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## EDUCATION IN NEW ORLEANS: A DECADE AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

# Music Lessons as Life Lessons in New Orleans Marching Bands

Matt Sakakeeny

*In New Orleans, musicians in school marching bands are more popular than athletes, and spectators marvel at the choreography and musicianship on display in Mardi Gras parades and sporting events. Lessons imparted in the bandroom not only prepare a select few with the tools to pursue a career in music, they offer all students “culturally sustaining pedagogies” unavailable in core curriculum classes. But in prioritizing high-stakes testing, racialized “career readiness” schools have relegated arts education further to the periphery, denying young people an opportunity to socialize themselves as black subjects in ways that they find meaningful and valuable.*

*Keywords: blackness, charter schools, culturally sustaining pedagogies, marching band, music, New Orleans*

Dinerral Jevone Shavers had wanted to be a marching band director ever since he first played in band at Martin Luther King Elementary, in the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood where his mother Yolande Adams owned a home and raised Dinerral and his three sisters. He played drums at Alfred Lawless Middle School and Frederick Douglass High School, where he held the cherished position of drum major, and upon graduation he received a scholarship to play in Southern University’s famed “Human Jukebox” band. Dinerral chose to return home after his son was born, taking on a seemingly never-ending string of day jobs, working in the shipyards and even delivering the bodies of Katrina victims to the New Orleans coroner’s office. But these were all supplemental to his music career: Dinerral was the snare drummer

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**Figure 1** The Hot 8 Brass Band performing at the New Generation Social Aid & Pleasure Club parade, with Dinerral Shavers in baseball cap and tuba player Bennie Pete. December 10, 2006. (Photo by author.)

for the Hot 8, one of the city’s many famed brass bands that play funky, improvised music with a small ensemble of marching band instruments (see Figure 1).

The job at L.E. Rabouin High School was different than the others. Staring as a substitute French teacher in the fall of 2006, the first full school year after Hurricane Katrina struck, Dinerral convinced his principal to let him fulfill his lifelong dream of starting a band. “He was persistent,” Principal Kevin George remembered when I visited the school in January 2007. “And finally I was like, ‘You know what Mr. Shavers, start putting things together.’ The first day we announced that we were going to have a band, over eighty-five kids signed up for it. So I said, ‘OK, we have a big demand for a band here at the school!’” In preparation for the Mardi Gras season, when school bands march between the garishly decorated floats filled with Krewe members tossing beads, Dinerral rushed to order uniforms and instruments before the winter break.

On the afternoon of December 28, Dinerral left a performance with the Hot 8 to pick up his wife Tiffany, and together they continued on to get her 15-year-old son. Thaddeus was enjoying time off from John McDonogh High School, where he had been reassigned from his neighborhood school after Hurricane Katrina, and was struggling to adjust. A feud had developed between Thaddeus and David Bonds, a student who lived near “John Mac,” as locals refer to it, and just around the corner from Thaddeus’ girlfriend. When Dinerral and Tiffany pulled up outside her apartment, and Thaddeus made his way into the backseat, someone approached

the car with a gun drawn. Dinerral pulled away as several gunshots broke through the car windows, but he was hit, and died after driving his family to safety. He was 25. David Bonds was arrested, tried for murder, and acquitted, then the following month he was arrested on new charges and eventually convicted of attempted murder.

Violence and death had been all too familiar to Dinerral: since the Hot 8 had formed in 1996, three members of his band had died, two of them murdered, all of them in their twenties. At Rabouin, nearly every one of his students had lost family members or friends to violence. When student Christopher Lee first appears onscreen in the documentary film *The Whole Gritty City*, the drum major for the Rabouin band offers condolences to his friends who have gone:

Special, special, special rest in peace to my little partner-ex, Joshua Jack. You feel what I'm saying? He got killed. But it's all good. Shouts out to him.

I miss you Darryl, you know, hold it down till I see you again.

Shouts out to Treydel Keeler, you heard me? I ain't known you for that long, but the time that I knew you, we was cool.<sup>1</sup>

The scene initiates the viewer into the sheer magnitude of loss for “Skully,” as Christopher’s friends call him, and the routineness with which he and his peers must cope. For Katrina victims, these “daily disasters” are intimately entwined with the trauma caused by the floodwaters of Katrina, the forced evacuation and long-term displacement, the debilitating governmental response, and the obstacles encountered on the road home. The unprecedented restructuring of the school system has created a decentralized laboratory for social and educational experimentation with young people like Skully as trial subjects.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the city limits, in urban centers across America, high-stakes testing and for-profit education have become the twin pillars of a perilous infrastructure of education, and students’ lives hang in the balance.

Against a backdrop of structural and interpersonal violence, music teachers have the potential to provide a space for creative expression and positive socialization through teamwork and leadership. “Kids that we had serious problems with, after they had band, I saw a total change in them,” Principal Kevin George told a reporter.<sup>3</sup> When Dinerral named Skully drum major—responsible for leading the band, marching out front with a tall hat, marching stick, and a whistle at the ready—he was literally passing the baton. “I had positions in my life, but that was a big step for me,” Skully explained to me. “That’s something I always wanted to be and he was giving me the chance to be it.” Just as his own music teachers had shaped him at the critical juncture that is adolescence, Dinerral gave his students a level of personal attention and self-responsibility that is hard to come by in the more passive, stricter, and outcome-driven environment of core curriculum classes.

My research in New Orleans has focused on the role of professional musicians in articulating a collective response to structural marginalization, sustaining community, perpetuating deeply rooted traditions, and propping up the tourism industry. This article takes me into areas I have only gestured to previously, where musicians, teachers, and students are situated within the larger contexts of a school system

undergoing massive reform and national changes in education policy that have further limited access to the arts. The benefits of marching band in New Orleans schools are twofold: the lessons taught in band provide the basis for a career as a professional musician, and all students benefit from the culturally sustaining pedagogies of band instruction. In imparting the fundamentals of music through daily rehearsals and in performances at football games, marching band competitions, and the Mardi Gras parades that roll down wide boulevards lined with spectators, band directors are also teaching students to overcome difference through discipline and teamwork. Dinerral had an expression for this desired degree of unification: “One Band, One Sound.” Embedded within the music lessons he offered are what one band director described to me as “life lessons,” acquired in the band room, on the field, and in the street.

I was led into an anthropological study of arts education through my interactions with professional musicians who spoke with reverence about their formative experiences with music teachers. As with studies of black American music elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> research on New Orleans has emphasized informal processes of acquiring musical knowledge, such as kinship (“musical families”), cultural immersion (participation in community-based parades, funerals, parties, etc.), and the transmission of African-derived vernacular practices (collective improvisation, polyrhythm, bodily engagement, etc.).<sup>5</sup> But for many New Orleans musicians, playing in school band was their first introduction to music performance, and scholars have become increasingly attentive to formal pedagogy in the socialization of young musicians.<sup>6</sup> In his book *Chord Changes on the Chalkboard: How Public School Teachers Shaped Jazz and the Music of New Orleans*, Al Kennedy found that countless professional musicians—from the self-proclaimed “inventor of jazz” Jelly Roll Morton to Pulitzer Prize winner and New Orleans native Wynton Marsalis—acquired musical knowledge through formal education.

