Overcoming Cultural Barriers in Choir Rehearsals:

A Study of Chinese Emigrant Conductors in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Foreign conductors face cultural, social, and language challenges when leading choirs from various cultural backgrounds. These challenges have not been extensively discussed in the choral context, but they may cause potential problems to foreign conductors' rehearsal skills and cross-cultural choirs' development. This thesis investigates the cultural, social, and language factors that influence Chinese conductors' choral rehearsals in New Zealand to guide Chinese emigrant choral conductors and to improve their rehearsal skills with a clear understanding of interactions with singers given their cultural background.

A combined qualitative research method of autoethnography and one-on-one in-depth interviews was applied to determine Chinese conductors' challenges in rehearsals with cross-cultural choirs. The results showed that cultural identity, disrespect, differences, and inequity are the main factors influencing Chinese conductors' rehearsals in cross-cultural choral settings. Conductors' ethnicity, religious belief, racial discrimination and speaking of non-native language also caused difficulties in rehearsals. Results were analysed by applying relative theories, including praxis, multi- and inter-culturalism, concept of organised cultural encounters, theory of intercultural contact zone, and culturally responsive teaching methods to interpret Chinese conductors' cross-cultural choral rehearsal practices.

My results and analysis suggest that *praxis* philosophy helps conductors investigate cultural, social, personal, ethical, and musical values in rehearsals from a personal perspective. A Chinese conductor's understanding of their cultural identities and intercultural relationships with singers can be enhanced by theories of multi- and inter-culturalism. Practices of organised cultural encounters, intercultural contact zones, and culturally responsive teaching methods can help Chinese conductors

to improve social and musical value in culturally diverse rehearsals. Furthermore, Chinese conductors can strengthen their communication skills by connecting culture, communication, and language to construct a professional speaking style in cross-cultural rehearsals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As an international student from China, I spent seven years living and studying in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was an unforgettable experience for me—starting to use English as the primary language, getting to know the Western culture from scratch, adopting diverse cultures in the young country of immigrants, acclimatising myself into an entirely different cultural and social environment. To be a conductor, I also had to prepare for the upcoming difficulties as a foreigner in New Zealand. For instance, how should I talk with New Zealand musicians correctly about their culture? How can I give clear instructions to get the sound I need and how to behave when I stand in front of musicians from different cultural backgrounds. In short, the core problem is how I, as a Chinese conductor, could deliver my musicianship adequately with limitations of language and understanding of New Zealand's culture?

In my three-year choral conducting experiences with New Zealand choirs, I found that speaking English and cultural and social differences prevented me from being effective during rehearsals. Since communication is an essential part of rehearsals, it was difficult to deliver my messages to singers without sufficient understanding of how New Zealanders talk, behave and engage in choral activities. Thus, I thought that sociological concepts and conducting strategies in a culturally diverse choral context might help me understand the socio-cultural factors behind the role of foreign conductors. The communication may differ, but does a conductor have a role to play irrespective of culture? I tried to search for practical skills to improve myself as a foreign conductor regarding the problems of cultural adaption, social interaction and communication with musicians from different cultural backgrounds. However, the current academic research about conducting studies mainly focuses on a conductor's role, rehearsing skills, and leadership skills on a broad scale. There is little research about analysing who conductors are, where they are from, and how flexible they are when directing various regionally and culturally diverse ensembles consisting of

musicians from different cultural backgrounds. As a typical example, it is not easy for me to interact with local singers from a completely different cultural base on their home turf since I sometimes feel distant from New Zealand culture and society. Thus, researchers must determine how international conductors could overcome barriers within a local social and cultural context while working towards effective rehearsals and successful performances.

Regarding the scene of foreign conductors leading choirs with different cultural backgrounds, the aspects of cultural, social, and communicative problems collectively identify the gap in this research. This thesis aims to help Chinese emigrant conductors who mainly work with community choirs to improve their rehearsal skills by understanding how cultural and social perspectives influence the quality of choral rehearsals and how conductors can identify potential problems and solve them with direct actions. This thesis also intends to construct a basic foundation of theoretical frameworks in terms of verbal communication skills for musical and human interaction purposes within choral rehearsals to help, guide and inspire Chinese emigrant choral conductors to improve their rehearsal skills with a clear understanding of choristers' behaviour given their cultural background. I break the primary research questions into the following sub-questions:

1. What cultural aspects of the local community music ensembles influence the conductors' rehearsal skills?
2. What sociological aspects of the local music ensemble may influence the conductors' rehearsal skills?
3. How can these sociological and cultural aspects of the ensemble impact regular music rehearsals and performances? How are they represented in conductors' actual rehearsing or performing circumstances (e.g., language, repertoire, working style, communication.)
4. What are potential solutions to these problems?

To answer these research questions, the first section of this thesis will overview previous literature that indicates the gap between cross-cultural choral rehearsals and the relevant factors that influence foreign conductors' rehearsal skills they need. Secondly, I combine autoethnography and qualitative research methods to determine the anecdotally realistic occasions and problems of professional Chinese conductors with work experience with Chinese and New Zealand choirs. With self-reflection on my own experience of conducting music ensembles as a foreigner in New Zealand and one-on-one in-depth interviews with conductors who have similar experiences. Furthermore, I will apply the cultural and sociological characteristics and rehearsing strategies addressed in the collected data to further discussions and discuss how these factors and relevant theories can transform into strategies in the cross-cultural choral rehearsal contexts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Problems Encountered by Some Foreign Choral Conductors

In the last twenty years, researchers have explored the topic of cross-cultural conducting on a broad scale. Scholars did not explicitly discuss foreign conductors' performances in choral rehearsals about the problems caused by musical, cultural, and social factors. Early in 2002, an African choral conductor named Fred Onovwerosuoke observed how white American conductors teach African music to African singers.[1] Due to the colonial social background of Africa, the American conductors fail to lead the local choirs to perform authentic African music with profound respect for local culture and a thorough understanding of the music's meanings.[2] Regarding cross-cultural repertoire, Onovwerosuoke found that American conductors, as foreigners, are enthusiastic about performing Africa's repertoire and rehearsing African cultural music as if it were European music with "exotic" elements.[3] The American conductors lack the enthusiasm to protect the authenticity of Africa's ethnographic music, and they do not rehearse such cross-cultural choral music by "sharing the song's meaning" or providing "a historical/cultural context" to African singers.[4] The problem of American conductors working in Africa centres on the performance of Africa's ethnocultural music since the limitation of foreign conductors' cultural and musical understandings stopped them from rehearsing local music effectively.

Several years later, American choral conductor Eliezer Yanson Jr. interviewed four foreign-born professional conductors born and raised in Canada, Philippines, Argentina and the United Kingdom but concurrently working in the United States as highly reputed conductors.[5] In the interviews,

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[1] Onovwerosuoke, "Contemplating African Choral Music: Insights for Non-Indigenes and Foreign Conductors," passim.

[2] Onovwerosuoke, passim.

[3] Onovwerosuoke, 9.

[4] Onovwerosuoke, 16.

[5] Apfelstadt et al., "Contemplating African Choral Music: Insights for Non-Indigenes and Foreign Conductors," passim.

Yanson questioned the conductors about how they rehearse, interact with American choirs and adapt to the cross-cultural choral contexts as foreign conductors.[6] Most foreign conductors are open-minded to the cultural diversity in America's social context. They claim the culturally diverse choral environments enable singers to respect unfamiliar cultures and allow conductors to "approach, analyse" ethnocultural music.[7] However, Simon Carrington, a British vocalist and choral conductor, believes there is no difference in rehearsal disciplines, strategies, and performance standards between mono-country and cross-country choral contexts. As a founding member of "The King's Singers" at Cambridge University, Carrington claimed that there are some differences between "English Cathedral" disciplines and American choral rehearsal regarding singers' sight-reading skills and superiority of orchestral players' skills in rehearsal process.[8] Nevertheless, "Conducting is certainly not a problem as long as the singers are committed to the idea of learning and improving", said Carrington.[9]

Carrington's words lead me to consider how choral conductors' linguistic, cultural and professional advantages influence rehearsals in various countries. First of all, since English is Carrington's first language, does the mutual language close the gap between a British conductor and American singers? Second, with his conducting career development in Japan, the United States, and Hungary, Carrington's experiences in different countries, including leading university choirs and attending choral festivals, may have enhanced his adaptive capacity in any country as a professional conductor. Thus, he conducts rehearsals the same way, regardless of the changes in cultural settings or regions. Thirdly, Carrington already overcame the cross-country problems in choral settings and stepped forward to the ideal stage of being an international conductor. He can implement the total

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[6] Apfelstadt et al., passim.

[7] Apfelstadt et al., 31.

[8] Apfelstadt et al., 36.

[9] Apfelstadt et al., 31.

capacity of rehearsing skills as a foreigner without being challenged by any cultural or relevant problems. Even though the different countries' choral environments did not influence Simon Carrington's conducting experiences, it is difficult to identify the underlying reasons for his easy adaption to the local cultural and social context. Since Carrington is an advanced, well-known conductor, the variable of cross-cultural choral context may not apply to his situation. Therefore, Carrington's example reveals a gap between developing conductors and advanced conductors in terms of managing the potential cultural or social problems differently in various countries.

Yanson's interviews with foreign conductors indicate several constructive questions about how international conductors reflect on their experiences directing American choirs, which may contain singers from multiple cultures. However, a lack of critical analysis of the conductors' insights about their experiences, self-reflection, and the cultural or social factors that influence their rehearsal strategies, repertoire choices, and intercultural interactions with American singers. As a young developing Chinese choral conductor, I was encouraged by Carrington's comments and experiences to think about the developmental process of transforming from culture-sensitive to non-culture-sensitive regarding giving effective cross-cultural rehearsals. I needed to explore and discuss concepts, factors, and strategies involved in the transforming process to help young choral conductors lead choirs of other cultures with more confidence.

To identify a Chinese conductor's cultural, social, and musical factors in New Zealand, I also looked into the relationship between foreign conductors' home language, work language, and the truth about their cross-cultural rehearsals. In 2013, Stephen Sieck, an American choral conducting lecturer, discussed how to teach music from the non-Western traditional system in non-English languages, trying to identify the relationship between culture and music in the choral context.[10]

[10] Sieck, "Factors In Teaching Foreign Language Choral Music to Students," 25.

According to Sieck's quantitative study, foreign conductors in America do not prefer to rehearse music in their mother tongues. Most of them do not consider programming repertoire in their home languages.[11] The limitations of Sieck's research outcomes include the cultural independency of different countries and the cultural identities of the foreign conductors. The study only indicates how conductors reflect on multicultural repertoire in the United States and neglects the cultural, music-educational backgrounds of the conductors. In New Zealand, there is no evidence yet showing foreign conductors do or do not prefer to perform music from their home cultures. The cultural-diversity-friendly social environment in New Zealand may direct foreign conductors to express themselves through multicultural music. Thus, my study will explore potential cultural and social factors of Chinese conductors who lead choirs in New Zealand regarding their cultural identities, social relationships with local singers, and repertoire choices during a rehearsal process.

In the same year, Jui-Ching Wang, an American-Chinese music educator, formed a Chinese music ensemble in Illinois to identify the relationship between music and culture and explore American-born tertiary music students understanding of these two components under the culturally diverse social context in the United States,[12] another Chinese-born conductor familiar with traditional Chinese instruments, musical notations, and special techniques leads the Chinese ensemble.[13] Culturally, the conventional disciplines of Chinese art philosophy baffled American musicians since the concepts of "humbleness, endurance, and humanity" in Chinese culture stand on the opposite side of the advocation of "high self-esteem" in the United States.[14] As a result, the research

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[11] Sieck, 28.

[12] Wang, "Do I Sound Chinese Now? A Musical and Cultural Analysis of Students' Learning Experience in the Northern Illinois University Chinese Music Ensemble," 2.

[13] Wang, 3-4.

[14] Wang, 4.

indicated that American students did not perform authentic Chinese music, even with the conductor's and students' best efforts to implement the unique Chinese techniques.

Wang's study focuses on how an instrumental ensemble takes part in rehearsing Chinese music with unfamiliar Chinese instruments. Correspondingly, Wang narrowed down the cultural barriers of the intercultural rehearsals to the authenticity of multicultural music performances, but she excluded the potential problems brought by the conductor's cultural background. In other words, Wang did not discuss the Chinese conductor's role regarding the cultural challenges; for instance, how does the conductor react and reflect on these challenges except by introducing the knowledge of Chinese music performance? In addition, the conductor in Wang's research could not speak English for sufficient work purposes and could only communicate with players through interpreters. Wang left the conductor's bilingual problem for further discussion, which I will undertake in this research. There is a communication gap between the conductor's musical instructions and the potential lack of the interpreter's musical skills. To fill this gap, I will concentrate on how Chinese conductors who do not receive extra teaching assistance can communicate with New Zealand singers in a multicultural context.

In Wang's research, she collected data on cross-cultural challenges mainly from her third-party point of view as an observer; still, she overlooked the conductor's first-person comments. Wang also believes that social and cultural factors impact music-making within an ensemble. Every culture brings a unique value to people's musical experiences. Nevertheless, Wang took the study in the context of university ensembles; she did not include rehearsals' social aspects and the interactions between the Chinese conductor and the ensemble in the discussion. The lack of social factors and details of conductors' first-person opinions are the main reasons I will take one-on-one interviews with Chinese conductors. The first-person experiences and reflections on cross-cultural

choral rehearsals will be compelling to investigate the key factors that influence the quality of rehearsals.

Choral Rehearsals with Culturally Diverse Singers

Even though choral rehearsals with culturally diverse singers are not as formal as school education curriculums, foreign conductors are responsible for regulating rehearsals to complete their cultural and social responsibilities.[15] New Zealand is a culturally diverse country with citizens from seven ethnicities.[16] In the Chinese-New Zealand cross-culture choral context, it seems possible that Chinese conductors will confront culturally-varied singers. Thus, besides the existing research about the role of foreign conductors, the literature about choral conductors' cultural adaptions to culturally diverse choirs is also essential to my study.

In 2006, Deborah Bradley discussed multicultural choral education in Canada and the United States from a community youth choir educator's perspective. She refers to David Elliott's self-identity concept as "a multicultural human subject" under the theory of choral educational multiculturalism.[17] According to Deborah Bradley, for a group of culturally-varied people, "a form of self-understanding" will "embody and reflect an individual's many 'identities'."[18] When people are clear about who they are, their positions in a specific group, and how they define the personal-version self, their expressions will present their self-internalisations shown with multiple angles. As Bradley observed, self-understanding also embraces the "multidimensionality" from others and dissembles the "discrete boundaries" between oneself and others.[19]

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[15] Shaw, "The Skin that We Sing: Culturally Responsive Choral Music Education," passim.

[16] Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand Rapu Mātauranga Hauora mo te Taiao - Aotearoa, "Ethnic Profile."

[17] Bradley, "Global Song, Global Citizens? Multicultural Choral Music Education and the Community Youth Choir: Constituting the Multicultural Human Subject," passim; Elliot, "Music Matters," passim.

