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Innovation and Empowerment: Transformational Leadership and Ubuntu in the Youth Choir

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Innovation and Empowerment: Transformational Leadership and Ubuntu in the Youth Choir

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the impact of a choral leadership practice that aligns with transformational leadership and an ubuntu ethic on the rehearsal and performance practices of a youth choir, and on the development of choristers as global citizens. The secondary purpose was to examine these rehearsal and performance practices and the youth choir's repertoire in light of the canon of Western art music and traditional choral practice, specifically notions of music as performance (Auslander 2006, 2013; Cook 2001, 2003, 2013) and musicking (Small 1998). The study investigated the leadership practice of Scott Leithead, one of Canada's foremost youth choirs, and his work with Kokopelli of Edmonton, AB. Kokopelli was selected because of its excellence as evidenced by frequent invitations to perform in national and international festivals and conferences, its innovative programming and repertoire, and its ongoing outreach program, African Projects, which supports Kokopelli's sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa.

Ethnographic data collection included interviews with Leithead, five current choristers, four former choristers, and an African Projects exchange student; observations of rehearsals, workshops, and concerts; and artifacts from one choral season. Two main research lenses were used to analyze the data: transformational leadership (Bass 1985, 1998; Bass and Riggio 2006), specifically its four components of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; and ubuntu, a southern African philosophy of humanism. Findings indicate that Leithead's behaviours align with transformational leadership and his moral motivation is consistent with an ubuntu ethic, a combination which corresponds to Bass's (1998) categorization of

an authentic transformational leader. The study presents suggestions for choral directors, although implications from this research are applicable to leaders outside of music as well.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background	2
How I came to this study.....	2
What does it mean to be a conductor?.....	4
The choral conductor as leader	8
Developing citizenship.....	10
Statement of the problem.....	13
Purpose statement.....	15
Research questions	15
Significance of the research.....	16
Outline of chapters.....	18
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	22
Introduction	22
Transformational leadership in music settings.....	22
Transformational leadership in post-secondary choral contexts.....	23
Transformational leadership in public school musical contexts	27
Transformational leadership in musical contexts outside of education....	31
Choral leadership in rehearsal and performance.....	35
Choral leadership in rehearsal.....	35
Choral leadership and motivation.....	41
Choral leadership and performance.....	44
Ubuntu in music settings.....	47
Developing citizenship in the choral context	51
Summary.....	55

CHAPTER 3: THEORY.....	57
Introduction	57
Leadership studies.....	58
Trait approach.....	59
Skills approach.....	59
Situational leadership.....	60
Servant leadership.....	61
Leader-member exchange theory.....	62
Charismatic leadership.....	63
Transformational leadership.....	64
Core components of transformational leadership.....	67
Authentic transformational leadership.....	68
The Full Range of Leadership Model.....	70
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.....	72
Criticisms of transformational leadership.....	75
Ubuntu.....	78
Ubuntu as a concept.....	78
Components of ubuntu.....	80
Ubuntu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa..	84
Ubuntu in business.....	87
Criticisms of ubuntu.....	90
Bringing together the lenses.....	91
Summary.....	93
CHAPTER 4: METHOD.....	94
Introduction	94
Qualitative research.....	94
Case study methodology.....	97
Selecting the site.....	98
Ethics	99
Research design.....	100
Interlocutor selection and rapport.....	101

Data collection.....	103
Data analysis.....	107
Trustworthiness and credibility.....	108
Situating myself as researcher.....	110
Summary.....	111
CHAPTER 5: THE CASE, SCOTT LEITHEAD AND KOKOPELLI.....	113
Introduction	113
Artistic director, Scott Leithead.....	113
Kokopelli, the youth choir.....	119
The Kokopelli concert season.....	122
The Stories concert: A Kokopelli Choir Association tradition.....	123
Kokopelli tours and festivals.....	125
Recordings and collaborations.....	127
The Kokopelli Choir Association.....	129
The Kokopelli Choir Association’s missions, goals, and values.....	131
The Kokopelli Choir Association ensembles.....	132
Summary.....	135
CHAPTER 6: SCOTT LEITHEAD’S REHEARSAL PROCESS.....	136
Introduction	136
Conventional choral rehearsal practices.....	139
Idealized influence.....	141
Leading from the heart.....	141
Incorporating other voices.....	143
Inspirational motivation.....	146
The talks.....	146
Tensions in the choir.....	149
Embracing positivity.....	150
Establishing expectations.....	153
Intellectual stimulation.....	157
Shared decision-making.....	157
Dealing with conflict.....	163

Workshopping an emerging arranger’s piece.....	166
Individualized consideration.....	177
Ubuntu in the Kokopelli rehearsal.....	179
Summary.....	187
CHAPTER 7: KOKOPELLI’S REPERTOIRE AND PERFORMANCE.....	191
Introduction	191
Charting new territory with repertoire choices.....	193
Creating new works through commissions.....	198
Approaching music outside the Western art tradition.....	205
Extra-musical elements.....	211
Transformational leadership and ubuntu in the choral performance.....	225
Idealized influence.....	226
Inspirational motivation.....	230
Intellectual stimulation.....	232
Individualized consideration.....	234
Summary.....	236
CHAPTER 8: AFRICAN PROJECTS.....	239
Introduction	239
Kokopelli’s connection to southern Africa.....	241
Southern African music choral and Kokopelli.....	241
Kokopelli in southern Africa.....	245
Sister choirs.....	248
African Projects.....	250
How African Projects began.....	251
African Projects fundraising.....	255
African Projects activities.....	258
Anniversary tour projects.....	259
The African Projects exchange program.....	262
Gaining cultural understanding.....	270
Witnessing hardship.....	271
Witnessing joy.....	275

Supporting hubs of ubuntu across the globe.....	276
Concerns with African Projects.....	278
African Projects and transformational leadership.....	280
Ubuntu and authentic transformational leadership.....	282
Summary.....	285
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION.....	287
Introduction	287
Research questions answered.....	289
In what ways does a choral director’s leadership impact the rehearsal processes of a youth choir?.....	289
How are repertoire choices and performance outcomes on stage affected by a choral director’s approach to leadership?.....	291
How can a youth choir director’s leadership empower choristers to develop into global citizens?.....	293
Implications of the research.....	297
Methodological and theoretical contributions.....	297
Suggestions for choral directors.....	300
Limitations of the research.....	302
Directions for further research.....	303
REFERENCES.....	306
APPENDIX 1: INTERLOCUTOR BIOGRAPHIES.....	327
Current members.....	327
Past members.....	329
APPENDIX 2: CHORISTER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	332
APPENDIX 3: KOKOPELLI VALUES STATEMENT.....	334
APPENDIX 4: KŌRERO CONCERT, THICK DESCRIPTION.....	336

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Bass's Full Range of Leadership Model..... 70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Kokopelli Choir Association Core Values Poster..... 156

Figure 2.1: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 1-9..... 169

Figure 2.2: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 38-41..... 170

Figure 2.3: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 42-45..... 171

Figure 2.4: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 70-73..... 172

Figure 2.5: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 106-109..... 173

Figure 2.6: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 119-122..... 173

Figure 2.7: K’naan, “Wavin’Flag,” arr. Joel Forth, mm 74-78..... 175

Figure 3: Kōrero Concert Poster..... 196

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the leadership practice of Scott Leithead, one of Canada's foremost youth choir directors. Leithead's leadership consists of several aspects, including musical ability, social approaches to interacting with choristers, and a moral motivation to help his choristers develop into global citizens through the Kokopelli Choir Association's African Projects, an ongoing outreach program that supports Kokopelli's sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa. The combination of these aspects results in musical and performance innovation, social cohesion, and chorister empowerment. By analyzing Leithead's leadership in rehearsal, the results of that leadership in performance, and the moral motivation of his leadership as embodied in African Projects, I attempt to shed light on what makes Leithead a successful choral director and leader.

The analysis of Leithead's leadership practice is guided by the theory of transformational leadership (Bass 1985; Bass 1998; Bass and Riggio 2006), specifically its four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Although this lens is useful for understanding Leithead's leadership behaviours and the impact of these behaviours on his choristers, it does not address the motivation for his behaviours. A second theoretical lens of ubuntu, a southern African philosophy of humanism, provides another way to analyze his leadership behaviours and also sheds light on the motivation underlying his decisions. The combination of these theories facilitates a more holistic examination of the leadership practices of this innovative choral artist and dynamic leader.

Background

This section provides some of the background to the dissertation. It begins with an explanation of how I came to this topic. Next, it provides background information on what it means to be a conductor. Finally, it situates this study within the discipline of musicology by providing some historical context on the emergence of the civic choir at the beginning of the nineteenth century at which time choral singing came to be understood as a tool for social development.

How I came to this study

Since elementary school, choral singing has been an important part of my life. Choir has always been the place where I fit in, where I could be part of a team, and where I, with my fellow choristers, could make music that was both beautiful and emotionally powerful. My choral experiences in both school choirs and an extra-curricular youth choir have played a key role in shaping my identity. Since becoming a choral director, I have had many conversations with fellow singers and directors who have recounted similar stories about how choirs have made them who they are. These conversations made me wonder what was so powerful about the choral experience during singers' teen years and young adulthood that created such a lasting impact on their sense of self.

When I was refining my dissertation topic, I knew that I wanted to explore the choral experience and its impact on choristers as people. I had seen performances by Kokopelli, the youth choir over many years and was familiar with their innovative programming and staging. I had also witnessed their incredible social cohesion and esprit de corps as a group. Prior to beginning my doctoral studies, I had worked alongside Scott Leithead as a clinician for a local high school choral program's weekend retreats and

through conversation with Leithead, learned about Kokopelli's African Projects, an outreach program that supported choirs in Namibia and South Africa. I was deeply moved by the stories of what Leithead and Kokopelli had accomplished in terms of improving the lives of choristers in their sister choirs. Although I had experienced the intensity of beautiful music-making and the sense of belonging to a social group in my own youth choir, this humanitarian component had not been part of my experience and was something new to me. I was also fascinated by the fact that Kokopelli singers remained members for so many years, staying well beyond their adolescence and into their mid-twenties. I was eager to learn more about their experience so as to better understand why they chose to stay in the youth choir rather than move one of the many excellent adult choirs in the community, including the Kokopelli Choir Association's elite adult choir, Òran (oh-RON).

These factors led to my selection of Scott Leithead and Kokopelli for the study. I began my ethnographic research with the intent to explore three key parts of the Kokopelli chorister experience — an aesthetic experience of the music, a social experience of the group, and a humanitarian experience of African Projects — and the impact of this experience on the identity of the choir as a whole and the choristers as individuals. During the fieldwork process, however, it became increasingly clear that the significance of these experiences in choristers' lives was due largely to the director's leadership. This discovery shifted the focus of my research toward the podium. Though I am still interested in the impact of the youth choir experience on chorister and ensemble identity, a full inquiry into that connection was beyond the scope of this dissertation.

What does it mean to be a conductor?

Though knowledge about choral leadership has emerged from empirical studies such as those addressed in the literature review of this dissertation, many of the conceptualizations of choral conducting have been generated by choral practitioners themselves through their own experience. This section and the next one provide a brief overview of key elements of choral practice as disseminated through textbooks, manuals, and articles that address various components of the craft. It serves to frame the discussion that follows regarding how Leithead both adheres to this practice and also challenges it.

A choral director must possess significant discipline-specific knowledge, including singing technique, strategies for blending and balancing of different voices, as well as repertoire selection and preparation. Choral directors rely on singers to bring their art to life and, therefore, must be knowledgeable about the singing voice. Beyond the vast literature on vocal pedagogy (Herbert-Caesari 1968; Lamperti 1957; Miller 1986; McCoy 2012; Steinhauer and McDonald Klimek 2017, etc.), several choral texts address elements of singing including breath, tone, resonance, placement, and diction (Davids 2012; Dehning 2003; Emmons and Chase 2006; Garretson 1998; Hylton 1995; Lamb 2012; Swan 1973). Choral texts have also addressed singing as it pertains to building a cohesive choral sound through a number of strategies including vowel unification, blend, balance, and placement of singers (Brandvik 1993; Hylton 1995; Lamb 2012). Although not all choral conductors are active singers, it is imperative that they possess a strong understanding of how the human voice works and that they are able to pass that

knowledge on to their choristers through explanation, demonstration, or a combination of the two.

Choral directors must also have a strong understanding of choral repertoire including elements of style and key canonic works through the eras (Garretson 1993; Hylton 1995; Shrock 2009). G. Roberts Kolb (1993) suggests that choral conductors are teachers and that the repertoire that they select is the vehicle for teaching.¹ As such, they must consider a number of pedagogical aspects of the repertoire, including the musical qualities of a work, the elements of style of that work and of the historical period in which it was composed, the vocal and musical skills required to sing the work, as well as how to interpret it, and how to communicate it to the audience (266). Kolb remarks that choral conductors, whether or not they choose to admit it, also program repertoire for themselves and suggests that, instead of only choosing repertoire that reflects their taste, they should also select works that allow them to grow as conductors and musicians (267). Kolb asserts that choral conductors must also consider the audience in the selection of repertoire and that effective programming should provide variety in terms of musical styles and historical periods, moods, languages, keys, difficulties, and performing forces (268). Variety in terms of performing forces may mean including soloists, a select “madrigal” group, or in the case of a mixed-choir, to have the men and women perform separately (270). Though variety adds interest to a concert program, the conductor should also strive for unity which can be textual, stylistic, or thematic (270). Balancing the needs of choristers and audiences with their own as conductors is challenging, but

¹ Here and throughout much of the literature, the terms “choral director” and “choral conductor” are used interchangeably. I use “choral conductor” to refer a practitioner of the craft of choral conducting and “choral director” to denote the long-time leader of a choral ensemble. For example, a choral conductor may be a choral artist who is not the long-time leader of an ensemble but comes in to conduct the group in concert.

also important for increasing choristers' skills, cultivating audiences that return concert after concert, and developing conductors' craft as artists.

The choral director must have the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare the score for the rehearsal process (Ashworth-Bartle 2003; Boyd 1970; Dehning 2003; Jordan 1996, 2007, 2008; Jones 2009; Paine 1993; Thornton 2008). Music education scholar Edwin E. Gordon (1999) coined the term "audiation," which refers to the act of hearing in one's mind, music that is not playing but that one has heard in the past, is creating, or that one is reading in notation (42). This transformation of the score into a meaningful utterance is a key element of the choral director's preparation process. Similarly, Daniel Moe (1988) stresses the importance of "developing a mental and aural concept of the complete work that embraces all its parts, thereby enabling the conductor to assume a decisive role in the shaping of the form" (167). Charles Heffernan (1982) notes that the choral conductor's imagined model of the perfect performance of a work cannot simply be an overall impression, but must be a detailed creation, complete with mechanical details as well as expressive and stylistic elements based on the conductor's overall knowledge acquired through prior training and experience (15). Jameson Marvin (1993) emphasizes the importance of marking the score as part of the development of a mental-aural image of the sound, and it is this in-depth analysis of the work that provides the foundation for rehearsing by preparing the ears for listening (100). Craig Hella Johnson adopts a slightly different approach to directing his renowned professional choir, *Conspirare Company of Voices*. In an interview with Jos Milton (2016), Johnson explains that he prepares the score with a soundscape in mind but as a listening musician, responds to his choristers when the sound gets produced, and "if there's another idea that

enhances that or that shifts gears even and goes in a different direction, that's of interest to me" (87). Regardless of conductors' levels of flexibility during the rehearsal process with their singers, they must come to the process knowing the scores intimately and bring to their ensemble a vision for what they will achieve musically.

The next phase of the choral director's process, the rehearsal, demands a range of planning and technical knowledge, which many texts address (Ashworth-Bartle 2003; Boyd 1970; Dehning 2003; Eammons and Chase 2006; Hylton 1995; Jordan 1996, 2007, 2008; Lamb 2012; Pfautsch 1973). The director must be able to audition singers, make both short-term and long-term plans for teaching the repertoire, place singers within the choir, interact with an accompanist as an artistic teaching partner, and maintain a pace that engages singers but does not overwhelm them. They must know how to use warm-up exercises effectively to not only warm up their singers' voices, but also build their vocal technique, increase their listening capabilities, engage their minds, and ideally, prepare them for specific musical challenges that they will be tackling in the rehearsal. As John B. Hylton (1995), notes, choral directors must communicate verbally with their choristers through the use of both technical terminology and imagery (59). They must model good singing habits, possess excellent listening skills, and be able to diagnose problems. Then, after diagnosing a problem, they must offer concrete strategies to fix them, recognizing a variety of learning styles including auditory, visual and kinesthetic, or a combination thereof (Apfelstadt 2013, 34). They must also know how to convey their desired sound through gesture (Apfelstadt 2009; Cairns 2009; Durrant 1995; Hylton 1995; Lamb 2012; Neuen 1993). While the knowledge and skills described above are

crucial elements of choral directing, the ability to inspire a group of singers and lead them towards a common goal is also vital.

The choral conductor as leader

Though the traditional model of a conductor “is one of an autocratic, sometimes dictatorial, presence that employs almost any means to ensure a good performance” (Wis 2007, 1), today’s conductors take on multiple roles such as: musician and leader (Yu 1999); conductor, teacher, and leader (Lisk 2007); and leader, teacher, and artist (DeGraf 2016). As choral leadership has shifted away from the notion of the benevolent dictator, choral scholarship has reflected the growing importance of forging connections with choristers, establishing trust, and inspiring choristers. Today, the connection between choral directors and their choristers is often a deeply human one where directors lead from the heart. Apfelstadt (2009) explains that the root word for conduct, *conducere*, means “to lead” and “to care” (158). Jordan (2008) paraphrases his teacher, Elaine Brown: “You must have a one-to-one relationship, at least spiritually and psychologically, with each singer in the choir, [a]nd that relationship must be one of honesty at all times and caring” (13). Wis (2007) echoes that sentiment, asserting that “conductors who are exemplary leaders and not just talented artists have a very special relationship with their ensemble, a relationship that is built on knowing the heart of the group as well as its individuals” (37). Craig Hella Johnson calls the members of his ensemble, Conspirare Company of Voices, his “beautiful partners” (Milton 2016, 87). One of the members of Conspirare, Emilie Sweet, notes that she felt truly valued musically under Johnson’s direction: “I was no longer just one anonymous voice among many – my voice and point of view mattered” (Romey, Sweet, and Wanyama 2009, 83).

Tom Carter (2005) encourages choral directors to cultivate a safe choral environment where members feel respected and supported by “honoring the shared humanity of both singer and director” (8). Through these personal connections built on respect, trust is established between choral directors and their ensembles, and directors are able to motivate choristers toward their common goals.

Motivating choristers is an important aspect of the conductor’s role as leader. David Redman (2016) examines chorister motivation and finds that individuals participate in an auditioned adult community choirs primarily for aesthetic reasons, secondly for emotional ones, and thirdly, for spiritual ones (78-79). Rick Stamer (1999) identifies four important motivational strategies for choral directors: creating a nurturing environment, providing feedback to singers, assigning meaningful repertoire, and presenting appropriate challenges (28). Beyond these strategies, Alan Mudrick (1997) identifies several additional ones, including: being strong role models (152); possessing a clear vision for what the choir should achieve musically (152); maintaining high standards (148); and displaying humility, humour, empathy, and care (154). Wis (2014) advocates for a servant leader approach to choral directing, rather than an authoritative one:

When we, as conductors, approach our leadership role as one of master influencer (rather than master dictator, master musician, or master administrator), we find an even greater opportunity to develop musicians’ artistry, understanding, and emotive energy. (225)

In order to be effective, choral conductors must do far more than excel at preparing scores, listening and making corrections in rehearsal, and communicating clearly through gesture. They must also establish trust with their choristers, inspire choristers towards

the ensemble's common goals, and maintain chorister development as a key purpose of their leadership.

Developing citizenship

Beyond developing chorister's artistry, understanding, and emotive energy, choral singing has also played a role in the development of choristers as citizens. Choral music as a form of education or *Bildung*, which Carl Dahlhaus (1989) defines as "education, culture, and good breeding" (160), played a significant role in the surge of choral singing in nineteenth-century Germany, England, and France, a surge that "originated in the spirit of the French Revolution" (47). In Germany, these amateur choruses — the singing academies, *Liedertafeln*, and *Liederkränze* — "formed an increasingly dense web of musical societies mingling companionship and music in equal measure" (47). Karen Ahlquist (2006) explains that "the mixed chorus in particular was set up to foster an idealistic approach to German high culture, artistic taste, conventional religious and moral beliefs, the value of history and a historical repertoire, and the role of the arts in *Bildung*, or individual cultivation" (265). David Gramit (2002) asserts that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in German-speaking Europe, music could be "understood both as part of the larger Enlightenment goal of popular pedagogy within the established social order, and from a still broader perspective, as an element in the development of a populace disciplined (in Foucault's sense)" (20). He argues, however, that although serious music was held to be universally-valid, it also served to maintain social divisions of class, gender, education, and nationality (21). So, while choral singing in these amateur choruses did contribute to the cultivation of choristers as citizens, it also produced negative consequences for society as a whole.

This idea of developing citizenship through choral singing did not end with the German bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century. In recent decades, scholars have found that choral singing encourages a sense of community both in school settings (Anderson 2013; Countryman 2009; Dawe 2006) and beyond (Barz 2006; Durrant and Himonides 1998; Rensink-Hoff 2009; Russell 2006; Sharlow 2006; Summers 1999; Willingham 2001), fosters chorister identity (Bartolome 2010; Bradley 2006; Durrant 2005; Hammond 2004; Mills 2008; Parker 2009; Wolters-Fredlund 2005a, 2005b; Yerichuk 2015), and cultivates chorister self-esteem (Andrews 2014; Campbell, Connell, and Beegle, 2007; Strachan 2006; Wallace 1992). Choral singing has also been used in therapeutic applications, as part of interventions with marginalized populations including: homeless (Bailey and Davidson 2002, 2003, 2005; Naddeo 1992), high risk males (Nelson 1997), at-risk adolescents (Shields 1997; Wolfe 2000), and prisoners (Abrahams, Rowland, Kohler 2012; Cohen 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012; Lee 2014; Sharp 2003; Silber 2005). Because of its ability to develop community, identity, and self-esteem, choral singing is a powerful tool for cultivating citizenship among choristers.

The Fundación Schola Cantorum de Venezuela, which was founded in 1967 in Caracas, Venezuela is another example of choral music being used to develop citizenship among marginalized populations. Artistic director, Maria Guinand (2016) explains that the non-profit choral education program developed alongside El Sistema de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles de Venezuela (National Network of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela) as part of a movement to increase choral singing in all strata of society (34). The mission of the organization is to “promote choral singing as an effective and dynamic tool for training in values; for music education and the development of

creativity while spaces for social dialogue are generated; for the proper use of leisure time and musical awareness for children, youth, adults, and entire communities while offering growth opportunities for young directors and teachers of choruses” (34). The program builds on collective values of choral singing, including solidarity, teamwork, tolerance, integration with the environment and the sense of belonging, as well as values of personal growth, including discipline, self-esteem, concentration, sensitivity, and creativity (35). Guinand highlights the success of one program in particular within the national choral network music. In this school in a favela, or “shanty town,” in the Petare area in Caracas (36) where the choral program was established sixteen years prior, students have exhibited lower dropout rates, higher academic achievement, an increased sense of security and self-esteem, and they have been able to transcend the space of their neighbourhood in social dialogue and sharing across social and economic strata (37). This program functions as an important lifeline for its participants.

Choral singing has been a vehicle for cultivating citizenship for the past two centuries. During the nineteenth century in Germany, *Bildung* was an important part of the success of the civic chorus. In recent decades, choral singing has provided the opportunity for choristers to experience community, to develop identity both as individuals and as an ensemble, and to increase their self-esteem. Choral singing has also been used in therapeutic settings with marginalized populations. Maria Guinand’s (2016) account of the impact on the Fundación Schola Cantorum de Venezuela on the communities where the program exists provides important insights into the power of choral singing to improve the lives of choristers in the developing world.

Statement of the problem

Until recent decades, most of the literature on choral conducting has focused on musical aspects of the craft. This has changed significantly over the past twenty-five years, with much more attention given to the aspects of leadership that are required in the role. Still, there has been limited choral scholarship that engages in a meaningful way with literature from the discipline of leadership studies. Some choral scholars have drawn on models from leadership studies, including servant-leadership (Wis 2007, 2014), situational leadership (Allen 1988; Apfelstadt 1997, Davidson 1995), structure versus consideration leadership styles (Yu 1999), and emotional intelligence (Neumann 2007). Several others have drawn on transformational leadership, both in quantitative studies (Andrews 2014; Bayless 1996; Davidson 1995; Dromgoole 2012; Ludwa 2012; Rowold and Rohmann 2009b) and in qualitative ones (Eychaner 2009; Williams 2014). Of these studies, none focuses on the youth choir setting.

Much of the literature on community youth choirs has focused on identity, while also drawing attention to the choirs' impact within their communities and regions. In her examination of the Seattle Girls' Choir, Sarah Bartolome (2010) finds a girl-centred culture which nurtures choristers musically, personally, and socially. She also finds that the choir benefits the larger community by being advocates and ambassadors for music and music education (198) through performances both locally and regionally, as well as internationally, by hosting choirs from other countries including the Danish National Girls' Choir (198) and the Vladimir Girls' Chorus from Russia in a homestay exchange and joint concert (199). Susan Knight (2003) discusses the role of the Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir (now called Shallaway) in fostering a sense of community and

identity for its singers and cultivating citizenship to develop the next generation of leaders in Newfoundland and Labrador. Deborah Bradley (2006) examines her own teaching practice with the Mississauga Festival Youth Choir, in the development of choristers as multi-cultural human subjects through an anti-racism pedagogy. Nicol Hammond (2004) examines the University of Witwatersrand choir of South Africa and finds that choristers enact their South African identity as part of a “rainbow nation” by singing in the racially-mixed youth choir.

My study builds on this literature, delving into the cultivation of Kokopelli choristers as global citizens, and the impact of these efforts on developing world communities through Kokopelli’s African Projects program. While the cultivation of citizens through choral singing has been part of the history of community choirs since the nineteenth century, this study updates the notion of *Bildung* which, as noted earlier, Gramit (2002) asserts was used to maintain social divisions of class, gender, education, and nationality (21) by examining Kokopelli’s African Projects which conversely works toward reducing those divisions.

Recent scholarship on choral conducting has called into question the validity of the old model of the authoritarian conductor who makes all of the decisions for his or her ensemble (Apfelstadt 1989, 2009; Broomhead 2009; Carter 2005; Countryman and Rose 2009; Dehning 2003; Emmons and Chase 2006; Knight 2004; Strand 2003; Wis 2007, 2011; Yu 1999). Though these texts suggest some strategies for empowering choristers to be more active in the decision-making processes of the ensemble, none delve deeply into the actual processes involved in adopting a more collaborative approach. My study addresses this gap by exploring the rehearsal process of a youth choir director who uses a

variety of techniques to involve his choristers in the artistic decisions and governance of the ensemble.

Finally, this research challenges traditional notions of choral excellence, which often focus exclusively on musical elements that can be perceived aurally, as a way to gauge the success of a choral conductor. Recognizing that success is multidimensional and that different musical strategies can lead to different kinds of success, I explore one choral conductor's approach. In this case, the notion of success does include musical precision and aural expression, but expands the notion to also include visual components of performance, social cohesion of the group, and the development of choristers as global citizens. I make no claim that one way of evaluating choral excellence is better than another, but seek to present a fullness of understanding into how one choral director leads his ensemble.

Purpose Statement

This thesis seeks to understand the impact of a choral leadership practice that aligns with transformational leadership and an ubuntu ethic on the rehearsal and performance practices of a youth choir, and on the development of choristers as global citizens. The secondary purpose is to examine these rehearsal and performance practices and the youth choir's repertoire in light of traditional choral leadership and the canon of Western choral music.

Research questions

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. In what ways does a choral director's leadership impact the rehearsal processes of a youth choir?

2. How are repertoire choices and performance outcomes on stage affected by a choral director's approach to leadership?
3. How can a youth choir director's leadership empower choristers to develop into global citizens?

Significance of the research

This study provides the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how an esteemed youth choir director interacts with his ensemble. My study does not address all aspects of Leithead's practice as a choral conductor as presented in the background section above, but focuses on aspects that pertain directly to his leadership. Though the study is formally situated in the field of musicology, it is interdisciplinary in nature and extends into ethnomusicology, choral conducting and music education, as well as leadership studies. The study contributes to the discussion of music *as* performance (Auslander 2006, 2013; Cook 2001, 2003, 2013) and musicking (Small 1998) in that it focuses on the act of making music rather than the notion of music as a concept separate from music-makers and contained within the score. It speaks to the further crumbling of the strong work concept (Dahlhaus 1983, 1989; Goehr 1992) where the role of performers was to simply deliver the work, conceived as a musical text, that "harbors a meaning which is made manifest but not entirely subsumed in its acoustic presentation – that a musical creation can exist as an 'art work of ideas' transcending its various interpretations" (Dahlhaus 1989, 10). Using ethnographic research tools drawn from ethnomusicology, this study focuses on choral director, Scott Leithead and his youth choir, Kokopelli in rehearsal and performance settings, probing not only who they are, where they exist, and what they sing, but addressing questions of how they function and

why they enact their values, both musical and otherwise, in the ways that they do. Also related to ethnomusicology, the study examines a choir that is grounded in the Western art tradition of choral practice, but engages in meaningful ways with music outside of that tradition, particularly with the choral music of southern Africa through Kokopelli's African Projects.

The study contributes to the scholarship on choral conducting and music education. It addresses multi-cultural programming within a globalized world, the balance between innovation and tradition, and the relational shift between choral directors and composers towards a more direct affiliation not mediated by music publishers. It challenges traditional notions of communication and decision-making within choral practice, as well as the limitations of what a choir can accomplish in the world beyond beautiful singing. It also expands the concepts of success and excellence within a choral context beyond conventional interpretations of the terms which focus on achieving musical goals to include social and humanitarian goals as well.

Theoretically, this study makes an important contribution to the literature on transformational leadership (Bass 1985, 1998; Bass and Riggio 2006). The vast majority of research that has employed this theory has been quantitative and has employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as its primary assessment tool, both of which Bass and Riggio (2006) acknowledge as weaknesses of the theory (2006). The data collection process of this qualitative study, grounded in an interpretivist or social constructivist paradigm, uses a number of ethnographic research methods over an extended research period, instead of a survey completed on a single day. Additionally, with the MLQ, only the perspectives of the leader and followers are examined. In this

study, I combine the perspectives of the director and choristers as relayed to me in interviews with my own observations as a peer for a more comprehensive investigation of Leithead as leader. Bass and Riggio (2006) also acknowledge that most research has focused on the outcomes of transformational leadership rather than the processes used to achieve those outcomes (235) and that more research must be done on the ethical and moral factors that distinguish authentic transformational leaders from pseudo-transformational ones (233). By completing the ethnographic research over an entire season, I examine the process of Leithead's transformational leadership throughout several cycles of introducing music, teaching it, and performing it. Finally, the addition of ubuntu as a second research lens provides a new way to explore the ethical and moral elements of Leithead's leadership practice. This philosophy is important in the analysis of Leithead's leadership behaviours because it provides a way to understand why he makes the choices for and with his choristers that he does, and provides guidelines for other choral practitioners on how they can employ a more humanistic approach to directing their choirs.

Outline of chapters

The second chapter of this dissertation provides a review of relevant research studies. It begins with a review of studies that employ transformational leadership in musical contexts, followed by a review of other studies of choral leadership as it pertains to rehearsal and performance settings. The next section addresses the brief literature that applies ubuntu to musical contexts. The final section reviews research studies that examine choral singing and the development of choristers as citizens.

The third chapter discusses the theoretical framework of this study. It begins with an overview of the field of leadership studies, followed by a more in-depth account of transformational leadership, including its core components, an explanation of authentic versus pseudo-transformational leadership, an overview of Bass's (1998) Full Range of Leadership Model and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (one of the theory's primary test instruments), as well as criticisms of transformational leadership. The next section presents the numerous interpretations of ubuntu, components of the philosophy or worldview, its application within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and in business contexts, as well as criticisms of the concept. The chapter ends with an explanation of how the two frameworks come together in the context of this study.

Chapter four provides an overview of the methodology and research design. It presents the reasoning behind selecting a qualitative approach to research, the case study methodology, and Scott Leithead and Kokopelli as the case to be studied. Next, it outlines ethical considerations and the overall research design, including interlocutor selection and rapport, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness and credibility. In the final section, I situate myself as researcher, acknowledging the ways in which my own education and experience have shaped my perspective.

Chapter five serves to contextualize my research by providing an ethnographic introduction to the site of study. It begins with an overview of Scott Leithead's education and career, followed by an introduction to his youth choir, Kokopelli. This snapshot of the choir includes its membership, its artistic team, the choir's philosophy, an overview of a typical concert season, and significant tours, festivals, and artistic collaborations.

The next section provides an overview of the Kokopelli Choir Association, which expanded from the youth choir. This section addresses the Association's goals, missions, and values, and introduces its remaining five choirs.

Chapter six delves into Leithead's leadership within the rehearsal context. It begins with a brief overview of conventional choral rehearsal practice, followed by an examination of Leithead's leadership, first, according to the core components of transformational leadership, and second, according to ubuntu. A number of elements of his rehearsal practice are investigated, including leading from the heart, open communication, shared decision-making, the process of workshopping an emerging arranger's piece, and Leithead's approach to inclusion with a singer who is blind.

Chapter seven explores Leithead's treatment of repertoire selection and performance. The first section provides an overview of Leithead's approach to selecting repertoire, including commissioning new works by established and emerging composers, preparing and performing music outside the Western art tradition with cultural sensitivity, and using innovative extra-musical elements in performance. The second section analyzes these practices through the lenses of transformational leadership and ubuntu.

Chapter eight examines Leithead's leadership in the establishment and maintenance of Kokopelli's African Projects, an outreach program that has raised over a quarter of a million dollars to provide ongoing financial support to its sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa for over a decade. The chapter begins by explaining how Leithead's interest in the choral music of southern Africa grew into a passion for the culture and the people, followed by an account of how this music became a staple of Kokopelli's repertoire. The next section presents an overview of African Projects,

specifically the advent of the outreach program, its fundraising projects, and the activities that it has funded which has included bringing two of its sister choirs to Canada for tours, and supporting an ongoing chorister cultural exchange program. The chapter continues with an examination of the cultural understanding that Kokopelli choristers have gained through their tours to southern Africa and through the exchange program. The final section analyzes African Projects through the lenses of transformational leadership and ubuntu, arguing that the ethical motivation that underpins Leithead's leadership practices, epitomized in African Projects, renders his leadership practice congruent with Bass's (1998) designation of an authentic transformational leader.

The concluding chapter reviews the key findings of this study in relation to each of the three research questions. It then presents methodological and theoretical contributions of this study and implications for choral directors. The chapter continues by addressing some of the limitations of the study, followed by directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of research relevant to this study. It omits studies that focus primarily on choral history, choristers' experience and identity, and literature on choirs within religious settings. The first section reviews studies that employ transformational leadership within choral and instrumental ensemble contexts, excluding studies of administrators of post-secondary music faculties and departments. The second section reviews select studies of choral leadership as it pertains to both rehearsal and performance processes. The third reviews the limited literature on ubuntu, a southern African philosophy of humanism, as it has been applied to musical contexts. The final section reviews the literature on the development of choristers as citizens through participation in choirs, omitting studies that employ choral singing as a therapeutic intervention with marginalized populations such as prisoners, homeless men, and at-risk youth.

Transformational leadership in music settings

Though transformational leadership has been applied widely within disciplines such as politics, education, the military, business and management, and health care (Bass and Bass 2008, 638-642), its application to choral and other musical contexts has been relatively limited. In their brief article in *Music Educators Journal*, Susan Armstrong and Scott Armstrong (1996) assert that the principles of transformational leadership offer insight into effective leadership for choir, band, and orchestra directors (22), particularly

demonstrating charisma and enthusiasm, establishing a shared vision, respecting and empowering individual members, and recognizing their accomplishments through praise. Over the past two decades, several scholars have used transformational leadership as a theoretical lens for their doctoral dissertations and other studies. The following subsections review these studies which employ transformational leadership in various musical contexts.

Transformational leadership in post-secondary choral contexts

This section reviews three studies that examine the leadership of choral educators at the post-secondary level. Frank Eychaner's (2009) dissertation compares the writings of acclaimed choral directors, Dr. Howard Swan and Dr. Eph Ehly, to the transformational leadership paradigm. Eychaner chose these two experts, first, because they had extensive choral conducting careers; second, because they left written records of their thoughts through lectures, presentations, workshop notes, videos, biographies, periodicals and other presentations; and third, because they spent the majority of their professional careers teaching at a college or university (5-6). Eychaner finds that Swan's writings are consistent with all components of transformational leadership, especially regarding the inspiration of singers and the challenge to choral professionals to be engaged in the academic disciplines associated with choral conducting (50). Based on an analysis of Ehly's writings as well as his own observations of Ehly's work with choirs, both from the perspective of an observer and as a singer, Eychaner finds that Ehly is also a transformational leader who is exceptionally effective as an idealized influencer, inspirational motivator, and practitioner of individualized consideration (66-67). He

suggests that collegiate choral directors could increase their effectiveness by adopting behaviours and attitudes consistent with transformational leadership.

Brenda Davidson's (1995) quantitative study examines leadership styles of successful college choral directors and seeks to determine whether gender-based differences exist. She employs three theoretical perspectives to study leadership styles, including Stodgill's Behavioural and Attitudinal Leadership Theory measured by the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ-Form XH-Self); Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, measured by the Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description Self-Test (LEAD-Self); and Bass' Transformational/Transactional Leadership Theory, measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-researcher-adapted self-report). She also designed and employed a fourth instrument to gather personal and socio-demographic data (20). Participants were nominated as the most successful college choral directors by American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) officials, and of those nominated, twenty-seven male and twenty-four female conductors consented to participate. In her quantitative study, Davidson finds no significant difference in leadership styles between genders, according to the three theoretical perspectives (61). Although Davidson substantiates the choice to employ four different test instruments representing three theoretical perspectives as a way to gain a more complete understanding of leadership style (20), the brief thesis does little to compare findings across theoretical frames and offers limited interpretation of each instrument's findings as they pertain to the choral context.

Chris Ludwa (2012) created and piloted a measurement approach for assessing choral leadership ability (3). Using anonymous online surveys, Ludwa surveyed twenty

conductors, nineteen of their colleagues, and 437 students in their choral ensembles from liberal arts colleges, universities, and state colleges in the USA (36). The survey comprised five parts, two adapted from the MLQ, another adapted from Podsakoff et. al's (1990) measure of transactional and transformative leadership styles, and two sections created by Ludwa, one of which was based on music education scholarship and the other with general questions about the overall success of the choral program (37-39). His findings indicate four primary leadership characteristics of choral conductors: first, an ability to impart technical, theoretical, or musical knowledge in order to create desired sounds; second, an ability to use magnitude which includes a range of body movement, pitch, voice volume, speed, activity, eye contact, gestures and facial expression (3) to create desired sounds; third, an ability to use body movement or gesture to create desired sounds; and fourth, an ability to express oneself as a leader in a way that inspires followers through transformational and transactional leadership skills (56). Ludwa finds a high correlation between inspirational motivation and high magnitude or range of gestures, tones and tempi in leaders' communication (58). In his survey results, Ludwa identifies disconnects between conductors' perceptions and their singers' perceptions of the conductors' magnitude ratings (50) and their communication skills (51) with student ratings being lower than those of the conductors.

Interestingly, in his analysis of the relationship between leadership ratings and magnitude, Ludwa suggests that conductors should better explain the intent behind their decisions to help the followers better understand their overall vision (61). Ludwa also finds virtually no correlation between conductors' leadership skills and the students' perception of how they listened in conversation off the podium, claiming that "one might

falsely assume the ability to be a transformational leader is something connected to an individual's ability to listen to one's followers (in the non-musical setting) but the present study suggests otherwise" (63). This claim directly contradicts Bass and Riggio's (2006) description of individualized consideration behaviours, where they assert that "the individually considerate leader listens effectively" (7). Here, Bass and Riggio (2006) recommend "management by walking around" workspaces where leaders have two-way conversations in informal settings (7), essentially the equivalent of conversations off the podium. Ludwa's choice to examine survey results of all conductors, followers, and colleagues together rather than examining them as twenty individual leader-follower dyads obstructs the study's ability to draw tangible comparisons between groups. Instead, Ludwa presents several speculations and inferences of what the numerical comparisons may mean. Overall, the brief thesis presents the quantitative data generated from the surveys, but the fragmented interpretation of data and the assumptions drawn from it, as in the example above, suggest that the validity of the researcher-created test instrument is questionable.

Eychaner (2009), Davidson (1995), and Ludwa (2012) each employ transformational leadership as a way to study choral leadership among post-secondary choral educators. Eychaner's analysis of the writing of Drs. Howard Swan and Eph Ehly establishes these renowned choral educators as transformational leaders and he suggests that post-secondary choral educators could improve their practice by adopting behaviours consistent with the theory. Davidson (1995) employs the MLQ as one of four test instruments in her study of gender differences between post-secondary choral educators, finding no significant difference between male and female choral directors' leadership

styles. Ludwa's (2012) quantitative study of post-secondary choral educators and singer employed a five-part researcher-created test instrument with two parts based on the MLQ; he presented a number of assertions and inferences drawn from the data, some of which seemed contradictory to leadership scholarship and common choral practice. The limited detail from Davidson (1995) in terms of the practical application of leadership theories to the choral context and the questionable findings from Ludwa (2012) strengthen the case for rigorous qualitative research in choral leadership. This dissertation addresses that gap.

Transformational leadership in public school musical contexts

The next four studies use transformational leadership to examine music educators within the public school context at the high school and middle school levels. An early example of transformational leadership applied to a music education context is Robert Bayless's (1996) study of large music ensemble directors at the secondary level. His study examines: whether discernable differences exist in leadership characteristics of public school music teachers; whether self-identified leadership styles of large ensemble directors are similarly identified by administrators, peers, and followers; and finally, whether there is a relationship between these directors' leadership qualities and teaching effectiveness (2-3). Bayless uses the MLQ to determine leadership style as transformational, transactional, or non-leader (*laissez faire*). He also uses Haman and Baker's (1995) Survey of Teacher Effectiveness to evaluate teachers in their lesson presentation and style as well as their lesson organization, knowledge, and overall effectiveness (10). Bayless surveyed a random selection of thirty-four high school music

ensemble directors in Ohio and administered the MLQ to these directors' administrators, colleagues, and students.

Bayless's findings indicate that twenty-four directors were identified as transformational while seven were identified as transactional (58). Of those who were deemed to be transformational, sixteen were also identified as transactional. Bayless asserts that although leaders often display traits of several leadership styles, "there is not usually an abundance of dual classification" (59). He continues with an example of a music teacher who supervises a musical theatre production, describing a change in the leader's style throughout the process of mounting the production. Though Bayless does not identify it as such, the shift in the teacher's approach can also be understood in terms of situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard 1977), where effective leadership varies with the tasks to be completed and the skill level and readiness of those being led.

Emma Dromgoole's (2012) study of teachers within the Edgewood school district in San Antonio, TX, examines the difference in perception of leadership between teachers of academic subjects and music. Participants were drawn from one middle school and two high schools, with academic teachers defined as those teaching math, science, reading, social studies, or computers, and music teachers defined as those teaching orchestra, band, or choir (81). Using the MLQ and a researcher-developed demographic questionnaire, she finds that music teachers self-perceived that they applied more transformational leadership than academic teachers. Dromgoole asserts that music teachers must not only challenge students to be good musicians, but must also inspire them to have a strong esprit de corps (156). She speculates this buy-in toward a collective goal contributes to the music teachers' higher transformational scores (156-

157). Although the comparison between teacher groups' self-perception of leadership using the self-rating portion of the MLQ is worthwhile, the choice not to survey students to determine follower perception is a significant limitation of the study. My research addresses this limitation in that it examines the perspectives of Leithead and his choristers, and compares these findings with my own ethnographic observations as a peer.

Owen Williams (2014) uses transformational leadership to study how the leadership behaviours of the teacher contribute to the success of a high school choral program. In this qualitative case study of one high school choral program, Williams employs ethnographic techniques including in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document collection and analysis. Though he does not employ Bass's Full Range of Leadership model as typically measured by the MLQ, many of his results align with the model's components (294). Williams finds that the director demonstrated several behaviours associated with transformational leadership including setting clear goals, maintaining high expectations, creating a positive and supportive environment, establishing a sense of community within the chorus, and caring about the students. He asserts that these behaviours contributed to the students gaining musical independence, confidence, and a sense of ownership of the ensemble. The description and interpretation presented in this in-depth study make it an excellent resource for choral educators on how to integrate principles of transformational leadership into a choral context.

Tammy Andrews (2014) examines the effects of leaders' creative self-efficacy on the relationship between transformational leadership and follower creativity among instrumental music education instructors in Oklahoma. Andrews asserts that, though

several studies have shown a correlation between transformational leadership and follower creativity (8), the correlation between leader creativity and transformational leadership has been largely unstudied. In her quantitative study, Andrews uses the MLQ and a creative self-efficacy assessment, completed through an online survey (11), to examine fifty-one leader-subordinate dyads consisting of one leader and one subordinate. Though she hypothesized that leader creativity would significantly moderate the relationship between transformational leadership and follower creativity, her statistical and correlational analyses contradict this hypothesis (108). Andrews acknowledges several limitations of her study and makes several recommendations for future research, including increasing the sample size, surveying followers in addition to the leaders instead of only the leaders regarding the leaders' leadership style, and assessing the leaders' creative potential as well as their creative self-efficacy (119-120). Qualitative research with its ability for researchers to respond to the situation and probe new avenues as they arise, might also yield the answers that eluded Andrews in her study.

Bayless (1996), Dromgoole (2012), Williams (2014), and Andrews (2014) each employ transformational leadership in their studies of music educators at the middle school and high school level. Using the MLQ, Bayless (1996) explores the connection between transformational leadership and teacher effectiveness, Dromgoole (2012) compares the leadership practices of music teachers and their academic counterparts, and Andrews (2014) examines the connection between transformational leadership and leader creativity. Williams (2014) presents an in-depth exploration of one high school music educator's transformational leadership practice in his ethnographic study, offering tangible evidence of how this educator puts theory into practice. My dissertation builds

on this knowledge, expanding it beyond the classroom into a community youth choir setting.

Transformational leadership in musical contexts outside of education

Transformational leadership has also been used as a theoretical lens to examine leadership within musical contexts beyond educational settings. Management scholar Sabine Boerner collaborates with several others on different studies pertaining to the leadership of orchestral conductors. Sabine Boerner, Diana Krause, and Diether Gebert's (2004) quantitative study of 334 musicians from thirty German orchestras explores the leadership of musicians by the conductor of an orchestra as being a combination of authority and charisma. Using a written questionnaire, they find that contrary to other creative fields where a non-directive style is favoured, directive-charismatic leadership in which the conductor restricts the freedom of musicians has a positive effect on the overall artistic quality of the ensemble. In a similar study the following year, Boerner and Christian Freiherr von Streit (2005) examine the degree to which a conductor's transformational leadership and a cooperative climate favourably affect the orchestra's artistic quality. Two hundred and eight orchestral musicians from twenty-two professional German orchestras participated in the quantitative study which employed written questionnaires. Boerner and Freiherr von Streit find that a conductor's transformational leadership style does not increase the artistic quality of the orchestra, unless it is accompanied by a highly cooperative group climate. In another article based on the same study, Boerner and von Streit's (2007) assert that neither a conductor's transformational leadership nor the musicians' positive mood alone enhance the artistic quality of an orchestra, but the interaction between these two elements is effective in

promoting a high-quality orchestral performance (134). In both of these studies, Boerner and her associates determine that transformational leadership alone does not enhance an orchestra's artistic quality, but other factors such as the leader's charisma, the leader's mood, and the ensemble's esprit de corps also play a role.

Boerner and Gebert (2012) build on empirical studies to provide an explanation of why transformational leadership by orchestral conductors is efficient. They assert that the transformational leader may reinforce the positive effects of diversity on the generation of ideas by being a role model for creative interpretations, by communicating his or her vision of the interpretation, and by encouraging musicians to express their ideas (356). They may also reduce the negative effects of diversity on idea integration within the process of artistic production by creating a collective sense of identity among musicians (357). Boerner and Gebert recommend further research on the process of idea generation and integration in orchestral settings, but state that since these processes "might be entangled in practice, [...] it may be necessary to conduct qualitative studies to further elucidate these processes" (362). I would argue that these processes are indeed entangled in practice, and as my study illustrates, qualitative research plays an important role in expanding this knowledge.

Psychology scholars Jens Rowold and Anette Rohmann (2009a) did similar work, researching the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on the emotions of recreational musicians in German non-profit orchestras. Two hundred and twelve musicians from eighteen non-profit orchestras in a variety of cities in Germany completed a German version of the MLQ-5X (275) questionnaires administered face-to-face by a member of the research team (48). Rowold and Rohmann (2009a) focus on

three subjective performance indicators: musicians' satisfaction, their extra effort, and their assessment of their leader's effectiveness (45). They find that only negative emotions had a significant impact on performance and that both transformational and transactional leaders yielded positive emotions by the musicians (53). Rowold and Rohmann (2009b) conducted a similar study of choirs within the voluntary sector. Their examination of two-hundred and eighty-eight unpaid singers from twenty-four choral societies in Germany (274) used a German version of the MLQ-5X modified slightly for the choral context (275). Their findings suggest that a leader's positive attitude is a prerequisite of followers' positive emotions and motivation, and that effective leadership within the voluntary sector is people-oriented, emotional, and inspirational (282). The consistency of these findings across orchestras and choirs strengthens the case for future research on how conductors might practically implement behaviours that increase positive emotions among ensemble members.

Steven Savageau's (2007) study does not focus on the music ensemble setting, but rather examines the correlation between self-perceived transformational leadership, gender, and participation in high school music programs. Savageau mailed out three-hundred surveys to graduates of a leadership development program sponsored by the chamber of commerce in an Upper Midwest town; participants included small business owners, non-profit organization directors, physicians, military officers, and senior non-commissioned officers (63). Of the one hundred and seven that were returned, sixty-two were women and forty-five were men (91). He used the short 5X version of the MLQ, and asked four additional questions: gender, whether or not the respondent participated in a music program during high school, whether or not the respondent participated in a

music program after high school, and how many years in total, the respondent participated in a music program (1). He finds that there is not a significant correlation between transformational leadership and participation in music programs during high school, or between transformational leadership and duration of participation in music schools. Savageau does, however, find a significant correlation between transformational leadership and gender, with women scoring significantly higher than men in the four core components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (97). Though this quantitative study did not yield the results that Savageau predicted, factors in youth that lead to the development of transformational leaders in adulthood do merit further investigation.

The studies of transformational leadership in musical contexts outside of educational settings each employed the MLQ or a German variation of it. Boerner, Krause, and Gebert's (2004) find that an efficient orchestral conductor combines authority with charisma and that a more directive approach to leading enhances the orchestra's artistic quality. Boerner and von Streit (2005, 2007) show that the conductor's mood and the ensemble's group climate are vital for transformational leadership to enhance an orchestra's artistic quality. Boerner and Gebert (2012) suggest that transformational leadership, particularly the leader's abilities to communicate his or her vision and to establish a collective identity within the ensemble, is important for reducing the negative effects of generating and integrating multiple ideas in orchestras. Rowold and Rohmann (2009a, 2009b) stress the importance of the conductor's ability to cultivate positive emotions among performers as part of efficient leadership in both orchestras and choirs. Savageau's (2007) study differs from the rest in that it does not

focus on current orchestral or choral settings. Instead, he examines the connection between transformational leadership and leaders' past experiences in high school music programs, and although his findings indicate no significant correlation between them, they show that women scored higher than men in some areas related to emotional intelligence. These studies all address the connection between emotion and leadership. My study also explores the role of emotion for the leader and the group in enhancing artistic quality within a choral setting.

Choral leadership in rehearsal and performance

In addition to the studies above that employ transformational leadership to examine choral directors' leadership practices, other studies engage with this topic using different research lenses. The following section reviews five select in-depth research studies that examine choral leadership within the rehearsal context, three of which focus on motivation in rehearsal, and two of which focus on choral leadership and performance.

Choral leadership in rehearsal

In his DMA dissertation, Christopher Smith (2016) provides a brief comparative study of six internationally-acclaimed choral directors from around the world: Frieder Bernius (Germany), Tõnu Kaljuste (Estonia), Stephen Cleobury and John Eliot Gardiner (UK), and Weston Noble and Robert Shaw (USA). Smith examines their approaches to unification of choral sound, rehearsal, conducting, and leadership. In terms of rehearsal strategies, he finds variance in the different conductors' approaches, but notes that constant singer engagement, consistent priorities, and voice preservation for performance are consistent among the conductors. Regarding leadership, Smith (2016) finds that conductors require technical competence, confidence on the podium (which is the result

of competence in musicianship and preparation of the work at hand), a strong work ethic, creativity, a servant's heart, sharing of success, acceptance of responsibility, positivity, and an understanding of leadership principles. Though Smith does not employ theories from leadership studies, his comparison of the approaches of these renowned directors offers tangible, discipline-specific advice for choral practitioners.

Sheng-Hwa Yu's (1999) study examines chorus members' reactions to the leadership styles of conductors in terms of their attitudinal reaction and their musical achievement under two different leadership styles of choral conductors (11-12). Yu's participants were the forty-four members of the chamber chorus of a suburban high school north of Philadelphia. Using Fleishman's Leadership Opinion Questionnaire, Yu identified two different leadership styles: consideration leadership style (CLS) and structure leadership style (SLS), and recruited two conductors, each of whom had tendencies towards one style (14). The director of the high school chorus divided the ensemble into two equivalent groups, and each group prepared the same two pieces over six rehearsals under the direction of one of the guest directors (63). The opinions of choristers were obtained through the rehearsal atmosphere scale, a written survey developed by Yu (76) and a group interview with four students from each ensemble (67). Three judges evaluated the musical achievement of the groups using a choral rating sheet, a seven-dimension, and five-point scale rating (63).

In his mixed method study, using both quantitative and qualitative analyses (86), Yu finds the singers in the CLS group had strong self-motivation, morale, and group cohesiveness, while the SLS group had strong group cohesiveness but weak self-motivation and morale (94). In terms of class control, the CLS group lacked

concentration and appeared non-serious in their performance, while the SLS group maintained discipline (96-97). The CLS singers were enthusiastic and considered themselves in a pleasant environment; however, they did not use rehearsal time efficiently and did not accomplish a high level of music-making (98). The SLS group, on the other hand, felt as though their creativity was stifled and their input was ignored; still, although “their mind and spirit were closed, because they felt they had already learned the two pieces well” (99), their musical qualities gradually increased. Since the CLS conductor worked very well with the CLS group, yet the SLS conductor achieved a higher level of musical performance, Yu recommends combining the two leadership styles into a single style that is unique and appropriate to the individual circumstance (130). This combination allows for efficient use of rehearsal time by the conductor to impart their knowledge on the choristers and help them increase their musical skills, while also acknowledging choristers’ needs to be recognized as engaged thinking artists.

Carolyn Neumann’s (2007) thesis explores the opinions of children and conductors involved in community children’s choirs regarding the importance of leadership behaviours of female children’s choir conductors who demonstrate emotional intelligence (5-6). She employs Goleman’s categories of relationship management and his focus on the emotional competencies which are developing others, inspirational leadership, building bonds, and teamwork and collaboration (6). Neumann surveyed eighty-five singers, aged nine to thirteen, from four auditioned community choirs in southern Ontario and seventeen female children’s choir conductors (53). Conductors were selected through a search of children’s choir websites and the provincial choral organization’s listings (57). Neumann developed her own survey for the study based on

related literature, her own experience, and Goleman's categories of relationship management (55). Additionally, participants were invited to provide anecdotal comments (60). Neumann's findings indicate that relationship management areas of developing others, inspirational leadership, and building bonds are considered more important by the conductors than by choristers (102). In terms of teamwork and collaboration, Neumann found that children perceived that allowing singers to have ownership over musical elements is extremely important, but several conductors indicated that the conductor should have the final say in musical decisions (103). This challenge in negotiating multiple perspectives is consistent with Boerner and Gebert's (2012) findings in their exploration of transformational leadership and idea generation and integration within orchestras.