“There was so much music when I was growing up in New Orleans that you couldn’t help but hear it,” remembered Louis Armstrong of his youth in the first decades of the 20th century, when jazz emerged.<sup>7</sup> Armstrong’s earliest memories are of singing hymns and clapping in church, and he was mentored in a sprawling social network of musicians, shadowing his mentor Joe “King” Oliver’s during street parades. However, it was Armstrong’s first and only music teacher, Peter Davis, who gave him his first horn and taught him the fundamentals of music. “Mr. Davis saw that trumpet and me were going to be pals and he helped me with my fingering and breathing and mouth work,” remembered Armstrong.<sup>8</sup>

At the other end of the 20th century, drummer Derrick Tabb was born into a musical family that includes his brother Glen David Andrews, and cousins Troy Michael “Trombone Shorty” Andrews and James “Twelve” Andrews, all active on the global performance circuit that the most visible New Orleans musicians travel. Derrick is also from the Tremé neighborhood, raised on the sounds of the leading brass bands—the Dirty Dozen, Olympia, and Rebirth—all of which were based in the Tremé during his youth. Yet Derrick credits his middle school band director, Donald Richardson at A.J. Bell, with instilling in him the wherewithal to become a

musician. "He was strict," Derrick said admiringly, remembering how Richardson required students to read music and practice fundamentals before they could march.

In 1988, when Derrick was weighing his options for high school, band was one of his primary considerations, and though he was offered a scholarship to St. Augustine, an all-black, all-male Catholic high school with the most legendary band in the city, he chose to attend John McDonogh because he saw potential in their band. In the hallways of John Mac, Derrick and the other star members of band were more popular than the athletes. When the football team played "St. Augs," the real action on the field was during the halftime show when students, parents, and alumni cheer on the bands as they try to out-blow and out-step one another. Rehearsals all built up to the Mardi Gras season, and on the parade routes John Mac stretched for a full block with a hundred or more members assembled in formation: the color guard, drum majors and majorettes, flag team, and cheerleaders leading the pack, followed by the musicians (trombones, mellophones, trumpets, woodwinds, tubas, and drums) and finally the dance team.<sup>9</sup> The ensemble creates a massive sonic and physical presence that is iconic of the city; as Derrick says, "everybody's watching us." After attending John Mac, Derrick joined the Rebirth Brass Band, eventually winning a Grammy Award, and his reputation as a leading drummer owes much to his experiences in band (see Figure 2).

For Louis Armstrong at the beginning of the 20th century and Derrick Tabb at the end of the century, their careers were facilitated, in part, by formal lessons in music. Over the course of that century, New Orleans redefined itself as a cultural destination with live musical performance as a central pillar of its economic foundation. Visitors come to New Orleans expecting to experience "authentic" local music, and there has been a massive infrastructure of entertainment districts, music festivals, and other cultural institutions constructed to meet their expectations.<sup>10</sup> From a purely economic standpoint, music provides jobs for young black musicians who face a career landscape of predominantly insecure service work and high unemployment (over 50% among black men), thus fulfilling a primary function of school: the reproduction of labor power.<sup>11</sup>

But music education has not been integral to strategies for sustaining local musical cultures, in part because of a misperception that black music is pure vernacular expression that simply "bubbles up from the streets" and thus does not require cultivation. This racial imaginary is part of a larger narrative about the "natural talents" or inherent kinetic abilities of black musicians, in contrast with Western classical music as the standard-bearer of erudition and skill.<sup>12</sup> Music education continues to rely upon universal models of indoctrinating students into the European tradition while devaluing other traditions that may have specific relevance to a given student population.<sup>13</sup> For black New Orleanians, repertoire and performance practices drawn from familiar genres of popular music (such as hip-hop, R&B, jazz, and brass band) make up a "knowledge fund" that students draw upon when playing band arrangements, bridging time spent in school with their home community.<sup>14</sup>

The music lessons taught in band exemplify what education scholar Django Paris terms "culturally sustaining pedagogies" that "support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence."<sup>15</sup> In one example, Paris references a





**Figure 2** Derrick Tabb (center) playing snare drum with the Rebirth Brass Band at the Sidewalk Steppers second line parade. March 28, 2014. (Photo by author.)

study of Mexican-Americans in Tucson, Arizona, where teachers assist bilingual students in bringing linguistic resources from their immediate community to bear on classroom studies taught in “Dominant American English.”<sup>16</sup> In another example, teacher-researcher H. Samy Alim “developed ways of using Hip Hop Culture itself as educational practice” to design a curriculum in middle school and high school English classes “based in the cultural-linguistic reality of the students.”<sup>17</sup> Paris situates pedagogies such as these, which draw upon the knowledge funds of minoritized students, against an education “reform” movement in which standardized tests are written for normative white, middle-class students while relegating “the languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being of many students and communities of color as deficiencies to be overcome.”<sup>18</sup> Musical aptitude is but one benefit of band instruction as a culturally sustaining pedagogy.

But as I discuss at the conclusion of this article, the future of school band is uncertain as New Orleans becomes the first 100% urban charter district in the nation,

amidst a national policy shift that has moved standardized testing in core curriculum subjects squarely to the center while displacing arts education further to the periphery. After the implementation of statewide testing at the turn of the 21st century, administrators could quantify an “achievement gap” between low and high performing schools, with many of the lowest being so-called “apartheid schools” in which 99 to 100% of students are nonwhite.<sup>19</sup> The calamity of Hurricane Katrina enabled the state legislature to pass Act 35, dissolving the teacher’s union and facilitating the takeover of 107 New Orleans schools; when I visited Rabouin in 2007 it was operated by the state’s Recovery School District (RSD), which then opened bids to Charter Management Organizations in 2009, before ultimately deciding to close the 70-year-old school and turn over the building to a charter. In this “non-system” that prioritizes measurable outcomes, dominated by for-profit education in the form of racialized “career readiness” and “college prep” Charter Management Organizations, culturally sustaining pedagogies are not a priority.

While some “legacy” high schools that predate Katrina have remained open and continued to offer band, many of the new schools most aligned with the reform movement do not. A primary motivation for principals that do offer band is to protect their image and satisfy the demands of parents and community members. My ethnographic research on the role of marching band in the lives of students, as well as former students who have gone on to become working musicians, is offered as an alternative to the supposedly objective, race neutral curricula designed to raise test scores. Music lessons not only prepare a select few students with the necessary tools to pursue a career in music, they also have the potential to raise academic achievement and offer levels of cultural transmission and community participation unavailable in core curriculum classes.

