

Expert High School, College, and Service Band Director's Opinions Regarding The Concert March in America: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigated the relevance of the concert march in current wind band literature and curriculum. Deliberate sampling was employed to select highly accomplished bandmasters including two high school band directors, two university band directors, and two service band directors. While there is substantial research regarding the history and heritage of the march and the evolution of the concert band in America, little scholarly literature is available that explores the significance of the march to current wind band literature. Themes include history and heritage, word of mouth, listening, mentors, programming trends, lack of understanding, slow decline, and advice. Findings from the study revealed how participants were taught march style and how their band directors/mentors molded their attitudes and opinions regarding the march. All participants agreed on the decline in performances of marches and changes in attitudes and opinions regarding the genre. Participants discussed the importance of continued rehearsal and performance of the march to the survival of the genre within the concert band. Future research recommendations include a replication that would employ a different sample of similarly qualified applicants as well as a quantitative study to determine programming frequency of marches at universities or high schools throughout the country

Keywords: concert march; march style; heritage; decline; relevance; band literature.

1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The concert band has transformed significantly in America since its inception in the late eighteenth century. The importance and contribution of the concert march in the late 1800s and early 1900s to wind band literature is difficult to dispute as popular composers such as John Philip Sousa, Karl L. King, and Henry Fillmore devoted much of their career to composing and directing marches (Chevallard, 2003), and marches have been an extremely important part of the literature ever since the development of the concert band in this country (Chevallard, 2003). Concert marches were programmed frequently by bands during the Professional Band and Community Band Movements. There are ample sources that show how important the concert march was to concert band curriculum when secondary school and university bands began to develop around the late 1800s and early 1900s. Frederick Fennell's creation of the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1952 was a monumental event in the history of bands in America (Hansen, 2005); however, there may be an unintended consequence from the wind ensemble movement that band directors today are seeing more frequently. As times changed and band literature evolved, the opinions of student musicians and the attitudes of band directors appear to have also changed regarding the once popular march. I have always programmed marches because they are good teaching tools (Begian, 1994) and important aspects in my curriculum (Gerald, 2008; Hopkins, 2013; Reynolds, 2000; Russell, 2006). However, I began to notice a negative change in my students' opinions and attitudes regarding the rehearsal and performance of concert marches during my ten years as a high school band director. After several of my colleagues told me that many of their students shared the same attitude regarding the concert march as my own students, I began to question whether I had stumbled upon a shift in attitudes and opinions regarding the concert march that is or may be affecting current or future band literature and curriculum.

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Numerous publications describe programming trends for high school and university bands (Paul, 2011, 2012; Powell, 2009; Wacker & Silvey, 2016) and lists of recommended music for wind ensemble (Bauer, 1996; Foster, 1999; Holvik, 1970; Kish, 2005; Nicholson, 2009; Oliver, 2012; Olsen, 1982; Stevenson, 2004); however, marches rarely appear on these lists. There is a gap in the literature on the role of the concert march in modern wind band repertoire and curriculum. These expert bandmasters from this study provided insight regarding the role of the concert march in current wind band repertoire and curriculum.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore bandmasters' opinions and attitudes regarding the role of the concert march in wind band curriculum.

1.3 Research Questions

- Q1. How important is the concert march to the history and heritage of the concert band in American music education?
- Q2. How were each of these bandmasters taught march style?
- Q3. What are the challenges that these bandmasters face when teaching concert marches?
- Q4. What are the programming trends of these bandmasters regarding concert marches?
- Q5. What is the relevance of the concert march to modern wind band literature?
- Q6. What is the future of the concert march within wind band pedagogy literature and curriculum?

2: Literature Review

Vast sources demonstrate the history and heritage of the concert march to wind band as well as the evolution of the wind band in this country (Chevallard, 2003; Hansen, 2005). Furthermore, there are numerous lists that show programming trends of major universities as well as recommended works for concert band and/or wind ensemble (Gaines, 1996; Nicholson, 2009; Oliver, 2012; Ostling, 1979; Paul, 2012; Powell, 2009; Stevenson, 2004). Unfortunately, I was unable to locate sources that addressed the opinions of current band directors regarding the relevance of the concert march to current wind band literature and curriculum. In this study, I began by reviewing the literature of the history of the concert band to demonstrate the evolution of the American wind band and its literature throughout the past 200 years. Norton (1998) discusses the history of the concert march in nineteenth century America in her dissertation which provided beneficial historical insight regarding my study. There are several lists of recommended literature for wind band (these lists exclude the concert march) that will be discussed later in the literature review. Finally, several studies that suggest changing programming trends regarding the concert march will be discussed in greater detail.