Marilyn Kerley (1995) also investigates leadership within the children's choir context. Her qualitative study investigates the decision-making processes, leadership styles and behaviours, and musicality of two master teachers of elementary-aged children's choirs (8), Catherine Glaser-Climie and Jean Laniuk. Sources of data included audio-taped pre-observation interviews; pre-rehearsal interviews and written and/or verbal choral rehearsal plans; video-taped rehearsals; field notes on rehearsal observations; stimulated recall interviews; reflective comments regarding field notes, video-taped lessons, and stimulated recall interviews; and member checks (34-35). The stimulated recall interviews involved reviewing videos of the teacher-directed choral rehearsals with the teachers, and then audio-recording the teachers' reactions and interpretations of their teaching (8).

Kerley finds that several elements are vital to a choral director's success, including the ability to plan appropriate and diverse teaching strategies to address musical deficiencies, to anticipate problems in the repertoire, to include diverse musical styles, and to meet choristers' needs for stimulating activities. She also posits that post-active reflective planning is an essential part of teacher preparation (223). Kerley asserts that leadership style and behaviour include both task and relationship goals and that character traits of choral directors include "a) concern for the well-being of choristers, b) the ability to relate in a positive manner to singers, and c) the need for self-actualization through excellence in musical performance" (224). She concludes that beyond simply teaching musical skills, the one component of musical performance inherent in master choral teachers is musical artistry (224). Though she does not employ transformational leadership as a research lens, Kerley's findings are consistent with its components of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Suzanne Allen's (1988) study examined whether or not there was a predominant style of leadership among successful choral directors in the USA, and whether or not there was a relationship between the style of leadership of the choral conductor and the readiness level of the group or groups they conducted (12). One hundred and twenty-two participants (57) were selected from choral directors of high school and college choirs who had performed at national or divisional conferences of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), thereby establishing their ensembles as having reached a level of excellence (48). Participants completed Hersey and Blanchard's Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description instrumentation (LEAD-test), a survey

designed to assess leadership skills according to Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) situational leadership theory. Results were used to establish the conductors' primary leadership style, secondary leadership style or styles, and style adaptability (57). Chi-square analysis was used to further compare the LEAD primary leadership style with various factors including education level, number of choirs conducted, years of experience, and age, both as a total population and among the high school directors, and college directors separately (85). Situational leadership suggests that effective leaders adapt their behaviours according to the task at hand and the followers' readiness, with four main leadership styles that reflect a combination of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours (4). Allen's findings indicate that most successful conductors had a leadership style consistent with high task/high relationship behaviours, with a predominant secondary style of high relationship/low task or a combination of high task/low relationship and high relationship/low task behaviours which shifted according to the particular situation (92-93). There was no significant difference in leadership styles between high school and college conductors (94). Allen's study is one of the earliest research studies of choral leadership and a pioneering work in terms of applying situational leadership to the choral context.

Studies of choral leadership beyond those which employ transformational leadership all highlight the need to consider the relationship with choristers as an important element. Smith (2016) asserts that the conductor must combine competence and confidence with a servant's heart. Yu (1999) suggests that conductors adopt combination of structure and consideration leadership styles. Neumann (2007) underscores the importance of emotional intelligence, while Kerley (1995) stresses that

master teachers are able to achieve artistry through planning, and a combination of task and relationship goals. Allen (1988) recommends a situational approach to choral directing where a conductor adapts their style according to the task at hand and the readiness of choristers. My study builds on this literature and probes the relationship between a choral director and his choristers through the rehearsal process and as it relates to innovation and artistry on stage.

Choral leadership and motivation

The next three studies focus on how choral directors motivate choristers. Alan Mudrick's (1997) qualitative study examines student motivation in four successful high school choral programs using a theoretical framework of grounded theory and naturalistic inquiry. Data was collected over the 1996-1997 school year through field observation of rehearsals and interviews with forty student informants (44-45). His findings indicate that successful choral directors uphold high standards for all components of their programs (148); structure the program hierarchically based on students' talent, dedication, and experience, a structure that motivates the most talented students to strive for acceptance into the elite group (149); maintain a healthy climate of respect with instrumental directors, with the social climate of students following suit (149); maintain a schedule where students rehearse every day (149); and select challenging and eclectic repertoire (150). Mudrick also asserts that successful choral directors motivate their students through dedicated, energetic, and charismatic leadership (151); by acting as role models for both music and life skills (152); by possessing a clear vision of what they want their students to achieve musically (152); by demonstrating persistence and rigor in pushing students beyond ordinary expectations (153); by confronting their own

shortcomings (154); and by displaying humour, empathy, and genuine care for their students (154). Mudrick's study provides clear and practical advice for choral practitioners seeking to establish a choral program or improve their current one.

Rick Stamer (1999) also explores what behaviours by choral music educators motivate students to learn. Stamer surveyed 472 students from eight large high schools using a test instrument based on Madeline Hunter's (1967) motivational strategies (26). In his finding, Stamer identifies four effective motivational behaviours. The first is creating a nurturing environment, which includes encouraging students in their efforts, congratulating students on their musical accomplishments, and providing new performance opportunities (28). The second is providing feedback, which includes providing students with detailed feedback on their progress, being available for extra help, providing constant feedback on the ensemble's musical progress, and providing students with opportunities to develop their singing abilities through feedback during private lessons (28).

The third effective motivational behaviour is assigning meaningful repertoire, which involves selecting challenging but attainable pieces, connecting compositional techniques of new selections to previously-studied works, presenting new compositions with enthusiasm, relating material learned in rehearsal to other topics of importance to students, and encouraging students to share their knowledge on musical subjects (28). The fourth effective motivational behaviour identified in the study is presenting appropriate challenges, which involves selecting sections of a difficult work and perfecting them, and then rehearsing the entire composition (28). Stamer also identifies four ineffective motivational behaviours: requiring students to perform their parts in front

of the group, telling students that their semester grade is based on an upcoming performance, expecting students to learn their voice parts on their own without providing adequate help, and communicating displeasure about students' effort without providing strategies for improvement.

In a subsequent study, Stamer (2009) uses his own test instrument, Stamer's (1995) Motivation Variables Survey, to survey 515 students in four Arizona high schools (26). Beyond several of the same findings outlined above, this study also identifies several differences between the effectiveness of motivating factors as perceived by male and female respondents. Female respondents identified the following motivating factors as more effective than male respondents: compliments from the director on work ethic, congratulations from the director on performance accomplishment, additional performance opportunities, detailed feedback in rehearsal, the opportunity to develop their singing ability in private singing lessons, and understanding that "through hard work in rehearsal a student may realize his or her goal of becoming an outstanding performer" (27). The difference between motivational factors as perceived by male and female choristers that Stamer identifies is significant, especially in light of Savageau's (2007) study of transformational leaders and participation in high school music programs in which he identifies female leaders as scoring higher on the components of transformational leadership, particularly in areas associated with emotional intelligence. Further research, perhaps in the form of a longitudinal study, might offer further insight into the relationship between transformational leaders, gender, and their involvement in music ensembles during their youth.

Mudrick's (1997) qualitative study of four high school choral programs and Stamer's (1999, 2009) quantitative studies of eight and four high school music programs, respectively, provide insights into motivational factors for choristers including maintaining a positive rehearsal climate, providing an appropriate level of challenge with repertoire, and showing care for their choristers. My study also addresses these elements of motivation but within a community youth choir setting. Its single case study methodology contributes to this body of knowledge in particular, by providing an in-depth look into one highly-effective choral motivator.

Choral leadership and performance

The following two research studies examine choral leadership and its impact on performance. Shulamit Hoffmann's (2016) phenomenological study explores the lived experience of live choral performance by amateurs, specifically the meaning of live performance to performers, conductors' and choristers' conceptualizations of choral expression, and what helps and hinders an ensemble's ability to be expressive in performance (23). In her study, Hoffman interviewed eight conductors, held focus groups with sixty choristers, and observed seven choirs in rehearsal. Hoffmann draws on Tolstoy's contagion theory of art, where "the purpose of art is contained in an artist's ability to infect an audience with his feelings, so that the audience feels the same feelings the artist does" (17). She argues that that the communication of feelings occurs at the overlap of contagion with aural and optic percepts (14-15).² Hoffman suggests that at the local level, amateur ensembles that consider both aural and visual elements "may vivify the experience of performance, both for performer and for audience" (292).

² Hoffmann (2016) defines 'percept' as "a sensory channel through which expression is perceived" (14).

Hoffmann's findings indicate that, although the participants in her study all identified choral expression as being important, defining "that most elusive entity and process, object and experience, modality and synergy, that is expression in a musical performance" (230) was much more difficult, and that her participants used over two hundred terms to define "expression" or name its components (230). Although her conductor participants varied widely in terms of their leadership ideology and study, most of the rehearsals that she observed were leader-driven (264). In her findings, Hoffmann identifies a willingness by choristers to submit to the authority of the conductor and a desire to meet their musical demands and to like or love them for their interpersonal and leadership abilities (263), and though some choristers indicated a desire for their voice to be heard beyond the singing, they did not articulate how this would be accomplished (264). She also asserts that "developing expressive ensemble synergy seems to depend on the cultivation of a sense of community among the singers and with the conductor" (265). This is consistent with Boerner and von Streit's (2005) findings that having a strong esprit de corps within an ensemble is important for achieving musical artistry.

Also related to choral performance and leadership, Evelyn DeGraf's (2016) explores how renowned choral directors characterize their roles as leaders, teachers, and artists, and how they prepare themselves through ritual for performance (21). For her multiple case study (22), she selected renowned North American and British choral conductors who had been nominated for awards, had won prestigious choral competitions, or had contributed significantly to the choral field: Harry Christophers, Alice Parker, Sharon Paul, Doreen Rao, John Rutter, Kent Tritle, and Julian Wachner. DeGraf's data collection included semi-structured interviews, performance observations,

and document review, and her analysis was done using manual coding based on grounded theory.

DeGraf discusses her findings of the seven cases in light of her pre-conceived categories of the choral conductor as leader, teacher, and artist (4). DeGraf uses the notion of ritual as a research lens, which she defines as: “a mindful performance action or behavior that transitions the performer into a heightened state and readies him/her for performance” (14). She examines both conscious and unconscious or “hidden” rituals and their qualities and finds that pre-performance rituals from early on concert day to the “liminal” space between stepping on stage to the first upbeat. She finds that ritual serves a variety of functions including: “ritual as transition, ritual as tool, ritual as catalyst, ritual as reminder, and ritual as way of being” (182). DeGraf asserts that the roles of rituals are interconnected and, for each of the seven master conductors, tied to their leadership philosophy. Therefore, she believes that focusing on skills alone is insufficient for studying choral leadership, but instead, one must examine the conductor’s philosophy and persona for a more holistic understanding (219). DeGraf’s study of internationally renowned choral conductors and their multiple roles as leaders, teachers, and artists, parallels Kerley’s (1995) findings of master choral directors of children’s choirs. The similarity of findings suggests that regardless of the skill level or age of choristers, in order to achieve choral artistry, a conductor must approach directing from multiple perspectives.

Hoffman (2016) and DeGraf (2016)’s qualitative studies both address elements of choral performance. Hoffman (2016) explores emotional contagion, expression, and the connection between choristers and audiences. Though her study focused on both choral

directors and choristers, she finds that most directors employed a leader-drive approach to directing. This finding is particularly salient to my exploration of expression and innovation on stage. By focusing on collaborative processes towards achieving choral artistry, my study responds the question of how to incorporate other artistic voices that arose in her work. DeGraf's (2016) research examines the pre-performance rituals of choral directors and their perceptions of their roles as leaders, teachers, and artists. Her assertion that it is insufficient to focus on skills alone when studying choral leadership, but that one must also examine the conductor's philosophy and persona is astute. By combining the lenses of transformational leadership with ubuntu, my study examines both aspects of Leithead's choral leadership practice.

Ubuntu in music settings

The following section examines the limited literature surrounding ubuntu, a southern African philosophy of humanism, as it pertains to music. In his one-page commentary on ubuntu and choral music, Steven Fisher (2006/2007) asserts that "choral singing is the perfect manifestation of this wonderful concept" (40) and that the concept of ubuntu has profoundly influenced his choral life. Fisher argues that as social creatures we need to stay connected to our fellow humans to reach our full potential, and that "when people sing together, there is an indescribable 'connectedness' that nothing can duplicate," (40) and that lasting joy comes from this connectedness. Ubuntu has also been used as the name of a network of choirs whose main focus is to create community rather than give performances. According to their website, Ubuntu Choirs Network ensembles are non-auditioned, community-focused, inclusive of people from all walks of

life, and socially engaged.³ The Ubuntu Choirs Network is a registered non-profit society in BC, Canada, whose purpose is “to foster the practice of people singing together as an essential tool for connecting to each other, and for building community locally, regionally, and globally” and “to encourage and facilitate these choirs to support charitable work, both locally and globally.”⁴ There are currently twenty-nine choirs in Canada and twenty-four in the USA.⁵

Caroline van Niekerk and Maria Typpo (2012) conducted an ethnographic case study of the STTEP Music School, an outreach project through the University of Pretoria which teaches orchestral music and music theory to disadvantaged students from neighbouring townships and suburbs.⁶ In addition to intercultural education theories, they employ the lens of ubuntu in their study (77). Van Niekerk and Typpo assert that STTEP is a manifestation of ubuntu (75), as evidenced by the advanced students who gain experience in taking responsibility, in mentoring current STTEP students, and in giving valuable help with language problems “between a white, non-African language-speaking teacher and a black pupil whose home language is one of the nine indigenous such languages in South Africa” (76). Their findings indicate that the STTEP orchestra worked as a social link between students from different areas; that students’ self-esteem increased through their progress (80); and that, for many students, this was their first exposure to Western classical music, and that exposure enriched their lives (81).

³ <http://www.choirs.net/model.php>

⁴ http://ubuntuchoirs.net/who_we_are.php

⁵ The Soul Song Circle Singers is an Ubuntu Choirs Network ensemble in Edmonton, AB.

⁶ The acronym STTEP “acknowledges the South African Music Education Trust (S), the Tshwane district (T), under which Pretoria falls, and the then Transvaal Philharmonic Orchestra (T), no longer in existence, followed by EP for Education Project” (van Niekerk and Typpo 2012, 87).

In addition to direct observations made by Typpo in the field, she interviewed the two teachers who founded the program in 1995 and two more long-time teachers who had been teaching with STTEP since 2002. Van Niekerk also administered questionnaires to all STTEP students and to fifteen teachers about their familiarity with ubuntu as a concept (83). Twenty students, aged ten to twenty, responded, all indicating a familiarity with the concept, while only five out of the fifteen teachers responded, the majority of whom were not familiar with it (83-84). Van Niekerk and Typpo observed further disconnect between the founding teacher's espousal of an ubuntu ethos as evidenced in her 2008 annual report for the school and email correspondence and the attitude of some teachers (85). Further findings indicate that being exposed to different musical cultures increased the students' interest in other cultures and in their own; that part of their self-concept had been formed by their role in the orchestra; and that playing in orchestra helped students process, adapt, and analyze their feelings. At the same time, students displayed performance anxiety when playing orchestral instruments which differed greatly from how they behaved at a traditional relaxed singing and dancing event, a finding that calls into question the extent to which the pupils' musical identity had been established (85). Van Niekerk and Typpo acknowledge the challenge of multicultural education systems, and recommend that both teachers and pupils be open to new ideas (86). They also ask: "[w]hat can Westerners learn from the social, African way of learning and playing music when mistakes made could even be described as joyous occasions, demonstrative of shared humanity and not of shame?" (86). Leithead's choral leadership in the rehearsal setting, which is addressed in chapter six, sheds light on this

topic, specifically how choir members are encouraged to try new things as choristers, soloists, and arrangers without fear of being mocked.

Business scholar Joyce Tsitsi Mhiripiri (2012) examined music management and promotion in Zimbabwe where currently most managers and promoters focus on the short-term and on maximizing the income from each transaction (69). In her study, Mhiripiri examined press reports from four Zimbabwean newspapers between January 2008 and December 2011, using the search words: “Zimbabwe,” “music,” “promoter,” and “manager” to determine which promotion model was being used (71). Her findings indicate that primary concerns in the relationships between artists and intermediaries were “trust issues, ambition versus capacity, marketing lapses and administrative flaws” (76). Though she discusses ubuntu management and marketing as well as McGregor’s Theory Y (1960), Greenleaf’s Servant Leadership (1970), and oddly Covey’s (1992) work on Transformational Leadership rather than more recent scholarship by Bass and his associates (Bass and Bass 2008; Bass and Riggio 2006, etc.), she does not actively engage with these theories in her analysis of data (68-69).

Though limited in number, these articles support the application of ubuntu to musical contexts. Fisher (2006/2007) identifies choral singing as the embodiment of ubuntu. Van Niekerk and Typo (2012) suggest that applying principles of ubuntu to classical music contexts could improve the emotional well-being of participants. Mhiripiri (2012) proposes that shared authority, consistent with ubuntu management, may be beneficial to the Zimbabwean music industry. By applying ubuntu as a main research lens in a choral context, my study expands on this literature.

Developing citizenship in the choral context

This section introduces the literature addressing choral singing and engaged citizenship. In 2009, Chorus America commissioned a study, which was executed by Grunwald Associates using online surveys, examining the attitudes, opinions, and activities of more than 2,000 singers in all types of choruses across the United States, including five hundred members of the general public, five hundred parents, and three-hundred K-12 educators (Chorus America 2009, 4). This study provided an update to an earlier study (Chorus America 2003). One of the four key findings in Chorus America's (2009) Chorus Impact Study is that "adults who sing in choruses are remarkably good citizens" (5) in that they tend to be avid patrons of the arts, be better team players in other activities beyond their choruses, be substantial financial contributors to their choruses and contribute more to other philanthropic organizations than average Americans, be more engaged in volunteering than the general public, and be greater civic leaders than their fellow Americans (5). This research suggests that many of the benefits of *Bildung* that were part of the widespread growth of civic choirs in German-speaking countries during the nineteenth-century remain relevant in present-day North America.

Related to civic involvement, Thomas Langston's (2011) qualitative interpretivist case study examines indicators of social capital in a community choir in regional Tasmania, Australia. The study adopts a narrative enquiry approach (168) with data collection completed using surveys, field notes, and semi-structured interviews (169). He finds that within the community choir of twenty-seven (170) mainly retired people (171), the presence of social capital is evident in several ways. Commitment is an element of social capital, and the presence of trust is an indicator that social capital is developing

(172). Participation, interaction, and involvement in civic and local community activities contribute to broadening community social capital and developing networks (173). The choir also demonstrates social capital through shared norms and values (176), learning from interactions with others (177), and fellowship as developed through teamwork (179). Langston's investigation of social capital sheds light on what might be some of the motivating factors for individuals to join community choirs beyond musical reasons.

Several choral directors have written about outreach and civic engagement as they occur within their own ensembles. In her critical ethnography on the Mississauga Festival Youth Choir (MFYC), Deborah Bradley (2006) explores how the music with which the MFYC engages enables choristers to locate themselves in the world, and what type of selves they create in relation to others (20). She also explores how engaging in global song within MFYC's anti-racism, multi-cultural choral practice contributes to the development of choristers as multicultural human subjects (20), and where her own pedagogical practice towards that end requires additional anti-racism work (23). Bradley proposes multicultural human subjectivity "as a form of resistance to the oppressions articulated through socially and discursively constructed boundaries of race, ethnicity, nation, gender, ability, and so forth" (26). Twenty choristers were selected from the Level II choir, made up generally of singers in grade seven and older; these choristers were interviewed individually (107). A focus group of five choristers was selected to ensure validity through further discussion and critique of the results of data analysis (110). Bradley also maintained a reflexive journal of her teaching experiences through the ten-month study (112).

Bradley's findings indicate that experiencing global song in a number of languages helped choristers recognize themselves in others, acquire cultural capital, recognize racism by connecting emotionally to global song, and through the performance of racialized representations of cultural memories, develop self-understanding as multi-cultural human subjects (207-208). Her findings also indicate that membership in MFYC led to the development of a collective identity for the group, and for its members, a better understanding of racism and a desire to change oppressive systems (263). Bradley's extra-musical goals for her youth choir are ambitious, but this study provides insight into how other choral directors might approach similar objectives.

In her keynote address at the Saskatchewan Music Conference, Susan Knight (2004) offers insights on how to establish a musical ensemble that goes beyond an aesthetic experience. She shares that the building of community and culture within an ensemble are of primary importance: "For me, the music itself is not top on the totem pole, but rather the people, their relationships, and the philosophy that defines the group" (10), and that "by building and maintaining a community of young musicians that is dynamic, democratic, vibrant and healthy, the music soars" (10). Knight advocates for a more democratic than autocratic practice so that her choristers can acquire independence, self-confidence, creativity, generosity, accountability, responsibility, and develop the skills of critical observation and reflection, analysis and synthesis, and problem-solving (11). She encourages educators to pursue reflective, transformative teaching where students are given the opportunity to produce their own knowledge, and to involve young musicians in developing a strong sense of community, identity, and agency within the ensemble (12). She explains that within the Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir

(NSYC), choristers elect a Chorister Council, which takes on projects, many of which are self-defined, that “further build relationship, community, awareness, responsibility, and accountability” (13). One of the goals of the choir has been to develop leaders for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador (14). Beyond cultural preservation and renewal, the NSYC provides the opportunity for singers to expand their thinking on a national and global scale through global repertoire and touring (14). Though Knight’s address is not a formal research study, her work with NSYC offers many insights into how choral directors can share power with their choristers. NSYC is now called Shallaway and continues to thrive under director Kellie Walsh as a musical ensemble and organization that empowers choristers and contributes to the cultural vibrancy of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Elizabeth McAnally (2002) describes the implementation of a community service choir as part of a successful choral program at the Philadelphia middle school where she teaches. Because of the highly competitive nature of the choral program in the school, several inexperienced singers were left without an opportunity to sing, so a choir was created with the dual purpose of providing a choral opportunity for inexperienced singers and serving the community through both musical performances and other volunteer services (31). The three primary objectives of the choir are to develop confident skilled musicians who value music and believe that music can have a positive effect on others; empathetic individuals who value volunteerism and believe their actions can have a positive effect on the lives of others; and a positive, constructive interactive relationship between the school and the community that allows each to learn from the other (32). McAnally makes several practical recommendations for music educators wishing to add a

community service choir to their school program, noting that the benefits of such a program include the development of lifelong musicians and good citizens, as well as the establishment of community support for schools and school music programs (34).

McAnally's study is significant in that it shows how the cultivation of citizenship in the choral context is not limited to adult or youth choirs, but can take place with child choristers as well.

Though the cultivation of citizenship through choral singing has been happening for two centuries, the number of research studies that address this phenomenon in its present context is quite small. Chorus America (2003, 2009) finds that adults who sing in choruses tend to be philanthropic and engaged citizens who support the arts and volunteer. In his study of social capital within a community choir in Tasmania, Langston (2011) also finds that the choristers tend to be active participants in their local community. Bradley (2006) and Knight (2004) address their goals of cultivating citizens within their youth choirs, and McAnally (2002) describes a community service choir within a middle school setting. My study expands this literature by examining a choir that not only makes a difference locally and regionally, but also globally. Through African Projects, Leithead not only cultivates citizenship among his own choristers, but facilitates the cultivation of citizenship for members of the ensemble's sister choirs through financial support of choristers and a chorister cultural exchange program.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature related to this study. The first section provided a review of studies that address transformational leadership in post-secondary choral settings, in high school and middle school choral and instrumental

music education settings, and in orchestral and choral society settings. Several quantitative studies employed the MLQ as their test instrument, while others used alternative surveys. Other studies adopted a qualitative approach and employed ethnographic research methods. No study focused on transformational leadership within the community youth choir setting, hence the unique contribution that this dissertation adds to the body of literature. The second section reviewed select studies on choral leadership that do not use transformational leadership as their primary research lens, but are salient to my research as they also examine choral rehearsal and performance processes. The third section presented the limited literature that applied ubuntu to musical contexts, while the final section reviewed select literature related to the cultivation of choristers as citizens within community youth and adult choirs and the school choral program. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORY

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed select research studies that employ my two main theoretical lenses, transformational leadership and ubuntu, in music settings, as well as other salient studies on choral leadership and the development of citizenship in the choral context. This chapter delves more deeply into the main research lenses and establishes the theoretical framework of the study.

In order to better understand what I observed in my ethnographic field research and what my interlocutors relayed to me in interviews, I selected Bernard Bass's (1985, 1998) theory of transformational leadership as my primary research lens. While this lens was effective for explaining many of Leithead's behaviours and his choristers' experience of Leithead's leadership, it did not adequately address the moral motivation that informs his leadership behaviours and decision-making. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of Leithead's leadership behaviours and his motivation for decisions pertaining to leadership, a second lens of ubuntu was added. Ubuntu is a southern African concept of personhood. Related to humanism, this concept has been understood as a philosophy, an ethic, and a worldview, and has been applied in a number of domains including politics and business. Despite the geographic location and Canadian cultural milieu in which Leithead and Kokopelli exist, ubuntu is an appropriate theoretical lens for this study because of Leithead's ongoing connection to southern Africa through Kokopelli's African Projects.

The first section of this chapter introduces the field of leadership studies, while the next section delves more deeply into transformational leadership, specifically Bernard

Bass's (1985, 1998) Full Range of Leadership theory.⁷ The third section explores ubuntu as a concept and illustrates how it has been used in politics and business. The chapter ends with an explanation of how the theoretical lenses converge.

Leadership studies

For centuries, man has been fascinated with the art of leadership. Chinese military general and philosopher Sun Tzu's sixth century BCE work, *The Art of War*, addresses leadership in the military. In ancient Greece, Plato discusses government and leadership in the *Republic* (approximately 375 BCE), presenting several concepts of leaders including tyrants, demagogues, and philosopher-kings. Centuries later, Niccolo Machiavelli's work *The Prince* (1532), published after Machiavelli's death, describes the political climate in Italy and how a leader must do what is necessary, however unpopular, for the greater good. Since then, the term "Machiavellian" has come to mean using immoral means to achieve desired outcomes. Leadership studies as we know it today is a field that emerged in the mid-twentieth century and has flourished over the past twenty-five years. This field crosses a number of disciplines from the social sciences and humanities to business, education, and organizational studies. Scholars in political science, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology and applied disciplines have sought and continue to seek to define leadership and have developed theories and methods to better understand it. While a comprehensive review of leadership theories is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is useful to briefly touch on some of the currents

⁷ The term Full Range of Leadership *Model* appears in Bass (1985, 1998) and Bass and Riggio (2006), but in related scholarship, appears as Full Range of Leadership *Theory* (Tejada, Scandura and Pillai, 2001; Antonakis and House, 2002).

of thought that exist in leadership literature, with particular attention to the works that have informed the development of transformational leadership.⁸

Trait approach

Some of the earliest theories of modern leadership adopt a trait approach, which focuses exclusively on the leader, not on the followers or the situation. Thomas Carlyle, considered to be the first modern writer on leadership, draws on the writings of Machiavelli when establishing his “Great Man” theory (Carlyle 1841). In this theory, leaders are believed to be born, not made. Leaders naturally possess the qualities necessary for influencing followers and flourish as leaders when there is a great need. With the trait approach, qualities of leaders include masculinity and heroism, as individuals take on causes against the odds for the good of the followers. Ralph Stogdill’s research (1948, 1974) analyzes studies of leadership traits from the early 1900s and finds that not all leaders are effective in all situations, leading to a shift in leadership research that focuses on behaviours and situations.

Skills approach

Other theorists who study traits of leaders find that traits are not innate but can be learned and adopted; these models espouse a skills approach and are considered behavioural theories of leadership. Management expert Robert Katz’s (1955) three-skill approach posits that effective leadership requires proficiency in three domains: technical skill in the type of work or activity in question, human skill or the ability to work with people, and conceptual skills that deal with ideas. Psychologist and social scientist,

⁸For a comprehensive account of research and models of leadership, see Bass and Bass 2008 (originally Stogdill 1974).

Daniel Goleman, (1995, 1998) approaches leadership through emotional intelligence, whereby a leader's skills and competencies lead to outstanding performance by followers. His model includes five main personal competencies of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation, as well as social competencies including communication and conflict management (Goleman 1998). With both trait and skills approaches, the primary method of evaluation of leadership is through the use of questionnaires.

Situational leadership

Other approaches to studying leadership go beyond simply examining the traits and behaviours of leaders and instead view leadership as an interchange between leader and followers. One such theory is situational leadership, developed by management experts Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard (1977). This theory maintains that effective leadership depends on leadership style and the followers' maturity level, which is made up of both task-specific skills as well as willingness to learn. In this theory, leaders must be flexible and adapt their approach to the task that must be accomplished; leaders should also seek to develop followers' competence and commitment so that followers become self-motivated. Northouse (2010) presents several weaknesses of situational leadership: insufficient published research justifying the assumptions of the approach, ambiguity regarding the theoretical basis informing the levels of competence and commitment of followers, failure to account for other demographic characteristics which influence a subordinate's preference for a particular leadership style, and bias in the test questionnaires. Practically, the approach does not adequately take into account the difference between one-on-one and group leadership, specifically how a leader deals with

individuals whose developmental levels differ from their colleagues when matching his/her style to the overall group (Northouse 2010).

Servant leadership

Philosopher Robert K. Greenleaf (1977) adopts an alternative understanding of leadership with his theory of servant leadership. This theory maintains that in order to create a more just society, a leader must first be a servant and that the motivation to serve must come before the motivation to lead. This conceptualization contrasts those who are leaders first and servants second, as servant leaders must temper their desires for power and for the accumulation of material possessions (Greenleaf 1977, 13). Although servant leadership does take into consideration the needs of followers, this approach assumes the superiority of the leader over followers and undermines followers' rights and abilities to determine their own growth needs (Tourish 2013, 204). As a result, regardless of the leader's intentions of serving followers, this approach suppresses the agency of followers and bars them from making meaningful decisions for themselves. In their work to distinguish charismatic leadership from other forms, management and organizational experts, Kyoungsu Kim, Fred Dansereau and Insook Kim (2002) suggest that a servant leader displays personal and empowering behaviours, but not vision-related behaviours. The servant leader assumes the risk of failure and suppresses his or her personal interest for the sake of followers, and although he or she provides opportunity for followers to be empowered, the servant leader does not articulate long-term planning for the future.

Leader-member exchange theory

Leader-member exchange theory (LMX), a more recent theory in leadership studies, focuses on the interactions that make up the two-way (dyadic) relationship between the leader and followers. This approach to studying leadership is based on the understanding that leaders build a relationship with each follower, and that the quality of that leader-member exchange determines the follower's level of responsibility, access to resources, and influence in decision-making. In this model, followers are separated into sub-groups: the in-group whose members receive more insider information and more responsibility, and the out-group whose members complete their assigned tasks but do not go beyond those expectations. George Graen and Mary Uhl-Bien (1991) propose that the relationship between leader and followers develops over time in three phases: stranger, acquaintance, and mature partnership. Various questionnaires have been designed to assess leadership in LMX including the LMX 7 (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) in which the seven questions are intended to measure levels of trust, and obligation between leader and followers. A key criticism of this approach is its lack of fairness. Northouse (2010, 156) explains that even though it was not designed to do so, the theory supports discrimination and inequality between members of the in-group and out-group and does not elaborate on strategies for gaining admission to the in-group. Northouse also suggests that the theory is under-developed and questions the lack of empirical evidence necessary to validate the measurement scales of leader-member exchanges (2010, 157).

Charismatic leadership

Two inter-related branches of leadership scholarship are charismatic leadership and transformational leadership. The word *charisma* comes from the Greek *charis*, meaning “grace, kindness, favour.”⁹ The term first appeared in English as *charism* or *charisma*, referring to the charisms of healing, prophecy, and other gifts of the Spirit (Parrinder 1987, 222). Sociologist Max Weber (1924; Weber, Henderson, and Parsons 1947) first introduces the use of the term in a secular context to refer to an individual whose extraordinary qualities are bestowed, not by God, but rather by colleagues and subordinates. He defines charisma as: “a quality of individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, super-human, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities” (Weber, Henderson, and Parsons 1947, 358).

For Weber (Weber, Henderson, and Parsons 1947), charisma lies outside of the everyday sphere as opposed to rational, bureaucratic, or traditional authority (361). Both transformational leadership and charismatic leadership stem from Weber’s work on charisma. These branches of leadership scholarship, each with their own theories and models are considered the “new leadership genre” (Avolio and Yammarino 2002; Northouse 2010; Bryman 1992), and focus on how leaders encourage performance beyond expectations by developing an emotional attachment with their followers in the pursuit of a common cause. Kim, Dansereau, and Kim’s (2002, 146) survey of the literature on contemporary approaches to charismatic leadership finds that Weber’s (1968) concept of charisma continues to capture the key dimensions of this type of leadership including vision or mission, extraordinary or exceptional qualities, and

⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/charisma>

recognition. Their distillation of the literature presents three behavioural dimensions of charismatic leadership. The first dimension, vision-related behaviours, is one of the most critical elements of charisma. A charismatic leader must present a compelling strategic vision or future goal that followers are willing to embrace. Second, the leader's personal behaviours must include self-confidence, risk-taking, self-sacrifice, and a strong belief in the moral righteousness of his/her beliefs. A charismatic leader must be a strong role model. Third, the leader's empowering behaviours must enhance followers' self-esteem. By offering support, assigning critical tasks, and ensuring self-leadership, a charismatic leader gains the trust of followers and demonstrates confidence in their abilities. These dimensions parallel Bass's (1985, 1998) concept of transformational leadership.

Yukl (1999) identifies several weaknesses that are shared by charismatic leadership and transformational leadership theories including "ambiguous constructs, insufficient description of explanatory processes, a narrow focus on dyadic processes, omission of some relevant behaviors, insufficient specification of limiting conditions (situational variables), and a bias toward heroic conceptions of leadership" (286). The weakness of focusing on the leader as a hero is particularly problematic because it can easily slip into narcissism and lead to an abuse of power by the leader.

Transformational leadership

Over the past thirty years, transformational leadership has been the most studied concept within the field of leadership studies (Díaz-Sáenz 2011, 299; Northouse 2010, 171). It has been used to study leadership practices in a variety of fields: politics, the public service, the non-profit sector, education, the military, business and management,

and health care (Bass and Bass 2008, 638-642). In the transformational leadership approach, the leader acts as a role model to their followers, motivates them to work towards a collective good, engages followers in a meaningful way, and recognizes their needs and contributions (Bass and Riggio 2006). Hector R. Diaz-Saenz (2011) offers the following definition:

Transformational leadership is the process by which a leader fosters group or organizational performance beyond expectation by virtue of the strong emotional attachment with his or her followers combined with the collective commitment to a higher moral cause. (299)

This approach to leadership has been associated with increased levels of follower morale, the development of follower self-efficacy, and a general esprit de corps for the organization or group.

The concept of transformational leadership has evolved over the past several decades. The term was originally coined by sociologist James Downton (1973) in his book on rebel leadership which explores concepts of charisma and the commitment of followers to their leader. Downton (1973) defines rebel leadership as:

those who initiate attacks against the political system, utilizing means that are contrary to generally accepted norms for sharply altering the distribution of resources or, intoxicated by the promises of revolution, for assuming political control in order to fundamentally alter patterns of human behaviour. (18)

Rebel leadership is in contrast to ruling leadership, which refers to incumbents of political office. In his exploration of the conditions in which rebel leaders emerge, Downton draws on A. H. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of five basic needs: biological (the need for air, food, water, etc.), safety (the need for security), social (the need for love and belonging), self-esteem (the need to feel important), and self-realization (the need for

meaning). Rebel leadership may occur when any of these basic needs are not being met by the current leadership paradigm (Downton 1973, 18). As a result, Downton stresses the importance of examining both social and psychological factors when studying leadership, specifically the conditions under which rebel leadership emerged.

Historian and political scientist James MacGregor Burns develops the concept of transformational leadership more fully in his book *Leadership* (1978). Here, Burns distinguishes between two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership involves a social exchange between leader and followers, such as campaign promises for votes or remuneration for work done. In transactional leadership, there is a system of rewards and punishments where followers are praised for exceeding expectations and punished for not meeting them. The expectations are made clear and subordinates follow the rules that have been outlined; this style of leadership is managerial rather than inspirational. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, inspire followers to exceed their expectations, and facilitate the development of followers' own leadership abilities. Burns (1978) further differentiates the two types of leadership according to their values. For Burns, transactional leadership depends on *modal values*, or values of means, such as honesty, responsibility, fairness and the honouring of commitments, in order to be successful. Transformational leadership focuses on *end-values* such as liberty, justice, equality, while ensuring that modal values are present in the pursuit of these ends (426). Essentially, Burns' conception of modal values in transactional leadership versus end values in transformational leadership correspond with Warren Bennis' (2009) comparison that the manager does things right while the leader does the right thing (42).

Core components of transformational leadership

Psychologist Bernard Bass, considered to be the foremost scholar on transformational leadership, builds on the work of Burns. Bass (1985, 1998) identifies four core components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.¹⁰ The first component is idealized influence. The leader serves as a role model to followers, inspiring trust and respect, and behaving in a way that followers seek to emulate. Part of this ethical behaviour includes displaying citizenship behaviours such as altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue, and instilling these ideas in their followers, essentially being influential about one's ideals (Bass and Riggio 2006, 227). The transformational leader can be trusted to do the right thing and behave in a morally sound manner. Idealized influence has two aspects: the leader's behaviours and the elements attributed to the leader by followers and others (Bass and Riggio 2006; Antonakis and House 2002). By examining both aspects, Bass's model highlights the processes of leadership as opposed to an examination of the leader's traits alone, as in trait-based approaches.

The second component is inspirational motivation, whereby a leader is able to articulate his or her overall vision and inspire followers to commit to it. In "buying in" to that vision, followers become involved in "envisioning attractive future states" (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6) and contribute to the larger goals of the group, often putting aside their own personal goals to do so. The leader makes expectations clear and fosters an environment of team spirit, positivity, and enthusiasm.

¹⁰ In Bass's original model (1985), the first two components were charisma and inspirational leadership, which combined to form the emotional component or charisma factor of transformational leadership.

The third component of transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation, involves the leader engaging followers in decision-making processes in a meaningful way. The leader does not expect followers to simply follow directions, but rather, encourages followers to seek new ways of doing things and to be creative.

Transformational leaders inspire followers to exceed their expectations, and facilitate the development of followers' own leadership abilities by providing them with opportunities to acquire new skills and improve themselves. Followers are not criticized for disagreeing with the leader or singled out for making mistakes.

Tied to intellectual stimulation, the fourth component, individualized consideration, addresses the relationship between a leader and his or her followers. With individualized consideration, the leader maintains open lines of communication, allowing followers to share ideas and to be recognized for their contributions. The leader pays attention to the needs of individual followers and provides opportunities for followers to grow through learning opportunities. This core component is the practical application of idealized influence, as the leader adopts a hands-on approach to mentoring followers. It is also a key determinant of whether an individual is an authentic or inauthentic transformational leader.

Authentic transformational leadership

The authenticity of a transformational leader refers to the leader's ethics and has been a point of much debate through the literature on charismatic and transformational leadership. Weber's (1947) notion of charisma is dependent on how a leader is viewed by followers, but not on how the leader is judged in terms of ethics or aesthetics (359). For Burns (1978), however, a key factor of transformational leadership is that leadership must

be morally uplifting. Burns evaluates the morality of leadership behaviours according to three criteria: first, that leaders employ modal values of honesty and integrity and advances standards of good conduct in humankind; second, that they produce end-values of equality and justice; and third, that in the context of free communication and open criticism, they are judged “in the balance sheet of history” by the impact on the well-being of those whose lives they touched (426). This element of morality was not part of Bass’s (1985) original concept of transformational leadership. For Bass, a leader could exhibit traits of a transformational leader regardless of the outcome or intention of goals.

After much debate between Bass and Burns, Bass (1998) agreed with Burns and added three moral aspects to the model. For leadership to be genuinely transformational, the leader must be of sound moral character and his or her vision must be ethical, as must be the process of attaining the leader’s vision. Bass and Steidlmeier (2004) clarify these moral aspects further, asserting that

the ethics of leadership rests upon three pillars: (a) the moral character of the leader; (b) the ethical legitimacy of the values embedded in the leader’s vision, articulation, and program which followers either embrace or reject; and (c) the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue (178).

The addition of these moral aspects differentiates authentic transformational leadership from inauthentic or pseudo-transformational leadership. With pseudo-transformational leadership, aspects of the four primary components of the model are present, but the leader is focused on seeking power and position, his or her vision is self-serving and narcissistic instead of for the greater good, or the process of pursuing that vision is deceptive or manipulative. Examples of pseudo-transformational leadership include cult

leaders, dictators, and other charismatic and influential leaders whose goals are not for the greater good and bring harm to their followers.

The Full Range of Leadership Model

Bass (1998) developed the Full Range of Leadership Model with which all leadership behaviours may be classified.

Table 1: Bass’s Full Range of Leadership Model

Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Laissez-faire
Idealized influence Inspirational motivation Intellectual stimulation Individualized consideration	Contingent reward Management-by-exception, (active) Management-by-exception, (passive)	Lack of leadership

In Bass’s Full Range of Leadership model, the category of transactional leadership is broken down further into three categories: contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), and management-by-exception (passive).

Contingent-reward leadership involves the leader assigning tasks or gaining follower agreement on what must be done, and rewarding the fulfillment of those tasks with praise or actual rewards (Bass and Riggio 2006, 8). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), this approach to leadership is considered constructive transaction and has been found to be reasonably effective in motivating followers to achieve a high standard of performance, though not to the same extent as transformational leadership (8). Although Bass originally placed contingent-reward leadership in the transactional category, later publications maintain that when the reward is material, it is transactional, but when the

reward is psychological in the form of praise, contingent-reward is considered transformational (Bass and Bass 2008, 624; Bass and Riggio 2006, 8).

Management-by-exception, on the other hand, is considered corrective and tends to be less effective in motivating followers than contingent reward and transformational leadership. Management-by-exception can be either active or passive. With active management-by-exception, the leader actively monitors errors and makes corrections when necessary. With passive management-by-exception, the leader waits passively for errors to occur and to be brought to the leader's attention before taking action. The corrective action may be negative feedback, disapproval, or disciplinary action (Bass and Bass 2008, 624).

Laissez-faire is the absence of leadership and is the least active and the least effective form of leadership. Within a laissez-faire style, decisions are avoided, actions are delayed and responsibilities are ignored (Bass and Riggio 2006, 9). This approach to leadership is associated with negative outcomes both in terms of the leader's effectiveness and follower job satisfaction, and follower satisfaction with the leader (Judge and Piccolo 2004, 760).

While a leader can display behaviours from more than one category, most effective leaders exhibit behaviours that are both transactional as well as transformational (Bass and Riggio 2006, 235). A leader is deemed transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire depending on where the majority of their behaviours and attributes fall along the spectrum.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The primary method used to evaluate transformational leadership is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). This tool was introduced by Bass (1985) and has undergone several revisions, the most recent being MLQ-5X (Bass and Avolio 1995) and its accompanying manual (Bass and Avolio 1997). The MLQ is a series of descriptive statements to which followers answer one of the five following answers: A) Frequently, if not always, B) Fairly often, C) Sometimes, D) Once in a while, or E) Not at all (Bass 1985, 201). What follows are sample statements drawn from the eighty-four statements that appear in Bass's (1985) work. These samples are grouped according to the four components of transformational leadership although they do not appear as such in the actual MLQ:

Idealized influence:

- Is a model for me to follow.
- Is a good team player.
- Has a sense of mission which he/she transmits to me.
- Is a father-figure to me.

Inspirational motivation:

- Excites us with his/her vision of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together.
- Talks a lot about special commendations and promotions for good work.
- Makes me feel and act like a leader.

- Motivates me to do more than I originally expected I would do.

Intellectual stimulation:

- Enables me to think about old problems in new ways.
- Gives us a vision of what needs to be done and depends on us to fill in the details.
- His/her ideas have forced me to rethink some of my own ideas which I had never questioned before.
- Puts suggestions by the group into operation.

Individualized consideration:

- Treats each subordinate individually.
- Lets me know how I am doing.
- Gives personal attention to members who seem neglected.
- Sees to it that my needs are met. (Bass 1985, 201-206)

Not all statements are aligned with transformational leadership. Examples include:

- Makes me concentrate on my self-interests rather than what is good for the group.
- Is content to let me continue doing my job in the same way as always.
- Asks no more of me than what is absolutely essential to get the work done.

- Tends to spend his/her time “putting out fires” rather than focusing on long-term considerations. (Bass 1985, 201-206)

Beyond the examples above outlined in Bass (1985), the current MLQ and related products are only available for purchase through the website of Mindgarden Tools for Positive Transformation at www.mindgarden.com. Products range in price from \$2 for a license to reproduce the MLQ, with a minimum purchase of fifty, to \$250 for group reports which calculate and summarize average MLQ scores for a group of participants. Other products available include the MLQ Manual (\$50), the MLQ II 360 Leader’s Report (\$100) which interprets and compares an individual’s self-rating to those done by other participants, and the Leader’s Workbook (\$25) which complements the MLQ II 360 Leader’s Report by providing developmental behaviours for each MLQ scale and item.

The MLQ’s computerized data collection, scoring, feedback and norms measure a leader’s effectiveness, providing a quantitative analysis of their leadership perceived by their followers (Bass and Riggio 2006, 27). Also available through the Mindgarden website, is the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), developed by Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa (2007) which measures key components of authentic leadership including:

- Self-Awareness: To what degree is the leader aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her and how the leader impacts others?
- Transparency: To what degree does the leader reinforce a level of openness with others that provides them with an

opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges and opinions?

- Ethical/Moral: To what degree does the leader set a high standard for moral and ethical conduct?
- Balanced Processing: To what degree does the leader solicit sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions?¹¹

Criticisms of transformational leadership

The theory of transformational leadership is not without its limitations. One weakness is the overuse of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as an evaluative tool over other methods (Díaz-Sáenz (2011, 307). Other scales of evaluation have been developed, such as the Leadership Practices Inventory by James S. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner (1987) that includes a questionnaire for leaders to complete and another for followers to complete. Like the MLQ, this inventory seeks to measure leadership behaviour in an empirical and quantitative manner. This scale and others, however, are used much less frequently than the MLQ which dominates transformational leadership research. Bass and Riggio (2006) acknowledge the importance of developing other evaluative tools for assessing transformational leadership, including observational methods to “objectively code transformational (and other) leadership behaviors” (229). Although these methods provide an alternate method of data collection to the MLQ, they remain fixated on objectivity and are quantitative in their usage.

¹¹ <http://www.mindgarden.com/69-authentic-leadership-questionnaire>

Bass and Riggio (2006) also acknowledge that they “need to appreciate what the non-quantitative scholars in psychohistory, sociology, and political science have to say about charisma and transformational leadership” (229). However, their very choice of the term “non-quantitative scholars” is dismissive of those scholars who engage in qualitative studies and by extension, fields that rely more heavily on qualitative research. The term also suggests that scholars themselves are either ‘quantitative’ or ‘other,’ rather than recognizing that a single scholar can engage with data using either approach or both, as in mixed-method studies. This focus on what can be objectively measured limits the development of transformational leadership as a way to understand human interaction by reducing the ways in which scholars employ the theory in their research.

Tejeda, Scandura and Pillai’s (2001) quantitative study which challenges the validity of the MLQ, acknowledges that the MLQ offers much insight into diverse perspectives on leadership, but finds that there is overlap between the four components of transformational leadership. They also note that some of these components correlate with transactional and laissez faire leadership, and therefore are not necessarily unique to transformational leadership. A related criticism of Bass’s theory of transformational leadership is its focus on psychological over sociological factors (Díaz-Sáenz 2011). The reliance on the MLQ as the sole test instrument favours this perspective as responders complete the questionnaire based on their own perception of the leader’s behaviour and attributes.

Another criticism is that although transformational leadership scholars emphasize the approach’s focus on leadership behaviours, transformational leadership is often viewed as a personality trait (Bryman 1992). This assumption is not surprising

considering the history of the approach which stemmed from Weber's (1947) concept of charisma. Transformational leaders are seen as visionaries who can *transform* others (Northouse 2010, 189), which leads to another criticism of the approach. Often, with transformational leadership, too much credit is given to the leader and not enough to the followers or the interactions between leader and followers regarding the development of identity of the group and the individuals within it (Díaz-Sáenz's (2011, 308). Northouse (2010) notes that current scholarship is centered on the leader motivating followers to do exceptional things and suggests that further research must be done on how leaders can encourage followers to challenge the leader's vision and be more active in the leadership process. While this two-way interaction is part of Bass's concept, particularly in the intellectual stimulation component of transformational leadership, it is often overshadowed by other leadership behaviours involving the leader's influence over followers (189).

Perhaps the most serious criticism of transformational leadership is its potential to be abused. Leadership and organizational studies professor, Dennis Tourish (2013) argues that leaders wield enormous power, in terms of their ability to influence others, in part, by controlling resources, rewards and punishments, and do not always do so appropriately (8). He presents case studies of cult leaders, the Enron Corporation, and bankers during the 2008 market crash. Tourish is concerned with the unintended consequences of using transformational leadership as an approach in a number of fields from nursing to the business sector. He asserts that a leader's pursuit of transforming others, their values, aspirations, and attitudes is overly intrusive (20). He also cautions against the leader as well as the followers having an exaggerated sense of the leader's

abilities and the worthiness of the leader's vision. Tourish draws the comparison between transformational leadership and traits of cults, noting that transformational leadership behaviours have the potential to move an organization further along the continuum toward cultish behaviour (31). With the explosion of leadership seminars, leadership education in business schools, and their claims that graduates are then ready to become leading CEOs, Tourish's work represents a realistic look at leadership studies and the real dangers of narcissism and abuse of power when leadership ideals intersect with the foibles of human nature.

Ubuntu

My second theoretical lens is the southern African concept of ubuntu. This section examines various interpretations of the term and its associated components. That discussion is followed by a brief demonstration of how ubuntu has been applied in the contexts of politics and business. The section ends with an account of some of the main criticisms of ubuntu.

Ubuntu as a concept

Ubuntu is a southern African concept of personhood amongst black Africans that is both multifaceted and mutable. According to professor of English and linguistics Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu (2008, 114), *ubuntu* is a Nguni term that means personhood or humanness, although there are variants in other African regions: *umundu* in Kikuyu and *umuntu* in Kimeru, both spoken in Kenya; *bumuntu* in kiSukuma and Bobangi, spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and *gimuntu* in kiKongo spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as in giKwese spoken in Angola. Business and

economics scholar, Andrew West (2014, 48) traces the etymology of the term and demonstrates that parallel concepts exist in countries across sub-Saharan Africa which, in addition to the countries mentioned above, include South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Mozambique (48).

Philosophy scholar Christian B. N. Gade (2011) explores the concept of ubuntu through a historical analysis of the way the term has been used in written sources from 1846 to 2011, the majority of which were in English. He finds that prior to 1980, there is less disagreement about the nature of the term: it is mostly commonly described as meaning human nature, humanity, and humanness (307), and in many of those texts, it is referred to as a positive human quality. Starting in the 1980s, ubuntu begins to appear in texts as a philosophy or ethic (316) in which the promotion of the common good and interdependence are key components. References in the 2000s cite ubuntu as a worldview informed by the values of humanness, love, caring and sharing, respect, and compassion (318). These references to ubuntu as a philosophy, ethic, and worldview emerged during the creation of Zimbabwe and the transition to majority rule in South Africa, and it was in this context that ubuntu was first used as a political philosophy (320). Gade speculates that the term was used by Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange, an influential nationalist politician in Southern Rhodesia which became Zimbabwe in 1980, to advance his political agenda, both as a rationale against the segregation of the previous apartheid era, as well as a means of Africanization of the country in the context of decolonization (321).

Today, ubuntu is often associated with the Zulu-Xhosa proverb or maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* — “A person is a person through other people” (McAllister 2010) —

or the Sotho equivalent *motho ke motho ka batho babang* (Shutte 2008, 27). Gade (2011) traces this association of ubuntu with the proverb to the period between 1993 and 1995 and attributes this interpretation to South African philosopher Augustine Shutte. Gade (2011) asserts that only one reference to ubuntu occurs in Augustine Shutte's 1993 South African's edition of *Philosophy of Africa*, but that in his 1995 American edition, the work itself is presented as a book about ubuntu and that Shutte uses the proverb as an explanation of ubuntu in its Foreward (314). Professor of philosophy and business scholar David W. Lutz (2009) interprets this maxim to encompass both realizing oneself as a social being and acting in solidarity with groups whose survival is threatened (315). Pedagogical theorist Moeketsi Letseka (2012) suggests that the maxim captures a "philosophical affinity and kinship among and between the indigenous people of Africa" (51-52). The range of interpretations of ubuntu as a concept enhances its utility as a research lens in that it can be more effectively applied to a variety of circumstances.

Components of ubuntu

The concept of ubuntu and the values associated with it are not taught in school, but are transmitted from one generation to the next through oral genres including proverbs, fables, and riddles (Kamwangamalu 2008, 115). Malawian writer and organizational development consultant Chiku Malunga (2009) explains that although Africa has many languages, proverbs provide common ground, and many proverbs can be found in some form in almost all language groups (viii). As a result, there are several key components of the concept that contribute to its meaningfulness as a philosophy or worldview, and also as an ethic or way to gauge morality.

One cluster of components of ubuntu relates to its function as a measure of humanism, humanness, or humaneness. Former Member of Parliament in South Africa, journalist, and author Mfuniselwa John Benghu (1996) attempts to define ubuntu, recognizing that there is no equivalent word in English and any attempt to translate the term is a compromise (4-5). In doing so, he extends the notion of ubuntu as ‘African humanism’ and provides some clarification on how ubuntu is achieved, essentially how an individual evolves until they have “realised that desirable state of being human” (1996, 5). He presents five definitions which, in spite of overlapping elements, offer slightly different interpretations of the term:

- Ubuntu is the humanistic experience of treating all people with respect, granting them their human dignity.
- Ubuntu means humanness. Being human encompasses values like universal brotherhood for Africans, sharing, treating and respecting other people as human beings.
- Ubuntu is humanism. It is a belief in the centrality, sacredness, and foremost priority of the human being in all our conduct, throughout our lives.
- Ubuntu is a way of life that contributes positively towards sustaining the well-being of a people, community or society. This definition seeks to be inclusive rather than exclusive, and, if read with the

above explanation of the origins of Ubuntu, will give the reader a clear understanding of the meaning of Ubuntu.

- Ubuntu is a non-racial philosophy which treats all people as human beings. Ubuntu-Botho actually means ‘the art of virtue of being human.’ (Benghu 1996, 5)

These definitions touch on many of the key components of ubuntu, both as a worldview and philosophy, as well as a guide of how to be an ethical human. Components represented within these definitions include respect, human dignity, recognition of the sacredness of human life, inclusion, and acceptance of difference. Kamwangamalu (2008) asserts that despite varying definitions of the concept, they all share a common understanding of ubuntu as a value system that measures the ‘humanness’ of members within a community (114).

The other main cluster of components relates to how relationships function and thrive. Anthropologist Patrick McAllister (2009) conceives of the characteristics of ubuntu as a mode of conduct and a social ethic which is said to include compassion for others; respect for difference and minority rights; an emphasis on reaching agreement and consensus; a spirit of mutual support and cooperation; and associated traits such as hospitality, sharing, generosity, and selflessness. In her presentation of ubuntu as a leadership philosophy, business scholar Lisa B. Ncube (2010) outlines some of ubuntu’s key components: interdependence, communalism, sharing, cooperation, and collectivism (81). She asserts that “collectivism encourages teamwork and a non-competitive

environment, building solidarity and loyalty within the organization” (81).

Kamwangamalu (2008) also asserts that two core values of ubuntu are communalism and interdependence. He explains that communalism refers to the subordination of an individual’s personal interests for the good of the group, and that interdependence refers to the various roles that individuals play within a society for the welfare of the society as well as the individuals within it (117).

Psychology scholars Poovan, du Toit, and Engelbrecht (2006) assert that survival, or the ability to live and exist in spite of difficulties, is at the heart of ubuntu, and that African people have learned to survive through brotherly care rather than self-reliance (18). They argue that, as a result, Africans have developed a collective psyche which allows them to pool resources, thus preserving and creating communities, something which they maintain can still be observed in poor African townships and squatter camps (18). This notion of an individual and his or her place within a greater community contrasts with Western individualism. Ncube (2010) maintains that “ubuntu forms the core of most African cultures” (78) with its hallmarks being harmony, continuity, and what it means to be connected to one another.