### **Music Lessons in the Band Room**

New Orleans is in the middle of a marching band belt that stretches from Florida to Texas, where high school bands emulate those of historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) such as Florida A&M University (FAMU), Southern, and Grambling.<sup>20</sup> These “show-style” marching bands, now highly imitated at historically white colleges and universities, were pioneered by legendary band director William Foster, who led the FAMU band from 1946 to 1998. It was Foster who developed the marching band into a black music ensemble, writing band arrangements of popular songs and introducing dance routines into the drill maneuvers, such as “barrel turns, backbends, hitchkicks, swivel turns, pelvic thrusts, [and] pelvic rotations.”<sup>21</sup> Having been excluded from band as a student at University of Kansas in the 1930s, Foster went on to become the first black American to serve as president of the Florida Music Education Association, the College Band Directors National Association, and the American Bandmaster’s Association.<sup>22</sup>

High school bands are especially popular in New Orleans because they are integrated within an expansive tradition of street music performance, which includes Mardi Gras parades, Mardi Gras Indian ceremonies, and community processions known “jazz funerals” and “second line” parades. My research has focused on the



brass bands that lead these neighborhood parades—such as Rebirth, the Soul Rebels, and the Hot 8—and appear onstage around the world.<sup>23</sup> Though these ensembles of eight to twelve musicians emphasize improvisation to a degree not possible in the much larger marching bands, nearly all brass band musicians got their start in school band. “This was big stuff in the black community,” said Soul Rebels bandleader Lumar LeBlanc, a member of St. Augs’ famed “Purple Knights” band in the 1980s.<sup>24</sup> “Kids were actually declining sports to stay in music programs ... you had such large numbers of kids in the community who were begging band directors to be in their bands.”

Two decades later, when I was conducting fieldwork with professional brass band musicians and school band directors, those who interacted regularly with students would inevitably describe them as “hungry.” “They’re eager,” observed Derrick Tabb, “they’re just so hungry for something.” The hunger stems, in part, from a kind of creative and social starvation in schools where armed security guards keep a watchful eye on “disobedience” and mete out discipline with a zero-tolerance approach. “The first thing I thought about was a prison,” remarked Derrick’s bandmate Keith Frazier after visiting John Mac to mentor the band students. “And if you have them kids in there like they’re in prison, they going to act like they’re in a prison.” New Orleans is at the forefront of what education activists describe as “the new paternalism,” a nationwide movement towards increased surveillance of student behavior for signs of noncompliance, to be penalized by suspension or expulsion.<sup>25</sup> The “school to prison pipeline” begins with militarism in school, which students likely relate to interactions with law enforcement out of school, working in tandem to isolate, punish, and incarcerate youth.<sup>26</sup>

When I entered John Mac in January 2007, a security guard rose from his chair, checked my ID and inquired about the purpose of my visit. While I explained my research on music and signed the book, students marched single-file through the metal detector wearing uniforms of either white rugby shirts or white button-down work shirts with black pants, worn oversized and baggy. “Tuck in those shirts!” the guard warned. He blocked a student from entering: “If you expelled, you can’t go in here. Come back with your mama.” I walked up the stairs and down the hallway to room 312.

The band room at John Mac was a space of relative calm even as sixty instrumentalists were playing at full volume. Ray Johnson was directing with a sense of steady resolve that he learned from his mentors, the renowned band directors Edwin Hampton at St. Augs and Isaac “Doc” Greggs at Southern University. At the beginning of rehearsal, time is allotted for students to explore their instruments individually and in small, impromptu sectionals, and then Ray calls for “horns up,” demanding attentive silence from the entire ensemble. After running through the songs that need the most rehearsal, the band broke off into sections run by student section leaders, boys and girls who had demonstrated their leadership potential to Ray. “Say, cut off boy!” a section leader scolded one of his drummers who continued to play after a song was halted. “Play together or don’t play at all.”

Ray demands authority in the band room and the students consented because he is a teacher and a figure of authority, yet unlike teachers in core curriculum subjects, the lessons he imparts relate to practices of black popular culture that students value. As

Ralph Ellison recalled of musical “drillmasters” in his childhood in Oklahoma City, “These men who taught us had raised a military discipline to the level of a low art form, almost a dance, and its spirit was jazz.”<sup>27</sup> Over time, despite changes in school integration, curriculum, and pedagogical methods, drillmasters have continued to effectively reach students. “I mean, the band directors were stronger than the principals in these schools, because their kids were disciplined,” remembered Lumar Leblanc:

Oh, I know some of the cats I grew up with, if they wasn’t in music from 3:00 in the evening, they would of been inside somebody’s house, robbing it, or getting in trouble. ... All our directors touched upon that: “keep your behind out of trouble, don’t do this, don’t do that.” ... You know, it was really these band directors, man, they really the saviors, but they don’t get the credit.

The founding members of the Hot 8 Brass Band, who met in the band room at Alcee Fortier High School, speak with similar reverence about their director Elijah Brimmer. Former Hot 8 trumpeter Melvin Tate no longer plays music professionally, but his relationship with Mr. Brimmer went far beyond the acquisition of musical knowledge: “I didn’t have a father when I was young, so Mr. Brimmer—Mr. Elijah Brimmer from Fortier High School—he was a mentor. He was a father. He was everything to us. He kept us praying ... and he always going to have us keep our head up. He was like a Martin Luther King in our neighborhood.”

Derrick, Melvin, and Lumar are all successful professionals who are active in their communities and families, and they all credit their band directors for providing them with valuable music lessons and life lessons. Their recollections of their music teachers resonate with the experiences of the football players at Eastside High School in North Carolina, where Micah Gilmer studied the strong social bonds formed between students and their coaches during out-of-school time.<sup>28</sup> These bonds have never been scarcer in New Orleans than during the post-Katrina period of restructuring, launched with the firing of 7,500 teachers in the days following Katrina, replaced by a teaching staff that is predominantly young, white, and non-native.<sup>29</sup> Music educators, meanwhile, are primarily black New Orleanians who students can more readily identify as role models.

Dinerral Shavers only had time to get the Rabouin band off the ground, but when I met with his students in the weeks after his death it was clear he had already made an impact. “He was like, ‘You know bro, I want to get a band started, I don’t care what it take’” remembered Quincy Bridges, a senior at Rabouin at the time. “So I was like, ‘Well, I’m behind you 100%!’” Because band had not been added to the official class roster, there was no time or space allotted for rehearsal and instruments had not yet arrived, so “Q” and the other founding members would take lunch in an empty classroom, practicing their drum cadences on textbooks and humming melodies through horn mouthpieces. Principal George recalled:

The second day, he called me and said “Mr. George I need you to come upstairs, I need you to see something.” So we went up there and he had his drumline set up with desks and with books. And they did a cadence. On books! On the second day! ... And so I told him, I said, “Man, give you a couple weeks and some equipment and I hate to see what we could do.”

Dinerral was informed that band would be added to the official class roster and a band room would be provided at the start of the next term. Skully remembered, “Right before the break, that Friday, he was telling everybody, ‘When we come back from the break we’ll get everything popping. We going to be straight. We going to be ready for parade season.’”