2.1 The Evolution of the Concert March in America

Literature reviewed about the evolution of the concert march in America was restricted to three types of marches: grand march, quick step, and concert march. Composers such as Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart wrote marches as part of much larger works. Many American composers (led by John Phillip Sousa) would focus much effort on march compositions and eventually elevate the concert march to the most popular music during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The grand march was music meant for ceremonial processions and represented the oldest and most fully developed march style in the early 1800s. Although most features of the grand march would not transfer to other march styles, the function of the grand march as parade music would remain a relevant part of future march styles. The quick step evolved out of a need to move troops quickly from one location to another whether during battle or drill. Norton (1983) describes the emergence of the quick step from the grand march stating "...in the very early 19th century, musical compositions entitled 'quickstep' referred specifically to music intended to accompany the military movement or march step classified as the 'quick step'" (p. 180). As the concert band grew in popularity across America, the American concert march emerged as music meant to be performed on stage, and the form and structure of the concert march became more complicated and the importance of the melody increased.

2.2 The March King

Many music historians consider John Phillip Sousa to be the greatest bandmaster of all time as well as the foremost contributor to the concert march genre. Sousa rose to fame as leader of the Marine Band from 1880-1892 where he transformed the band into the world's most famous band. He composed many of his most famous marches during this time, and his band performed these marches to thousands of people throughout the country.

Sousa resigned as leader of the Marine Band in 1892 and organized his own professional band. Sousa's foremost goal was to entertain the masses using his band to perform his music. Sousa once said "Entertainment is of more value to the world than technical education in music appreciation" (Goldman, 1962, p. 107). Professional bands became the most popular form of entertainment during the Sousa era (1880-1925) and Sousa's band was the most popular and successful band during the "Golden Age" of American professional bands (Battisti, 2002). Sousa's band would remain the most popular band until the arrival of another great figure in American Band history.

2.3 Bands in the Schools

Since the conclusion of World War I occurred near the end of both the professional band and community band movements, there was an abundance of qualified musicians and directors throughout the country in the early part of the twentieth century. Many former band members and directors saw teaching music in public schools as a viable solution to earning a living. School Band programs grew at an unparalleled rate in the 1920s. Hansen (2005) says "Following World War I, musical instrument manufacturing industries promoted band development in the towns and cities across the United States to replace the military band market" (p. 65). Band development was so astounding that by 1929, there were a reported 15,000-25,000 school bands across the country. These bands were asked to perform at events previously done by professional and community bands. Hansen (2005) also says:

At the same time as the fall of professional bands, school bands in America were on the rise. Communities asked school bands to provide music for civic events such as park concerts, holiday celebrations, political rallies, business openings, and parades—the very roles professional bands were engaged to perform. (p. 65)

As the number of school bands increased, more of these students chose to continue studying music at the university level.

2.4 University Bands

The increase of public school band students also significantly increased the number of band students at the university level. Most university bands in the early 1900s were still playing music made popular by the professional bands and/or orchestral transcriptions (Battisti, 2002). The amount of original band works available to university bands began to positively change in the 1940s when Dr. William D. Revelli, Director of Bands at the University of Michigan and the founder of the College Band Directors National Association, "...urged band leaders in colleges and universities to devise ways and means of motivating our better composers to give us masterpieces of original music" (Whitwell & Ostling, 1977, p. 13). Bernard Fitzgerald also addressed the CBDNA in 1949 by stating:

College and university bands must assume the responsibility for developing the concert band repertory. Since professional bands are almost nonexistent and high school bands lack either resources or musical maturity, leadership is therefore in the hands of the colleges and universities. The burden of proof is upon us, the directors...We cannot afford to perpetuate the concert band in the musical tradition of the town band of several years ago unless we are willing to accept the musical reputation that was associate with it. (Whitwell & Ostling, 1977, p. 13)

