MARCHING FORTH: A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON THE
PROFESSIONALIZATION OF MARCHING BAND STUDENTS IN NEW ORLEANS

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Abstract

Marching bands and the professional music scene in New Orleans have historically been male-dominated. Even as more female students are beginning to join marching bands, far fewer women go on to pursue careers in music than men do after participating in high school marching bands. This thesis shows how marching bands in New Orleans encourage visual, sonic, and social performances of uniform, normative masculinity that can discourage the professionalization of female band members after high school. Through observation and interviews with band students and directors at St. Mary’s Academy High School, which is an all-girls school, and Warren Easton Charter High School, which is co-ed, it is apparent that many girls are affected by stereotypes and social constructs that deem marching band and the subsequent careers in music to be masculine activities. This thesis looks at the history of marching bands as military organizations, the culture of bands today, and the patriarchal nature of the New Orleans professional music scene to show how marching bands maintain a gender hierarchy that privileges masculinity and can discourage professionalization in music for girls.
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possible. I hope that this thesis will make the hard and important work these bands and
band directors are doing more visible and will encourage more girls to pursue a career in
music one day.
1. INTRODUCTION

In New Orleans, musicians provide the heartbeat of the city. Brass bands and jazz bands play on street corners and have residencies at local music clubs. A person can find live music any night of the week in any part of the city. There are more festivals, most of which are centered around music, than there are days in a year, and music is an important part of the tourism economy that helps run the city. However, when you go to a jazz club or watch a brass band on the street or attend a music festival, it is apparent that there are significantly more men than women playing music. Typically, when you see a woman on stage, she is usually a singer or sometimes a piano player. The top brass bands in the city, including Rebirth Brass Band, the Soul Rebels, Hot 8 Brass Band, and the Dirty Dozen are all-male, and there is only one all-female brass band, the Original Pinettes Brass Band. When people list the paramount musicians in the history of New Orleans music, people will list musicians like Louis Armstrong, Buddy Bolden, Harold Battiste, Allen Toussaint, the Marsalis family, the Neville Brothers, Kermit Ruffins, and Trombone Shorty, evidencing how patriarchal the New Orleans’ music culture is. I beg the question: where are the women? Specifically, where are the professional female instrumentalists?

As an undergrad at Tulane University, I played saxophone in the marching band. One of the unique opportunities I had as a member of the marching band was the chance to play in the Green Wave Brass Band, an affiliated band that had formed a few years before my freshman year. I joined immediately, seeing it as an opportunity to learn more about New Orleans culture and to learn a new style of music. The band was still new, and as most of us were not from New Orleans, we were all trying to figure out what exactly
New Orleans brass band music was and how to play it. After hearing us play a particularly rough performance, a male colleague of mine told me, “Man, y’all just don’t know how to swing. You need to check out the Pinettes, they’re all girls and even they can swing better than y’all.” This comment struck me for two reasons: it made me aware of how male-dominated the New Orleans music scene is, as I soon learned that the Original Pinettes Brass Band is known for being the only all-female brass band in the world, and it made me realize that female musicians are often viewed as inferior to male musicians. My colleague’s comment implied that the Pinettes were good musicians despite that fact that they are all women, suggesting that female musicians are not usually as good as men and that their skill makes them an anomaly among female musicians.

This comment made me realize that almost all the brass and jazz bands in New Orleans that I knew of were all-male. I learned that most brass band members were trained in their high school marching bands, so I began to notice the gender breakdown of New Orleans marching bands. As band after band passed me in Mardi Gras parades, I began to realize how male-dominated the New Orleans high school bands were. Though there were girls in the bands, most of them typically played woodwind instruments, which historically have been gendered feminine, and are put in the back of the marching block where they are overpowered by the loud brass and percussion instruments in front of them. I wondered how the gender segregation I noticed in New Orleans marching bands affected the culture of these bands and if that had anything to do with the paucity of female musicians playing professionally in the city.

Marching bands in New Orleans rule the city; they have a huge presence in Mardi Gras, at high school football games, at festivals, and any occasion that calls for a parade.
Marching bands at one point were all-male, however more and more girls are participating in marching bands now than in the past, though bands are still male-dominated. Brass band scholar Matt Sakakeeny says that all brass band members he has worked with have started out in marching bands. He argues that “training in the fundamentals of music, targeted toward the performance of social music for dance and bodily movement, provides a basis for developing a career as a New Orleans musician.”¹ Sakakeeny argues that marching bands teach students skills that are necessary for a career in music, such as discipline, teamwork, and creative expression.² Yet with increasingly more girls joining marching bands, why are there not more girls playing music professionally after high school or college?

In his Master’s thesis titled “Street Queens: the Original Pinettes and Black Feminism in New Orleans Brass Bands,” Kyle DeCoste concludes with the questions, “Why [is there] such a steep drop-off in female participation in music right around the time of high school graduation when many male horn players are beginning to professionalize?”³ I sought to answer this question by observing and interviewing students and band directors at two very different schools in New Orleans: St. Mary’s Academy, an all-girls school, and Warren Easton Charter High School, a co-ed school. I aimed to find out how gender played a role within each of these bands and how their gender make-up affected students’ experiences and their decision to professionalize in music. I also wanted to find out if and how the gender of the band director affected the

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² Ibid, 29.
³ Kyle DeCoste, "Street Queens: The Original Pinettes and Black Feminism in New Orleans Brass Bands" (Master's thesis, Tulane University, 2015), 110.
experience of students in each marching band, especially since the all-girls band had two male band directors and the co-ed band had a female band director, making for an interesting gender dynamic.

Most of the research on New Orleans marching and brass bands thus far has focused on the social position of musicians. In *Roll With It: Brass Bands in the Streets of New Orleans*, Matt Sakakeeny writes about how brass band members navigate careers as musicians while dealing with violence, poverty, and racism in their professional and everyday lives. Sakakeeny has also written about how marching bands not only train students to play music professionally but also teach students how to overcome the difficulties they face in their daily lives through discipline and teamwork in his article, “Music Lessons as Life Lessons in New Orleans Marching Bands.” Kyle DeCoste’s master’s thesis was the first to address the issue of gender in brass bands, and there has been little research done on girls in modern marching bands. Since there is little evidence showing why so few girls go on to pursue careers after high school marching band, I relied mostly on ethnography to answer Kyle’s question of why so few girls go on to pursue careers after playing in a high school marching band.

**The Bands**

I chose to work with two bands, the Warren Easton Charter High School Marching Band and the St. Mary’s Academy Marching Band. Both bands are all-black and play within the show band style. New Orleans is located in the “black marching band

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belt” between Florida and Texas, and bands within this region use the show band style, based on the style of bands from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This style of marching incorporates a brassy, loud, and bright sound, high-stepping, and a dance-centric style, which often features pelvic thrusts, backbends, one hundred and eighty degree turns, and other dance styles based off African American vernacular dance.  

Warren Easton Charter High School is located on Canal Street in Midcity. It is one of the top charter high schools in the city, with a ninety five percent four-year high school graduation rate. Fifty two percent of students come from low income families. The school is sixty percent female and forty percent male, however this is not reflected in the band, which has significantly more male members than female. The band director, Asia Muhaimin, is an alumna of Warren Easton and became the school’s first female band director in 2009. Warren Easton was originally an all-boys school, and it became coeducational in 1952. According to Ms. Muhaimin, the band became co-ed at the same time the school did. Ms. Muhaimin says that the school administration gives her and the band a lot of support because the band represents the school so well by playing at school and community events. The band has also received donations and support from celebrities such as Sandra Bullock and Anthony Mackie. Many marching band students

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9 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 2016.
10 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 April 2017.
also participate in the concert and jazz bands, led by Ms. Muhaimin, and some students play in a student-run brass band.

St. Mary’s Academy is an all-female, all-black private Catholic school in New Orleans East. It is one of three Catholic schools that caters to the New Orleans black middle and upper class.\textsuperscript{11} It is an all-girls school committed to fostering Christian values, and it teaches etiquette to all students in preparation to present them to society, regardless of their race or class.\textsuperscript{12} The school is funded mostly by students’ tuition, which ranges from $5,600-$7,099 depending on the grade.\textsuperscript{13} The band is all-female, although the band directors are male. Band director Ray Johnson has been working at St. Mary’s since 2010, and assistant band director Kurt Brunus has been working at the school off and on since 1987. The school was founded in 1867, and although I was not able to find an exact date of when the band was founded, Mr. Johnson thinks it was sometime in the late 1800s or early 1900s. The school and the band have always been all-female. St. Mary’s Academy is a K-12 school, and girls can join the band starting in fourth grade, so there is a wide range of skill levels within the band. Many girls in the marching band also participate in the concert and jazz bands, and Mr. Brunus runs a brass band at the school in which some of the girls in the marching band play.

When I was deciding which bands to work with, St. Mary’s Academy stood out as an obvious choice. I wanted to study one all-female school and one co-ed school, not to compare the two but to study a wider range of female experience in marching bands.

\textsuperscript{12} St. Mary’s Academy, “Social Graces,” accessed December 5, 2016, https://smaneworleans.com/campus/high/social-graces/
\textsuperscript{13} St. Mary’s Academy, “Tuition and Fees,” accessed December 5, 2016, https://smaneworleans.com/tuition-fees/
Since the Original Pinettes Brass Band formed while they were in the band at St. Mary’s, I wanted to study the band’s culture to see which aspects of the band would make female students want to pursue a career in music and which elements would discourage them from professionalizing. I chose to work with Warren Easton because I wanted to see how having a female band director affected the culture of the band. I was also able to interview Ms. Muhaimin about her experiences pursuing a career in music, which was helpful for my study.

**Methodology**

After reaching out to both band directors, Ms. Muhaimin and Mr. Johnson eventually agreed to meet with me in person. I went to each of the schools to meet the band directors and explain my project more thoroughly. They both agreed to let me observe rehearsals once a week and conduct interviews when time allowed. I usually conducted interviews outside the band room or in a nearby classroom or office during or after rehearsals. Most interviews were one on one, but I did have some group interviews. I wish I could have interviewed every student in the band multiple times, but because I had to interview students during rehearsals which was disruptive and after rehearsals when parents were trying to pick up their kids, I could only do interviews when the band directors allowed it or when parents allowed their kids to stay late. When I observed rehearsals, I would usually sit somewhere on the side of the band room so I could observe without my presence being a distraction or variable in the data. I could tell that the students and directors were hyperaware of my presence, however. Ms. Muhaimin would tell students to be on their best behavior because I was there and would tell me, “You better not write that down!” if she did something she thought was embarrassing. Despite
my efforts to observe the band without being noticed, my presence clearly effected students’ and the band directors’ performance within the band, and perhaps the rehearsals that I observed varied slightly from the bands’ rehearsals that I did not attend.

I wanted my time with the bands to be a two-way street so while they were helping me by allowing me to observe them and do interviews, I offered to help by working with the saxophone players one-on-one or in sectional rehearsals. I ended up teaching clarinet players and even one flute player as well, which was quite a challenge considering I do not play either instrument. My time working with these students helped me get to know them and learn about their experiences in the band. It was during these informal teaching sessions that I learned the most about the female experience in marching bands because they eventually became comfortable with me and would share their honest feelings and gossip about school, their lives, and the band. I got more of an accurate representation of these girls when I was helping them learn their music than when they had a microphone in front of them, making them feel like they had to act a certain way for my research. I wish I had had the opportunity to work with other sections and get to know them in this way, but because I only play saxophone, most of my time was spent working with the woodwind sections.

In addition to observing rehearsals and interviewing band directors and students, I also went to several of the bands’ performances throughout the year. I watched as an audience member for a few indoor concerts and at a battle of the bands. I also had the opportunity to march with both bands in Mardi Gras as a chaperone. Bands usually have about twenty band parents who chaperone the band by providing water for the kids and making sure people do not mess with the band members or cross the band while they are
marching. By marching with the bands, I got to experience marching in Mardi Gras first hand and was able to observe the crowd’s reactions to the bands as they passed. I have marched in Mardi Gras before with Tulane’s band, but marching with these high school bands was an entirely different experience that gave me a better understanding of New Orleans band culture.

I decided to identify my subjects by name because their accomplishments and experiences as musicians and teachers deserve to be recognized. Those that I interviewed were all very excited to be written about, and when I asked if they would prefer that I would write about them anonymously, they all said they wanted me to refer to them by name and to make sure I spelled their name right. I received IRB approval to use the real names of my subjects.

As a white, female graduate student from Los Angeles in my mid-twenties, it was very clear that I was an outsider in these predominantly black New Orleans high schools. As I was sitting on the bus on the way to a Mardi Gras parade with the other St. Mary’s band chaperones, I could hear some of the moms whispering to each other, asking who I was because I clearly looked very out of place. Eventually I introduced myself to most of them and explained my project, and they all were enthusiastic and welcoming. Throughout this process, I have been very aware of my subject position as an outsider and how this affects my research and understanding of the bands’ culture. As a former marching band member, I came in with expectations and preconceived notions about gender and marching bands, and while I tried to see the bands objectively, my own experiences shaped my knowledge and perceptions throughout my research process. Although I could relate to the female students as a female musician myself, I could not
speak directly to their experiences in terms of race, class, and culture. I did my best to listen, observe, and understand in order to represent these bands as accurately as possible. At times, I have inserted myself and my experiences into this thesis to reflect on my observations and help the reader understand how my experiences have shaped my research.

I recognize my position of power as a white female writing about black girls and women, and I hope to use my platform to share the stories and experiences of those that I am writing about through the use of direct quotes. Audre Lorde writes, “It is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others- for their use and to our detriment.”\(^\text{14}\) I intend for this thesis to make visible the experiences of black girls and women, which are often ignored by society, not to define them but to let them speak about their own experiences and share their stories. Patricia Hill Collins advocates for the use of a dialogic approach in the production of Black Feminist Thought, which encourages the “call and response” participation of everyone in the group.\(^\text{15}\) Some of the most productive interviews I had were conducted in groups because the interviews evolved into conversations that allowed girls to expand on and debate each other’s responses in a call and response manner. This effectively obscured the subject-object relationship between interviewer and interviewee, as described by bell hooks, allowing the interviewees to engage in dialogue about their personal experiences with myself and each other.\(^\text{16}\) Patricia Hill Collins also proposes that by groups seeing their knowledge and experiences as partial, rather than universal, it becomes possible for other people to


understand and recognize other people’s standpoints and experiences as contributing to an unfinished knowledge.\textsuperscript{17} She argues, “Partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard; individuals and groups forwarding knowledge claims without owning their position are deemed less credible than those who do.”\textsuperscript{18} Each person I interviewed contributed their own partial knowledge to my research, and my interpretations and perspective reflects my own partial knowledge of the subject. This thesis does not represent a complete knowledge of gender in New Orleans marching bands but rather reflects my own partial perspective on the subject. I hope that this thesis will encourage others to engage with the subject and bring forth new ideas and perspectives.

**Organization**

The aim of this thesis is to explore the reasons that fewer young girls in marching bands pursue careers in music after high school by looking at the activity’s history as a male-dominated organization, the gender culture of the bands, and the challenges women face in careers as professional musicians after high school. My goal was to answer Kyle DeCoste’s question, “Why [is there] such a steep drop-off in female participation in music right around the time of high school graduation when many male horn players are beginning to professionalize?”\textsuperscript{19} I was able to identify some conditions and attitudes that discourage women from professionalizing in music, some of which were presented to me by the people I interviewed and others I proposed based on my observations. These observations reflect the partial perspectives of myself and those that I interviewed, so

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Hill Collins, 236.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 236-237.
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Kyle DeCoste, “Street Queens: The Original Pinettes and Black Feminism in New Orleans Brass Bands” (Master’s thesis, Tulane University, 2015), 110.
\end{itemize}
more work should be done to identify other reasons for the lack of women choosing to professionalize in music. There are also other possibilities of gender identities that I did not focus on due to the limited scope of my ethnographic study. For example, outside of band many members perform their gender identity differently than the uniform masculinity that they perform within the band. There are also other roles within the band culture that present performances of gender different from the normative masculinity of the marching band that I describe; for example, the auxiliary teams, which fulfill normative feminine gender roles, often have queer men or transgender women as supervisors. Although I was not able to focus on these alternative roles and gender performances, they are important to note and should be researched in future studies.

The first chapter shows the continuities between marching bands’ origins as military bands and New Orleans marching bands today. The first half of the chapter outlines the activity’s history, with sections on black participation in military bands, female participation in marching and brass bands, the history of school bands, and black participation in school bands. The second half of the chapter draws on the continuities between marching bands in schools today and military bands of the past to show how the male-dominant and hypermasculine elements of military marching bands affect the culture of contemporary New Orleans marching bands. I argue that certain elements present in both past and present marching bands, as well as the history of female exclusion from ensembles and written documentation of bands, contribute to the androcentric culture of bands which is not welcoming to female participants.

The second chapter focuses on the culture of New Orleans marching bands today and highlights gendered elements that contribute to the isolation of girls and women. I
argue that because the dominant instruments in marching bands are gendered masculine, girls are often encouraged to play feminine-gendered woodwind instruments that are often treated as subordinate within the New Orleans band culture, and therefore female students are often devalued and overshadowed. I also argue that the show band style and the preference in the New Orleans band culture for a loud sound and exaggerated movements encourages hypermasculine performance within the band. The use of military-style uniforms also present a uniform masculine aesthetic that hides feminine and non-normative masculine identities. I propose that these masculine-gendered elements prevent girls from feeling like they are part of the collective and discourage them from pursuing careers in music after high school.

The third chapter goes beyond high school to look at the conditions women face in the professional music world. The male-dominated brass band culture “others” female participants, and the gendering of brass band instruments and public spaces as masculine excludes women from participating. There is also a lack of female music teachers and mentors for young girls to look up to, creating a vicious cycle in which few girls go on to play music and teach younger girls. This lack of representation of women in the professional music world contributes to young girls not seeing music as a career option for themselves. Women are often discriminated against by men in the industry, making it hard for them to find management and make a living playing music. Though this chapter’s aim is to propose reasons why the transition out of the classroom and into the professional music world can be so difficult for women, this is still relatively uncharted territory, and there needs to be more research to prove how the professional music world affects girls’ decisions to professionalize.
2. KEEPING TIME: THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARCHING BANDS

Marching bands have a gendered history that for the most part has emphasized male participation over female participation. Associations with the military call forth connections to normative hypermasculinity that persist in the culture of marching bands today. Although marching bands in New Orleans and elsewhere around the country are not affiliated with military organizations, marching bands’ history as military bands dictates the movement of these bands as well as the attitudes and performance style of band members and the teaching style of the instructors. The perception of band as a male activity also remains today, even as more girls and women are joining bands, and those that have participated have not been given the documented recognition of their male counterparts. Today, marching bands retain elements of the military band style and culture, which, although all public-school bands are required to allow girls to participate, contributes to a hypermasculine and heteronormative environment that can be unwelcoming to girls. Due to the historical lack of recognition of women in marching bands and the ways that the masculine military style persists in bands today, many female students do not see marching band as the stepping stone for a career path in music as male students do.

History of Military Bands

According to Robert M. Boozajer Flaes, the first Western marching bands were sixteenth century European military bands, and the tradition of bands accompanying
military units continued until the twentieth century. These bands accompanied armies and helped communicate orders, while also keeping time for marching and maneuvering. William H. McNeill argues that the steady beat of the drum and the close marching of these bands enabled the band and the soldiers to march forth in a sort of trance that encouraged cohesion of the unit. These bands evolved to incorporate local musical styles, creating a hybrid of the European march style and the local music from the area in which the band was stationed. The style of marching that we associate with military bands comes from the German invention of the Gleichschritt, which refers to marching in close formation. This became uniformly used by European style military bands in the 1700s and led to the standardization of military band music as the rigid, percussive march style of music we know today. In the late eighteenth century, Turkish music became a fad, and increasing amounts of Turkish instrumentation were introduced, such as snare drums, cymbals, large bass drums, and triangles. The modern clarinet and transverse flute were developed during the eighteenth century, and the introduction of the keyed bugle allowed musicians to play more complex music. “Families” of horns with piston or rotary valves, which were much easier to play and to keep in tune with each other, soon replaced keyed bugles. By the mid-1800s, military bands and their music became

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20 Robert M. Boonzajer Flaes, Brass Unbound: Secret Children of the Colonial Brass Band (Amsterdam: The Royal Tropical Institute, 2000), 12.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid, 25.
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid, 4.
relatively standardized internationally. They brought bands as they colonized different parts of the world. European armies brought military band music with them, infiltrating Asia, Africa, and America. As military music became widespread in the Western world, the arrangements of music and musicians became standardized and were followed strictly. The rigid form of military music was intended to force assimilation. Native musicians were forced to learn scales, calls, hymns, and orders from the dominant culture, and military bands helped instill the idea that Western music and culture were superior.