Related to how communities function, a third cluster of components of ubuntu addresses issues of morality and ethics. In a community with ubuntu, the welfare of all members is important, and the care for powerless members is necessary for maintaining equilibrium and peace in the community (Nicolson 2008, 9). According to professor of psychology Nhlanhla Mkhize (2008), ubuntu is communitarian and existentialist: “The ethics of *ubuntu* is a call to action because an ethical being (*umuntu* – a being with moral sense) cannot look on the suffering of another and remain unaffected” (43). Philosopher

Erasmus D. Prinsloo (1998) affirms this belief, stressing that there is no dualism in ubuntu and that both rationality and morality are acquired from community life (13).

These explanations of ubuntu allude to the importance of empathy and its resulting responsibility: it is both rational and morally upright to care for other members of one's community.

Ubuntu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa

Ubuntu has been an important concept in the establishment of post-apartheid South Africa. In 1994, Nelson Mandela used a practical application of ubuntu in his South African presidency by introducing the shepherd style of leadership (Broodryk 2005, 45). This approach was based on Mandela's observations of the governance of the regent and his court when he was growing up as part of the Xhosa nation in rural Africa. Jongintaba, the regent or acting paramount chief was appointed partly based on a recommendation by Mandela's father. So, after the death of Mandela's father, the chief offered to become Nelson Mandela's guardian. He was treated like the regent's other sons and given an education. As a result, the regent became an important role model in Mandela's life. In his autobiography, Mandela (2000, 24-26) describes what he observed of the tribal meetings as a boy. Meetings were called as necessary to discuss issues such as drought, cattle culling, laws, and policies. The regent invited his *amaphakathi*, or group of high ranking councillors, as well as guests. After giving words of welcome, the regent would not speak until the end of the meeting, giving all those who wanted to speak a chance to do so, regardless of their profession or rank. Although the order of speakers was based on a hierarchy of importance, speakers were not rushed or interrupted. In this way, all men were considered equal citizens, free to express their opinion, even if it

meant criticizing the regent. At the end of the meeting, which often lasted many hours, the regent would summarize what had been said and consensus would be reached. If consensus could not be reached, another meeting would be called. These observations made a profound imprint on Mandela and influenced his approach to leadership later in life. Mandela explains that as a leader, he always tried to listen to what everyone had to say before giving his own opinion, which often represented a consensus of what was heard in the discussion. Mandela (2000) never forgot the regent's axiom: "a leader, he said, is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind" (26).

Parallel to Mandela's approach to decision-making as described above, Mzamo P. Mangaliso (2001), a management scholar, asserts that an ubuntu approach to decision-making is circular and inclusive, and that proceedings are allowed to deviate into other related issues (27).

Visions tend to be polyocular. In other words, those who look at issues from different angles are seen as interesting and as providing valuable insights. Diversity of vision is not only permitted but also protected and encouraged. Before closure, considerable time is allowed to assure that all voices have been heard, and that a consensus has been reached. The goal of decision making in this context is to preserve harmony and achieve consensus. A decision that is supported is considered superior to the "right" decision that is resented or resisted by many. Unity is more valued than the utility of the decision reached. (Mangaliso 2001, 27)

In this approach to decision-making, relationships are of primary concern, and that priority informs both the investment of time and the process.

When Mandela was elected in 1994, he installed a new constitution and established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a way of dealing with the country's past through restorative justice rather than punitive justice (Stuit 2010, 86). During this time, victims of apartheid were encouraged to embrace the concept of ubuntu as a vehicle for reconciliation, and forgive their oppressors. The Commission, established in 1995 and headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was created to promote national unity, to grant amnesty to perpetrators under certain conditions, and to give victims the chance to tell their stories. The goal of the Commission was not only to assess the extent of the human rights violations under apartheid, but also to establish the observance of human rights in South Africa so that such violations would never take place again (Frankental and Sichone 2005).

Literature and cultural studies scholar, Hanneke Stuit (2010) acknowledges the positive effect of the truth and reconciliation process for many victims of apartheid, some of whom were able to forgive their oppressors: “[t]he tangible solidarity and harmony during some TRC hearings show the power and value of this worldview in the face of anger, resentment and conflict” (85). Head of the Justice and Reconciliation Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, South Africa, Tim Murithi (2009) asserts that Mandela and Tutu were able to draw upon South Africa's “cultural values and attitudes to ‘re-form’ and educate their fellow citizens and thus enabling the country to move beyond its violent past” (229-230). This reform was guided by the principle of ubuntu which requires both parties to be reconciled after a dispute in order to rebuild and maintain social trust and cohesion (Murithi 2009, 229).

Stuit (2010) is critical of the discourse surrounding the TRC, including three binaries: understanding/vengeance, reparation/retaliation, and ubuntu/victimization, which favours national unity over addressing the personal needs of victims (87-88). Her critique brings to light questions including how reparation can be achieved without victimization or the identification of people as victims, and why perpetrators are given immediate protection while victims are compelled to give up their claims for reparation. Dutch anthropologist Wim van Binsbergen (2001) as cited in McAllister (2009) echoes these concerns with ubuntu as demonstrated in the TRC. With “its Christian emphasis on admission, apology and forgiveness, rather than on redress, (which would be important in the village)” ubuntu may protect those in power and prevent the resolution of real problems; though it purports to be based on African values, in practice, this is not the case (McAllister 2009, 55). While these concerns with the application of ubuntu within the TRC are valid, the concept remains a useful tool for analyzing elements of Scott Leithead’s leadership practices within the context of this study.

Ubuntu in business

Today, ubuntu has become a key strategy for the business sector in post-apartheid South Africa, and there have been training sessions, workshops, conferences and seminars to disseminate the concept and its application. Ubuntu philosopher and management consultant Johann Broodryk (2005) describes ubuntu as a comprehensive African worldview that values humanness, caring, sharing, respect, and compassion, and ensures a happy quality of community life in a family spirit or atmosphere (13). Ubuntu is multi-faceted and flexible, and therefore can be adapted to a variety of leadership and community situations.

South African businesses are incorporating the philosophy in their leadership models as way to become competitive through participatory management (Broodryk 2005; Mbigi and Maree 1995; Prinsloo 2000; van der Colff 2003). Johann Broodryk (2005) outlines some of the key features of an ubuntu management style. Ubuntu management works within an environment of humanness, warmth, friendliness, and mutual respect. Workers play different but equal roles and are treated with dignity regardless of differences. Transparency and active listening are valued. Teamwork is the norm, favouring cooperation over competition, and co-workers stand in solidarity like a family. Decisions are made through consensus, and all staff members participate in the decision-making processes relevant to their roles within the organization. Managers are considered part of the team, and there is an informal quality to the organizational structure (32). Mangaliso (2001) suggests, however, that although everyone must be given opportunities to express themselves and equity in the workplace is important, seniority must be honoured, and the wisdom of older employees must be recognized in leadership choices (32). So, while all staff members are valued, the organization is not without a hierarchical structure, and age and experience are respected.

Zimbabwean management scholar and entrepreneur Lovemore Mbigi and writer Jenny Maree (1995) echo the importance of teamwork, noting that there must be adherence to the solidarity principle that “individual conformity and loyalty to the group is demanded and expected” (58). They are not naïve in thinking that an ubuntu approach that values teamwork and cooperation will dissolve all conflict, but that there can be “graceful conflict and harmony in a workplace through interdependence and a common creed of trust” (63) when workers feel that they are participating in the decision-making

processes in a meaningful way. For Mbigi and Maree, it is not enough to simply make the attempt to embrace ubuntu values, but rather, the outcomes of the philosophical approach are equally as important and must result in the “development of cooperative and competitive people, paradigms and perspectives, practices, processes, policies and procedures, values and instincts” (10). This corresponds to Burns (1978) description of modal values in transactional leadership and end values in transformational leadership.

The use of ubuntu in business is intended to help business leaders understand the social context in which their business exists and incorporate the values of ubuntu into their corporate culture, enabling groups that were kept apart during apartheid to work together and become successful (Kamwangamalu 2008, 118). Lutz (2009) draws on ubuntu in order to outline a theory of ethical, global business management, asserting that the purpose of management is to draw out the common good, that the goods and services being sold must be genuinely good for customers, and that the production and selling of goods and services must be “consistent with the demands of justice” (325). This focus on people over profit adds an ethical component to business practices.

Though ubuntu has been applied to business contexts, it is first a social concept and its focus on communalism and interdependence operates in sharp contrast to capitalism with competitiveness and individualism as its essence. As a result, English and linguistics scholar Nkonko Kamwangamalu (2008) questions its usefulness in a business context where turning a profit is the goal, maintaining that ubuntu would be better suited to breaking down the societal walls left by apartheid, rather than teaching companies to become competitive in the marketplace (119). A review of empirical studies of leadership in sub-Saharan African business organizations finds that “the *ubuntu*

movement may be an inspirational goal promulgated by African government and social elites to encourage a more humane and community-oriented set of values for sub-Saharan African business people” (Littrell, et. al. 2013, 232) but there is little evidence of ubuntu behaviours in the business leadership practice.

Criticisms of ubuntu

The concept of ubuntu is not without criticism. Beyond the concerns presented above in ubuntu’s applications in politics and business, other issues have arisen from the widespread usage of the term. McAllister (2009) draws on van Binsbergen (2001) and asserts that “the term has been reified and credited with quasi-magical properties, fostering sweeping generalizations about the nature of African people and social relationships” (51). Law scholar Thomas W. Bennett (2011), struggles with translations such as humanity, personhood, or humanness as these “loanwords” do not convey ubuntu’s many connotations, nor its cultural implications (30). Communications scholar, Nyasha Mboti (2015) refutes the normative account of ubuntu as associated with the aphorism “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” in his article “May the Real *Ubuntu* Please Stand Up?” He is critical of the assumption that Africans are ethically, morally, and humanely dependent on one another (126). He asserts that the term is often used void of any cultural context (129), and that the reduction of ubuntu to Shutte’s maxim is hegemonic, established by moral and intellectual elite and spread through “educative” and other pressures, including political ones (126). In other words, the usage of the term outside of its original cultural context has not always corresponded to the positive meaning of the concept itself.

Lutz (2009) addresses the corruption of ubuntu management, warning that a potential vice is nepotism or tribalism, where collective identity is limited to relatives and members of one's ethnic group (324). He also cautions against "groupthink" in communalism, when group consensus overrides alternate viewpoints, and individual initiative is discouraged (324). Stuit (2010) addresses the irony that although ubuntu is associated with a universal humanity, the isiZulu term has been used to define the new South Africa, delineate boundaries, and "condemn, violate, and exclude those who supposedly do not know what it means" (84). Essentially, a term which is meant to denote humanism and inclusion has been weaponized to do exactly the opposite.

Bringing together the lenses

In this study, I will show how Leithead's leadership practice aligns with the four core components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. I am not using the theory to determine the degree to which he is a transformational leader as would be found using the MLQ. Instead, I employ Bass's theory to examine Leithead's leadership practices in rehearsal, the results of those practices on the stage, and his leadership in the establishment and continuation of African Projects for more than a decade. The four components provide a way to examine Leithead's behaviours and interactions with his choristers, as well as the decision-making processes that he employs as conductor of Kokopelli, the youth choir, and artistic director of the Kokopelli Choir Association.

Since I am approaching the study of leadership from an interpretivist perspective, using a theoretical model that is situated in a post-positivist paradigm might be perceived as somewhat problematic. Bass's theory suggests that leadership can be quantified and

leaders classified into categories according to their scores. Instead of using transformational leadership to evaluate Leithead's leadership in this way, I borrow its descriptive categories to analyze his practice and to gain a deeper understanding of how he leads his choir. Despite the potential incommensurability between this theoretical lens and ethnographic data collection methods, I maintain that Bass's theory, specifically its four components, remains a useful tool for addressing the richness of data generated by this study.

The second lens of ubuntu provides an alternative approach to studying Leithead's leadership practices. I draw on the various components of ubuntu to better understand the motivation behind Leithead's decisions. Although he does not explicitly use ubuntu as worldview or approach to leadership, his behaviours are consistent with this philosophy and ethic. I employ ubuntu as a way to assess the moral facets of Leithead's actions and how these moral facets contribute to his overall approach as a choral director.

Leithead's approach to choral directing is not strictly entrenched in the Western art music tradition, but incorporates musical practices from a variety of cultures, in particular musical practices from the choral traditions of southern Africa as learned from Kokopelli's sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa. As a result, it is insufficient to employ a single theoretical lens to dissect his leadership practices. By combining the theory of transformational leadership from Western leadership studies with the southern African philosophy of ubuntu, I am able to scrutinize Leithead's multi-faceted approach to leadership in a more holistic way.

Summary

This chapter introduced the key theories that I use in my case study of Scott Leithead and Kokopelli. First, the chapter presented an overview of leadership studies in the West, introducing some of the major currents of thought regarding how leadership is studied. The next section offered a more in-depth presentation of the theory of transformational leadership as developed by Bernard Bass and his associates. First, I presented the four core components of transformational leadership, commonly referred to as the four I's: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Second, I introduced some of the ethical considerations associated with transformational leadership, particularly what Bass (1998) calls authentic transformational leadership. Third, I presented an introduction to Bass's Full Range of Leadership Theory and the primary test instrument associated with the theory, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. This section ended with a review of some of the primary criticisms of transformational leadership.

The third main section of this chapter presented the southern African concept of ubuntu. It began with an introduction to the term and its various renderings, followed by an overview of some of the primary components of the concept. Next, I presented evidence of how ubuntu has been applied to political and business contexts, ending with an account of some of the main criticisms of ubuntu. The final section of the chapter demonstrated how I juxtapose the two theoretical lenses of transformational leadership and ubuntu in my study. The next chapter presents the methodology and research design used in this study.

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework of this dissertation, introducing the two main research lenses of transformational leadership. This chapter describes the method employed in the study. First, this chapter explains the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach and case study methodology, the reasons for selecting this site of study, and an overview of ethical considerations. Next, it outlines the research design including interlocutor selection and rapport, data collection, and data analysis. The final two sections present strategies for ensuring trustworthiness and credibility, and situate me as the researcher, respectively.

Qualitative research

Qualitative inquiry is grounded in the interpretivist (or social constructivist) research paradigm. Willis (2007) outlines the major differences between postpositivist and interpretivist research paradigms.¹² The first major difference between these worldviews is their understandings of the nature of reality. Postpositivists regard reality as “external to the human mind” (Willis 2007, 95), and though interpretivists do not deny an external, physical reality, they do not accept scientific method as the only way to learn about the external world. Instead, interpretivists or social constructivists believe that reality is socially constructed and that humans derive meaning through interactions with others (Creswell 2007, 20; Merriam 1998, 6; Willis 2007, 96) and “through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives” (Creswell 2007, 21).

¹² Positivism and postpositivism are closely related. However, positivism espouses an objectivist epistemology where findings are deemed true; whereas, postpositivism espouses a modified objectivist epistemology where findings are considered probably true (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, 98).

This study seeks to understand the leadership practices of a choral director as experienced by his choristers and the impact of these practices on performance and the development of choristers as global citizens. Working within the interpretivist paradigm, each member's experience is seen as unique. Therefore, the voices of the interlocutors remain a key component of the research and their stories are taken at face value. Within interpretivist or social constructivist paradigms, there is an understanding that the researcher's perspective, like those of the interlocutors, is also socially constructed and that the researcher's interpretation is influenced by his or her own personal history and experiences (Creswell 2007, 21; Merriam 1998, 19; Willis 2007, 97). Consequently, my research does not assume a neutral, omniscient perspective, but acknowledges that, even with an awareness of researcher bias, my observations and analysis are mediated through my own experience.

The second major difference between the paradigms, according to Willis (2007), is the purpose of doing research. For postpositivists, the goal is to find universals; whereas for interpretivists, the goal is to reflect understanding of a particular situation. This study focuses on one youth choir, and while there may be many similarities among the singers' experiences to those in other choirs, the goal of the research is not to make generalizations but to present an in-depth look at one choral situation. Related to the purpose of doing research is the issue of research methods. Postpositivists employ scientific method to test theories. Interpretivists, on the other hand, are open to both objective and subjective research methods. For interpretivists, meaning is gained not by disproving theories, but rather by gaining contextual understanding (Willis 2007, 240). This dissertation seeks to do just that, and therefore, a qualitative study within the

interpretivist or social constructivist paradigm was the best choice for completing this research.

Sharan Merriam (1998) outlines five characteristics of qualitative research. The first characteristic is that the key concern is to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's (6). My study focuses primarily on the *emic* or insider perspectives of my interlocutors, and not on my own *etic* or outsider point of view. The second characteristic is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (7). I conducted all parts of the research, and therefore all data were mediated through me as the human researcher. I did not rely on a questionnaire or computer, but throughout the research process was able to respond to nonverbal aspects and adapt my research to the context. The third characteristic is that it usually involves fieldwork (7); my study involved a year-long period of fieldwork, followed by several years of additional exploration to clarify findings throughout the analysis and writing processes.

The fourth characteristic of qualitative research is that it “primarily employs an inductive strategy” (7). In qualitative research, data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously and “emerging insights, hunches and tentative hypotheses direct the next phase of data collection, which in turn leads to the refinement or reformulation of questions, and so on” (151). Willis (2007) echoes Merriam's assertions:

In a qualitative study the process of making meaning is emergent. That is, what you are studying, the data you are collecting, and how those data are to be handled, change and emerge across the life of the study. They are not prescribed in detail beforehand. Instead, they emerge from your exploration of the environment and the data collected. They are constructed in the context of the study. (202)

This characteristic was particularly true for my study. Although I began my fieldwork with the intent to study the chorister experience, specifically aesthetic, social, and humanitarian facets of the Kokopelli experience, it became clear that leadership played a significant role in shaping these experiences, and I shifted the focus of my research accordingly. The final characteristic of qualitative research is that since it “focuses on process, meaning, and understanding, the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive” (Merriam 1998, 8). My study relies on words and pictures rather than numbers to convey my findings. The chorister experiences as relayed in their interviews, along with my own observations, seek to paint a detailed picture of Leithead and his ensemble as they interact in rehearsal, performance, and other circumstances.

Case study methodology

In this dissertation, choral director Scott Leithead with his youth choir, Kokopelli, form the single case to be studied. Merriam (1998) cites three primary characteristics of a qualitative case study. The first is that the study is particularist, examining a bounded system (29). This study is a holistic look at one director and his youth choir; the findings do not claim to be universal across other directors or other choirs. The second characteristic is descriptive (29) as noted above. The third characteristic is heuristic, meaning that “case studies illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Merriam 1998, 30). This study builds on prior research on choral practice, and sheds light on various aspects of choral leadership. Willis (2007) adds another characteristic to this list, stating that a case study is also naturalistic as “case studies are about real people and situations, and much of the data collection occurs in real environments” (239); Yin (2009) echoes that the case study focuses on contemporary

events as opposed to a history or archival analysis (8). He recommends a case study research design for studies that seek answers to “how” and “why” research questions which are more explanatory in nature, rather than to “what,” “who,” or “where” questions which attempt to describe and predict outcomes (9). By observing Leithead and his choristers within rehearsal, workshop, and performance environments, I was able to delve into how they interact and why Leithead is able to achieve the performance innovation, social cohesion, and humanitarian outcomes that he does.

Selecting the site

I selected Kokopelli, the youth choir as the site of study for several reasons. First, the choir and their director, Scott Leithead have been recognized locally, provincially, and nationally for their innovative programming, high musical standards, and emotionally-connected performances. Second, having observed Kokopelli choristers interact with each other and with members of other choirs at various festivals, I knew that there was a strong social cohesion among members. This social cohesion is common for choirs, especially youth choirs, but in my observations, Kokopelli members’ dedication to the choir and to their fellow choristers seemed to be even stronger than what I had experienced myself and what I had seen among choristers from other choirs.

Years before I began my doctoral studies, Leithead and I had worked for a couple of years alongside each other as clinicians for a high school choral program’s weekend retreats. Over discussions in the evenings, we developed a rapport and Leithead told me about African Projects, the Kokopelli Choir Association’s outreach program, which provides support to its sister choirs in South Africa and Namibia. This program, which requires significant time, energy, and financial dedication on an annual basis, is highly

unusual. While many choirs volunteer to sing at events where money is raised for charities, I did not know of any other choirs that engaged in their own charitable projects in such a significant way. This addition of a humanitarian experience for choristers combined with an aesthetic experience of the music and performance, as well as a social experience of the ensemble, was highly unusual and fascinated me. Finally, from my interaction with Leithead during our work as clinicians and my observations of him and his choristers at festivals and performances, I perceived an openness and genuine enthusiasm for sharing. As a result, I believed that I would be able, in a year of intense fieldwork, to extract enough data in various forms to explore the youth choir experience and what it meant to choristers.

Ethics

The research design for this study follows the protocol of the University of Calgary's Research Ethics Board. Acquiring approval involved submitting the research proposal, the list of interview questions, consent forms for interviewees, forms granting permission to be videotaped, as well as a consent form signed by Scott Leithead, director of Kokopelli and artistic director of the Kokopelli Choir Association granting me permission to research his choir and his organization. Interlocutors who were interviewed were given the option of whether or not they wished to be audio or videotaped, as well as whether they wished to remain anonymous, use a pseudonym, or use their real name in the dissertation. During the interview, I made it clear that they were welcome to skip any questions that they were not comfortable answering. Each interlocutor was given a full, detailed transcript of their interview for perusal. This

allowed them to reword any passages that were unclear or remove anything that they did not wish to appear in print.

Beyond simply following the guidelines outlined by the Research Ethics Board, I maintained a reflective approach throughout my research. It was clear to me from the beginning of my research journey that my role as researcher was a privileged position. I was always conscious of my interactions with members of the Kokopelli community and how my presence altered the choral context. From the initial research design through the completion of the writing process, I strove to balance the needs of the choir with my need for rigorous research. Qualitative research conducted in an ethical manner does not mean presenting only the positive, but rather, presenting a complete and truthful picture of the phenomenon, while respecting the individuals and the organization whose story the researcher is permitted to tell.

Research design

This dissertation aims to develop a deeper understanding of one choral director who has been recognized as an innovator in performance, who cultivates a strong esprit de corps within his ensemble, and who incorporates a humanitarian component into his work with his youth choir, thus providing his choristers with opportunities to develop into global citizens. It does not seek to make any broad claims or generalizations of required behaviours for choral directors to be successful leaders, though it does provide insights into how they might incorporate elements of transformational leadership and an ubuntu ethic into their own leadership practices. The next section details the methods used to carry out the study.

Interlocutor selection and rapport

In order to understand the *emic* experience of singing in Kokopelli under Leithead's direction and the short and long-term impact of that experience on singers, I interviewed both current and former choristers. As Willis (2007) notes, "acknowledging multiple perspectives recognizes that basic condition of human existence and often helps to elucidate why different individuals and groups behave the way they do" (194). In choosing singers to be interviewed, purposeful sampling (Creswell 2007, 126; Merriam 1998, 408; Yin 2011, 88) was employed in order to obtain a variety of perspectives on the impact of Leithead's leadership on his choristers. Maximum variation purposeful sampling was selected over random, homogeneous, convenience, and other sampling strategies because it "increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives – an ideal in qualitative research" (Creswell 2007, 126). In the selection of one interlocutor in particular, snowball or chain sampling (Creswell 2007, 127) was used, as several other interlocutors suggested that I interview her because of her involvement on the choir association's board and her interest in African Projects, specifically.

The interlocutors whom I interviewed includes both men and women; gay, lesbian, and straight choristers; choristers of European, African, and Asian descent; physically disabled and able-bodied choristers; as well as choristers who were active in other roles within the ensemble and those who were not. Gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity were not probed in the interviews, and I make no attempt to establish connections between these traits and the choristers' experiences beyond what they relayed to me explicitly in the interviews. However, these traits were considered in my

selection of interlocutors in order to gain a broader insight into the experience of singing under Leithead's direction. All interlocutors were eighteen years of age or older. This limitation focused the study on the perspective of young adults. Of the current members, only singers who had been in the choir for more than one year were chosen. This was important to ensure that interlocutors had experienced the complete cycle of a choral season with Kokopelli and were able to speak about the various elements and events within that context.

Six current members were selected, one of whom was an exchange student from Namibia who sang with the choir from January 2010 until the end of that season in June 2010. Four past members who were in their mid-to-late twenties at the time of their interviews, but who sang in the choir during their late teens and early twenties were also selected. By including past members as interlocutors, I was able to compare Leithead's approach to directing and the Kokopelli context in its early years to what I observed and heard from current members through interviews, thus gaining a better understanding of the evolution of this practice.

Of the past members who were interviewed, two had remained actively involved with the Kokopelli Choir Association; these two also participated in the African Projects exchange program, spending several months in Namibia singing with Kokopelli's sister choir, the Mascato Youth Choir. One was also an arranger whose new arrangement was workshopped by Leithead and Kokopelli during my year of fieldwork. Of the other two former members who were no longer involved with the Kokopelli Choir Association, one was selected because I knew her prior to beginning my research and she had been the lyricist for one of Kokopelli's commissioned choral works. The other was selected

because she is a professional singer who had since been featured as a guest artist in Kokopelli concerts including one that took place during my year of fieldwork. So, beyond shedding light on Leithead's early leadership practice as they experienced it during their time as choristers, these interlocutors also provided additional perspectives in other artistic roles.¹³

I, as the researcher, selected the interlocutors and asked if they wanted to be part of the study. Although I did seek advice from the director regarding the selection of some of the participants, he was not the one to ask them, therefore, limiting the chance that choristers would feel coerced to be part of the study. Those who were asked were given the option of whether or not they wanted to participate, and because I was an outsider to the group, there would be no repercussions to their decision. This did not end up being an issue as all those who were asked to participate agreed to do so.

Data Collection

A key component of case study research is the variety of methods used in data collection (Creswell 2007, 132; Merriam 1998, 69; Yin 2009, 101). Yin (2009) presents six sources of evidence commonly used in case studies: documentation, archival records, interview, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (101). In this study, I collected data from several sources including documents found on the choir's internal website, communication through the choir's e-mail list throughout the year, and archival CDs. The primary methods of data collection, however, were ethnographic observations and interviews.

¹³ See appendix 1 to read biographies of the interlocutors.

For the 2009-2010 season, I observed twenty-one rehearsals, generally attending every second Wednesday. I also attended concerts during the choir's regular season, as well as several other events including additional performances and workshops. In September 2009, Leithead introduced me to the choir at the first rehearsal of the season. For several months, I sat near the back of the room at rehearsal, taking field notes to document what I was observing. I wrote longer passages of thick description (Geertz 1973) so that I would be able to remember the details and the vivid quality of what I was witnessing in the various choral contexts. As Yin (2011) suggests, thick description allows a researcher to reduce selectivity (12) of what they are seeing and "move the interpretation away from researcher-centric perspectives, portraying instead the people, events, and actions within their locally meaningful contexts" (213). This was particularly important when trying to understand Kokopelli's performance practice in concert.

I did not begin video recording rehearsals until January 2010. I decided that the added presence of a camera might be too intrusive, and I wanted to establish a rapport with the group before doing any audio-visual recording. By the time I began recording rehearsals, I was a known presence in rehearsals, and choristers did not appear to react at all to the presence of a camera on a tripod. During this time, I continued to make field notes during rehearsals, but the camera became my primary way of documenting what was happening.

Observing video footage of performances played a significant role in my data collection process. The choir has numerous clips of their performances on YouTube, which allowed me to see concerts that I was unable to attend, especially those that occurred on tours outside of Edmonton. It also allowed me to watch performances that I

had attended, often from a different vantage point from where I had been sitting in the performance venue. For the videos that I recorded, I was limited to recording members of Kokopelli from whom I had signed forms granting me permission and/or parental consent in the case of choristers who were under the age of eighteen. Kokopelli, however, collaborates with numerous groups, including the other choirs within the larger Kokopelli Choir Association. Therefore, these amateur recordings posted on the internet, as well as archival recordings of concerts taken by the organization's videographer were a valuable resource, in that they documented performances of Kokopelli with other choirs, which often included more than two hundred performers singing at a given time.

Over the course of the 2009-2010 season, my role as an observer shifted and opportunities arose to play a more active role in the choir's rehearsals. These opportunities included running warm-ups with the choir on several occasions, conducting a sectional with the women's sections and running part of a rehearsal with the entire choir. These opportunities afforded me the chance to interact with the singers from the podium and deepen my involvement in the rehearsal process as a participant-observer. Yin (2009) suggests that participant-observation allows a researcher to perceive reality from the viewpoint of an insider, thus producing a more accurate portrayal of the case being studied (112). He cautions however, that participant-observation may limit the researcher's ability to work as an external observer, and may reduce their ability to effectively observe (113). Because the bulk of my time in Kokopelli rehearsals was spent observing, my role as researcher remained at the forefront and was not eclipsed by my role as a participant. Additionally, these occasions spent at the podium allowed for a

small degree of reciprocity where I could give back to the choir that had welcomed me into their life for the year.

In addition to my own ethnographic observations, conducting semi-structured interviews was a major method of data collection. Merriam (1998) asserts that “research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (3). In order to access the perspectives of current and former members of the choir, I conducted ten one-on-one interviews, lasting between thirty and ninety minutes each.¹⁴ As with the video recording, I waited several months before beginning the interviews so that I had time to establish a rapport with the choristers, and thus obtain more detailed and honest answers. Interlocutors were given the option of where they wanted to do the interview, with the hope of increasing their level of comfort with the process. Interviews took place in a variety of places, including the rehearsal space, choristers’ homes, one chorister’s school, my parents’ home, my in-laws’ home, and my office at the college where I teach. The semi-structured interview format served to keep the conversation on topic, but allowed for flexibility to explore different sub-topics and issues as they arose. Both audio and video recordings were made of the interviews for documentation purposes and so that they could be transcribed.

In order to gain a better understanding of Leithead’s work with his choir, I observed him *in situ* for the first five months of my fieldwork. This allowed me to observe his actions and communication with the choir without trying to connect what I was seeing to his explanations of his own intentions. After five months of observation and gathering questions that I wanted to ask him, I conducted my first interview with

¹⁴ See appendix 2 to read interview questions.

Leithead, which lasted just over an hour and covered a range of topics: repertoire selection, the processes of commissioning new works and workshopping student arrangements, the impetus for starting Kokopelli and African Projects, elements of his rehearsal process and directing style and how they have evolved. This provided me with new insights into Leithead's objectives and his approach to rehearsals and performances with Kokopelli, thus allowing me to build on my initial observations and gain a deeper understanding into his overall leadership practice. During the writing processes, further questions arose and new themes emerged, so I conducted three additional interviews with Leithead lasting between forty-five and ninety minutes, which provided further data to reinforce my analysis and interpretation of his leadership practice.

Data Analysis

Yin (2011) proposes a five-phased cycle for analyzing qualitative data: (1) Compiling, (2) Disassembling, (3) Reassembling (and Arraying), (4) Interpreting, and (5) Concluding (177). However, ongoing data analysis also takes place in earlier phases of the research study, especially during data collection (Merriam 1998, 119; Yin 2011, 178). Data analysis did take place throughout the data collection process as I observed rehearsals and performances, reviewed my field notes, interviewed interlocutors and created transcripts of the interviews. Following my year of fieldwork, I continued the process of *compiling* data by watching video footage of rehearsals and performances, and rereading field notes and transcripts in order to “get to know my field notes” (Yin 2011, 183). The second phase of *disassembling* involved reading interview transcripts and looking for initial codes or larger topic areas. Once these initial codes were established, I read through the transcripts more thoroughly, and looked for more specific codes. In the

reassembling phase, I labelled several sheets of paper with the larger topic areas. I then went through the transcript codes and reorganized them thematically by grouping, or *arraying*, them into the established topic areas and writing them on the corresponding topic sheets. Once this process was complete, I counted instances of codes in order to establish themes and patterns (Creswell 2007, 156). I then watched the video recordings that I had made and wrote detailed notes about them. I also read through my own field notes taken *in situ* and looked for codes, categorizing them into the main topics. As part of the *Interpreting* phase, I compared the codes from the interview transcripts with those from my own observations and looked for overarching themes. This analysis of themes was “not for generalizing beyond the case, but for understanding the complexity of the case” (Creswell 2007, 75). Through the process of reorganizing data, analyzing themes, and interpreting those themes, I was able to move into the *Concluding* phase where a multi-dimensional representation of Leithead’s leadership practice within his youth choir emerged. The process of data analysis, however, remained both recursive and iterative (Yin 2011, 179), and throughout the writing process, I continued to revisit my field notes and interlocutor transcripts, and when necessary, sought further clarification from Leithead and my interlocutors, as new themes emerged.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Merriam (1998) offers six strategies for internal validity: triangulation, member checks, long term observation, peer examination, involving participants in all phases of research, and clarifying the researcher’s biases (169). In this study, interviewing the director in the middle of my time in the field was part of data collection, but also served as part of the triangulation process. By comparing information from my own

observations, the perspectives of the past members, the perspective of current members, and the perspective of the director, I was able to triangulate data from several different sources (Creswell 2007, 45). I conducted member checks with chorister interlocutors, which included giving each interlocutor a transcript of their interview to check for discrepancies, and as new themes emerged, verifying them with the interlocutors to ensure that my observations and interpretations were accurate. I also conducted member checks with the director through all phases of the research. This was particularly important because I was not only exploring his leadership practice, but also his motivation for decisions surrounding that practice, and I needed to ensure that in my application of the theoretical lenses of transformational leadership and ubuntu, I was accurate in my analysis of his words and actions.

Because the bulk of my research took place over the 2009-2010 season this long-term observation allowed me to view the choral context with a fresh eye in the early stages and with more of an insider's perspective as the year progressed. The evolution of this perspective over an extended period of time strengthened my overall understanding of the choir. During the writing process, I gave a poster presentation exploring excellence in the youth choir at Podium, the biennial conference of Choral Canada, and presented papers on choral collaboration, inspiring minds from the podium, and African Projects at professional and student conferences. The peer examination available in these venues, specifically the questions I was asked by fellow music scholars and conductors, allowed me to gain feedback on my scholarship and address shortcomings more substantially in the dissertation itself.

Situating myself as researcher

Yin (2011) asserts that since qualitative research values direct observation and interaction between the researcher and the phenomena being studied, the researcher is, in fact, a research instrument and brings his or her own lens or filter to the data collection process (270). Therefore, it was important for me to acknowledge my own training and experience as a chorister and a conductor in order to clarify my biases as researcher. I have been fortunate to sing in a number of excellent choirs throughout my life, including various school choirs, a community children's choir, a community youth choir, university choirs during my undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees, as well as professional vocal and choral ensembles. In these ensembles, I experienced innumerable meaningful musical moments, both in rehearsal and performance, and forged strong relationships with my fellow choristers as we worked together to meet our musical goals. While my experiences as a chorister provided a starting point from which to study Leithead and Kokopelli, I aimed to be open to observing and probing other facets of the Kokopelli choristers' experiences that differed from my own.

My experience as a choral director has also informed my lens as a researcher. I have directed church choirs, a children's choir, a youth choir, and for the past sixteen years, a post-secondary level choir at the college where I teach. As such, I possess my own philosophies and pedagogical approaches that shape my leadership practices. My choral upbringing and my work today as a director and educator stem from a traditional approach to choral directing where an ensemble performs works from the Western art canon and newly published classical choral compositions, where the choir performs these works in a stand-and-deliver concert style, and where the director is the one who makes

artistic decisions for the group. Because Scott Leithead's approach differs significantly from my own and from how my former choral directors led their ensembles, I endeavoured, throughout the data collection process, to suspend my expectations of what should occur in the choral setting, focusing acutely on what I was directly observing.

Beyond my experience as a chorister and choral director, my academic training has also shaped my perspective as researcher in the study. Following my Bachelor of Music as a voice major, I completed a Master of Arts in Music, with a focus in ethnomusicology. My thesis (Clark 2001) was an ethnographic study of an Edmonton-based Irish dance school, and explored how the experience of Irish dancing shapes the identity of its participants within the Canadian multi-cultural milieu. As such, I was familiar with ethnographic research methods and how to access the experiences of participants through interviews, observation, and participant-observation. During my MA, I also took Hindustani singing lessons. Having studied voice within a Western classical tradition for several years before, these lessons challenged me to face my assumptions about vocal studies and to be open to unfamiliar vocal tone and sound production, repertoire, and pedagogical methods. This experience was helpful during my current research project, reminding me to approach this site of study as something new to be explored despite its many familiar elements.

Summary

This chapter examined some of the broader methodological considerations in designing and executing this study of a successful youth choir director's leadership practice. It presented a rationale for employing a qualitative approach grounded in an interpretivist or social constructivist research paradigm. It presented the motivation for

employing a case study methodology and for selecting Scott Leithead and Kokopelli as the case to be studied. Next, the chapter outlined elements of the research design, including ethical considerations, interlocutor selection and rapport, data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness and credibility, and the researcher's lens. The next chapter presents an introduction to Scott Leithead, Kokopelli, the youth choir, and the Kokopelli Choir Association. The subsequent three chapters present the study's findings: an examination of Leithead's leadership practice in the rehearsal setting, an analysis of the results of his leadership as enacted by the choir in performance, and an investigation of Kokopelli's African Projects as an opportunity for Kokopelli choristers to develop into global citizens.

CHAPTER 5: THE CASE, SCOTT LEITHEAD AND KOKOPELLI

Introduction

While the previous chapter addressed the method undertaken to complete this study, this chapter provides contextual background for those that follow. The first section introduces Scott Leithead, whose leadership practice is at the heart of this study. This section outlines his training, career highlights, as well as awards and honours. The second section introduces Kokopelli, the youth choir which Leithead directs, which is the site of this study. The section provides a description of the ensemble, an overview of a typical concert season, and summaries of the choir's most significant tours and festivals, their recordings, and some of their most significant collaborative projects. The third section of the chapter provides an introduction to the Kokopelli Choir Association which grew out of the single youth choir, including its philosophy and values, and an overview of the five additional choirs within the Association, which are presented chronologically in the order in which they were founded.

Artistic director, Scott Leithead

Scott Leithead (b. 1968) came to choral music through a different path than most. Registered as a trombone major during his Bachelor of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON, Leithead developed a love for vocal jazz and formed a vocal jazz group at the university. In addition to musical expertise from playing in the jazz band, he also brought to the group enthusiasm and a passion for community-building. The singers in the ensemble were mostly piano and voice majors and, at the time, knew much more about singing than he did. Therefore, in his role as leader-facilitator of the group, he learned a lot of about singing from the members (interview September 26,

2015). It was this experience directing the vocal jazz ensemble that ignited his passion for choral music and began his path toward becoming one of the foremost youth choir directors and choral innovators in Canada.

Many of Leithead's ideas about team-building, leadership, discipline, and performance excellence were shaped during his tenure as a member of the Bluecoats Drum Corps of Canton, Ohio (interview September 26, 2015).¹⁵ Living near the Canada-US border, Leithead commuted to Ohio to play euphonium with the ensemble in his last two years of high school and his first year of university. During that time, Leithead experienced a strong sense of team within the ensemble, and he remains in contact with many of the members, several of whom are active in the alumni groups that help to fund the organization. For Leithead, this was the first time that he felt valued as an individual within an ensemble and not just a cog in the wheel (interview September 26, 2015). He learned discipline by performing in heat waves, bussing through the night, and sleeping on gym floors. He learned to push the limits of performance and creativity through focused rehearsals where the ensemble's eleven-minute-long show was drilled for hours at a time, and the musicians were constantly re-writing and changing parts to take the performance to the next level. These elements of his Drum Corps experience, including dedication, valuing ensemble members, and the pursuit of creativity and excellence in performance, remain an integral part of the musical groups that Leithead directs.

Upon completing his Bachelor of Music (1992) from Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON, Leithead earned his Bachelor of Education (1993) from the University

¹⁵ Drum Corps is a specialized type of marching band that is made up of only percussion and brass instruments as opposed to other marching bands which also include some woodwind instruments. Drum Corps are not associated with school but are independently-run, exclusive rather than inclusive, and are self-financing. The Bluecoats are in the World Class Corps (highest level) within the Drum Corps International organization (Drum Corps International 2015).

of Toronto, and moved to Edmonton, AB in the fall of 1993 to become a music specialist with Edmonton Public Schools. He taught at St. Alphonsus Junior High School and at Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts, a high school with specialized arts programs. During that time, Leithead was also active in community music, conducting the Edmonton Youth Choir and the Columbian Jazz Choirs.

Leithead ran a successful choral program at the Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts from 1994 to 1996 and was keen to tour with the ensemble. Although he toured with his choir both years that he was there, the school's administration was not supportive of the choir pursuing touring opportunities. Leithead also preferred to work directly with parents as opposed to having the school mediate these relationships. At that time, he had a supportive group of parents who encouraged him to start a community youth choir. So, in 1996, Leithead left his teaching position and founded Kokopelli:

If I was going to do it, that was the time to do it. I had a really strong core group already. [...] I said: "I'm starting this thing and if you walk through the door, great." [...] Probably nine tenths of the group came and that was the beginning of it. We had so much more freedom as our own entity than under the public school system. We could do a lot more; we could tour much easier." (interview February 18, 2010)

Beyond the flexibility that this move gave Leithead in leading his choir, it also gave him more flexibility personally to engage in other professional activities.

After leaving the security of his full-time teaching position, Leithead embraced a freelance lifestyle which included working with members of the disabled community. In 1996, Leithead founded the Braille Tones choir, which began with singers with visual

impairments, but now serves persons with many different disabilities.¹⁶ The vocal group grew out of the Edmonton Dinner Optimist Club, which provided funding in 1988 to start a communication group for persons with disabilities, “promoting confidence in public speaking and making new friends in a fun and social atmosphere” (Braille Tone Music Society 2014).¹⁷ As the choir became established, able-bodied section leaders were added to mentor the disabled singers; many of these section leaders came from and continue to come from the Kokopelli Choir Association. After Leithead left his position as director, the next two directors of the Braille Tones were also from the Kokopelli Choir Association. Carmen So directed the group from 2001-2010, and Susan Farrell has directed it since then. In 2014, Farrell added a choir for disabled children aged eight to sixteen, the Semitones Children’s Choir, to the organization. Although Leithead is no longer active in the musical direction of the organization, he remains involved in the leadership of it, serving as President of the Braille Tone Music Society and leading a board made up primarily of former Kokopelli singers and associates of the Kokopelli Choir Association.

In addition to his work with Kokopelli and the Braille Tones, Leithead continued to fuel his passion for vocal jazz, and in 1997, he created three vocal jazz ensembles, Postdated, ’Nuf Sed, and FORM (Leithead 2001, 276). In April of 2002, he founded the umbrella organization, Today’s Innovative Music Edmonton (TIME), with the mandate “to provide young people with the highest level of music training in contemporary music genres” (TIME 2015).¹⁸ The Association is currently made up of three vocal jazz

¹⁶ The group’s name was originally spelled “Brail Tones,” but in 2015, the organization received permission from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to use the spelling “Braille.”

¹⁷ <http://btones.ca/about/our-history>

¹⁸ <http://www.musicedmonton.com/>

ensembles, 'Nuf Sed and FORM both directed by Leithead, along with J***Word which is led by founding director Julian Macdonald. The Association focuses on music technology and innovation, and according to its website, TIME is the only community organization in Canada that focuses on contemporary music for small ensembles.

Leithead is frequently in demand as a guest director, clinician, presenter and adjudicator at events in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. He has directed state and provincial honour choirs on more than twenty occasions, including British Columbia, Alberta for the fortieth anniversary of the Alberta Choral Federation, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Montana, Oklahoma, the Western ACDA Youth Honour Choir in Seattle, WA, and the National Youth Choir of St. Lucia. Leithead has worked with choirs in Namibia and South Africa on a number of occasions since 2005. During the 2008/2009 season, he was on sabbatical in Namibia and worked with the Mascato Youth Choir and several other choirs in southern Africa. Leithead was also director of the Ellison Canadian National Honour Choir, one of the national honour ensembles of Musicfest Canada in its inaugural year of 2013, in 2015 and 2016, and will be directing it again in May, 2017.¹⁹

In addition to working with small and medium-sized choirs, Leithead has also had the opportunity to direct enormous choral ensembles. In 2001, he was the director of an eight hundred-voice choir for the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Track and Field Opening Ceremonies. In 2016, he directed the thousand-voice adult choir common song at the seventeenth biennial International Choral

¹⁹ This is highly unusual as most honour choirs invite a guest director only once, or for a second time many years later. For Leithead to conduct the group for four out of five years is a rare honour.

Kathaumixw festival in Powell River, BC.²⁰ Leithead has presented at numerous conferences, symposia, and universities including the Canadian Conference for Music Education, Choral Canada's Podium conference, and the now-defunct Festival 500 in St. John's, NL. He has adjudicated at a number of prestigious festivals including: Kathaumixw; the Brandon Jazz Festival; the Ontario Vocal Festival; Musicfest Canada; the Cantando Festivals in Edmonton, AB and Vancouver, BC; and Choral Canada's National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs.

Leithead has received several awards for his work including the Edmonton Salute to Excellence Award for outstanding work with youth in 1996, the Con Spirito Award from the Alberta Choral Federation for his commitment to choral music in his local community in 2001, the Syncrude Award for Innovative Artistic Direction at the Edmonton Mayor's Awards for Business and the Arts in 2002, the Edmonton Mayor's Salute to Excellence Performance and Citation Award for Arts and Culture in 2015, and the Richard S. Eaton Award from Choir Alberta for exemplary service to choral music in the province in 2015. Leithead continues to serve the greater choral community in a variety of roles. He is currently the vice-chair of the Choral/Vocal Division for MusicFest Canada, long-time member of the advisory committee for the Canadian Rocky Mountain Music Festival, a member of the Artistic Committee for Choral Canada's 2016 Podium conference, as well as a board member of the National Youth Music and Art Development Foundation of South Africa.

²⁰ According Canadian choral experts, Patricia Abbott and Victoria Meredith (2012) Kathaumixw is Sliammon for "a gathering together of different peoples." The festival, which was created in 1984 to match the quality of European festivals, includes choral and solo competitions, orchestra, workshops, communal song singing, and seminars, and "has attracted more than twelve hundred singers from around the world who gather to share their music, culture, and friendship, and to perform for a distinguished international jury" (108).

Kokopelli, the youth choir

The youth choir, called simply Kokopelli, was founded in 1996 by director Scott Leithead. It emerged at a time when Edmonton, AB, was a thriving choral scene and many elementary, junior high schools, and high schools had strong choral programs. Today, the Edmonton scene has shifted somewhat. Although there are many excellent adult community choirs and a couple of other excellent community youth ensembles, due largely to the renowned choral conducting program at the University of Alberta, the number of school programs has dwindled significantly as choral specialists positions have been cut and the number of other possible options for students has increased.²¹ According to Leithead, the decline in strong school music programs has resulted in a decrease in the level of musical skills acquired through school programs, as well as a drop in the number of singers auditioning for Kokopelli, from sixty singers in 2010 to as low as fifteen in 2014 (personal correspondence November 15, 2015).

Kokopelli is made up of singers aged sixteen to twenty-three, and although the number of choristers varies from year to year, the number generally ranges from forty-five to sixty members. This ensemble is the flagship choir of the Kokopelli Choir Association and is an established ensemble within the choral community of Edmonton. Chorister auditions are held between late August and mid-September. Although there are new members added to the group every year, many choristers return year after year, some staying well into their twenties, beyond the time when choristers typically leave their

²¹ The Edmonton Youth Choir, directed by Dr. John Wiebe, is a mixed voice youth choir for singers aged fifteen to twenty-four within the Edmonton Youth and Children's Choirs organization. The Cantilon Chamber Choir is a treble choir for singers aged twelve to nineteen within the Cantilon Choirs organization. These two auditioned youth choirs both perform a range of repertoire, and tour and compete internationally on a regular basis. Though the groups incorporate some movement, they tend to perform more often in a stand-and-deliver formation than Kokopelli, and their repertoire includes more classical than world music selections.

youth choir and join an adult ensemble. Returning members tend to take on both formal and informal leadership roles within the choir, encouraging new choristers to meet the musical, performance, and memory expectations of the ensemble. This continuity helps the choir maintain a level of musical excellence and experience that enables the choir to consistently achieve excellent results in their artistic pursuits.

Filipina soprano, Kitbielle Pasagui, is currently the choir's assistant conductor. Pasagui trained as a vocal performance major at the University of the Philippines College of Music and sang with the world-renowned Philippine Madrigal Singers. Upon moving to Canada in early 2012, she joined Kokopelli and sang the rest of that year and the following season with Kokopelli. For the 2013-2014 season, she joined Òran, the adult choir within the Kokopelli Choir Association and took on the role of assistant conductor for Kokopelli. As Leithead travels often to adjudicate, conduct clinics, and serve as guest director of honour choirs, Pasagui's role is vital to the choir's ability to tackle challenging repertoire and strive for performance excellence. Leithead and Pasagui are assisted by two accompanists, each attending one of the weekly rehearsals, Bryan LeGrow who also accompanies Tamariki, and the Kokopelli Choir Association's resident percussion coach, Tova Olson, who also accompanies Shumayela (shoo-mah-YEH-lah). Both accompanists are Kokopelli alumni.

Until recently, Kokopelli and the rest of the Kokopelli Choir Association espoused a decidedly non-competitive philosophy. After a negative experience at the Kiwanis Music Festival in the choir's first year, the choir decided to no longer participate in competitions, but rather, opt for non-competitive festivals, conferences, and performance opportunities. Former chorister Neema Bickersteth explains that although

Kokopelli's performance in that first festival was focused on "sharing music, and sharing moments, and sharing humanity," the overall feeling coming from the other choirs was one where the element of competition eclipsed the celebration of excellence and the appreciation of the artistry within other ensembles' performances (interview December 27, 2009). In 2015, however, Kokopelli broke with that tradition and entered Choral Canada's National Competition for Amateur Choirs, placing first in the Mixed-Voice Youth Choir category. They were also awarded "best performance by a community group 19 and up" in the 45th National Music Festival.

The decision to enter these competitions, Leithead explains, was not because of some ideological shift within the choir or the Association, but rather to help the choir's chance of securing additional funding. Kokopelli has had limited success acquiring sponsorship, securing only a couple of corporate sponsors over the past twenty years. In 2015, the choir's costs had increased, but Leithead and the board did not want to increase chorister fees. After running deficit budgets for two years, Leithead sought advice from Lhente-Marie Pitout, artistic director of Kokopelli's sister choir, the University of Pretoria Youth Choir (UPYC). Pitout explained that UPYC participates in many competitions as a way to increase their visibility and to make it easier to approach granters and funders for support with a record of wins to their name. The Choral Canada National Competition win included a financial boost of \$1000, national radio airplay, and excellent feedback on the choir's performance. Although Leithead was pleased with the outcome of the competition, he does not envision competition becoming a strong motivator for choristers or an important aspect of the choir's overall philosophy (interview September 26, 2015).

The Kokopelli Concert Season

For Kokopelli choristers, the choir season begins in September and runs until the end of May, although on tour years, it often extends into the summer months. The choir rehearses twice per week at MacDougall United Church in downtown Edmonton with additional rehearsals before tours and concerts.²² The choir participates in the Kokopelli Choir Association's main concert season as well as workshops, festivals, tours, and other local appearances. The annual concert series for the Kokopelli youth choir comprises five main concerts. The first concert typically takes place in November and features both Kokopelli and Òran.²³ This concert has been performed at different church venues around Edmonton over the years. The annual Christmas concert in December features all of the choirs in the Kokopelli Choir Association in both an afternoon and an evening concert and takes place at McDougall United Church.²⁴ Stories, the February concert takes place at the West End Christian Reformed Church; the afternoon and evening concerts feature both Òran and Kokopelli, adding Kikimasu (kee-kee-mahs) to one and Shumayela to the other.²⁵ This concert often includes guest clinicians who work with the choirs during the week leading up to the event, sharing their expertise and their favourite repertoire with the groups.²⁶

²² The choir's regular rehearsals are Mondays from 7-9:30pm and Wednesdays from 4-6:30pm. Past rehearsal venues include Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples in downtown Edmonton and the Amiskwaciy Academy, a school within Edmonton Public Schools that offers Indigenous enrichment programming located in the former Edmonton Municipal Airport building, northwest of the downtown core.

²³ This concert has had various titles including: *Odyssey* (2010), *All Works of Love* (2012), *Long Road* (2013), *Pax* (2014), and *Elements* (2015).

²⁴ This concert has had various titles over the years including: *Wintersong* (2009-2012), *Snow in a Dark Night* (2013), *Rejoice* (2014), *Aurora* (2015), and *Winter Stars* (2016).

²⁵ The "u" in Kikimasu is silent or barely pronounced.

²⁶ Often, this weeklong residency includes rehearsing with the choir nightly from Monday to Friday, culminating in a three-hour dress rehearsal.

Colours of Spring in May showcases the same choirs as Stories and often takes place at MacDougall United Church.²⁷ The Kokopelli Youth Choir rounds out their season a few weeks later with the Colours of Spring Encore concert featuring guest choir, the Braille Tones, a tradition that has continued since Kokopelli was founded. This event takes place at the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples, a Catholic church with a very live acoustic that is decorated with Indigenous artwork. This venue, located on Edmonton's historic "church street" in the downtown area, was a rehearsal space for the choir in its early years and has been an important part of the ensemble's history for nearly two decades. For the end of the 2014-2015 season, the Kokopelli Choir Association changed the format of their year-end concert to a multi-site concert entitled Journey. For the event, concert goers travelled from church to church along the street to see twenty-minute long sets by each of the six choirs in the organization and the Braille Tones. The annual concert series strikes a balance between maintaining the general structure of the concert year and creating new and exciting events for concert goers. Although many audience members purchase tickets for individual shows, the Association offers a season subscription for "KokoNut" fans, which includes reserved seating, front and center, for all concerts.

The Stories concert: A Kokopelli Choir Association tradition

Though each Kokopelli concert is a unique event featuring a variety of music and visual elements, the annual Stories concert is often their most diverse and exciting of the year. For this concert, Leithead in collaboration with Luyk (née Skinner), chooses a

²⁷ Songquest is also part of the Kokopelli Choir Association's season offerings but features only the younger choirs, Shumayela and Kikimasu. In 2015, Echoes was the title of this concert, and featured Shumayela, Kikimasu, and the youngest choir, Tamariki with special guests, the Semi-Tones, a new choir for disabled children aged eight to sixteen within the Braille Tone Music Society.

theme or style of music to showcase and invites guest artists or performing groups to share the stage. Often, these guest artists are invited to work as clinicians with the choirs for a week-long series of workshops leading up to the concert. The 2007 Stories showcased the music of Stephen Hatfield with the composer as the guest clinician and conductor. In February 2010, the concert focused on Gospel music, and the choirs had the opportunity to learn from and perform with guests: musician, composer, choral director, and activist, Melanie DeMore; founding director of the Soul Children of Chicago, Inc., Walter W. Whitman Jr., as well as Terence Smith, an alumnus of that choir.²⁸ In 2014, the concert was entitled Ubuntu and focused on the choral music of southern Africa. Guests for that performance were Jimmy Mulovhedzi from South Africa who directs Memeza and is involved with the Soweto Gospel Choir, and Theo Cookson, the current director of the Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia. In 2015, the concert was entitled Kōrero, which is Maori for “stories,” with that year’s program featuring Polynesian and Maori music.²⁹

Besides being an encounter with music often not accessible to Edmonton audiences, Stories also appeals to audiences because of its extra-musical components. While there is often some staging and use of props during other concerts of the Kokopelli season, the Stories concert is the most complex of the season’s offerings in terms of added visual components. This concert typically incorporates video segments between numbers, extensive lighting elements, as well as the use of a number of props, dance, movement, and staging throughout the concert. The concert is held each February at the

²⁸ In addition to her solo career, Melanie DeMore was a founding member of the Grammy-nominated women’s ensemble, Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir (<http://www.melaniemore.com>). The Soul Children of Chicago is a “non-denominational, non-profit educational organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of our youth” (<http://www.soulchildrenchicago.org/page/our-mission.php>).

²⁹ The Kōrero concert is analyzed in chapter seven on repertoire and performance.

West End Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton. This venue is chosen because of its large flat stage in front, its high ceilings, and its technical equipment, including coloured lights, projectors, and large screens on either side of the impressive organ. The venue holds approximately eight-hundred audience members, and the concert consistently comes close to selling out for both the afternoon and the evening performances. The concert features Kokopelli and the select adult choir Òran, with Kikimasu rounding out the afternoon roster and Shumayela the evening one. Throughout the concert, each group performs some selections on their own, and then they join forces for other pieces. For the selections that feature both Kokopelli and Òran, the number of performers swells to over a hundred choristers.

