Participatory Discrepancies at the Festival**

Like the faculty, the participants are motivated to attend the festival for a wide range of reasons. According to frequent clinician and steelband pedagogue Chris Tanner, participants come to the clinic with a variety of expectations for their experience:

> One of the challenges of the MSD camp is that participants come for differing, often competing, reasons. Among those are: to interact with Trinidadian composer-arrangers such as Ray Holman and Robert Greenidge; to learn strategies for teaching/directing a band (pedagogy); to learn and or take home in transcribed or printed format new repertoire for their home bands; and to interact with others with like minds or similar interests and similar challenges, in the case of directors or leaders. It has been, and continues to be, a challenge for MSD and Tom Miller to continually satisfy all of these needs. In fact, some folks do go away “unsatisfied.”

Although people come for a number of differing reasons, Tanner has also discussed his perception of two distinct realms motivating faculty and attendee participation at the festival: education and performance. He asserts that participants are motivated to attend the clinic for two general reasons; they either seek to exchange information about the educational aspects of steelband or they are interested in learning about the practice and performance of it.

One reason people come to the Mannette clinic is to perform Panorama pieces and other challenging compositions with professional musicians and composers like Ray Holman, Robert Greenidge, and Jeff and Andy Narell; much of their time is spent rehearsing, practicing, and playing these pieces under the direction of the faculty. In this context, each faculty member gets the opportunity to instruct pannists from various places in performance techniques and in other musical, historical, and cultural realms related to the repertoire. They are in direct exchange with the musicians who buy, listen to, and perform their music; these musicians attend the clinic to glean information from historically and currently significant artists in the idiom.

Another reason people attend the festival is to access and select information about pan education. To varying degrees, each of the faculty has had a career as a professional performer. Some of them have also specialized, to different extents, in teaching steelband in local contexts. Chris Tanner, Tom Miller, Jim Munzenrider, and Alan Lightner are each involved steelband within educational realms, including in public school systems and university contexts. They have

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39 Chris Tanner, personal e-mail, 22 January 2008.
published music that is frequently played in educationally-based groups, they have traveled to
different programs to educate and train people learning how to play and direct steelbands, and
many of them have published articles and other materials related to the creation and
administration of steelband groups in educational settings. Each in their own local contexts,
many festival attendees have either worked with these faculty or are familiar with the materials
they have generated in regard to steelband education.

Although the two general categories of interest described above represent why people
attend the festival, the week is composed of a conglomeration of activities in the spirit of
celebrating, appreciating, and negotiating the elements of steelband. People assemble at the
Mannette Steel Drums Festival of Steel, not only to share in the performance and educational
aspects of the contemporary practice of steelband in unique local contexts, but also to exchange
information and to challenge and confront the existing themes and ideas involved in the
experience of playing pan.

Mannette Steel Drums “Festival of Steel” clinician Chris Tanner has asserted that a
central issue for steelbands and pan musicians today concerns the nature, purpose, and function
of the art form:

“What is the steel band ‘for’? To some it is entertainment. To some it is cultural
identity. To some it is a vehicle for exploring new ideas via composition,
arrangement or improvisation. These various “uses” of steel band (and indeed
repertoire is one of the most outward expressions of a musical art form’s being or
identity) are not necessarily in agreement. In fact, they may be in direct
opposition.” 40

The festival is a venue where steelband composers, musicians, authors, and pedagogues mediate
reactions to questions like that which Chris Tanner has posed. The “Festival of Steel” is a
context for the experience of steelband beyond local realms. Memetic exchange occurs here in an
intensified manner; people attending the festival espouse different perspectives about
performance, history, education and many other themes present in the practice of steelband in the
United States according to their own experiences. Each pannist reevaluates and nuances their
understanding of the cultural features of steelband in their encounter with a large array of memes
at the festival. Among the memes circulating at the festival are included arranger, “bomb” tune,
building and tuning, calypso, Carnival, community, competition, composer, engine room,

40 Chris Tanner, personal email, 22 January 2008.
entertainment, gig, history, Holman, identity, improvisation, Invaders, jazz, lead sheet, Mannette, musicianship, Narell, new steelband music, notation, pan in education, Panorama, performance, performer, play by ear, professional, recording, repetition, rote learning, soca, struggle, stylistic variety, technique, transformation, Trinidad. The information contained in these memes is articulated, practiced, explained, and explored in the activities and interactions at the festival. They are the musical styles, ideas, attitudes, personas, and pieces that flow between individuals as they interact in various contexts for steelband.

**Pan in the United States: Memes and Media**

In contemporary practice in the United States, these memes and a multitude of other memes circulate in some form of media. Books and articles in educational publications by musicians and historians, video recordings of steelband performances, sheet music and scores for steelband, audio examples of steelband, and steelband information in digital print, audio, and video forms accessible via the Internet contain many memes and complexes. Among other media, David Knapp has used Stephen Stuempfle’s book *The Steelband Movement: The Forging of a National Art in Trinidad And Tobago* (1995) and Shannon Dudley’s *Carnival Music in Trinidad: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (2004) in the group to teach his students about the history and practice of steelband in Trinidad. Both David and Ed use sheet music in teaching their students repertoire and performance techniques and they utilize audio and video media to help students better approximate certain musical styles. At the “Festival of Steel,” attendees can purchase print, audio, and video resources. Digital print, audio, and video media containing a variety of steelband-related memes are readily accessible to any pannist with a connection to the Internet. Contemporary steelband practice in the United States has, to a significant degree, become characterized by the incorporation of various media within the experience.
CONCLUSION: STEELBAND, GROOVE, AND MEMES

In this thesis, I demonstrated how steelband experiences are unique in local contexts, yet share common elements. The term “mediaization,” as explained by Krister Malm in “Music on the Move: Traditions and Mass Media,” explains the dissemination of world musics via mass media channels. Malm implicates mediaization in the courses of musical change and continuity. The ready access to and expedited exchange of video, audio, and print resources in various band settings in the United States facilitates the movement and exchange of steelband-related memes about the performance and history of pan; mediaization allows these memes to survive as they transcend geographic and cultural boundaries. Advances in communication technology enable musicians to cultivate new or hybrid connections and networks as they blend newly-acquired memetic information with the musical and cultural knowledge they already possess.

Replication, Selection, Preservation, Variation

Each of the memes listed in the previous chapters are negotiated in the interactions among students, directors, enthusiasts, educators, experienced players, and new pannists at the “Festival of Steel” and in Lion Steel and Space Coast Steel. Through the interactions of individuals, the meaning and informational content in steelband-related memes like arranger, calypso, community, competition, composer, engine room, entertainment, history, musicianship, new steelband music, pan in education, Panorama, performance, performer, professional, and repetition are nuanced. The content of memes, associations or complexes of memes, and memetic exchange are significant elements to explore in considering individual pannists’ roles in shaping the character and function of steelband experiences. A closer look at the memetic processes of selection, replication, preservation, and variation, in the ways that both Richard Dawkins and Kate Distin explain them, will illuminate the agency with which people engage the groove in steelband today.

Richard Dawkins originally proposed the meme concept in *The Selfish Gene* as a unit in the dynamic system by which culture is propagated and exchanged among people. He notes that a part of human nature is the disposition to participate in this process, but his approach in explaining the memetic transmission of culture focuses on the activity of the meme. To characterize this activity, he posited the proliferation of culture to be analogous to the biological
process in which a virus parasitizes the genetic makeup of a host cell. ⁴¹ Although this analogy affords no agency to people in shaping cultural expressions and traditions, Dawkins does assert an important point regarding the process of replication. He notes that the human mind has a unique capacity for the accurate replication of cultural information.

