rapport because the participants considered me a trustworthy insider. Furthermore, throughout the process, I reassured participants that I would prioritize their need for confidentiality to mitigate their concerns over the impacts of this research on their future employability.

Data Collection. Case study requires multiple forms of data to provide a thorough description of the phenomenon and achieve high transferability of results (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These multiple forms of data increase trustworthiness of results by allowing robust data triangulation during analysis (Stake, 2005). Data collected during this study included interviews, researcher memos, email text, participant journals, and artifacts. Interviews were first transcribed electronically using the Temi automated transcription service then cleaned manually. The collected data summed to approximately 150 pages of single-spaced text.

I conducted interviews with the participants using Seidman's (2013) phenomenological three-interview series approach (see Appendix A). In-depth conversations through three separate interviews allows the interviewer and participant to place the experience of a phenomenon in context and reflect on its meaning. The first interview focused on the participant's life history as it pertained to their music experiences. The second interview focused on their daily experiences as a student and GTA in conducting. The questions for the second interview utilized the framework from Lankveld et al. (2017) to determine which characteristics of their daily lives contributed to or detracted from their construction of personal identity. The third interview involved reflecting on the meaning the participant has for their experience and how it might influence their thinking about the future. Each interview lasted an average of 70 minutes.

Participants completed journal entries to further assist in an exploration of meaning (see Appendix B). As the researcher, I wrote personal reflections on the experience of our interviews.

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Lastly, participants were asked to provide artifacts relevant to their experiences. The actual content of these data varied based on the participant. Some provided all of the aforementioned types of data, others provided only some. Because graduate teaching assistants experience considerable stress from their disparate responsibilities (Adler & Adler, 2005), I allowed participants to engage with the research on their own terms (see Seidman, 2013, p. 98-99).

Data Analysis. I analyzed data with the aid of Dedoose qualitative analysis software. Data were coded inductively, looking for patterns that were natural and deliberate (Saldaña, 2016). While reading through the text of each interview, I highlighted excerpts that related to the research questions and assigned each a short word or phrase to identify its relevance. Examples of codes included *role-identity conflict*, *student-centered approach*, *coping strategies*, or *student as product*. I then sorted these codes into within-case themes for individual participants and cross-case themes focusing on doctoral conductor identity construction.

I used several strategies to ensure trustworthiness such as data triangulation, thick, rich description, member checking, and peer review (Creswell and Poth, 2018). I compared the code themes between cases and between data types, looking for similarities and differences. I also recruited the help of a colleague to review limited sections of coded, anonymized data and corroborate or refute code use. Finally, acknowledging my role in the research process through researcher reflexivity further allows the reader to understand my conclusions and how my own positionality influenced my research process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations. This study was conducted over a single semester at a single university. Each participant studied with one of two professors who also functioned as their supervisor for teaching assistantships. Results of this study, therefore, cannot be generalized and great caution must be taken when considering transfer when considering other individuals in other institutions.

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In addition, in an attempt to protect their future employability in a limited job market, I have decided not to provide any potentially identifying information about the participants, including even generalities about their institution or geographic location. I understand the negative impact this choice will have on transferability, but I wish to respect the concerns of my participants to protect their professional reputations.

Findings

Data analysis revealed that participants perceived "conductor" as a multifaceted role that changes based on the needs of the ensemble. Instead of a single prototypical figure, participants described conductors as a threefold role-identity: performer, teacher, and leader. This conception of multiple conductor roles was shared by both instrumental and choral conducting students. Furthermore, like preservice teachers (Draves, 2014) and novice university instructors (Lankveld et al., 2017), conducting graduate students perceived direct interaction with students as highly supportive of identity as a whole. Graduate conductors perceived other experiences, however, as undermining their identity construction, especially experiences related to their status as students and GTAs.

