

5-2022

Transgender and Nonbinary Attitudes Toward the Choral Music Education Major Experience

Bailee Green
The University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [Music Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Green, Bailee, "Transgender and Nonbinary Attitudes Toward the Choral Music Education Major Experience" (2022). *Honors Theses*. 843.
https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/843

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

Transgender and Nonbinary Attitudes Toward
the Choral Music Education Major Experience

by

Bailee Green

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of Honors Requirements

May 2022

Approved by:

Dr. Jonathan Kilgore, D.M.A., Thesis Advisor
School of Music

Dr. Colin McKenzie, D.M.A., Director
School of Music

Sabine Heinhorst, Ph.D., Dean
Honors College

ABSTRACT

Transgender and nonbinary individuals face unique challenges in the choral community because of their gender identity. The foundation of the choral ensemble and its methods are rooted in the gender binary, making it hard for gender-expansive singers to feel a sense of belonging.

The purpose of this thesis project was to gauge the experiences and opinions of transgender and nonbinary choral music education majors who participate in at least one choral ensemble. Data was obtained through a voluntary survey that asked participants how their gender affected aspects of their experience as a choral music education major. Survey results led to the conclusion that transgender and nonbinary choral music education majors feel to some extent less represented and less comfortable in their music education courses and choral ensembles compared to their cisgender peers.

Participants (N=17)

Keywords:

LGBTQ, transgender, nonbinary, choral, music, education

DEDICATION

To Mom, Aunt Michele, Grandma, and my dearest friends. Your support throughout this entire process is something that I will hold close to my heart forever. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the Honors College, I would not be the person I am today. Their support, scholarship, and assistance gave me access to an entire college experience and have made this research project possible. My eyes were opened to so many worlds that I did not know existed, and I hope to expand upon the thirst for knowledge that this program gave me at 18-years-old.

I am extremely grateful for my advisor, Dr. Jonathan Kilgore. You have imparted to me the highest level of musicianship possible. Your guidance has made me a better person, and I am so grateful that you were there to show me that I could do this.

I also give credit to the School of Music at Southern Miss. My professors, the experiences I have had, and the friends I have made all influenced how I value music and my life. I am so surprised to cross this finish line when I never thought I could. It is all because of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Keywords:	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
CHAPTER I: TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY IDENTITIES	1
CHAPTER II: GENDER VARIANCE IN THE CHORAL SETTING.....	10
CHAPTER III: TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY VOCAL PEDAGOGY	17
CHAPTER IV: SURVEY AND RESULTS	30
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	36
APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS	38
APPENDIX B: IRB Approval Letter.....	42
REFERENCES	43

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFAB	<i>Assigned female at birth</i>
AMAB	<i>Assigned male at birth</i>
FFS	<i>Facial feminization surgery</i>
LGBTQ+	<i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus</i>
MRI	<i>Magnetic resonance imaging</i>
POC	<i>Person of color</i>

CHAPTER I: TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY IDENTITIES

The transgender and nonbinary gender identities are challenging the field of music education and its norms. Within the world of music, specifically vocal and choral music, these identities are simultaneously appreciated and shamed. While some music educators and students can boast about the pride they feel in their gender identity, some are required to hide theirs, outwardly presenting to the world as a cisgender male or female. LGBTQ+ students and teachers alike conceal their identity in professional situations while also grappling with being “out” or open about their sexuality and/or gender identity in other areas of their lives (Taylor et al., 2020). Many transgender and nonbinary singers often find themselves making sacrifices in choral and vocal settings, having to sing roles and voice parts that do not align with their gender identity. Many music educators lack the knowledge and experience to work with these singers, creating environments that make transgender and nonbinary, or gender-variant, singers feel excluded. The exclusionary and unwelcoming feeling that transgender and nonbinary musicians feel is not unique, but rather part of a greater problem—transphobia. The societal view of those who are gender-variant ranges from supportive to pejorative, with a concerning percentage of people leaning toward the latter category. Most of this disapproval comes from ignorance of the concept that gender is separate from biological sex (Romano 2018).

If an individual feels the gender they were assigned at birth conflicts with how they authentically feel and choose to present, they could identify as trans or transgender. For instance, if an AMAB (assigned male at birth) individual felt a disconnect from the male identity and was rather more comfortable identifying as female, this individual

would be considered transgender. The word *transgender* acts as both an identity label but also an umbrella term for other non-cisgender identities (Peterson 2021). Other gender identities include genderfluid, bigender, and agender. There is much research to support the “science” of the transgender identity. MRIs done on transgender participants revealed that their brains had structural characteristics that matched the gender they identified as (Research on the Transgender Brain: What You Should Know).

Separately, one can choose to identify as nonbinary, an identity that falls between the traditional male and female genders or outside the gender binary as a whole (Peterson 2021). The nonbinary identity can exist both under the trans umbrella and as a separate entity. Someone can identify as trans, nonbinary, or both. Because those who are nonbinary exist outside of the gender binary in some way, it is common for nonbinary individuals to use “they/them” pronouns, “ze/hir” pronouns, or some form of neopronouns (Peterson 2021). Neopronouns refer to any pronouns created from the 20th century to today (Neopronouns n.d.). Similar to how a transgender individual’s gender identity can be supported by their brain structures, research has also found that some transgender and nonbinary brains have both male and female characteristics, supporting the idea that gender is a spectrum rather than a binary (Research on the Transgender Brain: What You Should Know). The concept of gender is a personal and unique experience for everyone. Though these descriptions of the transgender and nonbinary labels are agreed upon by many, it is important to maintain an adaptable and open mind when discussing the gender identities of the trans and nonbinary communities. It is also important to differentiate between gender identity and sexuality, as these are often

mistaken as interchangeable terms. Gender identity is how one feels and presents while one's sexuality pertains to attraction.

The concept of gender identity originated in the field of psychiatry in the 1980s. The third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders included "Gender Identity Disorder" as a classification. This idea that those who do not follow the traditional model of gender identity have a disorder has contributed to the oppression of transgender and nonbinary people (Rands 2009). "Gender is a set of socially constructed and context/culture-dependent ideas regarding gender roles and what behaviors and physical attributes are considered 'masculine' or 'feminine'" (Palkki 2017).

The labels "transgender" and "nonbinary" refer to the gender binary, the objective idea that male and female are the only genders. The gender binary assumes the following:

- There are only two genders
- Gender is invariant
- The genitals a person has equates to their gender
- There are no transfers between genders
- Everyone must be classified as one of the two genders
- The male/female dichotomy is natural
- Gender membership is natural (Romano 2018)

The transgender and nonbinary communities often face harassment and discrimination because, as Romano indicates, the gender binary ignores the existence of these identities. The gender binary has just begun to be challenged within the last decade as medical professionals and lawmakers participate in discussions about gender, sex, and sexuality (2018).

Initial discussions that began in the 1990s around gender-variant individuals held negative connotations that labeled them as "dangerous psychopaths" or "sexual

predators” (Koch-Rein et al., 2020). Today, there is much advocacy for gender diversity and LGBTQ+ education. This gender-based cultural shift has reworked the concept of the gender binary in the minds of many (Garrett & Palkki 2021). Celebrities and social media are modeling and educating the public on what it means to be something other than cisgender. Transgender icon Caitlyn Jenner started a massive discussion on being transgender, giving the public an inside look into the transitioning process. Popular queer television such as the Netflix series *Queer Eye* and the HBO Max series *Euphoria* depict trans and nonbinary identities.