[18] Elliott, "Music Matters," 209.

[19] Bradley, passim.

Bradley constructed the concept of the multicultural human subject in the research mentioned above, but Bradley only applies this concept to the young community choir singers in Canada. As a local choral educator, Bradley only addressed the importance of multiculturalism in North America's curriculum from a native citizen's perspective, viewing some singers and repertoire which was foreign to her. In other words, she did not further discuss the application of the multicultural human subject concept to foreign conductors. Thus, there is a space for me to explore how Chinese conductors can construct their multidimensionality through their choral activities with New Zealand singers. In addition, Bradley referenced David Elliott's music educational praxis and explored the praxis theory to multicultural choral education for constructing human-centred and ethical choral rehearsals.[20] Her interpretation of praxis in a choral context inspired me to consider how foreign conductors can apply the praxis concept to themselves and cross-cultural singers, especially when they confront cultural and social challenges.

Bradley's research indicates that multicultural music education and multicultural choral rehearsals centred on culturally the well-being of culturally diverse singers' well-being; there are also some research studies about *how rehearsing* in cross-cultural choral contexts. In 2012, Julia Shaw found the gap between multicultural music education and choral music education in culturally responsive teaching pedagogy.[21] American choral conductors and educators have broadly utilised the culturally responsive teaching method, which optimises "cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives of ethnically diverse students" as connections to achieve practical classes.[22] Still, the approach had not caught choral conductors' attention for rehearsing purposes. Through culturally responsive

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[20] Bradley, passim.

[21] Shaw, 75.

[22] Gay, 75.

teaching, Geneva Gay conceptualised the importance of "cross-cultural interactional competence" in the educational context, laying out that the ethnic and culturally diverse understandings of educators and students enhance their "ethnic identity development and citizenship skills" in "pluralistic societies".[23] In connecting choral activities to the culturally responsive teaching approach, Shaw believes that music represents singers' cultural and social identities—the same as a language does. These two identities should be emphasised in choral rehearsals by conductors shaping and synchronising multicultural music.[24] Again, Shaw's study focuses on how conductors foster multicultural choristers' cultural sense of selves through rehearsing and performing ethnocultural music in their cultures. Still, the discussion about foreign conductors' cultural identity problems is absent.

Although Shaw did not explore how culturally responsive teaching would impact conductors' cultural identities and rehearsal skills, the culturally responsive teaching approach inspires me to consider the relationship between the Chinese choral conductors' cultural responsiveness and their potential difficulties adapting to unfamiliar cultures in New Zealand. Shaw titled the article "The Skin that We Sing"——the "skin" represents choristers' ethnicities and belonging cultures.[25] Correspondingly, is it possible for choral conductors to find 'the skin they conduct'? Moreover, how will the 'skin' be presented in choral rehearsals? To answer these questions and fill the gap between CRT and foreign conductors' rehearsal behaviour, I need to determine the main cultural challenges Chinese conductors have experienced in New Zealand's choirs.

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[23] Gay, "Teachers' Achievement Expectations of and Classroom Interactions With Ethnically Different Students," 106. Shaw, passim.

[24] Shaw, passim.

[25] Shaw, 75.

Several years ago, Samatha Dieckmann and Jane W. Davidson conducted an organised cultural encounter to identify the challenges in Australia's musical contact zone—the choir rehearsals.[26] A culturally diverse choir is formed with immigrant singers from nine different countries, some of whom could not speak English smoothly, and the choir is led by multicultural staff.[27] Language has been identified as one significant challenge during the rehearsals as multilingual singers could not communicate efficiently to understand what each other meant or learn lullabies in different languages.[28] However, the conversations among participants encouraged them to learn music with even more effort, created a social zone with more fun and stimulated the singers sense of humour. As for choir leaders, the cultural "defamiliarisation" helped them process music shaping even faster, such as adjusting vowels in various languages and directing new music styles from other cultures.[29] Dieckmann and Davidson's experiment of multicultural choral activities include some of the cross-culture challenges within the choral context. Without sufficient background and comments from multicultural choir leaders, it is difficult to define the problems that foreign choral conductors may encounter.

Regarding cultural encounters Shaw mentioned for the choir activities, there are three main challenges found in other research studies about multicultural music-making situations. The first existing challenge of leading local choirs for a foreign conductor is the probability of misleading members on cultural knowledge of multicultural music. Charlene Morton found that the significance of "authentic performance" raised concerns from some music educators because this potential difficulty was already in their minds since they were trained as professional musicians

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[26] Dieckmann and Davidson, "Organised Cultural Encounters Collaboration and Intercultural Contact in a Lullaby Choir," 155.

[27] Dieckmann and Davidson, 156.

[28] Dieckmann and Davidson, 167.

[29] Dieckmann and Davidson, 170.

earlier.[30] In other words, the underlying reasons for conductors failing to demonstrate music from their cultures include a lack of knowledge of the music itself and the foreseeability of presenting it to people in other regions. As to these shortages of teaching music from one's own culture, Elliott inspired music educators to consider the aim of teaching this cultural music, the representation of the music and ethnocultural groups, and the interpretation of these representations.[31]

The second difficulty of conductors directing culturally-diverse choirs is derived from fluid cultural identifications when conductors work with different groups. In the wake of overseas study and work, conductors' cultural identities become more flexible but complex as the cultural and social environments change with re-locations. Giroux described such occasions as 'unfixed, unsettled, porous, and hybrid' cultural spaces; during the conductors' meeting, interacting, and leading various musicians, they start to become more bounded to individuals within "a myriad of complex relationships".[32] Thus, it was difficult for them to "defend notions of singular identity".[33] David Elliott also claimed that the reality of multicultural music education contains "fluidity" of cultural identities and "impermeability of cultural borders", which lead to strains inside the social group.[34] So when Chinese conductors enter various culturally-diverse choirs, they may need to foresee that the cultural and social contexts of the ensembles will shift their original cultural identity with different situation. Correspondingly, conductors are responsible for recognising and reacting flexibly to unstable cultural encounters during rehearsals.

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[30] Morton, "Breaking Through 'Crusts of Convention' to Realize Music Education's Potential Contribution to Critical Multiculturalism," 210.

[31] Elliott, "Praxial Foundations of Multicultural Music Education," 22.

[32] Giroux, "Living Dangerously: Identity Politics and the New Cultural Racism-Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Representation," 104.

[33] Giroux, 105.

[34] Elliott, "Praxial Foundations of Multicultural Music Education," 22.

According to Shaw, the third potential problem of organised cultural encounters in the cross-cultural choral setting is “unpredictability”.[35] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassenapply “a theatre metaphor"” to the organised cultural encounters, which are events designed with “place, roles and interactions” and are prepared in advance of the encounters.[36] However, Wilson laid out that both organised and disorganised cultural encounters “do hold a transformative potential” that is “tied in with unpredictability”.[37] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassen excluded the unpredictability of cultural encounters from the “place, roles and interactions”, which may bring problems to the social interactional phenomena.[38] The unpredictability of cultural encounters is similar to choral rehearsals. For instance, even if a conductor outlines each rehearsal’s procedures and tasks, temporary situations may require the conductor to react quickly to the changing circumstances.

To summarise, previous scholars mainly researched foreign conductors in culturally diverse countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Multicultural singers became a popular object of study in the choral rehearsal context. In contrast, foreign choral conductors’ situations and in-rehearsal challenges have not caught much attention of previous researchers, especially the Chinese conductors. Nevertheless, several theoretical concepts inspire me to explore their applications to choral context with culturally diverse musicians, including David Elliott’s music education praxis, Geneva Gay’s culturally responsive teaching method, and the impacts of multi- and inter-culturalism on choral rehearsals. These concepts may associate with the roles and responsibilities of Chinese conductors, their cross-cultural and social challenges with New Zealand choirs, and their rehearsal strategies applied to the choirs.

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[35] Wilson, “On Geography and Encounter: Bodies, Borders, and Difference,” passim.

[36] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassen, “Organised Cultural Encounters: Interculturality and Transformative Practices,” 599.

[37] Wilson, “On Geography and Encounter: Bodies, Borders, and Difference.” Cited by Christiansen et al, “Organised Cultural Encounters: Interculturality and Transformative Practices,” 602.

[38] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassen, 599.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Autoethnography & In-depth Interview Research

The research method of this thesis includes both autoethnography and in-depth individual interviews with professional choral conductors. I also considered the other two research methods, qualitative analysis of rehearsal video recordings and participant observation research of real-time rehearsals. Based on the ethnographic background of my research, I first considered recording observation as the primary research method and used rehearsal video recordings of Chinese conductors' rehearsals in New Zealand as data sources.[39] The main advantage of conducting rehearsal recording analysis is the greater scope of available data, which assisted me in exploring a wide range of aspects of effective cross-cultural rehearsals. While it is challenging to classify conductors' actions or speech precisely into cultural, social, communicative, or musical categories during rehearsals, the main reason is that these factors may interplay with each other. Therefore, the main reason for not choosing rehearsal observation was the distance between me and the actual rehearsals in New Zealand. Due to the pandemic-caused travel limitation, I could not observe New Zealand's rehearsals in person. The lack of first-hand experience may have led to personal assumptions about some events in the video recordings. It was difficult to collect sufficient data without being in the rehearsals and using my senses to investigate the activities.[40] For instance, closely observing singers' reactions towards conductors during rehearsals, listening to how Chinese conductors give English instructions, perceive any real-time changes of rehearsal mode, and sensing the connections between conductors and singers in the rehearsal room.

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[39] Baker, "Observation: a complex research method," 172.

[40] Baker, 172.

Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams, and Arthur Bochner divided autoethnography into *auto*—"personal experience", *ethno*—"cultural experience", and *graphy*—systematic analysis.[41] Autoethnography is an effective method that systematically enabled me to reflect on my cultural experiences and review my choral rehearsing experiences to summarise the keynotes regarding communicating, rehearsing, and conducting skills in cross-cultural choral environments. As a Chinese conductor having coached choirs in both New Zealand and China, my cultural and coaching experiences support the authenticity and integrity of the data. Moreover, autoethnography research enabled me to express my personal feelings from cross-cultural choral conducting experiences and review my internal transformation as a foreign conductor in New Zealand. Since most previous research studies about foreign choral conductors observational research in which researchers were observers or even participants, there was a lack of firsthand data collected from the conductors who have insights about cross-cultural rehearsals. Thus, to minimise the bias caused by personal misunderstandings of conductors' behaviour, spoken words, and strategies that appeared in rehearsals, I decided to interview several Chinese choral conductors and interpret their experiences and thoughts, and reflections on their work experiences with multicultural choirs.

There are four advantages to utilising in-depth individual interviews as the other research method. First of all, compared to quantitative data, qualitative data contains more insights into the cultural, social, communicating and rehearsing skills from the participant conductors' point of view. Secondly, the feasibility of in-depth interviews allows participants to express their feelings more precisely and avoid their reflections on conducting experiences being generalised as they might be with survey data where there would be a minimal choice of response options. Thirdly, to gain factual data on conductors' rehearsing stories, one-on-one interviews prevent the

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[41] Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," 1.

possibility of making assumptions about the conductors' problems in directing multicultural choirs. The last reason for using in-depth interviews is the flexibility of open-ended questioning. Pre-designed questions may fail to include all aspects of cultural and choral conducting challenges with conceptual assumptions. The following sub-questions and optional open questions were prepared to collect extra information that caught the conductors' attention in rehearsing.

Data Collection & Analysis

As for the data collection, I took two one-on-one in-depth interviews with two selected participants. The interviews were not open-ended. Each one-on-one interview was around 60 minutes long, and I split each interview into three parts: participants' educational and musical background, participants' conducting experiences with multicultural choirs, participants' reflections on cross-cultural choral rehearsals in terms of cultural, social, and technical challenges, and their considerations about rehearsing multicultural repertoire.

Besides the structured topics, there are prepared sub questions for Questions 4 to 7:

Q4. Are you conducting any ensembles? What is the background of the ensemble?

- a. Musical
- b. Cultural
- c. Social

Q5. Are you experiencing challenges while rehearsing the current ensemble?

- a. What are they?
- b. Regarding XXX (the challenge mentioned), what is your current solution?
- c. What strategies have you tried to overcome these challenges?
- d. What is the result? (Did your strategy work?)

Q6. Are you experiencing challenges brought by linguistic, cultural, or social differences?

a. What are they?

i. Regarding XXX (the challenges mentioned), what are your current solutions?

ii. What rehearsal/conducting strategies have you tried to overcome these challenges?

Q7. In your previous rehearsing experiences,

a. Have you experienced similar problems?

b. How did you deal with it?

c. What was the result?

To participate in the in-depth individual interviews, interviewees need to meet the following four conditions: 1) 18 years or older, 2) ethnic Chinese, 3) trained choral conductors, and 4) have experience directing choirs with different cultural backgrounds within New Zealand. The first two conditions assure that participants suit the demographic theme of this thesis, and the prerequisite of conducting skills undertake the interviewees professional background in terms of choral conducting. In addition, to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data collection, the unique experiences of directing multicultural choirs in New Zealand are also essential. Amy and Wayne, two Chinese conductors, volunteered to participate in the interviews; both are located in New Zealand and have sufficient experience conducting culturally diverse choirs. As for the data analysis process, two one-on-one interviews were completed on online meeting platforms, voices recorded, and transcribed into word documents of verbatim transcription, including each word they said about the interview questions. After the transcription, I summarised the interviewees responses into several different topics for further discussion about the topics.

In the autoethnography, I recalled the stories of working with both local and Chinese choirs in New Zealand and an intermediate school choir located in China. The combination of autoethnography and two one-on-one interviews create a data source triangulation for the research process since the multiple data sources assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of the culturally diverse choral context. On the one hand, autoethnography can be applied as a benchmark for measuring the data collected from the two individual interviews. On the other hand, the insights gained from the three data sources complement each other so that an overview of multicultural choral conducting contexts can be established effectively. From three Chinese conductors subjective perspectives, the key challenges and factors of cross-cultural choral rehearsing experiences will be summarised in several sections and discussed systematically on respective topics.

Limitations and possible bias

Language is one main factor that may lead to misinterpretation of collected data during interviews. Since I did not require all participants to answer the interview questions in English but in the language in which they are the most comfortable with, there might be some inaccuracy in my literal transcriptions in English. Beyond that, the Chinese-New Zealand cross-cultural theme does not limit Chinese participants' nationality and cultural identity; the three Chinese conductors' cultural, social, and educational environments vary. Correspondingly, conductors' reflections on cultural barriers may be influenced by the indeterminacy of individuals' backgrounds. In addition, even though this study is conducted with mixed methods, the sample size is relatively small for representing all Chinese conductors located in New Zealand.

Chapter 4: Findings

"Page two, bar thirty-six. That's it!"

Challenges were all over the place while I was trying to transfer myself from a typical Chinese international student to a professional English-speaking conductor. When I first came to New Zealand in 2013, I was confident with my spoken English as I was a good English student at high school in China. During my first years in New Zealand, there have not been many language difficulties because I did not have to speak English in front of crowds until I decided to take conducting as a major at the university. Of course, there were times that I could not understand everything the lecturers said in class, but I could catch up on everything from the type by listening to recordings, reading through lecture notes, and looking for help from my classmates afterwards. I struggled that I could not apply this method to solve the language problems which I was experiencing in conducting classes.