Military bands became widespread in America and accompanied military units in the American Revolutionary War and the Civil War. These bands, which typically included natural trumpets and horns, fifes and flutes, oboes, and bassoons, played bright, upbeat music for the armies they accompanied. These bands played at ceremonies, sounded calls, and provided entertainment. In 1792, Congress allowed military bands beyond just the fife and drum corps, to form. Each war brought about new and updated instruments, such as valved horns, which made it possible to play more

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28 Flaes, 29.
29 Flaes, 9.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Flaes, 10.
33 Ibid.
34 Schafer, 2.
36 Ibid.
complex music with ease. Some bands even included fiddles and improvisatory singing.

The American Civil War was the last American war in which bands accompanied military units. After the war, bands from both the north and south were stationed in New Orleans and frequently participated in parades and concerts. Many musicians in New Orleans formed bands for purposes separate from the military, with the help of musicians and music teachers who played in military bands and using the instruments that remained after the war. Many of these were brass bands, which are smaller than marching bands and typically have a more limited instrumentation usually consisting of one or a few trumpets, trombones, saxophones, sousaphones, drums, and sometimes clarinets. Brass bands require players to improvise and express themselves individually, while marching band members are required to read the part that is given to them and play it precisely without variation. Brass bands typically play on the streets or in small clubs as their instrumentation enables portability. These bands helped carry out the legacy of military bands while also bringing live entertainment to civilian events.

i. Black Participation in Military Bands and Marching Bands

According to William Dukes Lewis, black musicians were introduced to military bands when the Virginia legislature’s statute of 1738 passed, requiring “free mulattos, black, and Native Americans to serve in the military.” The statute prohibited them from

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37 Schafer, 4.
38 Southern, 65.
41 Lewis.
bearing arms, so they participated mostly as musicians.\textsuperscript{42} Although most military records did not include the race of the servicemen and few records exist showing black men’s participation in the military, we do know that black men were often musicians because a Virginia Act of 1776 declared that black men “shall be employed as drummers, fifers, or pioneers.”\textsuperscript{43}

It is assumed that many black musicians were trained during the War of 1812 because many all-black brass bands emerged in New Orleans, Philadelphia, New York, and New England after the war ended.\textsuperscript{44} Francis Johnson, who led one of these brass bands in Philadelphia, helped shift the function of these bands to serve civilian purposes, becoming the leader of one of the United States’ first popular black brass bands.\textsuperscript{45} Years later during the Civil War, black bands were formed to accompany the “United States Colored Troops,” and after the war ended they disbanded to form civilian bands.\textsuperscript{46} Soon marching bands were a prominent part of American society, playing at everything from political rallies to carnivals to athletic contests.\textsuperscript{47}

Black men were initially rejected from participating in the Civil War, but in 1862 they were allowed to enlist, and by 1865, 186,000 black men made up the “United States Colored Troops.”\textsuperscript{48} These men participated in regular infantry, heavy and light artillery, and cavalry. Others participated as musicians in military bands.\textsuperscript{49} Many slaves served their masters on the frontlines of the war, and other participated as “contraband of war,”

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Southern, 64.
\textsuperscript{44} Lewis.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Lewis.
\textsuperscript{48} Southern, 206.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
referring to fugitive slaves who fled to contraband camps to serve federal forces. Many of the officers at contraband camps were white northerners who were curious and sympathetic to the black servicemen in their camps, often keeping records of their interactions with these fugitive slaves. These commanding officers recorded descriptions of the music of these black men, helping disseminate the music of African Americans. Some contributed to the 1867 collection Slave Songs of the United States. These white officers also helped collect instruments and hire instructors to develop their bands, and in some cases these bands were performing in parades before troops received uniforms and arms. Many black servicemen drew on their church background, incorporating shouts, chants, hand-clapping, dances, folksongs, hymns, and prayers into their lives at army camps. This served as a way to deal with the stress of fighting a war. For the most part they only sang and chanted in the army camps, but when they used the “route step,” which they used under relaxed conditions, they were allowed to sing, chant, and talk to each other while marching.

Black musicians also played in and formed bands for civilian purposes, often after receiving instrumental training in military bands. Minstrelsy and brass band music became common forms of entertainment in America in the mid- to late-1800s, bringing African American styles of music and dance to other parts of the nation. The popularity of these genres and the availability of military-trained black musicians and cheap military

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50 Ibid.  
51 Ibid, 207.  
52 Ibid.  
53 Ibid, 208.  
54 Ibid, 208-209.  
56 Southern, 211.  
57 Lewis.
wind instruments allowed bands to develop and flourish in African American communities after the Civil War.\textsuperscript{58} This, as well as the New Orleans’ pleasant climate and social life, created a year-round demand for bands.\textsuperscript{59} This demand, as well as the city’s African American leadership, allowed military bands, as well as black brass bands to thrive. P.B.S. Pinchback, a black Reconstruction leader in New Orleans supported the development of African American societies, and thus indirectly supported bands in the city.\textsuperscript{60} African American societies, such as racial improvement societies, athletic societies, religious societies, and social and literary clubs, hired marching bands to perform at their social events, helping contribute to the development of bands in the city who played for entertainment purposes.\textsuperscript{61}

New Orleans’ marching bands, such as the ones seen in high schools today, and brass bands, developed out of the traditions started in the city during the Civil War, allowing for the similarities and relationships between the two groups. At the turn of the century, Creoles of color began forming rural, plantation brass bands.\textsuperscript{62} These bands played music influenced by black church music, as well as work songs, field hollers, and reels.\textsuperscript{63} They often used voice-like effects, such as falsetto, scoops, slides, growls, and whining, as well as offbeat phrasing, polyrhythms, melodies and countermelodies, syncopation, and call-and-response patterns, which are characteristics of African American music.\textsuperscript{64} Many of these characteristics are still heard among historically black

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Lewis.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
marching bands, including New Orleans high school marching bands. Beyond style and repertoire, this military influence set the stage for all-male membership of early school marching bands.65

ii. Female Participation in Marching and Brass Bands

Although marching bands were viewed as predominantly male organizations, there were prominent women’s bands that are often overlooked. During the mid to late nineteenth century, bands were a form of popular music and a source of public entertainment.66 They performed in parades, concerts, and benefits, and often were a status symbol for the towns in which they were based.67 Due to the popularity of these bands, women began forming their own bands since they were usually excluded from participating in male bands.68 During the “Golden Age of Bands,” a period between the Civil War and World War I during which amateur bands gained prominence, women formed amateur, professional, military, circus, immigrant, family, and school bands that performed and developed similarly to the male bands of the time. Bands at the beginning of the twentieth century were initially either all-male or all-female, although bands with both male and female members eventually formed. The National Women’s Party parade in 1913, which was organized to encourage support for women’s voting rights, was the first instance of a women’s band marching in a parade in the nation’s capital.69

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67 Ibid, 33.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid, 35.
During World War II, women played a big role in military bands, as well as swing bands, a history largely neglected by historians and other scholars. This period brought about opportunities for women to play as professional musicians, at least temporarily. After Pearl Harbor, there was a need for more manpower to fight in the war, so women were needed to fill civilian and military jobs, in order to “free a man to fight.”

Franklin Roosevelt signed Public Law 554, which established the WAAC (the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps) as the “only women’s organization authorized to serve with the army.” These women played at graduations and parades, accompanied troops and played bugle calls. Following this, other branches of the military got legislation passed, allowing them to organize female military bands as well, and soon after eight all-female bands were formed to serve the female troops of other military branches. Many of these female musicians received training before joining military bands from school bands and women’s ensembles. These ensembles were often discredited because much of the public did not believe that women could actually play wind instruments, as it was not considered acceptable for women. Many of the women who joined military bands also played in all-female school bands, but some members of military bands mentioned their experience playing in co-ed bands as early as the 1930s.

All-female military bands and the WAAC opened up more opportunities for women to perform and work as professional musicians both during and after the war.

71 Ibid, 4.
72 Ibid.
73 Sullivan, A Century of Women’s Bands,” 37.
75 Ibid.
paving the way for more women to play instruments.\textsuperscript{76} While their efforts did open up some opportunities, it was complicated by the sexism inflicted on women as musicians by members of society who viewed these roles as only temporary until their husbands came back from war. In \textit{Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940s}, Sherrie Tucker writes about the history of all-female swing bands that formed to fulfill the desires for swing at home and abroad during the war. This offered a great opportunity for women to play in bands, travel, and help their country during this period of war, however these jobs were for “swing shift workers,” meaning they were only temporary and were created specifically for wartime production.\textsuperscript{77} Propaganda images of Swing Shift Maisie and Rosie the Riveter showed images of powerful, attractive, patriotic women working to help their country but only until the war ended and husbands and boyfriends returned home.\textsuperscript{78} While bands did provide training and more opportunities for performance, if a female musician decided to continue performing after the war, she risked being called “selfish and antipatriotic” for trying to extend a job that was specifically tied to the war.\textsuperscript{79} This wartime period allowed for temporary performance opportunities but also highlighted the misogyny associated with female performers who were only booked because the men were preoccupied elsewhere. Tucker writes of the wartime period:

\begin{quote}
It was a time when serious professional musicians were seen as temporary war workers simply because they were women, when the previous vaudeville venues for all-girl bands were disappearing, and when, because of gas and rubber shortages, travel was more difficult than it had been before the war. To top it off, women musicians who took to the road under these conditions were consumed as visual entertainment, primarily as representations of the idealized sweethearts that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, 41.
wartime propaganda and entertainment relentlessly encouraged servicemen to miss or imagine.\textsuperscript{80}

This view of female musicians as temporary replacements for men contributes to the idea that women cannot play as well as men, simply because of their gender. The male gaze also objectifies women, implying that their value comes from their appearance, not for their talent, and devalues them as musicians.

Although most of the members of brass bands were men, there is evidence that some female musicians also participated in brass bands, as evidenced by a photo of the Tonic Triad Band from 1928 in Houma Louisiana, which shows four female musicians.\textsuperscript{81} The fact that there is so little evidence of female participation points to the fact that the brass band and jazz scenes have consistently been male-dominated. Today, the Original Pinettes Brass Band, which formed at St. Mary’s Academy in New Orleans, market themselves as “the world’s only all-female brass band.” Marching bands have attracted more female participation in recent years, however the professional brass and jazz band scenes in New Orleans have remained the province of men.

iii. History of School Bands

Bands were introduced to American public schools after 1838 when Lowell Mason, a music instructor and leader in church music, introduced vocal music into the curriculum of Boston grammar schools.\textsuperscript{82} Between 1885 and 1910, American society became increasingly more urban, leading to a higher enrollment in secondary schools.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 49.
This increased the demands for extracurricular activities and school programs, and school bands were created to support the football team, allowing boys who could not sing to participate in music. Most early school bands were led by male conductors and instructors who participated in military bands and brought the military style, including instrumentation, uniforms, performance style, and musical repertoire, to their schools. School bands gained popularity while professional and amateur bands became less and less prominent, as a way to fill the need for entertainment. This growth was mostly attributed to instrument manufacturers marketing to school bands when town bands diminished in popularity after World War I. Early bands were all-male, much like early military bands, however in the 1910s, as the school band movement in the United States developed, many schools including normal schools, women’s colleges, and high schools had women’s bands. As evidenced by the experiences of many of the women in the WAAC military bands, mixed-gender bands began appearing in the early 20th century. This evidence shows that the integration of genders in bands began very soon after school bands gained popularity.

Even when women were allowed to participate in bands, they often did not participate in the same way as men, and conditions were imposed that prevented them from being treated equally. In the early to mid-1900s girls were not allowed to compete against boys in music competitions and fewer girls were recruited than boys because

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83 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
there was a focus on bands appearing masculine and working to “toughen up” their male members.⁸⁹ Music educator and band leader Adam Lesinsky listed the reasons band directors gave for excluding girls as a general unwillingness to help girls, the negative stigma and appearance girls brought to the band, the essentialism that girls were not as good at playing wind instruments as boys, and that girls didn’t want to play the big instruments.⁹⁰ Many directors separated bands by gender to solve this issue, and others introduced new ways for women to participate without harming the appearance of the band or their own physical appearance.⁹¹ Joe Berryman of Fort Stockton, Texas introduced the “Bugle-Lyra,” a set of bells which replaced the bugles normally used in marching bands and did not distort the girls’ lips.⁹²

Baton twirling and flag spinning were other activities introduced so that women could participate without sacrificing their physical beauty on the field.⁹³ These activities gained popularity in the 1930s and 1940s and were considered feminine alternatives to marching band. Baton twirling and flag spinning are purely visual activities so their popularity among girls contributes to the idea that girls and women are meant to be viewed and objectified through the male gaze.⁹⁴ Today, baton twirlers and flag spinners, as well as dance teams and sometimes cheerleaders, still accompany bands and are typically female-dominated.

⁹⁰Ibid.
⁹¹Ibid.
⁹²Macleod, 19.
⁹³Ibid.
Women that did play in the band often did not march with the same exaggerated motions as men and were given different maneuvers to highlight their femininity.\textsuperscript{95} They also were sometimes forced to wear “feminine” uniforms to differentiate them from the men in the band.\textsuperscript{96} This continued until the passing of Title IX in 1972 which not only made it mandatory for public school bands to allow women to participate, it also alleviated some of the discrimination women faced in the band.\textsuperscript{97} Title IX prohibits the discrimination of students on the basis of gender and requires public schools to allow both men and women to participate in the band.\textsuperscript{98} Its passing was a national turning point for bands, forcing bands across the country who previously did not allow women to participate to welcome women into the organization.\textsuperscript{99}

University bands were also established in the early and mid-nineteenth century in response to the success and popularity of professional, amateur, and military bands in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{100} Many of these bands served as social spirit organizations or had church ties.\textsuperscript{101} Most early bands began with a military association. In 1862, The Agricultural College Land-Grant Act gave 30,000 acres of public land to help establish and develop agricultural and mechanical arts colleges and required that colleges that received this land had to provide courses for military training.\textsuperscript{102} Many of these land-grant schools established bands in accordance with this requirement, which brought the

\textsuperscript{95} Gould, 107.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} Sullivan, “A Century of Women’s Bands,” 38.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Gould, 106.
\textsuperscript{101} Walker, 22.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
military style of marching bands to universities.\textsuperscript{103} Most of these university bands were student-led and male-dominated and only allowed women in on a case-by-case basis. Although many early bands began with a military association, twentieth century developments altered the style of these bands, including changes to the performance style, field formations, and the purpose of the bands.\textsuperscript{104} They evolved to emphasize the entertainment aspect of their performance, focusing on visual performance through more elaborate pageantry and field formations rather than rigid, militaristic movements, although they still performed at military events and maintained elements of the military style.\textsuperscript{105} Band eventually became more associated with sports, football in particular, as many bands began performing field shows during halftime at football games.\textsuperscript{106} During World War II, college bands that were predominantly, if not entirely male, often recruited women to fill the spots of men who were at war. Others disbanded or stopped performing altogether.\textsuperscript{107} Some schools formed all-women bands that were used concurrently with the low-membership men’s bands during the war.\textsuperscript{108} Women had shown interest in participating in university marching bands prior to this, so this provided an opening for them to join.\textsuperscript{109} Their involvement, as well as the men who returned to bands from combat after the war, increased the membership of collegiate marching bands, allowing them to grow and thrive.\textsuperscript{110}

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\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{105} Walker, 23. \\
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{107} Gould, 106-107. \\
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 107. \\
\textsuperscript{109} Walker, 25. \\
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
iv. Black Participation in School Bands

Marching bands in New Orleans are influenced by those of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).\textsuperscript{111} Between 1880 and 1899, seventeen historically black colleges developed in response to the Land-Grant Acts that provided 30,000 acres of federal lands to be used for agriculture and mechanical in public schools.\textsuperscript{112} Bands were formed to help attract students to the universities and raise money for the schools. Many historically black bands hired veteran military band members or musicians from minstrel troops as band instructors.\textsuperscript{113} HBCU bands drew upon black military bands, brass bands, minstrel bands, concert bands, as well as elements of predominantly white institutions (PWI’s), which refer to marching bands that march within the corps or military style and have a predominantly white membership, to develop a style that incorporated high-stepping, syncopation, and driving music, setting them apart from the straight musical style of PWI bands.\textsuperscript{114} By the 1960s, black university marching bands grew and established their syncopated, high-stepping, and dance-centric style that distinguished them from white bands around the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{115} This style is known as the show band style, which uses a louder sound and flashier visuals on the field.\textsuperscript{116} The FAMU (Florida A&M University at Tallahassee) band, which formed in 1887, is known for developing the show band style into what it is today. William P.

\textsuperscript{112} Lewis.
\textsuperscript{113} Lewis.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
Foster, the FAMU band director from 1946 to 1998 innovated the marching band style to include elements like pelvic thrusts, backbends, 180 degree turns, and movement based off African American vernacular dance. New Orleans school marching bands developed out of this style, sharing many of the same characteristics, such as syncopated rhythms, high-knee marching style, dance moves, an emphasis on brass, and a high level of volume and intensity.

The show band style of HBCUs and New Orleans schools carry an association with masculinity because their loud, brash sound and physical, enthusiastic style is associated with hegemonic masculinity in our society. Although show bands at HBCUs are now required to allow both men and women to march, the activity still carries masculine associations and has conditions that do not welcome female participation. For example, when these bands play in the stands at football games, all the brass and percussion players stand up while the woodwind players, which are usually mostly female, sit down, giving them less of a presence both sonically and visually. The overshadowing of female students who play feminine-gendered woodwind instruments causes some to feel excluded from the culture of the band. Carlos R. Abril argues that band is a subculture within a school that is centered around the social bond of its members and the importance of the collective. Abril cites William H. McNeill to explain how moving and playing together, like in a marching band, helps students form a group identity and focus on the larger collective. McNeill argues that “human beings

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117 Malone, 62.
119 Ibid, 4.
desperately need to belong to communities that give guidance and meaning to their lives; and moving rhythmically while giving voice together is the surest, most speedy, and efficacious way of creating and sustaining such communities that our species has ever hit upon.” When female musicians are drowned out, told to sit down while others stand, and are put in the back of the parade block, they may feel as if they are unable to contribute to the collective and feel excluded from the band, which can discourage them from continuing to play.

**Continuities Between Military Bands and Today’s Marching Bands**

The male-dominance present in military bands set up a gender hierarchy that privileged masculinity and male participation and has persisted throughout history in school bands, college bands, HBCU bands, and even New Orleans marching bands today. This historical gendering of marching bands as masculine organizations contributes to contemporary New Orleans marching bands functioning as what Joan Acker terms *inequality regimes*. *Inequality regimes* are “loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations.” These inequalities are tied to inequalities of society in general and can often change over time. The nature of these inequalities varies from organization to organization, and some structures of inequality are more likely to change than others. It is very difficult for inequality regimes to change, however, because those with the most power tend to benefit from the systems in place, contributing to the

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120 McNeill, 152.
121 Acker, 443.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid, 459.
maintenance of these inequalities.\textsuperscript{124} Marching bands today are inequality regimes in terms of gender because the culture of marching bands favors masculine performance and male participation.

Since their inception as military bands, marching bands have historically excluded or constrained women. These bands were, and continue to be, examples of inequality regimes in which male participants hold higher power than female participants. The show band style encourages performances of masculinity, and males typically play the dominant instruments and hold leadership roles. Female participants on the other hand are pressured to play woodwind instruments which are often overpowered and viewed as subordinate within the context of the marching band. Although Title IX prohibits discrimination based on gender in bands, gender inequality still exists within the culture of these marching bands.