In the following sections, I describe two major themes which emerged from my analysis of the data. First, participants described a multifaceted conductor role-identity prototype which synthesizes three role-identities: leader, teacher, and performer. Participants did not see these priorities as in competition, but rather as a complimentary mixture of skills and personality traits. Second, participants identified several role-identity conflicts which caused stress in their daily lives and undermined the development of professional identities as conductors. When considered

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together, these two themes set in stark relief a picture of graduate conductors balancing conflicting experiences as respected musicians but inexperienced students.

The Conductor Prototype

Conductor as Leader. Participants believed that a "conductor" is a multifaceted role encompassing a range of skills and knowledge whose function changes based on the context of the ensemble with whom they work. The most important role of conductor for all participants was the role of Leader. Leadership appeared to be an abstract concept which was not fully articulable. One participant referred to conductors as having "ineffable leadership qualities" which could only be learned through experience.

Previous leadership experiences, especially experiences during their K-12 education, appeared to function as early authentic contextual experiences for all participants similar to findings among novice music teachers (Draves, 2014, 2018; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Haston & Russell, 2012). All participants reported having important responsibilities in their ensembles while students in high school like drum major or section leader. Two functioned as student coordinators with important ensemble duties: "I remember being in the library at the school giving PowerPoint presentations to section leaders as a junior in high school...we administered auditions of all sorts, we ran rehearsals on the field. That's where the leadership came from."

Participants described a change in their perceptions of leadership as a component of a maturing conductor role-identity. At first, participants viewed the conductor as the individual who was "in charge," the one who "makes the music happen." Their experiences as DMA students, however, had shifted this perception. Participants conceived of leadership on the part of conductor primarily in two ways: (a) facilitating experiences and providing resources for ensemble members; and (b) charismatically motivating students to excellent performance. One

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participant especially emphasized the conductor as working "behind the scenes" to make sure the ensemble is successful: "I'm most interested in just being an inspirer. If that means I'm a leader, okay, but if that means that's behind the scenes, that's okay too. I guess it's still leadership. Inspiring someone is leading them."

Participants believed that the conductor as ensemble leader has the ultimate responsibility for the quality of the music-making in performance. Therefore, authentic experiencing practicing conductor leadership requires agency over ensemble-related decisions. In addition to student-contact through ensemble rehearsals, participants spent many hours selecting repertoire, studying and notating scores, planning rehearsals, and doing organizational administrative tasks which they felt were crucial to the ensemble's success. Participants felt frustration when professors appeared to take credit for their work:

> We answer to our professors, yet they're nowhere to be found in rehearsal. And that falls on our shoulders. How good the concert goes, what other faculty that attend the concert [who] shake my professor's hand say to him is a reflection of our rehearsal and how we conduct and how we teach and how efficient we are in the literature we select. But it's not actually all that freedom in our hands…it's giving authority but not actually any power.

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Conductor as Performer. Participants described the importance of their performer identity by prioritizing the quality of performance by their ensembles and their personal performance as ensemble director. Participants also emphasized the importance of ensemble performance quality on their self-concept: "I'm the conductor at the concerts. It's me that's up there. It's my students up there. It's not my professor. So, if it falls apart on the stage, it is my responsibility, you know." Graduate conducting students appear to have exceptionally high expectations of themselves and their performances which manifest as either high self-esteem or acute self-doubt depending on the contexts. Supporting the theories outlined by Hogg, et al. (2012), participants' conductor role-identity and self-esteem were improved through high-quality

ensemble performances and undermined when they perceived that their personal performance was insufficient.

Rather than sounds, a conductor's musical performance is through their conducting gesture. Participants did not mention the importance of gesture directly, but importance of performer identity to participants still emerged as an emphasis on performance self-critique. An instrumental conducting student described personal frustration when regularly reviewing rehearsal videos: "I'm watching myself struggle with the same fundamental issue in my conducting for, you know, six months. It's like watching grass grow. It's like, when am I ever going to learn how to do this?"