This call for new original music for wind band led to an increase in literature by composers such as Morton Gould, H. Owen Reed, Paul Hindemith, Vincent Persichetti, Gordon Jacob, William Schuman, and Darius Milhaud. Nevertheless, many of the best composers of the time did not choose to write for the wind band medium as most university concert bands were still modeled after Albert Austin Harding's University of Illinois Band, which was a large ensemble of up to 100 players that performed mostly orchestral transcriptions, marches, and a few original works (Battisti, 2002). Literature available to university bands would remain this way until the creation of the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1952 by Frederick Fennell.

2.5 Wind Ensemble Movement

The establishment of the Eastman Wind Ensemble in September 1952 in Rochester, NY by Frederick Fennell had such an extreme effect on the concert band (Milburn, 1982) that its literature and curriculum are still influencing the wind band nearly seventy years later. According to Hansen (2005):

Several band historians purport that the founding of the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the repertoire it performed, and the corresponding artistry with which it performed is the most important sequence of events in the advancement of the American wind band in the twentieth century. (p. 96)

Fennell believed that many composers chose not to write music for university concert bands since most of these bands were very large with set instrumentation. He justified the creation of a new ensemble because he “believed there was a genuine need for another wind instrument organization which would combine the appropriate features of the symphony orchestra, military band and concert band with regard to performance, composition and music education” (Battisti, 2002, p. 56). This new type of ensemble had such a profound effect on literature that by 1959, eleven Pulitzer Prize in Music winners had composed at least one piece for wind band, wind orchestra, or wind ensemble.

Fennell created the wind ensemble to increase individual responsibilities of each performer and promote growth in conductors since they would be responsible for wind literature from all periods in music. This new wind ensemble had a very polarizing effect on band directors as many older directors resisted change while many young directors embraced the concept. As more directors embraced the new wind ensemble concept, the concert march was excluded on most recommended lists of repertoires. While Fennell created the wind ensemble to encourage directors to program literature from all periods of music, the trend to focus on new music still persists today as many university directors choose to program marches less frequently (Kish, 2005).

2.6 Changing Band Literature

Prior to the growth of the wind ensemble movement, concert bands performed a large number of marches on their programs. Fjeld (1959) found that Indiana high school bands were still performing a large percentage of marches several years following the start of the wind ensemble movement. The wind ensemble movement of the 1950s focused composers’ efforts to create original music for the wind band medium. It would not take long for programming trends of university bands to change. Holvik (1970) collected five years of concert programs from 78 members of the CBDNA. His study showed that concert works accounted for 67% and concert marches accounted for 18%. When Kish (2003) replicated Holvik’s study forty years later, concert works accounted for 88% of performances while marches accounted for 12%. Performances of concert marches among the participating schools had declined by 6%. This means that concert marches were performed approximately 2118 times during the Holvik (1970) study and 1412 times during the Kish (2003) study which is a decline of 706 individual performances of concert marches. I was unable to locate current sources that demonstrate whether this downward trend in the performance of concert marches at the university level has continued to present day.

The amount of new and original music for wind band increased significantly within a few years. This created a new problem as directors were asking which of these pieces were worthy of study and should be included as core repertoire. Ostling created such a list in 1978 that provided college band directors with the most recommended repertoire. This study was also replicated by Gilbert (1993) and Towner (2011). Furthermore, similar studies were created for high school bands (Gaines, 1996; Rhea, 1999; Thomas, 1998; Young, 1998). Concert marches are mostly excluded from these lists. On the decision to exclude certain genres of music, Young (1998) states:

Marches, fanfares, and compositions for soloist and band were excluded from the repertoire portion of the study since there was a lack of expert opinion on these types of composition throughout the literature. This does not indicate that consideration of the quality of these compositional types should not be carefully considered, but only that sufficient information was not available to judge them at this time.” (p. 13-14)

This makes one wonder if there is a correlation between the exclusion of concert marches from the lists of recommended repertoires for wind band and the downward trend in frequency of performances of concert marches. The music that many composers write today is very different from the marches they wrote for concert bands decades ago. Cicconi’s study (2012) directly reflects this difference as his catalog of band music composed since 1995 included very few marches. Music publishing companies also publish considerably fewer marches than before. I recently spoke with Robert Sheldon, a popular composer and music editor, who claimed that music publishing companies decline most of the marches that they receive for publication for fear that they will not be able to sell them to the public (personal communication, February 9, 2017). The wind ensemble movement still significantly affects the choice of band literature among directors and the type of music composers write and publishers sell.