The response to Dinerral’s murder days later was an indication of both the frustration of residents over rampant violence and their recognition of teachers like Dinerral to reach students and help ameliorate social problems. The *New York Times* alternated the stories “Storm Left New Orleans Ripe for Violence” with “In New Orleans, Bands Struggle to Regain Footing,” and National Public Radio’s *Morning Edition* ran the story “New Orleans’ Marching Bands Short on Funds” soon after “Drummer’s Funeral Underlines New Orleans Violence,” my own report for *All Things Considered*. A few days later, activists organized an anti-violence march to City Hall, where Dinerral’s sister Nakita Shavers and members of his band addressed a crowd of thousands, including Mayor Ray Nagin and Police Chief Warren Riley. When local musician Glen David Andrews gave an impassioned speech about how positive role models like Dinerral helped counteract broken systems of education and criminal justice, the crowd broke into a spontaneous chant: “Music in the Schools! Music in the Schools!” Among those chanting were several members of the Rabouin band, who Principal George had permitted to leave school (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3** Rabouin marching band students Quincy “Q” Bridges, Christopher “Skully” Lee, L. C. Bacchus, and Desmond Bell at Rabouin High School. January 3, 2007. (Photo by author.)

After break, a team of counselors greeted returning Rabouin students, while Ray Johnson and other RSD band directors met with Rabouin band members to assure them they would go on without Dinerral. The Hot 8 came by to address the students and play at a school assembly, where band members were still in shock. "I just can't see," Q told me. "They say when you're out there in that world, you live by the gun you die by the gun. But this person ain't lived by the gun." "So, he shouldn't of died by the gun," senior Desmond Bell interrupted, "Dinerral, he ain't do nobody nothing." In Dinerral's absence, the principal and students at Rabouin searched for another band director who could prepare the band to perform at the nine Mardi Gras parades Dinerral had booked.

Darryl Person is a graduate of St. Augustine High School, former student of Doc Greggs in the Southern University marching band, and one-time band director at Fannie C. Williams Middle School. But that was all before Katrina. After the storm, Darryl started a demolition business because, he explained, "there's more money in trash than in teaching." He worked long days, and on his way home to his family, temporarily housed in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer, Darryl sometimes stopped at the Winn-Dixie supermarket where one of his former students, Desmond Bell, worked. Desmond had been badgering Darryl to take over the Rabouin band, but the demolition business was good and there was no time for volunteer work. It was not until Principal George called to explain the situation that Darryl agreed to help.

He made his first visit to Rabouin on January 15, 2007, and was immediately confronted with the enormity of the task. Instruments were still in boxes, there was no sheet music, and hardly any students were able to read music anyway. Several musicians, including trumpeters Melvin Tate and Chad Honore, had volunteered as assistant band directors, and teachers Tamika Saul and Carolyn Jean Marie were in charge of the auxiliary team, but there was no one assigned with making decisions about repertoire, arrangements, and the field drills that coordinated musical performance with the choreography of the auxiliary team.

Then there was the emotional state of the students suffering from the loss of their teacher. "When you walked into the band room, you didn't feel a lot of joy, a lot of happiness," Darryl recalled of that first day a few weeks later. "All you saw was a lot of pictures of Mr. Shavers around. They didn't want nobody sitting in his chair." Emotions were running high and musical proficiency was rather low, but there was no questioning the students' determination. "They were just so angry about what happened with Dinerral," said Nakita Shavers, Dinerral's sister, "they started turning all that into positive energy."

In life, Dinerral was a professional musician and a positive role model committed to enriching the lives of his students through music; in death, he was a victim of the kind of violence that many music educators believe can be stemmed through interactions in the band room; and after death, his students realized his dream by organizing a band with the help of Darryl Person and other volunteers who stepped in to fill the void that he left. Like the circumstances that led to Dinerral's murder, the circumstances that led to his founding the band were capricious and

unpredictable. It was only because of Dinerral's persistence and his students' demands that Principal George convinced school administrators to fund band and allow the class to be officially added to Rabouin's roster. The superintendent's response was less an indication of an institutional commitment to arts education than an improvised gesture of good faith, predicated on the leadership offered by a volunteer, a day-to-day substitute French teacher who was willing to give his time and energy to his students. The formation of band and its continuation under Darryl exemplify the full potential of black musical instruction as a culturally sustaining pedagogy that students find valuable (see Figure 4).

### **Music Lessons as Life Lessons**

Before I heard the Rabouin band play a note, I arrived with two presumptions about the benefits of marching band: (1) that the lessons taught in band provide the basis for a career as a professional musician, and (2) that time spent in band room was productive not only for budding performers but for all students. What I did not realize until I began observing rehearsals is that the activities which make this time productive for emerging musicians are the same as those that make the time productive for those members who may never again touch an instrument or perform a dance routine. Each lesson in black music—be it the performance of participatory music, the inseparability of music and the body, a reliance on oral and corporeal



**Figure 4** Darryl Person at L. E. Rabouin High School band rehearsal. January 3, 2007. (Photo by author.)



communication, the incorporation of call and response phrasing, or an emphasis on rhythmic syncopation and repetition—also offers a valuable life lesson about teamwork, discipline, and creativity.

As the Rabouin band was being reorganized, I attended my first band rehearsal, entering the school building on Carondelet Street in the Central Business District, passing the security checkpoint, the metal detector, the principal's office, and walking down a long hallway. On my right, in the large auditorium, the full drum section was rehearsing onstage under the direction of a new volunteer named Larry. For many students, the highlight of band is performing "radio tunes" that they encounter outside the band room, and today the drummers were learning the song "Watching Me" by rapper Ja Rule, with the drum machine pattern rearranged for the drum corps.

A snare drum pattern starts off, then the cymbals add an accent on the downbeat, and finally the bass drum enters with a complex counter-rhythm. The problem was, every time the bass drummers began playing their syncopated rhythm, the beat fell apart. The source of the problem seemed to be an unawareness of what syncopation is, and specifically how it is created. Syncopation comes about through the tension of overlapping rhythmic patterns, with at least one pattern emphasizing the weak beat. There is strict division of labor necessary to create the groove: the snare and cymbal players are assigned the role of accenting the stronger beats and the bass drummers are meant to accent the weak beats. The bass drummers' failure to play their pattern correctly created an ungroovy groove. To compensate, they played softly and timidly.

Larry, fearsome and strict, raised his hand to halt rehearsal and walked towards the bass drum section. "Y'all be scared to hit the drum. Hit the drum! Every time y'all don't come in, y'all don't hit the drum, y'all going to drop," he said, threatening those who do not play with the humiliation of doing push-ups in front of the entire drum section. "Run it again!" instructed Larry, and when they faltered once more, he pointed at an inattentive bass drummer. "Drop and give me 10! Get down!" Then Larry had the bass drum section play their part unaccompanied, holding one of the drummer's hands and hitting the beater against the drum to demonstrate the pattern.