Both instrumental conducting participants expressed remarkably high levels of self-doubt regarding their abilities to be successful as ensemble directors: "I used to think that I was a good conductor, that I knew what I was doing. Now I know I don't." The other instrumental participant echoed the same sentiment, asserting that obtaining multiple degrees in conducting "just made myself smaller…I have just learned that I don't know as much as I think I do…it's been a painful experience." These statements were most often related to role-identity conflicts which the participants encountered, which will be discussed in the next section.

Conductor as Teacher. All participants believed that conductors are teachers and felt strongly that successful conducting requires teaching. Even so, participants delineated between performance-related skills such as conducting gesture, which represented a performer identity, and teaching-related skills such as instructional delivery, which reflected a teacher identity: "I think the two complement each other… I think they're intertwined. I consider myself a teacher….I [teach] through conducting. But there needs to be an aspect of conducting for me. I can't let that go."

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Participants perceived themselves as teaching when they are providing direct instruction to students for whom they have direct responsibility and experienced this role-identity most acutely when working with less experienced ensembles. One participant remarked that these circumstances were rewarding because they felt like they were making more of an impact in developing ensemble member's musicianship:

> I was amazed at how much I enjoy being in front of the middle school choirs, even a little bit more than the high school choirs. And in some ways I think that was because the middle schoolers…need to learn the basics, need to know how to stand and where to breathe and how to, um, support, for lack of a better word. Doing that with them was strangely fun.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, instrumental and choral participants differed as to what skills were most important to be a successful conductor-teacher. Instrumental conductors emphasized non-verbal gesture as the most critical skill for success of a conductor-teacher, conveying musical ideas without verbal instructions. Choral conductors believed a highly refined singing voice was the most important teaching skill through modeling desired performance characteristics: "I have found that in my own conducting, if I don't feel like I'm singing well, I don't feel like I'm conducting well." Clear verbal instructions during rehearsal were important to both groups. Neither choral music student discussed gesture as a component of teaching as a conductor, perhaps suggesting they considered gesture a component more aligned with performance than instruction.

Role-Identity Conflict

Participants expressed varying levels of stress during their interviews which stemmed from perceived role-identity conflicts related to their identities as students and instructors in their roles as GTAs. Shifting power dynamics between participants, their professors, and their fellow students complicated their social integration and frustrated their attempts at coherent self-

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concept. Indeed, when asked "where do you fit into the social structure of the university?" one participant remarked, "I don't think we do." Participants experienced role-identity related stress which stemmed from a perceived inability to express necessary identities and difficulty balancing expected responsibilities with personal care.

Instructor/Student Identity Conflict. Winstone and Moore (2017) suggested that GTAs experience stress related to their conflicting social identities as instructors and students. Participants in this study described that their identities were constantly shifting between faculty and peer—sometimes conducting GTAs performed with other students, sometimes they were in charge of other students. Both instrumental conductors felt that undergraduate ensemble members undervalued their teaching experience and assumed they were novices despite many years of prior conducting: "I think that being a graduate student has an inherent 'you don't know what you're doing." Sometimes, I want to look at these students and tell them, 'No, you don't understand. You don't know the experiences I've had before this.'" GTAs also felt like undergraduate student workers whom they supervised did not perceive them as an authority figure and that they did not receive adequate support from professors when dealing with these student workers. Participants also expressed frustration that they were not regularly included in communication related to classroom instruction either from faculty or administrators.

Supervisor/Peer Identity Conflicts. Participants felt stress when negotiating relationships with professors, oscillating between roles as junior faculty colleagues and student subordinates. Participants felt their conductor identity was especially undermined when professor gave them feedback in front of other students, as this was perceived as undermining their authority of the ensemble. One participant described how all decision making, such as repertoire

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selection, was reviewed by the professor requiring additional time. Both instrumental participants expressed a frustration at the uniquely public aspect of their training:

> DMA performance people like an oboist or a trombonist or whatever, they practice way more than I do. They spend hours a day in a practice room or in some part of their home practicing that instrument and it's very secluded. I prepare a lot, but all of my life getting better happens in front of people. So, it's almost always a performance if you let it be. But I even get critiqued in front of my students, [like] when you are teaching a private flute lesson and your teacher comes in and in front of your student tells you that you're messing up.