The history of marching bands, stemming from the military, carries associations to hypermasculinity and heteronormativity that linger in the culture of bands today and reinforce the inequality regime that prioritizes masculine performance and male participation. The military has always been almost all-male; only one percent of fighters in history have not been male.\textsuperscript{125} In War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa, Joshua S. Goldstein finds that this is consistent across cultures and finds that combat in war has always been associated with masculinity.\textsuperscript{126} He put forth three feminist frameworks to hypothesize about why this is the case: liberal feminism,

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 455.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, 11-35.
difference feminism, and postmodern feminism.\textsuperscript{127} Liberal feminism argues that women and men have equal abilities and that the all-male history of the military reflects how women are oppressed by men.\textsuperscript{128} Liberal feminists believe that women have been excluded from the military because they have been discriminated against because of their gender and that they should be able to participate equally in war and the military.\textsuperscript{129} Difference feminism is the idea that women and men have principally different experiences and that misogynistic cultures devalue, rather than celebrate, femininity.\textsuperscript{130} Difference feminists argue that women’s biological or cultural predisposition to nurture and take care of their families and those around them would make them better at making decisions and resolving conflicts in the military, rather than fighting alongside men.\textsuperscript{131} This framework assumes that men are violent and independent, while women are peaceful and dependent on others, explaining the gendered roles within the military.\textsuperscript{132} Finally, postmodern feminism questions the construction of gender that serves as a basis for both liberal and difference feminism and argues that gender is much more fluid and personal.\textsuperscript{133} Postmodern feminists argue against the binary between men and women set up by society because they believe gender is more complex and fluid to be defined by a dichotomy.\textsuperscript{134} In regards to war, postmodern feminists argue that gender roles in the military are based on a strict male/female binary, however they believe that masculinity

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 39.  
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid, 40.  
\textsuperscript{130} Goldstein, 41.  
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, 42.  
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 48.  
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, 50.
and femininity within the military is not uniform and that some of the roles women and men play within the military are contradictory to traditional gender roles.\footnote{\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 50.}

These approaches offer varying explanations of gender roles in war and often overlap with, as well as contradict each other. Whether these gender roles are put into place due to biological, cultural, or experiential factors, it is clear from the evidence that Goldstein presents that dichotomous gender roles exist within the military, with few exceptions, cross-culturally. The fact that combat within the military has been and continues to be dominated by male soldiers reflects our culture’s idea that men are aggressive and violent by nature while women are peaceful and better at fostering social relationships. Many still tie this to biology, however many gender scholars have disputed this, arguing that gender difference is a social construct.\footnote{\textsuperscript{136} See Judith Butler, \textit{Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity}.} While society’s construction of gender roles helps dictate the roles men and women play within the military, I believe that the military also reinforces these gender roles, causing them to be further accepted by society. The military itself is an inequality regime that favors male soldiers over female. Due to the close relationship between marching bands and the military historically, I believe that the masculinist structure of the military also causes marching bands to maintain a gender hierarchy that favors males.

Although military bands and marching bands today play a supportive role, which would traditionally be gendered feminine, the rigid, disciplined, and intense nature of military bands, as well as the fact that bands were traditionally all-male, contributes to these bands existing within the sphere of hegemonic masculinity. I believe that the hypermasculinity associated with the violence, physicality, and discipline of the military
transferred into the bands that accompanied the military. Although bands did not fight when they accompanied military units, they were amidst and often directly associated with military combat, keeping time and carrying out commands. It seems that even though bands were not engaging in the traditionally male-gendered activity of fighting, their association with it required members to be male because they were assumed to understand and inflict violence, and the military did not want to harm or scar “peaceful” women. This masculine association has prevailed and continues to be prominent in marching bands today. Certain continuities exist between military bands and the marching bands in New Orleans today, causing New Orleans marching bands to carry hypermasculine associations and exhibit the characteristics of an inequality regime. These continuities include uniformity, style of discipline, their ability to rally people together, and their combative style of performance.

i. Uniformity

Although the styles of marching band have changed, bands still march in block formations, have military-style uniforms, and utilize uniform movement. Marching bands are considered “paramilitary organizations,” meaning that although they are not attached to the armed forces, they employ similar organization, training, and performance styles. Bands march in ranks and files with uniform step sizes, with everyone stepping on the same foot at the same time. They follow the commands of one or of a few leaders and often address their leaders as “sir” or “ma’am.” The snare drum keeps time for the band to march in unison. Even the uniforms reflect this military history by keeping all members looking identical. Asia Muhaimin, the band director at Warren Easton, describes the uniformity within a marching band:
[In a marching band] everyone must look the same. I mean it’s the obvious reasons of the military. You have to do the ceremonial stuff, everyone has to have their uniform, everyone’s uniform must look the same, everyone must march the same, everyone has to have a clean face, their hair must be put underneath the hat. It’s just those things that if you were in the military you would get in trouble or be reprimanded for not having those things properly.  

This military aesthetic does not allow for individual expressions of gender and assumes a uniform masculinity through the use of masculine-appearing band uniforms and rigid, collective movement, causing people who do not embody traditional masculinity and do not wish to be perceived as masculine to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome. Due to the limited nature of my ethnographic study, I only focus on the uniform, normative masculinity performed by marching bands, however it is important to note that there is not one singular form of masculinity or masculine performance. Outside of band, various forms of masculinity exist, however the uniform nature of bands yields a uniform, normative masculinity that does not allow for variation.

William H. McNeill explains that by participating in collective activities like drill, dance, or battle, individuals experience “boundary loss,” meaning that individuals experience a “blurring of self-awareness and the heightening of fellow-feeling with all who share in the dance.” By marching and playing in unison, members of marching bands experience boundary loss and conform to the male-gendered nature of the collective, leaving individual gender identities behind. This loss of self for the good of the collective causes all members to perform in unison, and the nature of these marching bands causes members to perform a uniform masculinity. Ms. Muhaimin says, “It’s more girls [that are rebelling against the conformity]. The girls want to wear earrings, and girls

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137 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 April 2017.
138 I will elaborate on this idea in Chapter 2.
139 McNeill, 8.
want to wear their hair a certain way. ‘I don’t want to wear the hat it messes up my hair.’ …I see more issues with that with girls; boys they don’t really care.”

Although she says ninety five percent of band members understand that they have to be uniform with everybody else in the band, five percent rebel against it, and that five percent tends to be mostly girls, implying that girls are more often to feel left out of the collective or do not experience boundary loss to the extent others in the band do. Those who do not conform to the collective feel disconnected from the band and are less likely to want to continue playing music. By prioritizing one uniform style of performance that projects one uniform performance of masculinity, marching bands give power to those who conform to and exemplify normative masculinity in the context of the band.

ii. Discipline

Marching bands today still employ a militaristic style of discipline. Many New Orleans band directors employ methods of discipline that are reminiscent of drill sergeants to get their bands in shape. Raymond Baker, who marched in the bands at both McMain High School, a predominantly black public school in New Orleans with a show style band, and Tulane University, a predominantly white private university in New Orleans with a corps style band, explains his experience with discipline in the two bands:

The marching band that I did in high school was not- it was not as intense as what St. Aug’s, St. Augustine’s program does, but I do remember my first week of band camp, actually not going back for a week because I was so sore… Between nine and one we did a lot of- probably more physical training than the football team, and then also did a lot of cardio as well. We ran around the school, and there were also times when everybody wasn’t being disciplined, we had to do- we were forced to do pushups on hot concrete. So when I went outside, when I went to Lafayette and I went to Tulane, I was just scared that all of these things were going to happen again, and it was such a relief when we did get like water breaks and when we weren’t subjected to like all all like the extremeness. I mean you have

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140 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 April 2017.
to be in shape to march Mardi Gras parades but I mean the type of conditioning
done in Tulane’s band versus what we did in high school was night and day, like
if you didn’t come hydrated [in McMain’s band], you were going to have a bad
day. So yeah there’s definitely a military presence; there was a culture of
whatever happens in the band room stays in the band room. My band director
personally didn’t paddle anybody, he saw that if you had to be physically
disciplined that was up to your parents, and you were just going to get kicked out
the band but I do know that that is something that some marching bands do. ①

This high level of discipline that is carried out by most New Orleans high schools relies
on physical discipline, using fitness exercises and sometimes corporal punishment to
discipline band members. This style of discipline is akin to a military boot camp which
also uses physical exercises to keep soldiers in line and cooperating. Raymond mentions
St. Augustine, which is often considered the best high school band in New Orleans, and
attributes their success to their intense discipline:

I have friends who marched for St. Aug, and they definitely- they carry
themselves in a different way; they’re a little bit more disciplined. They’ll still
participate in like the usual New Orleans high school marching band banter,
which is we just talk a lot of trash to each other- that’s part of the culture, but
being an all-boys school, they were definitely- you could tell that there was that
culture of the military-style discipline. You know, I feel like since it was a private
school, the administrators and everybody, parents included, were probably behind
that type of, that type of culture where it was encouraged, like that military level,
because it was the reason I think they were the most disciplined band. ②

St. Augustine is an all-male band, so the fact that the best band in New Orleans is the
most disciplined and militaristic, as well as all-male, sets a standard of hypermasculinity
for other bands in the city to meet. St. Augustine’s band, like other bands in the city, has
employed corporal punishment as a form of discipline, although they famously stopped
using a paddle in 2011, with much pushback from parents who felt that this tool helped

the school achieve the highest level of success. Corporal punishment has often been tied to the production of masculinity. Horace Mann, an influential nineteenth century educator and proponent of corporal punishment exclusively for boys, believed that corporal punishment should be used to make boys tougher. He said that boys, who ultimately will grow up to serve in the military, “need to be trained to a disregard, and even a contempt of bodily pain, so that they may not be unnerved and unmanned” and “will be able to march, with unfaltering step, to the post of duty, though their path is enfiladed by a hundred batteries.” He also said that girls should not receive corporal punishment because they “need kindness and not force.” This reinforces the binary setup by our society that deems girls to be emotional, docile, and peaceful, while boys are more physical, strong, and invulnerable. By an all-male band like St. Augustine using the paddle, they are reinforcing the role of hypermasculinity in their band. If the paddle is used to create strong men who are resistant to pain in order to fulfill their roles in society, corporal punishment not only reinforces the idea that men are strong and tough while women are weak, but it contributes to the subject-object relationship between men and women, described by Simone de Beauvoir, in which men are always the dominant subjects and women are always the subordinate objects. This relationship contributes to the systematic oppression of women.

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144 Parille, 18.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
Many bands in New Orleans, including the two that I worked with, do not use corporal punishment, however they do use other forms of physical punishment such as pushups, jumping jacks, or running laps. There are also certain courtesies and required responses that are called out in unison. When a band director or drum major in New Orleans speaks a command, the band responds in unison with “Yes sir” or “Yes ma’am.” Vocal, whistle, and drum commands incite a mechanic response throughout the band. If a member is out of line, band directors often dole out pushups or make them run laps. The form of discipline carried out by New Orleans band directors is often reminiscent of drill sergeants commanding their military units. Different people respond to different forms of discipline; some people respond to the carrot (the reward for doing well) and others need more of the stick (the punishment for doing something wrong). The carrot and stick do not exist separately from each other; the carrot is necessary for the subject to respond to the stick. Bands in New Orleans often require a certain grade point average in order to be in the band, and since bands are so highly respected within the city, the reward of being in the band is often the carrot that students need to cooperate. However, once in the band students who act up often receive physical punishments such as pushups and running laps as the stick. These physical punishments, or the stick, tend to be associated with masculinity, and this level of militaristic discipline and physical rigor may be discouraging to some female students or other people who do not embody traditional masculinity. Boys respond better to this physical style of discipline because it allows them to show off their strength and perform their masculinity, giving them power within this culture of bands which prioritizes those that perform normative masculinity.
Directors of mixed-gender bands, like Warren Easton, mete out discipline uniformly, regardless of gender. Ms. Muhaimin from Warren Easton explained the importance of treating everyone in the band equally:

I find that girls don’t enjoy the pushups as much. The boys- I’m not gonna say they enjoy it but I do find that the boys don’t mind the pushups… They seem like they like the toughness. They like you to be hard on them sometimes; the girls are a little opposite, like you know, “Don’t be so hard on us, it’s so hard!” you know, but you can’t treat anybody differently. Kids, a lot of them appreciate [being disciplined uniformly]. This is a part of being in the band. I don’t discriminate, everybody’s gonna get the negative, everybody’s gonna get the positive.148

This approach is in line with Goldstein’s definition of liberal feminism, which argues that women are just as capable as men and should be treated equally. While this approach treats all students equally, it does not acknowledge the fact that the forms of physical punishment being used, like laps and pushups, are gendered masculine in our society and elicit different responses from girls and boys. Ms. Muhaimin often doles out push-ups when students are late or do not come prepared to class. One day while I was observing rehearsal, a male student walked in late and she made him do twenty-five push-ups. Later, a female student walked in late, and she looked at her apologetically and said, “Fair is fair,” and made her also do twenty-five push-ups. By saying “fair is fair,” Ms. Muhaimin made it known that all students should receive the same punishment, however she recognized that pushups are gendered masculine and that the female student may not respond to them in the same way. While the male student used the pushups to perform his masculinity and reinforce his position at the top of the gender hierarchy established in the

148 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 April 2017.
culture of New Orleans marching bands, the female student did not gain the same amount of power from the pushups and may have viewed the pushups as a “male” activity.

When the same punishments are used at St. Mary’s Academy, however, they do not have the same implications as they do at Warren Easton because in this context they are not used to perform masculinity. The pushups and laps do not give power to certain members by allowing male members to perform their masculinity because there are no male members and therefore this gender hierarchy does not exist. These physical punishments are used to teach the girls not make the same mistakes repeatedly, but they do not carry the same associations of hypermasculinity because the same gender structures do not exist.\textsuperscript{149} The St. Mary’s Academy band director, Ray Johnson, formerly worked as the assistant band director at St. Augustine High School, which embodies the militaristic aesthetic. Although he does not see the students in St. Mary’s all-female band any differently than the students in St. Augustine’s all-male band, he does speak to them in a different way to get them to respond. He does not use a paddle and uses exercise as discipline less frequently, but instead appeals to their emotions and uses positive encouragement to get the girls to cooperate. For example, during a marching practice, Mr. Johnson picked the girls who marched the best and put them toward the front, regardless of their instrument, as a reward.\textsuperscript{150} Kurt Brunus, St. Mary’s Academy Band assistant director explains his approach to disciplining the band:

Well at St. Aug or any other band, for instance dealing with boys you can be more structured, more stern, more aggressive, and they would be more receptive to it because they’re trying to be hard. You do the same thing with girls, they do the

\textsuperscript{149} Penni Ajala, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 14 March 2017.
\textsuperscript{150} This also reflects a hierarchy of positioning in the band. The front of the band is considered the best part of the parade block and is often reserved for loud brass instruments to make a loud initial impact. Woodwinds are often put near the back of the band and are deemed secondary to brass instruments. More on this in Chapter 2.
opposite, they’ll run away, get scared, and there’s a few that need it and embrace it, and there’s a few that if you have them running, they’ll cry after half a block, while the guys, they want to go out there and run because they’re trying to get in shape. And so it’s a different mindset… Don’t get me wrong, we still have to be stern because they don’t respond to softness, they don’t respect you if you continue that for too long, so you have to let them know you have a playful soft side and you have a stern aggressive side. So you have to know when to- you can’t overdo it, you have to say, now it’s time to get prepared, time to get ready, it’s time to get serious, and at that point they have to know that oh Mr. Brunus is serious today. So but we have to be playful sometimes and kind of lighten the load, even on the seniors just to give them a break.\textsuperscript{151}

Boys are more receptive to this kind of punishment than girls because it gives them masculine capital. Girls do not gain power or feminine capital from these punishments so they often do not respond as well. Although both Warren Easton and St. Mary’s use a uniform system of punishment, because St. Mary’s does not have a gender hierarchy that prioritizes male members, the standard of punishment does not have to be one associated with hypermasculinity, and band directors can adjust to meet the needs of the girls in the band.

\textbf{iii. Rallying People Together}

Another similarity between today’s marching bands and their military past is their role in rallying people together. Just as military bands rallied troops into battle, one of the main purposes of marching bands today is to rally up the school football team and pump up the crowd. Bands today usually play stands tunes, which are short pep songs played from the stands, on downs, when the team scores, and during timeouts. At many schools, the crowd dances or chants along with the band to get pumped up for the game and unite in celebration of their school and team. Bands also present a field show at halftime to entertain the fans while the teams are in the locker rooms. It is significant that one of the

\textsuperscript{151} Kurt Brunus, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.
main roles of marching bands is to support an almost exclusively male organization. Military units that military bands supported were all-male, and today football teams are all-male, with few exceptions. These male-dominated activities, football games and military battles, which have served as the primary spaces for marching band performances at different points in history, locate marching bands within almost exclusively male-gendered environments, reinforcing the idea that marching band is a masculine activity. The culture of football has always been considered incredibly masculine, and the loud, raucous presence of the marching band further magnifies this association. However, at most schools the band plays a supportive role to the football team, playing only when the team is not. This supportive role seems to put the marching band in a more female-gendered position; since women in our society historically have been viewed and treated as subordinate and subsidiary to men, marching band’s classification as a supporting organization to the hypermasculine football team places them in a slightly feminized role. They are still mostly gendered masculine, however, due to their participation in masculine environments, as well as their uniforms and performance aesthetics, especially in comparison to the hyperfeminine cheerleaders and dancers that occupy the sidelines of a game.

New Orleans marching bands, however, take on a slightly different role. In New Orleans, marching bands are king. People often go to football games to hear the bands, and the game comes secondary. The bands often play over the game and will often battle the other school’s band from the bleachers. While at other schools outside of New Orleans (or perhaps outside of the black marching band belt between Texas and Florida), most of the crowd leaves at halftime to use the restroom or get snacks, in New Orleans
they stay in the bleachers to see the band perform. The football team is often considered secondary to the band in New Orleans, placing New Orleans marching bands into a dominant, traditionally masculine role. This dominant role and the social capital that comes with it makes marching bands more appealing, however it also reinforces the gender inequity that exists within the culture of marching bands by favoring masculinity.

For many bands outside of New Orleans, football games are the most important part of their year. Many only play during football season, some switching to concert band in the spring. In New Orleans, however, this is not the case as football is considered secondary to Mardi Gras, which many consider to be the highlight of their experience in marching band. St. Mary’s Academy does not even have a football team, so their whole year is devoted to preparing for Mardi Gras and other parades throughout the year. High school bands perform in several parades throughout the Mardi Gras season, which is one of the biggest reasons students join marching bands in the city. While at football games, the band shares the stage with the football team, Mardi Gras parades showcase the bands as their own independent units. Parading in Mardi Gras is more connected to the military aesthetic of bands marching in ranks and files rather than in moving formations as they do in a halftime field show. Although most bands in the city are no longer associated with military units, their marching forward resembles a unit marching to war. The rigid, stern, exaggerated style with which New Orleans bands march is reminiscent of military units marching toward a battle, and as they carve their way through the city, bands rally the community together, as they would the crowd and team at a football game, or soldiers going to battle. When I marched with St. Mary’s Academy and Warren Easton, friends, family members, alumni, teachers, and community members screamed for the band, for
students they recognized, and for the school at large. A mom told me with pride, “My
daughter here is a young Maryite [student at St. Mary’s Academy]!” For many, marching
bands are the highlight of Mardi Gras, and their participation garners pride in the city, the
school and the band members, uniting and rallying the city together. Mardi Gras and the
celebrity status students get from marching in parades is one of the main reasons why
marching bands are so popular in New Orleans.

iv. Combative Style of Performance

Although most marching bands today are not associated with the military, and do
not engage in actual combat, bands still maintain a combative style when marching in a
parade or participating in “battles” between bands. When marching bands in New
Orleans march in a parade, they march in straight ranks and files, with a confident, and
perhaps even combative, appearance and attitude. Band members are taught to stand tall
with their chests out and their instruments held high, marching with an exaggerated,
militant technique. The resulting appearance and attitude of this rigid uniformity is
reminiscent of military marching bands marching into battle and encourages participants
to perform a uniform style of masculinity. Through this militaristic ideal, students learn
to maintain their ranks regardless of what is happening around them. Bands have
chaperones to make sure that people in the crowds at parades do not cross the band as this
would break up the unit and disrupt the rigidity and uniformity of their performance.
Both the chaperones and the band members fight to make sure that nobody crosses the
band and penetrates their cohesive unit, proving their strength and impermeability, and
giving off a “don’t mess with me” vibe. When I marched as a chaperone for Warren
Easton this Mardi Gras, one of the clarinet players dropped her glasses. When I bent
down to pick them up, I was almost run over by a sousaphone player. I was in the sousaphone player’s way, and he was not going to break apart from his line to avoid me because he had been strictly taught to maintain his line no matter what. By marching with this tenacity and fierce collective attitude, bands show that they are not to be messed with and exhibit their strength and ability to other bands, as well as people in the crowd.