Much like most LGBTQ+ civil issues, however, there is still much pushback. Detransitioning documentaries and videos have gained popularity. The anti-trans movement has used detransitioning as a way to undermine trans communities, creating a narrative that trans and nonbinary individuals are indecisive (Koch-Rein et al., 2020). Additionally, in recent presidential terms, there have been attempts to rescind the rights of trans students. In 2017, the Trump Administration announced the Department of Education and the Department of Justice rescinded the Obama Administration’s May 2016 Dear Colleague Letter, a correspondence that provided guidance on “...access to restrooms, locker rooms, and similar facilities, equal participation in educational programs and activities, and recordkeeping and privacy” (Phillips 2017). This devolved jurisdiction over the treatment of trans students to states, and schools were instructed to treat a student’s gender identity in line with Title IX’s definitions of ‘sex’ (Jones 2017). This opened the door, particularly in the south, for discrimination against gender-variant students. Prejudice such as this and the fear of the transgender community is known as *transphobia* (Gender Diversity Terminology). This rescindment was congruent with one

of Peterson's examples of transphobia: Outward harassment and denial of basic human rights for trans and non-binary folks "is an obvious manifestation of transphobia" (2021).

The spread of misinformation about gender complexity is a common occurrence due to the lack of education and discussion about the topic and can be harmful to those being misrepresented (Palkki & Caldwell 2018). Being educated on and supporting transgender and nonbinary identities is linked with lower rates of attempted suicide among these communities. In 2021, the Trevor Project hosted a national survey among transgender and nonbinary youth. 75% of LGBTQ+ youth reported having been discriminated against based on sexual orientation or gender identity in their lifetime. Participants who had faced discrimination were more than twice as likely to attempt suicide. 49% of participants indicated that none of the people in their lives respected their pronouns. Out of this group, 25% admitted to attempting suicide in the past year. Likewise, 57% of participants indicated that they were unable to change their names on legal documents to correspond with their identity. Out of this group, 24% of participants admitted to attempting suicide in the past year. The study also identified heightened discrimination patterns and subsequently a higher prevalence of mental health issues in LGBTQ+ POC participants. When asked to express areas of their lives where they find joy, two areas listed were "music" and "art and creative expression (2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health).

To provide welcoming and comforting learning and rehearsal spaces for individuals who do not identify as cisgender, there must be a common understanding of the terms that these individuals use to describe themselves and their experiences. Questioning one's gender identity involves determining a self-association to the labels

“man,” “woman,” more than one of these, or neither (in the cases of bigender, agender, and alternatively gendered individuals). Gender expression refers to the outward representation of this self-association through clothing, behavior, etc. Though someone can choose their gender, they have no control over how their gender is perceived. The term gender attribution refers to the act of categorizing people as either male, female, or unknown. This can lead to unintentional misgendering because the gender of a person cannot always be known by simply looking at a person (Gender Diversity Terminology).

Generally assuming, when a trans or non-binary person is not perceived as the gender they are, this can lead to feelings of gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is the feeling that one’s assigned sex does not match their gender and/or gender expression. Gender dysphoria can cause subsequent feelings of discomfort or distress around aspects of gender identity, expression, and perception (Murphy 2020). Murphy categorizes the multiple types as cognitive dysphoria, social dysphoria, and body dysphoria. Cognitive dysphoria relates to the way an individual perceives themselves and can involve self-misgendering and/or referencing their past self as a separate person. Social dysphoria is the discomfort related to being incorrectly perceived by others i.e., being referred to with the incorrect pronouns or name. Lastly, body dysphoria, the most well-known of the three, has to do with the discomfort caused by one’s body. Genitals, facial structure, and height are examples of areas of the body that could trigger body dysphoria (2020). These feelings of dysphoria, specifically how to prevent causing them in the classroom, are what many music educators find difficult (Palkki & Sauerland 2019).

Gender affirmation and coping with gender dysphoria are imperative for the health and well-being of those who are gender-variant (Murphy 2020). For many

transgender and nonbinary people, this means altering their appearance in some way. Transmasculine individuals may choose to have top surgery (removal of breast tissue) and/or transmasculine bottom surgery (the reconstruction of male genitalia into female genitalia). Transfeminine individuals can opt to have top surgery (creating the appearance of breasts) and/or transfeminine bottom surgery (the reconstruction of female genitalia into male genitalia). There are also fewer permanent ways of relieving gender dysphoria. Body modifications such as tucking, packing, hair removal, and nonsurgical breast enhancement are a few examples. Lastly, simply dressing in a way that aligns with the correct gender identity can help someone with gender dysphoria. Surgery, body modifications, and clothing can all cause gender euphoria for the wearer. Gender euphoria is the opposite of gender dysphoria and usually occurs when a transgender or nonbinary person feels validated in their identity either cognitively, socially, physically, or some combination of the three (Murphy 2020).

Clothing is a very easy and effective way among transmasculine and transfeminine individuals to align their gender expression with their identity and to be gendered in public as such, also known as “passing” (Gender Diversity Terminology). Gender-affirming clothing can fit within three types of gender presentation categories: masculine, feminine, or unisex/androgynous. Transmasculine individuals might wear packers, to give the appearance of male genitalia, and baggy clothing, to take attention away from the chest and waist areas. These individuals might also express the desire to wear a binder, a compression vest meant to flatten the appearance of the chest. Though binders normally aid with gender dysphoria, Jarrett, Corbet, Gardener, Weinand, and Peitzmeier indicate that they can be harmful to those who wear them unsafely (when

sleeping, for extended periods, more than one, one that is too small, etc.) (2018). Bad binding practices are due in part to the lack of conversation between transmasculine and nonbinary patients and their doctors about binding. In a study of 1273 participants, though most reported experiencing at least one negative physical symptom and many reported experiencing severe pain and daily limitations because of their binder, only 14.8% sought care for any binding-related health issues (Jarrett et al., 2018).

Transfeminine gender-affirming clothing is more form-fitting and is focused on accentuating the chest area and creating the illusion of curves. Breast prosthetics, gaffs and tucking, and corsets are examples of popular transfeminine gender-affirming clothing. Though helpful in treating gender dysphoria, transfeminine gender-affirming clothing can also negatively affect the individual in some way. A study of a 27-year-old transgender female revealed that tucking, or concealing the external genitalia, caused Cryptozoospermia, a condition referring to semen with an extremely low concentration of sperm (Trussler & Carrasquillo 2020). This can be unfortunate for transfeminine individuals looking to preserve their semen for future purposes, or for those who choose to detransition.

Transgender and nonbinary history and culture are relatively new discussions in academic fields. Agarwal describes it as "...a field filled with a sense of urgency and potential" (2018). There is still much that historians and cultural theorists do not know and have not discovered. This is in part because of the erasure of historic gender-variant identities and their roles in previous societies. Today, advances are being made to educate scholarly and public communities on the lives of gender-variant people. However, this increased visibility has also contributed to the increased political regulation of and

violence against transgender and nonbinary lives (Agarwal 2018). With 0.5% of the United States' population identifying as transgender, or 1.5 million people, it is imperative that education further incorporate the language and customs of transgender and nonbinary individuals to mitigate the discrimination and violence these communities face (Palkki & Caldwell 2018).