Participants stated that this close monitoring and public feedback stifled their creativity in rehearsal and made them feel less authoritative with their ensembles.

Despite this internal role-identity conflict, individualized attention from professors was perceived by participants as their single most rewarding school experience:

> My lesson that I had on Monday was one of the best lessons that I've had in three years because he was patient with me. It wasn't belittling. He sat on my level…communicating with me on my level in a very patient sort of way. That he did that in my lesson and that was really rewarding for me. I told anyone who had ears what an amazing lesson I had.

Participant values also reflected the values of their professors. Although participants did not always agree with their professors policies and procedures, they nonetheless appeared strongly loyal to their philosophical perspectives: "We were talking to a faculty candidate yesterday… [who] said something to the effect of, 'it's realizing that you suck and letting it go.' And I thought 'my professor would never ever abide by that philosophy.'"

Participants also appeared more able to empathize with the professional challenges professors face: "I could see myself doing everything and not letting my graduate students do anything the same way. Running myself into the ground, like [my professor] who sleeps four hours a day because he's taking the heat, which isn't what I said five minutes ago." This participant was conflicted between their personal frustrations and an understanding that the

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Draft 8-10-19
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professor also experienced considerable work-related stress. "I think, am I just being a big whiney baby and *everybody's* on this stress panic wheel, always in fear of failure or losing their job?" This participant noticed themselves repeating the close monitoring which they resented from their professor with their own undergraduate student workers due to the pressure they felt for the work to be done correctly.

Work/Life Balance. Participants in this study, particularly the instrumental conducting participants, described extensive GTA work-related responsibilities which they felt negatively impacted both their work as graduate students and their lives beyond school. Students felt like they couldn't tell their supervising professors "no," and prioritized work for their assistantship above their own school work. Conducting GTA's personal schedules started at or before 7am and many lasted until 10 or 11pm many days. Instrumental conductors described especially busy days without eating properly or using the bathroom because of the perceived expectation that they attend every instrumental ensemble rehearsal, even when they were not responsible to conduct. One participant characterized leaving campus as "an act of self-care." Despite this commitment, participants felt resentful at what they perceived as a lack of recognition. As one participant remarked, "we are the little pawns that are keeping the wheel going while he wears a suit and does what he does."

Discussion

I undertook this study to investigate the experience of identity construction among conducting graduate students. This discussion will first focus on the three primary research questions. First, what is the conductor prototype which conducting graduate students use as a role-identity model? Second, how does identity construction in conducting graduate students

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compare to novice teachers? Third, what role identity conflicts to these student experience and how do they impact their identity construction? I conclude this section with recommendations for improved practice in graduate conductor training.

RQ#1: The Conductor Prototype. Descriptions of conductor role-identity showed substantial similarity between participants. Unlike findings by Nettl (1995) and Roberts (1990) in which music students focused almost exclusively on performer identities, findings from this study revealed a tripartite prototype for the conductor-musician that included Leader, Teacher, and Performer. Participants believed that all three role-identities were important for a conductor to be successful in improving the quality of an ensemble's music making.

This study's findings, however, do not fully contradict Woodford (2002) who found that preservice music teachers identify more as performers than teachers. The participants described in this study enjoyed being performers and placed great importance on performing skills, but they also recognized the importance of non-performance skills. Being graduate students, and therefore both older and more experienced than Woodford's participants, graduate conductors may conceive a more sophisticated and nuanced role-identity prototype than undergraduate students with little authentic contextual experience.

Participants in this study described undergoing shifts in their understanding of the conductor prototype. Ensemble members who have not been conductors may not perceive musicianship instruction during rehearsal as formal teaching, nor might they be aware of the administrative responsibilities that conductors have outside of the rehearsal setting. As a result, non-conductors may construct conductor prototypes which focus exclusively on performance aspects of the conductor role-identity. As a person transitions from ensemble member to

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ensemble leader, their conductor role-identity shifts to encompass a wider range of behaviors which better match what is required of them (Bouij, 1998).