I still remember the moment I stepped into the undergraduate conducting lecture, facing a small group of string players I had never met before. Yes, I would talk with them, let them know who I am, and plan for a 20-minute short rehearsal to prepare for an upcoming conducting test. When I looked at the players surrounding me, I suddenly realised that I was not the person who tried to study for the test but a leader working with well-trained musicians. The test is only a result shown to the examiner; what took place before the test is my job—to collaborate with professional musicians and get the best performance we could in 20 minutes. For the first 10 minutes, we ran through three sections from three different pieces, and I could figure out the bars requiring work. Then the problem came, I spent a few minutes describing where we needed to pick up, and I did not mention what errors they made. I was so nervous that I could not speak appropriately with clear words. Musicians looked confused with my instructions and looked back

at me, waiting for more explanations. Suddenly, my thoughts vanished, and I spoke to the players softly, “Let us start from the top, shall we?”

After the short rehearsal, my conducting supervisor kindly pointed out what I missed in those 20 minutes: “Sola, you need to be very clear. Page two, bar thirty-six. That’s it!” I nodded because I understood what she meant—my comments have to be brief, specific, and instructional. The tricky part is not figuring out errors but delivering my thoughts to musicians with clear English to immediately build up my position as a conductor. During the 20-minute rehearsal, I was shy and overcautious about what I said in front of the musicians. Even though my brain went on track with the music they played, there was also a full image of the notes and rhythms I heard, and my voice was muted as I was worried about English speaking. Although the test result was good, my supervisor and I were unsatisfied with the rehearsal part of the exam. We both knew that the language barrier led me to more potential problems—lack of self-confidence, corresponding influences on rehearsal skills, and my position as a conductor.

The turning point occurred while I was leading an all-New Zealand community choir. The first few rehearsals did not go smoothly. I felt anxious and self-isolated because I was the only Asian in the group, and it was difficult for me to ignore that I was a young Chinese female in the singers’ eyes. When I reviewed the first rehearsal recording, I found that the more I thought about these labels, the less I could focus on the music; the more worries about English I had in mind, the less efficient the rehearsal became. One day, when I was giving instructions to basses who sat in the back of the room, one of them suddenly shouted to me: “What are you talking about? I can’t hear you!” Subconsciously, I raised my voice and shouted, “What about now?” The room went silent for a second, and everyone burst into laughter. I smiled at the singers and

said: “You may already know I’m shy and my English is not good. Please tell me straight away if you cannot understand what I’m saying.”

Surprisingly, the singers started to pay much more attention during the rest of that rehearsal when I gave instructions. The rehearsal mood started to be light, and there was more eye contact between the singers and me. I felt the connections between the musicians and me for the first time. In my view, their warm eyes and voices were so encouraging that I put down all my constraints of English and ethnic identity. After that rehearsal, I started to review the good words and sentences I had used in each rehearsal and practice English instructions by talking to myself. The moment I shouted back to that bass singer was a breaking point. I released myself from the protecting shell—the self-doubt; I broke through the line of interacting cross-culturally—the racial difference that had frustrated me for a long time. And most importantly, I found the best approach to giving English instructions—is to be confident and professional.

Besides English speaking and ethnic identity, rehearsing multicultural music with the New Zealand choir was challenging. In the second year of working with the community choir, the committee members expected me to prepare a summer concert programme with multicultural music. I was so excited that I could introduce Chinese choral music to the choir and perform it in Mandarin Chinese. The repertoire I chose is *The Farewell* ("送别"), a well-known folk song originally composed by John P. Ordway, named *Dreaming of Home and Mother*.[42] *The Farewell* was the Chinese version of Ordway’s composition with lyrics written by Shutong Li, a Chinese poet, artist, musician, and calligrapher.[43] When I introduced this song to singers, they were astonished by the story behind the music—Li re-composed the piece before leaving China to

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[42] Levy Sheet Music Collection, *Dreaming of Home and Mother.*

[43] Kim, “Western-style Painting in Pan-Asian Context: The Art and Historical Legacies of Kuroda Seiki, Li Shutong, and Go Hui-Doing, 1888-1916,” passim.

study in Japan and leading the Chinese political revolution in the early 20th century, with his deep feelings about the country and his mother's sudden death.[44] To deliver the emotions carried with the song, I spent around fifteen minutes telling Li's story for singers to understand the particular cultural, social and political music background.

The challenge for New Zealanders singing Chinese songs is the vowels and consonants of Mandarin. Singers found it hard to pronounce some words, such as rolling tongue for "tʃ" in *chang* ("长", [tʃanŋ]), shaping mouths for a closed "u" in *gu* ("古", [gu:]), singing the double vowel "-ian" with a fast transition from [i:] to [an]. As we had twelve rehearsals before the final concert, I broke down the Chinese lyrics into six parts for singers to learn several words each week with me. After each rehearsal, I also recorded the Chinese pronunciation for their practice. I was surprised at how singers had coped with Mandarin in our last rehearsal. The vowels and consonants were not 100% perfect, but they were confident with the words and could sing the music out loud. I felt relieved for the hard work we had done together in the past 12 weeks—through their voices; I could hear the stories behind the music, Li's farewell to his home country and his mother. After the concert, a Chinese audience came to me and said, "When I heard *The Farewell*, I got tears in my eyes because this is a song we listen to and sing a lot in China from a young age. When they [singers] opened their mouths, I thought they were Chinese! The Mandarin brought me home!"

The feedback on the Chinese song was entirely positive, and I felt glad that community choristers were able to perform *The Farewell* with their understanding of ethnocultural music. The process of teaching Chinese music is an intercultural activity that tied me to the choir closer, too. Singers were open-minded to the music I chose, curious about the lyrics and historical stories behind the music.

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[44] Kim, 33.

They were interested in learning Mandarin even though they had a tough time. Their passion for learning Chinese music led me to consider the cultural and social relationships they built together through this multicultural choral experience. On the one hand, singers were willing to learn about Chinese history, poetry and language; while they learned the song, they were also learning about me as I was a Chinese cultural representative to them. On the other hand, the more they knew about my cultural background and country, the more respect I received regarding my cultural identity; I felt much more comfortable and confident as the only Asian and Chinese person in the large group. In other words, I was no longer an outsider in this New Zealand choir.

Interview Findings

Wayne's and Amy's backgrounds show that their past experiences of living and studying in various countries shaped their understanding of cultural differences, cultural identities, and how they coped with cross-cultural choral rehearsals. I chose Wayne and Amy as interview participants because they have rich experiences working with multicultural choirs in New Zealand. In addition, because Wayne and Amy grew up in different countries, they have different educational and cultural backgrounds even though they both identify as Chinese. Their unique experience is beneficial for exploring the philosophy and theories behind cross-cultural choral conducting and how these manifest themselves in practices.

Wayne is a young conductor born and raised in mainland China and started playing the piano when he was four. When Wayne auditioned for the piano major at a conservatory in China, he accidentally auditioned for an overseas music school's conducting major as he could meet the application requirement. After completing his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Poland and the United States, Wayne moved to New Zealand as a PhD candidate and started to rehearse both Chinese and New Zealand choirs in Auckland and Christchurch. The other interviewee, Amy, was

born in Hong Kong, China and immigrated to New Zealand with her family when she was only seven. Before Amy decided to be a conductor, she studied classical performance in piano and double bass.

I categorised the collected data from the interviews into five parts: communication in choral conducting, community culture of choirs, cultural challenges, and cultural and language barriers in their specific cross-cultural choral context. Due to the difference between the two interviewees' educational backgrounds and conducting experiences, they also have different understandings of rehearsing multicultural music and constructing social relationships with multiethnic singers.

Communication in Choral Conducting

One of the preliminary questions is why participants chose conducting as their job. As this was only a background question, there was no expectation for interviewees to discuss the key elements of conducting; however, Wayne's and Amy's answers surprisingly explained their in-depth understanding of choral conductors role.

> Wayne: One of the most important things is my understanding of music. My music philosophy is relationship, and the most important thing for me, whether I am playing or rehearsing, is the relationship between people and music. When it comes to rehearsals, the most important thing for me is to conduct, whether there is a way to transmit the technical movements of the hands to the singers in the choir, and then they give me feedback with their voices and communicate with me, and then I have to give them feedbacks through my hands to produce a virtuous circle, that is, a relationship between each other.

> Amy: …It's [Conducting is] just a very different channel to really communicate with everyone on a very different level beyond just a performance. Communication is very big for energy…That's why I think conducting is an endless experience and experiment learning. I also think conducting very intriguing, because it keeps the learning…That's why I like it.

As both Wayne and Amy mention, communication is one of the critical factors which attracts them to lead choirs. They both agree that conducting fits the relationship between communication and choral rehearsals. According to Wayne, each rehearsal is progress for a conductor completing a music-communication cycle in several steps: teaching music, conducting with hands, giving instructions and feedback, interacting with singers, and creating better sounds. For Amy, the choral rehearsal gives conductors and singers an open space to communicate and make music together. With ongoing rehearsals, the communication drives her and the musicians to create energies that activate them to move forward on the choir's future development with continuous learning. Each time Amy and the choir learn new pieces or confront new challenges, such as learning new languages and building vocal balances, they have to communicate with each other to solve the problems. Through the repetitive routine of learning, communicating, and problem-solving, they can achieve better performance, giving them more confidence in rehearsals. For the two conductors, communication drives them to build a meaningful relationship with singers—it is not only an approach to rehearsing the choirs but also a bridge that connects musicians to explore music, create sounds, and learn together like colleagues. Later in the interview, Wayne emphasised the importance of communication again while describing his first rehearsal with a university student choir early in his postgraduate studies in the United States:

> For that rehearsal, it was a huge failure, an EXTREME failure. I had only been in rehearsal for five minutes before the teacher threw me out. At that time, because I was an assistant conductor, whoever was paying me, then the school's expectation of me was that I had to get on track quickly. But after I rehearsed for another five minutes, my teacher felt that I had lost my control of the choir…[my professor] wouldn't let me rehearse for a semester, she'd let me watch instead. He punish me in front of everybody and said, "I'm not punishing you singers, I'm punishing him. Why? Because he isn't prepared as a choral conductor or as an assistant conductor. He didn't have the ability to do this [job]. So that's why I couldn't even let him rehearse this semester, I had to let him watch." I stood at the door and watched the rehearsals for a whole semester. I learned how my professor communicated with those singers, and this experience made me think that this [communication] is very important, if I don't have this [communication], he [my professor] won't give me a chance.

Community Culture of Choirs

The second element that both Wayne and Amy emphasise working with choirs is the community culture, referring to the social and cultural values derived from the relationship between conductors and singers. For Wayne, his unsuccessful first rehearsal in the United States. stimulated him to improve his communication skills better to construct social relationships with the musicians as a conductor. The memorable cross-cultural conducting experience also inspired him to apply communication skills as an essential rehearsal strategy. Wayne said:

> My experience has led me to work with many choirs of different cultural background, the United States, Poland, Italy, New Zealand, China… The choirs

> don't give me that much time to build up a relationship with every musician, so I have to integrate into the group quickly. That's why I found out that a choir would only give me five minutes for self-introduction in the first rehearsal, to say who I am, what I'm here for, what my goal is. I need to convince people that I can lead them for the next few rehearsals and to gain their trust. Then the efficiency of rehearsals with new choirs is based on one point—my relationship with these people, how I enhance the relationship between me and them with commanding gestures so that people can sing along with me.

The relationship between the conductors' communication skills, choirs' rehearsal efficiency, and conductors' social relationship with choristers are circular. For conductors, when they meet unfamiliar singers for the first time as a new group member, good communication skills can assist them in building social connections with the singers. The better gestural and verbal skills conductors have, the faster conductors will establish a relationship with singers, and rehearsals will be more efficient. The social relationship Wayne talked about also includes rehearsing and learning new music:

> As a choral conductor, my [music] philosophy is relationship, so the most important thing in my choir is the relationship among the conductor, the singer and the work, and how to make these three factors progress together. Having a *community culture* is what I set out to do when I set up my co-op group, so I think *community culture* is what we, as conductors, have to master in the rehearsing process, and it is the reason we gather to learn.

As for Amy, when she reflects on her conducting experiences with Chinese choirs in New Zealand, the choirs' performances in Chinese festivals indicate the other aspect of *community culture*—the cultural value of choirs. For the Chinese singers in the community choir, each rehearsal is not only a place they learn music and sing together but also a social activity where singers from the same culture can interact with each other within the Chinese community. The Chinese choir is also excited about Chinese festivals when they can perform the Chinese music and celebrate the special days with people from the same cultural background. In this case, *community culture* refers to Chinese culture as a medium that connects Chinese singers and drives the growth of the Chinese choir as a community. As Amy explained:

> They [the singers] are passionate about singing, and they are also very enthusiastic about learning and enjoying their singing. It is a community choir, a real community choir. It means that the choir *means* to them, and they are able to enjoy the repertoire of choral music. They also want to find a way to get better and sing it as a choir. At the same time, every week's rehearsal is a social time for them to see friends. Moreover, they have these events that say Chinese celebration, and they got invited to do that … they do get opportunities to perform a little bit around their [Chinese] festival…

Sociocultural Problems In Choirs

Amy used to struggle with building up a healthy social relationship with another Chinese choir in New Zealand. According to Amy, a good choral rehearsal should be 95% music-making and 5% social interactions with singers. However, when she worked with the second Chinese choir, Amy noted that "Maybe only 5% I can input on the music and 95% was playing politics with people". As for the first choir, the second choir is built up of singers who immigrated from mainland China.

Amy found it difficult to balance her social being and the choir's social system, given her identity as an immigrant from Hong Kong, China. Amy's words about the relationship between her and the choir are thought-provoking, showing how the choir's social system strongly disrupted her job of rehearsing music as a professional conductor. In addition, Amy realised the pressure from the committee as a result of the hierarchal issue. When Amy led the choir, the committee kept telling her what music to rehearse and how to design the programme. They even asked her to exclude sacred music due to her religious belief and race. The only thing she could do at the time was to follow the committee's mandate and stop rehearsing sacred music:

> We have some work for Haydn and Brahms Requiem. The choir doesn't have enough balance among the voices, so we rehearsed to establish a real balanced sound. However, I found the singers are not quite responding…I got challenged, I got told in private that because I'm Asian and that I'm Buddhist, I'm not qualified to rehearse and do sacred music. But why should I be qualified to rehearse and do sacred music? Unheard of, but it shocked me. It's only not because the racism—of course there are racist things in there, but we are living more than a world. How can this type of thinking still exist? But that's all right, just live with it … I just kept on doing what I did until I found that the musical needs of me and the choir are very different. I ended up have to follow their musical intent and like a puppet. I can't really, and I don't need to spend the time this way.