CHAPTER II: GENDER VARIANCE IN THE CHORAL SETTING

Trans students represent perhaps the most marginalized segment of LGBTQ+ students in college (Hennessy 2012). Many gender-variant students in college feel alone, primarily because their professors and peers are largely uneducated about the trans identity (Nichols 2013). Trans and nonbinary individuals who are involved in fields and majors that concretely operate within the gender binary are especially at risk of feeling invalidated and discriminated against. One of these fields is music (Taylor et al., 2020). As more children and young adults in American schools and universities adopt transgender and nonbinary identities, choral music educators need to be knowledgeable about gender complexity and its implications for their classrooms (Palkki 2020). Palkki and Sauerland point out that choral music programs operate significantly within the gender binary in many ways: men's and women's choruses, tuxedos and dresses as ensemble attire, and gendered rehearsal language (2019). The nature and traditions of choir and choral music are a large upholder of the gender binary. Many choral directors and voice teachers often find themselves questioning how to help a transgender or nonbinary singer appropriately and accurately. Specifically, the relationship between one's gender identity and their voice part/type has caused some feelings of consternation for choral and vocal music educators (Palkki 2017). As Palkki mentions, trans singers are not the only group who pose a conundrum in the context of voice part placement—deciding the appropriate voice part for countertenors and contraltos, two groups whose vocal qualities may not match their perceived gender, can be very similar (2017). Drawing similarities to more familiar situations like this can help reshape the way

transgender and nonbinary singers are perceived and make finding space in choirs and voice studios easier for the hesitant music educator.

Palkki's study that analyzed music teachers' attitudes toward transgender students found a discrepancy between its responses and the reported harassment faced by these students. Over 90% of students and teachers alike agreed that teachers should intervene on behalf of trans students being harassed and should never use slurs that attack a student's gender identity. Though teachers indicated having supportive attitudes, many LGBTQ+ students still commonly report teachers failing to intervene in instances of harassment, or hearing teachers using slurs and other derogatory language about gender identity and expression. A seeming explanation for this could be the lack of training on how to navigate gender-complex situations and/or lack of institutional support. For music educators to gain confidence and to be more inclusive of transgender and nonbinary singers, effective strategies must be developed and implemented in their rehearsal spaces and classrooms (Palkki 2017).

There are several ways a music educator can be inclusive of transgender and nonbinary individuals in environments that require singing. The foremost step in creating an accepting music environment is to understand the history, struggles, and pressures of the transgender and nonbinary communities. Becoming familiar with the unique challenges that transgender and nonbinary individuals face provides a framework for respectful interactions. Alleviating the need for an individual to explain their gender identity can also make them feel validated in the way they choose to identify and present themselves. As mentioned previously, a transgender or nonbinary person is significantly less likely to commit suicide if they feel understood, seen, and heard.

Language

Another way is to examine the language used in the rehearsal space, lessons, etc. Inspecting the way one addresses the transgender and nonbinary communities can reveal a lot of hidden biases. Using the correct and appropriate words and phrases to describe these communities has a massive effect on the mental health and empowerment of trans and nonbinary musicians (Silveira & Goff 2016). There are several instances in a rehearsal where sections are gendered (“ladies” rather than “sopranos and altos”) and an individual’s pronouns are ignored. Additionally, the use of outdated terms can be offensive to some. Terms like “transsexual,” “female-to-male,” and “male-to-female” have negative connotations for others but are acceptable for some. More accepted terms include “transfeminine” and “transmasculine” (Cayari et al., 2021). It is important to note that simply asking what someone considers offensive is an effective way to avoid unintentional disrespect (Peterson 2021). A common practice for professors and choir directors to adopt is having their students introduce themselves and their pronouns at the beginning of each school year or semester. Whenever a student introduces themselves with a name different from what is listed on the roster, honor their request. In cases where it is dangerous to ask the student outright what their preferred pronouns are, have the conversation privately to protect the student’s safety and avoid embarrassment (Peterson 2021).

Voice Assignment

Butcher and Kozan recommend voice teachers to encourage their trans and nonbinary musicians to explore and accept their voices without upholding gender norms in order for these students to become more comfortable with how their voice factors into

their identity (n.d.). Unfortunately, vocal range, timbre, and other identifying aspects of the voice can lead a gender-variant person to be misgendered or feel unwelcomed in a space where these criteria are used as a means of categorization. A part of a singer's identity is often placed in the voice part that they sing in choir. Therefore, the music educator needs to have honest conversations with their gender-variant singers about what section would ultimately be most appropriate for them (Peterson 2021).

Placement and voicing are two options to consider for gender-variant singers. If a transgender woman wishes to sing alto, but her range does not allow her to easily sing in the tessitura, Peterson suggests the educator consider placing her between the altos and tenors in the standing arrangement. To prevent the singer from overexerting her voice, it is also suggested the educator consider allowing her to switch parts during pieces as necessary (2021).

Unfair and preconceived gender assumptions are not uncommon problems outside of the choral arena either. In a UK-based study that looked at middle school instrument choice, researchers found that these assumptions coupled with sexuality and gender discriminatory undertones were prevalent in secondary level band programs as they correlated with instrument choice (Hallam et al., 2008). Children experienced bullying if they played an instrument that did not “match” their gender.

Representation and Allyship

Trans and nonbinary music majors deserve the opportunity to have musical role models (Palkki 2017). Some examples of successful transfeminine singers include Breanna Sinclairé, Anohni, and Lucia Lucas. Some examples of successful transmasculine singers include Adriano Angelico, Lucas Silveira, and Holden Madagme.

Though some students at the university level may feel secure in their gender identity and presentation, there is no “gender timeline.”

“The ubiquity of social media and the prevalence of trans people coming out online has led many musicians, composers, and music industry professionals to acknowledge that they identify as part of the trans community. By sharing many examples of trans artists with students, music educators can avoid tokenizing a single example as emblematic of ‘trans music.’” (Cayari et al., 2021)

Peterson indicates that music educators can alleviate some of the identity problems that transgender and nonbinary musicians experience by being supportive allies. Allyship is done in and outside of the presence of a transgender or nonbinary person. Like the movement that calls people with racial privilege to be antiracists rather than passive supporters, cisgender people are being asked to participate in a similar movement against transphobia. Music educators should create an environment where harassment, oppression, and microaggressions are not allowed (2021).

In a series of interviews with a transgender music education student under the alias Joseph, three areas of improvement for music faculty were identified: using preferred names and pronouns, attire, and class-specific challenges (Silveira 2019). Joseph reported being consistently misgendered and deadnamed (the act of referring to a gender-variant person by their birth name instead of their chosen name) by faculty especially when they took attendance and read from the roster. Many faculty also seemed unaware of college-wide policies in place to protect and respect members of the LGBTQ+ community, something the student recommended would go a long way in protecting the identity of gender-variant students. Regarding required choir attire, the

student experienced the same gender binary practices as those previously discussed. The expectation for boys to wear tuxes and girls to wear dresses was exclusionary to those who felt these outfit requirements did not align with their gender perception.

Additionally, for some, the routine of the choral ensembles at Joseph's community college failed to accommodate those who did not identify as cisgender. Before his top surgery, Joseph wore a binder daily. Wearing a binder while engaging in an activity that requires a lot of air such as singing can be difficult. In his interview, Joseph encouraged music educators to teach the benefits of proper breath support for more than just musical reasons—in this case, to help those who have breathing troubles amplified by gender-affirming clothing.

An acceptance of his identity led Joseph to educate his professors and peers on how to respect and support transgender and nonbinary individuals. He explained the importance of things such as never deadnaming someone and being advocates for those who are continually misgendered. Joseph's main message for those in music education was to understand that "they're allies and have a voice that they can use" (Silveira 2019). His social action inspired others to become educated and advocate for others in the transgender and nonbinary communities.

Transgender and nonbinary awareness in the music education community at the community college and university level is just as important as it is at the secondary education level. As a subject area in many secondary schools, colleges, and universities that provides a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community, research efforts must be made to uncover why the transition into their career causes music educators to feel unsafe in their gender identity. Much research has been conducted to analyze how LGBTQ+ youth in

music programs navigate the unique experiences they face caused by their gender identity and/or sexuality. The majority of 116 participants in a survey on the perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation and acceptance said they felt safe at their school. However, when asked about faculty or staff who were LGBTQ+, the percentage of “out” music educators was lower compared to faculty or staff in other areas. 80% (n = 107) of students could identify a faculty or staff member who was publicly out, while only 37% (n = 44) of students could identify a music educator who was. “Like LGBTQ students, many LGBTQ teachers also conceal their identity and adapt to different social and professional situations, navigating the figurative closet by being “out,” or open about their sexual identity in some areas of their life, while projecting a different image or persona in others” (Taylor et al. 2020).