Sources from this literature review examined: the historical significance of the concert march to the early American wind band, several recommended lists of literature for wind band that exclude the concert march, and changes in programming trends among secondary and collegiate bands. However, I was unable to locate sources that encompass the attitudes and opinions of current band directors regarding the concert march.

This study is needed to help fill current gaps in the literature regarding the importance of the concert march to modern wind band literature and curriculum; furthermore, this study may also help establish whether or not the evolution of the wind band affects current band directors' attitudes and opinions regarding the concert march.

3: Research Method

3.1 Research Design

I chose a qualitative methodology to determine expert opinions of bandmasters regarding the concert march in America. I conducted in-depth open-ended interviews to address six overarching research questions.

3.2 Theoretical Basis

This qualitative research study was based upon data collected and gathered from personal experiences of six expert bandmasters in the concert band field. There were two bodies of literature that informed this study: (a) the interpretivist view that reality is subjective, that there is usually more than one approach to doing something correctly, and the support of a heuristic approach (Lather, 2006); (b) and symbolic interactionism. According to Blummer (1969):

The term symbolic interaction refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings... Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behavior. (p. 78-79)

Symbolic interactionism effectively summarizes how the band director communicates with the members of the ensemble and vice versa. Members of the ensemble are unable to verbally communicate with one another during the repetition of a specific section of the music; therefore, we use symbols (cues) from the director that each member of the ensemble is trained to interpret. Monk (2013) describes the use of symbolic interaction in the band setting as "...individuals [interacting] through ascribing meaning to symbols that can be gestural, verbal, or graphic. This process occurs both ways (i.e., an individual interprets someone else's symbols and an individual proposes symbols to be interpreted by someone else" (p. 77). This is especially effective when performing marches since many of these symbols do not appear on the music and it is important that performers correctly interpret what symbols the band director is conducting.

3.3 Sample

I employed deliberate sampling to recruit highly accomplished bandmasters who are currently serving or have served as director of bands at the secondary or collegiate level, or director of a service band. Criteria for selecting participants included: will have a minimum of a master's degree in instrumental conducting or similar field, and they will be recognized on a national level, either through adjudication or performance at state or national venues or publication in respected music and/or music education journals. Six band directors (two at the high school level, two at the university level, and two service band directors) agreed to participate in the study. The participants include:

- Diane Koutsulis – retired Director of Bands at Green Valley High School in Nevada.
- Dan Wooten – Director of Bands at Niceville High School in Niceville, FL.
- Rick Good - Director of Bands at Auburn University.
- Ken Ozzello - Director of Bands at The University of Alabama.
- Lieutenant Colonel Jason Fettig – Director of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band.
- Captain Ryan Nowlin – Assistant Director of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band.

3.4 Data Collection

I used six one-on-one open-ended interviews to collect qualitative data for this study, and each interview consisted of 22 questions lasting between 25-70 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded to prevent memories from fading. Participants were given the opportunity to complete the interview in person, online using FaceTime, or by telephone. Two interviews were completed face-to-face, one interview was completed by telephone, and the remaining three interviews were completed using FaceTime.

3.5 Data Analysis

The six one-on-one interviews yielded 39 pages of transcribed data. I coded data through an reiterative process of identifying plausible themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Once saturation was achieved and final codes were identified, themes were identified to summarize observed trends between and within participants. Dependability of the data were confirmed using member checking to validate conclusions of data by both the participants and the researcher (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.6 Ethical Assurances

IRB approval was sought prior to any data collection. All participants signed informed consent and audio release forms as well as gave permission to be identified in the study prior to any interviews.

3.7 Delimitations

This study was delimited to six deliberately selected participants, two representing high school band, two representing university band, and two representing service band.