In the experience and expression of steelband culture, people observe and imitate ideas, attitudes, habits, and data; regarding the propagation of steelband culture, Dawkins’ remark speaks to the shared aspects of the experience. Pannists in different locations throughout the United States, including in Tallahassee and Cocoa, Florida, and in Morgantown, West Virginia, share common elements. Although steelband-related themes are manifest in unique ways in local contexts and beyond, meme complexes like the master narrative, professional performance, and pan appreciation are circulated within many steelband experiences. Often, common memes punctuate the discussions, observations, and performances that constitute the experiences of different bands. “Bomb” tunes, calypso, Carnival, new steelband music, performance context, soca, and stylistic variety are a few memes common to the three contexts examined in this thesis.

Like Dawkins, Kate Distin observes several components that influence successful memetic exchange. She explains that, “the information that is preserved and copied in cultural traits must, in order for evolution to occur, be subject to some sort of struggle for survival.” ⁴² In other words, the memes noticed and considered by individuals are the elements that persist in culture through selection, replication, preservation, and variation. She identifies the meme’s capacity to flourish in cultural milieus as its memetic fitness. Moreover she explains that this characteristic is contingent upon three specific factors: “the content of the meme itself; the way in which it fits with other memes; and the external environment – the minds and surroundings of the people whose attention it is trying to gain.” ⁴³

In each of the steelband contexts examined in this thesis, these factors determine what memes and complexes enter the cultural praxis in each situation and how these constructs shape the nature by which people engage them. In Chapter 1, we learned that the master narrative meme complex has not only shaped David’s attitudes and perspectives about steelband, but that it also forms an important part of the Lion Steel experience. Discussions about history and

⁴¹ Dawkins, 192.
⁴² Distin, 39.
⁴³ Ibid.
culture, or the instances of memetic exchange, between David and the students in Lion Steel include memes like “bomb” tunes, building and tuning, calypso, Carnival, community, competition, history, identity, new steelband music, notation, Panorama, performance context, soca, struggle, stylistic variety, transformation, and Trinidad. These memes, and many others, constitute the master narrative meme complex, which is embedded in the activities related to the Lion Steel experience. In addition to specific lessons created by David through which he implements cultural learning, the students also rehearse music; learn and perfect their performance skills and technical facilities; engage in reflexive and self-aware playing. They also discuss memes within the master narrative complex like identity, community, and competition in relation to their own experience of practicing and performing steelband. In the process of memetic exchange during rehearsals, students actively and frequently participate in the selection, replication, preservation, and variation of the master narrative meme complex and the memes that comprise it in this local context.

Similarly, members of Space Coast Steel engage in processes of memetic exchange. The professional performance complex, which shapes the character of the Space Coast Steel experience, subsumes a variety of memes including arranging, “bomb” tunes, calypso, entertainment, improvisation, lead sheet, notation, Panorama, performer, play by ear, selling the music, soca, stylistic variety, technique, transposition by sight. These memes frequently exist within the group’s rehearsal and performance contexts, both in the classroom and on stage for different events, and they resonate with Ed’s objectives to prepare his students to be knowledgeable professional pan musicians. Ed and the members of Space Coast Steel discuss memes within the professional performance complex like improvisation, lead sheet, and stylistic variety in relation to their own experience of practicing and performing steelband. Just as Ed engages in memetic processes in administering his band, his students select, replicate, preserve, and vary the memes included in the professional performance complex according to their own perspectives.

**Participatory Discrepancies**

Distin’s presentation of memetic theory resonates closely with the purposes of this thesis. By employing the memetic model of cultural transmission, it is possible to explore the significant and intertwined ways individuals are situated within this dynamic and complex process. In extending Richard Dawkins’ theory, Distin asserts that studies in memetic exchange
should consider culture change both from the perspective of the meme and of the person. While Dawkins carefully crafts a theory based on the activity of the meme, Distin emphasizes the role of the individual in selecting, replicating, preserving, and varying articulations of culture. An individual, as a medium within the processes of cultural transmission, possesses agency. Members of Lion Steel and Space Coast Steel, as well as attendees at the “Festival of Steel,” involve themselves in the utilization of styles, habits, and concepts associated with steelband by joining in the activity. Through their discussions and interactions during rehearsals and performances, these pannists are agents participating in the transmission and propagation of steelband.

These individual agents engage in the deliberate transmission of culture to varying degrees. Steelband directors like Ed Anderson and David Knapp each intentionally select, replicate, and preserve the cultural and musical memes as they facilitate their groups’ steelband experiences. They pass memes along to their students, who each blend these bits of cultural information with their existing body of knowledge. The degree to which students are aware of their own role in this process varies depending on their reasons and goals for participating and also depending on whether they consider their participation to be an exercise in cultural transmission or propagation. Members of Space Coast Steel and Lion Steel become involved for a variety of reasons, including because their friends or siblings play in the group, because they heard about other students’ experiences in the band, or because they seek a new and different experience.

By considering the awareness and intent of individuals in the process of cultural change, Distin has strengthened the capacity for memetic theory to explain how cultural traits persist. Variations in culture can only be appreciated for their recognizable relationship to existing cultural elements; moreover, culture change, or variation, can be significantly attributed to the ways in which people employ memes. In other words, the survival of cultural traits is a function of the variable ways people express them. To illustrate this point, Ed and David both incorporate memes like “bomb” tunes, calypso, soca, Panorama, and stylistic variety in directing their groups. Despite the unique ways these ideas circulate within each group, the memes nonetheless remain in tact. This preliminary list of shared memes testifies to the ways unique local contexts can share common attributes.
Distin’s explanation accounts for enduring cultural features but it is also effective in elucidating how these components are uniquely manifest in local contexts. As we choose to engage specific cultural milieus, the concepts, behaviors, attitudes, and actions that constitute it circulate within the network of customs that already outlines the course of our daily lives. As this happens, we observe, consider, and imitate the elements of this selected milieu that resonate with the skills and knowledge we already possess. In this way, individual directors in local contexts each create a unique expression of it; they direct the groove. For example, Ed and David each select and communicate the information they have deemed important for the members of their steelbands. They each have constructed an approach to directing steelband that is a product of their own experiences in steelband, music, education, and a variety of other realms. David incorporates cultural learning as a significant aspect of the Lion Steel experience due to his value of social and historical information related to steelband. Similarly, Ed’s experiences playing pan during and after college have compelled him to use the professional performance complex in constructing the context in which Space Coast Steel practices and performs steelband.

Memetics is not only useful for explaining the transmission and variation of cultural traits and themes related to steelband. When applied to other idioms, meme theory could yield important insights into how people exchange and express music and culture. Future research regarding multicultural music education in the United States could benefit from the application of memetic theory.

By highlighting the important role of directors in shaping local steelband experiences, this study strengthens and explores a point made by both Tiffe and App in their thesis projects. Tiffe has identified an emergent generation of steelband directors marked by the practice and performance of steelband in the United States. App also identifies a developing population of American steelband directors in the 1990s who were trained in the percussion and music education departments at universities in the United States. Both Ed Anderson and David Knapp fit these characterizations. Ed played pan at FSU in the late 1990s and then pursued a professional career before he began directing Space Coast Steel. Although he began playing pan at Leon High School in the mid-1990s, David Knapp also participated in the steelband at FSU. These experiences have been and continue to be important elements that inform their choices and perspectives in administering the ways their bands “groove” or exist within local cultural contexts.
Students in Lion Steel and Space Coast Steel engage their experience in similar ways. While in the group, students participate by preparing music, practicing, and performing; they articulate the groove. Some students choose to supplement their experience by playing professionally in independent small ensembles; by seeking additional contexts in which they can learn more about steelband at festivals and workshops like MSD’s “Festival of Steel;” by attempting arrangements and compositions of their own. Members of steelbands in local contexts formulate their individual approaches as they select, replicate, preserve, and vary memes. Their collective participation, shaped by the director, generates the groove.