This concept of “leading a double life” (by hiding their sexuality and/or gender identity) as a music educator can occur as early as the student teaching experience. In a study that tracked 10 gay and lesbian band directors and their lived experiences career-wise, the study found that gay male educators had a special concern about being perceived as a deviant or a threat to their students because of their sexuality (Panetta 2021). Fear is the driving factor behind LGBTQ+ music educators choosing not to disclose their sexuality and/or gender identity. Panetta describes the dilemma of having to choose to be implicitly or explicitly “out” as a form of discrimination against many LGBTQ+ educators. The threat of losing employment is just one fear that many gender-variant music educators have related to disclosing their association with the LGBTQ+ community.

CHAPTER III: TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY VOCAL PEDAGOGY

Gender is heavily considered in singing spaces. A person's voice is unique to them and in many ways acts as a window into their gender identity. As previously mentioned, voice parts are heavily linked to the genders "male" and "female." There are many facets to gender perception in the voice. Pitch, resonance, registration, inflection and emphasis, cutoffs and onsets, and bodily gestures all play a part in determining whether a voice has more masculine or feminine qualities. For many choral music education majors in American universities and community colleges, participating in an ensemble and taking voice lessons are requirements for degree completion. In solo singing, Fach assignments (the categorization of a singer determined by the range, weight, and color of the voice), singing competitions, auditions and casting, and repertoire also involve the singer's gender in some aspects (Hearns 2020). Choral directors or voice instructors who do not know how to teach and accurately train transgender and nonbinary singers might exclude these students from their ensembles or studios altogether, potentially discouraging aspiring gender-variant music educators from joining the field. An understanding of how to teach transgender and nonbinary musicians how to sing will help decrease gender dysphoria experienced by these individuals (Garrett & Palkki 2021).

There are physiological factors of vocal structures that influence the gender attributed to an individual by the public. Laryngeal prominence, or how far the larynx protrudes from the neck, can lead many to assume the gender of a person. Larger larynxes are common in those assigned male at birth while smaller, less-protruding

larynxes are commonly found in those assigned female at birth. The neck as a whole also plays into the perception of gender (Amir et al., 2019). In a study of 30 adult men and women, the necks and voices of the participants were photographed and analyzed by a group of 10 judges. Another group of 124 judges rated the masculinity/femininity of the photographs and audio recordings. The results of the survey concluded that both the physical and visual characteristics of the neck are significantly associated with gender perception. The study found that larger necks are perceived as more masculine while neck length is perceived as neither masculine nor feminine (Amir et al., 2019). Male and female necks exhibit different geometrical configurations; the female neck is not simply a scaled-down version of the male neck. Many transfeminine individuals undergo a procedure known as chondrolaryngoplasty, a surgery where the Adam's apple is shaved down, to physically present more feminine.

Transgender and nonbinary individuals might also take hormones or undergo a medical transition to achieve their desired gender perception. Androgens are a group of sex hormones produced by both the male and female reproductive systems. The androgen testosterone is the most common androgen in all genders. For AMAB individuals, androgen contributes to factors such as a deep voice, hair growth, and sperm development. In AFAB individuals, androgens are converted into a form of estrogen known as estradiol which helps to regulate menstruation, stimulate pubic and underarm hair growth, and aid in conception and pregnancy (Androgens n.d.). The effects of testosterone on the vocal folds are irreversible. Transmasculine individuals who take testosterone introduce a profound change to their bodies, especially those who take exogenous testosterone. The main effects of testosterone cause the lowering of pitch in

transmasculine voices and prominence of the thyroid cartilage (Damrose 2009). Many liken these effects on the vocal structures to testosterone puberty (voice cracks, lessened range, etc.) (Hearns 2020). Edward J. Damrose MD, otolaryngologist and professor at Stanford Health Care, tracked the timing of voice changes in a 33-year-old, transmasculine jazz singer taking exogenous testosterone. Over 16 months, the patient took 200mg of testosterone intramuscularly. Previously a mezzo-soprano, by month six the patient's voice had settled into the baritone range. This profound voice change is not uncommon for transmasculine individuals who take testosterone. Damrose's study found that the average length of time needed to notice a significant change in the pitch and timbre of the speaking range is 4 weeks (2009).

During AFAB vocal transitions caused by testosterone, choral directors and voice teachers should have their transmasculine singers adhere to a list of rules to preserve the health of their voice:

- avoid anti-histamines and other medicines that have a drying effect on the throat
- use steam inhalation devices such as a humidifier
- avoid throat sprays, as they make it more difficult to notice vocal discomfort
- be respectful of your vocal range
- avoid clearing the throat or coughing
- avoid screaming and talking too loudly for prolonged periods
- drink plenty of water
- lip-sync during events at which unison singing or cheering is occurring
- attempt the release of any extra muscular tension, particularly in the neck, shoulders, jaw, and tongue
- avoid speaking and singing during periods of illness
- avoid smoking
- avoid alcohol and caffeine
- when feeling any kind of vocal fatigue, avoid voice use all together
- use sufficient breath support when speaking
- respond to yes-or-no questions by nodding rather than speaking

- do vocal warm-ups every day
- do vocal cool-downs every evening
- limit the amount of milk you drink to keep mucous from thickening and causing further vocal fold inflammation (Romano 2018)

Transgender and nonbinary singers might also take the risk of having laryngeal surgery to achieve a gender-conforming voice. Jennifer Oates, a speech pathologist at La Trobe University, detailed the process of laryngeal masculinization and feminization surgeries:

For transmasculine people, surgical voice masculinization involves reducing the tension on the vocal cords or increasing their size (for example, by injecting a filler-type substance into the cords) so they vibrate at a lower rate. This lowers the voice's pitch. More extensive surgery to the framework of the larynx and the pharynx can also enlarge the cavities of the larynx and the vocal tract above the larynx so the voice sounds more masculine. For trans women, surgical voice feminization methods involve shortening the vocal cords and/or reducing their mass and/or increasing the tension on the vocal cords. Each of these approaches is designed to increase the speed of vocal cord vibration and therefore increase the voice's pitch. (2021)

Though these surgeries are available worldwide, they are not often offered due to their inconsistent results. Laryngeal surgery can also cause unwanted side effects on the voice such as “poor voice quality, vocal fatigue, difficulty projecting the voice and reduced ability to vary the pitch of the voice in both speaking and singing” (Oates 2021). Other feminization surgeries include cricothyroid approximation/fusion, thyrohyoid

approximation, reduction of the anterior vocal folds, and laser reduction of vocal fold mass (Hearns 2020).

Several voice teachers in recent years have spoken publicly about training transgender and nonbinary musicians in their studios. One of these voice teachers is Michael Chipman, Assistant professor of Music at Westminster College in Salt Lake City. In his studio, Chapman trained a 22-year-old transwoman who chose to remain a bass-baritone. The student, worried about portraying male characters in opera because of her timbre and Fach, wondered what this would mean for her career as a singer. After realizing the prevalence of gender-bending roles in opera, she realized she was comfortable portraying a male character by thinking of it as “dressing in drag” (Manternach et al., 2017).