Kokopelli tours and festivals

Throughout its history, Kokopelli has participated in a number of musical festivals and concert tours, provincially, nationally, and internationally. On several occasions, Kokopelli has performed at the provincial Choralfest run by the provincial choral association, Choir Alberta, where choirs perform for each other and then have the opportunity to do workshops with guest clinicians.³⁰ The choir also performs several showcase concerts every year at the Canadian Rocky Mountain Festival in Banff, AB, a non-competitive festival that also provides choirs with the opportunity to work with guest clinicians. Nationally, Kokopelli has performed at a number of choral events including Podium, the biennial conference of Choral Canada (Edmonton, AB in 2000 and 2016; Winnipeg, MB in 2004; and Sackville, NB in 2008), the Unisong Festival in Ottawa, ON in 1997, Festival 500 in St. John's, NL 2011, and the Kaleid Festival in Ontario in 2012.

³⁰ Prior to 2015, Choirs Alberta was known as the Alberta Choral Federation.

In 2014, the choir was the festival guest choir at the International Choral Kathaumixw in Powell River, BC, and in 2015, they performed at the Canadian Music Educators National Conference in Winnipeg, MB.

Internationally, Kokopelli has performed at regional conferences of the American Choral Directors Association (Salt Lake City, UT in 2006 and Seattle, WA in 2012) and the Missoula International Choral Festival (Missoula, MT 2013). The choir has also performed at the International Society for Music Education conference (Bergen, Norway in 2002), and in 2010, was invited to represent North America at the Kinderchorfestival-Dresden (Dresden International Children's Choir Festival) in Germany. Kokopelli was selected for this honour because Leithead had performed at the previous year's festival during his sabbatical year with the Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia. After meeting Leithead and finding out about his Canadian choirs, the festival organizers invited Kokopelli to perform.

In addition to participating in these international choral festivals, Kokopelli has done three concert tours to southern Africa (Namibia and South Africa in 2004; Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia in 2007; South Africa and Swaziland in 2013). For each of these tours, some members of Òran have joined Kokopelli for the experience, learning their tour repertoire and performing as one ensemble. For Kokopelli's tenth anniversary, African Projects paid for its sister choir, the Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia, to join them on their western Canadian tour, and in 2016, for their twentieth anniversary season, Kokopelli covered most of the expenses of their other sister choir, the University of Pretoria Youth Choir, as they toured western Canada.³¹

³¹ These anniversary tours with its sister choirs will be discussed in more detail in chapter eight.

Not only has Kokopelli performed in a number of non-competitive festivals, they have also spear-headed an initiative to bring together youth choirs of Western Canada. In 2011, Kokopelli hosted the first Voices West Festival that welcomed several youth choirs from Western Canada to Edmonton including Vancouver's Coastal Sound Youth Choir (under the direction of Carrie Tennant), Corazón Vocal Ensemble from Nelson, BC (under the direction of Allison Girvan), the Edmonton Youth Choir under the direction of (Jordan van Biert), the ihana [sic] Youth Choir of Red Deer, AB (under the direction of Lisa Ward), and the Kamala Youth Choir of North Battleford, SK (co-directed by Dianne Gryba and JoAnne Kasper).³² This weekend-long festival included workshops and concerts for over 250 singers. In 2013, Coastal Sound hosted the festival, bringing the sounds of western Canadian youth choirs to Vancouver, and in 2015, Corazón hosted the festival in Nelson, BC. The 2016 iteration of Voices West took place in May 2016 in Edmonton and was featured in first evening concert of Choral Canada's Podium conference. This initiative highlights Leithead's commitment to sharing choral music and his role as a catalyst for meaningful encounters in the greater choral community.

Recordings and Collaborations

Over its twenty year history, Kokopelli has produced several CDs: *Evolve* (1997); *Freedom* (1998); *Time* (1999); *Colours* (2000); and *Believe* (2001). *Perspective* (2002) featured music performed during the season leading up to Kokopelli's first international tour to Bergen, Norway for the ISME conference, and *Spirit* (2006) which, although it was produced in 2006, was recorded during the 2002-2003 season. These albums straddle the line between archival recordings that document the various seasons of

³² In 2011-2012, Jordan van Biert was the interim conductor of the Edmonton Youth Choir. However, since then, Dr. John Wiebe has resumed the position.

repertoire, and commercial recordings that are typically recorded, produced, and sold by choirs. The repertoire featured on each CD is generally eclectic, except for *Connections* (2008), which consists of choral music of southern African performed by Kokopelli and Òran, as well as both of the Association's sister choirs at the time, the Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia and the now-defunct Siyacula Youth Choir of South Africa. In addition to the group's self-published recordings, Kokopelli is also featured on several tracks (one, seven, and twelve) of Rita's MacNeil's *A Night at the Orpheum* (EMI Music Canada, 1999), a live concert with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra of several of MacNeil's most popular songs.³³

Leithead (2001) explains how the connection with Rita MacNeil was originally forged:

During the 1998-1999 season, Kokopelli performed an arrangement of "Home I'll Be." It was written about Cape Breton but it talks about home in many different ways and has very special meaning for the choir. When I wrote to Ms. McNeil and told her about the Braille Tones and FORM, she invited me to meet with her while she was performing with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra in January 1999.³⁴ I brought Kokopelli to sing for her in the hotel lobby. She appeared with her son, looking as if she had had a bad day. The choir surrounded her and sang three pieces, ending with "Home I'll Be." She just wept and wept. She told the choir that you never know what marvellous moments can occur on any given day. Music has the power to heal. (277)

According to Leithead, a couple of weeks later, MacNeil's manager called to say that "she was doing this CD project and could think of no other choir that she wanted other

³³ Rita MacNeil (1944-2013) was a prominent Canadian folk and country singer from Cape Breton, NS.

³⁴ Jenica Hagan explains that the name was chosen at the time when the television program *Rita MacNeil and Friends* was on the air. A couple of choristers joked that if they named their vocal jazz ensemble, FORM, an acronym for "Friends of Rita MacNeil," perhaps she would someday have them on the show (personal correspondence January 2, 2016). Although FORM never did perform on the show, the name has remained.

than this choir” (interview February 18, 2010) for the live concert recording. This anecdote is significant as it underscores the emotive power of the ensemble beyond simply musical singing, highlighting their ability to connect on a human level with their audience, even in an informal setting.

In addition to the project with Rita MacNeil, Kokopelli has collaborated with a number of other ensembles including the Edmonton-based professional choir, ProCoro Canada; the Edmonton-based young artists program, Opera Nuova; and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra under various conductors.³⁵ They have also provided incidental music for Citadel Theatre productions and were part of a performance art installation on Edmonton’s Light Rail Transit line entitled, “Music in Transit.” Some of the most significant collaborations, however, have been through the ongoing relationships between Kokopelli and its sister choirs in South Africa and Namibia through the organization’s African Projects, which will be discussed in-depth in chapter eight.

The Kokopelli Choir Association

Since its inception, Kokopelli has expanded from a single youth choir to become the Kokopelli Choir Association, a thriving organization of six choirs and over three hundred singers with Leithead as artistic director, Kathleen Luyk as executive director, and an active board of directors. Within the Association, Leithead leads an artistic team of dynamic directors and accompanists who, in addition to their university music and education degrees, received part of their musical training under his direction in Kokopelli, Òran, FORM, and ‘Nuf Sed. The names of the choirs reflect the Association’s

³⁵ Projects with the ESO have included Video Games Live and Star Wars in Concert.

interest in world music, and each choir in the Association espouses the values of community, multiculturalism, choral excellence, and multifaceted performances.

Kathleen Luyk, the Association's executive director, has played an important role in the organization's growth. As a teenager, Luyk sang under Leithead's direction with Kokopelli and FORM before completing her Bachelor of Music at the University of British Columbia in 2003 and her Master of Music in Choral Conducting at the University of Alberta in 2005. Upon her return to Edmonton to complete her MMus degree, Luyk took on the assistant conductor role with Òran, a position which, at that time, she shared with Tim Unger. The two shared rehearsals and repertoire and took on conducting duties when Leithead was away. Then, Luyk began taking on some administrative duties and attending board meetings. She started by writing grant applications, but her role quickly expanded to writing programs, media releases, and eventually spearheading the addition of Shumayela to the organization. According to Luyk, when the executive director position was created, she had been working twenty hours per week as Òran's assistant conductor and completing various administrative tasks, so it seemed simplest to add twenty hours per week from the choir manager position and create a full-time position (personal correspondence January 6, 2016). Since taking on the role of executive director in 2009, Luyk has overseen the addition of three further choirs, Kikimasu and Tamariki (ta-ma-REE-kee), as well as Vacilando (va-sih-LAN-doh), of which she is the founding director. She has also solidified several policy matters relating to employment agreements and registration, revamped the membership database, catalogued the Association's choral library, and assisted in expanding and revising the Association's concert season.

The Kokopelli Choir Association's mission, goals, and values

In 2008, the Kokopelli Choir Association developed a set of Framework Policies which included a vision statement:

A signature musical experience grounded in musical excellence.

Also established at that time was the more detailed mission statement:

Kokopelli Choir Association is an Edmonton-based family of choirs that provides young singers with opportunities for musical education, musical growth and public performance, and fosters connections among communities at home and abroad through choral music.

Their goals outlined in the Framework Policies include:

- To enrich the community by providing world class performances, benefit concerts, supporting emerging musicians, and sponsoring individuals and other choirs in need.
- To strive for artistic excellence through the leadership of gifted directors and clinicians, pursuit of innovation, and the highest standards of artistic interpretation and staging.

This document also included more specific objectives for the organization:

- To make Kokopelli community-based and accessible to all eligible singers in greater Edmonton and surrounding areas;
- To develop the choristers' skills in choral singing in a non-competitive environment;
- To offer choristers a variety of music programming, workshops, performances, and touring opportunities;
- To provide a community service by arranging music performances by choirs as public concerts or for other organizations and institutions;
- To promote the development and advancement of choral music by provision of scholarships, bursaries, or other financial assistance to choristers of need, merit, or distinction;

- To develop enduring connections and relationships with choral communities and artists in other communities both in Canada and abroad, through tours;
- To form an alumni base for future contact and networking. (Kokopelli Choir Association 2008)

Through the musical education that the organization provides to its choristers, the artistic pursuits of the ensembles in performance, and the outreach initiatives through fundraising and guest performances, the Kokopelli Choir Association continues to meet these goals and objectives annually.

In 2015, Kokopelli director Scott Leithead and assistant conductor, Kitbielle Pasagui, along with their Kokopelli choristers developed the Kokopelli Values Statement.³⁶ The document, which each chorister keeps in their folder, outlines both a set of expectations that choristers have for themselves as well as expectations that Leithead and Pasagui have for the choir. From that page-long list, executive director, Kathleen Luyk distilled the content and created a Core Values Statement for the Association.³⁷ These core values which guide the practices and decision-making processes within the Kokopelli Choir Association speak to the organization’s global viewpoint and self-awareness as something more than simply a group of people who sing together.

The Kokopelli Choir Association ensembles

Beyond Kokopelli described above, the following ensembles make up the Kokopelli Choir Association. Òran, Gaelic for “song,” was founded in 2002 as an alumni choir of Kokopelli for singers generally aged twenty to thirty-five. Originally directed by

³⁶ See appendix 3. Chapter six on Leithead’s rehearsal practice contains a more detailed discussion of the process of establishing the Kokopelli Values Statement.

³⁷ The Core Values Statement has not yet been approved by the board. This too will be discussed more in-depth in chapter six.

Leithead, it was co-conducted for several years by Leithead and Luyk. Today, the group has expanded beyond its roots as an alumni choir, and is made up of experienced singers from the Edmonton area, with Luyk as director, Leithead as associate conductor, and Susan Farrell as assistant conductor. Farrell, a native Nova Scotian, sang with the choir while completing her Master of Music in Choral Conducting at the University of Alberta.³⁸ Kokopelli alumnus, Tyson Kerr is the choir's accompanist and resident arranger. Òran has participated in a number of festivals and has completed several choir tours including: Festival 500 in St. John's, NL in 2005; the Laval International Choral Festival in Laval, QC in 2009; Choral Canada's Podium conference in Halifax, NS in 2014; a tour to Cuba in 2011; and a tour to Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and France in 2012.

Shumayela is the African word in the Xhosa language meaning "to share or to preach." Founded in 2006 for singers aged twelve to sixteen, Shumayela is a feeder choir to Kokopelli. Their director, Kimberley Denis, sang with Òran while completing her Master of Music in Voice and Choral Conducting at the University of Alberta in 2007. She also holds a Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Commerce from Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB, both of which she completed in 2003. Kokopelli alumna and resident percussion coach of the Kokopelli Choir Association, Tova Olson, accompanies the choir. This group has performed at the Unisong Festival in Ottawa for Canada Day in 2011, at Festival 500 in St. John's, NL in 2013, and has toured throughout Alberta and British Columbia.

³⁸ She is currently the artistic director of the Braille Tone Music Society of Canada and directs the organization's adult choir, the Braille Tones, and children's choir, the Semitones for persons with disabilities. Farrell is also the director of the Girls' Choir within the Edmonton Youth and Children's Choirs organization, and the music director at a local church.

Kikimasu is Japanese for “hear it.” The choir for singers aged eight to twelve was founded in 2008, and is directed by Carmen So, an alumna of Kokopelli, Òran, as well as FORM and ‘Nuf Sed. Ms. So completed her Bachelor of Music/Bachelor of Education combined degree in 2004 and her Master of Education in Elementary Music in 2015, both from the University of Alberta. So took over as conductor of the Braille Tones from Leithead and directed the group from 2001 to 2010. In addition to her work with the Kokopelli Choir Association, So is a music specialist with Edmonton Public Schools. Devin Hart, formerly a pianist with the TIME Association, accompanies the choir. In 2015, Kikimasu placed second in the category for “Best performance by a community choral group 12 and under” in the 45th annual National Music Festival.

Tamariki is the Maori word for “children.” Founded in 2012, Tamariki is the organization’s youngest choir for choristers in kindergarten through grade three. Director Rachel Beach sang for years with Kokopelli before joining Òran. She holds a degree in Elementary Education from the University of Alberta and is a teacher and music specialist with Edmonton Public Schools. Kokopelli and FORM alumnus Bryan LeGrow shares accompanying duties for the choir with Vicky Berg.

Vacilando is a Spanish word meaning “to enjoy the journey rather than focus on the destination.” The choir for singers aged twenty and up, has fewer concerts and is more casual in their approach to music-making than Òran. Their director, Kathleen Luyk founded the choir in 2013. The choir is accompanied by alumna of Kokopelli, Òran and ‘Nuf Sed, Jennifer McMillan (née Kinghorn), who is also a prolific choral arranger.

Summary

This chapter provided background information on Scott Leithead, his youth choir, Kokopelli, and the Kokopelli Choir Association. The first section presented an introduction to Scott Leithead, whose leadership practice this study examines, including biographical information on his training, his career highlights, and awards and honours. The second section presented Kokopelli, the youth choir, which is the site of this study, providing an introduction to the group and an overview of the choir's history, including its main tours, festivals, recordings, and collaborative projects. The third section introduced the Kokopelli Choir Association, of which Kokopelli, the youth choir, was the founding ensemble. This section provided a summary of the Association's missions, goals and values, and an overview of the other five ensembles in the Association. The background information presented in this chapter serves to contextualize the following chapters which examine Leithead's leadership practices in the context of his rehearsals, his repertoire and performances, and African Projects, the Kokopelli Choir Association's outreach program.

CHAPTER 6: SCOTT LEITHEAD'S REHEARSAL PROCESS

Introduction

The rehearsal period is the primary activity for nearly any choir as it typically occupies much more time than performances do. For amateur choirs, rehearsals serve as fertile ground for choral directors to teach musicianship, singing, diction, and languages, as well as musical interpretation, critical thinking, and how to be part of a team. Decker and Kirk (1998) describe the role of the conductor of a pre-professional choral group as “an interpreter of music, a teacher of skills, an organizer of experiences, a self-motivated learner, and a sensitive human being” (3). Scott Leithead’s approach to performing choral music is highly innovative and requires choristers to trust their leader, to try new things that may be outside their comfort zones, and to commit fully to the group in their pursuit of musical excellence and performance innovation. In order to achieve the desired artistic achievements in performance for which Kokopelli is known, Leithead’s rehearsal process must guide choristers through musical and creative experiences that may be new to them, and empower them to become critical thinkers and active creators.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of conventional choral rehearsal practices followed by an examination of Leithead’s rehearsal process, giving particular attention to those aspects which deviate from the norm and validate him as a transformational leader who espouses an ubuntu ethic. Because transformational leadership is inextricably linked to the followers’ experience, the voices of his choristers combine to elucidate Leithead’s practice, demonstrating how his approach to the rehearsal process leads to extraordinary results both on stage and in the development of his choristers as artists and citizens. While these chorister experiences in rehearsal are multi-faceted and do not necessarily represent a single core component of

transformational leadership, the four components serve as a guide to organize the discussion. The four components are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Woven throughout the chapter is an analysis of Leithhead's choral practice through the lens of ubuntu. In his chapter on ubuntu management guidelines, Broodryk (2005) assembles what he calls the cardinal elements of a management style that is associated with ubuntu philosophy:

- U – Universal: global, intercultural brotherhood
- B – Behaviour: human, caring, sharing, respect, compassion
- U – United: solidarity, community, bond, family
- N – Negotiation: consensus, democracy
- T – Tolerance: patience, diplomacy
- U – Understanding: empathy (175)

These elements do not naturally fit within a transformational leadership framework, although some elements certainly overlap. With transformational leadership, leaders are respected because of their idealized influence, and in turn, they show respect of their followers through individualized consideration (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6-7). Consensus and solidarity are sought within a transformational leadership framework, but are generally understood in terms of leaders, through inspirational motivation, persuading their followers to buy in to their “compelling vision of the future” (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). Although differences of opinion are not criticized, and creativity is encouraged through intellectual stimulation, there remains a sort of understood assumption with transformational leadership that, although followers may be allowed to disagree with leaders, there is no expectation of leaders to adjust their behaviour or approach to solving problems accordingly. Bass and Riggio (2006) provide a sample from the MLQ representing intellectual stimulation: “[t]he leader gets others to look at problems from

many different angles” (7). While Leithead’s approach to leadership within the rehearsal setting does correspond to the core components of transformational leadership, several elements of his practice align more closely with an ubuntu approach to management. The cardinal elements of ubuntu management as outlined by Broodryk (2005) above address the humanness required to be an effective leader. For Leithead, these elements of caring, sharing, community, democracy, and empathy are an integral part of the way that he interacts with others, both in the rehearsal setting and beyond. The combination of these two lenses allows for a more in-depth examination of his leadership practice.

The chapter also explores Leithead’s leadership and rehearsal process through choral scholar James Jordan’s (2008) Four-Phase Model of the choral experience.

Jordan’s work is particularly relevant to this study because of the attention that he pays to the human aspect of choral directing, both for conductors in knowing themselves and in the relationship between conductors and their choristers. The four phases, which take place after the director has carefully selected repertoire and prepared the music through score study include: Acquisition, Comprehension, Ownership, and Communio.

Acquisition refers to the development of skills necessary to master the musical elements of a piece such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing, etc. Comprehension refers the understanding of how musical elements come together to create a piece. In the third phase of Ownership, a transfer of power occurs from the conductor to performers as the conductor facilitates an exploration for singers of what is at the heart of the music at hand, essentially “allowing the music to read us, searching for connections in the music, making a personal commitment to be present with emotional integrity to the music in the moment” (Jordan 2008, 29). This phase, which Jordan asserts is often overlooked by

conductors, will be examined as it is an integral part of Leithead's rehearsal practice. The final phase, *Communio*, underscores the link between community and communication, of which it is the Latin root for each word. In this phase, "singers who have acquired, understood, and personalized the music they sing have become a 'community of interpretation' that shares the fruits of their work with the listening audience" (Jordan 2008, 30). This phase of musical performance is explored in chapter seven.

Conventional choral rehearsal practices

Amateur choirs, including children's choirs, youth choirs, school choirs, adult community choirs, and post-secondary choirs, typically follow a standard format of rehearsal. The rehearsal often begins with announcements although some directors may opt to begin with music-making and leave time at the end for announcements and reminders. Following announcements, the director typically leads the choir through a series of vocal exercises that warm-up the voice, addressing different elements of healthy vocal production and choral sound. Goals of the vocal warm-up include improving resonance for a full sound, increasing range to prepare singers for the highest and lowest passages that they will have to sing in rehearsal, enhancing diction and clarity of consonants, increasing flexibility and agility necessary for singing fast passages, as well as unifying vowels and tone colour for good choral blend. Often, directors select or create warm-up exercises to prepare singers for upcoming challenges that the choir will be addressing in their repertoire during the rehearsal. Following the warm-up, the director takes the choir through selections from their repertoire, running passages,

stopping to fix errors, and then running passages or entire pieces to solidify corrections within a larger context.

These tasks, which make up the first two phases of the choral experience, Acquisition and Comprehension, provide the opportunity for choral directors to help their singers increase their musical ability, develop their voices, and understand how musical elements combine within each piece. Ownership, the third phase of the James Jordan's model of the choral experience, is not always integrated into a director's rehearsal process. This transfer of power from conductor to the performers is difficult, as it requires a significant amount of trust in one's singers, as well as an investment of precious rehearsal time. However, "without it, true collaboration between the conductor and the singers is precluded; the development of authentic ensemble and ensemble artistry is impossible" (Jordan 2008, 28). As discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the traditional paradigm of conductor-as-performer/ensemble as instrument (Jordan 2008, 28) has dominated choral practice for two centuries and many choral textbooks do not even deal with the notion of facilitating a transfer of ownership from the conductor to choristers (Brinson and Demorest 2014; Cairns 2009; Decker and Herford 1973; Garretson 1998; Holst 1973; Hylton 1995; Lamb 1979; Neuen 2002).

In recent decades, there has been more attention brought to the transfer of power from conductor to singers. Ramona Wis (2007) challenges choral directors to "rethink the autocratic, conductor-centered one-dimensional approach to leadership typically found in conductor/ensemble settings" (105). William Dehning (2003) pokes fun at tradition choral practice and offers the following advice to conductors: "encourage those in the ensemble to think for themselves; ensemble members of any stripe are so

conditioned to being told what to do that they forsake their own creative impulses, waiting instead for the Maestro to lead them to Enlightenment” (114). Hilary Apfelstadt (1989) addresses levels of critical thinking and offers practical suggestions for teachers in the high school choral class on how to incorporate opportunities for shared decision-making into their teaching. Emmons and Chase (2006), who espouse the philosophy of situational leadership, assert that the conductor must strike a balance between conformity (compliance) and flexibility (give and take), and that the balance must be adjusted throughout the rehearsal process, becoming more autocratic as performances approach (221). There is a large range in terms of the degree to which conductors enable this transfer of power to their choristers. For Leithead, it is a key part of his rehearsal process and it is achieved in a number of ways as outlined below.

Idealized influence

As in most choirs, Kokopelli rehearsals are the primary encounter between Leithead and his choristers. Throughout the season, Leithead acts as a role model to his choristers, demonstrating determination and high moral standards as he guides them through the process of learning repertoire and developing their musical, interpretive, and interpersonal skills.

Leading from the heart

Prinsloo (1998) draws on Khoza (1994) noting that Western Humanism is primarily intellectual with a person defined as one who has reason; whereas, “African Humanism is, in contrast, a profound spiritual/religious experience that is primarily emotional” (46). The open display of emotion, as opposed to a strictly rational way of

communicating with his choir, is an important element in Leithead's leadership practice.

Alto Laura Forster explains:

I think the thing with Scott is that he really puts his heart on his sleeve... He can make those kids do amazing things, because he puts himself out there first, and it's really easy to follow that. So he just builds this entire community of complete openness. I've never had an experience like that in choir before. (interview April 3, 2010)

Leithead is indeed very open in terms of articulating his emotions in rehearsal, thus creating a human connection with his choristers. Colin Durrant asserts that "it is important to take a human approach to conducting, understanding the way humans feel and learn, and the impact this might have on the way teachers and conductors behave" (2003a, 9). This notion of adopting a human approach is similar to one of Benghu's definitions of ubuntu as humanness: "being human encompasses values like universal brotherhood for Africans, sharing, treating and respecting other people as human beings" (1996, 5). Though Benghu's definition specifies brotherhood as strictly for Africans, Broodryk's (2005, 175) interpretation of the ubuntu value is that of an intercultural brotherhood and Prinsloo's (1998, 46) as a universal brotherhood, which allows for a more global application of ubuntu as a philosophy or worldview. Tenor Spenser Pasman explains how Leithead conveys his affection for the choir, setting the tone for what is to happen musically in the rehearsal:

We know how much he cares about all the people separately in the group, but then just Kokopelli itself. Every time he comes back, he's always like "This choir's my baby. I'm so happy to be back here." All that kind of stuff. Already, all of us are just like "Yeah! We love it too." Even then, we haven't even done anything. We haven't even sung anything and already we're super happy and our hearts are just so full. That sounds so corny... That is a feeling that I haven't felt from a choir director

before. I know that they enjoy doing what they're doing, but I can't feel the same amount of intense love that he has for the group itself and what he's going to do with it. (interview February 23, 2012)

Pasman's anecdote speaks to Leithead's passion for his career and emotional investment in his ensemble. Leithead treats his choir as a family and acknowledges the intense bond that he shares with them; this sense of a united community is one of Broodryk's (2005) cardinal elements of an ubuntu management style. The anecdote also underscores Leithead's idealized influence, and how with no children of his own, Leithead is a father figure to many of his choristers and is admired, respected, and trusted.

Incorporating other voices

Leithead establishes trust with his choristers by demonstrating humility. Choral scholar James Jordan explains:

Humility allows our vulnerabilities to be exposed and, in a certain peculiar way, esteemed. If humility is present, a type of "allowing" spirit enters the rehearsal space, which calms the space and the people within it so music can be truly heard. Again, we must make ourselves less so others (ie. the singers) can become more. This will energize and propel every rehearsal to higher ground. (2008, 7-8)

In his rehearsals, Leithead remains humble. That is not to say that he is not confident in his expertise and artistic impulses, but he seeks expertise from others to continually push the choir to greater artistic achievements. Leithead does not pretend to have all of the answers, but instead draws on the expertise of guest artists and clinicians, fellow choral experts, as well as his singers. Leithead explains his motivation for bringing in guest artists on an annual basis:

Every year we try to incorporate a whole group of new things, and we try to figure out what's going to challenge the group and what are they going to enjoy, of course. And

then we try to bring in all these different artists. We have a budget for it, and part of that was always like as conductors and artistic staff, we can't just always do our thing. We need to bring outside people in to help us grow and learn and the choristers too as well, so we stay fresh in what we're doing. So every year we put a big budget in making sure that happens. (interview February 18, 2010)

Typically, Leithead brings in a guest clinician for the weekend-long fall retreat, one or two guest artists for a week-long residency leading up to the Stories concert in February, and perhaps another one or two local experts throughout the year as needed. On several occasions during my year of intense fieldwork in the 2009-2010 season, I ran warm-ups with the choir while Leithead tended to other choir-related business, and during one rehearsal, I was invited to run a sectional with the women and then work with the entire choir on Mendelssohn's "Weihnachten," a piece I had learned with my university choir. In each of those instances, the choir was welcoming to me on the podium. Choral scholar Robert L. Garretson (1993) encourages choral directors to invite other conductors to work with their ensembles, asserting that "as a result of this experience, singers necessarily become more alert to the conducting movements of the director and develop and awareness of varying types of musical interpretation" (Garretson 1993, 282). Leithead's practice of bringing in other choral conductors helps Kokopelli choristers become accustomed to learning from a variety of experts and hone their skills of responding to gestures musically.

Beyond the more obvious instances of incorporating expertise from others through guest artists and clinicians, Leithead maintains a sense of collective knowledge during his rehearsals. In my field notes, I made the following observation:

Scott regularly refers to other artists and what he has learned from them including repertoire, technique,

analogies, and other ideas. At least once per rehearsal, he makes note of something he's learned from somewhere else. This idea of "footnoting" knowledge gives the sense of his place within a larger choral community, as well as a sense of humility and openness to others. There doesn't seem to be a sense of ownership or exclusivity of knowledge, but rather a sharing of it. The extent to which he seems to espouse this philosophy and practice is beyond that of an average conductor. (Field notes November 18, 2009)

By "footnoting" lessons that he has learned from other experts in the field, Leithead situates the Kokopelli rehearsal within the broader context of choral practice. Choristers better understand the connections between their choir and others and recognize that directions from the podium are not made arbitrarily, but come from a practice that has evolved over time and of which they are a part. Leithead's treatment of knowledge as something to be shared rather than guarded and his acknowledgement of the source of knowledge whenever possible demonstrate high ethical conduct, one element of idealized influence. This way of speaking to the choir, however, does more than just demonstrate Leithead's humility and his connections with others in the choral community. By being transparent about the fact that he is not infallible, Leithead reveals himself as a lifelong learner who continues to grow and expand his knowledge. By viewing Leithead in realistic and human way, choristers are more able to identify with him and want to emulate him. According to Broodryk (2005), this emphasis on sameness and togetherness corresponds to one of the basic descriptions of an ubuntu personality: "My neighbour and I have the same origins, same life experience and a common destiny" (70). Leithead's openness surrounding the sharing of expertise also paves the way for intellectual stimulation by encouraging choristers to feel comfortable sharing their own observations and interpretations.

Inspirational motivation

Throughout Kokopelli's twenty year history, Leithead has been able to motivate and inspire his choristers in rehearsal. Through ongoing dialogue, Leithead communicates his enthusiasm, accepts different points of view, embraces positivity, and establishes clear expectations of his choristers.

The talks

A gifted communicator, Leithead delivers motivational talks to the choir on an ongoing basis. Tenor Spenser Pasman recounts one such talk:

Recently, before Stories, we were having focusing issues. It happens when you're all happy to see each other. Scott, literally, just this last rehearsal yesterday, 4 or 5 minutes at the beginning of rehearsal, he just said: "This is a huge deal. We are one of two choirs that are Canadian that are at ACDA in Seattle. They won't look at you and say "it's Kokopelli from Edmonton. They'll look at you and say "it's a Canadian choir." You're not representing Edmonton anymore; you're representing Canada. We need to be at the top of our game. We need to focus." Then, last night's rehearsal was ridiculous; it was so good. We got so much done. [...] I guess that happens in other choirs too, but it feels like in Kokopelli, the magnitude of which we can grow and the maintenance - when we come back on Monday - we don't have rehearsal Monday - so next Wednesday, we'll come back and so much of that will still be retained. In my past choir experience, we bash notes and then we come back the next rehearsal and we bash the same notes. Maybe it's a hard part or maybe people just didn't practise or forgot. (interview February 23, 2012)

In his speech to the choir, Leithead articulates the importance of the choir singing their best at the American Choral Directors Association conference, a high profile meeting of choral professionals. He explains the significance of the invitation to perform at this event and the respect and effort that it is due. By "providing meaning and challenge to [his] followers' work" (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6), Leithead is able to provide the

inspirational motivation necessary for the choir to maximize their musical progress in the rehearsal, and as Pasma notes, retain the level of musicality in the following rehearsal. Choral scholar Ramona Wis (2007), who encourages choral directors to persuade with passion rather than coercion, asserts that “people grow in self discipline (sic) when they are excited about their experience, when they believe they are contributing to it in a significant way and when they can envision the end result as highly successful” (128).

Leithead’s talks, however, do not always go one way. He explains how Kokopelli differs from many groups:

We talk a lot more in Kokopelli, in terms of our social mix of people. We talk about our journeys and where we are in the season and how we feel about how we’re doing, successes that we notice in other people in the group. We definitely do a lot of that, a lot on tours and stuff, but even in rehearsal, if I can find a few minutes every few rehearsals just to reflect on that and just let people in the group know that they’re incredibly valued and that it is a journey, up and down, up and down, sometimes great days, sometimes tough days, stuff like that, but that we’re all kind of in this journey together. I never heard anyone talk like that in my groups that I was ever in. It was always that you just blindly follow, go in and you do what you do because the director tells you to do it, and you know it’s a cool thing and it’s good, but you feel a little disconnected in that way. But now, I want those kids to really feel how valued they are and how much they are a part of this process. (interview February 18, 2010)

A mainstay of the Kokopelli experience over the past twenty years, the talks play an important role in establishing a sense of community and trust within the choir. The talks generally fall into two categories: shorter conversations during rehearsal where choristers probe different aspects of the music and epic discussions involving the entire choir that often take place during the fall retreat and the year-end banquet, where choristers discuss their personal experiences in the choir and the significance of Kokopelli in their life.

Long-time member of the Kokopelli Choir Association, Alexis Hillyard, discusses how the talks establish a sense of closeness and community within Kokopelli:

Well I think it comes down to having that relationship with your director, him being really open. The way that he deals with music, he deals with it very emotionally and we talk about what music means to us, what the piece means, what's the history behind the piece, how can we use our voices to sing it expressively in the way that it was meant to be sung? We talk about how it makes us feel a lot – oh so much. So many talks. That's all another interview, how many talks we have. I think that's another thing. I don't know of a lot of choirs that will sit for two to eight hours and just talk with each other. [...] At retreats and at our final banquet, we'll literally just sit and talk. At the final banquet, we talk about our year and just reflect and we cry, and all this stuff. But then in rehearsal about songs, we'll talk for maybe fifteen - twenty minutes even - he'll let us go and talk about a piece and what it means and really let that shape and construct how we think and feel about the music. That helps us in our performance of that piece too. (interview March 10, 2010)

The ongoing dialogue between Leithead and his choristers solidifies an esprit de corps among the ensemble, which as Hillyard notes, influences how the choir performs the music that they learn. These talks correspond to an ubuntu approach to decision-making, which although it takes much longer than an autocratic approach where the director is the sole decision-maker, produces rewards:

The benefit of the Ubuntu style of team-mate or group decisions is that integrated groups tend to make wiser decisions, since more information relating to similar circumstances may be available. More options can also be proposed and considered, since people have different backgrounds, experiences and educational know-how. (Brookryk 2005, 95)

Leithead's practice of probing into the meaning of pieces through open dialogue requires an environment of trust among singers and corresponds to Jordan's (2008) phase of

Ownership in the choral experience. As Hillyard suggests, the sense of ownership impacts the performance, or “Communio,” as “we can only give away what we authentically possess, and to that end, ownership is crucial” (Jordan 2008, 30).

Tensions in the choir

Leithead’s approach to team building, however, has not resonated with all choristers. Alto Gaia Willis was a member of Kokopelli in the early days of the choir and although she loved the music that Kokopelli sang and found that her experience singing in the ensemble played a key part in her decision to pursue contemporary vocal studies at Grant MacEwan Community College, she was never comfortable with the social life of the choir:³⁹

I definitely felt very much on the outside of it. I found it kind of perplexing, and a little bit off-putting, and ultimately, it was probably the biggest factor that made me decide to leave, because I just found it really intense. Sitting around in a circle, holding hands, giving people compliments, that kind of thing - I don’t know - I just wanted to sing. (interview March 7, 2010)

For Willis, whose motivation for being part of the group was purely musical, it was difficult to connect with fellow choristers whose motivation seemed to be for reasons beyond making music or learning how to sing. Willis’ expectations of the social dynamic within a choir seem to align more closely with a conventional choral culture where choristers work together and are supportive of each other, but the connections between choristers may not be as strong, or at least, they are not expressed in such an overt manner as they are in Kokopelli.

³⁹ In 2009, GMCC became Grant MacEwan University.

Despite this disconnect, Willis remained in contact with Leithead and, after her time in the choir, was invited by Leithead to write the poetry for a piece that the choir had commissioned composer Greg Jasperse to write. Willis recounts the first time she heard Kokopelli perform “Oh, How Beautiful, this Finely Woven Earth”:

I was at a music festival because I was singing with the Grant MacEwan Jazz Choir and there was a really lovely moment that I had where I sort of ran into Kokopelli, and Scott had them all stand around me in a circle and sing the piece while I stood in the middle of the circle. It was a very Kokopelli moment and even though there’s kind of a cheese factor to that, it was a really nice moment.
(interview March 7, 2010)

So, although Willis found the social aspect to be too intense for her, she is not entirely negative about the overt displaying of emotion that is part of Kokopelli’s culture, and she acknowledges that her experience of a wide range of musical styles and self-discovery as a singer, as well as the performative aspect of the choir, were instrumental in her development as an artist.

Embracing positivity

Beyond stimulating team spirit, another way that Leithead inspires his choristers is by embracing positivity. Leithead explains how this works in the rehearsal setting:

I’m constantly checking with the group and saying: “what do you think about this? How do you feel about that?” But there are some rules and regulations in there too, like not everybody is going to love every piece. We know that. And if you don’t feel a certain way about a piece, then wait until it’s there, until it’s done, and when the season’s done, you can say: “you know, that wasn’t my favourite piece” [...] because we all have different tastes. So, that safety net’s kind of there, because you don’t want people with negative feelings coming in the ensemble, but at the same time, if you have comments that you think would elevate a piece, elevate a performance, don’t keep it to yourself. Let’s share it, let’s learn, let’s grow. Within every

ensemble, there's so much creativity and talent that if you can harness that properly, it's really cool to watch what happens. (interview February 18, 2010)

With established rules to govern discussions in rehearsal, Kokopelli choristers understand the expectations regarding comportment and attitude. By suspending judgement of a piece until it is at a performance level, Leithead helps choristers maintain an open mind, thus enabling them to constantly stretch their musical abilities and personal preferences. The process also allows choristers to develop their own personal responsibility, sensitivity, and professional conduct.

Jordan (2008) shares a lesson from his own teacher and mentor, Elaine Brown who spoke of conducting from deep within. She asserted that "all gestures emanated from one's center because that 'place' was the repository of spirit, will, rhythmic impulse, honesty and meaning" and that singers would be able to perceive whether or not a conductor was centered and grounded (Jordan 2008, 5). Brown's assertion speaks to the importance of self-awareness in being an effective leader. For Leithead, much of his success as a choral director is tied to his personality. He is naturally charismatic and positive, and these traits facilitate his ability to be a strong role model and to inspire others. He is also willing to share power with his choristers in decision-making processes and to recognize their unique contributions to the ensemble. So, while other choral directors might strive to emulate his success, the chance of them achieving those ends depends greatly on their understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and their adoption of a leadership practice that aligns with their own personality.

Leithead's ability to maintain a rehearsal environment of openness and positivity is inextricably linked to his authenticity of character and honest interactions with

choristers. Wis (2007) stresses the importance of having integrity both on and off the podium, noting that “being authentic means being guided by a core set of values and beliefs and working to express these values consistently whether at home, in a rehearsal, at church or at a board meeting” (146). Tenor Spenser Pasman compares his experience with a different choral director:

She definitely attempted to capture some of Scott by coming in and always being like “we need to be just so excited and happy to be here in every rehearsal. I’m going to bring that emotion in every rehearsal and so it’ll help you guys bring it in too.” But the thing with her was that she wasn’t always happy and excited to be there, which is fine. Everyone has a bad day, but it totally reflected [on] everyone in our choir too. So then there was a lot of huffing and a lot of angst. (interview February 23, 2012)

Here, Pasman explains that it is not enough for a director to simply say that they will always bring a positive attitude to rehearsal. A director must genuinely be enthusiastic in the rehearsal space or their attitude will have a negative effect on choristers through what Liz Garnett (2009) calls emotional contagion. Garnett (2009) asserts that extroverts are more likely to spread emotional contagion than introverts and that because of their position of power conductors are “more likely to ‘infect’ the choir with their mood than vice versa” (177). Pasman’s comparison of the two directors speaks to Leithead’s ongoing efforts to maintain a positive rehearsal environment where “enthusiasm and optimism are displayed” (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6), something that is not always inherent in other choral rehearsals. Broodryk (2005) clarifies one of the descriptions of an ubuntu personality, “my neighbour’s joy is my joy” (72), as valuing “togetherness, warmth and cheerfulness” (72). He explains that with an ubuntu personality, “life is about experiencing the greatest, true form of happiness possible at all times, and joy should also

be part of one's daily life task" (72). Because he models enthusiasm, Leithead is able to cultivate a rehearsal space for his singers where hard work is infused with joy.

Leithead's commitment to positivity is a hallmark of his leadership.

Establishing expectations

Beyond the establishment of open communication and positivity, Leithead displays inspirational motivation by clearly communicating his expectations of choristers. Tom Carter (2005) suggests that the best way to create a safe choral environment is to have high expectations for respectful and supportive behaviour by everyone, including the director (4). Garnett (2009) acknowledges the importance of singers being aware of what is expected of them in order for the ensemble to thrive and the link between behaviour and the art itself:

High-level choirs attain their results not just by the power of their conductor's personality, but by their constituent singers' participation in the ensemble's artistic order. This artistic order is constituted through the discourses that define the technique and values that shape the ensemble's activities, and each singer signals their personal investment in it by schooling themselves into observably correct ways of being. Hence, both meanings of the word 'discipline' – as a field of endeavour or expertise, and as the enforcement of required modes of behaviour – come into play at the same time: each relies on the other for its existence (100).

By establishing a safe rehearsal space, Leithead is able to foster buy-in from his singers.

This commitment permeates the group and helps new singers settle into the culture of the group. As his singers gain a sense of ownership over the artistic process, the *esprit de corps* of the ensemble increases, and the artistic quality of music-making improves.

As outlined in the previous chapter, in the fall of 2015, Leithead and Kokopelli established a values statement for the choir, thus formalizing the discourse around the

techniques and values that guide the choir's activities. The common values had been part of the choir's culture for the past two decades but Leithead had never committed them to paper. The idea emerged from conversations with Carrie Tennant, director of the Vancouver Youth Choir and former director of Coastal Sound Youth Choir, who suggested that this collection of beliefs was not so much a mission statement which Kokopelli had established in the past, but rather a values statement. This convinced Leithead to write up a list of values that guide decision-making processes in the choir. He began with some of his own thoughts about what he valued about the organization and brought them to the first Kokopelli rehearsal of the year which included returning members only.⁴⁰ The group discussed his ideas and came up with more ideas to add to the list. Then, Leithead sent the returning choristers home with the document to further distill the list of values. Each Kokopelli chorister now has a printed copy in their folder.⁴¹ The Kokopelli Values Statement is divided into two parts. The first part begins with "As members of Kokopelli, we:" followed by twenty-one statements that, together, establish and maintain a culture of openness, exploration, gratitude, positivity, and hard work. Leithead's aspirations for his choristers are ambitious: "You didn't just join choir - it's something way bigger than that; when you leave, I want you to leave as better citizens" (interview September 26, 2015). For Leithead, the Kokopelli Values Statement is a way to convey to choristers that the lessons learned through being a member of Kokopelli are not limited to musical ones.

The second section, "Scott and Kitbielle's expectations," is more practical in nature and begins "You want to be here... You can show us this by:" followed by a list of

⁴⁰ New members began attending at the second rehearsal of the season.

⁴¹ See appendix 3.

ten specific behaviours that ensure a productive rehearsal process. The expectations are often considered tacit knowledge within the choral practice, though Garretson (1998) stresses the importance of making singers aware of their own responsibilities, and suggests providing choristers with a list of self-assessment questions regarding elements of their own behaviour including: level of preparation, attentiveness, attitude towards new music, encouragement of others, effort toward memorization, etc. (205). Leithead's establishment of clear expectations of choristers can be described as inspirational motivation. As Bass and Riggio (2006) explain: "Leaders get followers involved in envisioning attractive future states; they create clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and also demonstrate commitment to goals and the shared vision" (6). Leithead does not, however, only establish chorister buy-in to his own vision. By involving choristers in the process of creating the Kokopelli Values Statement, he demonstrates an approach that is consistent with an ubuntu management philosophy where choristers are part owners of the decisions made (Broodryk 2005, 96).

The establishment of the Kokopelli Values Statement for Kokopelli, the youth choir, prompted executive director, Kathleen Luyk, to further crystalize that list of Values and create a Core Values poster for the whole Kokopelli Choir Association.

Figure 1: Kokopelli Choir Association Core Values Poster⁴²



⁴² Leithead and Luyk (2015), Poster used with permission.

Luyk's poster illustrates the Association's Core Values of inclusivity, positivity, responsibility, and artistry for the Association's choirs and its choristers as individuals. These Core Values guide decisions that are made at the Association level and inform the culture within each of the Association's six ensembles.

Intellectual stimulation

Leithead's approach to the rehearsal process differs from typical choral practice in that he creates a rehearsal space ripe with opportunities for intellectual stimulation. He establishes these opportunities by employing a shared approach to decision-making, which although it has benefits, is not without conflict. Leithead's process of workshopping a new arrangement by an emerging composer provides a tangible example of how he employs intellectual stimulation in his leadership practice.

Shared decision-making

Apfelstadt (1989) notes that "allowing students to make musical decisions means giving up some of our power and functioning more as guides than as controllers of the experience," (80) recognizing that although this may be difficult because it lies in contrast to traditional models and training, it is a worthwhile endeavor. In Kokopelli rehearsals, choristers do not simply follow directions and sing as they are told, but rather are encouraged to think creatively and share in the decision-making process. Leithead explains:

The old school version of conducting that I've seen when I first started which was that conductors stood at the front and they were in charge and you do what they say, kind of dictatorial. That seemed to be way more the case when I first started conducting than it is now. I think I learned that when I was teaching high school, that it worked way better

if I said: “this is something that we have to do together. It’s not just me it’s not just you. Let’s create this together.” I kind of gave them, at the beginning of the year: “you can pick door A or door B. Door B is we can have a fun year, and Door A is we can make something incredible if we all put ourselves into it. Not just me, I’ll do my best 100%, but I need you guys to do it too and everyone needs to be involved and it’s an open discussion. (interview February 18, 2010)

And it is that open discussion that truly makes Kokopelli’s rehearsal process unique.

Soprano Jessica Wu recounts:

When I first joined Kokopelli, I was surprised when choristers offered suggestions to Scott. In past choirs, I had simply followed my director’s guidance and not questioned their direction (often ☺). I think that by allowing choristers an open voice, I started thinking more creatively and forming my own opinions about the music, which had not previously happened. (email correspondence March 5, 2012)

With choristers thinking critically about the music and feeling encouraged to offer creative suggestions, the Kokopelli rehearsal becomes an exciting interchange of ideas. Choristers are not simply singing and waiting for the conductor to make corrections. Instead, they are actively looking for ways to contribute to the evolution of the piece, whether in the quest for accuracy or in the interpretation and addition of extra-musical elements of performance. As Apfelstadt asserts, “choral programs that exist to develop comprehensive musical growth and culminate in musical independence are fertile ground for building critical thinking skills” (1989, 76). Tenor Spenser Pasman explains this dynamic further:

Scott is one guy, who is extremely talented and awesome but he doesn’t hear everything, so often times, if we stop, we’ll just put up our hand. There’s an alto and she has a really great ear for rhythms, and often, she puts up her hand

and says “I think we want to check this out on page whatever” and then he’s like “okay” and then we go through it and see what’s happening. So in that regard, I guess you’re never afraid to put yourself out there because it’s going to be taken into consideration. Even if you happen to be wrong, no one makes fun of you. [...] It makes everyone better. (interview February 23, 2012)

Leithead has established the rehearsal as a safe space where choristers feel able to contribute ideas and offer suggestions without the fear of being rejected. As Ramona Wis notes, “musicians will be freely expressive only in an environment where they feel safe to make mistakes and where they are valued for whatever talents they bring” (2011, 10). Leithead’s method resembles an ubuntu approach to decision-making where “participants feel involved in the bottom-up process” (Broodryk 2005, 96).

Leithead explains how the shared decision-making approach works in his process of preparing music with Kokopelli:

There’s definitely an element of ‘shared’ in every piece. In terms of artistic direction, most of the time I pick the music, although I take suggestions from people too. In rehearsal, I definitely throw ideas out, but often people will reflect on things and throw ideas back to me too, like “I think we need more shape in this line” or “I think with this text here, I think this needs to start softer.” That kind of discussion happens a lot, just in about every piece, really, but within balance. I’m definitely kind of filtering as we go, and trying different things, and I have ideas too and I’ll say to the group: “we’re going to experiment and try some things and they may work and they may not. Just give it your all and then we’ll decide and we’ll see what happens.” It seems to work well. (interview February 18, 2010)

For Leithead, it is not that he enters rehearsals unprepared or without a vision for what the piece will be, but rather that he suspends final artistic decisions until he has heard the wisdom of the group and allowed his choristers to offer their thoughts on the development of the piece throughout the rehearsal process. Unlike choral directors who

create an ideal performance in their mind during the score preparation stage and then spend the entire rehearsal process pursuing that goal, Leithead allows for a more organic process similar to what Jordan (2007) calls “birthing a piece.” Tenor Steve Wenger articulates the chorister point of view:

Scott has always valued the input of choristers in the group, both new and old. He knows better than anybody that the choristers have a great deal of insight into what processes work best for the group from a rehearsal standpoint, and always kept a finger on that pulse to see if the group needed to change gears mid-rehearsal or try new approaches to rehearsing. From a creativity standpoint, Scott understands that the members of the choir are inherently creative people, and always had a great deal of respect for chorister input in that regard. In terms of how the process normally works, Scott will normally teach and mould the song to his liking sonically, and then begin to play with creative elements. There is a lot of experimentation, and if choristers feel that there is something that could work differently or potentially better, we will try it. Scott always has the final say on creative decisions of course, but he is always open to trying things in a different way. (email correspondence, March 10, 2012)

Jessica Wu echoes this assessment:

Decisions are made collaboratively in Kokopelli by having a rehearsal environment where choristers can freely offer suggestions and their opinions about a piece (whether it's the meaning or their interpretation about a musical phrasing). Ultimately this is guided by Scott, as he experiments conducting or performing a piece in different ways, therefore encouraging the idea that music can be made through a variety of different interpretations and that there is not usually one perfect way to perform something (email correspondence, March 5, 2012).

Wu's observation is astute, asserting that for Leithead, there is not one perfect way to interpret a piece, but there are many possibilities that are worth exploring. Leithead's openness to experimentation and willingness to include choristers in the decision-making

process has created a culture of intellectual stimulation, where Kokopelli choristers are able to trust in their own abilities, and as a result, are able to tackle musical challenges without fear. As a result of this collaborative approach to rehearsals, “the ensemble feels more invested and valued because they are more fully utilizing all their musical skills, not just the technical ones that we direct them to use in a more restricted leadership style” (Wis 2007, 89).

The shared decision-making process is not limited to musical decisions but also to movement and choreography. Laura Forster compares the approaches of two different choreographers who have worked with the choir:

Often the group can put together stuff ourselves or Scott will have an idea and the choir will build on it. It’s all very collaborative. Even with the lady who comes in now [Maureen Tigner-Morrison], she’s my favourite that I’ve ever experienced because she comes in and works with us. When she comes in, it’s like when we’ll do something and she’ll say “that looks kind of awkward, let’s try this instead,” she’s so ready to move on and just see what fits the choir performing it. We’ve had a few, one in particular – she was really nice. I knew her outside of choir and I thought she was great and I was excited when she came in, but she was so set in her ways. “You are going to do this.” And when we would do it, we either couldn’t do it or we were all really awkward doing it, or we had no vocal production when we were doing it. I mean, some of these things were kind of ridiculous and almost acrobatic, and Scott was like “C’mon guys, I can’t hear you sing. Where’s your sound? Support that sound.” And we’re like “Do you see what I’m doing right now? How am I supposed to sing doing this? It’s ridiculous.”

So, when [Leithead] announced that we were bringing in this other lady, and I think that was when we were doing the Stephen Hatfield concert that we did, I was all like: “Oh no!” because choreography and choir just does not mix. Some dance with the African music that you could still sing [is okay], but: “I’m tired of doing all this crazy stuff that I feel silly doing, and I can’t sing while I’m doing it.” She

came in and was fantastic. When she came in and said “Okay, men, do this,” and the guys couldn’t quite buy in because it was kind of strange or whatever, she was like “okay, why don’t we just back that up and only do this part of it?”

There was a lot of collaboration between the group, so when the group said “I don’t sing that line, so for me to do that movement at the same time is kind of hard, like the beats are off.” She’d be like: “Okay, well, what do you sing? Let me hear you sing it. Okay, why don’t you try this instead?” That was really great to have her work, because it wasn’t just her. It was Kokopelli too, and Kokopelli has always been very involved, and it’s not a dictatorship at all. Scott comes in with an idea; he bounces it off us. We all argue about it. We say: “What about this? What about that? What should we do here?” And then we try things and one thing sticks. So to bring in choreographers who were like: “you’re going to do this on this beat and this on this beat, just do it.” No feedback, no discussion. I mean it might be more efficient, but it wasn’t really in Kokopelli’s culture. I really like Maureen. She’s fantastic. We really like her, which is good because previously we’ve had a lot of stepping on each other’s toes between the choir and choreographers. It’s great to have someone who fits into our culture well. (interview April 3, 2010)

This quote provides much insight into two different approaches to choreography. In the first example, the choreographer came to the choir with a definite plan of what the choir would do movement-wise and did not deviate from that plan. This approach is consistent with the way that most choreographers work with dancers and other performers. It did not work with Kokopelli, however, because that authoritative top-down approach is not congruent with the choir’s culture of shared decision-making. According to Broodryk (2005), an ubuntu management philosophy rejects an autocratic approach and prefers an approach where “a team effort is at least more democratic and assists in arriving at resolutions that ensure participative ownership of the decision-making process” (96).

Maureen Tigner-Morrison's more collaborative method is consistent with an ubuntu management philosophy and Kokopelli's overall approach to preparing repertoire for performance, and as a result, she has been a frequent collaborator and choreographer with the ensemble for the past twenty years.

Dealing with conflict

Espousing a shared decision-making process is not an easy path and there have been times when tensions have arisen. Alto Laura Forster recounts a time when the choir was preparing a piece for Remembrance Day and some choristers were uncomfortable with the choreography:

They thought the movement we were doing was cheesy, like it was flair, and it was being disrespectful to the piece and to the idea of this Remembrance Day event that we were singing at. Scott was really attached to the movement and other people were too. Rather than have one side brood over the other, there was discussion about it and people weren't afraid to say: "you know, I just don't think this is respectful, and I'm not sure I want to do it." Scott was just as willing to say "Why? I don't see how it's disrespectful. What can we do? Let's figure it out." I'm not sure that would always happen in other choirs. It might just be shut down. Kids might just be like: "I refuse. I refuse to do that," and just not perform, not show up. And the director might have just as easily been like: "no, do it anyway. We're done; I'm the boss." I've never really seen that in Kokopelli. I guess Scott does have the ultimate say but it never really seems like that. He always seems really open to everything, and that frustrates some people, but I'm always like: "if it frustrates you, you're in the wrong place, because it's really essential to Kokopelli's culture, and if you want a dictatorship in a choir, which I get why you would want one, this is not the place for it." (interview April 3, 2010)

In the end, Leithead scaled back the movement to a having choristers move from an initial standing formation that, from a bird's eye view, looked like a cross to a second

formation later in the song. Most choristers were comfortable with this compromise, but there were still two singers who decided to sit out for that piece.

In another instance, the choir was performing a version of Psalm 23 by Bobby McFerrin in which all of the pronouns relating to God are “She.” Two choristers chose to sit out for the performance of the piece because it was contradictory to their religious beliefs. For Leithead, these rare occasions must be handled with mutual respect and an effort to understand the other point of view:

If somebody feels so strongly about something, I really try to take it seriously and listen to what they’re actually saying and try to see their point of view. And I think the choir does too, as a group, because you want to affirm people’s opinions in the ensemble, and yet we still need to find some kind of collective agreement, but isn’t that life!? Nobody’s going to agree all the time. (interview September 26, 2015)

In both of these situations, the singers returned the following year, and in the second case, the choristers continue to be dedicated members of the Association. Congruent with intellectual stimulation, “their ideas are not criticized because they differ from the leader’s ideas” (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). In the first situation, by accepting his choristers’ decision not to perform and proceeding with the interpretation, Leithead was able to preserve his artistic integrity and perform the piece in a way that was both sensitive and creative. In the second, he was also able to honour his choristers and preserve the director-chorister relationship by respecting their difference of opinion, thus enabling several years of artistic collaboration that have since occurred with these individuals.