To achieve precise synchronization of the drum ensemble—to get into the groove—requires teamwork, and this is one lesson that all students took away from this hiccup in the rehearsal. If the bass drummers miss their part, then the other sub-sections of the drum ensemble cannot play their parts correctly, and when the horn parts are added in, the result will be chaos. Larry used negative reinforcement to put the bass drummers on alert, and then demonstrated how they fit into the larger whole by isolating their pattern and repeating it until it can be played forcefully and with confidence. The technique of kinesthetic modeling, "whereby children watch and imitate the movements of more expert performers" according to Kathryn Marsh, is particularly important in the percussion section, where the unity of students' movements is directly connected to the musical rhythms.<sup>30</sup>

Productive musical interaction is productive social interaction, and this music lesson on group participation also works as a life lesson to solidify social bonds between classmates. "When Mr. Shavers brought this band together, I already knew

a lot of people, but I wasn't cool with a lot of people," tenor drummer L.C. Bacchus explained to me. By creating music with his schoolmates, L.C. extended and strengthened his social network. "Quincy, that's my brother," he said, pointing to his friend. "Skully, that's my brother, you know what I'm saying? Desmond, that's my brother, you understand? We all brothers." Band becomes the basis for musical and social participation that continues beyond the walls of the school building.

Across the hallway from the auditorium, in a stairwell, five or six young men were practicing the mellophone, a marching band version of a French horn. Desmond was made leader of this section because of his proficiency in reading music, and after consulting a score he orally transmitted the melody to the junior members. They work out the melody note-by-note, then play it through again in short fragments, then link the fragments together, pausing at difficult sections, until they can play the entire phrase with only minor interruptions. More experienced students such as Desmond are responsible for "scaffolding" or guiding newcomers' progress, so that everyone is prepared when the full ensemble gathers in the band room.<sup>31</sup> Desmond told me that Dinerral would habitually test his authority, "Every time I walked in the band room, he'd be like, 'D, you got your section together bro?'" Ultimately deferring to the authority of the band director, section leaders shoulder the responsibility of supervision during sectionals, when their social interaction is largely unmonitored.

Many studies of youth have privileged the role of adults in the process of socialization, yet researchers must also be attentive, as Mary Bucholtz writes, to the "ways in which young people socialize themselves and one another as they enter adolescence."<sup>32</sup> In this kind of diffuse socialization, where a variety of skill levels participate in routine activities, personal development is facilitated by cultural transmission. For example, the leadership skills that Bennie Pete acquired as the leader of the tuba section at Fortier High School prepared him for the position of bandleader for the Hot 8 Brass Band. Under his teacher Elijah Brimmer, Bennie remembered: "It wasn't no 'I'm going to hold your hand, I'm going to teach you this.' It was like ... 'What's up with your section? I need to take it from you, or what's going on?' And so he give everybody a little leeway and responsibility because he wanted to see whether you was taking in what he was teaching."

Rehearsal culminated with the entire Rabouin band gathering in the band room to run through full songs. "Drummers! Are you ready?" shouted Darryl. "Born ready!" the drummers yelled back. Their section stood at attention while the horn players sat upright in front of music stands with a chart for the song "Watching Me." Skully demanded "horns up!" and blew his whistle four times. The drummers started their cadence and then settled into a steady beat but when the horns entered the rhythm was out-of-sync with the melody. The whistle blew the musicians to a halt, and Darryl directed all the players to stand up and march in place so that their musical parts are intimately coordinated with their body movement. "Left! Left! Left! Left! I got it! I got it! ..." Darryl shouted over the sound of unison marching. The next take was vastly improved and the room was filled with self-congratulatory chatter, which Skully promptly silenced with his whistle. "Alright. Run it back," instructed Darryl. "Run that

again.” As they started another take, I exited the band room and made the long walk back down the hallway, the sounds of “Watching Me” echoing off the cinder-block walls.

Within the hierarchy of directors, assistant directors, section leaders, musicians, and auxiliary team members, each individual in band must set aside their personal objectives for the sake of the whole. The machinations and interrelations of the ensemble are governed by elements associated with black music: the link between music and the body, group participation, syncopated and repetitive rhythms, call-and-response patterns, and so on. In ethnomusicologist Kyra Gaunt’s study, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop*, she shows how young people become acclimated to black culture through handclap games, dance, verbal signifying and other “oral-kinetic etudes.”<sup>33</sup> The experience of band members expands this claim, demonstrating how oral-kinetic etudes are not only studied on the sidewalk, at the playground, and in church, but also through pedagogical means in the classroom. Beyond cultural skills linked to blackness, these music lessons are bundled with life lessons of teamwork, leadership, and self-responsibility that are ideally a guiding principle of education for all children, but are at odds with the college readiness curricula of the new paternalist schools.

### **Marching into the Spotlight: The Mardi Gras Parades**

For everyone in band, Mardi Gras is the culmination of a year spent rehearsing after school and playing at football games, the moment when their musical arrangements and precision drills are on display for all to witness. For many spectators along the parade route, high school marching bands are the highlight of the Mardi Gras season, the two weeks leading up to Mardi Gras day when there is at least one parade per night and at least ten bands in each parade. Without the bands, one music educator joked to me, a Mardi Gras parade is “all floats, dune buggies, and cotton-candy vendors.” Marching under the streetlights, students step into the spotlight (see Figure 5).

Before their Mardi Gras debut, the Rabouin students climbed onto a yellow school bus and headed to City Park for a dress rehearsal. In an open field, marching in proper formation for the first time, the band brought together the individual sections as a cohesive unit. “Listen up! Y’all are bunching up,” ordered Darryl. “Keep marching! Lift them legs up!” Excitement ran even higher a few days later on the bus ride to the start of the Krewe of Shangri-La parade, from where Rabouin and a dozen other bands would march down St. Charles Avenue all the way to the Canal Street border of the French Quarter. In the staging area, bands from competing schools exchanged menacing glances. St. Augs, as usual, was the band to beat, though celebrated band director Wilbert Rawlins had begun to assemble another powerhouse band at O. Perry Walker High School.<sup>34</sup> The entire Rabouin band was beaming with pride in their matching blue and white uniforms. “Y’all ready?” shouted Darryl. The band assembled in formation behind a massive float and took off in precise order, as the parents in the booster club lined up along the curb to hold back the ecstatic crowds cheering them on.



**Figure 5** Drum major Christopher “Skully” Lee leads the L. E. Rabouin High School marching band in the Krewe of Muses Mardi Gras Parade. February 1, 2008. (Still frame from film *The Whole Gritty City*.)

“You feel like a celebrity,” is how Q explained it. “You feel like [hip-hop star] Usher on the stage or something.” Q and his peers present themselves in public displays of black culture that have taken place in the highly racialized context of the Mardi Gras parade since 1967, when members of St. Augs became the first black New Orleanians to participate in the illustrious Rex parade. Band director Edwin Hampton led his students directly behind King Rex, who is referred to as the “King of Carnival” and presides over all New Orleanians, who are referred to as “his subjects,” on Carnival Day. Like all of the “old-line” Mardi Gras Krewes, membership in Rex was closed to blacks, Jews, Italians, and others until 1991, when the New Orleans City Council forced all Krewes to integrate or dissolve.<sup>35</sup> Three of the oldest Krewes, Comus, Momus, and Proteus refused to integrate, while Rex agreed to open up their membership, though one would be hard pressed to locate a black face on a Rex float.