The social interaction between Amy and the choir seemed disconnected, and I asked: "did this experience influence your choice of the choir for the future regarding the cultural background?" Amy insists on her opinion of doing a conductor's job—focusing on the music and abandoning potential socio-cultural problems of ethnocultural choirs. On the one hand, even though she has

been disrespected regarding her cultural identity, race, and religious belief, she chooses to overlook the social problems. On the other hand, Amy admitted that she has a culture gap with singers from mainland China as an emmigrant from Hong Kong, China. The cultural gap is difficult to overcome by compromising the choir's social hierarchy. Amy said:

> The cultural gap is there, but I wasn't even thinking about that because of the way I put place myself; it was very clear that I just make music as simple as that… I just do the job for music, and it doesn't matter. I just have to leave because there are too many things to deal with except music. I run into problems like the hierarchical issue, which is not really helpful or necessary to make the music… Then there is a hierarchical issue like the order of the pieces; there is the Chinese culture. Basically, they expect me to fully understand Chinese culture. Obviously, I was raised in Hong Kong and New Zealand, I do have a cultural gap there. And I went in as a musician, not as a comrade Chinese…I don't behave this way, and I don't communicate this way. I always had to deal with these problems and a lot of compromises to the very end. What broke it was my freedom of musical input talking about whether the piece was up to standard to perform or not. As a musical director, I don't have that. So what can I be?

Due to the differences between Chinese and New Zealand choirs' cultural and social contexts, Amy found it difficult to adapt to the Chinese choir's social hierarchy since she knew little about collaborating with members from mainland China. Beyond that, the cultural and social differences caused her to lose the right, as the conductor, to choose repertoire, which further influenced her rehearsal plans. In contrast to the Chinese choir, Amy enjoyed her rehearsals with a well-known choir located in Auckland in the past ten years as an Asian, a Hong Kong Chinese and a New

Zealander. The demographics of this New Zealand choir were described as “a mixed culture” by Amy. The local choir contains singers from various cultural backgrounds but follows New Zealand style social system in its operation. Amy said:

> It’s a mixed culture. The choir was founded in New Zealand, but there’re various culturally diverse singers: European, a few Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, one or two European as in Germany and even Lucien…So culture is institutional; a lot is institutional. At times, I launched my English in the institutional one. I don’t think they realised that, but in some way, they make fun if I use a bit more different type of way to express it, they will find it a little bit interesting, in a friendly way. But institutional stereotype, obviously yes, and of course…So when I’m doing that, at times, I get questions. Sometimes I get that publicly, sometimes privately…But a lot of things, we also respect each other; on the musical side, it is okay. Because when I’m doing the conducting there, I don’t necessarily work on other cases.

The other interviewee, Wayne, expressed his understanding of cultural respects and acceptance in cross-cultural rehearsals as a foreign conductor. When conducting multicultural music in different countries, Wayne observed that singers were disrespectful of the melodies, rhythms and lyrics. Wayne believed that conductors need to be inclusive and tolerant to the cultural misunderstandings of singers from diverse cultural backgrounds, and guide singers to learn about the cultural knowledge behind music to build up their music understanding from a scratch. Wayne said:

> The conducting experiences in so many countries made me understand the question of what it means to be truly inclusive. Inclusion does not imply that I have to have different works and words to present. Nor is it tolerant to say that if I

> give these works to the group members, they will accept them. I don't think that's tolerance. The real tolerance is to always keep the curiosity about all cultures, rather than standing on moral high ground and believing that this [a specific culture] is interesting.

> Whether it's a Filipino, Chinese, American, Polish piece [of music]… there's something to explore and sing. For example, I've worked with a Polish singing group before on a Chinese piece; singers laughed when they read the lyrics and found the lyrics quite strange. First of all, as a tolerant person, I have to accept their behaviour. But why are they laughing? It's not because they think it's funny, but they're scared as they hadn't worked on any Chinese songs before and they didn't understand the music…As an inclusive musician, I must not feel offended by such things. What is to be done? I have to take one step at a time so that people can appreciate or understand the value of the music. I've rehearsed Argentine music in the United States, and the students could not accept some unfamiliar rhythmic patterns. They thought the rhythms were strange, so what could they do?… Not only do conductors need to make the singers understand and appreciate the meaning behind the culture, but they need to increase singers' confidence through singing multicultural music.

Language Challenges

Language difficulty is indicated in both interviews with Wayne and Amy. To solve this problem, both conductors have tried different approaches to minimise the influence of limited language on rehearsal effectiveness in a cross-cultural choral context. Furthermore, it is also found that the language barrier led to a conductor's cultural identity. During Wayne's conducting experiences with

American and New Zealand choirs, he faced the challenge of speaking English as a second language, especially when he realised communication had stopped him from giving adequate instructions and improving rehearsal efficiency with native speakers. As for the English-speaking issue, Wayne used rehearsal review to record adequate English words and sentences he had used in each rehearsal, review the music outputs he had gained from singers, and prepare for the next rehearsal with improved language. Wayne said:

> My biggest problem before was that I had no way to express what I wanted with clear words in rehearsals. Then my professor gave me a challenge, as she said, "You have to say more than 5 words per sentence from now on, or no more than 3 words." Also, I had to write rehearsal reviews for each rehearsal I have been to during my studies in the United States, including effective sentences my supervisor used during her rehearsals, how she delivered information effectively by using very short sentences to express what she wanted from the singers. To me as a second language speaker, the rehearsal review is very useful since I have to write everything down, memorise the best English words or sentences, and prepare them for my own rehearsals…My professor in New Zealand is a German, and he gave me a lot of experience in this area [conducting] somehow. He said, "when I first came to New Zealand to rehearse, I was a German, my English wasn't even as good as yours, and I just made it a rule—get myself to use five words in each sentence during rehearsals."

Other than English, Amy has had problems rehearsing Chinese choirs with her limited Mandarin skills since she moved to New Zealand with her family at a young age. Amy speaks fluent English and Cantonese Chinese but only a little Mandarin Chinese; thus, she found it difficult to express

herself when directing Mainland-Chinese choirs in New Zealand, especially when explaining musical terminology to singers. Amy's rehearsal experience with Chinese choirs encouraged her to learn to speak Mandarin for work purposes and improved her communication skills when talking with mainland Chinese singers. When talking about speaking Mandarin in rehearsals with mainland-Chinese choirs, Amy said:

> I have to learn Mandarin, because I knew nothing much about it. I learn Mandarin because of the singers from the mainland China, and I learn to communicate because of them. I can speak Mandarin now. In Hong Kong, I got three years to learn 普通话 ("Mandarin Chinese"), but the education of Mandarin is very different from that in mainland China. Singers from mainland have different wordings which I didn't understand, so I have to learn all of them…The Chinese singers will forgive me and I can make fun of my Mandarin as I can't speak well. When I can speak fluently for most of the rehearsal about 45 minutes, my brain goes cuckoo. The second Chinese choir I worked with understands my situation and has a translator for me. The thing is, I have to learn the technical terms in Chinese and singers have to learn them in English, too. By doing this, I can say just one word while rehearsing; for example, *staccato, legato,* etc.

The challenge of rehearsing and communicating in Mandarin also shaped Amy's cultural identity as an Asian and a Chinese born and raised in Hong Kong. Even though Hong Kong is a city of China, its unique historical and political status as a SAR (Special Administrative Region) led to different education, language and social system from mainland China. After leading two mainland-Chinese choirs in New Zealand, Amy's cultural identity shifted from a Hong Kong-New Zealander to a Chinese-Hong Kong-New Zealander. The mixed cultural environment in which Amy grew up

caused her loss of belonging to either Chinese, Hong Kong, or New Zealand culture, even though Amy intends to be neutral about her understanding of the three different cultures when leading choirs from these cultural backgrounds. Amy explained:

> Thank the experience with the first Chinese choir I worked with. It enriched my cultural sense as an Asian and as a Hongkonger and reminded me that I still have the blood of a Chinese. I cannot know history when I studied, which is distant to me. Now, the history is like someone living that I can see the Chinese history which I can explore like literacy and a subject… Definitely, it was much more challenging when I first worked with the Asian choir, and there were more things to learn and understand… But being an immigrant, I have this thinking that I only belong where I am working. Still, I don't really belong to any culture. There's no sense of belonging. I know New Zealand is my home because I spent most of my life here… I still receive a little bit of institutional stereotype, which is everywhere. There's no sense of belonging that I'm a wholehearted part of this culture.

Chapter 5: Discussion

I classified data from autoethnography and interviews into four sections: communication in choral conducting, community culture of choirs, socio-cultural problems in cross-cultural choirs, and language challenge. These four components represent three dimensions of cross-cultural choral rehearsals for foreign conductors: the socio-cultural environment of choirs, cultural differences between Chinese conductors and singers from other cultural backgrounds, and communication difficulties due to cultural, social, and language barriers. Summarised from the literature review, *praxis* philosophy, multi- and inter-culturalism in the choral context, and culturally responsive teaching method are the key concepts that can construct the theoretical frameworks behind Chinese conductors' rehearsals with musicians from various cultural backgrounds. In addition, Chinese conductors' communication strategy in choirs with various cultural and social backgrounds also plays a significant role in choral rehearsals.

Regarding the four aspects, we will look into how previous researchers applied praxis philosophy, multi- and inter-culturalism, culturally responsive teaching approach, and communication skills to interactions among people from diverse background. Firstly, Aristotle's praxis philosophy is a human-centred theory that concentrates on people's well-beings when they participate in all kinds of human activities.[45] Secondly, multiculturalism refers to a shared belief of culture in a diverse group, whereas interculturalism focuses on the social interaction and cultural integration in a diverse group's activities.[46] I will demonstrate the concepts and the critical comparisons of multiculturalism and interculturalism. Thirdly, a culturally responsive teaching method is a pedagogy to deliver knowledge to people who are ethnocultural individuals to create cultural and

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[45] Au and Kawakami, "Cultural congruence in instruction." Foster, "African American teachers and culturally relevant pedagogy;" Gay, "Chapter Two: Power Pedagogy Through Cultural Responsiveness;" Hollins, "Culture in school learning: Revealing the deep meaning." Kleinfield, "Effective teachers of Eskimo and Indian students;" Ladson-Billings, "The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children," and "Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy."

[46] Bouchard, "What is Interculturalism?" 445; Parr, "Eight Simple Rules for Singing Multicultural Music," 34.

social value in multi- and inter-cultural context.[47] Furthermore, Geneva Gay's research about communication in classrooms consisting of people from different cultural backgrounds explores the relationship among culture, language and communication.[48] I will relate these theories and approaches to the choral context of Chinese conductors leading New Zealand choirs and discuss how the conductors can implement them in practice.

Section One: Praxis in Choral Rehearsals

Choral conductors are not only directors of groups but also front-line music educators who give a particular type of music lesson to musicians. Music teachers' tasks are relatively straightforward; the connection between school teachers and students is based on school regulations, directive supervision and structured teaching materials. Thus, the relationship between teachers and students becomes linear as they are givers and receivers of knowledge, and fixed results, such as exams, can measure the process of teaching and learning. Unlike the teacher-student relationship in China or New Zealand school curriculums, networks among the choir participants and the conductor are vague. Everyone in a rehearsal room needs to collaborate to achieve their common goal, including the conductor, the accompanist, and the committee. This common goal represents the choir's image and a core value of the group, which accelerates healthy choir development.

The progress of achieving praxis in music direction requires foreign conductors to take musical, cultural, social and ethical responsibilities through reflections on their actions during rehearsals. It is also essential for Chinese choral conductors in New Zealand to observe how singers react to produced music as part of the small choral society. The challenge for the international conductors is that they may miss some information due to language and socio-cultural barriers. In each step of the

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[47] Au and Kawakami; Foster; Gay, "Chapter Two: Power Pedagogy Through Cultural Responsiveness;" Hollins; Kleinfield, "Effective teachers of Eskimo and Indian students." Ladson-Billings.

[48] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," passim.

proceeding rehearsals and the concert performance, conductors and choristers should connect as *praxial selves* (refer to p.48)—their musical abilities, cultural background, and music preferences should be involved with ethical and social considerations. As for choral conductors, the choir rehearsal was a simple music learning session, but it was also a multi-dimensional activity that lifted the engagement of the singers, created cultural and educational values through music, and brought happiness to singers as individuals. In cross-cultural rehearsals, the Chinese conductors' knowledge, skills, actions, and ethical considerations may differentiate them from leaders of monocultural music activities since the conductors' music-educational, cultural, and social backgrounds could be essential variables in directing effective rehearsals. The four concepts of praxis could help conductors draw rehearsal plans, including potential music materials, expected progress of each rehearsal, and professional approaches applied to achieving outcomes with the cultural, social, and ethical responsibility.

Praxis in Music Direction

A good rehearsal environment requires much communication, interaction, and cooperation among individuals to establish and sustain musical, cultural, and social consistency. During the construction of such an environment, foreign conductors should take the responsibility to eliminate potential challenges and pay attention to their well-being and perception of the choir's events. When facing a new choir, conductors need to quickly identify the choir's music ability and members' background to take the right step. When Amy started to work with one of the mainland Chinese choirs in New Zealand, she did not prepare for the choir's cultural gap and social system. The lack of preparation caused further problems, including communicating with the committee, designing concert programmes, and rehearsing sacred music. Chinese conductors who lead choirs with singers from various cultural backgrounds need to spend more effort deeply understanding a choir's cultural and social background to avoid most cultural boundaries and communicative

problems. Aristotle's *praxis* philosophy includes these barriers and underlies the social, cultural, ethical and individual dimensions of people's well being and individual development.[49] Connected to choral conducting, *praxis* philosophy is potentially beneficial for Chinese conductors to evaluate their social interactions, communicative behaviour, and rehearsal strategies with cross-culture choirs, especially when they lack knowledge about particular cultures.

Praxis originally refers to "active reflection and reflective action" by which people positively transform their real lives and experiences.[50] Although choral conducting is a particular type of music education, there are similarities between the two fields, such as teaching music (mostly in school or community choirs), preparing materials or repertoire, and establishing social relationships with musicians. Thus, praxis philosophy can support foreign conductors to prepare themselves for better adapting to various ethnocultural choirs and produce music that suits the choirs' musical ability, social needs, and cultural background. Theories of praxis and paraxial music education also help music directors to consider their rehearsals as teaching sessions from a human-centred perspective. In music education, *praxis* refers to an action that transfers "knowledge and skill" into a specific type of "service" needed by people.[51] Phillip Alperson first mentioned the philosophy of *praxial music education.* He suggested that applying a "praxial view of art" in music activities would strengthen musicologists' understanding of musical and music educational "value" based on their practical activities within various cultures.[52] As both Wayne and Amy claimed in the interviews, rehearsals bring them opportunities to communicate with singers and bridge them to singers through exploring and learning music together. Communicating, exploring and learning

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[49] Elliot and Silverman, "Philosophy and Music Education," passim.

[50] Elliot and Silverman, 43.

[51] Regelski, "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis," 27-30.

[52] Alperson, "What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music," 233.

music creates the social and educational value in rehearsals with singers from various cultural backgrounds, leading conductors and choirs to create choral praxis.