Another singer, E.F., came out as trans well into his professional opera career. Pre-transition, the singer’s range extended from G_3 to $E\flat_6$. After beginning hormone therapy, E.F.’s range diminished to E_3 to C_4 . His voice teacher, Ruth Rainero, monitored E.F.’s voice during each lesson, listening as his ability to switch between registers, produce a stable tone, and control his breathing worsened. Compared to his voice pre-transition and other cisgender singers, E.F. was having a significantly harder time sounding like a professional adult singer. His tone was almost comparable to an adolescent boy going through puberty. Eventually, E.F.’s voice stabilized in the range of C_3 to $E\flat_4$. Despite this stabilization, his voice is not as strong as it was pre-transition. He can sing several transposed art songs rather than the opera and oratorio repertoire he sang before. E.F.’s situation is something for transmasculine individuals hoping to explore a career in professional singing to consider (Manternach et al., 2017). Music educators

should always be transparent with students who are transmasculine and aspiring to start testosterone, but especially so if these students hope to land professional and vocally demanding roles.

When working with transgender and nonbinary singers, a lot of the mechanics responsible for producing a healthy sound are the same, but there are some new considerations. The following information on working with transgender and nonbinary singers will be separated into categories to assure each aspect of singing is addressed.

Breathing

As previously discussed, gender dysphoria can make singers feel disconnected from their bodies. Singing is an extremely physical activity and requires the singer to be consciously aware and in control of their body. At the start of a transgender or nonbinary singer's vocal journey, Butcher and Kozan encourage the voice teacher to have the student explore the way breathing affects different parts of their body. However, instead of having the student focus on their chest area or stomach (places that cause body dysphoria for many gender-variant people), have the student focus on their throat, ribcage, shoulders, mouth, eyes, brows, and jaw. This activity is excellent for detecting areas of breathing-related tension (Butcher & Kozan n.d.).

Transmasculine individuals who take testosterone or bind might find their breath control suffers from a lack of diaphragmatic breathing. Hearn's definitively states the importance of breath control for those experiencing a vocal change brought about by the introduction of testosterone in the body by producing sound from the diaphragm instead of from musculature. Likewise, individuals who wear tight gender-affirming clothing are also at risk of taking shallow breaths and relying on musculature to produce sound. Air

intake is extremely important for creating a healthy and supported sound, but binders, corsets, and waist trainers can all inhibit air intake, causing shallow breathing problems that affect volume and a singer's ability to execute registration switches. These problems can be offset by communicating regularly with the student. Breathing exercises can also be practiced in the comfort of the student's home without a binder. Regardless, when teaching a transgender or nonbinary individual how to sing in a lesson or rehearsal space, it is imperative not to challenge the singer's decision to take testosterone or wear gender-affirming clothing. It is the educator's responsibility to remain supportive and find ways to help the vocal progression of a transgender or nonbinary singer (Hearns 2020). The following exercises are wonderful for any singer but especially gender-variant individuals who bind, regularly wear tight clothing, or who are experiencing a vocal change:

Exercise 1

Lie on your back with knees up, exhale completely, then allow the stomach to experience a “klunk” sensation as you inhale and the air displaces the organs in the lower abdomen. This should be done 3x slowly and 3x quickly. Audible breaths could mean that the vocal folds are not completely relaxed. This exercise is meant to be done three times slowly followed by three times quickly so that the action of releasing the abdominal wall becomes more immediate and intuitive over time (Romano 2018).

Exercise 2

Lie on your back with knees up, exhale completely, inhale silently with expansion in the lower back and abdomen, exhale as if through a straw, inhale low, exhale on a hiss, inhale low, exhale while vibrating the lips. Repeat this exercise while sitting and then while standing. If experiencing light-headedness at any point during this exercise, take a

break and breathe normally. This exercise increases breath use efficiency. (Romano 2018).

Exercise 3

Exhale completely, inhale feeling low expansion with an open throat, yawn/sigh these syllables at a comfortable, mid-range pitch with a breath in between each: “ha, hey, high, who”. With the consonant /h/, this exercise incorporates diaphragmatic breathing into speaking. Each of these words uses a single syllable and a pure consonant so as to gradually progress toward bringing diaphragmatic breathing into speech (Romano 2018).

Exercise 4

Exhale completely, inhale feeling low expansion with an open throat, say three of these words in a row: “hip, hope, him, hand, heat, haste, happy, heavy, hurricane”. Repeat for the remaining words. These words use mixed vowels, an additional consonant, and/or multiple syllables so as to gradually progress toward bringing diaphragmatic breathing into speech (Romano 2018).

Exercise 5

Exhale completely, inhale feeling low expansion with an open throat, slowly speak the numbers 1-12 breathing every three numbers. This exercise begins to build the habit of breathing in the middle of a spoken phrase so as to use air to produce speech (Romano 2018).

Resonance and Articulation

Transgender and nonbinary individuals, not just singers, can also work to change the sounds of their voices without the help of hormones or surgery. Voice

masculinization and feminization are “the process[es] of changing aspects like pitch, resonance, registration, prosody, articulation, musicality, interpretation, characterization, gesticulation, etc. to influence the listener or audience member to perceive a more masculine [or feminine] ...voice” (Hearns 2020). This is a great option for transmasculine individuals who do not want to permanently alter their voice. Some points of voice masculinization include a low, back tongue position, a low larynx position, broadening the resonance tract to achieve a darker tone, using the back of the tongue to articulate as opposed to the front of the tongue, and a chest voice-dominant registration. Transfeminine individuals who take estrogen do not experience any effect on their voice or vocal structures. Achieving a voice with more feminine qualities relies entirely on vocal feminization. Aspects of vocal feminization include a high, forward tongue position, a higher larynx position, using the tip of the tongue to articulate as opposed to the back, light cutoffs and onsets, a smaller resonance tract, and a head voice-dominant registration (Hearns 2020).

An example of a resonance exercise is included below. Any exercise that allows the singer to focus on the sensations caused by singing with different vowels in different registers can serve to evenly build resonance across their range.



Sustain the word “me” on F3 (F below middle C) for as long as comfortably possible. This exercise can be conducted both ascending or descending by half-step

within the middle voice. It utilizes the voiced consonant [m] and the vowel [i] to encourage clean resonance in the middle voice (Romano 2018).

Oral and Facial Exercises

Transfeminine individuals might opt for FFS or facial feminization surgery. The goal of this surgery is to soften areas of the face that are perceived as masculine. FFS mostly targets bone structure and nose shape but can also incorporate face-lifts and neck lifts. Though this surgery does not affect the vocal folds, it can affect areas of the face such as the mouth and cheeks that could cause unnecessary tension when singing. To combat this tension, transfeminine singers can engage areas of their face with oral and facial exercises to prevent tension. Singers can:

- raise eyebrows
- do emotional faces (shock, anger, delight)
- scrunch up the nose
- show upper teeth
- smile then pucker
- puff out cheeks
- hold exaggerated /o/ and /i/ lip postures
- make kissing sounds
- run tongue over teeth in a circular motion (Butcher & Kozan n.d.)

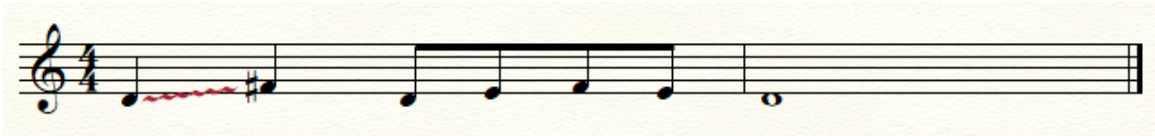
Warm-ups

Choral music education majors are taught the significance of vocal warm-ups and their value to the vocal development of every singer. They can prepare the vocal folds for extended periods of singing by adequately stretching the vocal folds and removing any excess mucus. For transgender and nonbinary singers, warm-ups can strengthen characteristics and registers of the voice that could help their voice better align with their gender identity (Romano 2018).