Based on my findings, I propose a tripartite model of conductor role-identity (Fig. 1). For participants in this study, the prototypical conductor model has skills in three domains: Leader, Teacher, and Performer. These identities are not in competition or exclusionary but complement one another. Like successful teachers, successful conductors customize their instruction based on the needs of their ensemble by enhancing or minimizing aspects of their instructional delivery.

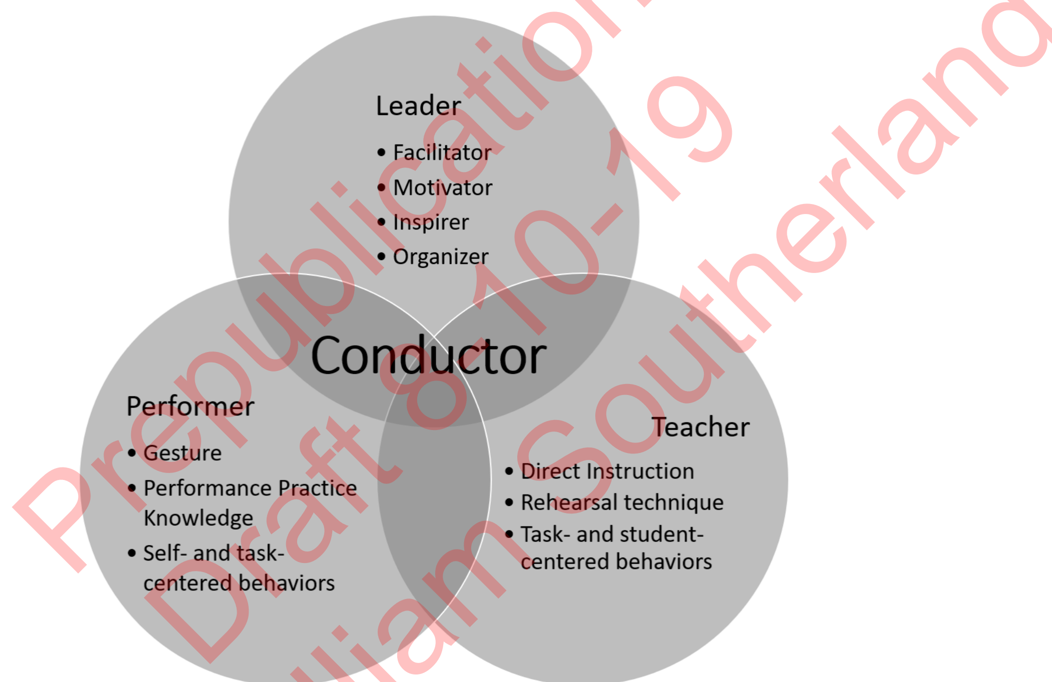

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Figure 1. A Tripartite Model of Conductor Role-Identity

RQ#2: Comparing Student Conductors and Novice Teachers. Research on pre-service teachers in music education programs suggested that students have difficulty synthesizing performing and teaching identities (Natale-Abramo, 2014) believing that "musicians" are distinct from "teachers" (Nettl, 1995; Roberts, 1990). Conducting students in this study, however, appeared to have successfully integrated both teaching and performing

identities as components of their conductor role-identity prototype, and they did not consider performing and teaching to be conflicting priorities. Instead, participants felt that successful conductors synthesize behaviors from each of these identities as facets of a more complex identity. One participant described it as "turning up or down" the style of interaction based on the needs of the ensemble.

Froehlich and L'Roy (1985) argued that a strong professional self-concept may help those starting careers as music educators and advocated for enhancing self-concept to improve teacher effectiveness. Conducting students in this study did not appear to have a strong professional-self concept related to role-identity conflicts which I will discuss in the next section. Unlike music education students who struggle to unite performer and teacher identities, the self-concept of conducting students appears most undermined by a perceived lack of professional agency. Therefore, early career conductor effectiveness may be improved by supporting student conductors in developing a professional self-concept.