4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore expert bandmasters' opinions and attitudes regarding the role of the concert march in wind band curriculum. Participants responded to 22 open-ended questions (See Appendix A) during the interviews in order to address the overarching research questions from the study. Throughout data analysis, I compared developing themes between participants to establish an expert opinion regarding the relevance of the concert march to current wind band literature and curriculum. Since I was unable to locate sources that provided current opinions of band directors regarding the concert march, it did not seem suitable to use prior frameworks to describe the overarching themes that arose during this study. Therefore, the interpretation of the data revealed the following themes: history/heritage, word of mouth, listening, mentors, programming trends, lack of understanding, slow decline, and advice.

4.1 History/Heritage

While these participants did not agree on how often bands should perform concert marches, these expert bandmasters agreed that the concert march is extremely important to the history and heritage of the concert band. They were very deliberate in how they programmed concert marches for both rehearsal and performance. All participants briefly described the evolution of the wind band and the influence of the concert march on programming. All six of the participants also agreed that the concert march is very important to the history of the concert band. Lt. Col. Fettig said "The concert march and by extension military marches and marches of all kinds are very important...Marches have their history from concert bands and military bands. It's one of the few musical forms that is originally owned by bands" (Personal communication, May 23, 2017). When asked about the importance of the concert march, Capt. Nowlin said "It is our history, our heritage, it's where we have grown from and come from. It was the first avenue in which many composers chose to write or engage in the wind repertoire in a large ensemble sense" (Personal conversation, May 22, 2017). Mrs. Koutsulis agreed "It is very important in that it is a huge point of our heritage. At one point, it was the main repertoire for bands across our country. I think it is very important to the historical context of our ensembles" (Personal communication, May 7, 2017). Finally, Dr. Good said "I consider it to be extremely important. It's our heritage, it's our roots. Obviously, if you know anything about concert band, the march is where it started" (Personal communication, May 5, 2017).

4.2 Word of Mouth

To teach something by word of mouth is a technique that is based on informal dialogue between teacher and student or between students. This has been an accepted method for teaching march style for generations. Several of the directors expressed that they were expected to develop an understanding of detached notes, dynamic contrast, and proper phrasing by word of mouth. Dr. Ozzello said "The challenge is at that time they weren't written down and was word to mouth" (Personal communication, May 25, 2017). Capt. Nowlin had a similar experience stating "Every conductor had a different interpretation and philosophy of the concert march. A lot of times it wasn't addressed and you just played it. You just had to learn its interpretation through playing it" (Personal communication, May 22, 2017). Lt. Col. Fettig discussed the way the Marine Band plays marches:

There is a great heritage of march playing in the Marine Band and playing marches in a very specific way. That extends all the way into how we articulate, the traditional dynamics we employ, and different alterations and orchestrations that we employ here in the Marine Band especially with Sousa marches. Much of that was passed down through the centuries and certainly through the decades of the 20th century. A lot of that tradition and unwritten things that we do to play in the march style aren't necessarily reflected in the music and was passed on from generation to generation and musician to musician. (Personal communication, May 23, 2017)

4.3 Listening

Several participants spoke directly about how the band director needs to listen to lots of quality recordings to help them develop proper interpretation of march style. A Sousa march will not be played the same way as a King march just as a Fillmore march is not the same as a Goldman march. Communication of the composer's intentions is key. Dr. Ozzello said:

Listen to good models. For me I would originally listen to the University of Michigan bands. Twenty-five years ago, there weren't many recordings but the Michigan bands had good recordings. The Eastman Wind Ensemble recordings were available. These were my initial references for recordings. (Personal communication, May 25, 2017)

Mrs. Koutsulis agreed with the importance of listening to recordings:

There are some wonderful recordings of the Marine Band doing marches. There is a whole set from the University of Illinois with Harry Begian doing marches. I look for those marches and I look for something special and see what I can take from those recordings. (Personal communication, May 7, 2017)

Dr. Good talked about the importance of listening for contrast:

Aural skills are huge so by listening to them, listen to how much dynamic contrast they make, separation they make, the accents they make and notes that aren't accented, staccatos and notes that aren't staccato. Look at the score and listen to see what they do and hear how much contrast there really is in a march. (Personal communication, May 5, 2017)