Throughout marching band season, bands often participate in informal battles of the bands in which bands will face off, taking turns playing songs to show off their skills and outplay the other band. These informal battles often occur at the staging areas of Mardi Gras parades while the bands are warming up. While these are usually friendly battles, bands take them very seriously, and some battles get very intense and sometimes even combative. Sometimes there can be verbal banter between band members to provoke and intimidate the other band, and sometimes bands even break out into physical fights or use physical intimidation tactics. There are also formal battles of the bands in which bands compete and sell tickets in an arena. These battles are intended to show off each band’s hard work and encourage friendly competition between bands. Bands face off two at a time, playing songs back and forth for a certain number of rounds. Although no official winner is chosen, crowd reactions indicate who is the favorite.

The St. Mary’s Academy band participated in a battle of the bands at the University of New Orleans Lakefront Arena on Saturday March 18, 2017. St. Mary’s was in the first set of bands to battle, and they battled St. Paul’s School’s marching band, an all-male PWI from Covington, Louisiana. The differences between the two bands, in terms of race, gender, and style made it hard to even make comparisons between the two bands. St. Mary’s, an all-girls, all-black band, plays and marches within the show band
style and focuses mainly on their sound quality, while St. Paul’s, an all-white, all-boys band, marches in the corps style and focuses mostly on show, incorporating comical dancing into their shows. These two bands were the smallest bands, so they went first, and the larger, more widely recognized bands like St. Augustine and Landry-Walker went last. Although no winners were chosen, and the battle was intended to celebrate the bands’ accomplishments and foster friendly competition, by arranging them in order by size and reputation, the organizers essentially ranked the bands, putting the “best” bands at the end of the night. It is hard to judge St. Mary’s sound against a band like St. Augustine’s sound because the bands differ so much in size and sound. By putting St. Mary’s band and St. Augustine’s band at opposite ends of the lineup, these battles draw forth comparisons between the two bands which can be difficult and problematic because the two bands are striving for different things but within the same marching band culture. It is more warranted to draw comparisons between St. Mary’s band and St. Augustine’s band rather than St. Mary’s and St. Paul’s band because the latter bands do not exist within the same marching band realm and culture; St. Mary’s plays and marches in the show band style and St. Paul’s plays and marches within the corps style. St. Augustine strives to be the loudest and most emphatic band, while St. Mary’s focuses more on balance and sound quality, often sacrificing volume for sound control, however both play within the show band style, eliciting comparisons between the two bands.

While preparing for the battle of the bands, St. Mary’s band director Mr. Johnson told the band, “It’s not about how loud you play, it’s about how good you sound.” However, in a city and band culture that prioritizes volume and intensity over balance and intonation, St. Augustine is often seen as the superior band. I also think that going
into these competitions, people tend to have assumptions about the bands based purely on reputation and gender stereotypes, causing them to make unfair comparisons and have certain expectations for each band. Members of St. Mary’s have recognized that these comparisons are unfair and that they must work extra hard to overcome them. Unfortunately, while Mr. Johnson assures the girls at St. Mary’s that it’s not about volume but about how good you sound, not everybody in the crowd may agree with this. In a venue like the UNO Lakefront Arena, you have to be loud for your sound to carry well and be received well by the audience. The reaction that St. Augustine and Landry-Walker got in comparison to the smaller bands was incomparable and really shows that a sound like that of these bands is preferred in the New Orleans band culture. The band culture of New Orleans emphasizes volume and intensity so St. Mary’s often does not get the recognition they deserve, and unfortunately this causes some people in the city to carry negative associations with women in marching bands. I personally think that St. Mary’s has a great sound and deserves more recognition than they get, however because they do not entirely conform to the loud, brash style of New Orleans bands, they are often disregarded. Tuba player Penni Ajala commented on being compared to other bands in the city:

They’ll say St. Aug is bigger than our band, St. Aug is louder than our band, I’m like okay, it’s not about how loud they are, it’s about the quality of our music. And people from our school tell me that. It’s like, okay, I don’t like that. I still get discouraged when people discourage us, it’s horrible, because I don’t like when people, you know, when you’re a part of something and someone downs it. It makes you feel bad because, like, I’m a part of it.152

Penni’s comment also shows that girls at her own school view the band as subordinate to bands like St. Augustine and have internalized both the notion that bands in New Orleans are better if they are big and loud and that girls cannot play music as well as boys.

In battles of the bands, bands take the place of the military and enter battles of their own, as the participants in the battle rather than the accompaniment to the battle. Although these are friendly battles, they can get quite competitive and combative. At the battle of the bands that I attended, Edna Karr’s marching band wore shirts that said “Team Bust Em Up.” Many of the bands’ cymbal lines faced off directly in front of each other and spun their cymbals around their heads to intimidate the other group. Bands often held their instruments over their heads to look bigger and more powerful as an intimidation tactic. When Edna Karr and McDonough 35 faced off, band members were literally holding their band mates back as they tried to charge at the other band. This competitive environment encourages combative masculine performance to “beat” the other bands. While St. Mary’s band danced and chanted to represent their school, some of the larger all-male or co-ed bands’ “come at me” attitudes showed the desire to fight against the other bands, reflecting the combative, militant nature of marching bands in New Orleans which favors masculine performance.

The functions of marching bands have evolved greatly from their origins as bands supporting military units. However, bands have maintained many of the original elements of military bands in terms of uniforms, performance style, discipline, and masculine culture. Although there is nothing that makes marching bands inherently more suitable for boys than for girls, male dominance and hypermasculinity associated with the military contribute to the masculine culture of bands and the systems of gender inequity that exist
within the bands. The persistence of male-dominance in marching bands from their beginnings to the present establishes marching bands as inequality regimes that favor male participants and masculine performance over female participants and feminine performance.
3. “Play More Like a Girl”: Performances of Gender in New Orleans High School Marching Bands

The gender culture within marching bands in New Orleans is very androcentric, and male members often hold dominant positions within the band. Although female participation in marching bands is growing, marching bands still tend to be mostly male and they project a monolithic masculine appearance through the prioritizing of masculine-gendered instruments, physical, loud, and emphatic performance styles, and military-style uniforms. This contributes to the gender hierarchy that prioritizes masculinity and male members over female members. Through my participant observation and interviews with the St. Mary’s Academy and Warren Easton marching bands, it became apparent that girls are affected by stereotypes and social constructs that deem marching band and the subsequent careers in music to be masculine activities. Students, directors, and community members who watch these bands internalize societal gender norms and expectations in regards to instrumentation, sonic and visual performance, and uniforms, affecting the performance of gender within marching bands, perceptions of female band members and of the bands in general, and ultimately the decision to choose a career in music. Girls in marching bands are pressured to conform to society’s expectations of gender, and gendered elements of marching bands tend to perpetuate the gender binary, privilege masculinity, and discourage professionalization for girls.

Play “Something Girly”

My participation in marching bands from middle school through college shaped my perspective and knowledge on the activity, and when I moved to New Orleans, I was
blown away by the high school bands I watched every year in Mardi Gras. These bands had an incredibly loud, intense sound and performed with such an expressive and physical style so different from the bands I had marched in, which were in the more traditional white military and corps style of marching band. Typically, New Orleans marching bands feature a banner with their name on it, followed by a color guard, followed by majorettes, then the drum majors followed by the band, in which instruments are usually ordered trombones, baritones, mellophones, trumpets, woodwinds, sousaphones, and drumline, and usually a dance team and/or flag twirlers in the back. This order is not completely uniform across all bands, but woodwinds (flutes, clarinets, and saxophones) are almost always in the back where they are often drowned out by the brass in front of them and the drums and sousaphones behind them. I was surprised by how much the gender breakdown of bands in New Orleans corresponded with the gender stereotypes assigned to instruments; for example, the brass and percussion sections in New Orleans high school marching bands were almost entirely male and the woodwinds were almost entirely female. The separation of male and female students into gendered sections in New Orleans marching bands and the ensuing disparate treatment of these sections within the bands, as well as the marketability of each gendered instrument in New Orleans’ professional music scene, is part of the reason why so many more men professionalize in music after high school than women.

When you look at the gender breakdown of Warren Easton’s marching band, the brass and percussion sections are almost entirely male. There is only one female trumpet player, one female mellophone player, and one female snare drummer. The clarinet and flute sections however are almost entirely female. The saxophones are about half boys
and half girls. This is typical of the other New Orleans marching bands I have seen. Brass and percussion tend to be gendered male and woodwinds are gendered female. In her essay, "Sounds of Power: An Overview of Musical Instruments and Gender," Veronica Doubleday explains how instruments come to be gendered in society. While it is culturally relative what specific meanings instruments take, it is common for gender associations to be placed on instruments due to relationships between the instrument and spiritual beings in religious beliefs, phallic symbolism of the physical instrument, choices in the materials and designs on the instrument used by the instrument maker, the instrument’s use in rituals and social practices historically, and the instrument’s timbre.\(^{153}\)

Though the historical context of these instruments likely started the process of gendering these instruments, today instruments with a softer timbre and quieter sound, like the flute and clarinet, are deemed feminine, while brass and percussion, which require more physical energy and produce a louder, more intense sound, are deemed masculine. This division of gender creates a power dynamic that favors male instrumentalists because of their presence playing the more dominant, masculine gendered instruments.\(^{154}\) Doubleday also notes that when a person plays an instrument, the instrument can transform the person who is playing it.\(^{155}\) Based on whether the relationship is same-sex (a man playing a masculine-gendered instrument or a woman playing a feminine-gendered instrument) or heterosexual (a man playing a feminine instrument or a woman playing a masculine instrument), the public’s perception of the performer can change. Typically, same-sex relationships between performer and instrument are deemed more acceptable, however in


\(^{154}\) Ibid, 17.

\(^{155}\) Ibid, 4.
some cases, heterosexual relationships between a man and a feminine instrument mirror
the dominance men have in marital relationships in patriarchal societies.\textsuperscript{156} However, if a
woman were to play a masculine instrument, the instrument would maintain a higher
level of power than the women, forcing her into patriarchal submission.\textsuperscript{157} These ideas of
relationships between gendered instruments and the gender of the performer affect
people’s perceptions of the performers, eliciting criticism against girls who play
“masculine” instruments for not being strong or competent enough to play these
instruments because it is believed that they do not have the power, both physically and
socially, to play them. Boys face discrimination for playing “feminine” instruments too,
especially when they play the flute which has the lightest, softest, and therefore most
“feminine” sound, however because the male-gendered instruments are the louder, more
dominant instruments, this gendering of instruments privileges boys by putting them in
positions of power and domination, rather than submission and inaudibility.

Brass and percussion instruments typically require more air or more force and are
often heavy, and therefore require more physical strength, which society tends to attribute
to male-assigned bodies.\textsuperscript{158} Many of the girls I have spoken with who play instruments
that are gendered as masculine have experienced negative reactions from family
members, friends, and audiences who have seen their performance on these instruments
as out of place and believed that because they are girls they will be less successful and
will not have the physical strength required to play these instruments. Rojonique Joseph,
a trumpet player from St. Mary’s Academy, told me,

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 15.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,”
\textit{Gender and Society} 19, no. 6 (2005): 851.
I have a lot of male friends that are in all-boy bands and co-ed bands. So when they hear, “Oh you play an instrument,” like they play, they immediately think, “You can’t play as good as me.” I have a brother that plays the same instrument as me, and I know for a fact that he thinks, “Oh you can’t do what I do.”\(^{159}\)

Penni Ajala, St. Mary’s only tuba player, says that she has had to prove her ability to play a masculine-gendered instrument:

To me it’s a masculine instrument. It’s heavy, it’s loud, it’s basically a bass horn, a bass drum, but you know, a horn, but I feel like they have this interpretation that men should only play big instruments, you know, but I feel like it goes both ways, if I can play it, you can play it.\(^{160}\)

Experiences like this are not unique to Rojonique and Penni. Girls in all bands are subjected to these comments and attitudes. These gendered attitudes about instruments are even depicted in the films and media. There is a scene in the movie *Drumline*, which centers around southern college marching bands, in which one of the male drummers tells the only female on the drumline that she should do “girl” pushups. The female drummer responds by doing her pushups with one hand, to which all the male drummers, shocked and impressed, respond, “Daaaaamn.”\(^{161}\) Although a lot of the criticism of girls playing male-gendered instruments comes from the attachment of physical strength solely to male-assigned bodies, additionally by choosing a “masculine” instrument, girls tend to adopt certain masculine traits that come with the instrument, threatening male dominance. Even girls who do not identify as stereotypically feminine are forced into a box based on their assigned gender and are expected to play a feminine-gendered instrument regardless of how they identify. Sierra St. Martin, a drummer at St. Mary’s Academy, identifies as a tomboy but still receives comments from her parents and

\(^{159}\) Rojonique Joseph, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.


audience members who think she should be playing a “girly” instrument because she is a
girl, even though she does not embody traditional femininity. Girls who play masculine
instruments are expected to take on masculine characteristics to be accepted as competent
instrumentalists, yet even when they do, they are still discriminated against. The
dominant-subordinate relationship between brass/percussion and woodwind instruments
mimics the dominant-subordinate relationship between masculinity and femininity, so
when a girl plays a masculine-gendered instrument, she threatens the balance between
masculinity and femininity, causing people within and outside of the band to criticize
them. Feminist scholar Mimi Schippers defines hegemonic masculinity as “the qualities
defined as manly that establish and legitimize a hierarchical and complementary
relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men
and the subordination of women,” so therefore hegemonic femininity refers to “the
characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimize a hierarchical and
complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee
the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”\textsuperscript{162} Schippers would call
the characteristics acquired by girls playing “male” instruments \textit{pariah femininities},
meaning characteristics that do not conform to female subordination by men. In other
words, by girls playing masculine-gendered instruments that require more physical
strength and intensity, they are contaminating the dominant-subordinate relationship
between hegemonic masculinity and femininity because by playing a masculine-gendered
instrument, they are taking on a dominant role.\textsuperscript{163} This causes criticism of girls playing

\textsuperscript{162} Mimi Schippers, “Recovering the Feminine Other: Femininity, Masculinity, and Gender Hegemony” \textit{Theory & Society} 36, no. 1 (2007): 94.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, 95.
brass and percussion instruments by people who believe it is not their place to play these instruments because this allows them to transcend their subordinate status as females and have a dominant role within the band. When girls try to overcome the system of gender inequity present in bands by playing a masculine-gendered instrument and taking on a dominant role in the band, they are often suppressed by those around them who feel threatened by their enactment of these pariah femininities. It is common for girls to internalize these constructions of gender, which comes through in their choice to play a female-gendered instrument like flute or clarinet. When I asked Warren Easton clarinet player Tyrese Tazande why she thinks so many boys play brass and percussion while girls play clarinet, flute, and saxophone, she said, “The girls would be like a more soft, delicate sound and the boys would do all the work of blowing and doing stuff like that.”

Tyrese later acknowledged that everybody has their own strengths and that there are girls playing “masculine” instruments, however her response shows that society’s expectations of gender have translated into her decision to play clarinet instead of a more “masculine” instrument.

Other female students have been discriminated against for their decision to play a “masculine” instrument. Sierra from St. Mary’s Academy explained to me that her decision to play drums was not always well-received:

At first my parents didn’t want me to be a drummer; they’d rather me be in like dance or majorettes, something girly. I’ve always been a tomboy, and I wanted to prove them wrong. They didn’t think I’d be good at it, but I moved my way up, and it surprised them. I mean I feel as though anybody could play a drum. I’ve always played it, and I make fun of the guy friends that play it, say, “You’re not playing hard enough, you need to play more like a girl.”

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164 Tyrese Tazande, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 15 November 2016.
165 Sierra St. Martin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 16 November 2016.
Sierra’s parents wanting her to do “something girly” substantiates Doubleday’s idea that same-sex relationships between not only instruments but gendered activities in general have an effect on the performer or participant. It seems that her parents were worried not only about her success as a drummer, but of people’s perception of their daughter when they would see her playing drums as well as the affect the instrument would have on their “tomboy” daughter.\textsuperscript{166}

Sierra’s statement about being a tomboy made me wonder if when choosing a masculine-gendered instrument one must also have or adopt masculine characteristics, perhaps only in performance, to be successful on the instrument and to be accepted as a performer on that instrument. Warren Easton band director Asia Muhaimin commented that she was disappointed in the only female in the trumpet section because she did not have the “cockiness” that other trumpet players have. She said, “There’s something about a trumpet player, they have this like air about them and I just feel like, if you’re gonna play trumpet, you have to have that cockiness, that air, that confidence, and I feel like my girls aren’t exhibiting that, and that’s a little bit disappointing.”\textsuperscript{167} The word “cockiness” has associations with the male-assigned body as well as the masculinity and aggression that is associated with being a man, so her use of this word to describe trumpet players is performative of gender hegemony and implies that masculine characteristics are preferred within the trumpet section. Trumpet players tend to have the melody and have the biggest presence in a marching band, so it is important to play with volume and confidence, and while I do believe that this is what Ms. Muhaimin was disappointed that her female trumpet player did not have, the use of the word “cockiness” carries associations of

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 2016.
masculinity that would either exclude women from playing brass instruments or would encourage them to take on masculine personality traits to fit the role. Ms. Muhaimin’s use of the word “cockiness” genders the instrument in a way that makes it less appealing to female students and makes female trumpet players feel like outsiders within the trumpet section because they do not conform to the masculine standard of performance associated with the instrument. Linking gendered stereotypes to specific instruments makes certain sections inequality regimes, as defined by Joan Acker, meaning that within each section there are different levels of power based on gender so membership is not equal within the section.168 Within these male-dominated sections, such as the trumpet section, girls and people who do not embody hegemonic masculinity are seen as subordinate within the section, regardless of their playing ability, because hypermasculinity, associated with “cockiness” is the standard. This results in girls choosing to play in a female-dominated section where they will be viewed as an equal or deciding not to continue playing music at all.