The marching band, then, operates within a highly circumscribed and contradictory space where young people perform blackness for admiring spectators and Krewe members. “[T]hink of how these cultures have used the body,” wrote Stuart Hall, “as if it was, and often it was, the only cultural capital we had.”<sup>36</sup> Like Usher on stage, or Louis Armstrong marching on these same streets a 100 years earlier, the black body becomes an instrument of cultural value. Band members present themselves as creative and disciplined young people, countering images of black youth as violent criminals, such as the young man who was accused of murdering Dinerral Shavers. But the parades are also a site where imbalanced hierarchies are reinforced, where applause and adoration are token rewards for perpetuating racial essentialisms of black musical and bodily mastery, in the absence of real systemic support and educational equity.

The principals and central office administration expect the bands to represent their schools with precision drills and showy uniforms, yet Mardi Gras is the only time

when music education is a priority for most administrators. As soon as the parade season ends, preparation for the Louisiana Educational Assessment Plan (LEAP) test begins, and band is on hiatus. During Mardi Gras season, the small fees that the bands earn (currently in the range of \$2,000 per parade) must pay for their transportation to and from the parade, token compensation for assistant band directors, refreshments, and yearly expenses such as sheet music, uniforms, instruments, and repairs.<sup>37</sup> What is notable about the performances that mark the apex of the students' experience is the way they work within this debilitating system and against these limitations to structure a valuable experience.

### **Music Education as Intervention**

Over a century ago, on New Years Eve, 12-year-old Louis Armstrong got hold of a gun and fired shots in the air to ring in the New Year. He was arrested and sent to the Colored Waif's Home, where Peter Davis took him under his wing and eventually appointed him the leader of the school's brass band. At the critical juncture that is adolescence, Peter Davis, a strict disciplinarian, instilled confidence in young Louis, teaching him not only about music but, as Louis put it, about "life in general."<sup>38</sup> Armstrong was receptive to the strictness, in part, because Davis' pedagogy was culturally sustaining: participation in band gave Louis entrée into a world of performances and parades that he had followed since his earliest days. He later surmised, "That shot, I do believe, started my career."<sup>39</sup>

Derrick Tabb, too, was raised by family members who struggled to make ends meet. He moved back-and-forth between his mother, grandmother, and aunt, in various apartments and public housing projects. At age 10, when a drug dealer approached Derrick to deliver a package, he accepted the money, unwittingly stepping down a path that has led others to a life of criminality, or worse, an early death. But for Derrick it was in the band room at A.J. Bell, under Donald Richardson's watchful eye, where he chose to spend his afterschool hours. "He saved me," Derrick said of the teacher who provided opportunities when opportunities were scarce. Richardson taught teamwork, pairing up known enemies so they would be forced to work out their differences together. He instilled determination, marching the band around the schoolyard for hours and then sending them home exhausted. Students who failed to maintain a minimum grade point average were suspended from band until they brought their grades up.

Despite the significance of marching band in pre-professional training for New Orleans musicians, the pedagogical practices are controversial among music educators. "We will never have a marching band," Kyle Wedberg, the head of the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts High School (NOCCA), was quoted in an article. "Our aim is to drop students into the highest levels of performance and college training, and do it with consistency."<sup>40</sup> For music educators that share a Eurocentric view of what constitutes cultural value, the volume, tone, repertoire, and stepping taught in band are diametrically opposed to the highest levels of performance. New Orleans College Prep school band director Ricardo Emilian lamented, "music education is



focused on how kids look and sound during Mardi Gras and football games. As far as quality music education, there's not enough professional development."<sup>41</sup> By my calculations, virtually 100% of professional brass band musicians in New Orleans were trained in high school marching bands, and many received scholarships to play in HBCU bands. Perhaps more significantly, band has a positive socialization effect on all members regardless of their level of commitment to music, an argument that may not sway those teachers seeking only the highest levels of performance.<sup>42</sup>

Regardless of the internal debates about aesthetic standards, music educators share the same plight in convincing school administrators about the utility of an embedded arts education.<sup>43</sup> The "all-choice" system allows each school, currently managed by forty-four different charter management organizations, to allocate budgets and hire teaching staff autonomously, with no uniform requirements on embedded arts curricula.<sup>44</sup> As in other states, in Louisiana the LEAP test's focus on English, math, science, and social studies has translated into a devaluation of other subjects. The arts, a sympathetic RSD administrator explained to me in 2007, are "not tested, and everything is geared towards testing." In the months leading up to the exam in the Spring, whatever arts classes are on the books are simply "blacked out" at most schools; band rooms become silent repositories for students preparing for the test.

Yet multiple studies have shown that students in "high-arts" schools rank quantitatively higher than their peers in comparatively "low-arts" schools, especially "at risk" students in so-called "opportunity schools." The National Endowment for the Arts aggregated data from four separate studies and found that "socially and economically disadvantaged children and teenagers who have high levels of arts engagement or arts learning show more positive outcomes in a variety of areas than their low-arts-engaged peers."<sup>45</sup> When these same students from arts-rich schools graduate, they are "more likely to show civic-minded behavior" as young adults, volunteering, voting, and visiting libraries at higher levels than those from "low-arts" schools.<sup>46</sup> But only 26% of black students report participating in the arts in schools, compared to 58% of whites, effectively redoubling the opportunity gap.<sup>47</sup> In other words, those schools in which budgetary decisions and a "teach-to-the-test" approach has reduced arts offerings are the same schools that could benefit most from an embedded arts curricula.

Beyond achievement levels in core curriculum subjects, scholars of arts education such as Susan Weinstein urge us to evaluate the arts on their own merits:

An arts education orientation encourages us to look for evidence of student success outside of narrowly defined outcomes and more through what young people actually do inside and outside the classroom, and what that doing reveals about the development of their abilities to choose, negotiate, and accomplish to their own satisfaction complex, multi-modal activities.<sup>48</sup>

Participatory arts, such as band, complement the emphasis on individual expertise in core curriculum subjects with collective cultural transmission, providing "an environment in which individual artists can draw upon community experiences, and find affirmation for their skills," according to a study of immigrant students in California.<sup>49</sup> There are several independent non-profit organizations in New Orleans that offer these experiences to young people, including the Tipitina's Foundation

“Sunday Youth Music Workshop,” the Tremé Center’s “Tambourine and Fan” camp, and the National Park Service’s “Music For All Ages” program in traditional brass band music.<sup>50</sup>

Now a respected musician and community leader, Derrick Tabb chose to honor his former band director Donald Richardson by founding Roots of Music, a city-wide afterschool program for students ages nine to fourteen. While many high school bands have remained intact because of pressure from parents and other incentives to school administrators, music education in lower schools has been drastically reduced since the 1990s. When I first met Derrick in November 2007, he had prepared a proposal outlining the social, educational, and economic benefits of marching band, and asked me for help in securing donations to implement a program for middle-school students. Within a year, he was overseeing a daily afterschool music program that offered free instruction, transportation, meals, and academic tutoring to over 100 students (see Figure 6).