By way of his theory of participatory discrepancies, Charles Keil explores the role of individuals within collective experiences. He explains that a musical groove is unique since it is negotiated among individuals each time they play together. Musicians each articulate their part according to the knowledge, experience, and understanding they have acquired in learning to perform. In regard to the creation of a musical groove, Keil emphasizes the process over the product of playing collectively. He notes that the individual articulation of distinct and sometimes discrepant textures, timbres, and rhythms in cooperation with one another constitutes the musical groove. In this thesis, I have employed groove as a metaphor for the way individuals engage in the steelband experience. People articulate their preferences for styles, techniques, habits, and ideas as they collectively participate in steelband. As agents in the process of cultural grooving in steelband, directors and students espouse distinct and sometimes discrepant perspectives about what they do in playing pan.

As a conclusion to his study, Keil indicates that groove theories should include a systematic exploration of textures and processes that are implicated in the groove experience. In this thesis, I have employed groove as metaphor for participation in steelband. I have investigated the ways directors and students engage with cultural and musical information about steelband and how they articulate this information in distinct ways as they partake in the activity. By linking memetic theory with the groove metaphor as Keil suggests, I have accounted for themes that emerge in the realm of steelband practice and performance and I have illuminated the ways directors use information to shape steelband experiences in local contexts.

In “Riffs, Repetitions, and Theories of Globalization,” Ingrid Monson comments on the use of musical metaphors in ethnomusicological research:
“I raise the familiar theme of music as a metaphor for social processes, not to revisit the well-established ground of ethnotheories and their importance for ethnomusicology, but to critically examine the cultural metaphors embedded in recent trends of theorizing the global and ask whether our collective experience as scholars of music can contribute to expanding this discussion.”  

She posits that ethnographic goals in using musical metaphors should examine cultural exchange by speaking to the local ways people use music to construct culture and to attend to broader hypotheses about globalization. In this article, she uses metaphor to construct the argument: “that riffs, repetition, and grooves—as multilayered, stratified, interactive, frames of musical, social, and symbolic action—might be helpful in thinking through some of the more challenging issues in contemporary critical thinking.”  

As Monson explains, combinations and repetitions of riffs cooperate in generating a groove in layers of interlocking rhythmic iterations by individuals. Repeatedly over time and across contexts, these rhythmic articulations are exchanged, overlapped, and recombined. Grooves are unique to each ensemble that produces them because of the discrepant ways each musical line produced by an individual performer combines with the iterations of the other musicians. However, a stylized groove retains its musical identity because of its specific rhythmic attributes. In many significant ways, cultural grooving is analogous to musical grooving. I have attempted to pursue this analogy in the current project.

I found the application of the groove metaphor to the cases in this study has been a useful way to explore contemporary expressions of steelband in the United States. Steelbands groove in unique ways in local contexts; the master narrative, professional performance, and pan appreciation meme complexes are emergent and observable themes that circulate within the experiences in Lion Steel in Tallahassee, Florida, in Space Coast Steel in Cocoa, Florida, and at the “Festival of Steel” in Morgantown, West Virginia. In these contexts and many others in the United States, individual directors shape the groove by riffing on themes when they develop an approach to teaching their members about the musical and cultural components of the practice of steelband. Repetition characterizes the exchange of memetic information between directors and band members. Because individual people espouse distinct perspectives about the elements of steelband, they each engage in the experience in unique ways. The groove is constructed through

45 Ibid.
the collective yet discrepant articulations of people who choose to participate in steelband in local contexts.

The present study is only a preliminary exercise in mapping the groove metaphor onto memetic theory in order to investigate contemporary expressions of steelband. Future researchers in this area could devote themselves to a detailed exploration of a single local context of steelband over an extended period of time. A number of in-depth studies of single bands could to identify and categorize a vast multitude of memes and meme complexes as practices change and vary over time and across contexts. These projects could also illuminate the specific ways memes in different categories blend with each other and manifest in a band’s groove. Additional investigations using memetic theory to explain cultural change could also illuminate and trace acculturation from the perspective of an individual musician who interacts and expresses themselves via memes.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION
Kayleen Kerg (KK)/David Knapp (DK)
2/11/07

KK: How did you first become the director of Lion Steel?

DK: I had graduated from FSU with a Bachelors in Music and Anthropology… I got a call from the choral director at Leon. Apparently the director was leaving to go to grad school. It was framed as an assistant position; someone else was legally responsible for the class, they’ll be the one getting paid. They needed someone who knew something about steelband to teach it. I wasn’t the teacher in terms of the money or legal purposes, but I was responsible for the daily lessons. I said that I would take it over on a short-term basis and then it turned into a yearlong thing. Then I left for a year to go to New York and then I came back for my degree and took it over again.

KK: So this was the first time you directed a steelband?

DK: Yes. I had been in Mas N Steel during my undergrad. On a few occasions I was given leadership responsibilities and failed mostly because I didn’t have the maturity to handle it. And I probably didn’t have the maturity, I surely didn’t have the maturity to handle being a director at 22. In fact I would say not until recently have I had the maturity to handle it.

KK: So what prompted your decision to do it then?

DK: I was living in Tallahassee, the town in which I was born and raised, I had a music degree, and anthropology, which I guess yields pretty well do doing something like steelband. I was working a lame job and the challenge of teaching something was welcome. That’s my reason for doing it, out of boredom I guess mostly.

KK: Mas N Steel was the only other experience you had in steelband?

DK: My senior year in high school I was in Lion Steel, I graduated from the program.

(David explains the cycle of directors in charge of Lion Steel. It seems, the founding director was there for three years, then left because of a publishing opportunity. Then the next director was there for four years. After her, another lady from NIU who was here getting here Masters in Percussion at FSU directed Lion Steel. Next was Josh Dekaney, who had steelband experience in Southern Missouri possibly with John Wooten. After Josh was Brian Dell.

KK: How does your experience as a student in Lion Steel shape your goals for your students now in Lion Steel?)
DK: My director was Elizabeth Delmater, a graduate from NIU with Cliff Alexis. He actually came down to tune a few times while I was in the band. She instilled lots of history and the steelband master narrative. When I took it over, that was something I wanted to emphasize to the students. But I wasn’t prepared to handle that the first year I took over, I didn’t understand a lot about the education process, except as a student. I didn’t know how to implement my ideas into a comprehensive pedagogy or plan. It wasn’t until I decided to pursue a Masters in Music Education that I really thought about codifying my ideas into a curriculum. So the steelband master narrative is a part of it and I inherited that from Elizabeth. She was also a really good person, so I certainly inherited an idea of community. Since Lion Steel is relatively small and insular the whole community thing was a present idea. To the second part of that question, some of the ideas I have for the curriculum involve the National Standards adopted by MENC having to do with ensemble playing. Standards one and two are important if you want to talk about the aesthetic relevance of the ensemble, it means it needs to sound good. Number nine, the ethnomusicological aspect or cultural relevance is something I try to emphasize. I don’t know how to teach improvisation and composition very well yet…I touch on these in terms of the pieces sometimes, but really National Standard number nine is important after addition to them playing the instrument and learning how to play music. Lastly, I try to understand the concepts of community, responsible decision-making, being nice to each other. I put a lot of responsibility on my students; there’s no way I could do what I’m doing unless I had them do some of the work for me. I have a small group that will compete in a solo and ensemble concert. They have the responsibility of filling out the paperwork and everything. I started out rehearsing them, but now they are getting it taken care of…Also, with things like setting up for a gig, I will often put my president, or captain, in charge. I used to go nuts trying to micromanaging…and now I just delegate out. That’s something that steelband has to offer that other ensembles don’t….agency in decision-making processes.