The stereotype of trumpet players being “cocky” is not unique to Warren Easton’s band. This is a common stereotype in most marching bands, from my experience, which is due to the instrument’s history and its presence and purpose within marching bands. Although many instruments are gendered masculine, the trumpet in particular has a history of associations and connotations of masculinity. In *Hotter Than That: The Trumpet, Jazz, and American Culture*, Krin Gabbard describes the history of the trumpet from ancient Egypt to modern New Orleans and shows how the trumpet was, and still is,

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a symbol of masculinity. Gabbard explains that the first representations of the trumpet were relief sculptures from Egypt in the fifteenth century BCE which showed men playing trumpets in front of an advancing army. The trumpet has often been used in the military because its high-pitched sound was able to penetrate the sound of battle. Trumpeters in the military often were sent to send messages across enemy lines. In medieval times, trumpeters were stationed on walls surrounding the city to warn that an attack was coming or to announce the time of day. These trumpeters also played for the kings in royal courts. In Greek mythology, the trumpet was believed to be invented by Tyrsenus, Hercules’s son, which connected the instrument to the most hypermasculine figure in Greek mythology. Another Greek myth tells the story of Achilles, who was sent to Scyros in women’s clothes to avoid being sent to fight and die in Troy. However, when Odysseus ordered a trumpet to sound as a call to battle, Achilles instinctively threw off his women’s clothes and ran toward the trumpet call to fight, exposing himself as a man, and was sent to battle in Troy. These associations between the trumpet and typically masculine activities carried through to the twentieth century when New Orleans’ own Buddy Bolden picked up a cornet and invented what Krin Gabbard refers to as a “new breed of masculinity,” which involved black men strutting and showing off to their white oppressors, by ragging melodies, incorporating sexual innuendo into playing, and teaching men how to strut and play to prove that they were men and not boys, which

\[169 \text{ Krin Gabbard, “From the Pyramids to New Orleans: The Trumpet Before Jazz,” in Hotter Than That: The Trumpet, Jazz, and American Culture, (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2008,) 31-69.} \]
\[170 \text{ Ibid, 34.} \]
\[171 \text{ Ibid, 43.} \]
\[172 \text{ Ibid, 54.} \]
\[173 \text{ Ibid, 55.} \]
\[174 \text{ Ibid, 33.} \]
\[175 \text{ Ibid, 33-34.} \]
came at a time when white men frequently called black men “boy.”\footnote{Ibid, 29-30, 221.} This style of bravado can be seen within black marching bands today when male members march in an exaggerated style that allows them to prove both their masculinity and their strength as black men. These associations between the trumpet and traditional masculinity are still prevalent today as evidenced by Ms. Muhamin’s disappointment in the lack of “cockiness,” implying confident, hypermasculine behavior, in her female trumpet-playing students, as well as the lack of female trumpet players in New Orleans marching bands.

As I described earlier, most New Orleans marching bands put their woodwinds—clarinets, flutes, and saxophones—in the very back of the marching block. This, in addition to being quieter instruments in comparison to brass and percussion, causes woodwinds to be drowned out, putting more attention on the brass instruments. In most Historically Black College and University marching bands, flutes, clarinets, and saxophones take a backseat to brass and drums; when they play in the stands at football games, they sit down while everyone else stands, making their quiet sound less likely to be heard. Most girls in marching bands play these instruments, so because the instruments girls are encouraged to play are neglected, drowned out, and less likely to lead to a career in New Orleans than other instruments, girls are less likely to want to pursue careers in music after high school. Some, like Shania Tyler, one of the drum majors from St. Mary’s Academy, switch from clarinet to a louder instrument, like trombone in Shania’s case, because they are tired of not being heard on clarinet.\footnote{Shania Tyler, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 19 October 2016.} Others drop out of band entirely or do not see music as a legitimate career path.
Many instructors tend to put less focus on the woodwinds in rehearsals as well. On one of my first days observing at St. Mary’s Academy, one of the band directors, Kurt Brunus, who is a trumpet player himself, told the band that the trumpets were the most important instruments in the band because they have the melody and are heard the most. Clarinets also frequently have the melody, but it seems that because they have a quieter sound, they tend to receive less attention in rehearsals. Mr. Brunus also points to an arrangement hierarchy that favors high brass by giving them the melody because they have a loud, strident sound that can be heard over the rest of the band. By prioritizing the high brass, which is gendered-masculine, this arrangement hierarchy also prioritizes male students by giving them the parts that most people will hear and recognize over the rest of the band. Clarinets often double the trumpet part; however, because clarinets cannot be heard as well over the band as a trumpet, they are often referred to as adding “color” to the band’s sound, rather than being featured as the main instrument playing the melody. Often play countermelodies or background parts that many students find boring. During a woodwind sectional at St. Mary’s Academy, one student expressed her annoyance that the saxophones only played the electronic dance beat of Calvin Harris and Rihanna’s “This is What You Came For,” which is the same syncopated rhythm throughout the whole song. As a woodwind player myself, I can verify that woodwind parts are often less exciting than brass parts, and I understand this frustration. Woodwinds are gendered feminine, however, so when girls join band they are pushed toward the woodwind sections because of society’s assignment of these sections as feminine, however being at the back of the block, being deprioritized at rehearsals and in arrangements in favor of the brass and drumline, and generally going unheard in the context of the rest of the band can
be a deterring factor for girls to join and stay in band. This instrumentation hierarchy, which categorizes masculine-gendered brass and percussion instruments as the dominant instruments in the band, reinforces the system of gender inequity which favors boys over girls in New Orleans marching bands.

Mr. Brunus explained that many girls in St. Mary’s band are pressured by their parents to start on a woodwind instrument but once they join the band they “hear how loud the other instruments are and how much fun they believe they are having, then they want to switch.”178 There is a fair amount of instrument mobility within St. Mary’s band because it is all-female, and even the instruments that are gendered masculine must be played by girls, so even though masculine instruments are prioritized in St. Mary’s band, male students are not prioritized because there are only female students in the band. However, in co-ed bands, girls are not encouraged to play masculine gendered instruments because there are enough boys to fill these sections, so girls are often confined to the woodwind section and are not treated with the same importance as boys who play masculine gendered instruments. This devaluation of woodwinds results in girls being less likely to experience “boundary loss,” as defined by William H. McNeill, causing them to feel like outsiders within the band and discouraging them from further pursing music.179

Woodwinds, especially clarinet and flute, are also not as lucrative in the New Orleans music world, so people who play these instruments are less likely to see their instrument as a viable career path. Clarinets typically are only seen in more traditional

178 Kurt Brunus, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.
brass bands and jazz bands, and flutes are rarely featured in the music that is popular in New Orleans. Since there are fewer opportunities for professional woodwind players than there are for professional brass and percussion players in New Orleans, and girls tend to be trained on these instruments, girls are less likely to see a career in music as a viable option if they play a woodwind instrument.

At Warren Easton on the other hand, I was impressed by how loud the clarinets sounded. Every time I heard them play, no matter where I was standing, I could always hear the clarinets, which is rare in New Orleans marching bands. It is possible that because Ms. Muhaimin, the band director, is a clarinet player, there is more of a focus on the clarinets in the band. While other band directors may deprioritize the clarinets, it seems that Ms. Muhaimin actually puts an emphasis on the clarinets to elevate their presence within the band. This suggests that not only the gender but also the primary instrument of the band director has an impact on the bands’ sound and the gender culture of bands. Although Ms. Muhaimin says they are “naturally” aggressive players, she does tend to work with them and often teaches by playing her own clarinet. Ms. Muhaimin’s prioritizing of the clarinet section creates a more equal power dynamic between female and male students and destabilizes the gender hierarchy that privileges masculine-gendered instruments and male students. Her own intensity and volume on the instrument acts as a model for them to follow and promotes a loud, strong clarinet presence. Having a strong clarinet player as an instructor opens space for the clarinet to move from being a background instrument to being a vital part of the band. This sends the message to the girls and boys that playing the clarinet could lead to a stable career in music. Three of the clarinet players at Warren Easton, all female, were interested in pursuing careers in music.
after high school, suggesting that the strength of the clarinet section, modeled after their female clarinet-playing band director, may have been a positive influence in that decision. It is rare for three girls in a marching band to want to pursue music professionally, let alone three from the same section. This suggests that having Ms. Muhaimin as a role model and mentor has not only helped them be confident in their sound and abilities within the marching band but has also showed them that having a career in music is feasible.

In the St. Mary’s Academy marching band, the flute section is nonexistent, and the clarinet section is the smallest section. The band is all-girls, so you would think, based on society’s insistence on gendering instruments, most girls would elect to play a woodwind instrument and that it would be hard to find girls to play other instruments. However, because there are no male-dominated sections, there are no influences within the band to play an instrument that coincides with their gender. Research shows that girls at all-girls schools are less likely to have stereotyped attitudes about adult sex roles and are less likely to see themselves in traditionally feminine roles after high school.\textsuperscript{180} This may be because girls at single-sex schools go to school apart from the societal pressures of the opposite sex, allowing girls to discover their place in society and their career aspirations without the influence of male students and their expectations of gender.\textsuperscript{181} Girls in St. Mary’s Academy’s band and other all-girl bands not only attend school separate from the opposite sex but also play in the band with only girls, so they do not have boys dictating gender roles within the band and have more freedom to play the

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, 394.
instruments they want to play. Girls are often pressured by their families to play a feminine-gendered instrument, but once they join the band they see girls playing all instruments and understand that these instruments are not just meant for boys to play but are meant for everyone to play. In this setting, because there is not an impetus for girls to stay within the female-gendered woodwind section since there are no male- or female-dominated sections, girls are able to more freely choose what instrument they want to play. Ray Johnson, the band director at St. Mary’s Academy, said that he does not struggle to recruit girls to play brass and percussion because the girls who have gone to St. Mary’s from an early age, many starting in kindergarten and continuing until twelfth grade, are used to seeing girls play these instruments and do not consider it weird for a girl to play these instruments.182 This normalizes the performance of girls on “masculine” instruments and makes it more acceptable for girls to play these instruments. This also shows that the tendency of boys to play brass and percussion instruments and girls to play woodwinds is a product of the gender culture of bands and is not a natural difference between boys and girls.

Although none of the girls in St. Mary’s band will call girls playing brass and percussion “masculine” or encourage them to play a “girly” instrument, many still are subjected to criticism from their parents who think they should not be playing these instruments and want their daughters to play clarinet or flute or join the dance team, all considered more feminine than brass and percussion, as well as community members watching the band perform who doubt the girls’ ability to perform as well as boys on these instruments.183 This shows that many of the band parents and other people from

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183 Sierra St. Martin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 16, 2016.
older generations subscribe to traditional gender roles and hold on to gendered stereotypes about instruments more so than the girls in the band, especially those who choose to play a brass instrument or percussion instrument after being told by their parents and friends outside of the band that they should play a “girly” instrument.

Most of the women who are professional musicians in New Orleans are singers or piano players. Since marching band does not provide vocal or piano training, it is rare that these musicians will come from a marching band background. Natalie Jones from St. Mary’s claimed that female singers would have an easier time professionalizing in music in New Orleans than female instrumentalists because singing is “more of a female type thing.”184 Perhaps there is a connection between Natalie’s understanding of singing as a feminine activity and the old stereotype that female singers were lauded for entertainment and sex appeal, while female instrumentalists were seen as masculine freaks.185 In the early 20th century, women were often added to jazz bands as singers to add a level of showmanship, and they stood in front of the band in an elegant gown to differentiate them from the male instrumentalists.186 Women have often maintained the role of vocalists due in part to a “gendered ‘division of labour,’” with men being instrumentalists and women singing or dancing.187 An instrument is not a part of the body and is therefore viewed as something the body has to manipulate through labor, while the voice is of the body and has a certain sensuality and expressivity associated with traditional femininity.188 Even though there are instruments that are gendered female within

184 Natalie Jones, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 19 October 2016.
186 Ibid, 45, 57.
187 Doubleday, 17.
188 Ibid.
marching bands, instrumental music as a whole tends to be viewed as a masculine activity. There is a long history of instruments being gendered, and what instruments were deemed acceptable and unacceptable for women to play were often linked to physical appearance. Beauty played a key role in how a performer was received by audiences, and “the successful woman performer was one who could play like a man… but not appear unfeminine.” 189 Certain instruments, especially brass instruments, can distort a woman’s physical appearance which men considered unappealing, and therefore it was unacceptable for a woman to play them. Other instruments like the piano, harp, and guitar were considered feminine and appropriate for women because they “required no facial exertions or body movements that interfered with the portrait of grace the lady musician was to emanate.” 190 In New Orleans, women historically have been more likely to play piano than a brass instrument, with experience playing piano often stemming from a church background. 191 Creole families especially encouraged their daughters to play piano as it was seen as the “primary vehicle for genteel musical education for girls.” 192 The piano signified both class and gender as the piano became a symbol of respectable middle-class femininity. 193 Brass and percussion instruments on the other hand held associations with hypermasculinity due in part to their use in military bands. 194 In twentieth century New Orleans, it was deemed inappropriate for girls to play brass

192 Ibid, 50.
193 Ibid, 61.
194 Ibid, 61.
instruments; only the piano and violin were considered acceptable.\textsuperscript{195} The violin was deemed acceptable for women because people believed that women had the compassion to access the emotive power of a violin’s sound.\textsuperscript{196} This paved the way for other string instruments to gain acceptance, however the cello had to be played side saddle with a thin rod at the end used to support it.\textsuperscript{197} None of these instruments are featured in marching bands, and even though the clarinet, flute, and sometimes saxophone are considered more feminine than brass and percussion instruments, they still cause facial distortion that makes the performer appear less attractive and continue to exist mostly within the masculine realms of marching bands, jazz bands, and brass bands. This element of beauty and appearance is key to how people view women in marching bands and professional music settings and affects their decision to join or remain in marching band.

There is nothing that makes certain instruments more suitable for men or women to play. Ingrid Monson, a jazz scholar, professor, and female trumpet player, argues that the trumpet should in theory be considered a woman’s instrument because its high-pitched sound is closer to the range of a woman’s voice than a man’s.\textsuperscript{198} Many women have been successful playing the trumpet and other instruments that are deemed masculine by society, so why do these stereotypes still exist? Perhaps the masculine associations with the trumpet, as one of the most valued instruments in New Orleans, serve men’s interests by discouraging women from playing the instrument. The gendering of the dominant instruments in New Orleans as masculine ensures that there is a link between the dominant instruments and the traditionally dominant gender. This link has

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, 116.
\textsuperscript{196} Macleod, 12.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid, 13.
\textsuperscript{198} Gabbard, 63.
prevailed throughout history in part due to the exclusion of female instrumentalists who played masculine-gendered instruments from music history. Female instrumentalists today are less likely to want to play a brass instrument if, for example, they do not know of female brass players. The lack of representation of female instrumentalists in music history creates a loop in which women choose to not play masculine-gendered instruments, contributing to the gendering of certain instruments and the mistreatment of people who decide to play an instrument gendered differently than what society deems appropriate for them. Thus, the traditionally dominant gender, male, remains tied to the traditionally dominant instruments, brass and percussion, leaving women to play the instruments that are considered subordinate in the New Orleans music culture.

“Boys Would Do All the Work of Blowing”

In addition to there being a gendering of instruments as a deterring factor for girls to professionalize in music, there is also a gendered aspect of the visual and sonic performance of Southern black marching bands that may deter some girls from participating and continuing to play after high school. New Orleans high school marching bands are modeled after Historically Black College and University marching bands, which use the show band style. Sonically, show bands tend to strive for a brassy, loud, and bright sound, which favors volume over intonation. Corps and military bands place much more emphasis on blending and maintaining high levels of musicianship, whereas show bands aim to be loud and flashy. By the 1960’s, black university marching bands had established their syncopated, high-stepping, and dance-centric style that

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199 Ibid, 65.
200 Gabbard, 65.
distinguished them from white bands around the rest of the country. New Orleans marching bands developed out of this style, sharing many of the same characteristics, such as syncopated rhythms, high-knee marching style, dance moves, an emphasis on brass, and a high level of volume and intensity.

The exaggerated, physical show band style is considered masculine by our society’s gender norms. The aesthetic appeal of these bands is very aggressive and brash, which are qualities typically associated with hegemonic masculinity. The assumption that girls do not want to or cannot act in the aggressive way that these bands perform can exclude women from participating in these bands. William P. Foster, the band director of the FAMU marching band, who revolutionized the show band style for HBCU marching bands, used to exclude women because he wanted his band to “operate like a machine,” and did not want to make young ladies participate in this rigid style. Women were not even allowed in the FAMU band until Title IX passed in 1972. Many marching bands in New Orleans allowed women earlier than this, but the history of marching bands being a male activity still affects the performance and perceptions of bands in the city.

Warren Easton’s marching band incorporates this masculine bravado and rigidity that William P. Foster saw as a male aesthetic into their performance and sound. The students in Warren Easton’s band march with their chests puffed out, head held high, instruments angled upward, using their full body and all their air to produce the loud, raucous sound associated with the show band style. Bands also incorporate dancing,

203 Katzman.
205 Ibid.
which, in contrast to the hyperfeminine dance style of the dance teams and majorettes that surround the band, is more rigid, robust, and emphatic. Historically, dancing has been considered masculine in black culture, as it carries ties to athleticism and competition which have been used to assert physical dominance over women.\textsuperscript{206} New Orleans marching bands’ use of “masculine” dancing and emphatic marching style brings their masculinity and power as black men to the forefront of the parade block by asserting their physicality and dominance through dance and marching styles. This masculine performance style is uniform throughout the band, and all members, regardless of gender, are expected to conform to this standard of performance. When New Orleans black marching bands perform, they are not only representing their school but are celebrating black culture, and, given the masculine style of marching and dance that they use, are celebrating a black \textit{male} identity specifically. This performance of black masculinity is in accordance with George McKay’s idea of marching bands and street music as a form of protest.\textsuperscript{207} Although when New Orleans marching bands perform, they are usually not actively participating in any sort of protest, but rather are representing their school, their city, and themselves, marching bands give a voice to communities who are often not heard within the city, and their performance can be read as a protest against the silencing of and discrimination against their communities. Many of these schools and band programs do not have the resources they need and are left out of conversations about the city. African Americans in these New Orleans marching bands are subject to racism, violence, and poverty. By playing loud and bombastically in marching bands, I see their


performance as a way of protesting the discrimination and injustices that they have
experienced and as a way of making their voices heard and their culture visible. When
drummers strike their drums forcefully without regard for whom they might hit, they are
clearing their path to make room for themselves in the city. They claim the public space
in which they march as their own, and through confident posture and forceful playing
they carve their own space for their school, their race, and themselves through the city as
they march down the parade route. John Connell and Chris Gibson argue in Sound
Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place that public streets, when juxtaposed with the
feminine domestic sphere of the private home, are gendered male, so when a marching
band performs in this “male” space, the marching band draws from the gendered power
of the space to increase their hypermasculinity to power their protest. In “‘A
Soundtrack to the Insurrection’: Street Music, Marching Band and Popular Protest,”
George McKay claims that in popular culture, the streets are associated with the struggle
for social change, with images of the masculine “street fighting man,” and the African
American man’s struggle in the urban streets. By bringing music and movement into
the streets, they bring about beauty and joy, while also encouraging mobilization. The
male-dominated bands in New Orleans, such as Warren Easton, draw on that masculine
power associated with the streets to territorialize the space as their own and use their
music to express their subjectivity in the city. The nature of New Orleans marching bands
seems to encourage the ideal of the “Strong Black Man,” an idealized version of the black

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209 McKay, 21.
male who fights to represent his blackness and show his power.\textsuperscript{211} The figure of the “Strong Black Man,” a concept defined by Mark Anthony Neal in\textit{ New Black Man}, resulted from the experience of black males resisting slavery, violence, and exploitation in North America, and came about in the 1960s as a figure of strength, pride, stability, independence, and self-sufficiency to counteract the stereotypical images of the dangerous, threatening black male that was accepted among white society.\textsuperscript{212} However, the “Strong Black Man” figure is simplistic and does not recognize the multifaceted nature of black masculinity.\textsuperscript{213} Its version of black masculinity is heteronormative and can be sexist and homophobic, often ignoring the realities of black women, queer men and women, and other non-normative black identities. When marching bands in New Orleans march in the physical, emphatic show style, they represent one form of black masculinity that does not allow for the performance of other identities. Although girls and boys march alongside each other in parades, the uniformity of marching bands promotes one form of black masculinity that showcases the strength and power of black men while ignoring other facets of black identity characteristic of those in the band. This can cause members who do not embody traditional masculinity to feel that their needs and identities are not recognized and represented within the band.