Band Directors that listen to lots of recordings will be the most prepared to interpret the many variations of march style. Lt. Col Fettig explained the importance of developing listening skills:

Listen to a lot of different bands playing marches. There is not really one perfect answer to how to play in the march style. It varies from composer to composer. You don't necessarily play a Sousa march the way you play a Karl King march or a Fillmore march. Dynamics, articulations, phrasing, there are differences in expectations from those composers in the way they wrote those marches. If you listen to a lot of bands playing marches, a lot of recordings, and especially bands that play a lot of marches, a lot can be learned about what sounds the best in any particular march style in any particular composer's marches. (Personal communication, May 23, 2017)

4.4 Mentors

Why is it that some band students develop a love for the genre whereas other students do not? It makes sense that a 1st trumpet player will probably enjoy concert marches more than a horn player, but parts alone cannot be the only deciding factor in who likes or dislikes marches. All of the participants agreed on the importance of their mentors in helping establish their opinion regarding the concert march. Mr. Wooten said:

I was lucky enough to go to LSU when Frank Wicks was there and Southern Miss when Dr. Mullins was there. Dr. Mullins did his doctorate at Illinois when Harding was the band director there. Mr. Wicks did his masters work at Michigan when Revelli was there. I believe the concepts were passed down to them that I got to absorb. I can remember one time with Mr. Wicks when a switch just flipped for me and I understood that's how a march is supposed to sound and that's why a march is supposed to sound that way. (Personal communication, May 30, 2017)

Students whose band director understands how to teach a march are probably going to enjoy playing marches more than students whose band director does not understand how to teach a march. It is difficult for a band director to effectively teach musical concepts when the educator's grasp of that concept is lacking (Jagow, 2005). Capt. Nowlin talked about relationships with his mentors:

The people and experiences that come to mind are conversations with Dr. Fennell, Harry Begian, and Bruce Moss. Dr. Moss was a student of Harry Begian and my mentor. He insisted on incorporating a march on a program sometimes as an encore because of its history and heritage.

Also, my experiences in the Marine Band and working and talking to past directors of march inclusion and march performance practice such as Colonel Foley, Colonel Bourgeois, and Lt. Col Fettig with this march project we are working on. As a horn player who loves marches, I am an anomaly of my own. (Personal communication, May 22, 2017)

In contrast, not being exposed to marches frequently at an early age can also shape opinions regarding the concert march. Mrs. Koutsulis said:

The most important thing is that we didn't do any marches in graduate or undergraduate ensembles. I mentioned earlier that I don't do a whole lot of marches. Part of the reason I don't do many marches is because I don't feel I am that good at them. (Personal communication, May 7, 2017)

Even Lt. Col Fettig does not remember playing a lot of concert marches until he joined the Marine Band:

I played marches in high school and college but I did not play a lot of traditional military marches. I had played a lot of wind ensemble music, a lot of orchestral transcriptions, a lot of classical symphonic music, but not a lot of marches which at that time really did feel like they were in the same category as far as quality of music that we know and think of today as the modern concert band repertoire. I absolutely feel the opposite now with my experiences in the band. (Personal communication, May 23, 2017)

The participants all agreed that their mentors helped shape their current beliefs regarding the concert march.

4.5 Programming Trends

One might surmise that in order to develop an understanding and enjoyment of the concert march, one must be exposed to the genre at an early age. All of the participants that said they played marches in secondary schools also said they still try to program concert marches frequently. When asked how often he rehearsed marches in secondary school, Mr. Wooten replied "Every single performance. I don't remember ever having a performance either as a teacher or a performer where I did not play a march. I program them on every concert" (Personal communication, May 30, 2017). Dr. Good also played a lot of marches in secondary band and said "I remember playing a lot of marches in Allentown. Every parade we played marches but that was probably because of the time I grew up in. We did a lot of marches" (Personal communication, May 5, 2017). Mrs. Koutsulis said she "hardly ever" played concert marches in band. I followed up that question by asking her if her lack of playing marches growing up shaped her decision not to perform marches frequently with her ensembles and she said "yes, absolutely" (Personal communication, May 7, 2017). Even Lt. Col Fettig said he did not play a lot of marches in high school or college:

We played the major marches such as Stars and Stripes forever, but it was not a core part of the repertoire that I learned in high school and college. We did play a lot of the standard band pieces. But only once in a while did we play a march on a program and have a chance to dig into it. Even then I don't remember spending a great deal of time rehearsing marches and having enough time to get into the details. (Personal communication, May 23, 2017)

4.6 Lack of Understanding

The concept of march style is foreign to many students in the modern wind band. Many directors will pull out a concert march and instruct the students to play in march style assuming the students understand and know what this means. I asked the participants to describe any challenges or issues they have encountered when working with their groups or another group. Several of them described how students often lack an understanding of the march style concept. Capt. Nowlin said:

Other problems I hear is (sic) issues with the style, the treatment of off-beats, treatment of downbeats, baseline vs. off-beats, phrasing and style, slurred notes vs. tongued notes, 6/8 vs. 2/4. All of those specific details take a lot of time and patience to address. It feels like the concept of march style is evading a lot of younger players and maybe it's because its exclusion and lack of rehearsal time in their secondary study. I have found that march style is more foreign and assumed. (Personal communication, May 22, 2017)

As the wind ensemble concept took root throughout this country, many directors chose to focus less time on the concert march (Holvik, 1970; Kish, 2005). When directors spend less time on rehearsing and/or performing the concert march, students often lack a true understanding of the concept of march style. Dr. Good said there is a lack of understanding when he works with other groups because "they don't know where the strong and weak beats are.

That's musical phrasing. We know there are built in strong and weak beats but we refuse to do this when we teach bands"

(Personal communication, May 5, 2017). Since many of the current band directors do not have a firm understanding of march style, band directors may pass along this lack of knowledge and attitudes regarding the concert march to their students (Rhea, 2011).

4.7 Slow Decline

There is a perception among educators that the march has been slowly dying, and several of the participants from this study agreed with this belief. Recently, several states have been trending away from requiring bands to perform a concert march at statewide concert band adjudication. Furthermore, the publishing of new concert marches also appears to be dwindling. Robert Sheldon, a popular composer and music editor, recently claimed that music publishing companies receive many marches for publication but the vast majority of these new marches are declined. The publishing companies are fearful that the new marches will not sell since there are already so many standard marches available to band directors (Personal communication, February 9, 2017). When asked about the future of the concert march in wind band literature and curriculum, Dr. Good said "It's been dying. Programming of the march has been dying. If it is dying and a person is in the band and the band doesn't play marches, how do you expect the students to learn marches" (Personal communication, May 5, 2017). Lt. Col. Fettig suggested "there is a danger of it continuing to fall off that list of core repertoire. It is going to take some effort to keep a place for it in our modern-day repertoire."

4.8 Advice

Most of the participants were hopeful that the concert march has earned its place as a permanent fixture in wind band literature as long as current band directors still make a conscious effort to program concert marches. The decision by several states to no longer require marches at concert band festival alludes to a declining interest in the concert march as does studies showing a decline in the performance of concert marches (Holvik, 1970; Kish, 2005). The participants were asked what advice they would give to young band directors regarding the concert march? Five of the six participants would encourage young band directors to frequently rehearse and perform concert marches on their programs. For instance, Mr. Wooten said "Don't make the mistake of overlooking the value of teaching march style, of teaching the heritage of the march and having the opportunity to teach students about the history of bands which I think marches are perfect for" (Personal communication, May 30, 2017). Capt. Nowlin would tell young band directors:

Don't be afraid to play it. Don't be afraid of doing something right or wrong. The rules aren't as strict as you think. Listen to a wide variety of recordings to include orchestral recordings of those concert marches to include a wide variety of interpretations. Make sure to give it the time it deserves. Give it the time that is necessary to have a reputable performance of it. Don't feel obligated to always play a march. Only do it if it fits your particular situation. Allow your students to be part of the decision making in some of the march choices. (Personal communication, May 22, 2017)

Lt. Col Fettig did not perform concert marches with great frequency in high school or university band, but that did not prevent him from developing admiration for the genre once he joined the Marine Band. Here is what he would tell young band directors:

Be curious about it. Curious about it in the way you are curious about a piece that comes from your favorite composer. Curious about it in the way you are curious about orchestral transcriptions. If you don't have significant experience playing or conducting marches, then it does take an effort to find out what is it that is so great about Sousa's marches, what is it that is so great about Fillmore's marches. You have to seek out those recordings and videos and go and listen to see if there is anything there that might interest you and peak your curiosity. (Personal communication, May 23, 2017)

5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

5.1 Implications for Practice

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study was to explore six expert bandmasters' opinions and attitudes regarding the role of the concert march in wind band curriculum. The frequency of performances of concert marches has been slowly declining over recent decades (Kish, 2005).

There is also a trend among several states to no longer require bands to perform a march at statewide concert band adjudication. This might suggest that the importance of the genre to band directors may also be declining. This is alarming since all participants from this study agree on the importance of the concert march to the history and heritage of the concert band in American music education.

Although not conclusive, this study holds implications for both current secondary and university band directors and for music teacher education. While the expert bandmasters from this study all agreed on the importance of the concert march to the history and heritage of the concert band, findings from this study suggest that the programming of concert marches is declining and the attitudes and opinions regarding the concert march have changed. Many secondary and university wind bands perform music from suggested wind ensemble lists of recommended repertoires that rarely include concert marches. Results from this study suggest that band students still need to be exposed to concert march literature so as not to forget the importance of the genre to the wind band medium. Several questions remain that cannot be answered due to the breadth of this study: Do other expert bandmasters share similar opinions regarding the importance of the concert march? Have the programming trends of concert marches continued to decline since the most recent surveys? What are the opinions of current secondary and university students regarding the importance of the concert march? Is there a correlation between the exclusion of concert marches from the lists of recommended repertoires for wind band and the downward trend in frequency of performances of concert marches? Additional research is needed to develop a clearer understanding of the relevance of the concert march to current wind band repertoire and curriculum.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation for future research #1. A future qualitative research study involving different similarly qualified participants from different regions of the country may provide further evidence of the relevance of the concert march to current wind band literature and curriculum.

Recommendation for future research #2. A quantitative study to determine the programming trends of major music programs throughout the country at the high school and/or university level could provide the frequency that marches are programmed throughout the year. This might suggest that modifications to state or national band standards and curriculum are needed.

5.3 Conclusions

William Revelli, former director of bands at The University of Michigan, once said “Nothing in the band world is more inspiring, thrilling, and musically satisfying to band audiences than a stirring march, when performed by a superb band under the direction of vital, inspired leadership” (Jorgenson, Milford, & Snyder, 2006, p. 2). The concert march has always resonated with performers, directors, and audiences alike making it an important genre in wind band literature. Dr. Ozzello programs marches because “It checks so many boxes. People love to hear them. They are fun to play other than for French horns, and you are teaching a style that is so important to the wind band.” (Personal communication, May 25, 2017). Dr. Good also said:

Audience members love marches. People like to listen to a tune and whistle a tune. They like to stomp their foot or clap and they can relate. It might take them back to a place or time in the past because it is melodious. (Personal communication, May 5, 2017)

The concert march has been an important part of the band program since the days of Sousa and earlier (Goldman, 1962). The present study investigated the opinions of expert high school, university, and service band directors regarding the concert march in America. Ultimately, the participants from this study overwhelmingly agreed that all band students deserve the opportunity to experience great marches through performance in wind band, and each band director is responsible for upholding the history and heritage of the concert band by programming concert marches.

The importance of the band director as student mentor was established as march style is usually handed down informally by word of mouth from band director to student. There was a relationship established between how frequently the participants performed concert marches in secondary and college band programs and how frequently they program concert marches as directors. Also, the participants agreed on a general lack of understanding regarding the march style concept.

All participants agreed there has been a gradual decline in the programming of concert marches; furthermore, they perceived a change in the opinions and attitudes regarding the concert march among current band directors. Nevertheless, the expert bandmasters still advised young band directors to program concert marches frequently with their ensembles as it is never too late to develop an understanding of march style. According to the expert bandmasters, the history and heritage of the concert march make this genre too important to remove from the modern wind band literature and curriculum.

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