Although all singers are allowed to participate in discussion within the choir, it is generally the members who have sung with the choir for several years who offer the most

suggestions. Occasionally, at the beginning of a year, there is a new member who does easily not adapt to the Kokopelli culture. Leithead recounts:

I had one new kid this year who was incredibly enthusiastic, and would often blurt out a bunch of things. She would not listen enough, and was one of those people that wasn't falling into the fold of the group. She was coming in with all her own ideas and trying to push through her thoughts. That happens from time to time, especially at the beginning of the year, where I have to pull them aside and just kind of talk with them, and say "you know, you're coming into a group with a lot of history and maybe a different way of how we work and deal with things, so sometimes it's good just to listen and observe, and just be more open to the situation." I would give that advice to people, and I think that that normally changes things. (interview August 1, 2016)

Leithead notes that often these behaviours are due to a lack of maturity, so he strives to strike a balance between helping those singers adapt to the choir's culture and ensuring that they feel like their voice is still being heard. Leithead very rarely needs to take disciplinary action and can usually resolve issues through talking:

I find with this group everybody really wants to be there, and usually if they've done something, it's because they're not really thinking about it. So yes, I'll have to have conversations with people sometimes. They're not thinking about the big picture often, if something like that happens. Normally, I just have to talk to them and then it's worked out. I've never had anything major where it's sending a kid home from a tour or anything like that, not in a long, long time. (interview August 1, 2016)

This approach to dealing with singers who are causing problems parallels an ubuntu management philosophy. Broodryk (2005) explains:

If staff members are not performing, Ubuntu-orientated managers tend to be tolerant. Tolerance means tolerating non-performance and using a diplomatic style of cautioning non-performers. This compassionate technique is about

talking out the problem or act of non-performance. Talking out implies that non-performers should not be insulted or threatened in any way, especially in the presence of others. The non-performers are still part of the organisational family, have human rights and should rather be approached in a brotherly or sisterly spirit. This technique is also a reference to "silent diplomacy." Silent diplomacy is to tolerate mistakes or misconduct and to reprimand in a wise and caring way, that is to be soft on others. (100)

Though dealing with conflict is uncomfortable and often difficult, Leithead's ability to talk through problems with choristers and resolve them before they escalate demonstrates his commitment to honouring the humanity of each individual singer.

Workshopping an emerging arranger's piece

One of the signature elements of Leithead's choral practice is his dedication to creating new choral works and mentoring emerging composers and arrangers. The creation and premiere of Joel Forth's arrangement of K'naan's 2009 hit song "Wavin' Flag" illustrates another example of Leithead's shared decision-making process.⁴³ The original idea to arrange and perform the piece came from a chorister who approached Leithead in October of 2009 about having Kokopelli sing it. This suggestion was made prior to the song being used as the theme song for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and by Young Artists for Haiti, a group of Canadian musicians who joined forces to raise money for Haitians following the January 2010 earthquake by recording an amended version of the single. Leithead explains:

"Wavin' Flag" this year, that arrangement, it was actually a member of the choir that came to me in October and said "I think this would be a really great piece for Kokopelli." This was before most people had ever heard of it; it was very new

⁴³ Here is a video of Kokopelli performing Joel Forth's arrangement of K'naan's "Wavin' flag" at the Rocky Mountain Music Festival in Banff, AB on April 24, 2010.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VE4ikSiDEYU>

back then. Now, it's crazy popular. So I took that and listened to it and I thought it was great. I gave it to Jen Kinghorn [McMillan] first, and Jen said "I'm not too into writing for this one." So I said: "well, let me ask Joel." Joel was really into it. He'd heard it just recently and he was really excited about it. We just threw some ideas around about how to do it. The piece now is super popular, so we thought: we can't do it the way it really is. It has to be able to add something that is different, do something to make it our own. It will be a piece that everybody's heard, so we have to do it in a different way, so that's been that whole process. Joel's been so great. He's been very flexible about that. We can kind of rearrange and try different things with it, almost create a new piece. (interview February 18, 2010)

After the brainstorming between Leithead and Forth, Forth created a first version of the arrangement and brought it to Leithead. Leithead explains what happened next:

One rehearsal, I broke everybody into 3 groups and gave them each some thoughts about things they could look at or work on, and just to be creative with it. Each group had half an hour. They went and tried a whole bunch of ideas and things. They tried different solos or whatever and then they came back and they all shared with each other. And then they all talked about what they liked, what they thought was good, what was interesting. Then we sat down – I had a small group of people from those groups meet on Monday for an hour before rehearsal, and we went through and talked about the ideas we liked and we created our own rough structure of what we wanted to do. Then we put it together in that rehearsal. We said: "we want to try this. We want to try this. We want to try this."

And now, there's more of a structured focus, and yet we've still got creativity going on. Even like you saw yesterday, we were still kind of creating but we knew the general structure of what we wanted. And then people can still say: "you know what I think would be even more effective, is if we do this." You have to start with something. If you just start with nothing, it's just a free for all. Now the creative stuff starts happening, and that's when I think the music gets really exciting, because the ownership is there and it really comes off the page, and it's different than what you may see K'naan or whoever else do. (interview February 18, 2010)

This anecdote exemplifies the collaborative approach to music-making that Leithead espouses. The initial idea to perform an arrangement of the piece came from a chorister, and once Leithead approved of the selection, he sought out an arranger within the organization to take on the project. From there, he had the choristers work on elements of the arrangement in smaller groups, and invited any chorister who was interested (interview August 1, 2016) to come early to the following rehearsal to further distill the choir's ideas. After trying out the various ideas with the full choir, Leithead was able to advance the arrangement from its initial form toward its final version. This approach to repertoire is highly unusual in conventional choral practice. Most choral directors plan their season and select repertoire well in advance. Although some directors might consider a chorister's request to perform a certain piece later in that season, usually the piece in question already exists as a choral work. In this instance, not only did Leithead accept the chorister's repertoire suggestion, but initiated the arrangement of the piece and workshopped it extensively so that it could be performed by the choir only months later.

The collaboration process through workshopping the piece resulted in several distinct changes to the original version. In Forth's original arrangement, the choir hums a unison C tonic while the tenor soloist sings the opening four lines rubato. Through the workshop process, this opening was altered slightly and the score now reads above the solo line "3-5 other soloists, male and female, echo each line in their own register and time." This effect of voices echoing from different sections and different places on stage helped to further differentiate the first lines from the rest of the song that is largely made up of tenor solos supported by the choir.

Figure 2.1: K'naan, "Wavin' Flag," arr. Joel Forth, mm 1-9⁴⁴

3-5 other soloists, male and female, echo each line in their own register and time

Rubato

mf

Tenor Solo

p when I get old er I will be strong er they'll call me free dom just like a wa vin' flag

Soprano

p

Alto

p

Tenor

p

Bass

p

no echo

In several instances, there is an indication above the staff for singers to switch between voice parts for certain passages. In mm. 38-41, the women's parts are in four-part divisi and the sopranos are singing in a relatively high tessitura. In order to achieve a more balanced sound in this passage, Leithead suggested having half of the women sing the tenor line which is the main melody. Forth made similar adjustments once he heard the choir sing certain passages.

⁴⁴ Score excerpts used with permission.

Figure 2.2: K'naan, "Wavin' Flag," arr. Joel Forth, mm 38-41

The musical score for Figure 2.2 consists of the following parts:

- Vocalists:** Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The lyrics for the Tenor and Bass parts are: "pa - tient - ly wait for that fate - ful day it's not far a - way but for now we say". The Soprano and Alto parts have vocalizations "oh" and "oo".
- Piano (Pno.):** Provides harmonic accompaniment for the vocalists.
- Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.):** Shows chords: F, C/E, F, G sus4, G.
- Congas (C. Dr.):** Play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Tambourine (Tamb.):** Play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

At the top of the score, there is a note: "1/2 of women sing tenor line". The dynamic marking *mp* is present at the beginning of the vocal lines.

In the following line, the women return to their own parts. Here, the tenors and basses are singing an octave apart, so the melody is easily heard. The altos add a harmony a third higher, following the rhythm of the men's voices. The sopranos function as a decorative descant line above.

Figure 2.3: K'naan, "Wavin' Flag," arr. Joel Forth, mm 42-45

The musical score for measures 42-45 of "Wavin' Flag" features the following parts:

- Soprano (S):** Starts with a *mf* dynamic, singing "ah" on a long note.
- Alto (A):** Starts with a *f* dynamic, singing "When I get old - er I will be strong - er they'll call me free - dom just like a wav - in'".
- Tenor (T):** Starts with a *f* dynamic, singing "When I get old - er I will be strong - er they'll call me free - dom just like a wav - in'".
- Bass (B):** Starts with a *f* dynamic, singing "When I get old - er I will be strong - er they'll call me free - dom just like a wav - in'".
- Piano (Pno.):** Accompanies the vocalists with a *f* dynamic.
- Acoustic Guitar (Ac.Gtr.):** Shows chords C, F, Am, and G.
- Conga (C. Dr.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.
- Tambourine (Tamb.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

The need for the reshuffling of voices becomes even more necessary in the next chorus where the soprano tessitura is even higher to build intensity in the piece.

Figure 2.4: K'naan, "Wavin' Flag," arr. Joel Forth, mm 70-73

The musical score for measures 70-73 of "Wavin' Flag" by K'naan, arranged by Joel Forth, is presented in a multi-staff format. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in 8/8 time and feature the lyrics: "pa-tient - ly wait for that fate - ful day it's not far a - way but for now we say". The piano accompaniment consists of chords: F, C/E, F, G sus4, and G. The acoustic guitar part is marked with slashes, indicating it is not played. The conga and tambourine parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment.

Another change to emerge from the workshop process was the addition by soprano choristers of a rhythmic ostinato on a C tonic drone in mm 106-112 with a drop to B for the second beat of mm 109 to highlight the V-I cadence. This pattern adds a new and interesting element, emphasizing the rhythmic pattern of the text in the alto, tenor, and bass parts. The ostinato pattern occurs in the highest soprano part, and because of the absence of guitar and piano in this passage, is more easily heard.

There is much flexibility in the instrumental accompaniment. The piece begins *a cappella* with an acoustic guitar joining in at mm 18, dropping out briefly for another *a cappella* passage from mm 106-112, and then returning for the final chorus. The guitar part indicates strumming on the beat with only the chord symbol indicated above the staff. The piano enters at mm 38 at the first chorus, and like the guitar, drops out from mm 106-112, and then returns for the rest of the piece. The piano pattern is simple, outlining chords with the right hand often playing on the beat and the left hand playing on the off-beat. At mm. 34, there is a note to the pianist to “feel free to improvise piano part within the given chords.” This note is consistent with the pop genre where instrumentalists improvise within a chord structure, but is also indicative of Forth’s level of trust in Kokopelli accompanist, Jennifer McMillan, a seasoned pianist, composer, and singer with training in both classical and contemporary styles.

There are two main rhythmic patterns in the percussion part, a sparser one for verses as seen in the score sample of mm 70-73 above. This pattern accompanies passages where new text is presented, generally by a tenor soloist. The second rhythmic pattern is thicker in texture and occurs during the chorus to build intensity as shown below. The top percussion part indicates conga drum, which was the closest instrument available in the computer program for score-writing, although it was always Forth’s intention that the part be played by djembe. The tambourine part was played by a shaker.

Figure 2.7: K'naan, "Wavin' Flag," arr. Joel Forth, mm 74-78

The musical score for measures 74-78 of "Wavin' Flag" by K'naan, arranged by Joel Forth, is presented. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental accompaniment for Piano, Acoustic Guitar, Conga, and Tambourine. The vocal parts include lyrics: "When I get old - er I will be strong - er they'll call me free - dom just like a wav - in' flag and then it goes". The piano part provides harmonic support with chords C, F, Am, G, and C. The guitar part is indicated by slashes. The conga and tambourine parts provide rhythmic drive with specific patterns and accents.

In this arrangement, the guitar and piano do not serve a melodic function, but rather provide additional harmonic support to the vocal parts, and, along with the percussion instruments add rhythmic drive and a timbre that further establishes the sense of a pop style.

In this example of workshopping a piece by an emerging arranger, Leithead's enactment of a collaborative process is evident. He provides Forth with the opportunity to have his arrangement performed, and then provides honest feedback about what is not working in the arrangement. It is the next step, however, that goes beyond what a typical choir director might do with a chorister arrangement. Leithead invests significant rehearsal time workshopping the piece with the choir. He explains:

That's the process I use quite often for young arrangers who are just learning how to do that, because they've got

some good ideas but they get stuck on other ideas, so I throw it out to the choir and see if they can come up with - if we have time. That's the thing. It takes a lot more time. That was just the perfect timing for that piece. It was before Stories. (interview September 26, 2015)

The process of working with emerging composers and arrangers is certainly different than the process of commissioning new works by established composers. With established composers and arrangers, there may be an initial discussion about the concept of the piece and in some cases, dialogue between the composer and the conductor through the compositional process, but certainly not the significant amount of time and energy that Leithead invests in the development of aspiring composers and arrangers within the Kokopelli Choir Association.

Through intellectual stimulation, choristers are challenged to develop their own critical thinking skills, and not only identify what may be lacking in the arrangement but seek musical solutions to fix the problems. Bass and Riggio (2006) explain how intellectual stimulation is provided by leaders to their followers:

Creativity is encouraged. There is no public criticism of individual members' mistakes. New ideas and creative problem solutions are solicited from followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions. (7)

In the creation of this arrangement, Leithead provided an opportunity for intellectual stimulation not only to Forth as an arranger, but to the whole choir as collaborators in bringing the arrangement to fruition. Forth welcomed the feedback and was not offended by the process of exposing weaknesses in his arrangement and working through them:

I think the other thing with composing [arranging] for Kokopelli is that it's kind of safe because you know that they're not going to do something that sounds bad. So if there's something about the arrangement that doesn't

entirely work, they're going to change it and make it work, and so as long as you can get it to the point where they're committed to do it, and they are committed to do "Wavin' Flag," I'm not worried now that "oh, I've done a bad arrangement; it's going to crash and burn." Kokopelli's going to make it work. (interview February 17, 2010)

Forth's openness is indicative of a culture within the choir where both innovation and collaboration are encouraged, and there is no real fear of failure because of choristers' commitment to the music that they sing and the choir's support of emerging composers and arrangers as they develop in their craft.

Individualized consideration

As explained in chapter three, through individualized consideration, a leader recognizes both the individual needs and contributions of each individual follower. By maintaining a sense of connection with each chorister, Leithead is able to assess their specific needs and contributions. Leithead's commitment to the growth of his singers as individuals is evident in his approach to selecting soloists. Elaine Brown who, based on her understanding of the principles of philosopher Martin Buber, describes the relationship between conductors and their choristers as being connected to each singer through a tether or umbilical cord (Jordan 2008, 12). Leithead's rehearsals with Kokopelli are very much tethered events. One way that Leithead connects with his singers is by recognizing them as individuals and acknowledging their contributions verbally within the rehearsal. While choral directors typically recognize vocal sections verbally when they sing a passage particularly well with phrases such as: "that's better timing there basses – good for you!" or "much better intonation this time, sopranos," etc., Leithead recognizes individual singers by name to affirm them. When asked if the

singers ever became embarrassed because of it, he responds no, that he tries to do it in a positive way that is not too serious (interview September 26, 2015). This way of interacting with choristers in a light-hearted, yet deeply personal way does not conform to typical rehearsal practice and requires a great deal of respect and care, which I believe only works because of the ubuntu environment which Leithead continuously cultivates within his rehearsals.

Leithead also strives to provide individuals with opportunities for growth through his distribution of solos. Leithead does not believe in only assigning solos to the strongest two or three singers, which is the practice of many choral conductors. Although only choosing the best singers for solos is the easier route and the one that often leads to the best sonic results in concert, Leithead opts to spread around solo opportunities so that more singers gain the chance to grow and learn through the experience, even if they are not the strongest voices in the choir. This does not mean that for concerts he selects singers who are not ready for the challenge of solo singing, but instead, that he nurtures the development of several singers throughout the rehearsal process, thus grooming soloists for the future. Because of his commitment to nurturing potential soloists on an ongoing basis within the rehearsal setting, Leithead has several solo voices from which to select for public performances in any given season. This approach is quite different from a typical choral setting, where there may only be a few soloists who can handle the required passages, and these soloists must generally possess the necessary musical ability and confidence already.

Unlike many choral conductors who hold auditions on a specific day and select soloists based on those auditions, Leithead delays the selection of soloists. Instead, as the

choir rehearses selections with solos, Leithead allows different choristers to try the solo passages within the rehearsal. Then, after several singers have attempted the solo throughout the rehearsal process, he selects one to sing it in performance. He explains:

I like to give everybody a chance to do try to do solos in a supportive environment for solo singing, and for people to try, to take chances with their voices. We talk at the beginning of the year saying: “this is a great place to take a chance like that and try different things.” And if you’re somebody who doesn’t necessarily do a solo very often, it doesn’t have to mean you do it in concert, but here’s an opportunity to just try it, and all these people will support you.” I also say to them: “if I don’t choose you for a solo in the end, don’t be offended. Sometimes this certain solo works well with that voice, and over here, this style of music works well for your voice. It just kind of depends, and to experiment through that. This is the place to experiment and try different things and just kind of see what happens.” (interview February 18, 2010)

This approach not only allows more singers to hone their solo singing skills, but also helps cultivate a supportive rehearsal environment where singers can develop confidence in their own abilities. For the singers who are very keen and take advantage of all opportunities to try solos in rehearsal, Leithead tries to find passages for them to perform in concert, even if they are short, to reward their efforts.

Ubuntu in the Kokopelli rehearsal

One chorister’s experience in particular illustrates Leithead’s commitment to individualized consideration and an ubuntu approach to leadership. Wade Brown was a member of Kokopelli from 2002 to 2011, and Òran, off and on from 2012 to 2016. Over 6’7” tall and towering over most of his fellow choristers, Brown has always been easy to spot on stage. What makes his story unusual, however, is that Brown was visually impaired from birth and blind from age fifteen. After several years of playing tuba in the

school band, Brown became involved in his high school choir and was recommended by his music teacher to participate in the Alberta Honour Choir. His aunt, a choral educator in the province, suggested that he join the Braille Tones, a choir for singers who are disabled. Brown's musical expertise was beyond the level of that ensemble and so, the following season, he joined Kokopelli. His first year in the choir was a difficult one.

Brown explains:

In my high school, I was definitely one of the best singers at the high school, so I assumed I was great at everything. And so I joined Kokopelli and I realized that I had a tendency to be a little bit flat almost all the time, I was a bit too loud for my section, and my tone quality was too dark. I just realized that I wasn't as good as other Kokopelli members and so, the first year was actually very, very frustrating and I nearly quit several times just because I did not want to put up with, for me, almost the embarrassment of not being a very good singer. (interview February 19, 2010)

In that first year, Leithead worked with Brown individually during breaks to help him shape vowels properly, improve his tone, and blend better with the rest of the choir. In the earlier years, sectional rehearsals were a regular occurrence with the group; these provided the opportunity for Brown to receive additional peer coaching from senior members of the tenor section. That process of learning how to sing was Brown's primary motivation for returning to the choir the following season.

Brown explains his process for learning music in the rehearsal setting:

Typically, what happens is that there are a few tenors who are better sight-readers than others, as will happen in any section. I sort of sit next to them or stand next to one of them and they sort of sing, and they're of course, loud enough because they're singing. I just copy what they're doing and over a few repetitions of the song, or as we stumble through the song, I'll just sort of pick up the way the pattern's going, because in a lot of songs there are

patterns - verses and things. That's handy, especially when there are repetitive elements. For things that are more rhythmically challenging, thankfully the choir also stumbles along, so just by virtue of Scott or Bruce [Cable] saying "oh, we'll pick it up at measure 27 with this rhythm," and then they might even clap it out or something, I really do get a very good idea about how the rhythm goes.⁴⁵ Especially during tricky sections, say, when the tenors are screwing up a line, then we have Jen [McMillan] play it, and then I can hear what it sounds like properly so I can sing that instead of whatever they're singing.⁴⁶ So I find that I do pick it up quite quickly. (interview February 19, 2010)

As in most choirs, there are leaders within each section who are strong readers on whom other choristers rely to learn their part and these singers played an important role in Brown's learning process. Leithead further facilitated Brown's learning by adjusting his way of delivering spoken feedback to the choir. By clapping rhythms or singing melodic fragments instead of simply saying measure numbers to indicate moments in the music, Leithead not only emphasized the correct musical elements for all choristers, but also ensured that Brown was clearly aware of the moment in question and was able to participate fully in the rehearsal. Brown does not, however, consider his disability a hindrance:

As difficult as it is not being able to read music, one of the good things about being blind is that as a child, I wasn't fortunate enough to have these types of technologies [gesturing to his computer] and I really wasn't a diligent Braille reader, so I relied on learning everything by ear as much as possible for subjects in school. When you can't read and you know that you're only going to hear something in class before the test, you tend to really develop the skill of remembering what you hear. So just

⁴⁵ For several seasons, Bruce Cable was the substitute conductor for Leithead when he was away; Cable also served as interim conductor during Leithead's sabbatical year in Namibia in 2008-2009.

⁴⁶ Jennifer McMillan was the accompanist for Kokopelli for several seasons and is now the accompanist for Vacilando.

thanks to that, I've become really good at hearing music and remembering quite quickly, so I'm sure that there are a good number of members who I'm quicker at learning the music just because I'm so used to it. (interview February 19, 2010)

Having relied heavily on his hearing and memory for his whole life, Brown's acute listening skills have served him well in the choral rehearsal, and after several seasons in the choir, he was one of the leaders within the tenor section.

Brown's greatest challenge in participating in the choir was to learn the movement, one of the signature elements of Kokopelli's performance style. Over the years, Kokopelli has brought in different choreographers to work with the ensemble.

Brown recounts his experience during one of his early seasons with the choir:

She choreographed this piece and the movement was just too complicated and there was no way that I could have done it, I don't believe. It was very intense. So in my first couple of years, that was kind of disappointing because I had to be off to the side playing the tambourine or whatever. (interview February 19, 2010)

For Brown, the movement became an alienating factor during his early years with the choir. With Maureen Tigner-Morrison's more inclusive approach to choreography, Brown was able to participate fully in the subsequent years of his tenure with the choir. Although her choreography often showcases small groups of singers who are particularly adept at movement, Tigner-Morrison's formations ensure that no choristers are excluded from the action. The movement component continued to be a challenge for Brown, but it was no longer out of reach:

Some members like John and Steve are really good. If we are doing movement that requires moving from one part of the stage to another part, they'll guide me, which I find is

reassuring and comforting because, to be honest with you, I have no idea about how good or bad it looks from the audience's point of view to have me guided around stage. I can't imagine it looks that great, but it's very reassuring to know that I'm part of a community where that isn't that big of a deal. So I really do like that part of it and I just appreciate that Kokopelli a) does the show aspect and b) includes me in that show aspect as well in spite of my difficulties. (interview February 19, 2010)

Placing his hand on a fellow chorister's shoulder, Brown followed his guide from place to place in the designated pattern of movement for each piece; the chorister guide changed from piece to piece throughout the concert according to the choreography of the specific song.

In terms of learning movement on the spot including the southern African dance steps as taught to the choir by Namibian and South African exchange students, Brown and his fellow tenors developed a number of strategies:

We tried many methods over the years. At first, we tried verbal descriptions and me trying to act them out, but that doesn't work out well for anything but the simplest movements because people aren't used of describing African dance in words, and they also inevitably forget something, and suddenly, I'm dancing backwards or my feet are doing the wrong thing. We tried them moving my arms and legs, but the issue there is that to do that, people often grab my wrists and ankles, so then the hands, shoulders, head, hips, and such don't always do what they ought to be. It sort of works, but sort of not.

I think the best method is for me to use another person as a model. That way, they can do the dance, or stand in poses from the dance for me, and I usually stand beside or behind them so I can feel them while they dance at regular speed or in slow-mo. Then, they can just bring my attention to their hand or head orientation etc. This works really well, but it also requires a lot of...familiarity. That's why a group like Kokopelli is great. We're all there to perform music

and be as inclusive as possible. No one ever complained or hesitated to show me the dance steps, even when it took away from their rehearsal time or even personal time outside of rehearsals (like during breaks or before shows etc). (email correspondence June 19, 2016)

For Brown, the inclusive and accepting environment cultivated in Kokopelli has made learning the movement not only possible, but a relatively comfortable experience.

Because the southern African songs are a staple part of Kokopelli and Òran's repertoire, the time invested in learning the movement for these pieces is well worth the effort as the pieces continue to be sung beyond the single season's concerts. Using the strategies outlined above for learning movement on the spot, combined with being guided by fellow choristers on stage for changes in standing formations, Brown has been able to fully participate in these visual aspects of Kokopelli and Òran performances.

Being guided by fellow choristers is not isolated to the rehearsal and concert setting but has also been part of Brown's experience on choir tours. When he first began touring with Kokopelli, Brown's parents were anxious about the practical aspects of travel which, up to that point, had been done for him. Brown had participated on smaller trips including the annual weekend-long fall retreat at Camp Nakamun and felt confident that he would have no difficulty functioning on tour within a community that he had found to be caring, welcoming, and embracing. He explains:

It's even gone to the extent that on most tours I don't even bring my white cane anymore just because I'm confident that I'm always going to have someone at hand who can guide me wherever I need to go. And because as a blind person, I'm really not that typical in that I really do prefer to be guided everywhere. I really have no attachment to my white cane at all. I know it's valuable and I used it on campus or in Edmonton, but when you're on tour, you're always in a strange environment, so many times I don't

even have time to learn my environment well enough to use the cane effectively. So I do have to rely on being guided a lot and I've just always found that there have been more than enough Kokopellis willing to sort of jump to that, and I've almost never been left without a guide. Sometimes there'll be a bit of excitement and people will just forget that I need to be guided, but that's very short-lived typically. So in general, I find in terms of at restaurants or in hotels, or at venues or even being billeted, I've always found Kokopelli to be very supportive and very accommodating to my needs. (interview February 19, 2010)

Brown's experience in Kokopelli demonstrates a culture within the choir where difference is accepted and there is a genuine effort to be inclusive. He was accepted as a member of the ensemble and accommodations were made to allow him to participate fully, including vocal coaching by both Leithead and senior members of the choir in his early years, rehearsal directions that did not rely solely on visual cues but also aural ones, peer support in learning the choreography, and guiding both on stage and on tour.

This culture of acceptance, specifically Leithead's dedication to meeting each individual chorister's needs, is congruent with both individualized consideration and an ubuntu approach to leadership. In her doctoral dissertation, Jennifer Haywood (2005) finds that the inclusion of individuals with special needs in a choir creates an opportunity for change for the individuals with special needs, for those with typical needs, and for the choral conductor, specifically in the areas of pedagogy, building relationships, and advocacy. Leithead's adjustments in his teaching strategies, Brown's personal development through his participation in Kokopelli, and the relationships built with his fellow choristers, in particular with his fellow tenors who assisted him in learning choreography, reinforce Haywood's findings.

For Brown, Leithead not only provided the opportunity for growth in bringing him up to the level of the others vocally and movement-wise, but also challenged him to develop his skills further in other realms. Throughout the years, Brown was given numerous opportunities to introduce pieces in concert:

I've really been known over the years for doing introductions to songs, and just that experience has gotten me used to not only being on stage but speaking to a large group of people. So I'm more comfortable doing that than I was, and I'm much more comfortable doing that well than I was, because now I don't have any problem getting in front of a group of people whether it's a class or an auditorium or a church or whatever, and saying a speech and having it ripe with timing and appropriate jokes and things like this, that I really enjoy delivering. (interview February 19, 2010)

These experiences allowed Brown to hone his public speaking skills and discover that he has both an aptitude for it and that he enjoys the limelight. His confidence in his own comedic timing is significant as he cannot rely on visual cues from the audience but must gauge their reaction solely through auditory means. Through individualized consideration, Leithead helped Brown to continue develop to “successively higher levels of potential” (Bass and Riggio 2006, 7). Having graduated from Law school at the University of Alberta in 2016, Brown's experience in public speaking will no doubt continue to serve him well in his career and his life.

Leithead's acceptance of Brown into the choir despite his disability and his musical deficit at the time, as well as his nurturing of Brown to become a skilled contributor within the choir, underscore the parallels between Leithead's leadership and an ubuntu ethic.

Ubuntu is a philosophy of tolerance and compassion. It does not give up on people and it starts from the premise that everybody has the potential to realise the promise of being human...when we fail to show compassion to the disadvantaged, the handicapped and the homeless, we are, in fact, demonstrating that we are still to realise the promise of being human. (Benghu 1996, 12)

Leithead's investment in Brown's development as a chorister within the ensemble and as an individual over many years, reveals that as a leader, he is ethical and compassionate, and essentially, profoundly human.

Summary

Kokopelli rehearsals are an exciting interchange of ideas and creativity for the conductor and choristers alike, largely due to director Scott Leithead's leadership which is congruent with transformational leadership. He is a mentor to his choristers and his behaviours parallel idealized influence. He demonstrates openness and emotional vulnerability and makes it clear to his choristers that he not only cares deeply about the choir, but about the individual choristers as well. Leithead is also humble. He is aware of the limitations of his knowledge and expertise, but does not allow these to hinder the growth and creative endeavours of his choir. He brings in guest artists and clinicians to augment his choristers' learning and to expose them to new perspectives. Throughout his rehearsals, Leithead is constantly "footnoting" statements, thus making his choristers aware of where he has learned different facts and practices, as well as stressing to them the notion that knowledge should be shared instead of guarded, and that they are all part of a larger choral practice that goes beyond what happens in their own rehearsal room.

Through behaviours that align with inspirational motivation, Leithead is able to encourage his choristers to envision an attractive future. He delivers motivational

speeches within his rehearsal, making clear to his singers his belief in their ability to achieve excellence, and providing guidance on how that can be done. He also engages his choristers in conversations where they discuss what is at the heart of the music that they are performing as well as how it relates to their own lives. This practice corresponds to James Jordan's (2008) notion of Ownership, where choristers are able to personalize their connection to the music they sing, and prepare it for performance, or *Communio*, where communication takes place between the choir and audience in community. Leithead also inspires his singers by maintaining a rehearsal space of positivity and authenticity. Through the Kokopelli Values Statement that Leithead created along with his choristers, Leithead has articulated a compelling vision for the choir as well as clear expectations of how artistic excellence can be achieved.

Behaviours that exemplify intellectual stimulation are not always part of typical choral rehearsals, but are an integral part of Leithead's rehearsal practice. Leithead deviates from the traditional notion of the conductor as the central artistic voice and the choristers as mere instruments to be used at the conductor's disposal. Instead, he cultivates a rehearsal space where choristers are encouraged to think critically and creatively about the music they perform and are allowed to question the choir's overall interpretation, both musical and movement-wise. When there have been instances of conflict and disagreement, Leithead has been accepting of dissenting views and maintained a balance between fulfilling his creative vision of the piece, honouring the composer's work, and also accepting his choristers' points of view. Leithead's process of workshopping a new arrangement by an emerging arranger further illustrates his process

in terms of a shared approach to decision-making and collaborative work between him, the arranger, and the ensemble.

Finally, Leithead's dealings with choristers are congruent with individualized consideration. His rehearsals are what Elaine Brown would call tethered (Jordan 2008) and he maintains a strong link to each one of his choristers throughout the rehearsal process. Leithead seeks to affirm individuals verbally, recognizing their individual contributions to the rehearsal and provides a large number of choristers with opportunities for additional growth through his "test drive" approach to selecting soloists, where several individuals can attempt solos in a supportive rehearsal environment rather than creating stressful auditions or simply assigning a select few singers to perform them. Leithead's dedication to choristers as individuals, however, is epitomized in his treatment of Wade Brown, a singer who is blind who sang with Leithead's ensembles for many years. Not only did Leithead support Brown in his vocal development, but also created an environment where Brown was able to fully participate in the movement aspects of Kokopelli's performances as well as international concert tours. Recognizing Brown's potential as a public speaker, Leithead provided additional opportunities for Brown to hone his speaking skills through the delivery of spoken introductions to pieces.

Leithead's treatment of his choristers as individuals, who are deserving of praise, challenge, and attention, can be understood in terms of an ubuntu ethic:

The basic principle of Ubuntu is that man is a social being and not a mere number as it is to be expected under a rigid, military-style management. Man is also not a mere cog in a machine in the industrial world; nor is man some sort of animal. Man has a right to be treated in a spirit of humanity and is entitled to basic human rights. (Broodryk 2005, 35)

Leithead's leadership, which aligns with the core components of transformation leadership and an ubuntu ethic, has resulted in the empowerment of choristers, the development of community, and has paved the way for innovation in performance. Under Leithead's direction, singers are part of the decision-making process. Singers are challenged to think critically about the interpretation of the music they sing and to question assumptions that do not resonate with them. Leithead cultivates a strong sense of community within the rehearsal space. Singers feel comfortable to try new things, vocally as an ensemble or as soloists, as well as movement-wise. Through motivational talks and discussions where choristers are able to express their emotions, Leithead makes his choristers feel valued. Finally, because of this strong sense of support and encouragement, choristers are free to experiment within the choral art. The resulting innovation challenges choral norms and creates exciting concert events where choral performers bring their understanding and dedication to the stage, and where they communicate with the audience in *Communio*. Leithead's approach to choral repertoire and performance are addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7: KOKOPELLI'S REPERTOIRE AND PERFORMANCE

Introduction

This chapter examines the impact of Scott Leithead's leadership on aspects of repertoire and performance, focusing specifically on features that differentiate his approach from typical choral practice. Although I have observed many Kokopelli concerts over my years of fieldwork, I have selected one concert as a representative event. Kōrero was selected because, like many Stories concerts, it involves guest artists, premieres of new works, and extra-musical elements, but unlike other concerts, it involves a body of repertoire, Māori music, with which the ensemble was largely unfamiliar prior to the rehearsal process leading to this event. Part of the analysis involved creating a thick description (Geertz 1973) of the concert in order to gain a deeper understanding of Kokopelli's performance practice as guided by Leithead's leadership. The thick description of Kōrero forms the basis of the discussion within this chapter.⁴⁷ Since elements of performance practice developed by artistic director, Scott Leithead are espoused by all choirs and conductors within the Kokopelli Choir Association, there is no need to differentiate between choirs or focus solely on Kokopelli, the youth choir, for the purpose of this analysis.

The first section of the discussion examines Leithead's approach to selecting repertoire, including his practice of commissioning new works and new arrangements by both established national and international composers, as well as by composers and arrangers from within the Association itself. The discussion attempts to shed light on Leithead's relationship with living composers within the context of a shift away from the strong work concept (Dahlhaus 1983, 132-133), which has dominated the Western choral

⁴⁷ See appendix four.

tradition for the past two centuries. The practice of commissioning new works exemplifies a commitment to furthering the development of the choral art and its repertoire by Leithead and the Kokopelli Choir Association.

Drawing on Skinner (2005), the second section of the discussion explores the Kokopelli Choir Association's approach to performing non-Western music, specifically their awareness of issues of authenticity and cultural appropriation. The section touches on Leithead's commitment to culturally responsive pedagogy, specifically his efforts to respect the culture of the people to whom the music belongs by inviting culture bearers to be part of the rehearsal and performance process, thus ensuring that the music is performed with appropriate care and cultural sensitivity.⁴⁸

The third section of the discussion investigates extra-musical elements that play an important role in Kokopelli Choir Association concerts. The discussion aims to illuminate Leithead's approach to music-making, which not only deals with the careful preparation and delivery of the music, but an active commitment to incorporating extra-musical elements such as movement, lighting, and video to create a multi-sensory experience for choristers and audiences. Drawing on the work of Philip Auslander (2006, 2013), Nicholas Cook (2001, 2003, 2013), and Christopher Small (1998), this section contextualizes Kokopelli concerts within the larger framework of performance studies and musicology, specifically how Leithead's approach indicates a further crumbing of the strong work concept and a move towards a more holistic view of music *as* performance.

The fourth and final section of the discussion investigates elements of Leithead's performance practice from a leadership perspective. This section illustrates how

⁴⁸ A full analysis of Leithead's practice as an educator according to culturally responsive pedagogy is beyond the scope of this study.

Leithead's approach to choral performance, which can be analyzed through the complementary lenses of transformational leadership and ubuntu, yields extraordinary results for the choir as a whole and for the choristers as individuals.

Charting new territory with repertoire choices

Typically, choral conductors draw on works from the classical canon to determine concert programs. Especially in educational settings, conductors select representative works from various historical periods including the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern periods.⁴⁹ Though not always, these selections often share a common theme. Choral conducting textbooks offer advice on selecting repertoire (Brinson and Demorest 2014; Garretson 1998; Lamb, 1988; Rao 1990; Tagg 2013; Telfer 2006, etc.), encouraging conductors to strive for variety within musical elements such as tempo, tonality, key, languages, degree of difficulty, and texts. When crafting a concert program, choral directors often begin with a focal piece around which the rest of the repertoire is chosen. The focal piece may be a longer work and generally serves as an anchor for the program, often determining the overall theme of the concert. Choral directors typically select repertoire that is published and available through distributors although they may also obtain scores or license agreements directly from composers through their websites, and find other repertoire through the Choral Public Domain online database.

For Leithead, as well as the other directors within the Association, repertoire selection is done slightly differently. Kokopelli does perform a few selections from the choral canon in their regular season, as well as several for their co-productions with the

⁴⁹ See *Choral repertoire* for an account of choral music's "most significant composers from the Western Hemisphere throughout recorded history (Shrock 2009, v).

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, but the choir's repertoire consists mainly of contemporary classical choral works by living composers and world music. Chorister

Wade Brown explains:

That is really the hallmark of Kokopelli music, to be different. I can't tell you how many concerts I've been to of other groups where they are doing music that we did two or three years ago, just because maybe they heard us do it or heard someone do it and took it. There are very few pieces that I've heard us do after another group. I think Scott has this really keen sense and well-honed ability to find music that's interesting, bring it to the group and then polish it up, now with the help of Katy [Kathleen Luyk] and Bruce [Cable], to a level where people are really interested in it.⁵⁰ (Interview February 19, 2010)

Brown's observation is astute in recognizing that Kokopelli rarely performs mainstream choral repertoire.⁵¹ Instead, they pioneer new repertoire and introduce the works of established and emerging classical choral composers from other countries to Canadian audiences. A large portion of the repertoire that the Kokopelli choirs learn is unpublished; therefore, the choir often works from original manuscripts obtained directly from the composer or arranger.

The Kōrero program demonstrates this approach to repertoire selection in that only one piece, the pop song "From a Distance," would likely be familiar to concert goers, and even that piece appears in a new choral arrangement. The composers, too, would be unfamiliar to the majority of concert goers, even those who are members of the choral community. This preference for unknown composers is also reflected in the

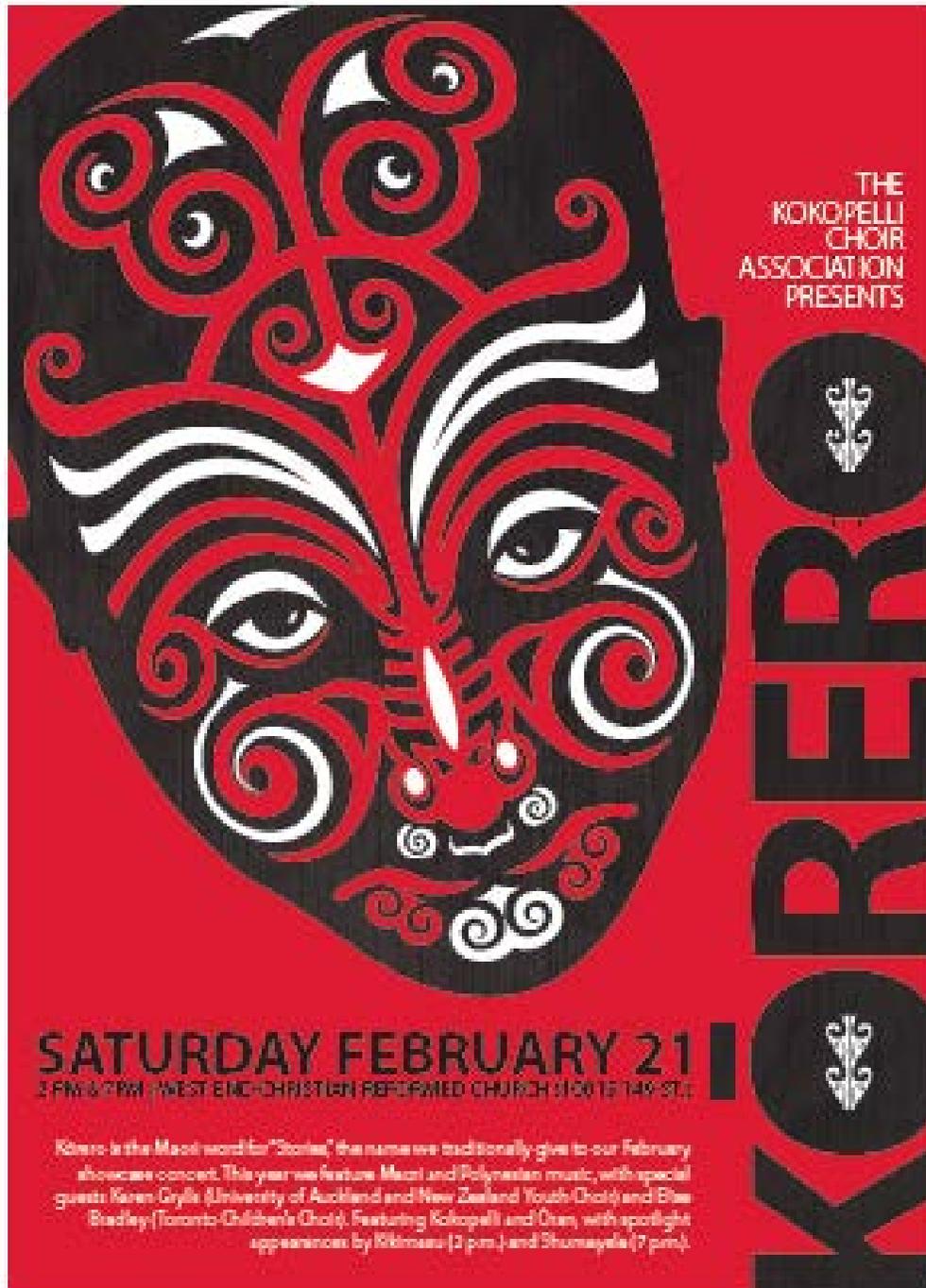
⁵⁰ Bruce Cable was a long-time associate conductor with Kokopelli, serving as the interim conductor during Leithead's sabbatical year in southern Africa in 2008-2009.

⁵¹ With my own choir, I have programmed several selections that I first heard performed by Kokopelli, including: "The World's Desire" by Eleanor Daley, "Wavin' Flag" by K'naan, arranged by Joel Forth, and "Alberta Bound" by Paul Brandt, arranged by Jennifer McMillan. I have also attended other choral ensembles' concerts where the majority of the program was likely selected from past Kokopelli concert programs.

promotional material for the Association's concerts. Instead of listing the composers whose works will be performed, advertisements for concerts list only the name of the concert, the choirs that are performing, and venue and ticket information. These promotional materials, including ads, concert programs, CD covers, and choir logos are designed by Kelly Skinner at Friday Design and Photography.⁵² Her designs are eye-catching and beautiful, and like the concerts themselves, each design is unique. This aspect of the Kokopelli Choir Association's marketing plan provides further evidence of a shift in emphasis from the works being performed to the performance itself and the performers involved.

⁵² According to Kathleen Luyk, Skinner designed the logos for Òran, Shumayela, Kikimasu, Tamariki, and Vacilando. The Kokopelli logo was redesigned in 2003, the year before Skinner began working with the Association. (email correspondence April 20, 2017)

Figure 3: Kōrero Concert Poster⁵³



⁵³ Kelly Skinner (2015). Poster used with permission.

Another difference between Kokopelli and other choirs is the sheer volume of repertoire that they tackle. Jessica Wu compares Kokopelli with her experience in another youth choir:

I remember I was just astounded at the amount of music that we went through in a year, in a season. With [a different youth choir], we'd pull out the same pieces, and of course, they'd get better and better, but you'd have your limited repertoire of 15-20 pieces that you'd always do. But with Kokopelli - at our year-end banquet, Scott sometimes does this trivia game and one of the questions that I remember in my first couple of years was "How many pieces did we do this year?" And I was thinking, like maybe 25 or 30 or something, and it was definitely like 72 or some crazy number that you don't even think about, but when you actually get to listing them all, it's fun that way. (Interview February 18, 2010)

These numbers are indeed astounding when one considers that the repertoire that Kokopelli performs is often incredibly challenging musically, with divisi beyond the typical four-part SATB, extended harmonies, a variety of languages, and nearly always performed from memory. The demands of tackling a large volume of challenging repertoire, often with accompanying movement or extra-musical elements, are part of the expectations of membership and those who are unable to invest the necessary time and energy do not return the following season. As a result, choirs within the Kokopelli Choir Association end up with dedicated choristers who return year after year. They not only appreciate the Association's approach to repertoire, performance, and music-making in general, but are also superior musicians who are able to handle the demands of this approach.

Creating new works through commissions

Not only does Leithead strive to find new and unfamiliar music for Kokopelli to perform, but he is also committed to developing the choral repertoire in general through commissions of new compositions and arrangements.⁵⁴ According to Leithead, beyond professional choirs such as ProCoro Canada, the Elmer Iseler Singers, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir who commission many new works in a year, Kokopelli, Corazón, and Coastal Sound Youth Choirs are some of the more active choirs in terms of creating new works through commissions (interview September 26, 2015). For most choirs, however, new works are rarely commissioned, if ever, and when they are, quite often they commemorate a milestone anniversary for the ensemble or are done in connection to a life event such as a marriage or death. Kokopelli commissions at least one new work every year, sometimes two, as well as numerous arrangements of existing songs. The Kōrero concert serves as a sample of a typical Kokopelli Choir Association Stories concert in this regard.

The première of “You Asked Me to Speak” by Norwegian composer Kim André Arnesen (b. 1980) exemplifies Kokopelli’s interactions with established contemporary choral composers and their repertoire. Leithead’s first introduction to Arnesen’s music took place in January 2014 when he was in South Africa. Later that year, Kokopelli gave the Canadian première of Arnesen’s “Even When He is Silent,” a work commissioned in 2011 by the St. Olaf’s Festival in Trondheim.⁵⁵ Soon afterwards, Leithead wrote to Arnesen about the choir’s connection to that piece and told him that they would like to commission him to write a piece. Arnesen’s response was that he had

⁵⁴ Past commissions by professional composers include works by: Jussi Chydenius, Kristopher Fulton, Sydney Guillaume, Stephen Hatfield, Greg Jasperse, Christopher Tin, and Graeme Wearmouth.

⁵⁵ Arnesen, Kim. Kim Arnesen Composer. <http://www.kimarnesen.com/#!/works/c1h6a>

a poem and an idea in mind as a response to it, which then became Kokopelli's commissioned piece.

Alexis Hillyard describes the experience of singing a new commissioned work:

It's really, really special to be able to sing that work because you feel like it's made for you, not personally or whatever. It's really cool because the piece hasn't been done before so you're the ones who get to contribute to what it's going to sound like, how it's going to mean, what it's going to do to an audience. It's almost like you have a part in inventing the piece and creating that piece with the choir, and it's almost like you're almost part of making it too, I guess - so it's really neat. (Interview March 10, 2010)

For Kokopelli choristers, their relationship to the music they sing is heightened by their role in bringing it into existence. Steve Wenger adds:

It's always interesting; it's always exciting. You never really know what you're getting until you get it. When we did "Koka" by Stephen Hatfield, it was an interesting experience for him to come in and explain his thought processes and what he had done. Or when we do something by Sydney Guillaume, it's always really fun to be the first choir that gets to try to do something. So from then on, it's kind of like our take was the first take and that's interesting. Like I say, it's always fun to be the first choir to get to sink your teeth into something and do it, especially when it's something that challenges. It's great. (Interview April 7, 2010)

These chorister accounts underscore the excitement involved in being part of the creation of new works. The pioneering spirit, emulated by Leithead, informs all aspects of Kokopelli's culture. These accounts also illustrate a shift in the relationship between composers of choral music and the choirs that perform their works. Through the commissioning process, Kokopelli choristers develop a sense of familiarity with the composer. The composer is no longer some unknown entity whose name is at the top of

the first page of the score, but rather a living person with whom their director interacts, thus creating a sense of being part of the same shared choral community with singers and composers alike. So, while the composer is still very much admired and respected, they no longer hold the deified position with the performers being subservient to the composer's will, a philosophy that has dominated the field of musicology and performance practice of Western art music since the nineteenth century (Dahlhaus 1989, 18; Goehr 1992, 114; Sallis 2015, 18). Instead, there is an artistic partnership between the composer and performers to bring the piece to life.

Beyond the commission by an established professional composer, the Kōrero concert also exemplifies the Kokopelli Choir Association's practice of performing new works by artists from within the organization. Kōrero features two new arrangements, "Casino" and "Lamma Bada Yatathanna" by long-time accompanist, singer, and resident percussion coach, Tova Olson. Leithead explains that for "Casino," he approached Olson and asked if she would write the arrangement; whereas, for "Lamma Bada Yatathanna," it was Olson who came up with the idea (personal correspondence, June 25, 2015). Performing works by choristers and artistic staff is not a conventional component of choral practice. For typical choirs, there may be, over the course of many years, the occasional member who is an aspiring composer or arranger who creates a new piece for the ensemble, or the conductor may compose or arrange works for their ensemble. For Kokopelli though, singing works by choristers or artistic staff members is part of every season.

Steve Wenger discusses the experience of singing pieces that choristers have written or arranged:

Well, obviously we're really lucky to have a lot of very talented musicians come through our choir, and those are always my favourite pieces to do at the end - the pieces that were written for us by former members or even members that are still in the choir. Those are always the songs that seem to have most emotional meaning for the choir because you can directly relate to that person, and they're always around to help us while we're learning it. (Interview April 7, 2010)

This sentiment of appreciation and support for fellow choristers and their works is echoed in several of the interviews I conducted. Joel Forth, now a high school choir and guitar teacher who also composes, arranges, and performs, was first inspired to try composing after singing an arrangement by fellow chorister Jennifer McMillan. As a member of rock bands, Forth was already writing songs, but that experience encouraged him to pursue formal studies in composition at Grant MacEwan Community College. He admits that his first attempts at composing and arranging choral music were not very good, noting

I think it's a long term process of working and really kind of honing skills and realizing that if I want to write a song that's good enough for Kokopelli, I'm going to have to work really hard at it and I'm going to have to make sure that it's perfect. (interview February 17, 2010)

Because Kokopelli is an accomplished choir that has gained acclaim nationally and internationally through competition wins and invitations to prestigious festivals, aspiring composers and arrangers strive to measure up to the choir's technical ability and artistry. Of course, not all compositions and arrangements that Leithead has received from choristers have been performed by the choir or moved to the workshopping stage. As a result, the inclusion of an aspiring composer or arranger's work in Kokopelli's repertoire is significant. Forth's first big success in writing for choirs came with the arrangement of

“John the 23rd” by Canadian singer-songwriter Sarah Slean that he wrote for Òran, followed by an arrangement of “After the War” by Paul Gross and David Keele for Kokopelli, and then the arrangement of K’naan’s “Wavin’ Flag” as discussed in the previous chapter. Forth articulates the impact of that opportunity on his career as an arranger:

Again, I know I worked hard on the arrangement, but I honestly feel like I’ve been so lucky with that song, because now I’m hearing that there are all these other choirs that want to sing it and everything. That’s kind of what it’s like composing for Kokopelli. I should also say that it’s such an amazing honour to have Kokopelli sing a piece of yours. It’s also the perfect platform to get known, because Scott knows so many people and he’s been performing it with honour choirs and that kind of thing. I know that the Rocky Mountain Festival in Banff, everyone is going to see Kokopelli because they’re awesome and everyone wants to hear that concert, but everyone is going there also to choose their music for next year. So if I can get a piece that Scott loves, and I can get him to perform it at the showcase concert in Banff, there’s no publisher that I could be with, no better commercialization that I could have for my music. So I’m so stoked about that and now I need to make sure that I keep following it up with good compositions and arrangements. (Interview February 17, 2010)

Forth acknowledges both the honour as well as the responsibility in composing for Kokopelli and does not take the opportunity for granted.

Over the years, there have been several composers who have emerged from the Kokopelli Choir Association.⁵⁶ These artists participated in the choir as choristers, and some of them have gone on to hold other artistic positions within the Association. I do not believe that this phenomenon is a coincidence, but there are several reasons why

⁵⁶ Some of the most prolific arrangers to write for Kokopelli are former members John McMillan, Jennifer McMillan (née Kinghorn), and Joel Forth. Others include conductors Kathleen Luyk (née Skinner) and Kimberley Denis, both of whom have been published by Cypress Music, and accompanist Tova Olson.

these young artists have gone on to further training and why composing and arranging make up part of their multi-faceted careers in music. Firstly, Kokopelli provides fertile ground for aspiring composers and arrangers by embracing a pioneering spirit. Singers experience singing a high volume of new works and are exposed to a variety of styles of composition and musical approaches. This constant interaction with newly composed material also normalizes the notions of composing and arranging as viable methods of selecting choral repertoire. Secondly, through workshopping these new compositions and arrangements, especially those by choristers and emerging composers, choristers learn how new works are created, that not everything works well from the start but that with some alterations, pieces can be successful, as shown in the previous chapter. Through the commissioning of new works by established composers, choristers gain a sense of the composer as a person who does the work of composing, rather than as a legendary figure from the past who existed in a much different social and cultural reality than present day. As a result of this shift in the perception of what a composer is, choristers are able to see themselves in the role. Finally, Kokopelli provides a supportive environment where choristers are encouraged to take musical risks without the fear of being rejected or mocked.

In order to ensure that my assertions were accurate, I performed a member check (Creswell 2007, 208) with composer Joel Forth. He adds:

I would say that as well as singing a wide variety of contemporary repertoire, what also plays a role is the fact that we met with and worked with many of the composers whose works we performed. Hearing people like Stephen Hatfield, members of Rajaton, Eric Whitacre, and even Katy Skinner [Luyk] talk about their process made composing and arranging a real thing done by real people who had a lot in common with us. I know that I was

inspired to hear Eric Whitacre say that he began singing in choir at around the age that I did. Now, I could have gone off on my own and researched different composers and found out information like this, but I wouldn't have, and neither would most. Kokopelli (and Òran) gave me the opportunity to actually meet these people and interact with them. When a member of Rajaton learns your name, tells you that he enjoyed singing next to you, and remembers you years later, you are empowered and validated as a musician.⁵⁷ (personal correspondence July 5, 2015)

So, for Forth, the in-person interaction with international leaders in the contemporary choral field provided both a better understanding of the composer's process, and an inspiration to continue with his own artistic pursuits.

The opportunity to arrange and compose music for Kokopelli has provided a point of entry for many aspiring artists. While these choristers do not receive formal training in composition through Kokopelli as they would in post-secondary music programs, there are several benefits for singers who want to experiment within the art form. Firstly, the opportunity to arrange and compose music for Kokopelli provides choristers with the chance to try it without committing to full-time studies in a post-secondary composition program and to find out if composing is something that they enjoy and if they have an aptitude for it. Several composers and arrangers who began writing for Kokopelli have gone on to post-secondary studies and are now working as professionals in the field, some of whom include John McMillan, Jennifer McMillan, and Joel Forth. Secondly, it allows choristers who wish to focus exclusively on writing choral repertoire to write for the voice and accompanying instruments, rather than investing time to learn how to write for a variety of instruments and ensembles. Some of the artistic staff of the Kokopelli Choir Association who are choral specialists and did not pursue composition in their

⁵⁷ Rajaton is a renowned Finnish six-member *a cappella* vocal ensemble.

post-secondary music studies have composed and arranged music for choirs within the Association and have had their works published.

Thirdly, having the chance to have their compositions and arrangements workshopped by a capable choir and being able to hear their work performed by live singers rather than through a computer program gives aspiring composers a chance to better evaluate their own work. Finally, aspiring composers and arrangers have the opportunity to receive feedback from a respected choral practitioner who, because of the volume of repertoire he has rehearsed and conducted over the years, is able to provide highly specialized feedback pertaining to how the piece works for the specific voice parts and the ensemble as a whole, rather than from the perspective of a composition professor in a post-secondary program whose primary expertise may not be choral.