The sights and sounds of Roots of Music students, marching in their black and gold uniforms past the screaming crowds of Mardi Gras revelers, have caused a sensation in New Orleans. Derrick’s determination has gained him national media attention, and in 2009 he was chosen as a “Hero” by CNN and honored in a gala ceremony with tributes by Nicole Kidman, Louis Gossett Jr., Carrie Underwood, and other celebrities. Several “graduates” of the program have gone on to become section leaders in the city’s finest high school bands. Through my teaching at Tulane University, I have helped provide academic tutors and at times I have worked with non-profit organizations to arrange for instrument donations. In these negotiations I



**Figure 6** Derrick Tabb leading the Roots of Music Marching Crusaders in rehearsal before the Krewe of Oshun Mardi Gras parade. February 7, 2010. (Photo by author.)

learned that many granting institutions would only place instruments in pre-existing schools or support programs run by teachers during normal school hours. “They never received a situation like this,” as Derrick observed of the new education landscape constructed in the aftermath of Katrina.

The policies of philanthropic organizations, however, are meant to address a critical systemic issue: school administrators rely upon outside institutions such as Roots of Music to fill in the gaps they have created, turning what has historically been a public right into a privilege. This is also true of independent organizations that bring teaching artists into schools for special programs, such as KIDSmart and Young Audiences, which can only make sporadic contact with students and cannot cultivate the relationships that full-time teachers develop. For all the positive work these much-needed organizations accomplish, they are part of the massive growth in philanthropy that is coterminous with the ongoing reduction of state programs.<sup>51</sup>

Derrick is the first to admit that Roots of Music is a “band-aid” for a gaping wound that school administrators have gashed in the arts sector of their curriculums. With his team of teachers, staff, and volunteers, he has created a small solution for a much larger problem. After Donald Richardson passed in 1995, AJ Bell no longer offered band, and most elementary schools have now reopened as K–8 schools, very few of which have marching bands. Rabouin and John Mac are both closed and the charter schools taking over their buildings have no plans to include band. With the constant changes in public education in New Orleans, it is not possible to collect precise data on which schools offer music education, though the Kennedy Center has launched a study of the city as part of their “Any Given Child” program. In the meantime, we know that the charter model supports a fully embedded arts curriculum only in specialized schools, with marching band as an option, often directed by teachers who are not full-time employees.

Derrick Tabb and Dinerral Shavers—two snare drummers, band directors, and community leaders—were products of a school system that had many failings but recognized the transformative potential of the arts. Both of their lives exemplify the possibilities of music education as intervention, while Dinerral’s death indicates the severity of the root causes of social suffering. Young black New Orleanians navigate through pathways littered with obstacles: violence and death, families and communities with high levels of vulnerability, debilitating schools and exploitive labor. While it is possible for students to overcome these obstacles, their subjectivities are overdetermined by virtue of their race, location, and social status, and they are limited in the ways they can construct alternative subjectivities and/or obtain their rights as full citizens. Operating within the constrictions placed on them, black youth elect to participate in school bands and submit themselves to discipline in order to experience something that they evaluate positively. They socialize themselves as black subjects in ways that they find meaningful and valuable. In this and in many other ways, a commitment to band programs for New Orleans students is a worthwhile investment in a more just future.

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## Interviews

11/07/06 Bennie Pete interview at American Routes studios  
12/15/06 Lumar LeBlanc interview at *American Routes* studios  
01/03/07 Interviews with Principal Kevin George and students L.C. Bacchus, Desmond Bell, Quincy “Q” Bridges, and Christopher “Skully” Lee at Rabouin High School.  
01/03/07 Bennie Pete and Melvin Tate interview at American Routes studios  
4/12/07 Keith Frazier interview at *American Routes* studios  
8/1/07 Nakita Shavers interview at Sound Café  
Various discussions with Derrick Tabb and Darryl Person.

## Notes

1. *The Whole Gritty City* (New York: Band Room Productions, 2014), <http://thewholegrittycity.com/> and educator's website <https://www.academicvideostore.com/video/the-whole-gritty-city> (accessed August 17, 2015).
2. Alice Fothergill and Lori Peek, *Children of Katrina* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).
3. Katy Reckdahl, “Feeling His Spirit,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune* (accessed January 10, 2007), 1.
4. At least since Melville Herskovits' *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), scholars have argued that characteristics associated with black music are not biologically intrinsic but socially learned. Kyra Gaunt writes, “Black musical style and behavior are *learned* through oral-kinetic practices that ... teach an embodied discourse of black musical expression” (*The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop* [New York: New York University Press, 2006], 2, emphasis in original). Characteristics such as participatory performance, inseparability of music and the body, oral and corporeal communication, call and response phrasing, rhythmic syncopation, and repetition—what Amiri Baraka called the “changing same” of black music—are acquired through social interaction, cultural immersion, and encounters with sound recordings and media representations (“The Changing Same [R&B and New Black Music],” in *Black Music* [New York, W. Morrow, 1967], 180–211). I would argue that any account of socialization into black music performance should also be attentive to the ways that formal music education is interwoven into the sociocultural fabric of young peoples' lives. In New Orleans, all of the musical characteristics enumerated above are integral to marching band.