KK: What is the audition process like for Lion Steel?

DK: Now we have two bands. It’s been that way since I have been doing it. The audition is mostly a rote audition. There is a music reading exercise…a sheet of paper with a musical staff they have to read from. The other part is playing something that I play for them, by rote. I pay attention to their ability to adjust to something new and to how intuitive they are in holding the mallet. It is a lot like the audition for Mas….there is a close connection between the bands, for many years they were directed by the same people.

(David continues, explaining that this year’s process changed a little because of a scheduling problem. There were about 35 spots open due to the fact another large music ensemble is scheduled at the same time. So, this year the audition served only to draw the line between the beginning and advanced bands. Also this year, there are more people who don’t read music yet. It had been typical that the students in Lion Steel had a decent level of musical training—some even went on to reputable music schools around the country. David then tells me about a proposal he is working on for a third band next year that will facilitate those students who have not had formal music training. He hopes that a certain percentage of at-risk students will populate this class and that this experience will correspond with other school-related experiences. David also describes his teaching philosophy and public school as a form of normative cultural transmission. He also is interested in critical pedagogy and describes how he has tried to work under the Freirian framework in steelband to help his students become better
people, but is still unsure of how to implement it in a unified way at Leon High School except for requiring students to be on time and to be nice to other people.)

KK: How does the smaller community of Lion Steel factors into the larger Tallahassee community?

DK: I think if I can teach these students how to function well in this smaller model that hopefully they can be good participants in other areas. I haven’t really though about it that much. My interests are best met by keeping my principal happy, thereby serving Leon High School that puts me in a politically advantageous position...Well, I guess I started the adult band this semester because I think music education can extend beyond high school. I guess I also did it for personal reasons. First, it’s a good idea politically for me to get more people to be aware of what I’m doing and I also convince my principal to pay me salary for what I’m doing. Plus I felt like it would be good for the community.

KK: When you plan for a semester, how do structure the rehearsals and what do you expect from the students?

DK: Well, I am terrible at mapping out a semester...unlike other music ensembles like concert band or marching band, steelband does not really have a set schedule of events during the semester. The schedule is comprised of things I generate for the band in terms of performance milestones. I kind of make it up week-to-week keeping in mind the long-term objective of the end of semester concerts...In terms of the students, I haven’t come up with the best way to get them to practice. I cant require it of my students because it would be different for each students needs....many of my students are involved in a number of musical commitments, so I really can’t require a lot of practice time. That’s why we have our rehearsals in class time, but the room is always available to them during reasonable hours. On at least half a dozen occasions during the semester, I give them playing assessments within the large ensemble and some opportunities within small ensembles.... That’s the best way I have found to foster some personal responsibility to practice. This year, more than any other year, there’s more than likely one or two students hanging out after school practicing. I try to give them some affirmation through their participation; if I get them hooked like that, they are more likely to come in and practice. I tried to require that once and it was a failure.

KK: What is your expectation for their performance in rehearsal based on?

DK: Each year students are at a different performance level...in steelband the majority of students are new to steelband. That makes my expectations variable from year to year. I make it clear that if students pay attention in rehearsal and want to do this, they are going to be able to get this done. If students are slower in reading music and have had every opportunity to learn how to do it, they need to spend extra time. Very rarely do I give out D’s.

KK: Do you do a lot of individual instruction and if you do, how do you do it?

DK: I give very little individual instruction. I wander the ensemble as we rehearse looking at people’s hands and posture and give whatever instruction I can. It mostly has to do with music
reading and decision making…in terms of one on one lessons, there is none of that. We do small ensemble stuff and I instruct them in those situations, basic pointers on dynamics and volume on rolls, but not too much. There are lots of general comments. If I realize a comment would be beneficial for everyone…like crossing your hands in a run, general comments like that.

KK: How do you pick the rep that you will play?

DK: Not well enough. I have to do more advance planning. I spend a lot of time thinking about rep, but don’t spend a lot of time mapping out rehearsals…so sometimes the decisions are the day of, and I pick something useful from the library. But I'm making an educated decision, I'm keeping in mind foremost my beliefs in what I think a steelband should play. I rarely will choose tunes like Margaritaville…I consider songs the students may want to do…I think its important for them to enjoy the music they’re doing. We do a ton of serious music…(David tells me a story about a confrontation he had with someone who called him for a pro bono gig. A woman claiming to be from “the Islands” hired them to play a luau and wanted two previously unrehearsed pop tunes—Hot, Hot, Hot and Limbo, Limbo, Limbo Like Me. Not only didn’t David want to arrange and rehearse these at the last minute, he told her that Lion Steel represented something more than just party music. He told her they would not do it…He brought this dialogue up to the students in terms of the role that repertoire plays in identity as a musician, the ensemble, and steelband itself—the identity crisis its been experiencing from the beginning.) Do I think that a steelband should play Yellowbird? Yes. Being a part of a gigging steelband, people are going to want to hear that. Also, I just began realizing that you're frequently background music at a gig…its important to learn these party tunes and lead sheets….but I’d rather that not be the staple. Unless you’ve got that party stuff, you don’t appreciate or respect more serious tunes. You can’t really appreciate a tune like those Brazilian Dances we’re doing right now without having played Jump In The Line also…I also try to map out a broad spectrum, we do pop music (Gnarls Barkley, Weezer, Kelly Clarkson), classical, jazz, traditional steelband, new steelband. Everything that every proponent of the genre says we can do we try to do.

KK: What are the dynamics between the students like? Do they typically get along?

DK: They definitely get along, there is a lot of homogeneity…with the exception of one student, students get along…The advanced band gets along very well, they take a lot of classes together…(David explains about a few situations in which the steelband has suffered from a lack of support from school administration. David jokingly told the students that this was a part of the struggle narrative of steelband and they thought it was funny. They have adopted that trope on occasion; they feel that they are a part of something, not just for the sprit de corps, but also He tries to get them to think of themselves as having agency in something. He hopes they can take those lessons and apply them to something else.) They get along very well. The stereotypes range from very motivated students to semi-unmotivated students. I’ve got this homogeneous student population, and I reflect on my role within that model as they’re teacher. I was not good with discipline in the beginning…the ensemble was pretty slack then…But things will happen now, for example at gigs, I will get on their case when they are unmotivated as a group and then walk away because I think its
important to make snide remarks or discuss what I just said together as a group. I think about my role in creating their social environment and the way that I interact with that environment.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION
Kayleen Kerg (KK)/David Knapp (DK)
4/12/07

 KK: Last night Ray talked about the master narrative and his take on it. When you teach Lion Steel the master narrative, how do you go about doing that?

DK: It was made a lot easier with Dudley’s book. Last year it was more difficult; I was using Stuempfle’s book. Years ago, I had a hard digesting the narrative myself, so putting that (Stuempfle’s narrative) into an easily consumable worksheet product that my students could handle. But even though Dudley’s book was not intended to serve this purpose, it was intended as more of a world music cultures textbook, I think it does a very good job of alluding to the master narrative while discussing contemporary carnival music. I do some teaching of the master narrative when we discuss Carnival and then I’m able to give them definitions for what J’ouvert means, what Canboulay means. So as I’m showing pictures and playing music, I make references to the master narrative. The first year I tried, it was a failure for many reasons; my teaching strategies were ineffective. For example, I started in 1498…the reason its called Trinidad is…nobody cares. I would feel comfortable teaching the master narrative explicitly now, I think I could do it effectively now. But I think the students will get more if it is directly tied into the music. Dudley’s book does a good job of it.

 KK: So there are specific musical examples you use to impart the story to them?