Approaching music outside the Western art tradition

In addition to new compositions and arrangements, the Kōrero concert is also representative of Kokopelli's interest in diverse musics of the world. The first half of the concert showcases music from five different continents, including North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia. This diversity in programming is highlighted by short video segments shown between numbers, which also serve to fill the time as large groups of choristers move on and off stage. Each segment features a spinning globe with a line moving from one region to another, not unlike the screen on the back of an aircraft seat that shows the trajectory of the trip. These videos not only prepare the audience for what is to come, but also emphasize the notion of place, as the choirs present repertoire from a number of different regions.

The printed program also lists the music's country of origin in the first half. The inclusion of place, both in the printed program and video clips, situates the music geographically for the audience. This practice is quite different from typical choral concerts, where notions of place are usually far less central, if noted at all. In typical printed programs of choral ensembles, places are not listed but rather, dates of composers are. Within the Western art tradition, when performing repertoire of the mainly Eurocentric choral canon, the time period of the work is the more important distinguishing factor, as opposed to its country of origin. For Kokopelli, on the other hand, their repertoire consists primarily of contemporary works and world music, and so it is not important to make note of dates but more so to note geographic origins. Essentially, within Kokopelli performances, the importance of place generally eclipses the importance of time.

While the majority of the Kōrero concert features a choral tone that is consistent with the Western art tradition, there are certain songs that deviate from this norm. In Stephen Leek's piece "Kungala," there are indications in the score to include shouts, whispers, and very nasal tone in certain sections.⁵⁸ Shumayela executes these markings, showcasing a range of tone from their typical Western art vocal timbre to these unconventional and often harsher sounds. Òran also employs a particularly bright tone in the Indian Bollywood piece "Balleilakka." In the Haka, led by Bradley Christensen, the men of Kokopelli and Òran use a guttural half-sung/half-shouted tone. These examples indicate a willingness to experiment with sounds outside a conventional Western classical choral sound to emulate the vocal timbre of performers outside the Western tradition.

⁵⁸ Stephen Leek. <http://www.stephenleek.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/kungala-satb-sample.pdf>

Francisco Núñez, founding conductor of the Young People's Chorus of New York City asserts:

As we train our singers for a new musical tomorrow, we need to incorporate techniques that allow singing with different colors, degrees of vibrato, ability to manipulate weight and pitch.⁵⁹ We also need to build a better ability to work with any musical genre and with different conductors. (2012, 211)

The conductors of the Kokopelli Choir Association are certainly providing their singers with these opportunities to expand their vocal capabilities by working in different musical genres and with guest conductors and artists on a regular basis.

Laura Forster brings up another element of Leithead's approach to performing music beyond the classical choral tradition:

His world music range is huge, and he doesn't just do world music, like Stephen Hatfield has gone and published lots of world music. We've done a lot of that, but that's almost in a safer way. He's gone to "I went out with Soila from Rajaton and she taught me this little yoik" and we created the whole piece just from this one line of a yoik.⁶⁰ And you don't just sing it; you outright sing it. You use the ugliest tone, and you're really trying to yoik like she would. He doesn't just do "world music." He's out there creating the world music and trying to bring it back. (Interview April 3, 2010)

Her anecdote demonstrates three aspects of Leithead's approach to music outside the Western art tradition. Firstly, it demonstrates a desire to fully commit to vocal techniques

⁵⁹ Vocal weight, along with tone colour and vibrato, is one of the main determining factors in the classification of voice types in Western classical music. Light voices are generally brighter and more agile, and heavier voices, darker and more dramatic.

⁶⁰ Soila Sariola is the alto in the renowned Finnish vocal sextet, as well as an accomplished composer, and graduate of the Folk Music Department of the Sibelius Academy (www.rajaton.net). A yoik is a traditional form of song of the Sami people of northern Scandinavia.

beyond the choir's normal *bel canto* style as required by the music.⁶¹ Secondly, it acknowledges the fluidity of non-Western music and its existence as an evolving and living art form to which present day performers contribute, rather than only a primitive form that existed in the past. And thirdly, it shows that Leithead's choice of repertoire is not confined to the conventional choral norms of performing arrangements of folk songs and African American spirituals, but that he also explores other types of "world music."

Linked to globalization, the term "world music" emerged in the 1980s as a catch-all category for popular music that did not already fit into another genre (Frith 2000) and has been the subject of much debate among the academic music community.⁶² Perhaps the definition of "world music" that best applies to the choral context is the one put forth by music librarian Carl Rahkonen (1994) who states:

World music might best be described by what it is not. It is not Western art music, neither is it mainstream Western folk or popular music.⁶³ World music *can* be traditional (folk), popular or even art music, but *it must have ethnic or foreign elements*. It is simply not *our* music, it is *their* music, music which belongs to someone else.

This definition captures the essence of Kokopelli's treatment of music outside the Western art music tradition since the choir embraces the challenge of foreign elements and acknowledges the music as belonging to someone else. In a multi-cultural society, even defining what is 'our music' is difficult because our music is not only music from the Western art music canon or North American popular music. Attempting to explain it

⁶¹ *Bel canto*, Italian for "beautiful singing," refers to the concept of singing from the Old Italian School. For a detailed discussion of how to apply the principles of *bel canto* singing to the choral context, see Fagnan (2005, 2008) and Fuchs (2014).

⁶² See Bohlman (2002), Frith (2000), Olsen and Brown (1992), and Taylor (1997, 2014), etc.

⁶³ Although Philip V. Bohlman (2002) argues that "world music" can be Western or non-Western, as well as folk, art, or popular music, among other things, and that essentially, any music could be considered "world music."

as music that, although accessible globally is not situated locally, is not quite right, since it does not account for diaspora communities, or address the multi-cultural milieu in which different performers within a single ensemble may each bring a different understanding of what is ‘their’ music. Essentially, it is music for which a performer or group does not already understand the cultural context in which it was created or the practices that inform its delivery.

Kōrero provides a clear example of the Kokopelli Choir Association’s commitment to performing non-Western music with cultural sensitivity. For this concert, the Association brought in guest artists who were able to work with the choirs, teaching the singers not only how to sing the repertoire, but also to impart their knowledge of the sacredness of music to the Māori people. Elise Bradley and her son Bradley Christensen, originally from New Zealand, have been gifted music of the Māori and are therefore able to teach and perform it.⁶⁴ By inviting culture bearers to teach and perform Māori music, the Kokopelli Choir Association is ensuring that the music of the Māori people is performed in a way that acknowledges the sacredness of it and honours the people to whom the music belongs. This practice demonstrates a culturally responsive approach to teaching, and as music education scholar, Julia Shaw (2012), asserts, is important for ensuring the cultural validity of the repertoire and the manner in which it is taught, programmed, and performed (77).

Kokopelli often posts songs from past concerts on their YouTube channel. For Kōrero, however, they did not post full songs, but instead posted a video that showed

⁶⁴ According to Peter Beatson (2003), the Māori are reluctant to share traditional knowledge with Pakeha (non-Māori or New Zealanders of European descent) until they are sure that the Pakeha is worthy of receiving it. By spending time with an iwi group (tribe), and doing menial tasks, a Pakeha shows commitment and whakaiti (making oneself humble) and establishes a kanohi ki kanohi (face-to-face) relationship with “the people to whom the culture belongs” so that the relationship is reciprocal (24).

short clips from the concert, thus honouring the wishes of the Māori elders who first taught this music to Elise Bradley and her son, Bradley Christensen. The video, published on February 25, 2015 offers the note:

Our thanks and love to the Māori people and to Elise Bradley and Bradley Christensen for sharing these precious musical gifts with us. Māori elders have gifted Elise with the privilege of teaching their music, but part of the understanding is that we are not to record and distribute it ourselves. Excerpts are permitted, however.⁶⁵

The Kokopelli Choir Association demonstrates an awareness of musical ownership and a commitment to understanding the cultural expectations of how music outside the Western art tradition must be performed. Executive director and conductor of *Òran* and *Vacilando*, Kathleen Luyk (Skinner 2005) addresses issues of authenticity and performance practice as well as current trends around multi-culturalism in choral music. In her MMus paper, she quotes Mary Goetze (2000) who suggests that choral conductors “[h]onor the culture by deferring to the experts – native musicians from that culture” (Goetze 2000, 25 as cited in Skinner 2005, 20). The Association has also brought in a number of guest musicians and clinicians from the USA and southern Africa over the years, in addition to the exchange students from their Namibian and South African sister choirs that it hosts every year.

Luyk (Skinner 2005) also discusses issues of authenticity, drawing on music education specialist Anthony J. Palmer’s (1992) authenticity continuum which presents one extreme as being “absolute” and the other being “compromise.” She finds Palmer’s framework problematic in that it diminishes the value and validity of arrangements of folk music that were never intended to be authentic representations of a genre but are

⁶⁵ Kokopelli Choirs. “Kōrero - Māori highlights.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWcbVOvMv9E>

instead, “artistic reinterpretations of pre-existing source music” (Skinner 2005, 6). Here, she reframes the construct to a Cultural Precedent Continuum with “total authenticity to pre-existing art” on one end and “total freedom from cultural precedent” on the other. She notes that multi-cultural choral music may be spread across the spectrum but that two main groupings emerge: “authentic, ethnic choral music” and “ethnic-influenced choral music” (Skinner 2005, 7-8). The Kōrero concert presents music from both groupings. The final five selections of the concert of traditional Māori music would be considered authentic, ethnic choral music, with the majority of the first half of the program falling into the grouping of ethnic-influenced choral music. The works by Griffiths, Hamilton, and Childs, as well as the new commission by Arnesen, would be considered part of the Western art music tradition. The combination of works from these categories within a single concert program demonstrates the breadth of Kokopelli’s repertoire.

Extra-musical elements

In typical choral concerts within the Western art tradition, the structure of presentation adheres to a standard method of delivery. Choristers walk on stage, single file, the men in suits or tuxedos and the women in matching gowns, and take their place in half-moon shaped rows on choral risers. The audience claps as the choir enters and again as the conductor walks on stage last, taking his or her place at the podium in the center-front of the stage. The choir presents their program and the audience claps, sometimes between sets and sometimes after each piece. The conductor may say a few words about a piece before the choir performs it, sharing biographical information about the composer, something of significance about the piece, or details about the social or political context in which it was composed. The choir, often accompanied by piano,

presents works from the canon of Western art music, usually in Latin, English, German, Italian, or French. Singers hold black folders and shift their gaze from the conductor at the podium to their scores in hand. Beyond facial expressions, there is very little movement in the singers' bodies. At the culmination of the concert, the audience applauds and the conductor responds by bowing, followed by the entire choir bowing together. The conductor and choristers then exit the stage single file.

For the choirs of the Kokopelli Choir Association, a choral performance is very different. Their concerts regularly include extra-musical elements such as lighting, movement, dance, costumes, and props. This difference is significant because Kokopelli and the other choirs within the Association are not Gospel or show choirs for which these elements are more common elements of performance. Instead, Kokopelli choirs sing primarily Western classical music and operate within the classical frame. Instead of conforming to performance norms of this frame, however, they challenge the notion of what audiences should expect in a classical choral concert. In *Kōrero*, shifts in brightness, colour, and placement of lights served to heighten the audience's experience of each work and mark it off from other pieces, as do slight changes in costuming and video footage that accompany select pieces. Among the pieces that employ props, there is a range in how they are used from the more subtle usage of a scarf as both a prop and costume piece in Òran's "Trillo" to the more choreographed use of fans in "Song of the Crow" and poi balls in "Tihore Mai," both by Shumayela.⁶⁶

Typical of a Kokopelli Choir Association concert, *Kōrero* presents a range in movement, including the featured dancing couple in front of a relatively still choir in

⁶⁶ Over the years, choirs of the Kokopelli Choir Association have experimented with a range of props, some of which include: long sticks, ribbon sticks, flashlights, large gauzy sheets of fabric, glass votive candle vases, helium balloons, and puppets.

“Lamma Bada Yatathanna,” pieces with choristers standing in place executing choreographed upper body movement as in the set of three Māori pieces by Kokopelli and Òran, upper body choreography and some steps as in the train-like movement in Shumayela’s “Thula Klizeo,” changes in spatial placement along with upper body movement in Kokopelli’s “Mama Afrika,” as well as choristers dancing fully in sync as in Òran’s “Balleilakka” and the men’s Haka. Stand-and-deliver pieces are spread throughout the concert, widening the range of movement within the overall concert. The arrangements of the Lithuanian folksong “Tykus Tykus,” the pop song “From a Distance,” and the Samoan folk song “Minoi Minoi,” as well as the Arnesen commission and the selections by Griffiths, Hamilton, Childs from the Western art tradition, plus the final massed choir Māori blessing “Ka Waiata ki a Maria” all serve as periods of stillness for the audience. Unlike in typical choral performance practice where stand-and-deliver is the norm, within the context of a Kokopelli concert, stillness becomes an artistic choice that is decidedly different from the rest. As such, these works stand out as different and provide the audience time to focus exclusively on aural elements, and to recover from the intense stimulation of the works that feature both aural and visual components to assimilate.

The ability to incorporate elements such as movement and the use of props is only possible because of the Kokopelli Choir Association’s commitment to performing from memory. In Kōrero, “Dance-song to the Creator” is the only piece for which choristers hold folders and read scores, a practice rarely used by the Kokopelli choirs. In her paper on multi-cultural choral music, Luyk addresses memorization:

Western reliance on the printed page points to one final aspect of performance practice – memorization. Once

again, this is a consideration which is mostly applicable to the performance of authentic ethnic music rather than ethnic-influenced music, but it need not be restricted to the former. After all, part of the ethnic flavour of a given performance can be linked to the visual impact of the performers in front of the audience. A choir which is holding black choral folders and reading Latin American rhythms from a score is less likely to embrace the feeling of the music than a choir which has committed the time and effort to memorizing the same music. (Skinner 2005, 26-27)

For the choirs within the Kokopelli Choir Association, memorization enables choristers to gain a deeper understanding of the music that they perform both within the Western art tradition and outside of it. However, especially in the case of music outside the Western art tradition, memorization “not only facilitates the performance, but also frees up the singers, mentally, to incorporate other meaningful performance practices” (Onovwerosuoke 2002, 17 as cited in Skinner 2005, 27). This is particularly evident in Kōrero, with the inclusion of arm movement in the Māori repertoire and the full-body movement in the Haka.

Chorister Alexis Hillyard compares Kokopelli’s approach to performing from memory with other choirs who use a score:

I guess you don’t realize what it does for a performance until you engage with choirs that don’t have that presentation style and you’re like “oh yeah, we get to do a lot more,” because you do miss out on a lot when you just stand and sing, or if you sing with music. That’s another big thing, not having a folder; I’ve always loved that, and so when you do sing with a folder, you’re almost letting the music down a little bit because you’re not completely engaged with the song, but a lot of choirs do. Anyway, I love it and Scott’s really good about letting us give him ideas about movement or position or choreography. So, it’s just really engaging and it lets you communicate with the audience on a way deeper level, and with the piece itself if you’re doing movement with it. It’s just really, really

freeing. It just adds a whole other dimension to the song.
(Interview March 10, 2010)

So for Hillyard, performing from memory allows the singers to be fully at the service of the music and engaged in the performance at hand, without the distraction of holding a score, having mentally internalized the music as notated in the score through the rehearsal process.

Hilary Apfelstadt (2011) discusses the pros and cons of adding extra-musical elements to the choral performance noting that, while visual effects can be illuminating and spatial formations can convey dramatic content of music, too much movement can be distracting, and rehearsing shifts in format or using props can be time consuming, thus detracting from the overall effect. She cautions conductors against adding movement for movement's sake or using gimmicks if it compromises the integrity of the music, but acknowledges that for an audience that is "accustomed to being seduced visually as well as aurally" (2011, 40), the addition of such elements may be worthwhile.

Extending Apfelstadt's discussion, I propose a continuum for the inclusion of extra-musical elements in choral performances with one end being a strictly stand-and-deliver approach and the other extreme being gimmick-laden with movement for movement's sake. While traditional choral practice has been mainly a stand-and-deliver approach, choirs now often move further along this continuum and incorporate extra-musical elements such as different spatial formations on stage, costumes, props, and physical movement (Apfelstadt 2011, 40). Choirs may situate themselves in various positions along this continuum, and their placement may shift from concert to concert, or even from piece to piece within the same concert. For choirs that operate within a mainly traditional approach, changes in spatial formation may be as far along this continuum as

their directors want to go. For show choirs or for youth choirs who operate in the classical mode but consistently include extra-musical elements in performance, their approach may place them closer to the other end of the continuum. Kokopelli concerts, I would argue, would be positioned between the center and the movement end of this continuum, with the Stories concert employing the most extra-musical elements of all concerts in their season.

Over the years, Leithead and I have had several discussions about the challenge in finding a balance between how much can be added to a performance for the sake of innovation and creativity without having it tip into the realm of gimmick-laden or movement for movement's sake. After many years of experimentation with different extra-musical elements, Leithead acknowledges that he is now more aware of that balance than he was in the early stages of his career and the tipping point is something that is always part of his decision-making process of whether or not to add various extra-musical elements to a performance (interview September 26, 2015). Like other Stories concerts, Kōrero pushes boundaries, adding a number of extra-musical elements while remaining sensitive to the tipping point of when these elements detract from the performance rather than enhance it, and as Apfelstadt (2011) explains, creates a “distraction for the audience or compromises the integrity of the music [which] is counterproductive to good music making” (34).

This tipping point, I would argue, varies according to the audience at hand and is determined by how the audience responds to the combination of these elements on stage. For example, some audiences may be partial to a more traditional stand-and-deliver presentational style, especially for music that is technically challenging and requires

complete attention to musical details by the singers for its execution. For other audiences, they may prefer more visual stimulation in a concert program. This may work better with less technically challenging repertoire, or it may be that the audience might tolerate a certain loss in the level of aural precision in favour of the multi-sensory experience that is achieved through the inclusion of both aural and visual components. Judging by audience reception, which included applauding, cheering, weeping, and giving a standing ovation not only at the end of the concert but also part-way through it, the Kokopelli Choir Association found the right balance of innovation and artistry in their Kōrero performance for this particular audience.

This shift towards a more multi-sensory approach to performing is indicative of a further crumbling strong work concept, a paradigm which, according to Dahlhaus (1983) has dominated the historiography of Western art music since the nineteenth century. “The concept ‘work,’ and not ‘event,’ is the cornerstone of music history. Or, to put it in Aristotelian terms, the material of music history resides not in *praxis*, or social action, but in *poiesis*, the creation of forms” (Dahlhaus 1983, 4).⁶⁷ Dahlhaus (1989) asserts that the concept of the classical music canon emerged in Germany during the nineteenth century, and “it was the presence of an imaginary museum of classical works that formed a counterweight to the quest for innovation in the nineteenth century” (24), essentially that there was a need to define what was old in order for composers to distinguish their works as new and innovative. Lydia Goehr (1992) explores this notion further, maintaining that

⁶⁷ A similar debate exists in music education discourse. Proponents of aesthetic education (Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman 1995; Meyer 1967; Reimer 1989) espouse a work-concept of music where the value of a work is intrinsic and can be experienced by listening and focusing on aesthetic, essentially structural, elements of the work. Advocates for praxial education (Alperson 1991, 2010; Elliott 1995; Regelski 2011, 2013), on the other hand, adopt a performance-based approach and view music as social action, focusing on the actions and context of making music rather than on the works themselves.

the canonization of dead composers and formation of musical repertoire of transcendent masterpieces provided musicians with a constant, standardized and enlarged repertoire, but in the process, alienated works from their socio-cultural contexts (247-249). This body of work has dominated choral programming for the past two centuries.

The focus on works rather than performance has also favoured stand-and-deliver choral concert practice over anything that may distract the audience from focusing on the purely aural elements of the music as notated in the score, including over-active conductors, singers who move more than their fellow choristers, or those whose costumes do not conform to the uniformity of the choir's visual impact. In my own post-secondary conducting training, stand-and-deliver was so strongly engrained as a method of performing that it was not even mentioned in the conducting courses or the choral ensemble. It is this uncritical reception of a practice dominated by the strong work concept that in the past two decades has been challenged, partly due to the leadership of choral directors such as Leithead.

Shulamit Hoffmann (2016) echoes this divide between those who understand the concept of choral expression as residing in the reification of musical works and those who see the reification of works as only part of expression, especially within the context of performance (273). She advocates for a broader understanding of expression that “does not negate or occlude the traditional, but expands it” (273). Although choristers and conductors often recognize that choirs communicate with audiences through both the aural and the visual, choral pedagogy focuses almost exclusively on musical sound (278). Hoffmann acknowledges that for conductors, it can be challenging to combine musical learning with presentational learning as “visual expression needs a technical foundation,

as musical expression does, and this is often beyond the purview of conductors or amateur choristers” (279). With his early training in marching bands, Leithead is keenly aware of the power of visual elements to convey expression in musical performances. Beyond his own work in staging, he consistently brings in experts to give his singers a technical foundation in movement through interesting and often challenging choreography.

Within the Western art music tradition, the strong work concept of music began crumbling with the emergence of avant-garde music (Goehr 1992, 260). Dahlhaus (1983) argues that the rise of these open forms, paired with ideological critique against the objectification of music have cast doubt on the strong work concept. He asserts that

[t]hese two developments converge in the belief that, in music, the ‘fixed letter’ capable of being passed down to posterity is less important than the actual musical process, which we might describe as the ‘event’ that emerges partly from the written composition, partly from its realisation in performance and partly from the modes of musical perception, with these three factors interacting on equal terms so that performer and listener are no longer subjected to the tyranny of the composer. (6)

Kokopelli concerts, with their unconventional repertoire choices and extra-musical elements are indicative of a further crumbling of the strong work concept of music.

While it may still apply to much of mainstream choral music and performance practice, the strong work concept, which is based on compliance (Goehr 1992), only partially captures what Kokopelli does in concert. The choir may very well comply with the notational requirements of the scores that they use; however, their inclusion of extra-musical elements beyond the composer’s conception of a work as represented in the score

cannot be ignored.⁶⁸ Of course, outside of the Western art tradition, this concept was never the dominant concept of music. For cultures who have relied on an oral tradition to pass down music, as in many folk traditions and in some Classical traditions where music is taught by a guru to their disciples and disseminated in an aural form, the notion of music being captured within a notated score was never the accepted philosophy. As a result, outside of the Western art tradition, music has not been conceived as a sort of abstract concept in the mind of the composer as represented by the printed page, but rather as aural form and a human activity.

Dahlhaus's (1983) concept of performance as a three-way interaction between composer, performer, and listener more accurately accounts for these elements. Jordan (2008) echoes this idea in his concept of *Communio* in which singers, after having internalized the music through the rehearsal process, share it with an audience. The inclusion of listener, or in the case of *Kokopelli*, listener-spectator is an important one. For conventional choirs, concerts are planned and executed primarily with a focus on what is heard by audience members. It is not that visual elements such as uniforms and the standing formation of choristers are ignored, but they often remain static throughout the concert, inviting the listener to focus on the aural offerings rather than visual ones. In the planning of *Kokopelli* Choir Association concerts, Leithead and his artistic team must continuously evaluate their artistic choices in light of the desired effects on the audience. Changes in lighting, chorister spacing, movement, and the use of props are meticulously

⁶⁸ Cook (2013, 73) is critical of the term "extra-musical," arguing that all elements of a performance can be construed as music. I find however, that the term remains useful in discussing the various components of performance, and to reject the term and subscribe completely to the "music as performance" theory sacrifices clarity in the discussion.

planned to engage audience members visually and aurally as listener-spectators, rather than predominantly as listeners.

More recently, the academic conversation has moved from understanding music and performance as two separate yet related entities towards understanding music *as* performance (Cook 2001, 2003, 2013), a shift which Philip Auslander (2006) calls a “performative turn.” While this way of approaching the relationship between music and performance is novel within musicology, it is essentially how ethnomusicologists have approached their research since the emergence of the discipline. Within musicology, however, this shift alters the discourse about music from one that values works over performance to one that is centered on what musicians do as performers and on “musical events as performances comprising a complexity of expressive means and social interactions” (Auslander 2013, 350). This conceptualization of music builds on the idea that “performance does not exist in order to present musical works, but rather, musical works exist in order to give performers something to perform” (Small 1998, 8). This framework is useful for examining Kokopelli concerts, since the choir does not simply act as an intermediary or middleman (Cook 2001) to convey the works from composer to listener, a view of performers that is consistent with the strong work concept. Instead, the choir acts as interpreters, adding their flair to the composers’ offerings to create a multi-sensory experience for their audiences.

Performance Studies scholar Philip Auslander (2006) goes further, proposing that the direct object of the verb ‘to perform’ is not a work or piece, but first and foremost the musician’s identity in a social realm as opposed to “the execution of a text” (118).

Chorister Steve Wenger explains:

I think we recognize that a lot of choirs don't necessarily think of themselves as performers, but we do. We recognize when an audience comes to see a two hour concert of ours, that they're going to want to see something more than stand and sing with folders, and so I think part of Scott's vision has always been that it's the complete experience. It's like when you go to a rock concert or an opera, there's so many things going on and it's so much more than just an audio presentation, and there's visuals and stuff. And so we've always liked to try different things. I mean, the African music always has dancing with it, so that's pretty easy, but for songs that it's not so easy to dance to, there are things like blocking or tableaux or just subtle movements that you can do with your body that really add to the piece. I guess it's one of those things that we just buy into as a group, especially when we can step back and look at it as a group and look at how it looks. It's definitely worth doing, and it seems to be catching on. I just think it's important to do more for an audience especially if the audience pays to come see you. It's important to give them a performance, not just something they can hear on a CD. (interview April 7, 2010)

For the members of Kokopelli, there is an understanding of their role as performers and with that, the responsibility to connect with audiences on a deeper level than simply an aural one. Visual elements are not randomly selected, but thoughtfully chosen for each piece and serve to expand the expressive capacity of singers and their ability to connect with the audience. Joel Forth compares singing in Kokopelli with singing in FORM, a vocal jazz ensemble also conducted by Leithead:

Probably with Kokopelli, everything comes down to the motivation of each individual piece. We really get to the core of: why are we singing this song? What do we need to convey to the audience with this song? It's about communicating through music. It's about making a connection within ourselves, with each other, and with the audience as well. I mean, I love singing in FORM but it's more about the connection with each other. It's about technically refining and perfecting the piece, and it is about connecting to the audience too, but it's not on such a deep

and emotional, and some people might say spiritual level that Kokopelli does. (interview February 17, 2010)

Chorister Spenser Pasman elucidates the connection between choristers and audience in Kokopelli concerts as compared to his experience in other choirs:

And you feel it from the audience too because you're giving it so much more with everything that you're seeing, but then also with all the movement and all that kind of stuff, that the audience is so much more engaged, so they're giving so much more back to you. So there's this huge give and take the whole concert. It's so totally different than just standing there and singing. (interview February 23, 2012)

For Pasman, the visual elements alter the relationship between performers and audience, creating a much different chorister experience in Kokopelli concerts than in those of other choirs. I would argue that while part of that difference stems from the added expressive capacity of performers through visual elements, part is due simply to the absence of scores on stage. Without the distraction of having scores, choristers are better able to engage in the performance at hand, connect with their audience, and perceive themselves as performers, or Auslander (2006) suggests, perform their musical personae on the stage (118).

With conventional choirs, choristers spend the concert shifting their gaze back and forth from their folder to the conductor for the duration of the performance, creating a predominantly one-way presentation from performers to listeners. Though not necessarily intentionally, this concentrated gaze on the printed score or 'text' rather than on the audience emphasizes the importance of the work and signals to the audience where the focus of the event lies. Nicholas Cook (2003) challenges the concept of music as a

‘text,’ which suggests a “half-sonic, half-ideal object reproduced in performance” (206) and, instead, suggests using the theatrical term ‘script.’”⁶⁹ This term more aptly describes Kokopelli’s use of scores as printed materials that inform the performance at hand, but that do not physically appear on stage and do not dictate or encapsulate all artistic elements embodied in the concert. Without the presence of a ‘text’ or ‘script’ on stage, choristers are able to immerse themselves in the expressive aspects of the music and communicate with the audience, and because they are not looking down at the score, see and respond to the audience’s reactions.

This treatment of the score as a map to a sonic event corresponds to Dalhaus’ (1989) argument over a decade earlier that Western classical music in the nineteenth century was essentially split into twin musical cultures, a distinction between Italian opera and German instrumental music (8). Dahlhaus (1989) asserts that Beethoven symphonies were considered “inviolable” (9) or sacred with the score existing to be deciphered and interpreted as if it were a text that contains the essence of music; whereas, Rossini’s “musical thought hinged on the performance as an event” (9) with the score being flexible as performances needed to be adapted to different theatrical spaces. These twin cultures emerged at the time when civic choirs were being established, and, as outlined earlier, the choral tradition has been largely governed by the strong work concept, or the notion of the score as a repository of the work, with the role of the director and the choir being to deliver that work as closely to the composer’s intention as possible. Leithead, on the other hand, adopts a more flexible approach to the score, thus challenging the established choral performance practice in favour of one that corresponds

⁶⁹ Auslander (2006, 101) is critical of Cook’s term ‘scripts’ arguing that, like the term ‘texts,’ it still puts the work in a position of privilege.

more closely to what Dahlhaus (1989) would align with Rossini culture. This return to a treatment of choral music as aligned with opera and story-telling that must be enacted is a decided move away from the more detached and formal approach to performing choral music that, as in Beethoven's time, often alienated audiences who struggled to understand and appreciate its meaning (Dahlhaus 1989, 10).

Kokopelli's performance practice, which acknowledges the audience as active participants as noted by Pasma above, can be also understood in terms of Christopher Small's (1998) theory of musicking, a framework in which "a music performance is seen as an encounter between human beings that takes place through the medium of sound organized in specific ways" (10). Small conceives of music as a verb instead of a noun, descriptive instead of prescriptive, and free from value judgements; he proposes the following definition: "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing, or practicing, by providing the material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (1998, 9). Small's definition of music as a verb reframes the idea of music in terms of how it is actually practiced and experienced, rather than as abstract conceptions of works. Most importantly though, like Dahlhaus's (1983) view of performance as a three-way interaction between composer, performer, and listener, and Jordan's (2008) concept of *Communio*, Small's notion of musicking acknowledges the significance of the audience in performance, a critical element in Kokopelli's performance practice.

Transformational leadership and ubuntu in the choral performance

Leadership in performance is different than in the rehearsal process as the various components that go into mentoring, inspiring, challenging, and recognizing ensemble

members are not as overt as in rehearsal. Instead of revealing the mechanics of how leadership occurs, the performance setting allows for the scrutiny of the impact of that leadership on performance. It also sheds light on ethical considerations surrounding leadership. As Bass (1998) argues, for a transformational leader to be authentic, the leader must be of sound moral character, their vision must be ethical, and the process of attaining that vision is ethical. The following discussion examines aspects of the Kōrero concert, shedding light on how Leithead's leadership practice is consistent with Bass's designation of an authentic transformational leader and corresponds to an ubuntu ethic.

Idealized influence

The first core component of transformational leadership is idealized influence and relates to the leader's ability to be a role model for their followers who, in turn, seek to emulate the leader and perceive the leader as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination (Bass and Riggio (2006, 6). Within this core component, there are two aspects that must be considered: the first being the leader's behaviour and the second being the elements that are attributed to the leader by followers and by other associates (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). The analysis that follows includes some quotes from choristers although contrasting the previous chapter where the chorister or follower perspective is the focus, the analysis of Leithead's leadership in the concert setting is supported mainly by my own observations as an associate and researcher.

Leithead's behaviour on stage is to be admired. In most Kokopelli Choir Association concerts, Leithead conducts some works from memory, a practice that is uncommon for choral conductors working within the Western art tradition. In Kōrero, Leithead conducts Olson's new arrangement of "Casino" from memory. He begins the

piece at the podium, facing both the audience and the choristers who will be processing onto the stage. Once the choristers all arrive on stage, Leithead leaves the podium and steps up onto the stage to join his choristers. The absence of scores among choristers as well as the conductor is significant. Firstly, it indicates a strong level of trust between choristers and conductor. The choristers must trust that their conductor knows the score well enough to lead the group; they must also trust themselves to be secure in their own part. The conductor, too, must trust the choristers to know their part well enough to perform and have confidence in their own memory to remember all of the necessary details of the piece, which is particularly impressive in a piece that is not structured by text, but rather built using nonsense syllables. Secondly, by not relying on the printed score, a typical practice in performances of Western art music, Leithead maintains a stage configuration that aligns more strongly with the traditional flavour of this arrangement for choir, fiddle, and percussion. The choice to embrace this more casual visual representation instead of a more rigid Western classical one demonstrates respect for folk traditions and a desire for stylistic authenticity of this “ethnic-influenced choral music.”

Another element of idealized influence pertains to the leader’s ability to be a team player (Bass 1985, 202), as evidenced by his shared approach to occupying the podium. Leithead is the associate conductor of Òran and conducts some of the choir’s pieces in concert. For others that are conducted by Kathleen Luyk, the primary director of the choir, Leithead sings with the group. He stands among the other singers, sings from memory, and even wears the black and maroon tunic choral uniform. Kathleen Luyk also wears the Òran uniform and sings with the choir in some of the pieces that she does not conduct. Assistant conductor of Òran, Susan Farrell also wears the choir’s uniform and

sings in all of the choir's pieces that she does not conduct. Being a team player is part of the Association's ethos and, with Leithead leading by example, is embraced by all members of the artistic team. This is particularly evident with Luyk who, although she is the primary director of the choir, shares the conductor's spotlight in concert with both Leithead, the associate conductor, and Farrell, the assistant conductor.

Another indication of idealized influence occurs when a leader takes into consideration ethical and moral consequences of decisions (Bass and Avolio 1995, 2). Leithead's decision to invite Elise Bradley and Bradley Christensen to teach the Māori music for Kōrero demonstrates an ethical approach to music-making. By inviting culture bearers who have been gifted the right to teach and perform Māori music, Leithead is ensuring that the Kōrero concert respects the Māori people to whom the music belongs. Leithead employs the same approach to music of southern Africa on an even larger scale, inviting culture bearers through a chorister exchange program with Kokopelli's sister choirs, Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia and the University of Pretoria Youth Choir of South Africa.⁷⁰ This choice to invite culture bearers provides evidence that not only is Leithead of sound moral character, but that his vision of performing non-Western music is ethical, as is his process of attaining that vision (Bass 1998).

The willingness of a leader to take risks is another element of idealized influence (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). Scott Leithead is a choral pioneer. He works within the tradition of classical choral music-making but is not restrained by that framework. Instead of limiting repertoire to canonic works of the Western art tradition, he also explores world music and commissions new works and arrangements, thus adding to the

⁷⁰ The ongoing partnership with these choirs, including the chorister exchange program, will be examined further in the following chapter.

overall choral repertoire. Beyond his innovative approach to repertoire selection, Leithead has also been a pioneer in how he presents choral music in concert. He discusses his artistic vision for performing choral music in the early days of Kokopelli:

Certainly, the other thing was just trying to think of music in a different way, conducting in a different way, presenting a program in a different way, different ideas in terms of staging or video, that sort of thing. I think that was all a little bit different early on; I didn't see a lot of other people doing that. Now I see a lot more people doing that, which is great in my opinion. I still think you need to be respectful of past traditions too. There's a time and a place for that. I think there has to be an evolution of what's happening with choirs. I can't think of many choirs in Alberta that exist in the same way that they were 15 years ago. They've changed. I don't know if that's us or who it is, but I do think things have changed a lot. (interview February 18, 2010)

Leithead began venturing beyond traditional Euro-centric choral practice early in his conducting career, and since then, other choirs in Canada and beyond have adopted elements of his performance practice, thus changing the overall choral landscape in the province and beyond.⁷¹ His role as a pioneer and choral innovator is recognized not only by the choristers whom he directs, but also by other choral professionals through their adoption of his repertoire and extra-musical elements of performance. The recognition by both his followers and his peers demonstrates both aspects of idealized influence.

As mentioned in chapter five, Leithead has gained much recognition in Canada and abroad, as evidenced by Kokopelli's numerous invitations to perform at various festivals. The choir performs several showcase concerts every year at the Canadian

⁷¹ There are many examples of repertoire and performance ideas that Leithead has brought to Kokopelli's sister choirs and to other choirs in Canada and southern Africa with which he has worked. There have also been instances when Leithead has found YouTube videos of other choirs outside of Canada who have copied the exact movement and extra-musical elements from Kokopelli's YouTube videos without recognition.

Rocky Mountain Festival, where conductors of the choirs in attendance seek new repertoire and performance ideas for the following season. The choir has performed numerous times at Podium, the biennial conference of Choral Canada, as well as at various regional conferences of the ACDA (American Choral Directors Association). Internationally, the choir has performed at the International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference and the Dresden International Children's Choir Festival. Kokopelli has also won Choral Canada's National Competition for Amateur Choirs, placing first in the Mixed-Voice Youth Choir category. These prestigious invitations to perform and a win in a national competition solidify Leithead as role model and "a symbol of success and accomplishment" (Bass 1985, 202) not only to his choristers but also as attributed by associates and fellow choral experts.

Inspirational motivation

The second core component of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation which addresses the transformational leader's ability to "motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work" (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). This happens largely throughout the rehearsal process as discussed in the previous chapter, but evidence of Leithead's leadership can be observed in the concert setting as well.

In Kōrero, Leithead appears to be enjoying himself throughout the concert. He displays enthusiasm and optimism (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6) as he smiles at the choir and moves his body to the music, offering a "thumbs up" at the end of several pieces. The choristers respond to the positivity that Leithead shows them, committing fully to their goal of expressing the music both vocally and physically. Toronto-based opera singer,

Neema Bickersteth who was part of Kokopelli in its inaugural year describes the experience of performing with the choir:

Sometimes it was just stand and perform, but then of course, other times, it's walk in, surrounding the audience. And so, even though it is just a regular, beautiful, classical piece, it's like we're sharing it, rather than just - I don't know - rather than just a presentation of our excellence. It's like: "here's something that we can pass between each other, and the audience." And half the time, there didn't need to even be an audience, because we were so into the music and each other, and just the idea of sharing that - that was enough in itself. (interview December 27, 2009)

These moments of connection between choristers through the music were a common theme in my interviews, as they occur so frequently in the choir that choristers refer to them as "Kokopelli moments." Having sung in several choirs both as an amateur and as a professional, Bickersteth notes that these moments were common with Kokopelli but not with other choirs:

It was pretty regular, considering that any other choir I'm with, that doesn't necessarily happen, but it happened quite often, I think, for us, which is crazy. (interview December 27, 2009)

Bickersteth's description of these intense moments of connection and sharing, rather than a more emotionally-detached presentation of excellence provides evidence of Leithead's inspirational motivation as he "excites us with [his] visions of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together" (Bass 1985, 203). This notion of only being able to achieve "Kokopelli moments" where choristers are bonded through their shared efforts to create music corresponds to an ubuntu concept which favours communalism and interdependence over individualism and competition (Kamwangamalu 2008).

Intellectual stimulation

The third component of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation, where transformational leaders encourage creativity among their followers, and followers are part of the process of addressing problems and finding solutions (Bass and Riggio 2006, 7). While evidence of this component of transformational leadership is more abundant in the rehearsal process, it is still present in the concert setting.

Chorister Steve Wenger discusses chorister expectations in Kokopelli performances:

There are a lot of very subtle moments in Kokopelli where you have to take ownership of the artistry of the music. You have to be responsible for what's going on because there's just so much going on, and there are so many people and there's only one director. I feel almost artistically connected to what we're doing especially in performances, at least at one point in every song where, like I say, it's just important that we take ownership of it ourselves.
(interview April 27, 2010)

This notion of personal ownership and responsibility for what happens on stage emerged as a strong theme in the interviews. Mascato exchange student Tula Tuli-Mevava explains how she gauges her own success as a performer:

When we'd sing in Banff "Hodie" and "The World's Desire" - those are my favourite songs - and also "After the War" in Banff, when we'd sing these songs, people cried in the audience. Instead of feeling what they're feeling, I feel inspired when I see an audience member cry, because I feel that I'm doing my job as a chorister to pass on whatever message I'm passing on to them. If maybe they're relating to something in their life, it means a lot to me. It means I have done my job in learning my music and singing my music in the right way to make this person cry. It makes me feel so good inside. It makes me appreciate everyone, each and every chorister, and it inspires me to do more.

Yeah, whenever someone cries, it makes me feel good.
(interview June 10, 2010)

For Tuli-Mevava, a successful performance is not simply singing everything in a technically correct fashion, but rather conveying the message of the music so that it is received in such a way by the audience to elicit an obvious emotional response.

Although forming a connection with an audience is certainly not exclusive to Kokopelli singers, it is an important part of Kokopelli choristers' performance ethos and is discussed during the rehearsal process. In most choirs, the importance of connecting with an audience and guidance on how to do so are not ignored, but they are not commonly discussed to the same extent as in Kokopelli. Also, while a traditional stand-and-deliver approach to performance can certainly result in the same response, the presence of a printed score often creates a barrier between the singers and the audience. Without a score, singers must be completely engaged in the performance, and through intellectual stimulation, are empowered to connect on an even more personal level with the audience. As Tuli-Mevava explains, she is able to visually assess her own connection with an audience in the moment, something that may not occur as often in other choirs where choristers are shifting their gaze between the conductor and their score, and may only look at the audience once the piece is finished.

Joel Forth shares another vignette:

In my first year, we did a piece called "Come Sweet Death." Bach.⁷² Yeah, that's the one with the movement at the end and we brought it back a couple years after for

⁷² This 1980 arrangement of "Bach (Again) Come Sweet Death" was conceived by Edwin London and arranged by Rhonda Sandberg. It has the choir sing the full chorale as written by Bach, and then sing it again together adding suggested movement or "choralography", followed by the verse sung with movement slowly by choristers, each at their own pace, creating an aleatoric soundscape of shifting harmonies and movement (Bach, London and Sandberg 1980, 1-3).

our reunion concert. That was especially special, simply because at the end where everyone's doing that movement, you are completely on your own but still so surrounded by everyone else, and I don't know really what to say about that moment but it truly is where every individual is expressing themselves. In a section of a piece like that, there are no passengers in the choir. Everyone is a leader because everyone has their own part, and you're expressing it vocally and you're expressing it physically at the same time. (interview February 17, 2010)

This notion that “there are no passengers in the choir” aligns with the core component of intellectual stimulation, where “followers are encouraged to try new approaches” (Bass and Riggio 2006, 7), essentially taking responsibility for their own creative work during the piece. Broodryk (2005) addresses this concept in the context of ubuntu management, noting that “people who are entrusted with responsibility, and who are encouraged to use their own initiative, tend to adopt a responsible attitude” (45). Within both transformational leadership and ubuntu management, leaders must empower their followers to actively engage in the pursuit of the group's overall vision.

Individualized consideration

The fourth component of transformational leadership is individualized consideration in which the leader provides followers with opportunities for achievement and growth within a supportive environment, and recognizes the needs and desires of individuals within the larger group (Bass and Riggio 2006, 7). In the Kōrero concert, singers are challenged to learn a significant amount of music in a variety of languages, perform this music from memory, and incorporate visual elements such as movement, spatial changes, choreography, and the use of props. Some members of the organization are also challenged to be creative in other ways including producing video segments for

the concert and creating new arrangements to be performed. In Kōrero, several solos feature individual voices within the groups, and choristers are featured in a number of segments as dancers or public speakers. These opportunities are plentiful and are shared so that it is not always the same choristers who are showcased in these roles. There are also many opportunities for choristers to work with resident percussionist and coach, Tova Olson, to learn various percussion parts that accompany the choirs. The challenges of performing as a chorister and the opportunities to take on additional roles in Kokopelli Choir Association concerts help choristers to be innovative and to grow as individual artists and performers.

The Kōrero concert also demonstrates Leithead's relationship with the various members of the Kokopelli Choir Association's artistic team. He is incredibly complimentary and gracious in his introductions of fellow conductors and instrumentalists. Following the mid-concert standing ovation after "From a Distance" and leading into "Lamma Bada Yatathanna," Leithead takes the mic:

"Thank you so much. What a gift the day that Kitbielle walked through the door and came to Canada. She is an absolutely amazing artist and she's been my assistant conductor with Kokopelli for the last couple of years and ah, she's such a great person to work with, absolutely amazing spirit. Her spirit comes through her singing and you can see it. That's exactly who she is, a beautiful person. We're going to continue with another brand-new arrangement of something totally different, and this just shows how incredibly talented Tova is, not just that she's played seventeen-thousand instruments in this concert [audience chuckles], but she composes music that you do not expect, all the time for us..."

He continues his introduction of "Lamma Bada Yatathanna" explaining different musical elements of the piece and introducing the featured dancers and the organization's long-

time choreographer. In these few minutes, Leithead conveys to the audience, choristers, and his artistic staff how much he values the individual contributions of others, thus treating them as individuals and not only members of the group (Bass and Avolio 1995). This treatment also corresponds to an ubuntu ethic where the community or in this case, the ensemble, does not engulf the individual, but allows “each individual to become a unique centre of shared life” (Shutte 2001, 9).

Summary

The Kokopelli Choir Association’s approach to performance deviates from typical choral practice. Instead of performing works from a variety of historical eras, Scott Leithead focuses on new classical choral repertoire and world music. Instead of maintaining the choral canon by performing works by composers of choral music deemed significant for the quality, quantity, and lasting popularity of their music among choral conductors, choristers, and audiences over centuries, Leithead pioneers new works. He contributes to the body of choral repertoire by commissioning new compositions by established composers annually and encourages his choristers and members of the Association’s artistic team in their compositional pursuits. By working with chorister composers and arrangers and giving them opportunities to workshop new pieces and have their works performed by outstanding choirs, Leithead enables emerging composers and arrangers to develop their skills and hone their craft.

For the world music that his choirs perform, Leithead strives to honour the people to whom the music belongs by inviting culture bearers to work with his choristers and teach them how to perform non-Western music with cultural sensitivity and attention to the specific nuances inherent in the music. Finally, the choirs of the Kokopelli Choir

Association do not adhere to the choral performance tradition of holding a score in a stand-and-deliver position. Instead, choristers perform from memory, incorporating a number of extra-musical elements including movement, dance, props, lighting, and video.

The innovation and creativity inherent in Kokopelli Choir Association concerts stems from the dynamic leadership of Scott Leithead at the helm. He displays behaviours associated with the four components of transformational leadership and his decisions are guided by an ubuntu ethic. Idealized influence essentially deals with a leader's worthiness of admiration as demonstrated by their behaviour and by the recognition of worthiness by others. With his commitment to being a team player, his pioneering spirit and creativity, as well as his willingness to take risks artistically, Leithead demonstrates behaviours that align with idealized influence. These behaviours have led to national and international acclaim for Leithead within the choral community.

Leithead's enthusiasm and optimism, two elements of inspirational motivation, are evident in the concert setting, and his singers embrace his challenge to go beyond presenting a technically excellent performance but also engage emotionally and share of themselves on stage, thus connecting with the music, with him, with each other, and with the audience in *Communio* (Jordan 2008). Leithead encourages creativity among his choristers, programming music in which they must take an active role in conveying the message of the works both aurally and visually, all of which align with intellectual stimulation. Leithead's leadership can also be described as individualized consideration, specifically his empowerment of choristers to develop as artists and his provision of opportunities for their growth through solos, percussion parts, public speaking, dancing, and video production. He also shows his appreciation for the individual contributions of

choristers and members of the Association's artistic team, which is consistent with individualized consideration.

Perhaps most importantly, Leithead's treatment of the Māori music in the Kōrero performance establishes him as an ethical leader. Leithead demonstrates ethical character by acknowledging that he alone is not able to teach Māori music in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way. His vision and process of inviting culture bearers to teach Kokopelli singers the Māori music is ethically sound and consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy. His choice to not show full songs in the choir's YouTube compilation as per the agreement between the guest artists and the Māori elders who taught them the music also demonstrates a commitment to ethical processes in performance. As such, the Kōrero concert reveals that Leithead's leadership is not only inspirational and charismatic, but also ethical. His choices align with an ubuntu ethic, and he adopts a deeply humanistic approach to both music-making and interacting with people. As a result, Leithead's approach is consistent with Bass's (1998) characterization of an authentic transformational leader.

CHAPTER 8: AFRICAN PROJECTS

Introduction

In addition to developing their musical and performance skills through participating in the choir, Kokopelli choristers also develop cultural sensitivity, empathy, and a sense of responsibility and empowerment to make the world a better place. Through Kokopelli's African Projects program, the singers participate in meaningful outreach initiatives, making their experience in the choir not only an aesthetic and social one, but also a humanitarian one. The following chapter investigates the impact of Scott Leithead's leadership on the Kokopelli Choir Association's African Projects outreach program, as well as his ethical motivation for engaging in these extra-musical endeavours.

Leithead is somewhat familiar with the term 'ubuntu,' having attended the 1998 ISME conference in Pretoria whose theme was "Ubuntu" and having named a Kokopelli concert "Ubuntu" in 2014, yet he does not consciously ascribe to the philosophy. His actions and those of his choristers, however, correspond with many of its facets, including caring, respect, and compassion (Benghu 1996; Gade 2011), interdependence, communalism and collectivism (Kamwangamalu 2008; Ncube 2010), the sacredness of human life, community, and inclusivity (Benghu 1996), hospitality, generosity, and selflessness (McAllister 2009). I argue that this ethic or worldview describes Leithead's motivation for leading his choristers and the Kokopelli Choir Association in meaningful and ongoing outreach initiatives that go far beyond typical choral practice, and it is Leithead's adherence to a worldview consistent with ubuntu that renders his leadership practice congruent with Bass's designation of an authentic transformational leader.

In Bass's (1998) further development of his (1985) theory of transformational leadership, which stemmed from discussions with James MacGregor Burns, he includes three moral aspects to differentiate authentic transformational leaders from pseudo-transformational leaders, or leaders who display some of the core components of transformational leadership but whose motivation is self-serving and narcissistic. These moral aspects are first, that the leader must be of sound moral character; second, that his or her vision is ethical; and third that the process of attaining this vision is ethical. Beyond Leithead's leadership in rehearsal and in performance, African Projects provides further evidence of his espousal of these moral aspects in his choral practice. These aspects, however, do not adequately capture the significance of what African Projects has done and continues to do in terms of providing support for Kokopelli's sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa. While the three moral aspects denote a minimum standard of ethics, essentially that the leader, his vision, and his process of attaining his vision cannot be unethical or cause harm, they do not adequately explain the ethic or worldview that motivates these efforts. Ubuntu fills in the gap, enabling a more thorough examination of the ethical aspects of Leithead's leadership.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction of how Leithead's interest in choral music from southern African that began early in his career grew into a passion not only for the music but also for the culture and the people. This section traces how the choral music of southern Africa became an important part of Kokopelli's repertoire, how the choir increased their understanding of southern African cultures through concert tours, and how Kokopelli forged personal connections with singers from Namibia and South Africa by establishing sister choir relationships.

The second section provides an overview of how African Projects began, its fundraising projects, and its outreach activities. The section continues with a more thorough account of the key cultural encounters between Kokopelli and its sister choirs including anniversary tours and an ongoing cultural exchange program between Kokopelli and its sister choirs. The third section explores the significance of African Projects and the impact of Kokopelli's ongoing support on its sister choirs. The fourth section examines the role of African Projects as a vehicle for cultural understanding and for the development of Kokopelli choristers as engaged global citizens. The fifth section, which addresses concerns with African Projects, is followed by an analysis of African Projects through the lens of transformational leadership, and the final section shows how ubuntu and transformational leadership come together to provide a thorough understanding of Leithead's leadership practices.

Kokopelli's connections to southern Africa

Kokopelli's connections to southern Africa began with Leithead's interest in the music of southern Africa, increased through concert tours, and deepened further through the bond they forged with its sister choirs.

Southern African choral music and Kokopelli

From early in his career as a student teacher until today, Leithead has been passionate about the choral music of southern African. This repertoire has always incited a strong emotional reaction in him (interview February 10, 2010). Toronto-based opera singer and Kokopelli alumna, Neema Bickersteth, describes Kokopelli's repertoire in its first season: "And then we did some 'African' music [laughing] — in that first year, I put it in quotes because no one really knew anything, and it's not like anyone had gone to

Africa yet” (interview December 27, 2009). Still, at that time, Leithead was not satisfied with merely dabbling in the repertoire, and so in 1997, he arranged for a day-long workshop with Juba, a local Juno-nominated *a cappella* group that sang choral music from southern Africa.⁷³ Leithead (2009) explains the results of that interaction:

The effects of the music, which incorporated both traditional movement and emulation of the rich, full vocal tone associated with the tradition, were twofold: firstly, the voice-body connection was enhanced by the use of African movement, freeing my choir’s sound by encouraging active breath support; and secondly, emulating the traditional sound of the music helped to develop a warmer, taller and fuller sound and a better sense of balance in the ensemble. (46)

Kokopelli’s ongoing engagement with this repertoire continues to enhance the choir’s vocal production.

Leithead deepened his passion for African music when he attended the biennial International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference in Pretoria, South Africa in 1998. He was a member of the 2000 ISME world conference planning board from 1996-2000, and in preparation for Edmonton’s hosting of the event, Leithead was part of a delegation that attended the conference in South Africa. There, he was inspired by performances by several African choirs, especially the now-defunct Namibian National Youth Choir directed by Ernst von Biljon. When Leithead was planning the first Kokopelli tour to Africa, he contacted von Biljon about connecting with his choir, but because it had since folded, von Biljon suggested that Leithead contact Mrs. Ena Venter,

⁷³ According to Scott Rollans, a member of the now-defunct Juba, the ensemble learned their first southern African songs from sheet music; these South African freedom songs were collected and published by Swedish conductor Anders Nyberg. Over the years, they learned many songs from recordings and by rote from African friends. None of the core members were from southern Africa. Four were born in Canada, one was an American-born naturalized Canadian, and the other was Jamaican. For a couple of years, a seventh member joined the group; he was Liberian. (personal correspondence, July 4, 2016)

the director of the Mascato Coastal Youth Choir. That connection became an important one to Leithead both personally and professionally, and in 2008-2009, Leithead spent his sabbatical year in Namibia as Mascato's guest director. Though most of his time that year was spent working with Mascato, he was also "able to research and observe choral music in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Kenya, and South Africa" (Leithead 2009, 46).

Kokopelli's performance of choral music from southern Africa has changed significantly since the choir's early days, due largely to the choir's partnerships with its sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa. Now, southern African choral music, referred to by the choir as 'African music,' is a staple part of Kokopelli's repertoire. Tenor Steve Wenger remarks: "I guess we are most known for our African music; people recognize us as that 'African choir' that is white" (interview April 7, 2010).⁷⁴ The process of learning the core set of songs and their associated movement takes place early in the Kokopelli season and is somewhat of a rite of passage for new Kokopelli members as they become part of Kokopelli's tradition of singing southern African choral music. New singers learn the music by ear, but are given a set of lyric sheets in order to help them memorize the core repertoire of approximately a dozen songs. This music is not taught during regular rehearsals; rather, returning members teach it to new members in sessions held prior to regular rehearsals over the course of several weeks. Many returning choristers attend these sessions in order to help new members learn the songs. By singing the harmonies along with the new members and by modeling the associated movement, returning choristers facilitate the new members' learning. The songs are not complicated melodically, harmonically, or rhythmically. Instead, the challenge to learning them for

⁷⁴ Approximately 85% of Kokopelli singers are of European descent while the remaining 15% are of Asian, Southeast Asian, and African descent. The exact break-down changes from year to year, but generally stays in this range.

performance lies in the coordination of musical aspects with movement, which for many new Kokopelli members is unfamiliar and initially, uncomfortable. As a result, the dissemination of this segment of Kokopelli's repertoire is best done through the oral tradition from which it came, rather than through the printed score, which is how Kokopelli choristers learn the rest of their repertoire. By teaching the southern African choral repertoire orally, Leithead and the returning choristers are observing the teaching and learning practices of the culture from which the music comes, a practice that is consistent with a culturally responsive teaching or culturally relevant pedagogy (Bond 2014, 12; Goetze 2000, 25; Shaw 2012, 78).

Kokopelli concerts often feature one or two southern African songs with movement in their formal programs. However, this repertoire plays a key role for the choir when they perform for other events beyond their concerts, including television spotlight features, guest performances at events, and busking to fundraise for African Projects at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival. Selections from the Association's core repertoire of southern African songs are also performed informally by members of Kokopelli and Òran after most Kokopelli concerts. In this tradition, singers from Kokopelli and Òran gather in the lobby or outside the church venue immediately following a concert and sing as patrons exit the venue. Alumni of the choirs attending the concert often join in with the singing and associated movement.