Participants in this study recognized and advocated for student-centered teaching approaches which parallel those taught in music education preparation. This student-centered perspective, however, appeared to have developed as a result of teaching experiences prior to their graduate work. While participants did find student interactions at the university authentic contextual experiences (Haston & Russell, 2012), the positive effects of these interactions were undermined by role-identity conflicts.

Conductors working professionally in university and community-based settings bear considerable responsibility musically and organizationally. When training novice conductors, universities should provide authentic teaching experiences which promote the development of

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student-centeredness. To be effective, teaching experiences must allow novice conductors a high level of autonomy (agency) with the real possibility of failure.

Scheduling may pose a serious barrier to conducting students getting sufficient authentic "podium time," and professors who oversee large ensemble often feel pressure from administrators to produce only superior-quality performances. Universities could offer more smaller ensembles, rather than a few large ensembles, where graduate conductors could experiment, prioritizing process over product. This could lessen the stress that conducting professors feel over performance-as-product and allow graduate students greater agency over the artistic decision making throughout the process.

RQ#3: Role-Identity Conflicts. Participants experienced several role-identity conflicts in their work at the university, and these conflicts appeared to be a source of stress all of them to varying degrees. Student/teacher role-identity conflict appeared to be the most impactful and a primary source of stress. This supports the finding by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) that music teacher identity results from a sense of agency. As students, graduate conductors lacked a sense of real agency or sufficient time to devote to their responsibilities (Adler & Adler, 2005), undermining their identity construction as conductors. As a result of this student/teacher identity conflict, participants reported varying levels of stress and anxiety related to job performance in both areas. This supports the findings by Jazvac-Martek (2009) and Keefer (2015) who described rapidly changing identity roles and imposter syndrome as sources of stress for doctoral students.

Participant experiences corresponded most directly with the model developed by Winstone and Moore (2017), which characterized identity construction in graduate teaching assistants in terms of malleability where GTAs must regularly switch between different, often conflicting, role-identities. GTAs imagine themselves one day being instructors, professors, and

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conductors, but currently feel confined by limited personal agency due to role-identity conflicts. Their experiences working with students are overshadowed by public feedback from professors, awkward peer relationships, and inadequate communication regarding university procedures.

Graduate students like these participants practice and refine academic identities. As a result, direct interactions with professors have profound impacts on graduate students' psyches. Participants described feeling rewarded from genuine, personal interactions with professors, but also described feeling high levels of anxiety regarding feedback procedures from supervising professors. Professors overseeing doctoral students should dedicate time to fostering positive, peer-like interactions. In addition, graduate students should be granted maximum autonomy to function without supervision, and professors should avoid giving feedback in front of students over whom graduate conductors have leadership roles.

Graduate students who work as GTAs have additional identities as university employee who deserve to be managed respectfully. Graduate student themselves are highly-driven individuals who sometimes struggle maintaining healthy work-life boundaries, as participants in this study demonstrated. Professors supervising GTAs should clearly define what is expected of them, provide them with necessary resources and materials in advance, and include them in communications about university policies and procedures. Furthermore, university administrators should monitor these responsibilities to ensure GTAs have sufficient time to address their own studies and personal needs.

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Conclusion

Individuals pursuing doctoral degrees in conducting, who also work as GTAs, have considerable social and personal responsibility. They are excited about the possibility of one day

being conductors and conducting professors, but they do not feel like they can fully inhabit that role due to several intersecting role-identity conflicts. Their identities as students greatly overshadow their emerging identities as scholars and university instructors. By better understanding the processes of identity construction and the impact of role-identity conflict, universities generally and professors who supervise doctoral conducting teaching assistants specifically can promote school environments which support the development of desired identities and mitigate unnecessary stress.

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