For transgender and nonbinary singers, it is important to gauge what parts of their register the singer is comfortable using and exploring. For some, using lower and higher parts of their register can cause gender dysphoria for transfeminine and transmasculine singers respectively. Butcher and Kozan encourage transgender singers to do the following exercises:

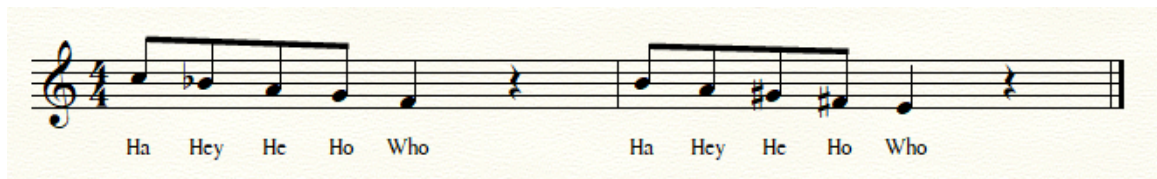
- straws
- straw phonation with water
- lip trills
- raspberries
- humming
- resonating on “v” or “z” (n.d.)

These and other SOVT (Semi Occluded Vocal Tract) exercises are helpful for the transfeminine singer. The mouth is partially closed, and back pressure from the lips and pressure from the lungs help the vocal folds to vibrate with ease. Additionally, the use of a straw when singing warm-ups can also relieve excess pressure on the vocal folds.



“This exercise is to be conducted through a straw because a straw elongates the vocal tract allowing for more positive air pressure above the vocal folds which in turn results in a gentler adduction of the vocal folds” (Romano 2018). These types of warm-ups can calibrate the voice, causing less strain and vocal fatigue for the singer. More excellent examples of warm-ups for transfeminine singers include gliding between the tonic and dominant pitches of a key, messa di voce, and any other type of exercise revolving around sustained phonation.

Transmasculine and some nonbinary singers often seek voice therapy due to vocal strain caused by speaking too lowly, singing too loudly, or pushing the voice past its limits to achieve a clear tone. These singers often use hard glottal attacks and have a heavy, pressed quality to their voice from trying to sound masculine (Butcher n.d.). Yawning/sighing /h/ words and syllables are excellent tension relieving exercises for easier onsets for transmasculine singers.



For transmasculine singers starting testosterone therapy, warm-ups are especially important for the healthy development of the lower range. They can also ease the voice of a transmasculine person on testosterone through a transitional period. If the singer was a soprano before their vocal transition, a high laryngeal position might be an unconscious habit they try to carry over into their deepening voice. Warm-ups on the vowel [u] can encourage a lower laryngeal position (Peterson 2021). These singers might also experience a “full” sensation like something is stuck in the throat or a “covered” sensation like something is covering the throat. The best practice for transmasculine singers on testosterone is “soft legato phonation on easy vocalises across two or three steps up and down...” (Butcher & Kozan n.d.).

Overall, consistent communication with a transgender or nonbinary singer is crucial to the health and well-being of their voice. Especially with nonbinary and gender fluid singers, the type of voice (whether masculine, feminine, or androgynous) that the singer desires to obtain might change frequently depending on the gender identity of the

singer. Gender-affirming articles of clothing, though not always beneficial to the singer musically, should always take precedent as the singer's mental well-being is more important. The goal of the music educator is to help the singer healthily reach their voice goals while keeping expectations reasonable (Hearns 2020).

CHAPTER IV: SURVEY AND RESULTS

For this research study, choral music education majors who identify as cisgender, transgender, or nonbinary and who participate in at least one choral ensemble at their community college or university were asked to complete a survey. The survey covered many of the gendered aspects of choral rehearsal. The survey also covered the perceptions and knowledge of gender identity of peers, professors, and their community college or university. Based on the results of this study, it is evident that the responses of the transgender and nonbinary participants mostly align with the idea that choral music ensembles and instruction are largely not inclusive to gender-variant individuals.

The survey questions were divided into three themes. The first theme was respect and comprehension. Participants were asked if they felt their gender identity was understood and respected by their professors, choral directors, peers, and school. The second theme covered the effects of a participant's gender identity. These questions attempted to gauge if participants ever felt inhibited in different aspects of the choral music education major experience because of their gender identity. Finally, the third theme was vocal instruction and voice ease. Participants were asked how their gender identity played a role in the accessibility of their voice. This theme also addressed a participant's vocal instruction and how closely it aligned with their gender identity.

Out of all the participant responses, only two people identified as gender-variant. All other participants identified as cisgender. One participant was assigned female at birth and identifies now as transgender. The other was assigned male at birth and now identifies as nonbinary. Both responses indicated to some degree discomfort with their

ensemble, voice lessons, and/or music education courses for reasons directly relating to their gender identity.

All participants answered the first few preliminary questions that verified their eligibility to take the survey. Those who were eligible then noted their assigned sex at birth and gender identity. Participants were also asked whether or not they took estrogen or testosterone. The questions that followed asked the participants to use the Likert scale to rate a series of statements about how their gender identity influenced their experiences during their time as a choral music education major.

The first series of questions asked the participants to rate their sense of belonging in relation to the name of their ensemble, their ensemble's attire, gendered language used in the classroom, and their voice part. Most participants strongly agreed that out of the four criteria that they felt a sense of belonging to their voice part. The transgender participant felt somewhat they lacked a connection to their voice part, but significantly lacked a sense of belonging to their ensemble's attire and gendered language used in the classroom. To a lesser extent, the nonbinary participant similarly expressed some discomfort in their ensemble's attire and gendered classroom language but felt a positive connection to their voice part and the name of their ensemble. Interestingly, three cisgender participants expressed a slight discomfort in either their ensemble's attire or gendered language used in the classroom.

The second and third series of questions asked the participants if they felt respected by both their peers and their choral director concerning their gender identity/presentation/perception, their pronouns, and gendered situations. The transgender participant indicated that they somewhat agreed that their peers respected their gender

identity/presentation/perception and pronouns, but somewhat disagreed regarding gendered situations. Their responses concerning their choral director were significantly different. They somewhat disagreed with their choral director respecting their pronouns and gender identity/presentation/perception, and strongly disagreed with feeling respected by their choral director in gendered situations. The nonbinary participant somewhat agreed and strongly agreed with feeling respected by their peers according to the three criteria, but similar to the transgender participant also somewhat disagreed with feeling respected by their choral director in gendered situations. Almost all cisgender participants strongly agreed with both statements, with a few “somewhat agree” responses. Compared to the gender-variant participants, cisgender participants were more likely to feel slightly less respected by their peers rather than their choral director, whereas with gender-variant participants the opposite was true.

Next, participants were asked if they felt inhibited during rehearsals or performances by any of the following criteria: clothing, accessibility of voice, and gender perception. The transgender participant somewhat agreed with the clothing and accessibility of voice options, but neither agreed nor disagreed with the gender perception option. The nonbinary participant strongly agreed with the clothing option, but somewhat disagreed with the gender perception and accessibility of voice options. There was a range of answers among cisgender participants. Though nearly half of participants responded “strongly disagree” to the statement, 40% of cisgender participants answered somewhat or strongly agreed with feeling inhibited by their gender perception.