Historically, black women have been excluded from both the categories “black” and “women” which tend to focus respectively on black men and white women.\textsuperscript{214} Within New Orleans marching bands, black girls are forced to adapt this hypermasculine

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\textsuperscript{212} Ibid, 25.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid, 24.
\textsuperscript{214} bell hooks, \textit{Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism} (New York: Routledge, 2015), 7.
\end{flushright}
performance style and wear uniforms intended to hide their gender, grouping them in with the rest of the band as one uniform collective, ignoring their black female identity and focusing on the black male members.215 All members in marching bands are required to conform to the uniform performance style of the band and therefore are not allowed to express gender identities different from the uniform masculinity that these bands present. The uniform performance of the band represents hegemonic masculinity. However, by eliminating the performance of femininity within the band, is it possible that bands in turn can eliminate the hierarchical relationship between masculinity and femininity and place all members as equal? Elizabeth Gould posits that it is possible to reinterpret the masculine culture of bands in a way that makes it possible for girls and women to reject the masculine culture of bands by claiming elements of it for themselves.216 Girls in marching bands subvert conceptions of black femininity and show that they are just as capable as black men and should be considered as part of the collective. Black girls’ participation in marching bands takes them beyond and rejects the four controlling images of black womanhood defined by Patricia Hill Collins: the mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother, and the Jezebel, all of which are unattractive interpretations and stereotypes of black female sexuality that are used to oppress and “other” black women and keep men in control.217 Participation in marching bands undermines men’s control over women by allowing them to participate in a historically male-dominated activity as equals, in theory. Unfortunately, women are not always seen and treated as men’s equals

216 Gould, 112.
because bands are inequality regimes, which prioritize men over women through the
gendering of the dominant instruments and performance styles as masculine, discourages
women from playing the dominant instruments in the band and from performing with the
same intensity as boys in the band.218 Those that do play male-gendered instruments and
perform with the same masculine energy as the boys in the band embody pariah
femininities and are viewed as a threat to the male members in the band as they are
destabilizing the dominant-subordinate relationship between hegemonic masculinity and
femininity.219 Perhaps because boys and girls tend to play different roles within the
marching band, girls do not see themselves as part of the same protest as the boys are
participating in. While the boys are using their masculine power to show their place
within the city, the girls in the band are still fighting to show that they should have an
equal role within the culture of the band itself, as well as within black culture in general.

St. Mary’s and Warren Easton, while both within the show band style, play with
different approaches, and I want to stress that I am not advocating for one being better
than the other. Both have great sounds and positive attributes which give them a unique
presence within the city. Although St. Mary’s marching band plays within the show band
style, their band director, Ray Johnson encourages them to play with a more controlled
sound:220

Well, looking at the sound of marching band nowadays, and of course particularly
the styles that we have down here in Louisiana and New Orleans, most of them
try to play like colleges if they have the makeup and the personality for that,
which is the loud sound type of thing like that. The sonic style that we have of
course the benefit of it is, we have an advantage because by the band being all
females, I’m not saying that they’re not capable but they don’t overblow, they

218 Acker, 443.
219 Schippers, 95.
220 Interview with Ray Johnson, October 27, 2016.
don’t play as loud, out of tune and static and stuff like that only because they’re not trying to do that.\footnote{Ibid.}

Through observation, it is clear that intonation and control are a focus in Mr. Johnson’s teaching methods, however he attributes St. Mary’s sound and presence to the girls’ desire to have a more controlled sound.\footnote{Ibid.} The girls in St. Mary’s marching band tend to keep their instrument lower, not as aggressive in appearance, and play quieter and with more control than the male-dominated marching bands. The drummers play loud but do not hit the drum with the same intensity of Warren Easton’s drummers, for example. St. Mary’s band focuses on control, blending, and intonation, while Warren Easton and other New Orleans marching bands emphasize volume and impact, which separates St. Mary’s Academy from the New Orleans band archetype which emphasizes loud and intense sound and performance. I do not attribute this to lack of physical strength because physical strength is not tied to only one specific gender or body-type, and girls can be as strong as boys, but rather I think it is an expression of their femininity and a rejection of the hypermasculine style employed by other marching bands in the city. The loud sound, masculine bravado, and rigidity of marching bands is perhaps considered superior in the New Orleans band culture because these qualities are associated with masculinity, and therefore St. Mary’s band may be less highly regarded because they do not conform to this this masculine standard.

Many of the girls I spoke with compared themselves to other prominent bands in the city, some of the top bands like St. Augustine High School’s band being all-male bands.\footnote{Shania Tyler, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 19 October 2016.} St. Augustine is usually the first band people think of when they think of New
Orleans marching bands, and their loud volume, intense body language, and hypermasculine performance style makes them stand out above the rest of the New Orleans school bands. St. Augustine’s band is all-male, which allows them to emphasize the image of the “Strong Black Man” on the parade route. Their success is due to the embodiment and implementation of the show band style, which, as I have shown above, tends to be gendered masculine. The fact that the band that is considered the best band in New Orleans, according to a poll on Nola.com, is an all-male band sets the standard for all other bands in the city to play in this hypermasculine performance style and affirms that the New Orleans music culture is androcentric. Charles Saint, a commenter on Nola.com wrote, “The Marching 100 has been the epitome of high school football bands. They are the band that has set the bar for All other high school bands. Their name is nationwide!”

St. Augustine’s dominance in New Orleans is apparent and clearly has an effect on bands like St. Mary’s Academy. When the band that is recognized as the best band in New Orleans is all-male, there are often perceptions that they are so good because they are all-male. Many assume that bands like St. Mary’s Academy will not be as good simply because they are all girls. The fact that St. Mary’s band places an emphasis on different stylistic qualities than St. Augustine’s band can often cause people to perceive as them inferior since St. Augustine is viewed as the standard and pinnacle of New Orleans marching bands. Despite the fact that they aim have a style of playing and performing that is different than any other school, they still compare themselves to St. Augustine, acknowledging that their difference in intensity

may cause them to be viewed as inferior. Perhaps by playing in a style different than the hypermasculine aesthetic of bands like Warren Easton and St. Augustine, they are protesting the privileging of male-dominated or all-male bands and claiming a place for female instrumentalists within the marching band paradigm in New Orleans. Their intersectional identities as both black Americans and females makes them subject to different discrimination and injustices than black men or white women. As Kimberle Crenshaw argues in “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” black women are often excluded from discussions of racism and discrimination, as well as ignored for their successes. To extend my idea that marching bands in New Orleans are engaging in protests to claim their voice and represent their identity when they marching, St. Mary’s band has to not only claim space for themselves as women, but specifically as black women who are often disregarded by their community and society as a whole. While St. Augustine’s band represents the “Strong Black Man,” St. Mary’s band has to fight for the image of the “Strong Black Woman” to show that they can play just as well and should be recognized for their abilities, which, though they are different from St. Augustine’s band, deserve the same recognition and value.

“*It’s Not the Prettiest Thing to Do*”

Uniforms are another way in which marching bands are gendered in a way that can deter women from participating or continuing to participate. Early marching bands, which were no longer connected to the military, maintained military-style uniforms. Since early marching bands were all-male, it made sense to keep this style, and when

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women started joining bands, most kept the same uniforms which allowed them to hide the gender of their members, maintaining an all-male image. The Warren Easton uniform, like most other marching bands, includes a coat, pants, gloves, spats (a piece of cloth that covers the ankle and part of the shoe), and a shako (a military style hat with a plume). Uniforms cover the entire body besides the face, which makes it hard for an observer to determine a person’s gender identity at a glance. Marching band members are expected to be completely uniform, which for most bands means no makeup or jewelry, which prohibits them performing their gender through physical appearance and style. Warren Easton band director Asia Muhaimin says, “It’s a paramilitary organization, everybody’s male. Him, him. You know when you put that hat on the uniform, we don’t know if you’re a girl or a boy, and we always assume that you’re a boy.” Ms. Muhaimin said that when she was in marching band in high school and college, she would always try to sneak on some earrings so people would know she was a girl and so she would feel pretty. She claims that many girls do not want to do marching band because “It’s not the prettiest thing to do.” The coat and pants give off a militaristic, masculine presence that genders everyone as masculine. The hats ruin the hair underneath, the coats go up to the neck, pants are often unflattering, and you’re sweating underneath the uniform. Ms. Muhaimin told me that many girls have told their parents, “Mom I don’t want to be in band because you’re not pretty in the band.” Girls in our society are taught that their external beauty is the most important thing and marching band does not allow them to show off their bodies and their beauty. Girls often do not

226 Gould, 112.
227 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 2016.
228 Ibid.
229 Ibid.
want to be assumed to be male, and marching band does not allow them to perform their femininity so they do not join or quit after being in it for a while. Ms. Muhaimin said that so much of what girls focus on is the attention of boys, which they feel they cannot get by being in the marching band because they cannot look cute. This is an example of girls being objects of the male gaze, through which women are viewed and critiqued by men. Girls so often live as objects of this gaze, taught to be desired rather than to desire. This desire to be desired and the insistence on looking desirable leads girls to “pretty” activities like the dance team or majorettes as the marching band leads to scrutiny by men about their physical appearance and performance of gender.

During rehearsal one day, Ms. Muhaimin told the boys in the band that if they play their parts right and march well, every single one of them would get prom dates. She told me one of her old boyfriends asked her out by playing her a song on his baritone. While boys in bands are viewed as attractive for taking on this masculine appearance, girls are often neglected because they also take on a masculine appearance, making them less attractive by heteronormative standards. Ms. Muhaimin did not say anything about girls getting prom dates by performing well in the band because marching band is not considered a sexy activity for girls. While marching in Mardi Gras is a huge factor in students deciding to be in marching bands, boys tend to get more validation out of it than girls because it not only makes them feel like a superstar in their city, but they also feel attractive and impress girls because band helps them convey a masculine, put together

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230 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 2016.
appearance. I have never heard a band director tell a girl that if she plays her music well and marches well that she would find a boyfriend through marching band, however in New Orleans, marching band allows boys to show off their masculinity and attract a female partner. Auxiliary groups like the dance team, majorettes, and cheerleaders who highlight femininity through revealing uniforms, makeup, hairdos, suggestive dance moves, and happy facial expressions would more likely be told that they would find a boyfriend or a prom date if they smile and dance well. The juxtaposition between the hypermasculine band and the hyperfeminine auxiliary units makes marching band seem less appealing to high school girls who are taught that they should be acting “feminine” and attracting boys.

The auxiliary groups that accompany marching bands are almost always all-girls, and they wear hyperfeminine, flashy uniforms covered in glitter and sequins, with their hair and makeup done. There is never any question that those that are performing are girls, unlike the marching band which makes all members appear androgynously male. These hyperfeminine auxiliary groups are often at the front and the back of the parade block, surrounding the marching band and making the band appear even more masculine. The auxiliary groups wear short skirts and tops that often bare their midriffs, are sleeveless, and/or lowcut, making them appear unmistakably female, while the band is covered basically from head to toe in a heavy uniform that disguises their gender and makes them appear uniformly masculine. Dancers and majorettes also wear their hair and makeup in a way that highlights their femininity while most high school bands do not allow makeup, and girls have to tuck their hair into their hat. The movement of these groups is also gendered; the dance teams move provocatively in a way that highlights
their bodies and their femininity, shaking their hips, kicking their bare legs into the air, flipping their hair, while the movement of marching bands is very rigid and mechanic, eliminating any expressions of femininity through movement. Many girls tell their parents that they would rather be a dancer or a majorette because they get to look pretty and attract the attention of onlookers, particularly male onlookers. This also allows for a reciprocal relationship within the gaze, allowing these girls to acknowledge their desirability and find power within it to express their own desire. By finding enjoyment and delight in being desired, these dancers claim subjectivity and resist the male gaze.233 These hyperfeminine groups find subjectivity and empowerment within the male gaze, while girls in marching bands are objectified by male scrutiny. Returning to Mimi Schippers’ theory about pariah femininity, by being in marching bands, girls are adopting typically masculine characteristics, making them at once objects of the sexualizing male gaze while also contaminating the power dynamic between genders, putting them in a position of further scrutiny by male onlookers.234 By over-performing feminine characteristics, girls on the dance team and majorettes own their feminine qualities and find power and resistance in their performance through their enjoyment of their own desirability.235 As Ms. Muhaimin says, marching band is not the prettiest thing to do and most would not consider their band uniform to be sexy. In this sense, by putting on a band uniform, women resist the heteronormative idea that women need to be sexy to please men, however the uniform also restricts them from expressing their femininity and sexual desire. Since our culture teaches high school girls to want to look pretty to attract

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233 Warwick, 73.
234 Schippers, 95.
235 Warwick, 73.
males’ attention, joining the dance team seems much more enticing, however donning a
marching band uniform and resisting male objectification and society’s treatment of
women as sexualized objects can be freeing and rewarding in a different way. Although
marching band can appear to restrict feminine expression while the auxiliary groups
encourage it, marching band can actually function to resist hegemonic femininity and the
dance and majorette teams reinforce it.

The St. Mary’s Academy uniforms differ greatly from Warren Easton and most
other marching bands; the girls wear long blue and gold skirts instead of pants. While
most other bands gender its members uniformly as male, St. Mary’s instead presents a
uniform femininity that puts the gender of its members at the forefront of their
performance. Since its inception, the St. Mary’s marching band has always worn skirts in
order to separate them from other bands in the city, highlighting their all-female
membership as a distinguishing factor.\textsuperscript{236} I thought that perhaps these uniforms would
bring about sexism directed at them being recognizably an all-girl band that would deter
girls from wanting to participate in them band, however this was not the case. The girls I
spoke to said they have heard audience members ask where the boys are or question the
girls’ ability to perform as well as the boys, yet they say they love wearing the skirts
because it helps them stand out and gives them a sense of pride for being all-girls. The
uniforms motivate them to show off what they can do and prove that girls can perform
just as well or maybe better than boys. The skirts however offer a simplistic version of
femininity that reinforces gender norms. The uniforms do not allow for individual gender
expression and present a normative version of femininity. While the girls often enjoy how

\textsuperscript{236} Ray Johnson, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 27 October 2016.
their skirts distinguish them from other bands and show off the fact that they are girls and are able to perform just as well as the boys, the skirts may also exclude girls who do not conform to traditional femininity and may reject the notion that girls should wear skirts to be feminine.

As female participation in marching bands becomes more visible, more girls will want to participate, however, the gender culture of bands and the systems of gender inequity that exist within the marching band culture need to change to be more inclusive of girls. Girls have to work incredibly hard to be accepted in androcentric band cultures, and it is discouraging to have to fight to show that they can do the things they love, and I think this causes some girls to burn out after high school. The fight for women to prove their ability to play does not stop after marching band, however, and I believe that this often deters girls from seeking a professional music career. Although the boys in marching bands are also fighting for their place within the city, the girls in these bands have to work to prove their worth and claim their place within both within the marching band culture and their community, as well as society at large.
4. Forward March: The Difficulties Women Face in the Professional Music World

The exclusion of girls and women from marching bands in the past, the lack of written documentation of female participation in marching bands, and the androcentric gender culture of New Orleans marching bands all work to position male students as the dominant participants. This can impede girls from continuing to play in marching bands and from pursuing careers in music. Girls in marching bands also may be discouraged by the challenges they see professional female musicians facing after high school, such as finding a manager who does not have sexist qualms about working with women, or balancing a life as a professional musician with familial duties, since women still face pressure from society to be the primary caretaker in the family. It is exceedingly rare to see women in the brass band and jazz scenes in New Orleans, and those few who do pursue a career complain of being highly sexualized or treated with a lack of respect due to their gender. There is also a lack of women in music education; Ms. Muhaimin from Warren Easton is the only primary female band director at a New Orleans high school. Without female musicians and band directors to look up to, it is less likely that female students will see the possibility of playing or teaching music professionally for themselves. Girls and women must overcome both these external discriminatory obstacles and their own internalization of societal gender norms if they want to professionalize in music. The lack of gender diversity and the unfair treatment of women in the music industry is significant, and many young female never even see a professional music career as an option. There is very little research about girls’ transition out of the band room and into a professional music career so in this chapter I rely on the
ethnographic research I conducted and some of the research Kyle DeCoste conducted about the Original Pinettes Brass Band’s navigation of the professional music world to propose some explanations about why this transition is difficult for women. More research should be done to prove that these challenges exist for women, making it more difficult for women to have a career in music.

“The ‘Other’ of the Brass Band World”

Professional marching bands do not exist in America, so students must explore music in a different genre and setting beyond school. Although there are many different styles of music in the New Orleans professional music scene, the most direct connection to marching bands is brass bands, mostly because of instrumentation and history. Brass band scholar Matt Sakakeeny estimates that all the professional brass band musicians playing today began playing music in high school marching bands.237 Today, many high school marching bands have affiliated brass bands, often made up of the top players of the marching band, which help bridge the gap between high school marching band and the professional music world by offering students tools and skills that they need to play music professionally. These bands play gigs for the school and throughout the city, and many compete in the city’s Class Got Brass competition, which is a battle of the bands for school brass bands. Class Got Brass was created in 2012 to “create an incentive for band programs to embrace the joyful sounds of New Orleans brass bands, and to reward participating schools with funds that support their music instruction.”238 The competition

encourages school band programs to start brass bands and fosters excitement about brass band music amongst high school students. It also teaches young musicians how to master syncopated rhythms, improvisation, and even teaches them how to dress for a professional gig. Class Got Brass even provides instructional guides and clinics with members of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. The $10,000 cash prize is also enticing for bands who need funding for their programs. As the Class Got Brass program grows, brass bands are continuing to develop and compete. The bands that compete still tend to be overwhelmingly male, however, and most of the female brass band players who compete tend to be from all-girls schools.

School brass bands are an important tool to bridge between the amateur marching band and the professional brass band. While in marching bands, students play the written part they are given, and precision and discipline are strictly enforced, brass bands require individuals to improvise to express themselves creatively. I asked some of the students in St. Mary’s brass band what they like about playing in a brass band versus a marching band:

Malon McGee: You know like in marching band we have music but in brass band you have to figure it out on your own. Yeah, you improvise so that’s what makes it fun.
Rojonique Joseph: It’s fun playing a different type of music.
Natalie Jones: Yeah like brass band is not like serious.
Rojonique: Let your mind be free.
Natalie: You could do anything and it doesn’t matter.
Shania Tyler: I think that brass band is more of an advantage for us to kind of, you know, be free and you get a chance to kind of like…in a sense express yourself through your horn cuz you’re not playing like,

Kyle DeCoste, “Street Queens: The Original Pinettes and Black Feminism in New Orleans Brass Bands” (Master’s thesis, Tulane University, 2015), 44.
you’re not playing written music…it’s like improv and you’re playing things by ear, and it makes you feel good being able to do things on your own.

Rojonique: When we play it’s fun to see how people get so happy, they get out of it, so it’s fun and nice to see.\textsuperscript{240}

Kurt Brunus, the assistant band director at St. Mary’s Academy who restarted the school brass band after years without one, said that school brass bands act as a stepping stone between marching band and the professional music world:

It’s more of a relaxed type of performing versus stern and strict as the difference in jazz and concert music. You have to be perfect in your tone in concert, you have to be perfect in your posture and your reading overall, and in jazz you have to be more skilled or just as skilled knowledge-wise but you have a more relaxed or loose way of approaching it and mainly based on how you feel versus how the writer felt that wrote the song, so you get more comfortable with performing.\textsuperscript{241}

Improvisation is one of the key elements that differentiates brass bands from marching bands. Marching bands put an emphasis on precision and discipline, while brass bands allow individuals to express themselves through the use of improvisation. Both performance practices associated with marching brands and brass bands are central to black expressive culture.\textsuperscript{242} Musicians learn improvisation through socialization, by surrounding themselves with other improvisers, listening to live and recorded music, and practicing and performing on their own.\textsuperscript{243} Improvisation is a critical skill for transitioning from an amateur player to a professional musician. It seems that the majority of improvising musicians I have encountered are male, which makes me wonder

\textsuperscript{240} Malon McGee, Rojonique Joseph, Natalie Jones, Shania Tyler, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.
\textsuperscript{241} Kurt Brunus, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid, 289.
if there is gender inequity in the pedagogy of improvisation. More research should be done on this subject.

Brass bands, concert bands, and jazz bands that are affiliated with the marching band offer opportunities for band students to experience new styles of music and get a taste of what it feels like to play professionally. These groups have the opportunity to play in different settings that a marching band would not experience. Some groups even play paid gigs, allowing students to understand what it would be like to be a professional musician, even if the money they make then filters back into the band. Many brass bands busk on the streets or compete in Class Got Brass, giving them their first taste of playing music as a profession. The students that participated in the brass band at their school were much more likely to be interested in a career in music than those who only played in the marching band because school brass bands allow students to take their experience playing in a marching band and adopt skills and experiences more applicable to the professional music world.