Leithead (2009) identifies several positive outcomes of incorporating southern African choral music into Kokopelli's repertoire beyond the boundaries of the music itself (47). Firstly, he explains that it helps choristers develop a sense of internalized pulse, because they must deal with complex rhythms, often singing in one meter while

performing movement in another (47). Secondly, the movement associated with this repertoire helps choristers connect the voice and the body, including coordinating breath, vocalization, and resonance, as well as developing a “taller” tone, particular for the men’s sections. Though there is variance according to language groups, “the tone production is often more in the chest voice, with a somewhat harsher, louder quality” (47). Leithead finds that the vowels used in many southern African languages are almost identical to those in *bel canto* singing, and that plosive consonants tend to be softer and more dentalized than in English and, therefore, can be transferred to Latin and other romance languages (47). Within performance practice of traditional southern African choral songs, a variety of arrangements and creativity is encouraged. Opportunities for creativity and artistry include adding harmony lines, variations on the movement, a descant, traditional calls or ululations, or changing ensemble or country names within lyrics, thus giving choristers a sense of ownership of the piece (47). Finally, Leithead identifies the promotion of inter-cultural understanding through an exploration of the text and history of the songs they sing as another benefit of incorporating the choral music of southern Africa into Kokopelli’s repertoire (47-48).

Kokopelli in southern Africa

Kokopelli’s three concert tours to southern African in 2004, 2007, and 2013 have helped the choir expand their understanding of choral music in southern Africa by connecting not only with its sister choirs but other musical groups as well. For the 2013 tour, Scott Rollans, a Vacilando member and the father of two Kokopelli choristers chaperoned the tour and maintained a blog during the trip. In an entry dated August 6, 2013, in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, Rollans describes their day on tour which began

with wildlife sightings at the Addo Elephant Park, continued with a workshop, and ended with a joint concert with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) choir.

Upon arriving at the university, Kokopelli enjoyed a workshop with a local group, Uphondo Lwe Afrika, which specializes in traditional Xhosa song and dance. The choir then retired to the NMMU choir's rehearsal room to prepare for the 7:00 p.m. shared concert. Kokopelli took the stage first and, as usual, was very warmly received. Once again, the African repertoire got the biggest response, with "Kwela Kwela" earning a spontaneous standing ovation... After NMMU's performance, both of our groups moved on to a nearby community centre for a casual meal and get-together. Given the chance to mix on a social level, we quickly cemented our friendship. The evening ended with a boisterous singing session (see a sample here⁷⁵) and countless warm hugs. (Rollans 2013)

Beyond simply documenting Kokopelli's interactions with two different musical groups in South Africa, this blog entry provides insight into the group's ability to connect with singers and audiences across cultures. The post-concert gathering reveals a sense of community between the two choirs, who prior to that day had never met, as they shared a meal and sang songs that overlapped both choirs' repertoire. Socialising as a group is part of an ubuntu life and often involves spontaneous singing and informal dancing (Broodryk 2005, 110). At this gathering, the choirs' shared repertoire provided a medium through which the singers could connect personally. Although they came from vastly different backgrounds and geographic locations, in this time and space, they became simply a community of singers. Their shared love of music, in a sense, redefined them as being part of the same community, and singing songs together became a way to enact this community through "musicking" (Small 1998).

⁷⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Saq33aIKduM&feature=youtu.be>

During both formal and informal performances on their tours of southern Africa, Kokopelli has received enthusiastic responses to their southern African choral repertoire. Chorister anecdotes and documented video footage reveal audiences clapping wildly, dancing on the spot, and often joining in with the choir for traditional songs. Leithead describes the response that Kokopelli has received on countless occasions when they have performed southern African choral repertoire on their tours of southern Africa:

Audiences love it. They feel affirmed a lot of the times. Like, they can't believe that here's this group from the other side of the world that is singing cultural music from their countries, and not just traditional music, but when we sing an Afrikaans piece or just a piece that has a connection to Africa. [...] They're really appreciative, especially the Black cultures because so often in their country, many of the academics don't consider the music necessarily very valid. So, when they see that this music is being affirmed by people on the other side of the world, it's really moving. (interview August , 2016)

Leithead's observation of the divide between traditional African music and the music academies within Africa is astute. Ethnomusicologist, Jean Ngoya Kidula (2006) asserts that "music academies in Africa inherited their structures from the educational system of their former colonial powers" (99) and because Western music favours written texts, African music that has been disseminated through oral transmission has generally been viewed as less worthy. Kidula (2006) explains that after WWII, ethnomusicology provided a point of entry for the serious study of African music (100), but within the discipline, African music was positioned more as a cultural study rather than a musical one (104). Though ethnomusicology has shifted from its European positioning of other cultures with Euro-American scholars as objective outsiders towards a more inclusive approach that recognizes the biases of all scholars and includes more local researchers

and performers (110), remnants of that divide between European art music and the oral traditions within African communities remain.

African music scholar Kofi Agawu (2007) addresses the legacy of this divide, arguing that by following Western citation practices in scholarship, African intellectuals are less likely to be given full credit for their knowledge and instead act as an informant to Euro-American ethnomusicologists (259). Agawu challenges scholars to closely investigate oral culture as a means of preserving and disseminating knowledge for a more Africa-centered citation practice (262). Although Leithead is careful to share with his singers the cultural context of the music that they sing and to teach the music in a culturally responsive way (Cho 60), the study of these elements never eclipses the choir's engagement with the music itself. Beyond the choir's stylistically accurate performances of traditional songs of southern Africa, it is perhaps more so the ensemble's genuine passion for the music and their obvious pleasure in performing it that has resulted in so many enthusiastic responses from audiences on their tours of southern Africa.

Sister choirs

Since 2004, Kokopelli has had two sister choirs which they have supported through African Projects. Initially, those choirs were the Mascato Youth Choir, as noted above, and the Siyacula Youth Choir. After Siyacula ceased operations in 2010, Kokopelli became sister choirs with the University of Pretoria Youth Choir.

The Mascato Youth Choir (formerly the Mascato Coastal Youth Choir) is based in Swakopmund, Namibia. Retired school teacher Mrs. Ena Venter founded the choir in 1996 in response to the removal of music from the school curriculum. Venter directed Mascato until 2012, at which point alumnus and assistant conductor of the group, Theo

Cookson took over as director.⁷⁶ When the Mascato Coastal Youth Choir first became a sister choir to Kokopelli, the ensemble was made up of approximately thirty-five singers aged fourteen to twenty-four. Today, the Mascato Youth Choir is made up of 120 singers aged fourteen to eighteen and the Mascato Singers, an alumni group, is made up of approximately forty singers.⁷⁷

Founded in 2003, the Siyacula Youth Choir was based in Somerset West in Cape Town, South Africa and directed by Marijke Roos. According to Leithead (personal correspondence July 4, 2016), Roos and her family left South Africa to escape apartheid (1948-1994) and settled in Edmonton. There, she was the accompanist for the newly-formed Edmonton Youth Choir that Leithead directed. After the end of apartheid in 1994, the Roos family returned to South Africa, and she and Leithead remained in touch.

The University of Pretoria Youth Choir (UPYC) is based in Pretoria, South Africa. It was founded in 2001 and revived in 2005 with nine singers. Directed by Lhente-Mari Pitout since 2005, the group is now made up of over ninety singers from more than thirty schools in the Greater Pretoria Tshwane region. The award-winning choir travels around South Africa and internationally, promoting South African music abroad and acting as ambassadors of choral music within their own country. For singers in UPYC, the choir is

not only cultivating the[ir] interest in music, developing their sense of co-operation and functioning harmoniously in a multicultural environment, but also initiating the first steps to share and influence those around us, to transfer skills & knowledge & creating an understanding of the *value of achieving excellence in an internationally competitive environment* as part of a global community.

⁷⁶ <http://www.mascatoyouthchoir.com/history/>

⁷⁷ <http://www.mascatoyouthchoir.com/mascato-youth-choir/>

Successful participation on the international stage not only ensured various invitations to participate in big international events but also ensured that our singers' view of the world and their role in it expanded beyond themselves, their family and school to something bigger where they influence their surroundings through ownership and commitment as a requirement.⁷⁸

Leithead met Pitout during his sabbatical year in 2008-2009 when she brought UPYC on tour to Swakopmund, Namibia. Near the end of his sabbatical, Leithead travelled to Pretoria and stayed with Pitout and her husband. He was joined by Tuhafeni Michael, a singer from Mascato who was about to come to Edmonton on the chorister exchange. This social trip had the dual purpose of allowing Leithead and Michael to become better acquainted before the exchange and for Leithead to get to know Pitout. On that visit, Leithead and Pitout discussed their respective choirs' philosophies and potential future projects, and in 2010, UPYC and Kokopelli became sister choirs.

For singers in Mascato and UPYC (and formerly in Siyacula), participation in these choirs provides much more than simply a musical education. Like Kokopelli, these choirs also offer their singers a chance to develop tenacity, to strive for excellence, to work in teams, to foster a sense of self-awareness and self-efficacy, and to cultivate empathy for others. Because racial tensions remain a reality that is constantly being negotiated in Namibia and South Africa, within Kokopelli's sister choirs, the cultivation of empathy across racial groups is both challenging and important.

African Projects

Through personal connections with their sister choirs, Kokopelli choristers are able to empathize with youth from choral communities in southern Africa. Moreover,

⁷⁸ <http://www.universityofpretoria.co.za/up-youth-choir>

African Projects creates the opportunity for Kokopelli choristers, audiences, and supporters to make a difference in the world that is both tangible and meaningful.

How African Projects began

African Projects began as Kokopelli was preparing for their first tour to southern Africa in 2004. Being aware of the financial need of choristers with whom they would be connecting on their tour, Kokopelli choristers had assembled gifts of school kits and hygiene kits and held a sing-a-thon fundraiser to cover the cost of transporting the kits. However, the airline waived part of the cargo fees, leaving Kokopelli with additional funds. Leithead explains:

We realized that in Africa, they [choral organizations and their directors] have so little. Funding is a huge issue. They have to feed choristers, and transportation is an issue. I was watching these two directors put so much of their own personal funds in [towards supporting choristers and sustaining the choirs]. In one case, she [Mrs. Venter] had to downsize her house because she couldn't afford to have it anymore; she had spent the money on the choir. [...] That's when we had some extra money [from the sing-a-thon] and we pledged right on that first tour. We said: "We want to give you this much money. We want to give you something, and we don't want this to be just this year, but we think that this can be an ongoing thing." (interview February 18, 2010)

Although Leithead's choice to bring gifts to choirs whom Kokopelli would be meeting on their tour is laudable, this gesture is not entirely unusual as touring groups will often offer gifts to their host choirs. What happened on that tour, however, is far more significant. Leithead, along with his choristers, saw the financial sacrifices that the conductors of their sister choirs were making in order to keep Mascato and Siyacula operating, and instead of ignoring their plight, Leithead offered not only a one-time monetary gift of the funds that remained from the choir's sing-a-thon, but a commitment to support these

conductors and their choirs on an ongoing basis. This commitment is not only consistent with idealized influence, one of the core components of transformational leadership, but also with the ethics of ubuntu. “The ethics of *ubuntu* is a call to action because an ethical being (*umuntu* – a being with moral sense) cannot look on the suffering of another and remain unaffected” (Mkhize 2008, 43). In other words, it is not enough to know what is right, but one must also do what is right.

Leithead does not answer this call to action alone. Instead, he inspires his choristers to become involved, motivating them to participate in the fundraising efforts to support African Projects. As a result, this outreach program has become an integral part of the Kokopelli Choir Association and has had a profound effect on many Kokopelli choristers. Former Kokopelli chorister, Joel Forth who was part of Kokopelli’s first tour to southern Africa, remembers meeting Mascato and Siyacula and forming an instant connection with these ensembles that seemed to share the same ideals, passions, and philosophies as Kokopelli. Forth explains the connection and its effect on Kokopelli choristers:

[W]e felt like they [Mascato and Siyacula choristers] were accepting us with such open arms, yet they went through so much more to be able to do what they were doing, which was really similar to what we’re doing. [...] We figured that we could probably do something to help them with that to equalize a little bit. (interview February 17, 2010)

Kokopelli members have accepted the commitment of raising funds for African Projects as part of their membership in the choir and have embraced the opportunity to help equalize access for teenagers and young adults in these communities in South Africa and Namibia to a similar musical and social experience that Kokopelli singers have in their

own choir. Chorister Steve Wenger describes the rootedness of African Projects within Kokopelli culture:

We are all firm believers in that fact that we should give back to them [sister choirs] for what they've taught us [Kokopelli] culturally and things we've gotten from them [repertoire and knowledge about performance practice], and more so, just the fact that they need so much just to keep their choir functional, operational, especially in South Africa, because in their choir [Siyacula], a lot of times, they [choral organizations and directors] need to go pick everyone up and they [directors] feed them [choristers] because they [choristers] don't get a meal every day. We're [Kokopelli] so lucky over here to have what we have, that especially if we're a non-profit organization, it just makes so much sense to give back to them [sister choirs] and help them with what they do. (interview April 7, 2010)

Wenger's comments reveal several elements of the Kokopelli culture as led by Leithead. Wenger demonstrates an awareness of the challenges in sustaining a choral organization in a developing country, as well as an understanding of his own and his fellow choristers' privilege in Canada. Being aware, however, is not where it ends. For Wenger, the comprehension of that imbalance demands action. Though Leithead and Kokopelli members do not use the term ubuntu, their actions demonstrate a commitment to recognizing hardship in one's fellow man and taking action to ease it, therefore embodying an ubuntu ethic.

I think it's sort of a humbling experience because you realize how lucky you are to be in a choir like Kokopelli. It can become very easy to get a sense of entitlement when you're in Kokopelli, because people treat you like you're something special. [...] So, the African Projects, yes, it makes us feel more special because we're doing something good for other people, but it makes us realize how lucky we are to be able to do the things we do. (Joel Forth interview February 17, 2010)

Here, Joel Forth touches on the satisfaction that Kokopelli choristers gain from helping others as well as their gratitude for living in a society where choristers do not need to worry about having their basic needs met. Beyond that, Forth also conveys his appreciation for being part of a choir like Kokopelli.

Kokopelli has been recognized nationally and internationally through awards and invitations to perform in festivals, giving choristers a sense of pride from being part of the choir. This recognition is particularly evident at the Rocky Mountain Music Festival in Banff, AB, where Kokopelli performs in several showcase concerts annually. Jessica Wu explains Kokopelli's comportment at the festival, for which Leithead explains his expectations annually during one of the rehearsals prior to the festival:

We make a big effort to make sure we go up to other choirs after their performances and tell them something nice about their performance. It's usually pretty inane, like nobody really needs to be told, but it's nice to have that reinforcement. [It is] just to make sure that we're encouraging other choirs as well, because in talking to them, they're all like "Oh, you're talking to me; you're in Kokopelli. This is a really big deal." And we always want to make sure that we're giving back to other people.
(interview February 10, 2010)

Wu's anecdote alludes to the star treatment of Kokopelli choristers within segments of the choral community, as well as Leithead's efforts to help his choristers recognize the successes of others, cultivate humility, and not become conceited. It also sheds light on Forth's assertion that African Projects provides a useful reminder for Kokopelli choristers not to let their privileged treatment lead them to believe that they are more important than others because of their membership in Kokopelli. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who

headed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the end of apartheid rule in South Africa in 1994, explains:

You know when *ubuntu* is there, and it is obvious when it is absent. It has to do with what it means to be truly human, to know that you are bound up with others in the bundle of life. And so we must search for this ultimate attribute and reject ethnicity and other such qualities as irrelevancies. (2003, 26)

Forth's statement about resisting the temptation to see one's status as a member of Kokopelli as distinguished from others could be understood in terms of Tutu's notion of "other such qualities" that should be rejected as irrelevant in determining the worth of a person.

African Projects fundraising

In the thirteen years since African Projects began, the Kokopelli Choir Association has raised over a quarter of a million dollars for its sister choirs in South Africa and Namibia. Fundraising projects over the past decade have included selling Christmas cards, selling pre-paid grocery cards of which the choir keeps a portion of the sales, and for several years, selling raffle tickets for gift baskets at the Christmas concerts. The main fundraising projects, however, have been the annual sing-a-thon and busking at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival, the largest and oldest Fringe theatre festival in North America. For the first several years of African Projects' existence, Kokopelli held a twenty-four hour sing-a-thon at an Edmonton café. Small groups of performers from Kokopelli and Òran and affiliated artists performed in half-hour-long sets around the clock, culminating in a full choir performance in the last hour. Friends and supporters of the choir were encouraged to come by the café and make donations. Donations were also collected online through the Canada Helps website, an

online platform for donating and fundraising.⁷⁹ These annual events typically raised \$10,000-13,000. After several years of raising more money than the previous year, the novelty of the event began to wane and the amount of money raised began to drop.

Then, in 2012, the Association changed their primary African Projects fundraiser to a series of busking spots at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival. Busking within the designated city blocks of the festival is regulated, so every year Kokopelli obtains a permit and a performance schedule for their twenty-minute sets. Organized by senior choristers within the Association, groups of fifteen to twenty singers from Kokopelli and Òran perform two sets per day over the ten-day-long festival with the goal of raising \$10,000-15,000 for African Projects. These short, repeated performances have the additional benefit of solidifying repertoire and performance ability of the participating choristers. Beyond what the singers collect at the festival, additional online donations by Kokopelli supporters help the Association meet these fundraising goals. This format has worked well for the Association as it is easier to organize than the sing-a-thon, it raises as much or more money, and it spreads awareness of African Projects to a much wider audience.

A new fundraising project for African Projects was the 2015 establishment of Legato Music, an online distributor of digital sheet music. Over the years, Kokopelli has been gifted numerous new arrangements of southern African folk songs by arrangers and some original compositions by composers affiliated with its sister choirs. These songs are a staple of Kokopelli's repertoire and Leithead often teaches them in his workshops with other choirs. He was always bothered by the fact that these composers and arrangers were never adequately recognized or compensated for their artistic work once other

⁷⁹ <http://www.canadahelps.org>

groups added the songs to their repertoire. He has also been frustrated by the fact that many North American arrangers have been claiming arrangements by other choirs and arrangers as their own and publishing them (interview September 26, 2015). Leithead has been asked many times by publishers for the rights to publish pieces given to him by Kokopelli's sister choirs as part of their published series, but he has always rejected their offers, explaining that the compositions and arrangements do not belong to him but to various southern African composers, arrangers, and ensembles with whom he is affiliated. According to Leithead, with mainstream music publishers, composers receive only nine to twelve percent of the proceeds of sales, which he did not see as adequate compensation for their artistic work (interview September 26, 2015). The result was the establishment of Legato Music Publishing.

Tova Olson, former member of Òran and long-time accompanist, percussion coach, and arranger in the Association took on the venture of establishing an online publishing company with all of the profits, approximately eighty-five percent of the sale price, going to the composer or arranger. She connected with publisher Chee-Ming in Singapore who sold band music and established a choral branch of the company. This project, which furthers the mission of African Projects to support choral ensembles and artists across in southern Africa, would never have begun without Olson's leadership. Unlike Kokopelli's other fundraising activities, which involve Kokopelli singers raising money to support their sister choirs, Legato Music provides a forum for southern African musicians and artists to raise money for themselves. By supplying the platform to promote and sell scores of new compositions and arrangements of traditional music, Kokopelli is creating opportunities for members of its sister choir communities to

generate their own funds. Instead of being the recipients of charitable donations, these artists are provided the chance to benefit financially from their own creative work. The establishment of Legato Music corresponds to one of Benghu's (1996) definitions of ubuntu as "a way of life that contributes positively towards sustaining the well-being of a people, community or society" (5).

African Projects activities

Kokopelli forged cultural and personal connections with its sister choirs during their first tour in 2004, and on that tour, brought gifts and covered the cost of many expenses including group meals for the ensembles. Their ongoing financial support under the African Projects umbrella, however, was formally established in 2006. Since then, funds from African Projects have been used for a number of items and activities: choral materials for its sister choirs including choir uniforms for Siyacula; printed scores for Mascato, Siyacula, and UPYC; choral workshops for Siyacula and Mascato; and transportation for Siyacula singers. African Projects has also funded a number of projects that have been more personal in nature and have helped individual choristers from its sister choirs. In one case, this assistance involved providing financial support to Siyacula member and former exchange student Thulani Makwenda through private school. In another case, African Projects provided a scholarship to a young mother and member of Mascato to begin her university studies. For several others, African Projects has paid for dental work for members of Siyacula. Paying for dental work may seem outside of the scope of what might be covered through a choral group, but Kokopelli's African Projects website explains what the alternative would have been if the Siyacula singers had not been provided this dental care in Canada:

Unfortunately the dental care they would have received in Somerset West would have involved the extraction of the bad teeth as opposed to proper dental reconstruction and fillings. This sort of procedure would have been devastating to the choristers' self-esteem, as well as severely hindering their ability to sing.⁸⁰

Funds from African Projects have also been used by UPYC to sponsor individual singers, covering the cost for more than twenty singers annually who would not otherwise be able to afford the choir fees. In addition to these activities and purchases, African Projects has also funded two anniversary tours for its sister choirs and an ongoing chorister exchange program.

Anniversary tour projects

Two years after Kokopelli's first trip to Namibia and South Africa, the choir decided that they would celebrate their tenth anniversary in 2006 by bringing one of its sister choirs, the Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia, to Canada to join them on a tour of Western Canada. Funding the entire trip for Mascato included covering the group's travel to and from Africa, as well as their travel, accommodations, and expenses through the tour of Alberta and British Columbia. Although Kokopelli had raised much of the money, a month before the tour was to take place, they were still short of the \$150,000 total that the project would cost. Leithead recounts the turning point in that fundraising campaign:

We had to make it happen and the choristers really stood up. They all changed. Joel [Forth], he stood up at rehearsal one day and said something and that changed the course of what we did and how it happened. Just his words were perfectly timed, and everybody said "yeah, we can do this." Then all of a sudden, the money came in, and within

⁸⁰ <http://africanprojects.org/about/>

a month. It was a month before they were supposed to come and we still didn't know for sure if they were coming, and that week after, we were able to make it happen. (interview Feb 18, 2010)

In 1996, well before Facebook, the choir had an online discussion page where choristers could post messages. Chorister Joel Forth wrote a long message to the choir explaining that this initiative would be something that they would be proud of for years, that they would never regret doing it, but that they would certainly regret not doing it. Leithead had read that post and invited Forth to share his thoughts in the rehearsal. It was that speech given by a chorister that inspired the members to increase their fundraising efforts, and in many cases, make cash donations themselves. That initiative, through which Kokopelli raised the entire \$150,000 with very little outside sponsorship, remains something of which Kokopelli members are deeply proud. It would not have happened without the final push that resulted from a chorister who, empowered to be part of the process of finding solutions, spoke up and challenged his fellow choristers to look at the problem in a new way.⁸¹ This anecdote sheds light on the culture of Kokopelli and on Leithead's leadership, specifically how it aligns with inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.

Leithead describes Kokopelli's tenth anniversary tour with Mascato:

Having them [Mascato choristers] here and watching their joy, and having them experience so much of that tour with us [Kokopelli], for us to experience that tour together, for my kids and their kids to do all these joint concerts together in all these communities - it was an incredible, incredible

⁸¹ This change in perspective on the part of Forth and his fellow choristers which prompted them to take action is similar to transformational learning in adult education in which "perspective transformation involves (a) an empowered sense of self, (b) more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, and (c) more functional strategies and resources for taking action" (Mezirow 1991, 161).

thing to watch how people had such an outpouring of love and generosity towards them. We [Leithead and Kokopelli] were able to just watch it all happen, and feel like we were a part of it, and how cool that was. It was a spectacular time for us. I mean, they are so connected with us, and to spend so much time with them and see our programs grow and develop through that whole time. It was like having your best friend there the whole time. That was a really cool project. (interview Feb 18, 2010)

The joint tour reflected an ubuntu ethic in several ways. First, it demonstrated caring, sharing, and respect, some of the key facets of ubuntu (Benghu 1996; Gade 2011). It also demonstrated the active pursuit of understanding and empathy. As choral music scholar Hilary Apfelstadt (2011) remarks, touring with a choir can be a window to cultural understanding, since “customs, habits, and lifestyles all differ from ours, and in observing those of other people who share their love of music, we can develop greater tolerance for different ways of doing things” (28). Despite cultural differences and vastly different economic and social realities, the singers from the two choirs were able to share the tour experience and establish a sense of solidarity and community between the groups.

Kokopelli has continued with this tradition and, for their twentieth anniversary, raised over \$90,000 to bring their other sister choir, the University of Pretoria Youth Choir (UPYC) to Canada from April 16 to May 3, 2016, for a tour of Alberta and British Columbia. With funds raised through African Projects, Kokopelli was able to pay for UPYC’s registration in two festivals, bus transportation, accommodations, and meals, essentially covering all expense of the trip except the flights. These two tour initiatives, which involved extensive fundraising and dedication on the part of Kokopelli members, can be described as embodying an ubuntu ethic, specifically Leithead and his choristers’ acknowledgement of the imbalance of opportunities between Kokopelli and its sister

choirs and their attempt to provide equilibrium (Broodryk 2005, 9). Within an ubuntu worldview, personal growth is achieved “only by means of the coming into being of a community of persons characterised by the fullest possible mutuality and reciprocity” (Shutte 2008, 33). Kokopelli singers have enjoyed hospitality from their sister choirs on their African tours, but without the financial support of Kokopelli’s African Projects, the opportunity to travel to Canada and have a similar experience would never have been possible for Mascato or UPYC. By sponsoring tours for their sister choirs, Kokopelli members have been able to reciprocate the hospitality shown to them in southern Africa. Kokopelli’s tours to southern Africa and its sister choirs’ tours to Canada have provided singers in each of these ensembles with meaningful opportunities for personal growth through the establishment of a reciprocal relationship between choirs and a kin-like relationship that transcends borders.

The African Projects exchange program

The exchange program is one of the key initiatives of African Projects and demonstrates the commitment of Leithead to individual choristers in both his own choir as well as in Kokopelli’s sister choirs. Exchange students are chosen by Leithead and the director of the sister choir from which the applicant comes. According to Leithead, only the “best of the best” are selected although many factors are considered including leadership skills, potential, and on occasion, voice parts. In some instances, the selected singers were at a crossroads in their life and needed a new challenge (personal correspondence, September 20, 2016). These exchange students also have advanced musical skills, can tackle a high volume of new repertoire in a short period of time, and have strong communication skills.

From 2006-2016, four Kokopelli choristers went to southern Africa on the exchange for three months, and twelve exchange students from their three sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa came to Edmonton for a period of three to six months to sing with Kokopelli.⁸² For exchange students from Kokopelli's sister choirs, African Projects covers all of the exchange students' costs, including travel, accommodations, food, and choir-related expenses. Though the exchange students now stay with Canadian families during their time in Edmonton, in the first several years of the program, they lived with Leithead and his roommates. During these months, they sang in a number of Leithead's choirs including Kokopelli and Òran, as well as in Leithead's jazz choir 'Nuf Sed.⁸³ The high demand for Leithead as a clinician and guest conductor, resulted in the exchange students accompanying Leithead on his many business trips to clinics and workshops within Alberta and beyond. In these workshops, the students were often given the opportunity to teach traditional southern African songs and the accompanying movement to Canadian choirs. In this role, they were ambassadors for their choir and their country, showcasing their own music and culture, and participating in the ethical sharing of world music.

Leithead explains how the exchange program has not only benefited the individual participants, but has also energized their choral communities upon their return:

The director of Mascato has said to me so many times, that her kids come back completely changed. They've got confidence, and their skills have gone through the roof, and they become leaders. Sometimes they weren't leaders before, but they come back and they're just strong leaders.

⁸² Two additional singers from the Siyacula Youth Choir came to Canada to sing with Kokopelli but they were funded by the Rotary Club and not through Kokopelli's African Projects.

⁸³ 'Nuf Sed is one of the three jazz choirs in Today's Innovative Music Edmonton or TIME Association, of which Leithead is the founder and artistic director.

They have tools to help them to succeed in their own communities in what they're doing. (interview February 18, 2010)

In one case, Matheus Tuhafeni Michael had been a member of Mascato and had been living on his own as an orphan since his teen years after the death of his great-grandmother who had raised him. He came to Canada on the exchange from March to July 2009, which was his first time away from Namibia. Since that time, Matheus Tuhafeni Michael's life has changed significantly. He explains in a twentieth anniversary feature post on the Kokopelli website:

Until that point in my life I had always been very shy, but the exchange put me in a position where I was not only representing myself, but Mascato and Kokopelli as well. In those six [sic] months, I learned a lot about myself, people, and community through music. I'm currently studying towards a BA in Music at The Free State University in South Africa. The turning point came when I rejoined Kokopelli for its 2013 tour of South Africa and Swaziland. One night after a performance I had a chat in Scott's [Leithead] room, with Cieran [Kokopelli chorister] and Mxolisi [UPYC exchange student] and Scott. When I left that room, my life was on a new path (I never told them this). For this and many more life opportunities, I can thank my Kokopelli family and Scott himself. (Michael 2016)

For Michael, his association with Kokopelli and Leithead through African Projects has been life-altering. After that night's conversation on Kokopelli's African tour, Michael went on to earn a diploma in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality Management from the International University of Management and an Advanced Diploma in African Performing Arts from the College of the Arts, both in Windhoek, Namibia. In 2015, he represented the College of the Arts at the Singing and Dance Symposium held in Nanjing, China, and later that year was invited to tour with his six-member Spirit

Ensemble to take part in the 15th Nanjing Arts and Culture Festival (Kutwa 2015).

Because of the opportunities provided to him through African Projects, the entire trajectory of Michael's life has been changed for the better (Michael 2016).

Tula Tuli-Mevava was an exchange student from Mascato from January until July 2010. Tuli-Mevava first heard about Kokopelli's African Projects and the chorister exchange program from Leithead when he was guest director of Mascato during his 2008-2009 sabbatical in Namibia. After experiencing Leithead's energetic directing style and seeing the changes in her fellow choristers who participated in the exchange, Tuli-Mevava was inspired to apply:

I have noticed of all the exchange students before me come back and they have more leadership skills. They are more open to ideas. They have acquired all these skills that they haven't had before, like standing in front of us and directing a piece. They have become more interested in music. [...] They leave here [Edmonton] and go back [to Namibia] and actually find a school choir and direct that choir which I think is a great thing. (interview June 17, 2010)

During Tuli-Mevava's six months in Edmonton, she sang with Kokopelli, Òran, and 'Nuf Sed. She took part not only in the Rocky Mountain Music Festival in Banff, AB with Kokopelli but also in their tour to Dresden, Germany for the International Children's Choir Festival. These trips, in addition to her living expenses were all covered by African Projects. Tuli-Mevava articulates what African Projects has meant to her:

The fact that the Association raises funds especially for Mascato and Siyacula means a lot to me personally. [...] To spend almost your entire year singing just because you're raising funds for these groups and to expect nothing in return, that to me is amazing. I have been touched. It means so much. (interview June 17, 2010)

Like her fellow exchange students, Tuli-Mevava benefited directly from Leithead's hospitality and experienced acceptance and affection by Kokopelli choristers during her time with the choir. She was struck, however, by the choir's generosity in their ongoing efforts to financially support its sister choirs.

One common aspect of the Namibian and South African exchange students' experiences has been a close relationship with Leithead. In the weeks leading up to Kokopelli's twentieth anniversary concert, *Boundless*, many former exchange students posted messages of congratulations, expressing love and appreciation, with many calling him 'Dad.' As mentioned in chapter three, this appraisal is consistent with Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership, with one of the indicators of transformational leadership being an assessment by followers that the leader "is a father-figure to me" (Bass 1985, 203). During their months in Edmonton and beyond, Leithead has been a father figure to many of these exchange students. Here, Leithead's account of what he has gained from hosting exchange students resembles that of a parent who experiences the world through the fresh eyes of his or her child:

These young people bring so much when they come here and [...] they've kind of renewed my love for what I do. Linus [exchange student from Mascato] would be a good example, who was here. [...] It was so much fun to see our lives from his perspective and have him meet all these people [whom Leithead taught in workshops]. [...] To be able to share that with somebody who's seeing it for the first time with a new perspective is just amazing. [...] I love having these exchange students because they get to see our country and meet these great choirs and work with other conductors and other choirs. [...] That to me is so exciting. (interview February 18, 2010)

For these singers from Kokopelli's sister choirs, the exchange program has been a life-shaping experience, providing the opportunity to hone their musical, public speaking, and leadership skills; to expand their worldview; to increase their self-awareness and self-esteem; and to develop lifelong friendships. For Leithead, the exchange program has provided him with the chance to be welcoming, generous, and hospitable (Tutu 2003, 26), and as a person with ubuntu, to share with others through a communal experience.

Beyond its positive effect on the Namibian and South African singers and on Leithead himself, the exchange program has also benefitted Kokopelli choristers. Leithead explains the choir's reaction to Matheus Tuhafeni Michael when he first came to Edmonton:

We're all touched when we get an exchange student. Michael is a good example, who was just here, a nineteen-year-old kid, same age as them [Kokopelli choristers] and to realize how his life has been so different. Here's this incredibly responsible kid who's been taking care of himself since he was twelve. For my kids to meet somebody like that, from an environment that is so not materialistic like we are in our society... They [exchange students] bring a whole different perspective as to what's important. I think it's had a huge impact on people in the choir. That's one of the first things people [Kokopelli choristers] ask: "who's coming? Who's coming this year?" They [Kokopelli choristers] can't wait to meet them [the exchange students] and get to know them better. (interview February 18, 2010)

The opportunity to connect over several months has facilitated the development of lasting friendships and cultural learning opportunities that would not have been possible in a brief stay of a few days on a concert tour. By creating opportunities for deeper understanding of similarities and differences between cultures, the exchange program has

been instrumental in cultivating empathy among Kokopelli singers, yet another facet of an ubuntu ethic.

Joel Forth was the third Kokopelli exchange student to go to southern Africa, spending three months in 2008, mainly in Namibia but also travelling to South Africa. At this time, Forth had completed a music diploma at Grant MacEwan Community College and was part-way through his Bachelor of Education at the University of Alberta. Prior to the exchange, he had participated in Kokopelli's 2004 and 2007 tours to southern Africa. These trips to southern Africa challenged Forth to examine his worldview:

[African Projects] gives me a whole other perspective, because the ways things work in Africa are so different from here, and people's worldviews and philosophies about things are so different. It gives you sort of an idea of what people are talking about when they talk about a Western-centric point of view because that's really what we have, and when we start to see other perspectives, it helps us to understand people better, in general. It's like experiencing another perspective on the world. (interview February 17, 2010)

Forth experienced these philosophical differences most poignantly during his time in Namibia, when he sang with Mascato. He recounts:

My experience on the exchange was much different than I expected. I feel like it took a huge amount of patience for me. The way the choir is run there is – I mean, it's like watching someone meander through a set of streets taking all these different turns, when really there was one way that they could have done. And it seems that some of those things are due to poverty. Some of those things are due to different philosophies. Some of those things are due to different beliefs. You go in thinking: "I can see how you could do this, and I know what's right. You know, I'm from Kokopelli." [both laugh] "This is the way we do things in Kokopelli" is what you end up thinking: "this is what I've been told is the right way to do this."

Even in my education classes - I have some music teaching pedagogy behind me - and I'm seeing the way things are being taught, and I'm seeing this is not a good practice. But at the same time, I have to realize in myself, and it took a lot of my patience to do this, to see that this is a different way of doing this and there are reasons why it's done this way. It's not my place to come in and tell people they're doing things wrong. It's my place to try to understand those different ways of doing things. (interview February 17, 2010)

For Forth, who went into the exchange program with a clear sense of how to run a productive rehearsal within a Western choral setting, observing a completely different and seemingly inefficient approach was challenging.⁸⁴

Part of Forth's struggle to adapt to Mascato's rehearsal practice after his experience singing in Kokopelli and his university training in education demonstrates a disconnect between his Western perspective of time and Mascato's concept of it. Science and math education scholar, Vongai Mpofu (2016) explains how Africans' indigenous concept of time is defined in qualitative terms, deduced or perceived through life events, and "rooted in their indigenous worldview of understanding the interconnectedness and holism of their place in the universe" (65). She explains that this socio-cultural frame of time differs greatly from a Western rectilinear concept time that moves in a straight line rooted in a scientific epistemology or way of knowing (68). Mzamo Mangaliso (2001) echoes this distinction between notions of time in Western and African cultures:

Time [in African cultures] is not a commodity to be frugally consumed, a tool to be carefully utilized, or a regulator to be dutifully observed. Instead, it is a reference that locates communities with respect to their collective past and shared future; it assigns significance to patterns of events and it orders relationships and affairs. (28)

⁸⁴ Forth's struggle resembles Jack Mezirow's (1991) "disorienting dilemma," the first phase in his theory of transformative learning within the discipline of adult education.

Adjusting to the alternative understanding of time did not happen immediately for Forth, but instead, was part of his learning process over the course of the exchange.

Forth's ultimate acceptance of an alternative way of doing things parallels Benghu's (1996) explanation of one component of ubuntu as a philosophy of life:

Ubuntu insists that the person is adequate for the accomplishment of every task he sets out to do; that his ignorance is the only factor that limits his adequacy. To overcome weakness, he has to regard his neighbour's mind as an open book of discovered knowledge; to recognise his neighbour as the reverse side of an entity to which he is the obverse. This demands extremes of discipline which continuously enlarge the personality. The Zulu view of *umuntu ngumuntu* means that to be human is to have a many-sided mind. (1996, 3)

Similar to Kokopelli members' development of cultural understanding through the hosting of exchange students, Forth's experience on the exchange in Namibia demonstrates the cultivation of empathy and respect of others, important facets of an ubuntu ethic.

Gaining cultural understanding

African Projects has provided a unique opportunity for Kokopelli choristers to get a glimpse of not only the hardships endured by members of their sister choirs, but also of the joy that they experience through music-making and being part of their choirs. By seeing both, Kokopelli choristers have been able to empathize with the members of their sister choirs, and better appreciate the importance of African Projects in supporting the maintenance and development of these choral programs in Namibia and South Africa. This shift in Kokopelli choristers' worldview has been instrumental in their development into engaged global citizens.

Witnessing hardship

As noted above, Kokopelli choristers observed several challenges which members of their sister choirs have endured due to poverty. They also gained insight into the racial tension in the societies within which their sister choirs operate. With racial segregation in Namibia and South Africa continuing until the end of apartheid rule in the early 1990s, the post-apartheid reality of co-existing racial groups has been full of tension as racial groups learn how to relate to one another. Geography scholar Gregory Breetzke (2012), in his study of crime in post-apartheid South Africa, asserts that following the 1994 general election, South Africa “moved from a white, autocratic and largely repressive state to one that became more inclusive and democratic” (299), but since then, the country has encountered a number of challenges including “the restructuring of the economy, adjusting to globalisation, dealing with rising poverty and high unemployment, grappling with the HIV/Aids pandemic, and last but not least attempting to contain and combat the surge in criminal activity” (299). Education scholar, Xoliswa Mtose (2011) asserts that although racism is no longer embedded in law, everyday racism in the lived experience of black people continues to exist in post-apartheid South Africa through segregation, discriminatory language, and power relations (337).

Ethnomusicologist Nicol Hammond’s (2004) study of the Choir of the University of Witwatersrand (Wits choir) examines the musical construction of South Africanness within a racially-mixed, predominantly English-speaking fifty-five-member choir. She suggests that choral singing in South Africa, with its hybrid roots (pre-colonial African, European, and African and American resistance cultures) is an effective site for creating a shared sense of belonging, and essentially enacting South African’s post-apartheid

“rainbow nation” (107). She notes that choral singing allows South Africans of all races to interact in a non-threatening environment (111) and through singing music from South Africa and abroad, strengthen their South African identity and interact with other global identities (110).

Similar to the Wits choir in Hammond’s (2004) study, establishing spaces where singers from different racial groups can co-exist peacefully and work together towards common goals through music-making has been one of the goals of the directors of Kokopelli’s sister choirs. This endeavour has not been easy. Kokopelli chorister Laura Forster, who knew the Siyacula director, Marijke Roos, from her time in the Edmonton Children’s Choir, explains the segregation that she observed amidst racial groups within Siyacula in 2007:

She [Roos] gets those kids to come together from such different backgrounds. [...] She’s trying to build an open, safe place for them [choristers from different racial groups] to interact, but they still don’t. There’s still so much, not even personal prejudice, but it’s just not quite safe to them. [...] Even in standing positions, they’ll end up over here. Not that I ever really noticed it until I started talking to the kids, that I was noticing “why are you five always hanging out, but those five are always hanging out?” It just seemed a little odd. Eventually, you get into it and you’re like: “oh, there’s actually still some kind of wall up here.” (interview April 3, 2010)

Forster’s observations indicate that although apartheid in South Africa ended in 1994, tension between racial groups were still present, even among teenagers who were unlikely to remember living under that political system of racial segregation.

Just as Roos strove for racial harmony among the singers of Siyacula, Lhente-Mari Pitout works toward the same goal in UPYC. Leithead explains:

That's really what Lhente's whole thing is, really empowering this next generation to understand that it doesn't matter where they come from, or what their background, or where they live, that all of them are equally important in the new South Africa, because there's a lot of division right now down there, more than there has been in many years, especially with the younger generation. In her choir, she says that we do not have time for that. We work together. She's incredibly positive and upbeat about it, and her choir is meant to be the role model of the future of South Africa. (interview August 1, 2016)

Through Siyacula and UPYC, both Roos and Pitout have worked to establish an arena of tolerance and acceptance, essentially a hub of ubuntu within a wider society struggling with intolerance and prejudice. Leithead and his choristers have recognized the importance of the role that these women have played in carving out a safe space for their South African choristers and by supporting them, Leithead and his choristers have behaved in a manner that is consistent with an ubuntu ethic in which “the actions that produce harmony, reduce discord, and develop community are simultaneously the actions that perfect one's valuable nature as a social being” (Lutz 2009, 316).

According to Leithead, the current political climate in Namibia between white and non-white citizens is not as confrontational as it is in South Africa, but racial tension still exists (interview November 10, 2016). Gerald Stell and Tom Fox's (2015) qualitative study of ethnic boundaries in discourse describes Namibia, which was administered by South Africa until 1990, as “a post-apartheid society that displays the legacy of a ‘ternary racial project’ revolving around a threefold distinction between the racial categories ‘black’, ‘coloured’ and ‘white’, each of which was allocated specific socio-economic positions” (978). Participants for the study were University of Namibia students from the Windhoek campus, aged nineteen to twenty-four, who self-identified as members from

various Namibian ethnic groups, specifically Afrikaners, Coloureds, Hereros, Ovambos, Namas and Damaras (980), representing the three racial categories enforced during apartheid (981). Participants' personal narratives suggest that inter-ethnic boundaries in present-day Namibia are most rigid between whites and non-whites, and to a lesser extent between Coloureds and blacks (983). The study's interactional data suggests that dissociative behaviour occurs mostly covertly through the use of language, for example whites and Coloureds maintaining Afrikaans instead of the language of their interlocutors, and through an uneven frequency of turn-taking between ethnic groups across inter-ethnic boundaries, with the number of turns skewing generally in favour of whites (986). So, while Namibia may not have the same degree of racial tensions and other challenges as South Africa, the Mascato Youth Choir, which is made up of Coloureds, Hereros, Ovambos, Namas, and Damaras, still operates within an environment where racial relations are constantly being negotiated.

Namibian exchange student, Tula Tuli-Mevava, addresses the difference of racial tensions between her experience of living in Canada versus her life back home in Namibia:

I love this and how amazing people are here [Edmonton, AB]. When I first got here, the first thing I noticed was how multi-cultural it is. Not one moment did I feel out of place, did I feel unwelcome in Canada. I felt: "wow, I fit right in here. I like it here." Back home sometimes, you get stared at. Small towns - I live in a small town and you get stared at if you are walking around with another cultured person. Come here, nobody even cares. "Yeah, you're just there. You're another person to me. You're just a person. I don't care what colour you are, what race you are, what height you are. Who cares about that, right?" [...] That is one amazing thing. (interview June 16, 2010)

Leithead has heard the same response from every exchange student that has come to Canada, that they get a sense of a weight being lifted, and the perception that the way they look does not matter gives them a sense of freedom (interview August 1, 2016).

Although Canada is certainly not without its own racial tensions, the degree to which the South African and Namibian exchange students experienced racism during their exchange to Canada compared to their home communities was noteworthy.

Witnessing joy

What Kokopelli choristers have witnessed through southern African tours and the exchange program has not been all negative. They have also seen resilience, acceptance, and joy. Chorister Steve Wenger recounts his experience on tour with Kokopelli:

Being in this choir [Kokopelli] and having experiences like going to Africa and meeting people who live off pennies a day and live in a house the size of my bedroom that's made out of cardboard and tin, it's those very eye-opening, jaw-dropping experiences where you say "what I think is important is definitely not important." Especially going there and seeing, you know they don't have much for material goods but they have family and they have their relationships and they have music and they're all very, very happy. [...] That was an incredibly eye-opening experience for me, just going and seeing people with so little still have so much. [...] It's definitely made me a better person. There's so much less ego about the things that I do now. I've become a person who likes to do things because they're good to do, not because there's a benefit for me, and I've definitely learned that from Scott as well - to do for others, not necessarily for yourself. (interview April 7, 2010)

For Wenger, travelling to southern Africa and seeing the resilience of people living in poverty who choose to be happy has provided him with the chance to re-examine his priorities in life. This experience has helped Wenger become more empathetic and

ultimately re-evaluate his own way of living to be less selfish and more engaged in helping others.

Kokopelli chorister, Wade Brown was also struck by the joy that he witnessed:

I would probably say that when I went to Africa, that was probably the greatest concentration of the happiest people I had ever seen, even though they're essentially - not living on the street, but living in houses that aren't quite as nice as North American houses. They don't have enough money and some of them don't have parents, and they're not sure where they're going to get money from, but they're happy because they can sing and they can associate with each other and they can rejoice in each other's company, which is a really neat thing to witness, because a lot of North Americans don't have that experience either. (interview February 19, 2010)

Brown and Wenger's observations while on tour in southern Africa emphasize the fact that Kokopelli choristers are gaining an appreciation of both the hardships as well as the joy in the daily lives of choristers in their sister choirs. Seeing that joy gained from singing and being part of a choral ensemble creates a commonality between the Canadian and southern African choristers, and Kokopelli choristers recognize that sentiment as parallel to their own youth choir experience. This common bond facilitates relationships, establishes a cross-border choral community, and contributes to choristers' sense of interconnectedness.

Supporting hubs of ubuntu across the globe

By observing the cultural milieu of poverty and racism within which their sister choirs operate, as well as the joy that choir participation brings to their members, Kokopelli singers gain an understanding of the importance of supporting these choirs with their operations. Kokopelli chorister Laura Forster, who likens the youth choir

experience to “therapy for teenagers,” sees African Projects as a way to ensure that choristers in their sister choirs have access to a similar experience where they learn and grow as musicians and work together as a cohesive unit:

The purpose of Kokopelli is to get kids to put themselves out there because that changes them so significantly for the better that you carry that for the rest of your lives. To me, that’s what Kokopelli always was – putting your teenager into therapy, they’ll straighten out and they’ll turn out fine because that’s what happens when you get into Kokopelli. [...] You just stay in for years, and you come out and you’re completely musically talented now, and you can dance and you can sing, and it’s fantastic. You have totally strong, strong, lasting friendships. You have some leadership skills and you are looking for a place. You know it can exist, a place where you can just open yourself up and just put it out there to the general public. [...] You can just say: “I’m going to put myself out there first and if you shut me down, [...] then I’m going to turn around and put myself out there over here, and that’s not actually going to stop me from doing it because it makes the world better when I do that.” The same thing is essentially what they’re trying to do with Siyacula and Mascato. (interview April 3, 2010)

Despite observing parallels between the directors of Kokopelli and their sister choirs in their effort to develop strong citizens, Forster also recognizes the significant difference between the cultural settings, particularly increased racial tensions and poverty in southern Africa, and how these challenges impact the development of choristers:

I might not be able to be like I am in Kokopelli at work, or at school, or at home, but it’s not like those three places are putting up walls to my success. There [in Namibia and South Africa], they are. So African Projects, to me was always: “we have to make that safe place so strong, because they [sister choir directors] have to counteract all this other stuff, and to get them [sister choir members] to be people who could just put themselves out there, and if they get shut down, they’re just going to continue to put themselves out there until it works.” You need a lot of

positive influence because there's a lot of negative influence down there. (interview April 3, 2010)

By supporting the directors of these sister choirs in their work which essentially creates hubs of ubuntu, Kokopelli joins in this effort and displays this ethic as well. As Benghu (1996) notes, "Ubuntu is a way of life that contributes positively towards sustaining the well-being of a people, community or society" (5).

Concerns with African Projects

While African Projects has generally been enthusiastically embraced by members of Kokopelli, concerns have arisen. Wade Brown is familiar with aid distribution and possible challenges based on personal anecdotes told to him by his grandmother who worked as a missionary in various locations around the world including Russia, Mexico, and Africa. He articulates his worries:

I think that's a really good model for aid distribution, because when countries send each other aid, a lot of it tends to go to corruption and bribes and things like that, whereas if you send aid to a specialized group, it tends to be used a lot more effectively. [...] The downside with giving aid or support to any group who needs it is that they can become dependent. So there is a concern in my mind that these choirs will become so dependent on Kokopelli's aid, that if for whatever reason we can't provide it, then they'll collapse or become insistent or demanding, which is something that I think needs to be thought about, because you can't send tens of thousands of dollars willy-nilly without there being some kind of attachment or dependency created. (interview February 19, 2010)

Brown is not wrong in his observation of dependence, as Mascato and UPYC have come to depend on Kokopelli's support to maintain their programs. When asked if he ever

worries about pushback from Kokopelli's sister choirs if for some reason, Kokopelli were no longer able to provide ongoing financial support, Leithead replied:

No, because they are extremely grateful for what we're doing. I mean, almost all of the financial backing is coming from us. It's not coming from the other side. I think that they give us many other things as well. I think they consider it [financial support from Kokopelli] a gift. I don't get that sense that they would feel otherwise.
(interview August 1, 2016)

For professor of English and linguistics, Nkonko Kamwangamalu (2008), two core values of ubuntu are communalism and interdependence; communalism refers to the subordination of an individual's personal interests for the good of the group (115) while interdependence refers to the various roles that individuals play within a society for the welfare of the society as well as the individuals within it (117). In the case of Kokopelli and its sister choirs, these roles are different, yet still reciprocal. While Kokopelli provides financial support, the sister choirs provide access to traditional southern African choral repertoire, insight into how the music should be performed in a culturally responsive way, and meaningful cultural interchanges through the exchange program.

Laura Forster also had concerns about the use of donated funds. During her time as chorister representative on the Kokopelli Choir Association board, the board received requests to fund various projects, but there had not been any clearly documented parameters by which to make decisions. Consequently, Forster accepted the challenge of developing guidelines and objectives for the African Projects Fund. She explains her motivation for taking on the project:

Because people donate to it, you have to be accountable to where you're putting the money. You can't just say: "well, Scott thought it should go here." I totally trust Scott but at

some point, someone's going to come in and say: "what do you mean you just decide later about what to do with it?"
(interview April 3, 2010)

Since then, the Kokopelli Choir Association board has now moved to a system whereby its sister choirs decide which of their needs to address and how to spend the money that Kokopelli sends. This system removes the responsibility of Kokopelli board members and staff to decide what is best for their sister choirs, and instead empowers the directors of the choirs to prioritize their needs and spend the funds accordingly. Sending funds with no strings attached requires a significant amount of trust in the directors of Mascato and UPYC, but perhaps even more significantly, demonstrates a respect for the dignity of the directors, two elements of an ubuntu ethic.

African Projects and transformational leadership

African Projects has been a significant undertaking for Scott Leithead and Kokopelli, one that reveals the ethical underpinning of Leithead's leadership practice. Leithead's recognition of need during the first African tour and his impulse to pledge ongoing support to Mascato and Siyacula demonstrates high moral conduct. By continuing this support for over a decade, he demonstrates persistence and determination. Although the commitment to raise money on an annual basis for Kokopelli's sister choirs is not easy, "leaders who have a great deal of idealized influence are willing to take risks and are consistent rather than arbitrary" (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). Beyond his commitment to African Projects, which can be understood as idealized influence, Leithead is able to inspire Kokopelli choristers to share in his vision of assisting their sister choirs. Kokopelli choristers are able to see the meaning of their work and its

impact on their sister choirs, thus motivating them to dedicate their time and energy to fundraising projects.

African Projects also demonstrates how Leithead's leadership aligns with intellectual stimulation. Through the exchange program, African tours, and sister choir tours to Canada, Leithead provides choristers with the opportunity to question their own assumptions and reframe their point of view. This shift towards a more global perspective has included helping Kokopelli choristers understand that not all places embrace racial diversity to the extent that they generally experience within their Canadian cultural milieu, that not all choirs are taught or learn in the same way as they do in Kokopelli, and that a lack of material wealth does not necessarily result in a lack of happiness.

Leithead is open to questions about how African Projects is run and welcomed Laura Forster's investigation of its practices. He was also supportive of Tova Olson's work in establishing Legato Music through which composers and arrangers associated with their sister choirs could receive credit for their artistic work and the financial benefit from being able to distribute it to a wider audience. Finally, Leithead's work with African Projects can be described as individualized consideration. He recognizes the needs for achievement and growth for choristers within his own choir as well as within Kokopelli's sister choirs. He accepts individual differences, and his interactions with all choristers are highly personalized. He invests both time and energy teaching and coaching. Although the valuing of individuals permeates Leithead's practice, it is most clearly observed in his mentoring of the exchange students whom he has hosted, and who then returned to their home communities with increased musical, public speaking, and

leadership skills, and thus, were better equipped to make a positive difference in the musical ensembles, schools, and their communities in general.

Ubuntu and Authentic transformational leadership

As Tourish (2013) observes, transformational leadership has a high potential for abuse. He cautions that charismatic leaders do not always use their ability to influence others appropriately (8), and warns both leaders and followers not to over-estimate the worthiness of the leader's vision (28). With transformational leadership being taught in business schools and its prevalent use in business contexts where turning a profit is the primary goal, it is important to approach the theory critically. Even in Bass's (1985) first iteration of the theory, moral aspects were not part of the criteria of what makes a leader transformational. After discussions with James MacGregor Burns, Bass's further work (1998) does reflect a moral standard, but as Bass and Riggio (2006) admit "it is clear that much work needs to be done to better understand the dynamics of authentic leadership, in general, and authentic transformational leadership in particular" (16).

In contrast, Leithead's work exists in the not-for-profit sector and he has never studied leadership theories. For him and the Kokopelli Choir Association, the primary goal is not to make money. Instead, their core values are to be a community of learners and artists; to be optimistic, grateful, self-disciplined, and vulnerable; to seek diversity and explore music's meaning; and to "sing with open hearts because our music is both important and beautiful" (Leithead and Luyk 2015). African Projects goes beyond these core values, making a tangible difference in the lives of choristers in southern Africa. As a result of these values and goals, it is insufficient to simply examine Leithead's leadership through the single lens of transformational leadership. Instead, the concept of

ubuntu with its multiple interpretations and components enables a much more comprehensive examination of his leadership practice.

Leithead's decisions and actions are not motivated by a narcissistic drive to achieve fame or devotion by his choristers; rather, they align with an ubuntu ethic. Most members of the wider choral community do not even know about African Projects, but simply admire Leithead for his creativity and artistic work with his own choirs and the ensembles with which he works as a guest conductor. He is genuine and passionate in his pursuit of improving the circumstances of the singers in Kokopelli's sister choirs and challenging his own choristers to move beyond a more materialistic attitude that is prevalent in mainstream North American culture. For Leithead, it was not enough to have his choirs only sing at fundraisers for worthy causes. Instead, he has spearheaded a series of ongoing initiatives through African Projects that directly support the plight of fellow conductors and their choristers in South Africa and Namibia. Leithead reveals:

I'm really proud of our African Projects too, and our sister choirs and that relationship that our kids have together, and how we're [Kokopelli] looking beyond our borders now. We're not just doing things for us, but doing things for other people more. We've always done that with foundation things or other performances we do that we don't get paid for, for charities. Everybody does that, right? But now, we're specifically saying that we need to help raise money for these groups and WE need to do this stuff, not just that we're going to perform for someone else to do that, but WE'RE going to do it. That was really cool and that changed a lot of the way these kids think.
(interview February 18, 2010)

This drive to make a more significant contribution to the world, one that is tangible and personal can be understood as an ubuntu ethic. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) elucidates:

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, ‘*Yu u nobuntu*’; ‘Hey, so-and-so has *ubuntu*.’ Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say ‘My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.’ We belong in a bundle of life. We say ‘A person is a person through other persons.’ It is not, ‘I think therefore I am.’ It says rather: ‘I am human because I belong. I participate, I share.’ A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are (31-32).