Participants were then asked how well they felt their peers, choral director, and professors respected and understood their gender identity overall. For gender-variant

participants, the trend of receiving more respect from their peers than from their choral director held true for this statement. The transgender participant neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements that their choral director and professors respect and understand their gender identity, but did strongly agree and somewhat agree with the statements that their peers respect and understand their gender identity respectively. The nonbinary participant somewhat disagreed with the statements that their choral director and professors respect and understand their gender identity, but strongly agreed and somewhat agreed with the statements that their peers respect and understand their gender identity respectively. Almost all cisgender participants strongly agreed with the statements that their choral director, professors, and peers respected and understood their gender identity with the exception of one “somewhat agree” and one “neither agree nor disagree” response to the statements regarding their choral director and professors respecting and understanding their gender identity respectively.

The last choral ensemble-related question asked participants if their ensemble was a safe space where they could express themselves without ridicule. The transgender participant somewhat disagreed with this statement, and the nonbinary participant somewhat agreed with this statement. Approximately 66% of cisgender participants strongly agreed, approximately 27% somewhat agreed, and approximately 7% neither agreed nor disagreed.

The next sets of questions primarily focused on their place of education as a whole as well as the education aspects of their choral music education major experience. When asked how represented they felt their gender identity was represented in their choral music education courses, the transgender and nonbinary participants strongly

disagreed while 20% and 80% of cisgender participants somewhat agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

Next, participants were asked to respond to how well both their community college or university and music program include and respect their gender identity. The transgender participant somewhat agreed and strongly disagreed with these statements respectively, and the nonbinary participant strongly disagreed with both statements. Approximately 73% of cisgender participants strongly agreed with both statements. Regarding their community college or university, approximately 27% of cisgender participants marked “somewhat agree.” Regarding their school’s music program, answers were more varied. Approximately 13% marked somewhat agree, 7% marked neither agree nor disagree, and 7% marked somewhat disagree. In the cases of both gender-variant and cisgender participants, responses indicated that participants were more likely to feel that their community college or university respected and included their gender identity more than their music program.

The next statement addressed how well a participant’s vocal instruction aligns with their gender identity. The transgender strongly disagreed with this statement, and the nonbinary participant strongly agreed with this statement. All cisgender participants strongly agreed with this statement with the exception of one participant who somewhat disagreed.

Finally, participants were asked if they had ever felt discouraged from pursuing and/or continuing their major for reasons directly related to their gender identity. The transgender participant somewhat disagreed, the nonbinary participant strongly disagreed, and 80% of cisgender participants strongly disagreed. 13% and 7% of cisgender

participants neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement and strongly agreed with this statement respectively.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Limitations

This research project provided an excellent insight and level of understanding into transgender and nonbinary attitudes toward the choral music education major experience. However, as is with most studies, there were limitations in the way research was conducted. For this study, limitations largely revolved around how data was collected. Participants gathered via snowball sampling depended on how active participants were in communicating the survey to others. Not having control over the data pool and trusting participants to actively share the survey with others inhibited the reach of this research project and therefore its accuracy. In addition, the extensiveness of this research topic surpassed the time limit given to complete an undergraduate thesis project, undermining the comprehensiveness of the survey itself. The opinions of one transgender participant, one nonbinary participant, and fifteen cisgender participants only provided a small, centralized approximation of gender identity's impact on the lives of choral music education majors.

Future Research

Many studies have been conducted on younger transgender and nonbinary individuals, particularly about their attitudes and experiences at home and in music classroom settings. Naturally, it is recommended that future research be conducted as the current wave of young transgender and nonbinary musicians and future music educators grow older. The current research does little to address how the negative experiences of being transgender or nonbinary in musical spaces affect the percentage of gender-variant individuals in music education. As the topic of gender-variant representation in choral

and vocal music grows, further research could monitor the change, if any, in generational gender-variant participation in the music education field.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

4/4/22, 7:09 PM

Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

Project Title: Transgender and Nonbinary Attitudes Toward the Choral Music Education Major Experience (22-154)
Principal Investigator: Bailee Green
Phone: (601) 910-1338
Email: bailee.green@usm.edu
Program: School of Music, Choral Music Education

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to gauge the opinions and experiences of cisgender, transgender and nonbinary music majors in choral ensembles in order to compare the data. There is a lack of scholarly research surrounding gender variant participation in choral ensembles, and it is for this reason that many choral directors are unknowing of how to properly respect these students. The results of this study will inform the choral community of the transgender and nonbinary gender identities. This increased understanding may lead common choral ensemble practices to become more gender equal.

Description of Study: Participants will take a survey via the program Qualtrics that averages less than 10 minutes. The survey pertains to the participant's experience as a music major in a choral ensemble as it relates to their gender identity. Participants will be recruited via snowballing sampling, a process where upon survey completion a participant will share the survey with other viable candidates of the survey. The number of participants will depend on the outcome of the snowball sampling process within the time limit of 3 weeks.

Benefits: A potential benefit for participants is the chance to express their feelings about and experiences within their music department that might otherwise go unheard.

Risks: This survey pertains to the stigma and feelings of rejection that some singers, particularly those who are transgender or nonbinary, may experience from their music department. For participants who have experienced bullying or rejection because of their gender identity, this survey could cause emotional distress. The following LGBTQ+ and gender-expansive hotlines are included for participants to call if they do experience emotional distress from the survey:

LGBT National Hotline: 888-843-4564
Trans Hotline: 877-565-8860
TrevorLifeline: 866-488-7386

Confidentiality: All participants and their survey responses will be kept confidential during the duration of the thesis process. Data will be deleted sometime before the fall of 2022.

Alternative Procedures: There are no alternative procedures available for participants.

Participant's Assurance: This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5125, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, 601-266-5997.

Any questions about this research project should be directed to the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided above.

I understand that participation in this project is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Unless described above, all personal information will be kept strictly confidential, including my name and other identifying information. All procedures to be followed and their purposes were explained to me. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to me if that information may affect my willingness to continue participation in the project. This study (22-154) has been approved by USM's IRB which ensures projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Consent to Participate in Research: By clicking the box below, I give my consent to participate in this research project. If you do not wish to participate in this study, please close your browser now.

☐ Yes, I consent to participate.

Are you a choral/vocal music education major at a community college or a university?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you participate in at least one choral ensemble at a community college or university?

☐ Yes

☐ No

https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_0cw8L3KtItuI65E&ContextLibraryID=UR_0... 1/4

What gender identity applies the most to you?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Non-binary
☐ Transgender
☐ Other gender identity

What was your assigned sex at birth?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Intersex

Do you take testosterone or estrogen?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

I feel a sense of belonging in relation to:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Name of my ensemble	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ensemble's attire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gendered language used in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My voice part	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel respected by my peers in relation to:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My gender identity/presentation/perception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pronouns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gendered situations (rooming lists, bus seating placements, standing arrangements, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel respected by my choral director in relation to:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My gender identity/presentation/perception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My pronouns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gendered situations (rooming lists, bus seating placements, standing arrangements, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I have felt inhibited in rehearsals and/or performances by:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My clothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility of my voice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My gender perception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel my gender identity is respected by my choral director and professors.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I feel my gender identity is understood by my choral director and professors.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I feel my gender identity is respected by my peers.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I feel my gender identity is understood by my peers.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I feel my gender identity is represented in my music education and/or performance course discussions.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Strongly agree

My choral ensemble is a safe space for me, and I can express myself without fear of ridicule.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

My college or university makes an effort to include and respect my gender identity.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

The music program at my college or university makes an effort to include and respect my gender identity.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I receive healthy vocal instruction that aligns with my gender identity as much as possible.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

I have felt discouraged from pursuing and/or continuing my major for reasons directly related to my gender identity.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Office of Research Integrity

118 COLLEGE DRIVE #5116 • HATTIESBURG, MS | 601.266.6756 | WWW.USM.EDU/ORI



NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident submission on InfoEd IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 22-154
PROJECT TITLE: Transgender and Nonbinary Attitudes Toward the Choral Music Education Major Experience
SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Music
RESEARCHERS: PI: Bailee Green
Investigators: Green, Bailee-Kilgore, Jonathan~
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved
CATEGORY: Expedited Category
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 11-Apr-2022 to 10-Apr-2023