5. Samuel Floyd, “Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry,” *Black Music Research Journal* 11, no. 2 (1991): 265–87. Christopher Wilkinson, “The Influence of West African Pedagogy upon the Education of New Orleans Jazz Musicians,” *Black Music Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (1994): 25–42. Thomas David Brothers, *Louis Armstrong’s New Orleans* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).
6. David Chevan, “Musical Literacy and Jazz Musicians in the 1910s and 1920s,” *Current Musicology* 71–73 (2001/2002): 200–31. Al Kennedy, *Chord Changes on the Chalkboard: How Public School Teachers Shaped Jazz and the Music of New Orleans* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005). William D. Buckingham, “Louis Armstrong and the Waif’s Home,” *Jazz Archivist* 24 (2011): 2–15.
7. Quoted in Lawrence Bergreen, *Louis Armstrong: An Extravagant Life* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 33.
8. Louis Armstrong, *Swing that Music* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936), 17.
9. The precise order of marching band formation varies according to the preferences of the band director and the make-up of the auxiliary team. For example, not all schools have a cheerleading, dance, and flag team, and all-boys schools such as St. Augustine have none.
10. J. Mark Souther, “Making the ‘Birthplace of Jazz’: Tourism and Music Heritage Marketing in New Orleans,” *Louisiana History* 44, no. 1 (2003): 39–73; Matt Sakakeeny, “Playing for Work: Music as a Form of Labor in New Orleans,” *Oxford Handbooks Online*, <http://www.oxford-handbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935321-e-23> (accessed March 2, 2016).
11. On unemployment, see City of New Orleans, “Mayor Landrieu Announces Economic Opportunity Strategy for Disadvantaged Job Seekers and Businesses,” <http://www.nola.gov/mayor/press-releases/2014/20140909-economic-strategy> (accessed August 18, 2015).
12. Judith Becker, “Is Western Art Music Superior?” *The Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (1986): 341–59.
13. Susan Young, “Towards Constructions of Musical Childhoods: Diversity and Digital Technologies,” *Early Child Development and Care* 179, no. 6 (2009): 695–705.
14. Band arrangements of “radio tunes” extend a dialogue with popular culture, such as the representation of the Morris Brown College band featured in the 2002 movie *Drumline* and sampled in the 2006 song “Morris Brown” by the hip-hop group Outkast.
15. Django Paris, “Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice,” *Educational Researcher* 41, no. 3 (2012): 95.
16. Luis C. Moll and Norma González, “Lessons from Research with Language Minority Children,” *Journal of Reading Behavior* 26, no. 4 (1994): 23–41.
17. H. Samy Alim, “‘The Whig Party Don’t Exist in My Hood’: Knowledge, Reality, and Education in the Hip Hop Nation,” in *Talkin Black Talk: Language, Education, and Social Change*, ed. H. Samy Alim and Jon Baugh, vol. 17 (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 28.
18. Paris, “Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy,” 93.
19. On “Apartheid Schools,” see Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005), 19.
20. There is also the phenomenon of “bandheads”: adults who graduated long ago but continue to follow the activities of bands and band directors at football games and through the internet, on the *Times-Picayune* “High School Bands” forum ([www.nola.com/forums/hsbands](http://www.nola.com/forums/hsbands)) or the “Bandhead Social Network” website (<http://www.bandhead.org>) (accessed June 3, 2015).
21. Jacqui Malone, “The FAMU Marching 100,” *The Black Perspective in Music* 18, 1–2 (1990): 61.
22. Richard L. Walker, Jr., “The Life and Leadership of William P. Foster: The Maestro and the Legend” (PhD Dissertation, Indiana State University, 2014), 143.
23. Matt Sakakeeny, *Roll With It: Brass Bands in the Streets of New Orleans* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).



24. There are several Catholic schools in New Orleans that have renowned bands, including the all-black, all-male St. Augustine High School, the all-black all-female St. Mary's Prep, and the nearly all-white all-male Brother Martin.
25. Kathryn A. McDermott and Kysa Nygreen, "Educational New Paternalism: Human Capital, Cultural Capital, and the Politics of Equal Opportunity," *Peabody Journal of Education* 88 (2013): 84–97.
26. Johanna Wald and Daniel Losen, "Defining and Redirecting a School-to-Prison Pipeline," *New Directions for Youth Development* 99 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 9–15.
27. Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 10.
28. Micah Gilmer, "'You Got to Have a Heart of Stone to Work Here': Coaching, Teaching, and 'Building Men' at Eastside High" (Doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 2009).
29. Kristen L. Buras, *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space: Where the Market Meets Grassroots Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 125–59.
30. Kathryn Marsh, *The Musical Playground: Global Tradition and Change in Children's Songs and Games* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.
31. On "scaffolding," see Amanda Minks, *Voices of Play: Miskitu Children's Speech and Song on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 90.
32. Mary Bucholtz, "Youth and Cultural Practice," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 529.
33. Kyra Danielle Gaunt, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 2.
34. Dan Baum, "To Be Continued," *Oxford American* 71 (February 2011): 158–65.
35. James Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1997).
36. Stuart Hall, "What is This 'Black'/In Black Popular Culture?," in *Black Popular Culture*, ed. Gina Dent (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992), 27.
37. The most renowned bands, such as St. Augustine and Landry-Walker, are able to negotiate higher fees with Mardi Gras Krewes. Most bands earn additional funds by performing for conventions, Mardi Gras balls, and other private events booked by tourist destination management companies and contractors such as Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World.
38. Quoted in Brothers, *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans*, 108.
39. Armstrong, *Swing That Music*, 1.
40. Michael Patrick Welch, "School Music Programs, Marching Bands, Staging Post-Katrina Comeback," *The Lens*, <http://thelensnola.org/2012/10/24/school-music-back-in-new-orleans> (accessed June 3, 2015).
41. Ibid.
42. Not all of the socialization practices in the band room have positive effects on young people; for example, band has historically been a space where imbalanced gender norms are reproduced. FAMU and many other HBCU bands were initially strictly the province of men, and though many are now ostensibly open to female participation, men continue to far outnumber women, especially in the brass and percussion sections. As a whole, the auxiliary team is perceived as a female domain and is subordinate to the male-dominated band (though the drum majors straddle and have authority over both sections). There is a complex relationship with black musicality, which among New Orleans instrumentalists is perceived as a male-dominated space. This is reproduced in the exclusive representation of male professionals in my research, and in this article I was not able to suitably address the auxiliary team or female musicians. While socialization of gender norms may not be a positive component of the band experience, students are obliged to confront established gender roles that they are likely to encounter in settings outside of school, and consider how to situate themselves within and without them.

43. In 2007, the Louisiana legislature passed Senate Bill #299, Act 175, which requires “full implementation of the visual arts curriculum and the performing arts curriculum for all public school students in kindergarten through grade eight, including... 60 minutes of instruction in the performing arts... each school week,” but the state did not allocate a budget to implement or enforce this mandate. Instead, the Louisiana Department of Education eliminated the position of Fine Arts Program Coordinator in 2012, terminating an employee who had rigorously advocated for the arts. See Richard Allen Baker Jr., “The Relationship between Music and Visual Arts Formal Study and Academic Achievement on the Eighth-Grade Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) Test” (PhD dissertation, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2011).
44. See Adrienne Dixon, “Whose Choice? A Critical Race Perspective on Charter Schools,” in *Neoliberal Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, Late Capitalism, and the Remaking of New Orleans*, ed. Cedric Johnson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 130–51; Sarah Carr, *Hope against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle Educate America’s Children* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013); Buras, *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space*.
45. James S. Catterall with Susan A. Dumais and Gillian Hampden-Thompson, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies* (Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2012), <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2015), 24.
46. *Ibid.*, 18–21.
47. Nick Rabkin and E. C. Hedberg, *Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2011), <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-ArtsLearning.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2015).
48. Susan Weinstein, “A Unified Poet Alliance: The Personal and Social Outcomes of Youth Spoken Word Poetry Programming,” *International Journal of Education & the Arts* 11, no. 2, <http://www.ijea.org/v11n2/> (accessed June 3, 2015): 5.
49. Pia Moriarty, *Immigrant Participatory Arts: An Insight into Community-building in Silicon Valley* (San Jose, CA: Cultural Initiatives in Silicon Valley, 2004), 13.
50. For a thorough discussion of musical socialization in New Orleans pertaining to the “Music For All Ages” program, see Rachel Breunlin and Bruce “Sunpie” Barnes, *Talk That Music Talk: Passing on Brass Band Music in New Orleans the Traditional Way* (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2014).
51. A similar criticism could be made of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, “Turnaround: Arts,” <http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov> (accessed August 18, 2015). On the increasing reliance of the state on philanthropic organizations, see Vincanne Adams, *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith: New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

### About the Author

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