DK: Yeah, I do PowerPoint presentations and I imbed movies and audio into the presentations. We discuss the World Steelband Festival, and then you can start talking about TASPO, you could start talking about the biennial music festival, to start to talk about the legitimization – why they wanted to legitimize, in terms of legitimacy, they were going after a certain aesthetic. You know, why is it if you’re the lower class minority that you choose to adopt, I’m sorry, lower class majority – were talking about Trinidad its so funny the way that…. If you’re the lower class majority why do you adopt the upper-class minority’s music in order to…so. I guess its all related to the master narrative. They (students) don’t learn dates and exact things necessarily. I used to ask, about four years ago students would have known that the Canboulay riots were 1881. But these guys wouldn’t know that unless they were really on the ball. The worksheets I did last year with the Dudley book it asked questions like When were the Canboulay riots? But I used that more to force them to read, to catch them. But that’s totally ineffective, so instead what I do is ask them to reflect upon the book with 5 essay questions per chapter. So I don’t really teach the narrative with as many historical details as much as I used to.

 KK: What concepts do the student engage with the most in this format, do you notice? What kinds of questions do students ask and what do they tease out?
DK: What I would like to do once I have time is chart out the concepts that I want students to walk away with after they leave this curriculum. There are about half a dozen really central concepts. I don’t really know what those are, I kind of do. Dudley talks about a few – performance context, social identity, …and something else. He highlights three…that’s the perfect question and I don’t really have a ready answer for it, but it’s something I’ve thought about…. 

KK: There are no recurring themes….?

DK: I think there will be more themes as I streamline the curriculum more and I’m able to expose them to these things and get them to realize the themes…the generative subject matter and then they come up with it themselves. I’m surprised how much they don’t get tied up with the trite parts of the master narrative. The whole oppression thing, the struggle narrative, they don’t dwell on that too much. I’m not sure if its because students are more sophisticated in their concepts of race and class, because if I was their age, I would obsess on that and that would be the only thing I talk about. Growing up in the nineties, there was always a concert for something, a concert for Tibet, it was always about oppression. But they’re not about that. Everyone was genuinely interested in the way things actually were, what was it like to be a performer in a steelband, why do people go to the panyards, what kinds of people go, why people choose to be in different bands. They are more concerned with the realities of the environment, whereas if I were taking the class, I would be obsessing with the struggle narrative. They’re really not into that, which I think is good, because I think steelband has become….maybe Stuempfle’s book has something to do with that, but it’s become about the struggle narrative.

(we discuss Stuempfle’s book, the struggle narrative, and Dudley’s book…)

DK: In Dudley’s book, social identity, performance context, and function—they got into that. In the chapter about the road versus the tent, about performance context, they really got into that because we had a string of gigs where we had to bust out *Tequila, Hot Hot Hot* and all this other stuff I really try to get away from, and they really got into that. In terms of reflexivity, talking about ourselves, why are we performing this music, what are the demands being placed on us that are similar to the demands on steelbands since day one and how, how do we negotiate that, and also we talked about me as the director—why do I not like to play that kind of music, and why am I now capitulated to playing it. They got into that, I didn’t foresee it coming. A few students started relating themselves, and I thought it was the perfect conversation. That was definitely something.

KK: So they are vested in the repertoire that they play, what that means…?

DK: They are definitely vested in it because they spend so much time practicing it and performing it. I think it goes for any high school ensemble that it’s the first thing students start to complain about is the music they’re playing. As soon as marching season is over, they are already recommending to the director what they want to play next year…

KK: Do the students ever make those recommendations to you?
DK: Oh yeah, totally. In the last several years since I came back to this job, I tried hard not to do the Disney kind of steelband stuff, and focused solely on the good Panyard charts and Ramajay stuff. I think that stuff is sort of the zenith of steelband stuff. (David clarifies that he thinks Ramajay’s stuff is the zenith of steelband music, not necessarily all of Panyard’s stuff is good, some is.) I guess what I mean is new music for steelband. That’s what I want to do. But new music for steelband, first of all its going to lose its meaning if you don’t do this other stuff and that other stuff is not only what pays the bills, but it also is what draws people into wanting to do it in the first place. So if you want to transcend people’s expectations for steelband, you have to first meet them at their expectations. Also, it gets the students in the steelband in the first place. Last year, my students complained because we did too much Sojourn and the Passage, they literally said, we want more Disney tunes. And yeah, so this year we are doing the Lion King, more upbeat socas, like Rant and Rave.

KK: So what you perceive that they enjoy doing is more along the lines of what they may have first encountered a steelband playing?

DK: Yeah, but that’s not to say that they don’t want to do the serious stuff. They DO want to do the serious stuff, just not all the time. If they had to choose one tune, if you’re going to die in the next ten minutes what one would you play, they would choose a nice grooving soca, something like Rant and Rave, they would not choose a Disney tune, they would not choose really hard tunes, like that Brazilian tune we started to do, they would probably not choose that. But they do really like tunes like the Brazilian one, because it’s very aesthetically pleasing, even if it’s not the typical steelband aesthetic. So they are very into good music. They don’t want to play crap. But they also like to play fun music even if it’s somewhat base.

KK: When students approach you about playing outside the ensemble setting, like your student Sean auditioning for Birchcreek, what kinds of things inform their choices about repertoire? (David tells me about purchasing and selecting small ensemble/solo repertoire for the students from wind and string repertoire. He has implemented a requirement this year about small group/solo playing. They should pick something they can succeed at.)

DK: In the case of Sean, he has much better technique than I do – he’s a percussionist. In terms of direct instruction, he did that entire solo himself. In terms of choosing repertoire, some students will want to do their own arrangements. The first time a student said that, I was excited, but then I realized high schoolers can be really lazy and have good ideas but trouble following through with it. So now I say, “That’s great, bring it to me sometime.” So far, I have had two students bring in a score and an audio version and I make direct suggestions like, “This must be changed in order so that we can play it.” Or I say I suggest fixing this. (He tells me that they are going to do Clocks by Coldplay on May 7-8 this year. Also on this concert, they are playing music that another student arranged music from the Lion King at the last minute, which didn’t make it into the concert last year. For the Leon County High School hundredth year grand reunion, Lion Steel will be playing as a representative of the 1990s decade [Lion Steel started in 1991, Lion King was in the 90s] The mascot is the Lion so David chose the student arrangement of Lion King music for this years concert. A total of two student arranged pieces will appear on the concert, more than David has listed in the program he tells me.)

KK: So students that approach you are self-motivated to make arrangements?
DK: Yes although this year, it so happened this year that a few students playing in small ensemble stuff were in AP Music Theory, so they would do arrangements for their 9 weeks grade performance thing, so...

KK: So the solo/small ensemble work is built into the curriculum for the band?

DK: Yes, it is. My curriculum is so patched together…Working on my masters here, I feel like I haven’t yet had the time to implement all my beliefs into a coherent curriculum. They would have received this year on two occasions for small ensemble performance whereas next year I want them to receive one each nine weeks. So they successfully….in the first one it will be more of a choose this and you’ll be graded on just doing it. There are a lot of higher-level musical thinking skills that go into play for choosing rep for an instrument that you don’t know a lot about. Lets say you want a bass pan solo; considering you only have 18 notes, a lot of rep for the [string] bass goes up into the treble clef, how do you navigate all the octave shifts? I will give recommendations, they listen to it and realize they can only adjust the music certain ways, but then they know more about it for the next nine weeks. The first way I graded this year…as long as I know they’ve practiced it, even if it doesn’t sound performance-ready, which is sort of the rubric they are being graded by...

KK: So they consider the solo work to be an integral part of the experience as well as the ensemble experience?