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

REFERENCES

- 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. The Trevor Project. (2021). Retrieved February 16, 2022, from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/?section=Introduction>
- Abril, C. R. (2007). I have a voice but I just can't sing: A narrative investigation of singing and Social Anxiety. *Music Education Research*, 9(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800601127494>
- Agarwal, K. (2018, May 1). *What is trans history?* Perspectives on History. Retrieved March 30, 2022, from <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2018/what-is-trans-history-from-activist-and-academic-roots-a-field-takes-shape>
- Aguirre, R. (2018). Finding the Trans Voice: A Review of the Literature on Accommodating Transgender Singers. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 37(1), 36–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123318772561>
- Amir, O., Shemer, K., Roziner, I., & Primov-Fever, A. (2019). Physical and visual characteristics of the neck predicting gender perception. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery - Global Open*, 7(12). <https://doi.org/10.1097/gox.00000000000002573>
- Androgens. Cleveland Clinic. (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2022, from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22002-androgens>
- Butcher, L., & Kozan, A. (n.d.). Nurturing the Voice: Techniques and Exercises that

- Guide the Voice through a Healthy Transition. One Voice. Retrieved March 7, 2022, from http://ovmc.org/files/6215/3307/0157/Butcher__Kozan__Nurturing_the_Voice.pdf
- Cates, D. S. (2019). Choral directors' experiences with gender-inclusive teaching practices among transgender students (dissertation). MOspace. Retrieved February 1, 2022, from https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/68825/Dissertation_2019_Cates.pdf?sequence=1
- Cayari, C. (2019). Demystifying trans*+ voice education: The Transgender Singing Voice Conference. *International Journal of Music Education*, 37(1), 118–131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418814577>
- Cayari, C., Graham, F. A., Jampole, E. J., & O’Leary, J. (2021). Trans Voices Speak: Suggestions from Trans Educators about Working with Trans Students. *Music Educators Journal*, 108(1), 50–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00274321211038481>
- Damrose, E. J. (2009). Quantifying the impact of androgen therapy on the female larynx. *Auris Nasus Larynx*, 36(1), 110–112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anl.2008.03.002>
- Garrett, M. L., & Palkki, J. (2021). *Honoring Trans and Gender-expansive Students in Music Education*. Oxford University Press.
- Garrett, M. L., & Spano, F. P. (2017). An examination of LGBTQ-inclusive strategies used by practicing music educators. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 39(1), 39–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X17700702>
- Gender Diversity Terminology. Penn State Student Affairs. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/campus-community-diversity/lgbtq-community/explore-lgbtq-resources/identity-based-resources/gender-terms>

- Hallam, S., Rogers, L., & Creech, A. (2008). Gender differences in musical instrument choice. *International Journal of Music Education*, 26(1), 7–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761407085646>
- Hearns, Liz Jackson. “Voice pedagogy for transgender/non-binary singers.” Lecture, Chicago, Illinois, September 27, 2020.
- Hennessy, Anna Elizabeth Matijasic. (2012). "LGBTQ music majors' experiences of social climates and developing identities in music education settings" Masters Theses. 234. <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019/234>
- Jarrett, B. A., Corbet, A. L., Gardner, I. H., Weinand, J. D., & Peitzmeier, S. M. (2018). Chest Binding and Care Seeking Among Transmasculine Adults: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Transgender health*, 3(1), 170–178. <https://doi.org/10.1089/trgh.2018.0017>
- Jones, T. (2017). Trump, Trans Students and Transnational Progress. *Sex Education*, 18(4), 479–494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2017.1409620>
- Koch-Rein, A., Haschemi Yekani, E., & Verlinden, J. J. (2020). Representing trans: Visibility and its Discontents. *European Journal of English Studies*, 24(1), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2020.1730040>
- Manternach, B., Chipman, M., Rainero, R., Stave, C. (2017). *Teaching transgender singers. Part 1: The voice teachers' perspectives*. *Journal of Singing*, 74(1), 83–88.
- Murphy, E. (2020, November 20). *Gender Dysphoria and Euphoria*. Victim Service Center. Retrieved February 27, 2022, from <https://www.victimservicecenter.org/gender-dysphoria-and-euphoria/>

- Neopronouns*. MyPronouns.org Resources on Personal Pronouns. (n.d.). Retrieved March 8, 2022, from <https://www.mypronouns.org/neopronouns>
- Nichols, J. (2013). Rie's Story, Ryan's Journey: Music in the Life of a Transgender Student. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 61(3), 262–279. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429413498259>
- Oates, J. (2021, August 17). How trans people can change their voice to suit their preferred gender. *The Conversation*. Retrieved February 28, 2022, from <https://theconversation.com/how-trans-people-can-change-their-voice-to-suit-their-preferred-gender-52863>
- Palkki, J. (2017). Inclusivity in Action: Transgender Students in the Choral Classroom. *The Choral Journal*, 57(11), 20–35. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26412785>
- Palkki, J. (2020). “My voice speaks for itself”: The experiences of three transgender students in American secondary school choral programs. *International Journal of Music Education*, 38(1), 126–146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761419890946>
- Palkki, J., & Caldwell, P. (2018). “We are often invisible”: A survey on safe space for LGBTQ students in secondary school choral programs. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 40(1), 28–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X17734973>
- Palkki, J., & Sauerland, W. (2019). Considering Gender Complexity in Music Teacher Education. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 28(3), 72–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083718814582>
- Panetta, B. J. (2021). Understanding an Invisible Minority: A Literature Review of

- LGBTQ+ Persons in Music Education. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 40(1), 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233211015730>
- Peterson, C. W. (2021). Gender Identity in Choral Music Education. *In Resonance: The Art of the Choral Music Educator: Pedagogy, Methods, and Materials for Tomorrow's Outstanding Music Teachers* (pp. 363–391). Pavane Publishing.
- Phillips, M. (2017, February 23). *Trump administration rescinds guidance on transgender rights under title IX*. Jackson Lewis. Retrieved March 16, 2022, from <https://www.jacksonlewis.com/publication/trump-administration-rescinds-guidance-transgender-rights-under-title-ix>
- Poteat, T., Malik, M., & Cooney, E. (2018). Understanding the health effects of binding and tucking for gender affirmation. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 2(S1), 76-76. doi:10.1017/cts.2018.268
- Rands, K. E. (2009). Considering Transgender People in Education: A Gender-Complex Approach. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(4), 419–431. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109341475>
- Research on the transgender brain: What you should know. Cleveland Clinic. (2021, December 29). Retrieved March 8, 2022, from <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/research-on-the-transgender-brain-what-you-should-know/>
- Romano, T. (2018). The Singing Voice During the First Two Years of Testosterone Therapy: Working with the Trans or Gender Queer Voice.
- Silveira, J. M. (2019). Perspectives of a Transgender Music Education Student. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 66(4), 428–448. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429418800467>

- Silveira, J. M., & Goff, S. C. (2016). Music Teachers' Attitudes Toward Transgender Students and Supportive School Practices. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 64(2), 138–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429416647048>
- Taylor, D. M., Talbot, B. C., Holmes, E. J., & Petrie, T. (2020). Experiences of LGBTQ+ Students in Music Education Programs Across Texas. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 30(1), 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083720935610>
- Trussler, J. T., & Carrasquillo, R. J. (2020). Cryptozoospermia Associated With Genital Tucking Behavior in a Transwoman. *Reviews in Urology*, 22(4), 170–173.