Derived from the definition of praxis, the theory of *praxial music education* allows music educators to evaluate the content and the context of their teaching process and then enhance students' learning experiences through reflective reactions taken for improvement.[53] When Wayne, Amy and I conducted community choirs, we found that musicians were active in learning new music and attending the rehearsals as community social activities. At the same time, community choir singers expected to perform music to their best abilities after the learning progress. Therefore, foreign conductors need to be aware of the praxial music education theory to underpin rehearsal practices and the attributes of praxis in music direction, including the effectiveness of varied musical performances, the ethical and social benefits for students' self-identities as people, musicians, and representatives of culture.[54] In choral contexts, the praxis concept can help conductors prepare the appropriate musical contents, test choristers' reactions to the music, observe their behaviour, and adjust rehearsal strategies to strengthen the rehearsing experiences. To achieve this goal, foreign conductors can build connections among music content, singers' cultural backgrounds, and singers' cultural identities with ethical concerns. In Wayne's experiences of rehearsing Chinese music with choirs in Poland and New Zealand, Wayne found it difficult to 'teach' Chinese music as the singers made fun of the lyrics. Even though musicians from various cultural backgrounds accepted Chinese singing songs, they did not relate to the musical contents. The lack of Chinese cultural knowledge stopped singers from resonating with the Chinese conductor.

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[53] Tuo, "Article Review: Elliott, D. & Silverman, M. (2015). Philosophy and Music Education." In Elliott, D. & Silverman, M. (Eds.), "Music Matters (2nd ed., pp. 43-53)," 1.

[54] Elliot and Silverman, 44.

In contrast, when I introduced Chinese repertoire to New Zealand singers, I prepared a complete plan, including the piece's historical, socio-cultural, compositional, and musical background. Also, the original English version of the song, an English translation of Chinese lyrics to connect New Zealand singers to the stories behind the music. At the same time, I foresaw the situation that most singers may not be familiar with early 20th century Chinese history; I also talked about how the worldwide historical events influenced the Chinese lyricist. New Zealand singers were much involved in the musical background by drawing a complete picture of the Chinese song before actually rehearsing it. They managed to sing with their comprehension of the Chinese culture.

Praxial Self of Foreign Conductors

Praxis starts with theories, actions, methodologies, and practical reasoning; however, conductors cannot achieve praxis without caring for individual singers.[55] Since music is "a social act and social fact", another common characteristic of praxis philosophy is the social effects of communities' self-identities.[56] Choral activities can enhance people's national and cultural identities, bridge social capital, encourage singers to build friendships, and contribute to musical expressions.[57] These outcomes of choral rehearsals vary among different contexts, including schools, communities, churches, and even prisons, and they are all relevant to the construction of *personhood* in praxis philosophy regarding cultural, social and musical development.[58] The underlying principle of *praxis* is to create a "positive transformation of people's everyday lives and situations" praxis ought to be constructed with individuals' sociocultural and ethical considerations, which vary in

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[55] Elliot and Silverman, 43.

[56] Bowman, "Who is the 'We'? Rethinking Professionalism in Music Education," 109.

[57] Bartolome, "'We sing to touch heart': Choral musical culture in Pretoria East, South Africa," 277; Ramsey, "Adolescents and The Way of Choral Music," passim.

[58] Bartolome, passim; Bartolome, "We sing to touch hearts": Choral musical culture in Pretoria East, South Africa,' passim; Henry, "Transformational Choral Singing," passim; Ramsey, passim; Yinger, "Adapting choral singing experiences for older adults: The implications of sensory, perceptual, and cognitive changes," passim.

different disciplinary and situational contexts.[59] The effectiveness of choral rehearsals is inseparable from the conductors' construction of self-perception and self-confidence, which can positively influence singers' "strength to challenge and defy stereotypes" within multicultural contexts.[60] To identify the variables of conductors' self-identity constructing regarding social and cultural values, we need to figure out the meaning of *personhood* with a multicultural *praxis* background and chase down the self-perception problems that conductors may confront during rehearsals.

A foreign conductor's understanding of *praxial self* originates from *personhood* in praxis philosophy. As for modern music training, David Elliott and Marissa Silverman extended Aristotle's philosophy of praxis to music learning and teaching circumstances. They believed that praxis includes a deep concern for human 'personhood', referring to musicians' personal, musical, and cultural identities.[61] In other words, praxis in music training describes the compound connections among people's self-identities, teaching and training activities, life experiences and mental well-being. For instance, when faced with unfamiliar cross-cultural choirs, Chinese conductors need to prepare rehearsals with more knowledge about the cultural and social backgrounds of choirs to avoid possible problems that influence their well-being. According to the interview findings, when Amy got challenged by the query from the Chinese choir committee that she shall not rehearse sacred music as an Asian Buddhist, she did not achieve praxial self under the circumstance:

1. Amy received discrimination for her religious belief and race, and the choir members affected her mental well-being.

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[59] Elliott and Silverman, 43.

[60] Powell, "Choral possible selves: The interaction of Australian males' past, present and future identities in shaping decisions about participation in choir," 66.

[61] Elliot and Silverman, 43.

2. The choir refused to rehearse Joseph Michael Haydn's Requiem due to Amy's identity, and the committee's decision to stop Amy from rehearsing sacred music broke disrupted her music teaching.
3. When Amy decided to stay and work on the repertoire told by the committee, the unbalanced relationship between her and the choir represented a failure to achieve praxis.

What does a conductor's praxial self mean to a cross-cultural choir? A cross-cultural choir is a musical community that ties people from various backgrounds together, and it has a unique image of social and cultural values. This image can also be viewed as the presentation of a society that consists of individuals' human personhood. For foreign conductors, it is common to face the situation of adapting themselves to an unfamiliar community within a short amount of time. In this case, achieving praxis is even more challenging since physical and mind-setting transformations have to take immediate professional responsibility as a musician, a leader, and an effective communicator. When I started to work with the New Zealand community choir, I knew that I had to confront singers from the same demographic background and represent a regional society that is different from mine. As an Asian and a Chinese conductor, the challenge was to sustain the choir's existing social and cultural values and not break the balance between their sociocultural environment with my background and Chinese repertoire. More generally, conductors need to consider how personal background may affect both the choir's social image and individuals' self-identities to choose repertoire from European and Chinese cultures without breach of the choir's image.

Meanwhile, the social and cultural identity of the conductor herself is a determinate factor in creating the ensembles. Comprehending the *praxial self* concept may resolve the complex issue of conductors' self-identity. In his discussion about *praxis and personal meaning*, Regelski defined

the *praxial self* as “a social, participating selflessness” which “incorporates ‘other’ as context” and “resonates” with the community, but also an "idiosyncratic" self with excessive personalisation and self-actualisation.[62] While adapting to a new choir, conductors need to balance their resonation with the group, which reduces the sense of selfness and the maintenance of self-identity, energising them to present their actual selves. Thus, international conductors can minimise the disadvantages raised from the socio-cultural contrasts and maximise their *praxial* selves—by being who they are and combine their abilities and personalities, which are beneficial to directing ensembles. The resonation will occur automatically when non-local directors present themselves as their default praxial selves, and their adaption into changeful communities will become less problematic. In rehearsals with New Zealand choirs, Wayne, Amy and I all accepted our cultural identities as Chinese, and we are willing to interact with singers by being their authentic selves. For example, I used humour to resolve my lack of self-confidence when I first joined the New Zealand choir. Singers were more open to communicating with me during rehearsals, and the rehearsals’ atmosphere became much more relaxed. Similarly, when Amy found her unique English style lightened the rehearsal mood with singers from various cultures, she decided to keep her tongue for using her natural speech tone as a rehearsal strategy to solve language problems.

Achieving Praxis in Cross-cultural Choirs

The reason that praxis philosophy can be constructive in a cross-cultural context is that praxis covers the personal, musical, cultural and social development in community activities—here, the cross-cultural choral rehearsals. When conductors are aware of culturally diverse singers’ cultural backgrounds and take personal care of singers as individuals, the human connections between conductors and singers will reduce the potential risks of causing ethical problems. Simultaneously, conductors’ understandings and care of singers’ cultural backgrounds also help the conductors to

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[62] Regelski, “Music appreciation' as praxis,” 292.

rehearse and perform multicultural music. Within a human-centred and culturally friendly rehearsal setting, foreign conductors enhance cultural and social values, which will encourage singers from different cultural backgrounds during rehearsals. From the Chinese conductors' point of view, these four aspects influence a choir's musical development; however, it is difficult to predict all potential problems derived from the gap between Chinese conductors and New Zealand choirs. To achieve praxis in a cross-cultural context, we need to divide a choral rehearsal into several parts and figure out how Chinese conductors can cope with choral rehearsal problems and with singers from various cultural backgrounds. One essential theory derived from Aristotle's praxis philosophy is his four-part concept which significantly impacts people's "thinking and doing" process, formed with *theoria*, *techne, poiesis*, and *phronesis*.[63] These four concepts can be applied to structure rehearsals for Chinese conductors to critically evaluate their rehearsals in terms of choral development in the context of singers with various cultural backgrounds.

Firstly, *theoria* refers to the theoretical knowledge—knowledge of "pure or eternal truth" of a specific subject that helps a person make appropriate decisions and implies "speculative knowledge studied, arranged, and contemplated".[64] As a conceptual type of knowledge, *theoria* is the root or basics of taking actions to satisfy "tangible" everyday needs and guide "certain pragmatic" results.[65] In music training, Regelski refers theoria to aesthetic experiences and theories, and he believed that praxial music training should avoid generalisation and rationalisation.[66] As for instrumental learning, Regina Antunes Teixeira Dos Santos and Liane Hentschke applied theoria in terms of pianists' knowledge and skills to achieve their musical goals.[67] In choral direction, the theoria

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[63] Elliot and Silverman, 45.

[64] Regelski, "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis," 23.

[65] Regelski, 23-24.

[66] Regelski, "Music and Music Education Theory and praxis for 'making a difference'," 16.

[67] Dos Santos and Hentschke, "Praxis and poiesis in piano repertoire preparation," passim.

includes theoretical knowledge behind gestures, vocal training, and repertoire—the compulsory fundamentals of conducting. To Chinese conductors, the applicability of theoria is a crucial problem in conducting New Zealand choirs, especially for repertoire choices. When I rehearsed the Chinese song with the New Zealand choir, *pinyin* ("拼音"), the standard system of romanised spelling for transliterating Chinese, is a typical example of theoria. To produce the vowels and consonants of Chinese and to gain the blended choral sound, the singers and I had to follow the *pinyin* system and read through them with IPA annotations. Language is only one part of singing, but it cannot be excluded from the knowledge that I should deliver to New Zealand singers.

In contrast to *theoria*, *techne* means "manual skills, procedures, or abilities" in Greek and is defined as necessary "technical knowledge" to the action making that produces the actual results or objects.[68] With the example of being a conductor, *techne* may include the physical movements of conducting techniques, hands-on gestures, and vocal practices. When Wayne talked about choral conducting techniques, he emphasised that the conductor's movement should be used to replace unnecessary verbal communication; Chinese conductors can cover up some of their English disadvantages by doing this. However, the conductors should identify the communicative gap between conducting gestures and spoken words when rehearsing community choirs. For instance, Wayne mentioned that some amateur singers could not understand complex conducting patterns or changes of patterns, such as from 6/8 time, even though they have years of singing experience. In this case, conductors need to clarify details of *techne* before heading to the actual music.

Techne cannot be generated with a solid foundation of theoretical knowledge and is driven by *poiesis*, the production step that transforms theories and imaginations into a product with a constant procedure, such as rehearsing music from a sight-reading to the final performance. *Poiesis,* the

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[68] Elliott and Silverman, 45.

production or creation of particular objects or outcomes, is centred on the process of bringing things to life with rules.[69] Dos Santos and Hentschke refer to *poiesis* as the non-creative "activities" of piano practice.[70] In contrast, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert used *poiesis* as a metaphor for the "musical discourse", which involves developing a "structural" music organisation.[71] According to my own experience of teaching Chinese lyrics to New Zealand singers, the process of teaching Chinese words from the start and leading singers to read the lyrics is the *poiesis* part of rehearsals. It needs to be clarified that the non-creative choral activities, such as repeating lyrics, do not cause a failure in achieving choral praxis. To choral conductors, it is necessary to classify the activities in each rehearsal and aim at the product—the voices.

The final concept of Aristotle's praxis is *phronesis*, defined as a practical reasoning of the creation.[72] In other words, *phronesis* indicates if the decision-makers can recognise or comprehend the "proper value of rational human conduct" in particular situations.[73] In Daniela Bartels' research, she found the application of the *phronesis* concept in rearranging lyrics of a repertoire's original score to avoid gender discrimination against female singers. By doing this, Bartels'improved the musical quality as the choristers could sing the words they wanted to sing. Thus, Bartels believed she achieved *phronesis* as her musical knowledge impacted the choir's growth through offering "different musical options".[74] As for cross-cultural choral conducting, *phronesis* refers to how foreign conductors lead rehearsals with considerations about cultural and social differences for taking ethical responsibility. When Chinese conductors choose exercises, repertoire, and in-

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[69] Regelski, "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis," 28.

[70] Dos Santos and Hentschke, 288.

[71] Kielian-Gilbert, "Of poetics and poiesis, pleasure and politics - music theory and modes of the feminine," 45.

[72] Regelski, "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis," 28.

[73] Regelski, 28.

[74] Bartels, "Regarding Young Musicians as Ethical and Aesthetic Practitioners: A New Reading of Phronesis," 45.

rehearsal activities, they need to consider the reasons for their selections and how they will impact musicians' learnings or improvements. Conductors' choices should also be constrained by an ethical concern, referring to the conductors' respect, protection, and care for musicians within the decision-making process. With Amy's unhappy experiences with one of the mainland-Chinese choirs, she achieved praxis even if the choir committee unfairly treated her ethnicity and religion. After realising the choristers were uncomfortable with singing sacred music as Chinese, she quickly took action to rehearse the music the singers chose.

There are also further interpretations of Aristotle's four-part concepts that conductors can apply to cross-cultural rehearsals. Besides the *theoria, techne*, *poiesis*, and *phronesis*, Elliott and Silverman defined the concept of *praxial music education* formed with several additional aspects. Firstly, music educators should emphasise the use of musical techniques. Still, they should also emphasise "personal and social music actions", referring to the moral education of individuals to help students play more imaginative and creative music.[75] Second, since music activities empower people with various values such as aesthetic sense and social interaction, these values are paths to achieving "eudaimonia"—the supreme human value of Aristotle's praxis philosophy.[76] Sarah Powell's study found that the choral experience improved school students' musical and vocal skills and enhanced community choir participants' musical, social, and personal fulfilment.[77] The third aspect, musical traditions in music-making, means more than traditional musical styles and repertoire. The tradition in praxis music education emphasises the creative and innovative elements while thinking of and making traditional music, such as the new improvisations derived from the original musical materials.

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[75] Elliott and Silverman, 48.

[76] Elliott and Silverman, 48.

[77] Powell, "Table 2: *Summary of possible selves findings,*" 62.