However, outside of all-girl schools like St. Mary’s Academy, school brass bands are still predominantly male, leading to more men than women playing in brass bands and other ensembles professionally. Brass bands typically are made up of sousaphones, bass and snare drums, trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and occasionally clarinets, so they are very compatible with the instrumentation of marching bands. However, the historical gendering of these instruments as masculine is one of the reasons why more boys play in these bands than girls, and girls are often excluded from the brass band world for not playing a brass band-appropriate instrument. The fact that so many

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244 Clarinets are included in some brass bands, especially traditional brass bands, but still tend to be played by men. For more information on the difference between traditional and modern brass bands, see Matt
professional brass band musicians are male contributes to and reinforces the gendering of these instruments and the genre as masculine, and many young female musicians do not see themselves in the brass band world.

Brass bands primarily play in the streets and other public settings. They accompany neighborhood social organizations, called social aid and pleasure clubs, in second lines, which are communal parades in New Orleans in which audience members participate by following and dancing behind the members of the social aid and pleasure club, who organize and lead the parade, and the brass band musicians, who provide the music for the parade.245 Brass band musicians also play at jazz funerals, which are traditional New Orleans burial processions in which a band first plays dirges to bring the body to the burial site, and then, once the body is “cut loose,” or laid to rest, plays faster, celebratory music to celebrate the life of the deceased.246 Both second lines and jazz funerals help bring together members of the community. As Helen Regis writes, “Participating in funerals, in New Orleans as in many other cultures, is a profound way of strengthening and repairing the social fabric, which in this city is severely weakened by poverty, joblessness, violence, class- and race-based segregation, and racism.”247 Music historian Thomas Brothers argues that the New Orleans music scene encourages public participation and interaction, setting it apart from the Eurocentric tradition of private performance, such as parlor music.248 Since public space has historically been male

246 Ibid.
gendered, female musicians have often been left out of these public music spheres and participate as audience members or as members of social aid and pleasure clubs but rarely as musicians.249 Historically, when women did make music, they made it vocally, rather than with instruments and performed in private settings like churches and homes.250 This separation of gender in public and private spaces was common throughout the American South. According to Patricia Hill Collins, “While racial segregation delimited African American from white physical space, gender relations within Black communities delimited female from male space. Male space included the streets, barber shops, and pool halls; female arenas consisted of households and churches.”251 These gender trends have lingering implications in contemporary New Orleans as the majority of female musicians sing or play piano and rarely participate in the public culture of jazz funerals and second lines as musicians.

Safety is also a concern for members of brass bands. Brass bands typically play in public settings such as parades, second lines, and street corners, or clubs and bars that serve alcohol usually late at night. There have been shootings at second lines, musicians playing on the street have been mugged, and various other criminal activities plague the streets of New Orleans, making female musicians wary of playing in the streets. Not all school-affiliated brass bands perform in the streets, but those that do offer a taste of what professional musicians will eventually experience when performing on the street or playing in a second line. Many parents are concerned about their children performing on the street, especially at night. Ms. Muhaimin recalled that the parents of female students

249 Ibid, 129.
250 Ibid.
tend to be more involved in the marching band because they want to make sure their daughters are safe.

The all-female Original Pinettes Brass Band chooses not to play in the streets anymore. Their weekly gig at Bullet’s Sports Bar functions as a safe space for them to perform and relay their message to their audience.252 Trombonist Dee Holmes explains why the band chooses not to play for parades anymore:

For four hours, oh my God. Yeah, I mean, when you have a good group in front of you and they’re moving their bodies, it’s okay. But, you know, with the streets, it’s a crowd-pleasing thing. So you could play one wrong thing and they’ll walk away from you, move to the next band. I’m sure you’ve been out there and seen it happen. So, yeah, if you’re not playing that tune they want to hear, boy, they will walk away from you so fast.253

In order to play the songs they want to play without losing the lyrics that carry their message, the Pinettes need to play on a stage, often with microphones that allow them to convey their messages of female empowerment to their audiences. Playing in venues such as Bullet’s allows them to “create autonomous safe spaces where they voice self-definitions of black womanhood that resist dominant ideology within and without the New Orleans brass band community.”254 Kyle DeCoste argues that by rejecting the male-dominated streets as their primary venue of performance, they have created a space for women to play and succeed in the male-dominated brass band world. The Pinettes have achieved great success in New Orleans, as they have played at various clubs and festivals, were featured on the hit TV series Treme, and even won the title “Street Queens” after competing in the Street Kings brass band competition in 2013. Yet their success remains

252 Kyle DeCoste, “Street Queens: The Original Pinettes and Black Feminism in New Orleans Brass Bands” (Master’s thesis, Tulane University, 2015), 44.
254 DeCoste, 16.
mostly indoors, and I wonder if it is possible for female brass band musicians to find success and feel safe within the male-dominated brass band street performance scene. Does their reluctance to perform on the street further isolate them from the rest of the brass band world and “other” them as the only all-female brass band?

Feminist scholar Adrienne Rich argues that the best way to resist compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity is by forming women-identified relationships, meaning that exclusively female groups like the Pinettes can help women overcome their subordinate position in relation to men. However, because the Pinettes are still treated as an “other” as the world’s only all-female brass band and are still thought of within the context of the male-dominated brass band world, another example of an inequality regime that systematically favors men, the male musicians in this scene maintain their dominance and continue to thrive. Although branding the band as the “The World’s Only All-Female Brass Band” gains them recognition and attention, it also limits them because many people only think about their status as women. Veronique Dorsey, a trumpet player for the Pinettes explains how getting recognition as an all-female band was not easy to come by:

“We’re like the “Other” of the brass band world. I mean, it took us a while to actually get that recognition that we deserve. I feel like a lot of people just look at us as “the girl band” or just “those girls” but I think it’s the people outside of the actual musicians that will look at us like that while the musicians just look at us as people trying to come take their money, you know? … It’s hard because—us being all girls—in the kind of situations if somebody has something to do, we can’t just call somebody and be like, “come play” because there are people looking for an all-female band and there aren’t females doing it.”

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Feminist scholar Simone de Beauvoir theorizes that woman is man’s Other; therefore, women are defined by their relationship with their male oppressors. She explains that men are always the subject and women are always the object in the relationship, restricting them to a subordinate role. She explains that in order for women to fight against their own oppression, they have to transcend their status of object and become sovereign subjects.257 The Pinettes note the success of the Grammy-Award-winning Rebirth Brass Band and state that one of their goals is to become “Rebirth, the female version.”258 Kyle DeCoste argues that this statement “suggests that (1) gender is significant in how the band members identify and market the band and (2) gender acts as a barrier—or at least a caveat—to their success in accumulating social capital.”259 It also positions the Pinettes as Rebirth’s “Other” or inferior, which limits their success. Just as St. Mary’s Academy’s band is compared to their male counterpart, St. Augustine, the Pinettes are compared to their male counterpart, Rebirth, and unfair gendered comparisons ensue, often leaving the female bands in a subsidiary position. Until male brass bands start being called “Pinettes, the male version,” or female brass band musicians start being recognized for their success without comparisons to their male counterparts or without gender hindering their success, female brass band musicians will still exist as an object or “Other” in the brass band music scene. The gender culture of brass bands in New Orleans needs to change to give male and female musicians equal opportunities and power.

259 DeCoste, 99.
The Original Pinettes have achieved great success in the brass band world and serve as an inspiration for young girls to start playing in brass bands at their schools. Their visibility in New Orleans has a huge effect on both the brass band scene and on young female musicians who might not have imagined a career playing music had they not seen the Pinettes playing and being as successful as they are today. While their success and visibility has inspired many young girls to start playing brass band music, young girls recognize the difficulty of professionalizing in a male-dominated genre. Seeing the Pinettes as an “Other” in the brass band world can be discouraging to girls who want to make a career as a musician. Rojonique Joseph, a trumpet player in St. Mary’s Academy marching and brass bands explains the influence the Pinettes have on young female musicians:

I think the Pinettes do send a good message that you can do this and you could do just what the men do. But in New Orleans we never feel like oh we can’t play what the men play because believe it or not, if you have a horn and they’re marching down the street and you know the song, you can just jump right on in and they won’t tell you nothing. But I think that they’re scared, scared of what other people may think, think that they can’t do it.260

The girls at St. Mary’s and at Warren Easton feel like they can play as well as the boys can, however, they often hear comments from people telling them that they should not play male-gendered instruments or that they should not play in brass bands because they are for men. Hearing comments like these can be discouraging, and many girls stop playing music to do more “girly” things. When I asked some of the members of the brass band at St. Mary’s why they thought so few women went on to pursue careers in brass bands, these were their responses:

Jada Richardson: I think that the hindrance of black women, or women period not wanting to be a professional musician or be in a band or play an instrument period is because they want to be more girly like they want to be a dancer or a majorette or they want to be a gymnast or whatever, and some people they just really don’t have the passion for it but other people I feel like they want to do it but they’re scared of what other people will think of them, and they’re scared of what they might experience like the discipline. They’re scared they’re going to get yelled at, they’re scared that “Oh the instrument might be too heavy, and I’m too lazy to march a whole parade, and I’m too lazy to practice all the time and this and that.” I feel like they just think that girls are supposed to be on dance teams and stuff and not in the band because I feel like they think girls aren’t fit to play the instrument and to march and to battle because it’s not our thing but anyone can do anything they want.\footnote{Jada Richardson, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.}

Rojonique Joseph: I think that females are afraid to pursue a professional career because it’s a male-dominated career so when you’re used to seeing all men, all you see is men in a career, it’s like, well, “If they think I can’t do it, I can’t do it, I’ve been told I can’t do it so it’s like I’m not going to do it.” But I mean they shouldn’t let that get to them because I have a friend who’s pursuing a music career, a professional music career in a male-dominant career choice. And she doesn’t let that get in her head that she can’t do it because from her being small until now, she’s in college, she’s been told she can’t do it, so if you’re around a group that’s telling you you can’t do it or you can’t do this that and a third, you’re gonna think you can’t do it.\footnote{Rojonique Joseph, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.}

Malon McGee: To me it’s both a mindset, and it’s also peer pressure because some people are pressured by their peers to make them feel like they’re not capable of doing this or that, you know, oh you don’t need to do this, you know, men don’t like women- you know they say stuff like men don’t like women who play instruments and some feel like, you know, they get discouraged. So I feel like if it’s something you really want, you would work towards pursuing this dream, but with people in your way and these obstacles, it’s gonna stop you from going for what you want.\footnote{Malon McGee, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 4 April 2017.}
All the girls agreed that women and girls can do anything a man can do, if not better. However, significantly more obstacles, both mental and physical, exist for girls and discourage them from turning their passion into a career.

Although the St. Mary’s Academy band receives more negative comments as a whole for being an all-girls band, its members actually have an advantage over girls in co-ed bands because they do not face gender discrimination within the band from male bandmates. This gender autonomy allows them to have more opportunities because all girls are encouraged to play any instrument, including male-gendered instruments, and are encouraged to join the brass band, jazz band, and concert bands. All these affiliated bands are all-female also so girls do not have to compete against their male bandmates and prove their ability in order to get in. This opens them up to more opportunities that could lead to a professional music career in the future. Many of the girls in St. Mary’s brass band seemed interested, or at least open to, the idea of playing music professionally. Saxophone player Malon McGee even said she wanted to start her own brass band after going to college. Though it is unclear whether girls in co-ed bands are discouraged to join their school brass bands by their band directors, male bandmates, or just by their internalized societal expectations of gender, there are far fewer girls playing in these bands than boys. Although St. Mary’s Academy’s band and the Original Pinettes follow the model put forth by Adrienne Rich of women-identified relationships, these bands do not exist within a vacuum, and it would be unrealistic and ineffective for all female musicians to only play with other female musicians. It is necessary to encourage gender equality within co-ed bands and offer girls in these bands the same opportunities to equip them for careers in music. Gender inequity is deeply ingrained in the culture of
marching bands, and the entire system needs to change to address the gender hierarchy that limits the success of female musicians.

“Man, You Know They Got a Bitch Over There?”

In addition to the paucity of professional female musicians, there is also a lack of female band directors. Ms. Muhaimin, Warren Easton’s first female band director and the only female high school band director currently in New Orleans, was inspired by her band director at Beauregard Junior High School, Miss Simon, and she says that having a female band director as a role model motivated her to pursue a career in music education. Having a female role model was important in Ms. Muhaimin’s decision to teach music professionally, and perhaps if there were more female band directors, more girls would see playing or teaching music professionally as a possibility for themselves. Although almost all band directors in New Orleans currently are male, a few female band directors have achieved prominence in the field in the past. Yvonne Busch for example, held jobs as the music instructor for multiple different schools and helped build and develop many band programs, like Booker T. Washington Senior School’s band, which she brought back from a state of disarray after only one year of working there from 1951 to 1952.  

She relied on her enthusiasm and knowledge of music and discipline to gain the respect of her students and help the band programs she led grow and succeed. Busch worked to ensure that her students would continue their studies in college, and many colleges looked to her to recruit her students in whom she instilled a high degree of discipline.  

Some of New Orleans’ most prominent music instructors studied as student teachers

265 Ibid, 67.
under Busch, including jazz patriarch and founder of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and the jazz studies program at University of New Orleans, Ellis Marsalis. She instilled in these future educators how to maintain authority and a sense of discipline, as well as the idea of giving respect to get respect in return. Busch influenced countless musicians who went on to shape the worlds of jazz and R&B in New Orleans and inspired future generations of music instructors who would carry on her legacy of inspiring students to fulfill their dreams of becoming professional musicians.

Yvonne Busch’s success was not without challenges, however. Students were often skeptical of her as she looked no different from the female students in the band, and she had to work to prove herself and her abilities as a musician and teacher. Ms. Muhaimin expressed that she faced many of the same challenges preparing to be and working as a band director. In college, she was one of very few women pursuing a degree to become a band director. Although being a woman in a class full of men could be discouraging for some, she said she did not face gender discrimination until she became a band director:

I remember spending the weekend before sewing the uniforms by hand and so I’m marching the parade, my band is put together, everybody has gloves on, boots on, spats on, boots, hats, everything, everybody looks great, and I’m walking with my band, I’m telling them the music and things like that and a man taps me on my shoulder, “Hey baby, come here, come here come here.” And so I was like, “Yeah?” And he was like, “Hey give this card to the band director.” And I was like, “I sure will.” And so I threw it away after that. And even though the proximity of the band where I was standing was obvious that I was the director, you know, I wasn’t standing in the back, I wasn’t handing out water, I mean I had a little satchel on that had a little candy and every once in a while I give a kid something if they felt down, but the proximity of where I was standing next to the

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266 Ibid, 74.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid, 73-75.
269 Ibid, 59.
270 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 2016.
drum major was obvious that I was the band director and what I had on was obvious that I was the band director, whistle on, got the, you know I looked like the band director, but he just assumed that I wasn’t. And so I just said, “I’ll make sure he gets the card.” And I said “he” for a reason. And I wound up tearing that card up and throwing it away.\textsuperscript{271}

This type of discrimination is not rare. Ms. Muhaimin has been assumed to be the principal instead of the band director because she is a woman, has been asked who writes the music and drill for the band because people assume that a woman could not do it, and has heard people talking about her being the band director by saying things like, “Man you know they got a bitch over there?”\textsuperscript{272} Ms. Muhaimin’s adoption of pariah femininities through her role as the leader of a marching band is seen as a threat. In addition to being considered masculine for participating in this leadership role, she is also considered a “bitch.” This supports Mimi Schippers’ idea that non-compliance with the hierarchical relationship between masculinity and femininity is considered contaminating and is stigmatized.\textsuperscript{273} This type of discrimination for female band directors, as well as professional musicians, can deter girls from pursuing this “male” profession.

The way gender plays out within structures of leadership in the band can have an effect on students. Music scholar and librarian Beth Macleod cites studies that classify certain occupations as more suitable for the female brain, one of these being teaching because it requires a nurturing personality for children.\textsuperscript{274} However when it comes to teaching music, female instructors are not the majority. According to Harold F. Abeles and Susan Yank Porter, only seventeen percent of instrumental instructors and five

\textsuperscript{271} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{273} Mimi Schippers, “Recovering the Feminine Other: Femininity, Masculinity, and Gender Hegemony” \textit{Theory & Society} 36, no. 1 (2007): 95.
percent of public school and college band directors are women. Women led vocal music classes in public schools, however when schools began incorporating instrumental music into their curriculum in the early 1900s, many hired “music supervisors” who acted as Jacks of all trades, teaching many different instruments, conducting the school’s bands, and developing and organizing the program. Many instruments were not deemed acceptable for women, so most women could not get these jobs because they did not have experience playing all of the instruments they were expected to. Educators at this time feared the stigma of music being a feminine activity and thought that hiring male instructors would help show boys that music is as much for them as it is for girls.

Music and teaching were culturally defined as feminine activities by the end of the nineteenth-century due to their associations with emotion, the body, nurture and other female-gendered characteristics. Society in America was strictly divided along the gender binary, and duties were strictly assigned as male or female. Women were obligated to help instill social and moral principles in the newly forming middle class to help strengthen and develop the nation. Music played a similar role as it was intended to encourage and develop morals in churches and schools and support nation building, and therefore was gendered feminine. However, in the late nineteenth-century, American society trended toward professionalization and specialization in various occupations, music and teaching evolved to require specialized training and credentials for someone to

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276 Macleod, 17.
277 Ibid, 18
278 Ibid.
280 Ibid, 43.
281 Ibid.
participate in them as a career.\textsuperscript{282} This meant that while music and teaching as activities were gendered feminine, as professional occupations they were gendered masculine due the public and expert nature of the occupation.\textsuperscript{283} Teaching was considered a feminine activity because teachers were “expected to uphold middle-class, Protestant, capitalist values and so ensure the continuation of the nation.”\textsuperscript{284} This was considered a woman’s duty in the home so it made sense for women to teach in public schools. However, when public education became more standardized, teachers were required to have specialized degrees and training, and the higher education required to get a career in education was considered part of the male sphere, so many teaching positions were designated for men.\textsuperscript{285} Music teaching, because both music and teaching were gendered feminine, would be considered feminine, however it became masculinized when professionalization of music teachers became standard.\textsuperscript{286} This contradiction between the gendering of the activity and the gendering of the profession created problematic ideas of gender and professionalization that made it unattractive for women to teach music because it was considered too masculine a profession and unattractive for men to teach music because it was considered too feminine an activity.\textsuperscript{287} When these female gendered activities became professionalized, they became perceived as male-gendered, and female practitioners were perceived as “inappropriately crossing the gender boundary,” leading to more men teaching music than women.\textsuperscript{288} Sherrie Tucker argues that the concept of “worker” itself is gendered masculine and that when women work they are often assumed

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{283} Ibid
  \item \textsuperscript{284} Ibid, 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{285} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{286} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{287} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{288} Ibid, 44.
\end{itemize}
to be participating as a hobby or leisure activity.\textsuperscript{289} When a female musician or music teacher stands before an audience, the audience often assumes that she is expressing herself and performing a passion, while male musicians and music teachers are taken more seriously and treated as professionals.\textsuperscript{290}

Since participating in college marching band is essential for college band directors, and prior to 1972 women were often excluded from college bands, there were fewer women working toward being college band directors at the time. Even today, even though women are allowed to participate in college bands, band directors are more likely to be male than female. I propose that the lack of female band directors in New Orleans causes girls to be less likely to receive the encouragement necessary for them to choose a career as a band director, however more research should be done on how the gender of the band director affects the likelihood of students to professionalize in music. Elizabeth Gould argues that bands are historically homosocial organizations, meaning that membership is uniform in terms of gender and that band directors today tend to recruit and mentor people that are like them, leading to more men seeking careers in music or music education than women.\textsuperscript{291} This creates a vicious cycle of girls not professionalizing in music because their band directors are male, and they inspire male students rather than female students to become band directors. Gould argues that the cultural systems of bands and music, rather than individual band directors’ actions, explain the exclusion of women from careers as band directors.\textsuperscript{292}

\textsuperscript{290} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{291} Ibid, 8.
\textsuperscript{292} Ibid.
“Men Are Just More Likely to Get More Chances Than Women”

In New Orleans, kids grow up listening to music in their neighborhoods, in parades, on street corners, in church, at festivals, on the radio etc. Many grow up in musical families in which skills are passed down and shared among generations. Although there is this romantic idea that all New Orleanians grow up hearing music and learn it just by listening to the sounds around them and picking it up by ear, there is often formal training involved. One of the main ways young kids receive a formal music training is through marching bands. However, mentorship outside of the marching band is also very common and important in New Orleans. Many young musicians have a professional musician as a mentor to help them get the tools to be a successful professional musician and help them network and make connections with other musicians. Programs such as the Tipitina’s Internship Program led by Donald Harrison, the Trombone Shorty Academy led by Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews and instructed by Erion Williams and Julian Gosin of the Soul Rebels, Jenard Andrews from the New Breed Brass Band, and Edward Lee of MainLine, and the Next Generation Big Band, run by Jesse McBride provide opportunities for young student musicians to work with professional musicians and gain the tools they need to play music professionally. In other cases, young musicians have one-on-one relationships with professional musician mentors. Talk That Music Talk: Passing on Brass Band Music in New Orleans by Bruce “Sunpie” Barnes and Rachel Breunlin, part of the Neighborhood Story Project, chronicles the lives of various musicians and their experiences learning to play music in New Orleans. Each chapter pairs one young musician with their musical mentor and shares stories about how music is passed along. Of the forty mentors and musicians mentioned
in the book, only two were female. The lack of female mentors in the book, as well as the entirely male leadership of all these mentorship programs, show a clear paucity of female musicians who serve as mentors for younger generations.