DK: Yeah and I want that part to grow, but without impeding from group performance. I want all of this not to detract. If that philosophy is going to be promoted, it has to be done not at the expense of the final sound. I would like to be able to say that my band knows more about history than any other band and we can play just as well. I think the history augments it and it doesn’t take a lot of class time to do it. 180 days times 52 minutes is a lot of time, if used effectively it can all be done. Same with the small ensemble stuff, it is only going to make the final sound better. Students have no idea what they sound like by themselves, some will get in there at the beginning and work on their parts, playing at a moderate dynamic level by themselves, but when someone else walks in the room, they stop playing because its just so uncomfortable, the instrument its so new, and they don’t…its one of those instruments that unless you’re really good at it, it doesn’t sound good by itself. It’s so easy to be masked by the other twenty players in there. The final sound of the band is really just an average of everyone in there. If everyone sounds perfect, the sound is so much better. I want students to have that feeling of good tone. And they don’t learn that unless you force them to do small ensemble stuff.

KK: Are there any tunes that you keep in the rep, or recycle over the years?

DK: Sunset is one of those tunes that was the Lion Steel anthem for so many years, and I guess it still kind of is. After every concert, everybody just comes onstage and plays, all the alumni and anybody who knows Sunset. They play really loud and take the DS a million times. I used to try to stop that, but I stopped trying to manage that. It’s certainly worth mentioning.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION
Kayleen Kerg (KK)/David Knapp (DK)
7/24/08

**KK: Regarding your band’s website, can you explain when, why, and how you use it?**

DK: I did the first design for it when I wasn’t teaching it. I first started to work on it my freshman year in college. At that point, the director of the band was Elizabeth Delmater and she was my director my senior year and she was also the director of Mas N Steel. My freshman year in college, I just graduated from the program; she wanted some pictures up on the web. I told her I could take some and put some up. Then my first year teaching, when I really didn’t know what to do, I wanted a website and a way for people to quickly find out the contact information, download the performance request sheet and all that, but I just didn’t have enough time to put it together. Then I moved, quit, but I had already started the design. So that year that I was away, I was communicating with Josh Bulah, who was technically in charge of the program. He’s sort of a technology guy too, so I sent him the package and he put it up on the web. It was OK, it was all HTML-based. The problem with that was that it took a lot of upkeep. It was up for a total for three years. At one point I decided that it would be a lot more efficient to change it to a content management system, what’s called a CMS. That’s a server-based, php-oriented thing. The webpage is generated every time someone goes to the website. The website changes depending on various things that are going on. You could test this now by going to the website. You’ll see that its got the basic shell and then there’s content placed within it. I can choose where I want certain content to go. The purpose of the website is to have a place where people know where we are on the web, if they need to contact us they can. That is kind of effective, but what most people do when they want to contact us, they go with whatever route they know. They call the school, or they email the band director thinking that he’s in charge of the program. Its also a good way to get people to go download the performance request sheet so that I don’t have to fax it to them each time or email it to them.

I used to check the traffic all the time. After big things like Virginia Beach, I checked the traffic to see where different people were coming from. There is definitely an explosion of people using the site after that.

I also use the sight, rather than have a new student fill out their contact information on a piece of paper, for the first couple days, I set up a way for them to go into my office, do all their contact information, hit submit and the next person comes in. That way all that administrative stuff is right there and I can access it on the web any time.

As a department, we’re tying together all of our performing arts into one. We used to be at like leonband dot com forward slash lionsteel, now we are at leonperformingarts.

I want to do a lot more stuff. I want to implement some curriculum stuff in it. Two or three years ago, there was a good group of students who were really invested in it, we were doing lots of cultural studies. We were reading the Dudley book. I had them go on there during Panorama and comment on various things they were noticing about the different pieces. So leading up, I had them list to the semi-final recording of so-and-so band and comment what they thought about the original tune. This sounds really lofty, like the pinnacle of education. Listen to the original, compare and contrast. It wasn’t really executed well, there was a lot of missed opportunity, but the potential is there. And having the website, a place where they can go to communicate with each other and the teacher in a structured way, especially with embedded musical examples and content. Like YouTube, there are a ton of examples available now.
The biggest problem is, how do I get the students to participate? Before it was a little hard to get them to, because they would go online and they’d be like, this is kind of corny but I will just say something sarcastic. The students have changed a little bit, I’ve changed a little bit, and the classroom attitude has changed. So I think there is the inclination to be invested in this instrument, so I need to find a way to want to participate. Maybe I could make it part of the grade, to respond to critical questions on the website.

**KK:** In what other ways have you used technology in the classroom?

**DK:** Man, two years ago, I was the star technology teacher. I was using the Dudley book, it was the basic curriculum outside the practice and performance of music. That was really the biggest example of what I was doing. I did other things, like if we were doing I’d Rather Be in Trinidad, I’d bring in a recording like Rudder’s *Autobiography of the Now* and talk about his career with them.

Then for the Dudley stuff, it was awesome. They had to read a chapter each week. Monday there would be a lecture, and Wednesday there’d be a quiz. I went through and made a PowerPoint presentation of each chapter, and it was partially based on the content from the chapter along with my own thoughts and viewpoints. For example, chapter 4 is something about music for the road versus music for the tent. Here’s the road, the music is going to be more upbeat, nowadays more soca than calypso. I’d show them pictures, and talk about the characteristics of the road, performance context and function. Then I’d show them the tent, play a recording of the Mighty Sparrow, the oldest recording of a chantwell, Julian Whiterose. I embedded all the media in there. They’ve got a sheet of paper with guided questions on it. Then they did a take home quiz that would be due in the middle of the week. At the end of the chapter, we’d play the game “road or tent?”

I used LCD projectors, my laptop, and the media. It was pretty effective.

**KK:** Why use media within the context of the class?

**DK:** I’d like to think that performance and cultural learning are connected. I guess I should say that I know they are, just based on faith, I know they are. I don’t know this from research, but I am willing to bet they are connected. I know that students care more if they know what’s going on, rather than some disconnected, decapitated, musical experience that has no meaning to them. So that’s why I do the cultural stuff. As soon as you do the cultural stuff, you have to use this stuff. I can’t just sit there and tell them, I was in Trinidad once and saw this. Its much better to show them photos of someone breathing fire.

In terms of performance, I have to play that stuff for them. First of all, I don’t have all that knowledge. My drum set player last year played on Fall From Grace. I’m not going to tell him what to play on the drum set, there’s no way. I have no idea what’s going on. Instead I give him a copy of the mp3, he studies it and plays exactly what the drummer on the recording plays. Our program is at the point where it would be a lot better to mimic good things that have been done rather than try to completely reinvent it ourselves, although to some extent we do that.

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION**

Kayleen Kerg (KK)/Ed Anderson (EA)
KK: *When did you first become the director of Space Coast Steel?*

EA: I founded the group in October of 2000. I started out with eight sets of drums and twelve players.

KK: *Was this your first experiencing directing a group?*

EA: Well, I have been an orchestra and a band director for two years before, but that was my first steel drum group that I ever taught.

KK: *What other steelband groups had you been in?*

EA: I played in Mas N Steel for about 4 years. I also played with Darren Duerden in his smaller group for about 3 years as well.

KK: *Was that at the same time?*

EA: Yes.

KK: *So you were doing two steel groups at the same time then?*

EA: Yes. Darren would have some of us from Mas N Steel go out and do gigs with him, paying gigs. I'd been playing professionally. Back then I hadn't been playing solo; I started doing that when I came here to Orlando. About a year before, I started a steel drum group and started playing professionally in Orlando.

KK: *When was the first time you ever played steel drums?*

EA: At Florida State.