The standard of *theoria* establishes the nature of oneself and the ensemble regarding the rehearsals' efficiency, music styles, and expected repertoire or programmes. These are the results derived from a combination of the conductor's professionalism and theories. Conductors should also notice that *theoria* is not formed by a particular purpose or intention..[78] Instead of a specific function with an underlying reason for acquiring the knowledge, *theoria* should be the down-to-earth ability of the conductor and can lead to music production spontaneously. To enforce the integration of *theoria* and *phronesis*, conductors need to establish a "democratic" environment by hearing musicians' thoughts and expectations of the repertoire and theme of the programme to involve them culturally.[79] Regelski believes that the *techne* taken to meet the actual results ought to be constructed with systematic methodologies, which are then utilised flexibly under variable circumstances.[80] The procedure of rehearsals can be established as a fixed system as an essential method, but the effectiveness of the method, i.e., how well the method functions, does depend on the conductors' reactions when facing musicians with diversities in abilities, cultural and social identities, music preferences, and so on.

Section Two: Multicultural and Intercultural Choral Contexts

In the first section, I used Aristotle's praxis philosophy to explore how Chinese conductors can review their rehearsals with musicians from various cultural backgrounds as personhood-centred community activities. When leading singers from different cultural backgrounds, conductors can pay more attention to how their cultural identities influence the music they sing, the social relationship they establish in the choir, and ethical considerations based on cultural differences.

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[78] Elliot and Silverman, 23.

[79] Elliot and Silverman, 45.

[80] Regelski, "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis," 27.

Praxis in music direction interprets cross-cultural rehearsals from a social dimension and can be applied as a conceptual basis for reflecting Chinese conductors' real-life rehearsal experiences in New Zealand. Indicated in my autoethnography and interviews, conductors also emphasised that cultural gaps and cultural differences had brought them problems in communicating with choristers, developing the community culture in choirs, positioning themselves as Asian and Chinese conductors in New Zealand. Thus, in the context of Chinese conductors leading cross-cultural choirs in New Zealand, culture is another essential factor that may influence rehearsal experiences: musical development for both conductors and singers.

Rehearsals are workplaces for choral conductors, and the impact of culture is also significant to the quality of rehearsals. Previously, Catherine Manathunga discussed how academic researchers managed the "cultural boundaries" raised from varied workplace cultures when travelling overseas or working with international researchers.[81] She found that a deeper understanding of the cultural dimension is significant to evoking researchers' innovation and creativity. Thus, the cultural and ethnic problems are undoubtedly significant for foreign choral conductors. They need to be prepared to recognise, react, and solve the cultural bias or assimilation in the rehearsal room.

The difficulty of encountering culturally varied ensembles for foreign conductors is to break down an ensemble's entity and figure out the demographic setting of the ensemble from outside to inside, at the same time, from the group to individuals. The outside refers to a choir's appearance, such as the size and demographics. In contrast, the inside is the choir's meaning to the external world for musical, cultural and social purposes. For instance, a public concert is a typical presentation of a choir's default music styles and abilities, meaning the music they are used to and able to sing; and it can be regarded as the choir's connections with the rest of society. It is worth noting that

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[81] Manathunga, "Research as an intercultural 'contact zone'," 165.

culture plays an essential role in directing the choir, as culture is the reason and a result of all the above actions. The cultures of a choir and individual choristers define the particular style of music performance and the unique social connections towards the community, which can be seen as the "social values" and "beliefs" as informed by Gay.[82] Thus, emigrant conductors need to resonate with one's beliefs with various ensembles to develop an organic value system through an in-depth understanding and effective utilisation of multiculturalism and interculturalism. Thus, after discussing the social and ethical aspects of leading cross-culture choirs through *praxis*, we now move to the potential impacts of multiculturalism and interculturalism within the choral context. I will discuss how multiculturalism and interculturalism influence Chinese conductors' rehearsals with singers from various cultural backgrounds, how the conductors can evaluate their behaviour towards cultural differences, and what actions they can take when confront cultural barriers between them and choirs, including limitations of cultural representative music and potential risks in cultural encounters.

Multiculturalism in Music Direction

To understand the meaning of multiculturalism in choral rehearsals, conductors can start considering what *culture* means to them. The word 'culture' origins in the Greek word, *kultus*, which initially means "belief".[83] Musically, Clayton Parr stated that a culture "come(s) from the shared belief of that culture".[84] When introducing a teaching approach named *culturally responsive teaching*, Geneva Gay defines culture as "a dynamic system" consisting of "social values, cognitive codes, behavioural standards, worldviews, and beliefs", which are employed to form people's lives with "order and meaning".[85] The lives Gay refers to are our own as individuals and the lives of

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[82] Gay, "Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching." 8.

[83] Parr, 34.

[84] Parr, 34.

[85] Gay, "Chapter One: Changes and Perspectives," 8.

people living in the same area. In the context of choral music, the zone can be narrowed down from national music organisations to community choirs, further to a small-sized singing group. Thus, the culture of the choirs is a multi-layered abstract entity that is based on, formed with, and shaped by the various elements carried by individual musicians, including their demographics, behaviour, personal beliefs, and social and cultural backgrounds.

In the context of the cross-cultural choir rehearsal, more than one culture is involved in this music activity. When Chinese conductors work with New Zealand choirs, the social and cultural value becomes different from the choirs' original entity. The circumstance in which multicultural musicians meet and work together will lead to a more complex sociocultural system; thus, foreign conductors need to understand how multiculturalism occurs and influence the cross-cultural rehearsals sociologically. From a sociological perspective, multiculturalism is simply a "label" for describing a concurrent social situation's plural or diverse actuality.[86] With political considerations, multiculturalism is explained by Nasar Meer and Tariq Mododd as "different things in different places".[87] In Parr's writings about changes and perspectives of multiculturalism in musical contexts, she described multiculturalism as the involvement of "multiple beliefs", which impact musicians' positioning of recurring problems, such as "performance practice, language, and even religious beliefs."[88] Culture is a multi-layered entity in a multicultural choral context that reflects conductors' singers' shared beliefs, social values, and everyday cognition. When multiple cultures encounter one another, this entity will automatically transform into something else, which combines influences of *external* values and is so-called *multiculturalism.*

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[86] Meer and Modood, "How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?" 178.

[87] Meer and Modood, 178.

[88] Parr, 34.

In multiculturalism, culture and society are two inseparable components since multicultural events can only occur within a particular form of society, and in this case, the choir. Choral music and multiculturalism are connected by socio-cultural value since music performance is the *poesis* of choral rehearsals. According to Abraham Schwadron, "all musics occur within and are inseparable from their socio-cultural contexts", presenting the substance that music reflects as "a human phenomenon".[89] In addition, Richard Pratte also says that multicultural is "the coexistence of unlike groups" but "in a common social system".[90] These statements demonstrate the music multiculturalism's social attribute and explain the complex environments of music ensembles, which are representations of the human phenomenon and consist of sociocultural coexistences. What do they mean to musical groups, such as a choir? Instead of viewing a choir as one group inside the large national or regional society, the choir is a minor social system that allows the coexistence of *unlike individuals*.[91] In my, Amy's and Wayne's rehearsal stories, they and I had hard times working with culturally diverse singers sometimes because we had put ourselves into the various tiny societies. We were clear that the only way of producing good music with the singers is to become a part of them with unlike cultural identities and backgrounds, even religious beliefs.

The contextual perspective of music multiculturalism provides a refreshing way for ensemble leaders to consider their workplaces as small social groups that culturally diverse and independent musicians construct and seek practical approaches to adapt, develop, foster, and sustain. Because Wayne, Amy and I mainly worked with community choirs, the educational value of cross-cultural rehearsals is also essential. David Elliott emphasised both the social and educational nature of multiculturalism. Elliott believes the concept of multiculturalism implies "a social ideal", a

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[89] Schwadron, "World Musics in Education," 92.

[90] Pratte, "Pluralism in Education: Conflict, Clarity and Commitment," 6.

[91] De Loo and Kamminga, "'What a wonderful world!': human relatedness, social space and accountability through action in a top-level amateur choir," passim.

regulation that supports the "exchange among different groups of people" whose "integrity of each" will be respected and preserved by each other, leading to consistent enrichment of individuals within the groups.[92] What is the social ideal for cross-cultural choral rehearsals, then? When Amy had to stop rehearsing sacred music, she chose to compromise the Chinese choir's concerns about the religious issue and respect most singers' thoughts about the choir's social system to focus more on the rehearsal and music itself. When foreign choral conductors' musical aims clash with those of the local musicians, it seems unrealistic to preserve everyone's integrity. To conductors, the only thing they can control is the professional mindset—to focus on music and minimise the conflicts between or among the cultural encounters with flexible solutions. Successful rehearsals must include enhancing work efficiency, which is dependent on both conductors' and choir members' efforts. The more willing to understand different cultures, the fewer time people will spend resolving culture-relevant problems in a multicultural context.

In cross-cultural choral rehearsals, foreign conductors can also attach importance to their cultural identities to better connect themselves to the singers. Elliott believes that multiculturalism is an "opportunity" for music students "to achieve a central goal of humanistic education: self-understanding through 'other understanding'."[93] This means that the progress of people finding the internal identification is an approach to knowing other people from the same group; the two directions of understanding are interactive and form a basis for living in multicultural environments as humans. In Deborah Bradley's work about multicultural choral education, she refers to Elliott's self-identity concept as "a multicultural human subject" under the theory of music educational multiculturalism.[94] According to Bradley, for a group of culturally-varied people, "a form of self-

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[92] Elliott, "Key Concepts in Multicultural Music Education," 14.

[93] Elliott, "Music Matters," 209.

[94] Bradley, "Global Song, Global Citizens? Multicultural Choral Music Education and the Community Youth Choir: Constituting the Multicultural Human Subject," 213.

understanding" will "embody and reflect an individual's many 'identities'."[95] When people are clear about who they are, their positions in a specific group, and how they define the personal-version self, their expressions will present their self-internalisations shown with multiple angles. As Bradley observed, self-understanding also embraces and even accepts the "multidimensionality" from others.[96] As shown in the interview, Amy is originally from Hong Kong, China but was raised in New Zealand; her cultural identity flew between being a Hongkonger, a Chinese and a New Zealander. Amy was worried that she had lost her sense of belongings in any country or culture. Nevertheless, she transferred the unstable cultural belongings into a source of power that gave her the courage to work with multicultural choirs and opportunities to learn about any cultures from ethnocultural singers and music repertoire.

In multicultural choral contexts, the misunderstandings of oneself or others will result in both short term and long-term cultural problems inside the rehearsal room. For instance, when a conductor makes a tiny mistake while interacting with local musicians, the conductor will cause unexpected cultural offences against protocols or language, leading to the musicians' emotional disturbances and causing difficulties in directing the ensemble. Wayne had rich multicultural conducting experiences in America, Poland, and New Zealand, but he sometimes received singers' doubts or jokes about their rehearsing Chinese repertoire. It is impolite to make fun of any content in music or traditional artistic works in Chinese culture. However, Wayne regarded the singers' culturally offensive behaviour as presentations of the singers' lack of self-confidence and self-identity when encountering new cultures. The singers' behaviour harmed Wayne's personal feelings about being culturally offended, and their misunderstanding of Chinese music and cultural heritage frustrated

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[95] Elliott, "Music Matters," 209.

[96] Bradley, 213.

Wayne as a Chinese choral conductor. As for Wayne's concerns about singers' self-identities, Charles Taylor explained how people's identities are related to their misrecognition of others:

> "[O]ur identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning some in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being."[97]

Taylor implies that what people see from each other moulds their self-identifications, for better or worse. Conversely, how people understand others' identifications are affected by the community's socio-cultural conditions—which is also variational following individuals' perspectives. In Wayne's case, he did not criticise the non-Chinese singers' culturally-offensive behaviour towards Chinese music. However, he positively resolved his emotions by concentrating more on music and less on culture. Each time Wayne did this, his cultural cognition and identity as Chinese improved his self-esteem when standing in front of cross-cultural singers. Moreover, Meer and Mood conclude from Taylor's connotations that "a socio-cultural self-esteem emerges not only from personal identity, but also in relation to the group in which this identity is developed".[98] Self-identification is basically "what we claim to be and what we really think we are" and is inseparable from *who we are* in others' eyes as self-identification continuously changes as time goes on.[99] Therefore, international conductors must realise their self-cultural-identifications will significantly influence musicians'

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[97] Taylor, "Multiculturalism and 'The politics of recognition': an essay," 25-26.

[98] Meer and Modood, "How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?" 184.

[99] Meer and Modood, 184.

sense of self since they are all under the same sociocultural roof, blended by everyone's cultural values and self-identification. From a Chinese conductor's point of view, the effort to sustain people's ethnic values must be taken, including one's own. When there is a slight possibility for a conductor to know complete details of choristers' cultural beliefs and characteristics, the sociocultural theory of *cultural identity* may be a starting point for breaking cultural boundaries.

What does multiculturalism mean to choirs? In choral multiculturalism, conductors need to present profound respect for musicians' cultures and identities and present themselves as culturally-neutral individuals with naturally built-in cultural values to better form a healthy multicultural choral context. Pratte Richard's book about pluralism in education proposes a "dynamic multiculturalism" concept, which emphasises the necessity of transforming subgroup alliance into a group of common interest by cultivating mutual commitment and purpose. Sociologically, conductors as leaders need to identify the shared value system and the social attribute of the choir. Then, conductors should determine the joint commitment and purpose; for instance, the cultural or social image of the choir, the musical aims of one year's rehearsals, and the music training goals. The choir is unified as an influential multicultural group when it reaches a consensus on all aspects. For example, when the community choir invited me to create a multicultural programme for the Christmas concert, I prepared both Chinese and New Zealand repertoire that the singers were willing to perform. The combination of multicultural music for Christmas is not common, but the concert received much positive feedback from audiences of the two cultural backgrounds. The successful concert marked dynamic choral multiculturalism with the group's mutual commitment and purpose of rehearsals and shared social value derived from multicultural music performance.

From Wayne's and my conducting experiences in New Zealand, we, as Chinese conductors, subconsciously chose to rehearse or perform Chinese music. The subconscious choice of Chinese

music presents our intentions to promote music and knowledge from our culture. However, we both neglected the influence Chinese music would bring to singers from other cultural backgrounds. According to Elliott, "the dynamic curriculum encourages students to develop basic ideas about music from the bottom up (inductively), rather than from the top down (deductively)."[100] In a multicultural choral context, the 'deductively' implies the phenomenon of directors making subjective assumptions about members' music preferences and musical abilities, considering singers' cultural identities and learning objectives. In Elliott's words, music educators subconsciously "indoctrinate students with the prejudices that inhere in majority philosophies of music and music education", and a dynamic multicultural curriculum takes advantage of balancing between "a teacher's conscious and unconscious tendencies".[101]

To achieve dynamic multiculturalism in choral context, Richard Pratte's three conditions in a social group is also helpful to foreign conductors—cultural diversity, all aspects of equality, and a basis on cultural pluralism.[102] First, diversity must be shown in race, ethnicity, economy, and demography from political and social perspectives. Within a setting of Chinese conductors and choirs located in New Zealand, the condition of cultural diversity is promised. As for equality, referring to "equal political, economical, and educational opportunities", conductors can deliver information to musicians with no prejudice based on rehearsal purpose.[103] According to Pratte, the final requirement of achieving dynamic multiculturalism is to apply cultural pluralism as a fundamental principle for establishing "a viable system of social organisation".[104] In other words, if conductors determine to develop and sustain a multicultural ensemble, they must start with a guarantee of

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[100] Elliott, "Key Concepts in Multicultural Music Education," 18.