Some of the girls at St. Mary’s Academy and Warren Easton who showed an interest in professionalizing in music spoke about having a mentor in the city that inspired them to want to keep playing. Malon McGee, a saxophone player at St. Mary’s Academy, was inspired by her mentor, Donald Harrison Jr., a saxophone player and Mardi Gras Indian chief. Her experiences in the marching and brass bands at St. Mary’s Academy have made her want to start her own brass band after college. Jasmine Green, a clarinet player from Warren Easton, wants to play jazz professionally like her mentor, clarinet player Gregory Agid, who led the Warren Easton jazz band on an exchange in Cuba in 2016, introducing the students to the history and culture of the island. However, most could not name a single female musician in New Orleans, let alone a female mentor, other than their own band director Asia Muhaimin. Band directors are also mentors and inspire kids every day, but having a professional musician mentor outside of the band room helps bridge the gap between participating in high school marching band and pursuing a career in music. Jasmine Green believes that if more girls were introduced to musicians and mentors, they might see a career in music as a possibility for themselves:

I feel like music, joining or trying to be a professional musician as a whole, I feel like females are not introduced enough to that. I feel like as a female we’re not taught to enjoy certain things, so I feel like if like people actually came and taught people about like the industry and stuff and broadened our horizons, then we could actually see if it was something that we want to pursue or not. Because before that’s not what I wanted to do. I used to say that I wanted to be a plastic

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surgeon, I was really determined to be a plastic surgeon but now that I-
ever since I joined the band and started listening to jazz music and the people that I met and stuff, I know that I want to be a jazz musician. [There needs to be] like more women just talking to other females, like younger kids.\textsuperscript{294}

Since mentoring is so important in the culture of New Orleans professional music, it is essential for mentors, either female or male, to be able to identify with and inspire young female girls to play music. Many girls do not realize that playing music is an option for them, especially at the professional level, and I think that the culture of professional music needs to change to allow for an increased visibility of female professional musicians in order for young women to see a career in music as an option.

There is also a notable lack of documentation of women in music, especially in jazz history. When girls study and read about jazz history, they primarily learn about the accomplishments of male musicians and rarely see themselves fitting into this patriarchal scene. Sherrie Tucker claims that “because gender- or the array of social meanings associated with femininity and masculinity- have a knack for seeming natural, instead of as cultural and historical, it is extraordinarily easy to miss its operations when conducting a research study of an area believed to be a history of men.”\textsuperscript{295} Tucker maintains that there is evidence of women that “participated on every instrument, in every genre, in every period of jazz history” though this legacy is heavily underrepresented.\textsuperscript{296} This lack of historical information about women was not necessarily an intentional neglect by scholars and writers, but rather was likely due to the fact that women often participated in music in ways that were not seen as dominant parts of the culture, such as singing,

\textsuperscript{294} Jasmine Green, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 6 February 2017.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid.
playing accompaniment on piano, performing at private parties, participating in all-
female bands, performing in vaudeville shows, dancing, throwing parties, and
teaching. Tucker also notes that female musicians were likely not recorded as much as
men were, and therefore historians using recordings as evidence of women’s participation
in jazz may be misguided.

Although there were women (though underrepresented) throughout the history of jazz, these performers often were sexualized and discriminated against by audience members, band mates, and managers. Linda F. Williams explains that many jazz and blues musicians had to appear more feminine through dress and makeup, and there were pressures to stay thin, be light-skinned, and show off their chests with a low-neckline. Women who were serious about music had to prove that they were more than just a sex-object to a public that “looked first, listened second.” Ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff claims, “In societies where males were or are the main patrons of musical performances or where male-dominated political, religious, and economic spheres call for young female performers, musical behaviors that heighten female sexuality are the norm.” Today in New Orleans, to avoid being objectified and sexualized, the Original Pinettes choose to wear un-revealing outfits, usually consisting of jeans and t-shirts, as they demand to be recognized for their music rather than their looks and sexuality. Pinettes band leader

297 Ibid. 3
298 Ibid.
300 Tucker, Swing Shift, 68.
Christie Jourdain explains that judgment on their physical appearance still factors into how the Pinettes are received today:

…Men used to say, “Excuse me, it’s all tits and ass up there.” And people used to come to shows and our last manager used to say, “I’m not worrying about how y’all sound. Y’all are girls. Y’all are females.” But I was the opposite; I was like, “Get over that girl crap! I’m looking for a sound.” And it was just crazy because we have never used that. We have never, ever, ever used that to our advantage… We’ve always showed up as musicians and it went from “Y’all are cute” when we started coming up to “Yeah, y’all sounding like y’all trying to do something.” It used to be all “Hey, hey, hey.” Then it went, “Here come the Pinettes. Hide your flavor and hide your hands. Don’t let them see what you’re playing!” Yeah, then it wasn’t cute anymore!\(^{302}\)

By focusing on their music rather than on their image and femininity, the Pinettes are now recognized as more than just a novelty all-female band and are respected as a top-tier brass band in the city. While the Pinettes have worked hard to overcome being sexualized and objectified, many female musicians struggle to be recognized for their music rather than their body which can often be discouraging to girls trying to professionalize in music.

In addition to being sexualized, women in New Orleans are often left without management because so many managers refuse to work with female musicians due to gendered stereotypes of women being catty and hard to work with.\(^{303}\) The Pinettes were left without a manager when their manager released a live recording of the band without their permission. Now, Christie Jourdain has taken on the role of bandleader but they still have no manager.

Christie Jourdain: We don’t have a manager. I’m the leader, but no one wants to manage us. I think I [got] turned down like three or four times. And you


\(^{303}\) DeCoste, 88.
know what they tell me? Even by women: I don’t ever want to deal with females!

Kyle DeCoste: That seems like another place where just being a woman perhaps works out really a lot to your disadvantage.

Christie: And I have to ask, I was like, “Why?!” … And another man told me that, “Man, you know, women have bad attitudes…” I was like, “It’s not this bad.” I mean, you see our band hanging around more than you see [other bands hanging around] … They come hang at my house, we christen each other kids.304

Kyle DeCoste notes, “Social expectations demand women to conform to normative images of feminine passivity and deviations from this standard are often perceived as relationally aggression.”305 When a woman is referred to as “catty,” it means that they do not conform to normative femininity, which Linda M. Waldren describes as having “passive, gentle, submissive, emotional, domestic, and narrowly defined understandings of beauty often expressed through heterosexual desirability.”306 Often when a woman knows what she wants and fights to get it she is called “bossy” or “catty,” while a man would be called hardworking or dedicated. This association between cattiness and femininity is used especially frequently to refer to and criticize black women and contributes to the sapphire caricature which depicts black women as “rude, loud, malicious, stubborn, and overbearing,” contributing to the “Angry Black Woman” stereotype commonly used in TV and movies.307 These attitudes toward women in the music industry trickle down to be internalized by young female musicians. Many of the girls and band directors I spoke to identified attitude problems, drama, back-talk,

305 DeCoste, 88.
cattiness, and mood swings as female-specific issues that make it hard to work with girls in marching bands. Jasmine Green from Warren Easton attributes the lack of female musicians in the jazz scene to negative attitudes regarding working with women:

It’s rare that I spy like a lot of female jazz musicians, like I mostly see men, like men are all over the jazz scene so it’s like rare for me. I feel like men are just more likely to get chances, more chances than women. Honestly, I feel like, I don’t know. Just it’s probably like a mindset that people have about women, like they won’t do the work or something or women, they probably think women are too emotional to handle certain stuff. 308

By internalizing these stereotypes about girls being too emotional or catty, or causing drama and having mood swings, girls begin to fear that people will not want to work with them and may restrict themselves from pursuing what they really want to do. The treatment of women in the professional music world as well as sexist assumptions and attitudes about women in general have a huge impact on younger girls and can discourage them from choosing a career in music.

In addition to being discriminated against due to gendered stereotypes regarding personalities and work ethic, women also face societal pressures to have and raise children. Historically, women have been held back from pursuing careers in music, or sometimes careers in general, because of the societal pressure to marry, have children, and care for their family. 309 Rose Brewer argues that “[l]abor is not simply about waged work at the site of production. Within households, Black women perform a significant [and disproportionate] proportion of the social reproductive labor.” 310 Band directors and professional musicians have to put in an immense amount of time and energy into what

308 Jasmine Green, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 6 February 2017.
they do which can make having children and taking care of their family incredibly difficult. At Warren Easton, Ms. Muhaimin leads the marching band, jazz band, and concert band in rehearsal, arranges the music, writes field shows, takes the band to football games, marches with them in parades, disciplines her students, makes sure they are keeping their grades up, organizes and mends the uniforms, and spends countless hours making sure the band will sound and look good. As a new mom, she often feels guilty devoting so much time to her job and has people telling her to quit so that she can take care of her daughter. She acknowledges that societal gender roles tell mothers that they should be the primary caregiver of their children, and she says that because her daughter spends so much time with her father, “it feels like the roles changed.”

Raising a family while working as a band director can be a difficult balancing act but Ms. Muhaimin has made it work:

Timewise, I feel guilty a lot that I’m away from her, but I also feel guilty that I’m not there for them, so a lot of times those two things come together. Now that she’s older I include her in because I don’t want my students to feel like they’re not important because Ms. Muhaimin is a new mom, but I also don’t want my daughter to feel like her mom only cares about the marching band. So, I just have to take both of those worlds and combine them. And it works fine, sometimes I think she thinks she’s in high school. The kids like her around and a few of the kids she’s really close to. So you know it’s a balancing act that any mom in my position would have to do… I mean I get home, I have my seasons, like football season my fiancé knows that mom’s gonna be late. Last year she was so young that she couldn’t travel with me. Now she’s at an age where she can travel, she can do a lot of stuff, like I used to miss them a lot but I think you can do whatever you want to do.

The guilt that Ms. Muhaimin describes is common for working moms to feel but much less common for working dads. Female band directors often feel like they have to choose

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311 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 2016.
312 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 April 2017.
either their family or their career, while their male colleagues do not. Part of why Ms. Muhaimin is able to be successful at both is that she has a partner who is reliable and understanding of her commitment to the marching band:

[You have to] have the right partner. Like I have a partner who does not have an issue with that fact that I’m not home on Fridays cuz of a football game and Mardi Gras, the month before Mardi Gras I’m usually late because I’m practicing and things like that but I have a supportive partner. He’s secure in who he is, he doesn’t feel threatened by the fact that most of my colleagues are male, that it’s 10 o’clock and “where’s my wife?” My fiancé, he doesn’t have that insecurity, and I don’t have an issue with him showing up with a small person on his hip at a football game, so it’s a partnership. If you have a good partner, anything is possible. If you don’t have a good partner, you’re gonna have an issue. If your husband is old fashioned or says that a woman should be in a woman’s place, at home, you won’t be successful. But if you have a partner that says, let’s make it work baby, let’s make it work, that’s it. I like the fact that my daughter sees me in an unconventional career, I think about that a lot, when she identifies what her goals are and she sees that mommy isn’t doing something conventional.313

Many male partners, however, are not understanding and do not pull their weight raising children as they have been taught that it is the woman’s job to take care of and nurture the family. V.E. Schein’s research shows that female parents end up taking care of the house and children “regardless of the extent of the career or family earnings.”314 Even those women who have partners who share the household and parenting responsibilities “experience far greater conflict between work and family roles than their male counterparts,” including the guilt that comes from being away from their children.315

Female professional musicians, like teachers, also have to deal with the pressure to take care of their family and the guilt that comes with being away from them because of work. Professional musicians often play gigs late at night and travel a lot, keeping

313 Asia Muhaimin, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 April 2017.
them away from their families. The Pinettes ultimately want to travel the world but are held back because of their familial responsibilities:

Kyle DeCoste: What’s your ultimate goal as a musician? What do you aspire to?
Janine Waters: To do this fulltime and to touch every single country in the world. I mean, like, to play-
Kyle: You want to travel?
Janine: Yeah, I love to travel and I would love to play in every single country.
Kyle: So really it’s about mobility and getting around?
Janine: Right, right. Traveling. I mean, and if I could bring my son with me, that would be awesome to let him experience that… Because I was like, “Can I take him to Switzerland?” And they [Swiss festival organizers] were like, “No, Miss! What are we going to do with the children when you play?” … So yeah, me and Christie talk about that a lot: “Man, if we ever make it big where we can afford to, we’ll just bring a babysitter with us when we travel overseas and everything and at least we’ll have somebody to watch them while we’re playing.” And, you know, just so the kids can get that experience.316

Kyle DeCoste argues that men do not feel the same pressures to stay home with their kids or to take them traveling with them when they are on tour.317 In the HBO TV show Treme, based in post-Katrina New Orleans, the character Antoine Batiste is seen constantly playing gigs and touring while his daughter stays at home with her mom. Antoine is gone so much in the show that I often forgot while I was watching that he even had a daughter. Women usually do not have the liberty to go out and play gigs for days and weeks at a time because they are pressured by society to stay at home to care for their family. For many women being a mother is a full-time job, and many musicians, like the Pinettes, have to work another job as well to provide for their family.318 Working a job on

317 DeCoste, 83.
318 DeCoste, 83.
top of taking care of kids does not allot much time for the Pinettes to practice or perform, so getting the band together is a challenge.

Marching bands in New Orleans exist within a realm of hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality. The society in which we live dictates that many of the practices and styles that marching bands in New Orleans use are masculine, and therefore girls are less likely to want to participate and less likely to see music as a possible career. The challenges women face in the professional world and the pressures put on them by society can dissuade girls from professionalizing. There is virtually no research on the transition of girls out of the classroom and into the professional world, so more research should be done following girls as they begin their careers in music.
5. Conclusion

When I first started this research, I expected to find blatant gender inequality and discrimination within the bands. I expected that band directors would treat girls and boys differently and would provide less encouragement and resources to girls than to boys. However, I realized that more so than individual actions, the culture of bands, stemming from their history as military organizations, creates an androcentric environment that prioritizes male members over female members. Marching bands function as inequality regimes that favor masculine performance, and the gender inequity that exists within these bands is a product of a larger system that prioritizes male participants. Society and the gender roles that pollute it ingrain expectations of performances of gender into students’, directors’, and audience members’ minds that manifest within marching bands and discourage female students from playing certain instruments, playing and performing with an aggressive sound and appearance, putting on a “masculine” uniform, and pursuing careers in the male-dominated fields of music performance and music education. Judith Butler’s theory of performativity explains that social expectations of gender are reproduced through actions, behaviors, and gestures, and marching bands encourage the performance and certain qualities exemplary of hegemonic masculinity, which can be off-putting to high school girls.

The ideas that gender elements of marching bands and make them undesirable to girls are set in place starting at an early age. As soon as someone exclaims, “It’s a girl!” when a baby is born, a set of expectations and understandings of gender are placed upon this wrinkly, screaming, tiny human that shape its existence for the rest of its life. These
expectations and gender norms make girls believe that they have to play certain “feminine” instruments, have to be pretty to impress boys, and have to pursue careers that are “acceptable” and viable for women. As Natalie from St. Mary’s Academy says, “I think it just really starts from an early age, so like parents, teachers, people that influence young children, they should tell them that they can do anything that a boy can do, even better.”

Recognizing that these stereotypes and expectations exist is the first step in overcoming them. I also believe that allowing more girls to have leadership roles within bands will give them the confidence to pursue careers in music and will also inspire other girls to follow in their footsteps. The fact that most girls in New Orleans have not had a female band director as a role model and most cannot even name a female musician from New Orleans that they look up to makes it understandable that music does not seem like a viable career for women, or perhaps they do not even realize it is an option for them. St. Mary’s drum major Shania Tyler commented on her role as a band leader, “Students will watch us for example, and they might say ‘oh she’s been doing this for so long and she’s been improving and stuff like that,’ they would, that would like motivate them and encourage them to try and see if they want to do that as a professional career.”

The work that the girls in both St. Mary’s and Warren Easton’s marching bands are doing will be seen by and inspire future generations, and the more representation there is of girls in marching bands and professional music, the more the activity will seem more appealing and possible to other girls and women. Girls in marching bands can act as role models for younger female musicians and can pave the way for more girls to participate in bands and more women to pursue professional music careers in New Orleans, however the whole

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319 Natalie Jones, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 19 October 2016.
320 Shania Tyler, personal interview, New Orleans, Louisiana, 19 October 2016.
culture of marching bands and professional music needs to evolve to be more inclusive and encouraging of women.

The girls in the St. Mary’s Academy band and the Warren Easton band who are interested in pursuing careers in music are incredibly tenacious and inspiring in their efforts to overcome the obstacles that surround them and that loom over their future. They have already faced gender discrimination during their time in the marching band and yet still want to fight for their place in the professional music world. Women should not have to fight, however, to play music professionally. The state of the professional music world, especially in terms of the lack of gender diversity and the discrimination directed at female musicians, is visible to young female musicians, and they are clearly affected and discouraged by it. Female musicians such as the Pinettes are carving a space for women in the New Orleans music scene, however music will only be normalized as a profession available to all genders when the professional music world begins to allow for greater representation of women and non-normative identities. Almost all the girls I spoke to said that in order to encourage more girls to professionalize, there need to be more professional musicians speaking to and mentoring younger female musicians. It is critical that girls receive the same tools to professionalize as boys and that they are able to see the accomplishments of women in music history as well as in music today so they can imagine themselves in music as a future career. Women deserve to have the same chances as men and should be able to professionalize without being discriminated against because of their gender.

My aim for my research was to answer Kyle DeCoste’s question, “Why is there such a steep drop-off in female participation in music right around the time of high
school graduation when many male horn players are beginning to professionalize?” I do not claim to have answered this question completely, as there are many other perspectives and standpoints that could offer other explanations for the lack of female professional musicians and different interpretations of the female experience in marching band and the professional world. I hope that my partial perspective contributes knowledge to help answer this question and that this thesis encourages others to engage with gender in marching bands and the professional music world. One of the most rewarding experiences of this process was when a student at St. Mary’s told me she appreciated me coming in every week because it was nice to see a woman who plays an instrument and understands how hard it is for women in the music world interacting with younger female musicians. I hope this thesis helps encourage more girls to play music and that one day the culture of marching bands and the professional music world will be inclusive of all genders. Maybe one day the Original Pinettes will no longer be able to market themselves as “the world’s only all-female brass band.”
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIOGRAPHY

Olivia Broslawsky was born in Pasadena, California. She received her BA in Anthropology and Music from Tulane University in 2015. She has played saxophone in several marching bands, including the Tulane University Marching Band, and hopes to stay involved in music and music education, even though she has chosen not to play professionally.