KK: *So you learned much of what you know from the Duerdens?*

EA: Yes. I remember Darren’s first words to me, the first time I ever met him, was “get in the room and practice boy.” My first semester at FSU was a very hard one for me; I actually ended up on academic probation. But during that semester I went to the steel drum concert that was held in Ruby Diamond Auditorium with the Caribbean Students’ Association and I was like, “this is it, this is what I’ve been looking for.” So I tried out for the band, and in the hallway, Darren, he talked to me a little bit, but I never really had any association with him until then. He stopped me and said, “hey, you did very well in the audition, I’d like to put you on double tenors.” From there it just kind of stuck with me and I started playing more and more. He invited me to come play congas at a gig in Jacksonville that he was doing. I was with other members in Mas N Steel who would go out and play the gigs Darren booked. He kind of took me under his wing and started me showing me a little more and more. I ended up getting a set of double
seconds. He was there with me when I opened them up and took them out of the box. He and Jennifer Duerden taught me a lot. They taught me how to teach it as well.

**KK: Why did you decide to become a director?**

EA: I knew what it did for me and it was fun. I knew the kids would enjoy it. The way I got my band was by a fluke. I was sitting in a Burger King on a trip coming back from a concert band festival. I was sitting with one of the parents, talking. She asked me what I did at FSU, and I told her I did steelband. She asked how much it would be to start a group. I said that I had checked around and Tom Reynolds had given me a quote for $6100. She said, “order the drums, I’ll write you a check.” I fell outta my seat. That’s how it started.

**KK: What have been some of your goals for your group?**

EA: For me, I want to have solid players. My experience has been that it is good to be able to read the music, but I also want them to be strong in several areas. Being able to play by ear, being able to read music, being able to improvise. I don’t want to have what I call, robotic players; there’s a piece of music, now we’re going to play that. From playing in Orlando like I do, I’ve seen the benefit of being able to play by ear. Some of the best musicians I’ve ever met do that. Now, I want my guys to be very solid in all of those areas. I also want them to be able to know, if they want to play professionally, like what we do here in Orlando, there are certain tunes that you have to know. If I have to play Margaritaville again, I’ll scream. But that’s a tune you have to know. You have to know Brown Eyed Girl, you have to know Breezin’. You have to know the Goodbye Look, Hot Hot Hot, Shaker Song, Morning Dance, all those standards you have to know. I want my guys to know those as well so if they do want to go out and play, they’ll have a bit of background in it. So that will help them get started, not to be so unsure of their footing if they ever try to do it by themselves.

**KK: In emphasizing the value of knowing a broad repertoire within the context of professional playing, how do you incorporate this into your program?**

EA: Every year I introduce standards. We play standards on our concerts. One year we did Brown Eyed Girl, but we did it in the key of G, because that’s the standard key that is played in. Girl From Ipanema we’ve done one year, and these are arrangements that I’ll write. I will try to make it so that everyone will have the melody, inside the arrangement, things like that. I try to do that so they know, if they are going to go out and play. I introduce them to the repertoire, stuff that I write out for them. They have a Jamaican Farewell arrangement; they have a Yellowbird arrangement that we do. There are some directors I’ve known that don’t really want to do this because these are some of the simpler tunes. But still, I cant count the number of times when I’ve been playing at Margaritaville or I’ve been playing up at the Villages somewhere where a couple goes, “can you please play Yellowbird for us, we’d really like to dance to it.”

**KK: I guess there is an element of giving people what they want to hear, the typical calypsos and socas, reggaes and Jimmy Buffet tunes…**

EA: Yeah, all this…knowing how to play Bob Marley, if you wish to make a living doing this as an entertainer, this is stuff you have to know.
KK: So it’s important to know how to sight-read, play a lead sheet, and think on your feet…?

EA: Exactly. I had a professional musician come to speak at our school, and he spoke to my steelband class. He told them about lead sheets, and he explained that when you go out that this is all you get sometimes. The *I’m Tore Down* that we did at our spring concert last year was done entirely by lead sheet. The basses learned how to play a walking bass line in the blues form and the kids themselves did all the strums.

KK: Can you describe what the class context is for the ensemble?

EA: I have certain tunes I want to do within a certain amount of time, this week I spent 15-20 minutes on a tune. We have 48-minute blocks every day. For kids this age, that shorter time for each tune is better, because any longer than that, they’re going to get off task the longer they go. Depending on how hard the tune is, I may rehearse that more during the week. There are some that I may spend most of the class on one tune, if they’re harder to do. We did *Steel City Jam* for Solo and Ensemble; we only had a month and a half to learn that. We spent the majority of the time in class for two weeks on that tune, but they learned it pretty well.

KK: Will you explain how the rehearsal of a tune goes, typically?

EA: I tend to go section-by-section; A to B; B to C; reinforcement and repetition. Repetition is the best teacher. Especially for an instrument like this. I give them a minute to iron out any kinks they need to when I check each section. I have several of my kids who I’ve assigned to help me check; one for the seconds, one for the triples. These members are very experienced in doing this, so they’ll know what to look for. I like to assign kids responsibilities in that way. I have assistant directors who are in charge of running rehearsals if I am not there. I have people assigned to each section, to the backline, trips and basses. They might hear something I don’t.

KK: Is there an overall structure to the program?

EA: Everyone is in the same group, because it’s only just one class. I have my rookies and I have my vets. I will do a variety of tunes, some easier than others. I may do *Calypso Jam*, but I have the rookies on the steel drums for those and the vets in the engine room. A couple of vets on pans here and there, or a vets on their own drum. I can get those kids acclimated to the drum. This year, we’re going to do *Sarah*. It’s an easy tune, but it sounds great, the kids love it, and it’s easy for a rookie to learn. I try to do that. Also, during the first year, we do a lot of the Christmas Atmosphere, at Disney, so I take in some of the Christmas tunes we have. I let the rookies play on those, mostly. We don’t spend a lot of time on those tunes, but just enough so that the rookies can start acclimatizing themselves to the drum and learning the patterns. They learn a lot by imitation; they see the vets play next to them, and they pick it up.

KK: What is the audition process like for Space Coast Steel and what do you look for in candidates who audition?

EA: The audition process I use is the same one Darren used for Mas N Steel. I show them a rhythm; I use the montuno pattern from the tune *El Montuno*. I have them play it back to me. What I am looking for, because I am familiar with a lot of these kids, just through school, I am looking for the right kind of person who can feel the music, who has a very good sense of rhythm. You can teach them how to read it, you can teach the parts, that’s never a problem. You just gotta get
someone who can accept it. You don’t want someone who is gonna sit there and be stiff. It’s not just how you play it, it’s how you sell it. If you don’t show that you believe in what you are doing, the audience is not gonna believe it. Part of our success is selling that music. I always get compliments about how the kids, in their faces, you can see that they love what they are doing.

_KK: How does your audition rubric help you establish this?_

EA: I just watch them. Are they at ease with it? Are they used to thinking off the beat? A lot of steel drum literature doesn’t hit the beat. Also I look at things like their behavior. If I know some kid has been a royal pain during the year, do I really want to have them in Space Coast Steel? A lot of it is their grades too. A lot of my kids are honor roll students. We do a lot of playing that takes a lot of time. When you sign up for this, you commit to playing. There is no doing only convenient performances. Which we’re already signed up for seven performances this year and we haven’t started taking calls yet.

Another thing I want to add, I will encourage kids to try out for steelband. Like I had a trombone player who was just taking off on her trombone, doing really well, smart, always on task, got a superior at Solo and Ensemble. So I said, “I want you to try out for steelband. I want to see what you can do on that.” She’s now gonna be a lead player next year.

_KK: Is the group popular with the community? And why do you think people want to join the group?_

EA: In the community we are very popular. Just the other day I got a call from Titusville Church. They wanted us to play their Back To School kick-off service for the kids. I get calls all the time to play at parties. Depending on the venue, I may say yay or nay. And also depending on whether we get approval from the administration.