[101] Elliott, "Key Concepts in Multicultural Music Education," 18.

[102] Pratte, "Pluralism in Education: Conflict, Clarity and Commitment," 141.

[103] Pratte, 141.

[104] Pratte, 141.

cultural diversity and equality among musicians, then commit to the consistency of the shared value system.

In music direction, when a foreign conductor steps into a rehearsal and confronts an unfamiliar cultural group, with which the conductor only has little knowledge about the value and beliefs of one or even more specific ethnicities, the resistant situation to multiculturalism will appear. For conductors, multiculturalism in choral contexts is a prolonged circumstance in which culture-varied musicians congregate to create a shared value and belief, with the concomitant influences of multiple internal cultures. The definition of multiculturalism seems fluid depending on various contexts; nevertheless, it is possible to disassemble the above theories into smaller parts and rearrange them to formulate the multicultural theories regarding choral direction. As discussed, cross-cultural choral rehearsal is a type of social activity and a multi-dimensional space filled with musicians from different backgrounds who interact with each other. To musicians, the rehearsal place has no difference from the typical social situation they live in; besides, they expect to work with others actively to produce music. Therefore, multiculturalism in music direction can assist foreign conductors in establishing a culture-friendly social space and deliver human-centred value through multicultural music performance. Secondly, in addition to Parr's descriptions of political multiculturalism as "different things in different places", "different people" should be added and counted as an essential component of diversity.[105] In choirs, interactions, collaborations, and communications drive the musical people to participate as an indispensable part of music-making.

Interculturalism in Music Direction

Multicultural circumstances within choirs require foreign music directors to maximise their abilities to eliminate cultural boundaries to concentrate most on producing music. As discussed in the last

[105] Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 32.

section, when Chinese conductors are confident with their cultural identities and ethnocultural music, they can also help musicians build up their self-cognition of their own cultures. Based on musicians' self-acceptance and confidence in their cultural background, an ideal socioculturally-friendly rehearsal environment can be built with conductors' and singers' respect and acceptance of each other's cultural beliefs. According to Wayne's, Amy's and my cross-cultural rehearsal experience, communication and social interaction are highly significant during rehearsals. Even though socialisation is not the core element of choral rehearsals, the relationship between conductors and singers can assist musicians' understanding of each other. It can also strengthen the choirs' musical development. To support Chinese conductors' construction of a cross-cultural relationship with culturally diverse singers, we need to look into how social integration, interaction, and communication occur in a cross-cultural choral context—the interculturalism in music direction.

Intercultural Paradigms in Cross-cultural Choirs

Concepts of multiculturalism emphasise the cultural labels stick to individuals, the combination of each independent culture, and a single person's self-consciousness within a larger group. In reality, conflicts between or among cultures are inevitable if both conductors and musicians exceed their individuality. Based on this concern, the theory of multiculturalism can be transformed into an "updated version", interculturalism.[106] *Interculturalism* is defined as a "global model for social integration".[107] From a sociological perspective, interculturalism in music underlies a power derived from the consolidation of diverse cultures. Musicians are welcome to present their own cultures in the community and can refuse to participate in the domestic-majority cultural activities that may go against their self-identities.

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[106] Lentin, "Replacing 'race', historicizing 'culture' in multiculturalism," 394.

[107] Bouchard, "What is Interculturalism?" 445.

The intercultural problems collected in my experiences and the interviews include lack of cultural equity, cultural respect and cultural homogeneity. These problems are previously discussed by Gérard Bouchard, a scholar from the immigrant country of Canada. In his discussion about problems of interculturalism in Canada, Bouchard outlined four typical paradigms of interculturalism as the sociological interpretation: diversity, homogeneity, bi- or multipolarity, and duality.[108] First, the concept of diversity does not refer to multiple cultures but emphasises the equality of ethnocultural groups within the same country because "there is no recognition of majority culture and…no minorities".[109] Regarding her conducting experience with a mix-culture choir in Auckland, Amy commented that the choir's cultural environment is friendly. However, musicians are 'institutional' to her Chinese ethnicity, mainly when her English speaking style is different from New Zealand speakers. Even though the choir Amy worked with was culturally friendly, the majority and minority cultures still exist invisibly. Ideally, duality in an intercultural choir with a Chinese conductor and New Zealand musicians, means no such person or a single cultural value is a dominant authority; instead, the ensemble's sociocultural entity is established by the unique cultural identities of individuals.

According to Bouchard, "diversity is conceived and managed as a relationship between minorities from a recent or distant period of immigration, and a cultural majority that could be described as foundational".[110] Duality is a paradigm of interculturalism that explains the progress of developing "an identity and a collective imagination" of citizens, who are engaged and absorbed by external social factors, including expression from "language, traditions and institutions."[111] The concept of

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[108] Bouchard, 441-442.

[109] Bouchard, 441.

[110] Bouchard, 442.

[111] Bouchard, 442.

duality seems to be a feasible proposition applied to the intercultural choral context. For instance, when Chinese conductors come to New Zealand, the Chinese culture will automatically become a minority. Facing a different culture and social environment, Chinese conductors should try to fit into the foundational local communities. The efforts to transform oneself into a local person do not refer to the stringent enforcement of everything local people do. However, they should be a series of self-motivated actions and engagement in New Zealand's cultural or social activities. With the motivation to participate in local events, improve English, and accept information from outside the 'Chinese culture zone', one will experience "solidarity" and a sense of belonging to the New Zealand community.[112] As Chinese conductors, Wayne, Amy and I are all engaged with choral activities in New Zealand by leading choirs consisting of local singers. Through these cross-cultural rehearsals, the distance from Chinese to New Zealand culture is shortened since we proactively attended local activities, rehearsed multicultural music and interacted with New Zealand singers. Therefore, foreign conductors can engage in more local activities to better understand the society that singers live in and improve their adaptions to the local culture and choral activities.

Characteristics of the Intercultural Model

Since interculturalism sits between multiculturalism and the complete absorption of all cultures within a society, the primary characteristic of interculturalism is cultural integration and interaction. As described by Guilherme and Dietz, integration is the final aim of applying intercultural strategies that tend to be "something not very far from assimilation."[113] Within an intercultural context, people are neither presenting themselves with absolute cultural independence nor being unified into one majority culture. Bouchard indicated that interculturalism is a model that assists "interactions, exchanges, connections and intercommunity initiatives" and "privileges a path of negotiations and

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[112] Bouchard, 442.

[113] Guilherme and Dietz, "Difference in diversity: multiple perspectives on multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural conceptual complexities," 7.

mutual adjustments."[114] In the context of foreign conductors rehearsing local choirs, rehearsals contain cultural interactions and social integration among musicians from different cultural backgrounds. Foreign conductors need to join the local choirs and reduce the cultural gap between them and local musicians to develop more efficient rehearsals to adapt to the local culture. Therefore, foreign conductors may also apply these sociological terms of interculturalism to music rehearsals with culture-varied participants. Some rehearsals have specific cultural interactions, such as introducing personal experiences, involving music from unfamiliar cultural settings, teaching or learning foreign languages for multicultural repertoire. These culturally interactive activities will improve the interconnections among the group and establish "conciliation, balance, and reciprocity" during the process.[115]

According to Bouchard, integration is the substance of interculturalism but is prevented by the psychological barriers derived from the majority-minority duality—the anxiety the minority culture feels confronting unfamiliar cultural majorities regarding "values, traditions, language, memory, and identity."[116] The sense of anxiety is common when foreign conductors meet local choirs for the first time when there are rejections of most musicians with the conductor as a new leader and a new cultural representation. To resolve the issue of anxiety with encountering unknown cultures, the conductor should take the responsibility of preparing and building up a solid cultural identity with confidence and lead musicians to find the "balance and mediation between often-competing principles, values, and expectations", which is the centre of interculturalism.[117] When I first stood in front of a New Zealand choir, the sense of anxiety came from the lack of confidence as a young conductor, the concern about my ethnicity and cultural identity as Chinese, and the unforeseeable

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[114] Bouchard, 448.

[115] Bouchard, 448.

[116] Bouchard, 445.

[117] Bouchard, 461.

challenges I must overcome with the cultural difference. The only thing I could do, and I did, was to break up the invisible wall of my psychological reactions to the cross-cultural choir, to open myself up, share my feelings, connect myself to the singers, and build up a social relationship with them for balancing me as a cultural minority in the choir with the cultural majorities, the New Zealand singers. Moreover, I was frank with the singers about any concerns with my English skills and other behaviour. I expected the singers to participate in rehearsals more actively, and I could use my culture-relevant disadvantages to engage them with being part of the interaction. In any case, I kept the initial aim in mind—collaborating with musicians to rehearse music without the minor disruptions raised by the cultural or social problems. Thus, when foreign conductors recognise their discomfort caused by their cultural identities, the cultural gap between them and local singers, or language difficulties, they need to consider their roles as conductors and their jobs as part of the choirs to construct confidence for defending their mental disturbance.

From a socio-cultural standpoint, the conductor needs to avoid excluding minority-cultured musicians in the distance but to approach them to break down cultural "stereotypes" and promote the conductor's own culture with a perspective of "the host society".[118] In an intercultural choral context, the minority-cultured musician refers to a conductor who is not from the same culture as local singers. Bouchard claims the process of cultural-balance-sustaining a new way of "coexisting within and beyond differences at all levels of collective life", implying that interculturalism is all about cultural co-existence, cultural interactions, frequent communications. In contrast to multiculturalism, which only represents a small number of mixed cultures, the intercultural model demonstrates a more effective form of the cultural mixture since these cultures have to exist together to create a shared zone for people to live in with the most comforts possible. When a conductor stands for the majority culture, such as a Chinese conductor leading a choir consisting of

[118] Bouchard, 450.

relatively more Chinese singers and still welcomes singers from other cultures, the conductor can implement a social approach to establish a culturally friendly relationship.

As for achieving sufficient integration, connections, and exchange of various cultures, communication is an essential step and a “defining” characteristic of the intercultural model.[119] Phil Wood, Charles Landry and Jude Bloomfield stated that communication is the “central means” of the intercultural model’s completion—"to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds”.[120] Young Yun Kim’s intercultural identity development theory indicates that extensive cross-cultural communication will direct to the cross-cultural adaption, which derives “intercultural transformation” of individuals’ cultural identities and fosters “a mindset that integrates, rather than separates, cultural differences”.[121] In other words, communication is a crucial element of establishing an intercultural model with a multicultural choral context. For Amy and me, the communication with cross-cultural singers and choir committees helped us understand singers’ thoughts about multicultural and sacred music. Correspondingly, the direct communication about cultural-relevant problems tied conductors to the choristers; only with efficient communication approaches, culturally-diverse musicians can accomplish cultural integration and interaction for constructing the social model of interculturalism.

Beyond multiculturalism, one similar characteristic of intercultural activities is that people from other cultural backgrounds respect and accept the multiple values or beliefs. More importantly, these values or beliefs become essential parts of the shared value system. Tony Booth indicated that the primary task of applying interculturalism is to develop “cohesive civil societies” through

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[119] Meer and Modood, 182.

[120] Wood, Landry, and Bloomfield, “Cultural Diversity in Britain: a toolkit for cross-cultural co-operation,” 9. Cited by Meer and Modood, in “How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?” 182.

[121] Kim, “Finding a “home” beyond culture: The emergence of intercultural personhood in the globalizing world,” 7.

"turning notions of singular identities into those of multiple ones" and "developing a shared and common value system and public culture."[122] Booth implies that a group of culturally-varied people should establish a community with a standalone cultural system, which is the final status after deeply experiencing and sharing "differences of culture".[123] Inside the shared value system, individuals' cultural identities will be shaped by others' experiences, leading to "the formation of interdependencies".[124]

Gérard Bouchard pointed out that "a pluralist mindset" is an essential element of interculturalism in his writings about intercultural activities in Canada.[125] While constructing the pluralist mindset, the status of people's self-identity will be influenced, too. Bouchard implies an evolution cycle of intercultural exchange when people encounter new cultures, starting from forming a shared value system stimulated by ethnocultural diversity. When the shared value system is formulated, the shared value brings people a sense of belonging. Then, individuals' belongingness to the unified value system and the shaped self-cultural identity will "graft itself onto initial belongings and identities."[126] According to interculturalism's duality paradigm, a society's major and minor cultures will appear when new citizens enter a new social environment. People of the cultural minorities will be impacted by the local culture(s) by osmotic.

The duality paradigm connects to the last step of the interculturalism exchange cycle; people of majority and minority cultures "will find themselves changed to varying degrees" in the long

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[122] Booth, "Review of Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion," 432.

[123] Booth, 432.

[124] Booth, 432.

[125] Bouchard, "What is Interculturalism?" 440.

[126] Bouchard, 460.

term.[127] It is to say, no matter what perspective an individual has regarding the majority or the minority, the interculturalism process ends with a clear self-identity of one's belonged culture and a certain level of sense of belonging to other interacted cultures. The intercultural exchange cycle is a "logical, predictable, and welcome consequence" of integrating and interacting, which belongs to the core of interculturalism.[128] In addition, it should be noted that during the formation of a shared value system, citizens with any cultural background should be sensitive to "ethnocultural diversity" and concurrently reject any forms of discrimination caused by cultural differences.[129]

The characteristics of the intercultural model draw an intercultural framework that can be applied to choral direction. In a choir formed with a foreign conductor and local singers, the transformation from multiculturalism to interculturalism depends on the choir's social value system established through respecting, understanding, interacting, and integrating different cultures.

Multiculturalism vs Interculturalism

As for the difference between multi- and inter-culturalism, both frameworks aim to assist ethnocultural groups or individuals in adapting to societies containing distinct cultural majorities and minorities. In the context of a conductor and singers coming from different cultural backgrounds, foreign conductors belong to the cultural minorities. Thus, foreign conductors need to consider adapting to the local choirs with potential culture-relevant challenges. The most significant difference between multi- and inter-culturalism is that multiculturality indicates the preservation of the minor culture. In contrast, interculturality directs the minorities to interact, integrate, and communicate with other cultural groups to form a coexisting social context, which is more effective for foreign conductors.

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[127] Bouchard, 460.

[128] Bouchard, 460.

[129] Bouchard, 440.