For Leithead, it is not enough to simply be an excellent choral director and to make beautiful music. For him, music is a way to make strong human connections, to help his choristers develop into engaged global citizens who, like him, will continue to make a positive difference in the world, and through African Projects, to make an impact not only in his own community, but in choral communities across the globe. Prinsloo (1998) stresses that there is no dualism in *ubuntu*, but rather, that both rationality and morality are acquired from community life (13). In other contexts, transformational leaders may struggle to combine rationality and morality, especially in the business sector where the primary goal is to make a profit; whereas, success for Leithead, both musically and socially in the nurturing of choristers as engaged global citizens is only achievable in community. *Ubuntu* is, therefore, not only what ensures that Leithead’s leadership practice aligns with Bass’s (1998) designation of an authentic transformational leader rather than a pseudo-transformational one, but also what enables him to be successful in

his choral practice and in realizing his dream of energizing choral communities at home and abroad.

Summary

This chapter explored the ethical motivation that underpins Scott Leithead's leadership practice, which I argue aligns with an ubuntu worldview. Using ubuntu as the primary lens, I examined Kokopelli's African Projects, an outreach program that supports its sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa and goes far beyond typical choral practice. In the first section, I addressed the evolution of Leithead's relationship with the choral music of southern Africa, from a passion for the music to one for the culture, strengthened by tours to southern Africa, and for the people, demonstrated by the establishment of formal connections with Kokopelli's sister choirs. In the second section, I presented an overview of African Projects, including its history, its fundraising projects, and its activities, paying particular attention to the choir's two anniversary tours in which they sponsored sister choirs to come to Canada, and the chorister exchange program, which has provided meaningful cultural experiences and connections not only for the exchange students, but also for Kokopelli members.

The third section delved into the opportunities for Kokopelli choristers to grow and develop into engaged global citizens through concert tours and the chorister exchange program. Through these opportunities, Kokopelli members have gained insights into some of the hardships and joys in the lives of their sister choir choristers, thus expanding their worldview and prompting them to take action to improve the lives of these southern African singers. The next section addressed concerns with African Projects, followed by an analysis of African Projects through the lens of transformational

leadership. In the final section of this chapter, I brought together the complementary lenses of ubuntu and transformational leadership, showing how the lens of ubuntu enables a multi-faceted exploration of the ethical motivation of Leithead's leadership practice, specifically as it pertains to African Projects. The combination of lenses increases the depth of understanding of Leithead's leadership practice and how it aligns with Bass' (1998) designation of authentic transformational leadership.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This dissertation analyzed the leadership practices of one of Canada's most notable youth choir directors. Scott Leithead is known for his innovative and emotive choral performances and his ability to connect in meaningful ways not only with the members of his own choir, but with the members of the numerous ensembles with whom he interacts as guest director, clinician, and honour choir director. What is less known about Leithead, however, is his ongoing work with Kokopelli in supporting the ensemble's sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa through Kokopelli's African Projects outreach program. The study examined Leithead's leadership practices in the rehearsal setting, the effects of his leadership on his choir's performances, and the impact of his leadership on the development of his choristers as engaged global citizens through African Projects.

To frame the analysis, the theoretical approach combined two lenses. The first was Bernard Bass's (1985, 1998) theory of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and through the process, develop their own leadership abilities; they respond to followers' needs by empowering them and aligning the goals of the individual followers, the leader, and the organization as a whole (Bass and Riggio 2006, 3). The core components of transformational leadership are idealized influence (that the leader is charismatic and followers seek to emulate him or her); inspirational motivation (the ability to inspire followers by providing meaning and challenge to their work); intellectual stimulation (the ability to stimulate followers to be innovative and creative and to question previously-held assumptions); and finally, individualized consideration

(whereby a leader pays attention to individual followers' needs for achievement and provides a supportive climate in which to learn and grow) (Bass and Riggio 2006, 5-7). While transformational leadership presents an excellent way to analyze Leithead's leadership behaviours, it does not provide a way to investigate his motivation for these actions.

Ubuntu is a southern African concept that has been defined in a number of different ways. Benghu (1996) offers several definitions including the human experience of treating all people with respect, sharing, humanness, humanism, and a way of life that sustains the well-being of a people, community, or society (5). Since the early 1990s, ubuntu has been associated with the Zulu-Xhosa proverb or maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* — “A person is a person through other people” (McAllister 2010) or the Sotho equivalent *motho ke motho ka batho babang* (Shutte 2008, 27). This interpretation of the concept recognizes the realization of oneself as a social being, and the responsibility to act in solidarity with those whose survival is threatened (Lutz 2009, 315). Using ubuntu as a theoretical lens, I was able to further probe Leithead's leadership behaviours, as well as the moral motivation that led to his choices, particularly with the choir's ongoing humanitarian outreach program, African Projects.

This final chapter reviews the findings of the study as presented in the previous three chapters. Next, it outlines some of the broader theoretical and methodological contributions of the research and its implications for choral directors. The final two sections address limitations of the study and directions for future research, respectively.

Research questions answered

Each of the body chapters investigated one key research question. What follows is a brief summary of the findings and analysis.

In what ways does a choral director's leadership impact the rehearsal processes of a youth choir?

As demonstrated in chapter six, this study finds that a choral director who exhibits behaviours congruent with transformational leadership and an ubuntu ethic through the rehearsal process, can lead his or her choir to extraordinary musical results and strong social cohesion. Prior to this study, Leithead was not familiar with the theory of transformational leadership and had only a passing familiarity with the concept of ubuntu. Still, his leadership practice aligns with both, and they proved to be effective lenses for analyzing Leithead's behaviours and interactions with choristers.

Leithead's leadership parallels idealized influence in a number of ways. He is a mentor and role model who leads from the heart, which is consistent with Apfelstadt's (2009) explanation of *conducare*, the root word of conducting which means both "to lead" and "to care"(158). He develops trust with his choristers by adopting a human approach to conducting and understanding the way humans feel and learn (Durrant 2003a); this behaviour exhibits both idealized influence and an ubuntu ethic. Leithead incorporates other voices by inviting guest clinicians to work with his groups and by "footnoting" his explanations of concepts to his choristers, giving credit to sources of knowledge whenever he can. In doing so, he rejects the stance of the all-knowing conductor and instead, demonstrates humility (Jordan 2008) and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Leithead's leadership aligns with inspirational motivation, specifically in his various interactions with choristers, from extended talks about the interpretation of pieces and the importance of art to more commonplace talks about maintaining focus during rehearsals. Within the rehearsal space, Leithead is keenly aware of the power of emotional contagion (Garnett 2009) and its capacity to enhance or damage the emotional climate of a rehearsal, and ultimately its productivity. Leithead cultivates a rehearsal space that teems with positivity and he encourages choristers to spread that positivity beyond the rehearsal space and beyond the group, as demonstrated in his pre-festival talk about the expectation of Kokopelli members to reach out to members of other ensembles. Leithead's commitment to establishing clarity of expectations also aligns with inspirational motivation, and his inclusion of choristers in the process of creating a values statement can be described as intellectual stimulation.

Beyond the example above, Leithead involves choristers in a variety of decision-making processes. As Apfelstadt (1989), Dehning (2003), and Eammons and Chase (2006) recommend, this encourages choristers to develop their critical thinking skills. By providing a safe space for his singers to be expressive and make mistakes (Wis 2011), Leithead further facilitates the growth of individual choristers as both musicians and critical thinkers. Leithead subscribes to an organic process of birthing a piece (Jordan 2007). Beyond developing his choristers as singers, he also mentors aspiring choral arrangers by workshopping their pieces, further demonstrating his commitment to a collaborative creative process.

His treatment of a singer who is blind as a full and valued member of the ensemble and his commitment to developing strategies to help the chorister learn both

music and choreography shows his commitment to each chorister in what Elaine Brown (Jordan 2008, 13) describes as a tethered rehearsal, as well as an ubuntu ethic that promotes tolerance and compassion (Benghu 1996, 12). He cares deeply about his choristers as individuals and acknowledges their individual contributions to the ensemble, often offering personalized verbal recognition in rehearsal. Leithead is respectful of his choristers and deals with tensions and differing views with acceptance and openness, behaviours that can be described as individualized consideration and an ubuntu ethic.

How are repertoire choices and performance outcomes on stage affected by a choral director's approach to leadership?

The study finds that a director's leadership significantly impacts repertoire choices and innovation in performance, as explored in chapter seven. With his youth choir, Kokopelli, Leithead programs repertoire primarily outside of the established choral canon. In addition to his work in mentoring chorister arrangers and composers, Leithead commissions both established and emerging composers, thus contributing to the expansion of choral repertoire and a further shift away from the strong work concept that has dominated Western art music and choral practice since the nineteenth century (Dahlhaus 1983, 1989). He demonstrates culturally responsive teaching (Shaw 2012) through his approach to learning and performing music outside the Western art tradition with sensitivity, specifically by inviting culture bearers to teach it (Goetze 2000). Beyond ensuring that music is not being appropriated, Leithead's inclusion of culture bearers in teaching and performing this music also yields a more authentic presentation on stage.

Leithead incorporates extra-musical elements into his choral performances, challenging performance norms and exploring the use of props, lighting, costumes, and

movement in innovative ways. While Leithead remains aware of the tipping point at which extra-musical elements become a distraction to the integrity of the music (Apfelstadt 2011), he strives to connect with audiences both visually and aurally, communicating both effectively and affectively through emotional contagion (Hoffmann 2016). This connection corresponds to the final phase, *Communio*, of Jordan's (2008) four-phase model of the choral experience: after an ensemble has completed the acquisition of basic skills, the comprehension of the music's structure, and the ownership of the emotive content of the music. As noted in chapter six, "*Communio*," the Latin root word of both "community" and "communication," occurs "when an ensemble of individuals become a 'community of interpretation' that shares the fruits of their work with the listening audience" (30). This shift provides further evidence that innovative choral practice is moving away from the crumbling strong work concept as a normative ideal (Dahlhaus 1983, Goehr 1992), towards the notion of "music *as* performance" (Auslander 2006, 2013; Cook 2001, 2003, 2013) and musicking (Small 1998). Leithead's response to audience preferences for both aural and visual stimulation has resulted in innovative performances and large audiences of enthusiastic patrons.

In *Kōrero*, a representative Kokopelli performance, Leithead demonstrates a variety of behaviours that align with transformational leadership. Actions that can be understood as idealized influence include: conducting some pieces from memory; singing with *Ōran*, of which he is the associate conductor, while director Kathleen Luyk conducts the group; and inviting guest clinicians Elise Bradley and Bradley Christensen, who have been gifted the right by Māori elders to perform and teach their music, to work with the choirs. His positive interactions with singers on stage can be viewed as inspirational

motivation. The results of Leithead's leadership which aligns with inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation are evident in the ability of Kokopelli choristers to tackle difficult repertoire and choreography and perform it from memory with a strong commitment to expression. These performance results demonstrate Leithead's ability to instill in his singers confidence in their ability to achieve high performance standards and realize their shared artistic vision. Finally, Leithead's recognition of the work of guest artists Bradley and Christensen and of other members of the Kokopelli Choir Association's artistic team and their contributions to the event as arrangers, instrumentalists, and fellow conductors is consistent with individualized consideration.

How can a youth choir director's leadership empower choristers to develop into global citizens?

The notion that choral singing can help choristers develop as citizens is not new; the concept of *Bildung* was intimately tied to the function of choral societies in nineteenth-century Germany (Ahlquist 2006; Dahlhaus 1989; Gramit 2002). According to Ahlquist (2006), the nineteenth century German mixed chorus "was set up to foster an idealistic approach to German high culture, artistic taste, conventional religious and moral beliefs, the value of history and a historical repertoire, and the role of the arts in *Bildung*, or individual cultivation" (265). Leithead, however, rejuvenates this notion in his work with his youth choir, Kokopelli, as discussed in chapter eight. Instead of using choral singing to educate the bourgeois while preserving the prestigious positioning of German art music and maintaining social division between classes, gender, education, and nationality (Gramit 2002, 21), through African Projects, Leithead strives to bridge the divide between Western art music and traditional southern African choral traditions

and to break down divisions of class, wealth, education, and nationality between his Canadian choristers and the members of Kokopelli's sister choirs in Namibia and South Africa. He achieves these ends through a leadership practice that can be understood as transformational leadership which is guided by an ubuntu ethic.

Within Kokopelli, choristers engage with Leithead, with each other, and with audiences in positive and meaningful ways. Through Kokopelli's African Projects, however, choristers embrace the ethic with which Leithead leads and go further in their pursuit of making the world a better place. Leithead's connection to southern Africa began with an interest in the music and through travel, both on his own and with Kokopelli, and grew into a passion for the people and culture, which is now a significant part of Kokopelli's culture. As noted in chapter eight, African Projects began on Kokopelli's first tour of southern Africa in 2004 when Leithead and his choristers made meaningful connections with two choirs, the Mascato Youth Choir, formerly the Mascato Coastal Youth Choir, of Namibia, and the Siyacula Youth Choir of South Africa. Leithead and his choristers recognized the financial need of the ensembles and offered assistance, pledging to become sister choirs with each of the choirs. The ongoing support provided by Leithead and Kokopelli to their sister choirs corresponds to an ubuntu ethic, which Mkhize (2008) explains as "a call to action because an ethical being (umuntu — a being with moral sense) cannot look on the suffering of another and remain unaffected" (43). Siyacula ceased operating in 2010, and that year, Kokopelli forged a new sister choir relationship with the University of Pretoria Youth Choir (UPYC) of South Africa.

Following the initial assistance offered while on tour in 2004, Kokopelli formalized the ongoing financial support of its sister choirs. Over the past thirteen years,

African Projects has raised over a quarter of a million dollars for its sister choirs. This money has been used to pay for a number of projects for its sister choirs including: choir uniforms and scores, workshops, transportation and meals for choristers, bursaries and scholarships for individual choristers to attend university, and dental work for choristers. It has also been used to sponsor members of its sister choirs who otherwise would not be able to afford the fees. While the funds were initially earmarked for specific projects, Kokopelli has moved to providing a straight money transfer with no strings attached. This corresponds to an ubuntu ethic, specifically the elements of caring, sharing, and respect (Benghu 1996; Gade 2011), as well as trust in the directors of its sister choirs to use the funds to serve their choirs' most pressing needs.

The two most costly projects that African Projects has funded have been tours to Canada for its sister choirs. For Kokopelli's tenth anniversary in 2006, they paid all expenses totalling approximately \$150,000, for Mascato's flights, accommodations, and meals to join Kokopelli on a tour of Alberta and British Columbia. For Kokopelli's twentieth anniversary year in 2016, they raised over \$90,000 for UPYC to come to Canada, including covering the choir's registration in two festivals, their accommodations, food, and bus travel, with UPYC paying for their own flights. These significant projects were made possible because of a combination of Leithead's vision, his ability to inspire his choristers to buy into that vision, and the commitment of Kokopelli choristers to raise funds for African Projects year after year.

African Projects also funds a chorister exchange program that has had choristers from Namibia and South Africa come to Canada for a three to six month-long exchange, often returning home with new skills and increased confidence with which they have

been able to make a positive difference in their own communities. There have also been exchanges where Kokopelli choristers have gone to Namibia and South Africa to sing with one of their sister choirs for three months. Beyond challenging the worldviews of the Kokopelli exchange students who travelled to Namibia and South Africa, the exchange program has allowed Kokopelli choristers in Edmonton, AB, to learn more about the culture and the lives of visiting exchange students. Kokopelli's three concert tours to southern Africa have also challenged Kokopelli choristers' worldviews and Western assumptions, as they witnessed both joy and hardship in the southern African countries where they toured and connected with their sister choirs and other ensembles. The emotional impact and learning opportunities through experiences of music-making and togetherness, as relayed by interlocutors in this study, resemble those of Durrant's (2003) choristers during a tour of South Africa.

African Projects represents a significant extra-musical undertaking for Leithead and Kokopelli and pushes the boundaries of what a choir can accomplish beyond beautiful singing. Music is the common bond between Kokopelli and its sister choirs, as well as the vehicle through which they enact this connection between members of global choral community. The choice to make African Projects an ongoing priority of Kokopelli and the whole Kokopelli Choir Association is a further indication of Leithead's desire to make a positive difference in the world and to engage his singers in these pursuits as global citizens. Tourish (2013) identifies one of the key dangers of transformational leadership as being the ease with which it can be abused and used for personal gain or narcissistic results. Despite its twenty year history, African Projects' existence remains largely unknown to the Canadian choral community that has recognized Leithead for his

musical contributions, specifically his work with Kokopelli. African Projects is evidence of the ethical underpinnings of Leithead's leadership practice, which can be understood through the lenses of ubuntu and transformational leadership, the combination of which aligns with Bass's (1998) categorization of authentic transformational leadership.

Implications of the research

The originality of this study is situated in the juxtaposition of research lenses of transformational leadership and ubuntu. It is this combination of frames which contributes to existing knowledge in leadership studies in general, and choral leadership practice specifically. This section presents the key methodological and theoretical contributions of this research as well as suggestions for choral practitioners.

Methodological and theoretical contributions

Bass and Riggio (2006) acknowledge several shortcomings of transformational leadership as a theory. This study attempts to advance the theory by addressing three of its main weaknesses. Bass and Riggio (2006) recognize the popularity and widespread use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to assess transformational leadership as a limiting factor in advancing the theory, and they acknowledge that it is important to develop other methods of assessment beyond quantitative research (229). As a qualitative study grounded in the interpretivist or social constructivist paradigm, this study deviates significantly from the majority of research on transformational leadership. Though statements from the MLQ were used as part of the analysis of data, this study does not use the MLQ as the primary test instrument. Most studies of transformational leadership in the choral context employ the MLQ (Andrews 2014; Bayless 1996; Davidson 1995; Dromgoole 2012; Rowold and Rohmann 2009b). This study augments

the work of Eychaner (2009) and Williams (2014), which do not rely on quantitative data generated by the MLQ. Furthermore, by employing ethnographic research methods drawn from my background in ethnomusicology, this qualitative study allowed for a more in-depth and organic approach to research where new themes could be probed as they arose.

Idealized influence, one of the core components of transformational leadership is identified as having two aspects: “the leader’s behaviors and the elements that are attributed to the leader by followers and other associates” (Bass and Riggio 2006, 6). The MLQ, however, is only administered to the leader and followers, and therefore, does not adequately shed light on the views of other associates. Because I am a professional choral conductor and a peer of Leithead’s within the Alberta choral community, I am able to provide the perspective of an associate regarding his extraordinary capabilities and the level of admiration and respect for him by professionals within the field. This perspective of an associate who has never been one of Leithead’s choristers provides a unique opportunity to compare research findings between the data collected through interviews with Leithead and his choristers, and my own observations of his work in rehearsal and performance settings.

Secondly, Bass and Riggio (2006) acknowledge that most research has focused on outcomes rather than on the process of transformational leadership (235). By attending rehearsals every two weeks, all performances in the main concert season, and several other events, I was able to observe Leithead’s leadership over an entire nine month choral season. I also attended various concerts and events in subsequent years following my main period of field work. This extended research period has allowed me to observe

Leithead's leadership at different points in the rehearsal and performance process, from the excitement of the beginning of a season, through the rigorous teaching and learning of repertoire, to the sharing of that work on stage. Through these times, I have witnessed Leithead express gratitude, address problems, welcome input from choristers, and provide numerous inspirational talks to his choristers. This type of extended research, in conjunction with my interviews with Leithead and my chorister interlocutors, yields a far broader and more detailed impression of Leithead's leadership practice than what could be captured in a questionnaire administered on a single day.

Thirdly, Bass and Riggio (2006) recommend further study of the inner workings of transformational leaders and their motivations (235), as well as the ethical and moral factors that distinguish truly transformational leaders from pseudo-transformational leaders (233). By augmenting the research lens of transformational leadership with a second lens of ubuntu, this study probes not only Leithead's leadership behaviours but also the motivating factors that inform his interactions with singers, composers, arrangers, instrumentalists, audiences, and especially the directors and singers of Kokopelli's sister choirs who benefit greatly on an ongoing basis from Leithead's moral motivation and ubuntu ethic. Additionally, with his strong links to southern Africa through connections with Kokopelli's sister choirs and their extensive repertoire from that tradition, Leithead combines musical practices from the Western art tradition and southern African culture. This study parallels this co-existence of traditions and influences by employing research lenses from both cultures.

Suggestions for choral directors

While there are several approaches to leadership for choral directors that can lead to excellent results, including servant leadership (Wis 2002) and situational leadership (Apfelstadt 2009), another approach that is worthy of consideration is transformational leadership. This approach requires time if choral directors are to engage their singers in meaningful intellectual stimulation. It also requires that directors have a clear vision and are able to inspire their singers to embrace that vision. Regardless of which leadership approach or combination thereof an individual director may adopt, however, this study provides several suggestions for choral directors to implement into their leadership practice.

In order to lead with idealized influence, choral directors must be well-prepared and trustworthy (Jordan 2008). They must do the right thing such as paying attention to the tipping point of when extra-musical elements enhance or hinder a performance (Apfelstadt 2011) and approaching repertoire outside the Western art tradition in a culturally sensitive way, whenever possible, inviting culture bearers to be part of the teaching and performing of the music (Goetze 2000; Shaw 2012; Skinner 2005). Inspirational motivation encourages choral directors to display enthusiasm and optimism, as a director's attitude can significantly affect choristers through emotional contagion (Garnett 2009). It also requires choral directors to establish clear expectations (Carter 2005; Garnett 2009; Garretson 1998), which this study reveals, can be done with chorister involvement through the establishment of a values statement.

Intellectual stimulation challenges the traditional approach to choral directing as a top-down organization led by a benevolent dictator who makes all of the decisions for the

ensemble, in favour of a more collaborative and open approach to music-making (Apfelstadt 1989; Dehning 2003; Wis 2007). This component of transformational leadership suggests that choral directors cultivate a space of respect in their rehearsals that is focused and goal-oriented but not rigid. It also suggests that directors establish a culture of acceptance where singers feel comfortable to be creative, to make mistakes, and to grow and learn (Carter 2005). By engaging choristers in decision-making processes and by encouraging them to contribute ideas to the interpretation of both text and music, conductors can empower their singers to become independent thinkers and artists.

Choral directors can adopt practices aligned with individualized consideration by recognizing the needs for growth of choristers and providing opportunities for their development. This can be done by passing around solos and having singers try them out in rehearsal rather than only offering that experience to a select number of the most outstanding singers. It can also mean providing choristers with other opportunities such as public speaking or taking on peer coaching roles within the ensemble. Individualized consideration also means recognizing the contributions of individuals within the overall group, which in the rehearsal setting may be achieved by affirming singers verbally, not only as a section or as a whole, but as individuals.

It is important that choral directors guide from a deeply human place (Jordan 2008), that they both lead and care (Apfelstadt 2009), and that their actions are guided by a desire to honour the humanness of their singers, their audiences, and all those with whom they interact. While ubuntu is certainly not the only way to name this ethic or worldview, it does provide guidelines for choral directors who wish to make a tangible

difference in the world in addition to what they achieve through music-making. These gestures can be small, but it is possible for choral directors to empower their singers to reach beyond their ensemble into their communities and the world at large.

Limitations of the research

In my observations of Kokopelli choir rehearsals, I was very cognizant of my presence in the rehearsal space and sat at the back trying to remain unobtrusive. I took detailed field notes, but did not begin taking video footage of rehearsal until several months into the year of fieldwork. In retrospect, I believe that I could have begun taking video footage of rehearsals earlier in the data collection process. Through my interviews with current and former choristers, it became clear that in general, Kokopelli choristers are a particularly open and welcoming group. They frequently work with guest clinicians and guest artists, both in workshops and during the numerous rehearsals that Leithead misses in order to do other professional activities such as adjudicating, directing honour choirs, and working as a clinician himself. Perhaps waiting several months before taking video footage would have been appropriate with a choir that rarely works with other conductors beyond their own in order to establish trust and create a rapport, however, since Kokopelli is quite different in that regard, I could have begun that part of my data collection earlier.

Another constraint of this research was the limited use of participant-observation. Kokopelli membership requires an intense time commitment including attending two rehearsals per week, a weekend retreat in the fall, several days at the Rocky Mountain Music Festival in Banff in the spring, a five-concert season, several additional performances and workshops that generally occur on a monthly basis, and quite often one

provincial or national tour as well as one international one in a single year. Beyond my doctoral studies in that year of fieldwork, I was living 150kms away with my husband and two children aged two and four, and teaching full-time at a college. Because of the distance and my other commitments, I was only able to attend one rehearsal every second week, all of the main season's concerts, as well as several additional local appearances. In terms of my own participation, it was generally in the capacity of a guest conductor, leading warm ups or sectional rehearsals. It would have been interesting to be a singer under Leithead's direction although I imagine that would have altered my findings as I would have relied more heavily on my own experience, rather than focusing on the experiences of my interlocutors as relayed to me in their interviews and comparing their narratives with what I had seen as an observer.

Directions for further research

This study focused primarily on the impact of a leadership practice that corresponds to transformational leadership as guided by an ubuntu worldview on the rehearsal and performance practices of a youth choir, and on the development of choristers as global citizens. Though themes of chorister identity emerged in the ethnographic and interview data, a full treatment of identity was beyond the scope of this project. It would be interesting to further probe the relationship between transformational leadership and chorister identity.

Another direction for future research would be a comparative study of the leadership practices of several leading youth choir directors. While this study focused on a single conductor and one of the choirs that he directs, it would be worthwhile to

examine the leadership styles of several leading youth choir directors and see what parallels in terms of leadership practices and moral motivation exist.

An investigation of the influence of youth choirs on the development of the choral canon is another area in need of further study. I have long believed that innovative youth choir directors, who operate outside of educational settings and the curricular limitations of those settings, play an important role in determining the future direction of the canon. Directors like Leithead are often the risk-takers who program new and emerging composers, and who experiment with various aspects of performance on stage. It would be valuable to trace their influence on school choirs, post-secondary choirs, and adult community choirs in terms of repertoire selection and performance practice.

It would be interesting to examine leadership practices in other musical contexts, particularly those where there is not a clear leader. In bands, choirs, and orchestras, leadership is usually concentrated at the podium. An examination of non-conducted ensembles such as chamber music ensembles both vocal and instrumental, as well as world music ensembles, jazz combos, or rock bands, would contribute to the literature on leadership and music, as would an investigation of leadership in recording and sound production where artistic work is produced by different professionals in phases over time rather than simultaneously.

It would also be interesting to compare leadership practices in other performing arts contexts with those in music. Within a theatre context, there is a clear hierarchical structure of roles that guides the process of producing a show, including among others, the director, musical director if there is one, designers, stage management, and performers. A comparison of decision-making processes and leadership styles under

different directors might shed further light on alternative approaches to sharing power in the pursuit of artistic goals.

Bass and Riggio (2006) recommend longitudinal studies that follow young people as they develop into leaders (232). This would be interesting to apply to leaders in musical contexts, specifically examining the training of ensemble directors through their participation in music ensembles, and the mentorship by transformational leaders of future leaders. A study such as this would build on the work of Savageau (2007) who examined the correlation between leaders' self-perceived transformational leadership and their participation in high school music programs years prior.

Another direction for further research would be a comparison of leadership and motivation in sports teams and music ensembles. There is significant overlap in leadership practices within these fields in terms of establishing a compelling vision, motivating athletes and performers, challenging them to meet and exceed expectations, and recognizing the contributions of the team or ensemble and its individual members. Exploring similarities and differences between the two fields could advance the understanding of effective leadership practices in each field, and have implications for leadership studies beyond sports and the performing arts.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERLOCUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Current members

Visually-impaired from birth and blind by age fifteen, tenor Wade Brown joined Kokopelli at age nineteen. Before that, he had played tuba in the school band and had sung in the concert and jazz choirs in high school. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Psychology at the University of Alberta and at the time of my interview with him, Brown was twenty-six years old, was working part-time as a research consultant for the National Education Association of Disabled Students, and was in his eighth year with the choir. The following year, he began his law degree at the University of Alberta, which he completed in 2016.

Joining Kokopelli at age fifteen, alto Laura Forster sang five seasons with the group, followed by one season with Òran. The following year, she moved to Winnipeg, MB and sang with Prairie Voices for one season. Upon her return to Alberta, she rejoined Kokopelli and became involved with the board, sitting as the singer representative and working on the African Projects portfolio. Forster completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Alberta, and at the time of my interview with her, Forster was twenty-five years old, and was working on her Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resource Management at the University of Alberta. Prior to her involvement with Kokopelli, Forster had sung in the Edmonton Children's Choir as well as the Edmonton Youth Choir, which at the time, was directed by Scott Leithead.

Tenor Spenser Pasman joined Kokopelli later than most, at age twenty-two. Prior to moving to Edmonton and joining Kokopelli, Pasman completed his Music Diploma in voice at Red Deer College, during which time he sang in the Red Deer College Chamber Choir. While in Red Deer, AB, he also sang with the ihana [sic] Youth Choir and the It's

Time vocal jazz ensemble. At the time of my interview with him in 2012, he was in his first year in Kokopelli and Scott Leithead's vocal jazz ensemble, 'Nuf Sed.

Soprano Jessica Wu joined Kokopelli at age sixteen. She had auditioned for the group two years prior, and at the same time, auditioned for the Edmonton Youth Choir. Leithead suggested that she was still quite young for Kokopelli and encouraged her to re-audition in a couple of years. So, she sang with Edmonton Youth Choir for two years with the ultimate goal of eventually getting into Kokopelli. At the time of my interview with her in 2010, Wu was twenty-one years old, in her fifth season with Kokopelli, and was working on her Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Alberta which she completed in 2012. She currently sings with Òran.

Tenor Steve Wenger joined Kokopelli just after high school at age seventeen and sang with the choir for five seasons. He also sang with the vocal jazz ensemble 'Nuf Sed. At the time of my interview with him in 2010, Wenger was twenty-two years old, and a business student at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT).

Alto Tula Tuli-Mevava lives in Windhoek, Namibia. At the time of my interview with her in 2010, she was twenty-two years old, had recently graduated from a property assessment and management program at the Polytechnic of Namibia, and was the sixth exchange student from her home choir, the Mascato Youth Choir. This exchange, one of the initiatives funded by Kokopelli's African Projects covered Tuli-Mevava's travel, accommodations, and food for the six months of her exchange, during which time she sang not only with Kokopelli, but also with Òran and the vocal jazz ensemble 'Nuf Sed. As other exchange students before and since, Tuli-Mevava accompanied Leithead on his

many workshops with different choirs, and during her time in Canada, they did a workshop with my choir, the Red Deer College Chamber Choir.

Past members

Soprano Neema Bickersteth is a Toronto-based opera singer who sang with Kokopelli in its inaugural year. That year, she had just finished high school and was taking some extra courses and singing with Kokopelli, the Edmonton Youth Choir, and Belle Canto, an elite amateur women's choir in the Cantilon Choir Association. The following year, she began her operatic studies at the University of British Columbia, where she earned a Bachelor and Master of Music. For several seasons, Bickersteth sang with the Nathaniel Dett Chorale, a professional choir in Toronto that specializes in Afro-centric music of all styles. She has performed internationally in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and has been part of several innovative new operatic and theatrical works. She has sung for the XIVth Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Governor General of Canada, Michaëlle Jean. Bickersteth has returned several times over the years to perform as a featured guest artist with Kokopelli.

Baritone Joel Forth began singing with Kokopelli at age nineteen and sang with them for five seasons. He completed his music diploma in composition from Grant MacEwan Community College and has written choral arrangements that have been performed by Òran and Kokopelli, and are now being performed by other choirs outside of the Kokopelli Choir Association. At the time of my first interview with him in 2010, Forth was finishing his student teaching practicum towards his Bachelor of Education at the University of Alberta and singing in FORM, one of the vocal jazz ensembles in the TIME Association. Forth was one of the Kokopelli singers to participate in the African

Projects exchange program, spending just over three months in southern Africa, mostly in Namibia and singing with the Mascato Youth Choir, and travelling to South Africa as well. At the time of my second interview with him in 2015, Forth was a high school music teacher, arranger, and performer with the five-member *a cappella* vocal group, Apocalypse Kow.

Soprano Alexis Hillyard is a long-time member of the Kokopelli Choir Association and recently worked as the Sexual and Gender Minority Equity Advisor at the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies at the University of Alberta. Her work advocating for sexual minorities' rights led her to be chosen as one of the Top 40 Under 40 by *Avenue Edmonton Magazine* in 2013. Born without her left hand, Hillyard

has been involved with the War Amps Champ program since her youth, and still does speaking engagements and volunteers with the Matching Mothers program, a service that pairs the families of disabled children with other families that have gone through similar situations. (Bryant 2013, 96)

She currently hosts and produces an award-winning video blog, the gluten free vegan cooking series, Stump Kitchen.⁸⁵ She began singing with Kokopelli when she was fifteen and sang with them for seven seasons, followed by three seasons with Òran. The following year in 2005, she took a year off from pursuing her Bachelor of Education from the University of Alberta to be the first Kokopelli exchange student to go to southern Africa, where she spent three months singing with the Mascato Youth Choir in Namibia. Two years later, Hillyard returned to Namibia for a year to teach with a non-government organization. Her experiences in southern Africa led her to pursue further studies in global education and at the time of my interview with her, Hillyard was finishing her

⁸⁵ www.stumpkitchen.com

Masters of Arts in Policy Studies at University of Alberta. With a strong dance background, Hillyard's work as a dancer and choreographer has been featured in Kokopelli performances. She continues to sing with Òran.

Alto Gaia Willis sang with Kokopelli for two seasons in first few years of the choir's existence while she was working on her Bachelor of Arts in Honours English at the University of Alberta. After finishing her degree, she completed a vocal performance diploma at Grant MacEwan Community College. At the time of my interview with her in 2010, she was a mother and a broadcasting student at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). Willis is a poet and wrote the text for one of the pieces that Kokopelli commissioned.

Alto Jenica Hagan was one of the original members of Kokopelli and has been heavily involved in the organization ever since. After singing with Kokopelli for six seasons, she joined Òran and has sung with that ensemble since 2002. In 2010-2011, she took a year-and-a-half-long hiatus from the organization while she worked as a radio DJ in central Newfoundland. Since 1996, Hagan has been involved in the TIME Association, singing with FORM until 2003, and later in 'Nuf Sed from 2005-2009. Hagan has also been involved off and on with the Braille Tones since 1996, helping out as section leader. She and business partner Alexis Hillyard own the Edmonton-based Three Hands Two Hearts Organizational Services. Dubbed the unofficial Kokopelli historian by Leithead, Hagan has provided important clarification and details pertaining to the history of the choir and the Association.

APPENDIX 2: CHORISTER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part 1 - General:

- How old are you?
- If you are a current member, at what age did you join the group?
- If you are a past member, how long did you sing with the group? How old were you at the time?
- Why did you join Kokopelli?
- Did you return after your first year? If so, what made you return the following year?
- For current members, what has made you choose to sing with Kokopelli instead of with a different adult choir, Òran or otherwise?

Part 2 – Aesthetic Experience:

- Tell me about the music that Kokopelli sings.
- Tell me about your experience in singing a new commissioned work.
- Do you sing, or have you sung, in other choirs? How is singing with Kokopelli the same or different from singing in other groups?
- Kokopelli has a presentational style that is much different than many choirs' stand-and-deliver way of performing. Tell about the experience of performing in this way.
- Can you think of specific time when you experienced the music in an aesthetic or artistic way?

Part 3 – Social Experience:

- Tell me about the social life of the choir.
- How is it different from your other social circles?
- Kokopelli's singers range in age from 14-24. How, if at all, does that age range impact the social life of the group?
- Can you think of a specific time when you experienced Kokopelli as a social group? Tell me about it.

Part 4 – Humanitarian Experience:

- Tell me about Kokopelli's African Projects.
- How do these initiatives figure in the overall experience of being in the choir?
- What have these initiatives meant to you personally?
- Can you think of a specific time when you experienced being part of an African Projects initiative? Tell me about it.

Part 5 – Identity:

- Has singing in Kokopelli influenced your personal identity?
- If so, how?

Part 6 – Additional questions:

- Discuss the collaborative decision-making process that is employed in Kokopelli?

- Tell me about Kokopelli's values as a group.
- How are choristers made to feel valued and empowered in Kokopelli?
- Compare your experience in Kokopelli with your experiences in other choirs in terms of:
 - empowerment of choristers
 - interactions between choristers
 - interactions between choristers and the director

APPENDIX 3: KOKOPELLI VALUES STATEMENT⁸⁶

As members of Kokopelli, we:

- Are free to be ourselves and to take risks both personally and as artists
- Conduct ourselves with grace and caring
- Cultivate gratitude and are always thankful for opportunities offered to us
- Open ourselves to new ideas and challenges
- Open ourselves to vulnerability
- Stay connected to others
- Support and care for every member of the organization, including staff and volunteers, regardless of boundaries such as age
- Empower ourselves and empower others, always leaving room for every person to grow
- Support artists from other groups and act as ambassadors to the organization
- Are humble and eager to learn
- Seek to understand the importance of music of other cultures and to perform it as respectfully and accurately as possible
- Make music in a thoughtful and reflective manner with each other
- Endeavor to find individual and collective meaning in every piece
- Always strive to reach the next level of artistry
- Take ourselves seriously as artists and understand the responsibility of being artists
- Strive to find new ways of understanding and doing things
- Work hard because we understand that what we are creating is important
- Practice at home, not because we are afraid of quartet tests, but because the artistry of the group as a whole matters to us
- Practice optimism in regard to the music and the group
- Sing with open hearts, and in doing so aspire to touch the hearts of both those in the ensemble and those in the audience

⁸⁶ Kokopelli 2015. Used with permission.

Scott and Kitbielle's expectations...

You want to be here... You can show us this by:

- Not talking when we're talking
- Being on time and prepared. In your spot with your music and pencil just before rehearsal begins.
- Taking initiative to put the chairs away
- Having your music in order at the beginning of rehearsal
- Having your pencil ready and using it throughout the rehearsal
- Practicing music at home and asking for help if you need it
- Eating before rehearsal and staying well-hydrated during rehearsal
- Being aware of how your body language might affect other singers and your directors. Be committed and engaged in sectionals and in rehearsals – energize your leaders!
- Having your eyes on the director and not talking when we stop you
- Taking initiative – feel free to express your ideas

APPENDIX 4: KŌRERO CONCERT, THICK DESCRIPTION

The following is a thick description (Geertz 1973) of the experience of attending a Kokopelli choir concert, from the perspective of an audience member. The concerts in Kokopelli's Edmonton-based concert season feature more than one choir within the Association, however, elements of performance practice developed by artistic director Scott Leithead are espoused by all choirs and conductors within the Kokopelli Choir Association. As a result, it was not necessary to separate performances by the different choirs, and I have chosen to describe the concert as a whole including segments by Òran and Shumayela, as well as those by Kokopelli.

This year's concert takes place on February 21, 2015 and is entitled Kōrero, which is Māori for "Stories." The first half of the concert presents music from around the world and the second half explores the music of New Zealand and Polynesia. The printed program explains how being able to hear the music of the Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand, is a rare treat for Canadian audiences as the Māori are protective of their music and fear that it will be "compromised or diluted by those appropriating it" (Kokopelli Choir Association 2015, 3). The showcase of this music is permitted because the guest artists have been gifted the music by Māori elders. The program goes on to explain how "they, in turn, have entrusted us with the honour and responsibility of performing it for you today with all our respect and love" (Kokopelli Choir Association 2015, 3).

The concert begins just after 7:00pm with a brief spoken introduction by the president of the Kokopelli Choir Association board, asking audience members to turn off their cell phones and to fill out the audience survey. He then informs audience members

of a campaign to save McDougall United Church, the beloved rehearsal space of Kokopelli and Òran and one of the best venues in Edmonton for live acoustic music. The historic church has fallen into disrepair and there is a threat that it might be sold and torn down to make way for further development. A brief video on the Kokopelli Choir Association follows, and the concert is underway.

For the first piece, the Swedish folksong “Trillo,” arranged by Bengt Ollén, Leithead conducts Òran using a score, from a podium set seven or eight pews back from the front of the altar. With screens in front showing video footage of caribou in a bleak winter landscape, the women of Òran move through minimalist choreography with scarves on stage, and other singers perform up the aisles of the church. The audience is stimulated visually from every angle while the slow evolving hums underscore the mezzo-soprano soloist. The atmosphere changes completely for the second piece, a peppy tune entitled “Casino” by the Finnish Celtic group Tsumi, arranged by Tova Olson, the accompanist for Kokopelli and Shumayela and the Association’s resident percussion coach. With colourful lights blinking, Kokopelli choristers walk from the back of the church and join the group of instrumentalists playing fiddle, guitar, and percussion for the world première of this arrangement. Leithead joins the choir on stage and directs the group from memory.

The third piece, a world première of Kokopelli’s latest commission, combines the forces of Kokopelli and Òran. Leithead introduces the work “You Asked Me to Speak” by Norwegian composer Kim André Arnesen, and invites long-time Kokopelli Choir Association chorister Fahim Rajabali to explain its origins. Last year, the choir performed Arnesen’s “Even When He is Silent” which is based on a text found in a

World War II concentration camp. The choir loved the piece so much that Leithead approached the composer to write a song in response to it, and the text for tonight's piece is the response from the higher power. The choir, clad in their primary uniform of purple tunics, performs the beautiful piece with lush harmonies skillfully, as Leithead directs using a score. At the end, Leithead grins at the choir and gives them a private "thumbs up" before turning to acknowledge the audience's applause.

As the third choir of the evening takes the stage, Leithead introduces Shumayela and their director Kimberley Denis, explaining that given the small number of strong junior high choral programs in schools in the Edmonton area, this group fills a need in the city, by offering quality music instruction to this age group. They perform a set of three pieces. The first piece, Chinese folksong "Song of the Crow," arranged by Victor Bobetsky for choir and flute, features choreography with fans. The second, an Australian song by Stephen Leek entitled "Kungala" has Kimberley Denis conducting on stage with a score as the choir performs in a stand-and-deliver style. For their final piece of the set, "Thula Klizeo," a South African song by Joseph Shabalala, the choir moves into four rows to stand side by side like train cars as they sing. Their choreography with claps, slaps, and stomps is delivered with enthusiasm, and as the song ends, Leithead, Denis, and Elise Bradley all give the choristers a "thumbs up."

Following Shumayela's set, Kokopelli returns to the stage wearing all black with patterned vests in African animal prints. Leithead takes this opportunity to introduce Kwena Tloubatla, a singer from Kokopelli's sister choir, the University of Pretoria Youth Choir, and the thirteenth exchange student to come to Edmonton through the Association's African Projects program. Kwena greets the audience in the South African

language of Sepedi with an enthusiastic “Dumela.” Leithead explains that this is the tenth anniversary of African Projects, which in its first year raised \$150,000, and has raised a quarter of a million dollars for projects like paying for transportation and food for Kokopelli’s sister choirs. To celebrate this anniversary, Kokopelli performs “Mama Afrika” by Haitian composer Sydney Guillaume which Kokopelli commissioned in 2007, a dramatic work with eight-part divisi and percussion.⁸⁷ Leithead conducts from a score as the choristers sing. Their choreography includes arm gestures that are sometimes done by all singers, and at other times, are linked to the specific musical phrases and are done in canon between voice parts. Other choreographic elements including shifting between sitting and standing, as well as moving to different positions on the stage. For much of the movement between positions on stage, only a handful of singers move at once, so although the composition of the stage set-up changes, there is still visual stability with the majority of singers anchored in place. Beyond choreography and dance steps, changes in the lighting also punctuate the distinct musical sections of the work.

The mood shifts as Òran takes the stage and their conductor, Kathleen Luyk explains the salacious text of Vaclovas Augustina’s arrangement of the Lithuanian folksong “Tykus Tykus.” Her explanation that “shenanigans ensue” is met with chuckles by the audience. This lighthearted song is embellished by colourful swirls projected on the ceiling of the church. Leithead, associate conductor of Òran, sings with the group as Luyk conducts. As the choir shifts to a new standing formation, Leithead takes the podium to conduct Òran’s second piece, the familiar American pop tune “From a Distance” by songwriter Julie Gold, arranged for choir and soloist by Filipino composer,

⁸⁷ The Creole text is by the composer’s father Gabriel T. Guillaume, and asks Mama Afrika why the cries of the children of Africa are not heard through the sounds of war, and hardships of famine, genocide, and desolation. (<http://www.sydneyguillaume.com>)

conductor, and music educator Eudenice Palaruan. This piece showcases the stunning vocal ability of Kitbielle Pasagui, an alto with Òran and assistant conductor of Kokopelli, who moved to Canada in 2012 after completing her degree in vocal performance at the University of the Philippines. Following her powerful and emotive rendition, the audience, many of whom are weeping, rises to their feet in a standing ovation; it is not even the end of the first half of the concert.

Kokopelli returns, this time with choristers clad all in black and the women wearing scarves. Using a score, Leithead conducts the world première of an arrangement of the traditional Arab-Andalusian song “Lamma Bada Yatathanna” by the organization’s own Tova Olson. The song begins in the dark, but soon, green and blue lights slowly light up the back of the stage, highlighting the dark silhouettes of the choristers as they sing the chromatic melody, punctuated by drum and tambourine. As the lights become brighter, a lone dancer, Kokopelli chorister Rebecca Alexander, emerges from the middle of the church. She too is clad in black but dances slowly down the aisle toward the front, executing the Arabic-style choreography with a large light pink scarf. The light on the choristers becomes brighter and the faces come into focus. From backstage right, chorister Collin North walks around the risers and moves slowly toward center stage, his gaze fixed on Alexander. As she approaches the front of the stage, she holds the scarf taut across her shoulders, giving the appearance of wings, and floats up the steps. She dances seductively in the middle of the stage, moving the scarf around her body to become a veil as she and North move slowly in a circle, his gaze never moving away from her, and hers never meeting his. He drops to one knee, and with the scarf draped across her chest and over the back of both shoulders, she slowly encircles him. He stands

and they clasp their right hands and continue moving slowly in the circular pattern on stage. Their interaction intensifies as she meets his gaze and he takes one end of the scarf. The choreography continues with her twisting in the scarf towards him and back out, and then with him draping the scarf over her shoulders as the two dancers move in tandem. The choir slowly builds in intensity through the three and a half minute-long polyphonic arrangement, never surpassing a forte but providing a slow, burning soundtrack to the couple dancing at the front of the stage. As the piece ends, the dancers lift the scarf as a sort of privacy screen from the audience, causing the audience to softly chuckle.

The first half of the concert closes with Òran performing A. R. Rahman's "Balleilakka" arranged by Ethan Sperry.⁸⁸ The piece begins with a driving percussion rhythm as the choristers move quickly onto the stage in a spread out formation, lit by flashing red backlights. When all of the choristers are in place, there is a pause in the percussion and the stage goes dark. As the singing begins, the stage is lit up and the faces are visible; the red lights remain, adding to the ambience of the piece. Assistant conductor Susan Farrell conducts the ensemble, as conductor Kathleen Luyk joins Tova Olson and two other instrumentalists on percussion; Leithead watches from the front pew. For this lively Southeast Asian piece, the singers are clad in black, the women with long scarves as sashes across their bodies fastened at the left hip, and the men with long scarves around their necks hanging down in front, creating a rainbow of accent colours on stage. As they sing this upbeat piece, choristers execute Bollywood-style choreography, created by long-time Kokopelli choreographer Maureen Tigner-Morrison. Through the next five minutes, the audience watches chorister move through a variety of

⁸⁸ From the Bollywood movie *Sivaji*

arm movements and minimal steps, highlighting the divisi and melodic fragments of the music. This exciting piece with featured soloists tenor Tyson Kerr and soprano Jai Armstrong, well-rehearsed movement, and expressive singing creates a rousing end to the first half of the concert. As it finishes, the audience erupts in applause, whistles, and whoops.

During the twenty minute-long intermission, many audience members gather in the large church hall where there is coffee, juice, and cookies. Drinks are available along one wall, and several tables are set up around the room holding trays of cookies and baskets to collect a freewill offering. The lights flash to signal the beginning of the second half the audience make their way back to the sanctuary. The second half of the concert, which explores the music of New Zealand and Polynesia, showcases what the choirs have learned from their week of workshops with guest artists Elise Bradley and her son Bradley Christensen. A native of New Zealand, Bradley relocated to Toronto, ON in 2007 when she became artistic director of the renowned Toronto Children's Chorus. Christensen completed his Bachelor of Arts in Italian and Bachelor of Music (Honours) in voice from the University of Auckland, and is currently completing his Master of Music in voice performance and pedagogy at the University of Toronto.

Elise Bradley takes the stage, conducting Shumayela from a score, in a stand-and-deliver performance. Accompanied by piano, they perform "The Moon is Distant from the Sea" by New Zealand composer, David Childs who trained in New Zealand but now lectures at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN). This is a very different performance style than Shumayela's set in the first half of the concert which featured much movement, but the singers seem comfortable in both performance styles. Choristers watch Bradley

intently. Their diction is excellent as are their balance and intonation; the song is punctuated with “shhh” wind sounds.

For the second piece, a Māori song entitled “Tihore Mai” written by Hirini Melbourne and arranged by Gaugatao, Bradley steps off the stage and sits on the front pew. With no one directing at the helm, the singers are in complete control of their performance. As she sits down, Bradley picks up a large camera to document the piece as the choristers move into a new, more spread-out formation. Suddenly, a prop seems to appear out of nowhere in the hand of each chorister; each singer swings the soft, softball-sized ball at the end of a foot-long string, in a variety of patterns, executing the hand choreography as they sing.

Following the number, Bradley takes the mic, explaining the origins of the “poi,” a Māori device meant to improve flexibility and strength in the women for weaving, and in the men for battle. Although the poi is originally from the Māori culture, Bradley explains that it has been transmogrified and spread across the world. Bradley tells how each chorister was assigned the task to create their own “short poi.” She then introduces one of the members of Shumayela, a fourteen-year-old girl, who is in her seventh year singing with the organization, and who has been learning hula dancing for eight years. The young singer performs a short two-minute-long demonstration of “the long poi,” a soft ball at the end of two-foot-long string. The audience watches silently as she moves through a series of complex movements, swinging the pair of long poi in two hands, then one hand, behind her back, and eventually moving from standing to lying on the stage, all while spinning the poi.

Then, Bradley introduces the next piece, “Beata Virgo” by New Zealand composer David Griffiths. Òran takes the stage, this time clad in all black with half of the singers wearing white lace-like sashes across their torsos; they stand in a typical choral formation of three rows in a semi-circle. The *a cappella* piece evolves slowly, building from simple chords to lush, shifting harmonies, showcasing the full, mature sound of the adult choir in a stand-and-deliver performance.

Kokopelli then joins Òran on stage as Elise Bradley introduces “Dance-song to the Creator” by New Zealand composer David Hamilton. She explains how he had been her rival for a while, as he used to conduct the choirs at a girls’ school, and they would often compete against each other’s choirs at festivals. He left that position to pursue composition full-time and as Bradley explains, she “snapped him up to be my composer-in-residence.” For this work, most choristers are holding a black folder, the first appearance of chorister scores in the concert. The piece is a full fanfare-like sound with piano, bass drum, and snare. The rhythmic drive and the sheer force of nearly one hundred singers on stage propels the piece forward right to the end. The silence at the end of the piece is broken by one male voice in the audience saying “wow!” before the audience erupts in applause.

Òran moves quickly offstage and Kokopelli remains, as Bradley introduces the next work, a piece by one of the “David” composer from New Zealand, David Childs. “Salve Regina” showcases the youth choir’s rich tone, their sensitivity to the musical details of the work, and their capacity to memorize and perform incredibly challenging literature. Following this heavy repertoire, one Kokopelli bass moves front and center and performs a short Samoan chant. His booming voice fills the church in a half-

spoken/half-sung sound, as the choir executes some quick choreography of hand gestures and clapping. After the short chant which lasts less than a minute, the bass returns to his place in the choir and Elise Bradley returns to the podium to conduct the light-hearted Samoan folk song “Minoi, Minoi” arranged by Christopher Marshall. Although there is no choreography for this piece, Kokopelli choristers smile and pulse their bodies as they sing.

For the next set of pieces by Wehi Whanua, Òran joins Kokopelli on stage, filling the altar with over a hundred singers. In front of the stage, Joel Forth and guest musician George Koufogiannakis strum guitars, accompanying the lilting piece in four-part harmony, evoking the sound of the tropics. As the choristers execute hula-like arm movements, the Māori text is projected phonetically on the back screen of the church, unseen by the audience. After the gentle “Wairua Tapu,” the choir moves into a V-shape on the stage for “Te Atua,” also unconduted and accompanied by guitars. From his place in the choir on stage left, Bradley Christensen chants verses in Māori, half-shouting, half-singing over hums in the accompanying choir. He is wearing a rectangular white cape with red and white trim and black tassels, fastened over his right shoulder; his right hand flutters during his solo passages. The song finishes and the women exit the stage from both sides as the men spread out across the stage for the Haka, a traditional Māori warrior song and dance. The boys of Shumayela, now clad in all black, join the men of Kokopelli and Òran.

Christensen removes his cape, dropping it downstage left, and moves to the center of the stage. He turns upstage to the men and leads the Haka call-and-response war chant. With their first response, the men strike a stance of readiness, their legs spread

wide with knees bent, and their arms parallel to the floor at chest height, fingers fluttering. The men's loud, guttural shouts are punctuated by strong arm movement involving fist pumps, knee slaps, and angular gestures. Although the Haka lasts less than a minute, the power of the united men's voices is startling, and the audience reacts with applause and whoops. The men step back into tighter rows at the back of the stage and the boys of Shumayela leave the stage, in preparation for "Te Iwi E," the third song by Wehi Whanau; the translation is projected on the screens on either side of the organ's pipes. The women of Kokopelli and Òran file back on stage from the aisles of the church, led by Kitbielle Pasagui who chants as she takes center stage. About ten seconds later, the two guitarists appear from in front of the stage and give the first strum of the piece. The choir of over a hundred choristers pulses and executes arm movements in this call-and-response piece, led by Pasagui. Although it is mostly a hula-like four-part song, it is punctuated by guttural chanted lines by the men.

Before the final piece of the night, Elise Bradley returns to the stage and thanks all of the choristers for their hard work all week. She is incredibly complimentary to the group, telling how there was not a single moan from choristers despite the volume and difficulty of the repertoire to learn. She notes how they truly put their minds into learning, and bring passion and love into singing as a group. Her line "they are the most incredible group of young people I've worked with in a long-time - except for my own, of course" is met with chuckles from the audience. Bradley, then, remarks that the singers are led by a phenomenal team, a collaboration of administrative and artistic staff and volunteers. She comments that the leadership of the organization is incredible, and acknowledges the incredible work that went on before her arrival, specifically naming

accompanists Tova [Olson] and Bryan [LeGrow]; Kitbielle [Pasagui, assistant conductor of Kokopelli] who had already taught half of the movement before Bradley arrived; and especially the conductors, led by Scott [Leithead] and his vision, thoughts, and creativity, which is supported by Kim [Kimberley Denis] and Katy [Kathleen Luyk].

Next, Leithead and Luyk thank: the audience; the lighting designer Vince Burwash; producer of the introductory video Spencer Marsden; producer of transition videos Rebecca Parsons; producer of the “Trillo” video Kiva Olson; the church sound technician Jack VandenBorn; and various instrumentalists. Leithead reiterates how Elise Bradley is one of very few people who are allowed to sing and teach music of the Māori people and thanks her for sharing it with them. Bradley, then, introduces the final piece, a Māori blessing. She explains that the Māori are a very spiritual people and in their oral tradition, Mary is a vessel for Jesus who is worthy, as we all are. This song is an invitation for all to go into the world and do good things. With one guitar strum, the singers begin, positioned across the stage, down the aisles, and around the pews. The strains of “Ka Waiata ki a Maria” by Dick Puanaki envelop the audience in a surround-sound experience, heightened by the ambient blue lighting. As the song ends, the packed house of more than five hundred concert-goers rises to their feet for a standing ovation and the choristers launch into an encore of “Te Iwi E.”