I think it’s popular because it’s unique. Every school has a marching band; every school has a concert band. I am the only secondary school in the county that has a steel drum band. Especially here in Florida. Everyone likes that Caribbean-feel, that Florida-feel. Thank you Jimmy Buffet. They like that, so they seek us out. We get a lot of gigs just by word of mouth.

_KK: How many students have been in your group that had no prior forms of musical training?_

EA: None. There is the one requirement that you must take at least a music class at Space Coast. I use the band as a recruiting tool for the music program at Space Coast, orchestra and band, not just band. The only exception to that rule is if you can prove that you have had prior musical training equal to that, then that is ok. For example, had a young lady from Apollo Elementary that had been one of the advanced music students of Sheila King. Now, Sheila has probably the top elementary music program in the state of Florida. Ok, that satisfies that; I know her students very well. Another student had played Piano Guild competitions for the past four years. Ok. Another student was from Trinidad, and had experience playing pan. Ok.

_KK: How do you pick the repertoire and program the concerts?_

EA: I like to do a little bit of bossa, an island tune, a popular tune. I like to vary it during the concerts, to do a little bit of everything – so we get something for everybody. Because your average audience hasn’t heard _Sunset_ or _Fire Down Below_, I rarely will concentrate on a panorama. The reason being is that they are very long and they can get very boring sometimes.
The audiences that we play for can’t get into that. This year is an exception, we are working on Plenty Lovin’, both the abridged version and the panorama. You have to be entertaining as well as good in order to have a successful ensemble in the school setting. Because, we don’t get any funding from the school, we get nothing from the county. We try to do stuff that is going to bring everybody in. Last year we did the Police, just a little bit of everything.

KK: During Christmas, you have to prepare for many performances. Can you describe the repertoire for these events?

EA: I try to include an educational element to the music we play for these gigs. For example, a “bomb” tunes. What’s a bomb tune? It’s a popular song that’s done as a calypso. Well, we did that for Christmas. Franz Grissom’s Greensleeves arrangement – bomb tune. Panyard has a great selection of Christmas music as well as Hillbridge. They are accessible and have educational value.

KK: How do you decide what performance opportunities to include for your band?

EA: Whether or not the kids are going to get something out of it. If we do a bucket-drop, what we call an “iron-man” performance, the kids are going to get a lot of repetition on their songs and grow stronger in their playing. Basically it’s a big glorified practice session. If we are asked to go to a party, there I am pretty specific. I run everything through my admin. I don’t want anything to bite them and I want to cover myself as well. Is there going to be alcohol at that party? If there is, then no, we don’t do it. What is the party for? Is it appropriate for kids to be there? Someone wanted to play someone’s 40th birthday, which is not appropriate for our band. I told them that we weren’t available. It has to be appropriate for the kids, the administration has to allow it, and if its not appropriate, then I will offer to come play, however I do not play for free. If its something that we can’t do but that is appropriate for students to play at, then I turn it over to them, since many of them have their own drums. At that point I stay out of it. If they ask me to play with them, I say no, because then I would be liable.
APPENDIX B

LIST OF ORAL SOURCES


APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

Subject: Human Subjects Staff Review
From: Human Subjects <humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu>
Date: Monday, April 28, 2008 1:36 pm
To: kmk06g@fsu.edu

Human Subjects Application - For Full IRB and Expedited Exempt Review

PI Name: Kayleen Marie Kerg
Project Title: Memetics and Media: Musical Experience in Two Florida Steelbands
HSC Number: 2008.1280

Your application has been received by our office. Upon review, it has been determined that your protocol is an oral history, which in general, does not fit the definition of "research" pursuant to the federal regulations governing the protection of research subjects. Please be mindful that there may be other requirements such as releases, copyright issues, etc. that may impact your oral history endeavor, but are beyond the purview of this office.
APPENDIX D

PERMISSIONS TO USE PHOTOGRAPHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Re: Permission to use photographs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
<td>&quot;<a href="mailto:mr@davidknapp.net">mr@davidknapp.net</a>&quot; <a href="mailto:mr@davidknapp.net">mr@davidknapp.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Monday, October 13, 2008 10:19 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To</td>
<td>Kayleen Kerg <a href="mailto:kmk06g@fsu.edu">kmk06g@fsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course!
On Oct 13, 2008, at 10:10 PM, Kayleen Kerg wrote:
  David-
  > Hello! I am finishing my thesis this week and I found a few
  > photographs posted on the Lion Steel website that I would like to
  > use. They are photographs of students during rehearsal and at
  > performances. Would it be alright for me to include these photos in
  > my published research?
  > Thank You!
  > Kayleen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>RE: Permission to use photographs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
<td>&quot;Anderson, Ed@SCHS&quot; <a href="mailto:Anderson.Ed@Brevardschools.org">Anderson.Ed@Brevardschools.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 15, 2008 12:37 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To</td>
<td>Kayleen Kerg <a href="mailto:kmk06g@fsu.edu">kmk06g@fsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cc</td>
<td>&quot;Waller, Michael@Space Coast AP&quot; <a href="mailto:Waller.Michael@Brevardschools.org">Waller.Michael@Brevardschools.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hi Kayleen,
Mr., Waller, my Administrator, checked and said that it would be o.k. for you to use those photos
for your Research.
Hope all is well.
Take Care, Ed
-----Original Message-----
From: Kayleen Kerg [mailto:kmk06g@fsu.edu]
Sent: Monday, October 13, 2008 10:11
PM To: wildpan@cfl.rr.com; Anderson, Ed@SCHS
Subject: Permission to use photographs
Ed- Hello! I am finishing my thesis this week and I found a few photographs posted on the Space
Coast Steel website that I would like to use. They are photographs of students during rehearsal
and at performances. Would it be alright for me to include these photos in my published
research? Thank You! Kayleen
Due to Florida's broad public records law, most written communications to or from government
employees regarding public education are public records. Therefore, this e-mail communication may be
subject to public disclosure.

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Abu-Lughod, Lila. “The Interpretation of Culture(s) after Television.” *Representations* 59, Special Issue: The Fate of “Culture”: Geertz and Beyond. (Summer 1997): 109-134.

Anderson, Ed. “Space Coast Steel: Band Home.”  

________. “Space Coast Steel: About the Director.”  


George, Kaethe. “Ellie Mannette: Training Tomorrow’s Steel Band Tuners.” *Percussive Notes* 32/5
(October 1994): 31-34.


______. “So You Want to Start a Steel Band…” *Percussive Notes* 19/3 (December 1981): 60.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kayleen Kerg was born in Ohio in 1980 and grew up in West Central Ohio. She graduated from Miami University in 2002 with a B. A. in Psychology and a Minor in Political Science. She was admitted to Miami University again in the Fall of 2002 to pursue a B. M. in Music Education. During her tenure at Miami University, she played in the Miami University Steel Band under the direction of Dr. Christopher Tanner and studied concert and world percussion with Dr. William Albin. After graduating from Miami University in 2005 with a degree in Music Education, Kayleen taught music lessons in the Greater Cincinnati area at the Musical Arts Center and in the Hamilton City School District. She was accepted to study Ethnomusicology as a graduate student in the Musicology program in the College of Music at the Florida State University in 2006. While at Florida State, Kayleen presented a conference paper for the Southeast and Caribbean Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology meeting in February 2008 called “Negotiating the Character and Function of Steelband: Repertoire, Education, Performance at the 2007 ‘Festival of Steel’.” She currently teaches an undergraduate music lecture course, “American Roots Music.”

Kayleen is an accomplished pan player. She began playing at Miami University in 1998. Since then, Kayleen has played pan in a variety of professional and educational contexts throughout the United States. Currently, she directs Mas N Steel, the steel band at Florida State University.