Regarding the three Chinese choral conductors' experiences in New Zealand, multiculturalism and interculturalism in cross-cultural rehearsals respectively represent the cultural background and social integration of the choirs. On the one hand, the diverse background of conductors and singers allows musicians to establish their cultural identities through cross-cultural rehearsal activities, performing multicultural music and gaining knowledge about others' cultures through ethnocultural music. On the other hand, to achieve multicultural choral rehearsals, intercultural communication and integration must be taken. In short, for Chinese conductors working in New Zealand, multiculturalism is the goal they aim to achieve, whereas interculturalism is the progress of achieving this goal. By understanding multiculturalism—the goal and interculturalism—the process, conductors can better identify the underlying reasons for problems while rehearsing choirs from different cultural backgrounds and finding the best solutions. Within the multicultural rehearsals, everyone should respect and accept others' backgrounds and music choices; but only with the cultural integration through social interactions can Chinese conductors and New Zealand singers collaborate to construct culturally-healthy rehearsals.

Figure 1. Diversity in Multicultural and Intercultural Discourses

Factual level = status quo	*Multiculturality* Cultural, religious and/or linguistic diversity	*Interculturality* Interethnic, interreligious and/or interlingual relations
Normative level = pedagogical, sociopolitical or ethical proposals	*Multiculturalism* Recognition of difference: (1) Principle of equality (2) Principle of difference	*Interculturalism* Coexistence in diversity: (1) Principle of equality (2) Principle of difference (3) Principle of positive interaction

Revealed in the interviews, both Amy and Wayne had faced problems choosing the culturally and ethically appropriate music to rehearse. Due to a lack of communication regarding these cultural divergences, they failed to overcome the challenges, including singers misunderstandings of Chinese music and singers contradicts to sacred music. Foreign conductors need to adapt to

multicultural workplaces with correct repertoire choices, strategic interaction and communication skills to guide musicians to achieve an ideal intercultural competence choral environment. Therefore, understanding the similarities and differences between these two sociocultural models is crucial. Guilherme and Dietz sketched two charts about the difference between multi- and inter-culturalism.[130] In Figure.1, "Diversity in multicultural and intercultural discourses" by Dietz and Giménez, compares multiculturality and interculturality on the factual level in the difference between diversity and relationships and the normative level in regards to diversity, pedagogy, social politics, and ethics.[131]

Regarding the factual level, it is indicated that multiculturality focuses on the diversity of cultures, religions, and languages. On the contrary, interculturality emphasises the relationship of inter-ethnicity, inter-religion, and inter-language. As for the normative standard, multiculturalism stands for "recognition of difference" with principles of equality and difference; on the other hand, interculturalism represents "coexistence in diversity" with equality, difference, and most significantly, "positive interaction".[132] Guilherme and Dietz concluded a common ground between multicultural- and intercultural-ism, as "both express a social situation and movement" which confront sociological or socio-cultural challenges, and both are proposed solutions with the initial purpose of reacting toward the "one world vision".[133]

Both multi- and inter-culturality follow the principles of cultural equality and cultural difference. However, the core of interculturality is the coexistence of ethnicities, religions, and languages derived from interactions. Based on Guilherme and Dietz's table, the interculturalism model can

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[130] Guilherme and Dietz, "Difference in diversity multiple perspectives on multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural conceptual complexities", passim.

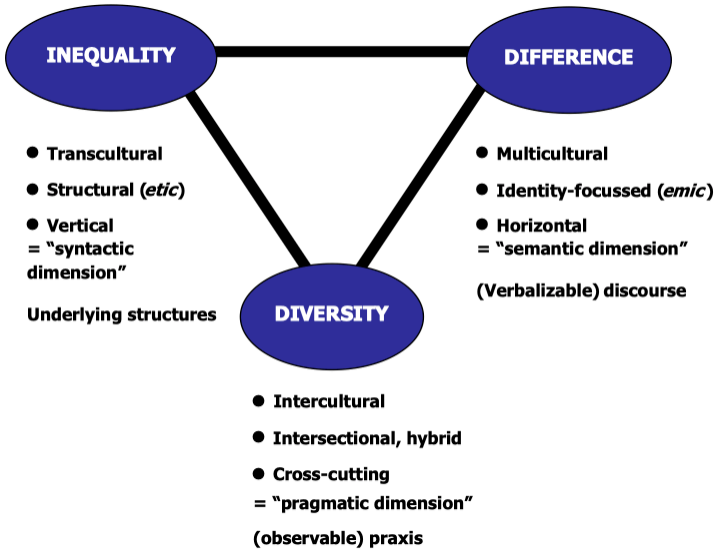
[131] Dietz, "Multiculturalism, interculturality and diversity in education: an anthropological approach" and Giménez, "Qué es la inmigración? [What is enmigration?]." Cited by Guilherme and Dietz, in "Difference in diversity multiple perspectives on multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural conceptual complexities," 6.

[132] Guilherme and Dietz, 6.

[133] Guilherme and Dietz, 7.

better explain the dilemma between a foreign conductor and culturally-varied ensembles. Supported by Bouchard, "interculturalism draws its particular conception of integration, namely the emphasis on interactions, connections between cultures, the development of feelings of belonging, and the emergence of a common culture."[134] Emigrant conductors should consider integrating their cultural values with local musicians to establish a solid socio-cultural relationship in a short amount of time. Beyond that, the exchange of cultures with musicians will help to build long-term partnerships through further socio-cultural modification and evolution.

Figure 2. Inequality, difference, and diversity in intercultural studies



In Figure 2, Guilherme and Dietz summarised the three axes that measures the concepts and complements of multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturalism.[135] The graph shows that the multicultural model is underlined by difference and formed with identity. In contrast, the intercultural model emphasises diversity and is formed with intersections and hybrids of the larger group or society. Compared to the first table of multicultural and intercultural discourses, the key attribute of diversity in interculturalism is consistent. Concerned about the dimensional difference,

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[134] Bouchard, 463.

[135] Figure 1, "Inequality, difference, and diversity in intercultural studies." In Guilherme and Dietz, "Difference in diversity multiple perspectives on multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural conceptual complexities," 16. Cited by Dietz, "Multiculturalism, interculturality and diversity in education : an anthropological approach."

multiculturalism intends to be horizontal, meaning that a community or a society is divided into various parts depending on "cultural features", into "in-group" and "out-group". In contrast, interculturalism concentrates on "intersectional and hybrid phenomena of inter-group interactions" and is themed by the "pragmatic dimension", referring to "different kinds and sources of diversity".[136] Critically, the descriptions of *in-* and *out-group* in multiculturalism are not as appropriate since a multicultural group is not expected to be split into smaller parts with cultural differences on purpose. Once the in- and out-group are formed, people of the cultural minority will be isolated and fall behind the majority, which will result in a collapse of the multicultural context. Another difference between multi- and inter-cultural frameworks is that multiculturalism indicates an intention for people to "preserve a cultural heritage".[137] In contrast, interculturalism "concentrate on relationships between individuals" from various backgrounds.[138] On the one hand, interculturalism "acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, exchange, and circulate to be modified and evolve."[139] On the other hand, multiculturalism does not function as an approach of exchange but of validating and promoting "ethnic groups" within a diverse context.[140] Walsh referred to two unique attributes of interculturalism, "relational" and "functional", which implies the practical purposes of intercultural models to enhance the connections among people with an intercultural mindset as a practical approach.[141] Walsh's statement is consistent with later scholars, claiming that the focus on intercultural relationships is a representation of "a move away from the celebration of strong cultural or ethnic identities", acknowledging multicultural concepts, and an

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[136] Guilherme and Dietz, 17.

[137] Powell and Sze, "Interculturalism: Exploring Critical Problems," 1.

[138] Guilherme and Dietz, 7.

[139] Powell and Sze, "Interculturalism: Exploring Critical Problems," 1.

[140] Bouchard, 464.

[141] Walsh, "Interculturalidad crítica y educación intercultural [Critical interculturality and intercultural education]," 79.

emphasis on “the space in-between” and “the possibilities offered by dialogic cultural exchange”.[142] In an intercultural choral context, foreign conductors need to break down the invisible barriers among different beliefs by providing opportunities to talk with choristers about their cultural experiences. Correspondingly, conductors can create more spaces in-between them and musicians, building up an integrated network of cultural diversity.

The sociocultural perspectives of multi- and inter-culturalism are opposing as well. One of the paradigms of interculturalism is the majority-minority duality, referring to the social structure in some immigrant countries. Naturally, native citizens tend to be the cultural majority and have anxiety faced with the ‘invasion’ of foreign cultures. In this case, multiculturalism represents how cultural minorities, including foreigners and ethnocultural groups, stand for their cultural values to gain protection, respect, and protection from a society governed by cultural majorities. Instead, the multicultural model encourages both the major and minor cultural groups to take steps into each other’s space, engage with people from other cultures, and strengthen the culturally diverse society with less radicalism. Guilherme and Dietz applied the continental European societies as an example. They found that “the need for interculturality in education is not claimed on the ground of the minorities’ identity necessities”. On the other hand, developed countries of immigrants face a continuous increase in “heterogeneity of the pupils”, and this circumstance is the “growing sociocultural complexity of majority-minority relations”.[143]

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[142] Dieckmann, Samantha, and Davidson, “Organised Cultural Encounters: Collaboration and Intercultural Contact in a Lullaby Choir,” 157; Meer and Modood, passim.

[143] Guilherme and Dietz, 5. Cited by Aguado Odina, “Pedagogía intercultural [Intercultural pedagogy];” Gogolin, “Einführung in die Fallstudie “Grossstadt-Grundschule”: zu theoretischem Rahmen, Fragestellungen und Methode des Forschungsprojekts [Introduction to the case study “metropolitan primary School”: On the theroetical framework, the questions and the method of the research project];” Verlot, “Werken aan integratie: het minderheden- en het onderwijsbeleid in de Franse en Vlaamse Gemeenschap van België (1988–1998) [Working on Integration: Minority and educational policies in the French and Flamish communities of Belgium (1988–1998)].”

The last difference between multiculturality and interculturality is the principle of social "openness".[144] According to Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, the sociological theory of multiculturalism is "founded on the belief in tolerance between cultures, but it is not always the case that multicultural places are open places."[145] This statement implies that even though ethnocultural groups are accepted for their existence in society, some may still stay in the space created by people from the same cultural background. For instance, when a Chinese conductor leads a Chinese-culture-based choir, the choir presents cultural heritages of China, which are respected for their existence socially but may not welcome people of other cultural backgrounds. Indeed, the isolation of particular cultural groups can be resolved by social openness, which is the "prerequisite" of interculturalism.[146] As Wood et al. advocate, even though openness does not guarantee the formation of interculturalism, "it provides the setting for interculturalism to develop."[147] For example, when a Chinese conductor seeks music ensembles in New Zealand, one will likely be concerned about the cultural problems of a cultural minority. This consideration may lead one to choose Chinese ensembles that are more familiar with the cultural and social context and become part of the multicultural existence in New Zealand society. Conversely, if the conductor looks for opportunities with an *openness* mindset and joins ethnocultural music groups, the first step of interculturalism will be taken.

Models of multiculturalism and interculturalism seem to have overlapping theories, including constructing a shared value system, uniting culturally varied people, and establishing reciprocal relationships. However, their underlying philosophies of them are different. Multiculturalism emphasises people's self-identification and cultural beliefs and delivers these cultural messages to

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[144] Meer and Modood, 182-183.

[145] Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, "Cultural diversity in Britain: a toolkit for cross-cultural co-operation," 7.

[146] Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, 7.

[147] Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, 7.

increase others' awareness of the other unfamiliar cultures. The concept is based on how people from any cultural background can survive with received respect and basic knowledge about these messages; vice versa, how they react to others' messages and present appropriate actions. However, interculturalism is a social model which directs practical strategies and approaches to create a culture-balanced environment beyond the philosophy of multiculturalism. In other words, multiculturalism refers to the circumstance of diverse citizens working or living together. In contrast, interculturalism defines the quality of their works and lives as a part of cultural coexistence.

Section Three: Cross-cultural Rehearsal Approaches

Both multi- and inter-cultural mindsets of conductors enable them to reflect on past experiences critically from the cultural and social perspectives. As discussed in the last section, the multicultural model will not be effective enough unless the intercultural model is applied simultaneously since the socio-cultural relationship between conductors and singers from different cultures is vital to the community culture of cross-cultural choirs. There are several common challenges in the three Chinese conductors' reflections on their conducting experiences in New Zealand: building a community culture of choirs and establishing intercultural relationships with singers. As for problems in intercultural communication, Manathunga used the term *organised cultural encounter* to define "rigorous but respectful" conversations about cultural and disciplinary differences among culturally diverse people, which "has the potential to create exciting new forms of knowledge construction."[148] The theory of organised cultural encounter is derived from *the contact zone* concept, referring to a space for people from various cultures to connect. Both Wayne and I have experienced this in rehearsing Chinese music in New Zealand choirs. Performing

[148] Manathunga, "Research as an intercultural 'contact zone'," 169. Cited by Dieckmann and Davidson, "Organised Cultural Encounters: Collaboration and Intercultural Contact in a Lullaby Choir," 159.

multicultural music is a typical example of *an organised cultural encounter*. In addition, the intercultural interactions between foreign conductors and local singers exemplify the concept of an intercultural contact zone. This section will discuss relevant theories to guide Chinese conductors in resolving sociocultural relationships caused by cultural differences, including *organised cultural encounters, contact zone,* and *culturally responsive teaching* methods.

Constructing Organised Cultural Rehearsals

The theory of organised cultural encounter originates from *the cultural encounter*, a concept that explains "the dynamics of cultural flows" and "interaction between groups and/or individuals across established cultural boundaries".[149]According to Lene Christiansen, Lise Galal and Kirsten Hvenegaard-Lassen, *an organised cultural encounter* has a specific purpose: to manage or transform problems that are "perceived to originate in or include cultural difference".[150] Christiansen et al. also referred to organised cultural encounters as a practical paradox—the encounters reflect realistic cultural problems and are arranged to solve these problems.[151] Thus, an essential element of organised cultural encounter is the potential for creativity; in choral rehearsals, it refers to how musicians learn about ethnocultural music and what knowledge they gain from experience and depends on the effectiveness of the interaction.

Nevertheless, in a cross-cultural choral context, when Chinese conductors sometimes identify themselves as cultural minorities and then encounter sociocultural problems due to cultural differences, it is difficult for them to critically design, execute and review the cultural encounters being both a participant and an organiser. In Wayne's choral rehearsals with American, Argentinian, Polish and New Zealand choirs, he introduced Chinese repertoire to each of them. Wayne's choice

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[149] Christiansen, Galal and Hvenegaard-Lassen, "Organised Cultural Encounters: Interculturality and Transformative Practices," 599.

[150] Christiansen, Galal and Hvenegaard-Lassen, 599.

[151] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassen, 599.

of Chinese repertoire for international choirs is an example of organised cultural encounters in choral rehearsals, but it is difficult to identify his expectations of performing Chinese music. As some singers did not accept Chinese music, Wayne attributed this situation to the singers' lack of cultural respect and their cultural identities. However, Chinese conductors need to consider the purpose of performing music from their culture under different circumstances. For instance, will the proposed cultural encounter of singing Chinese music contribute to the choir's creativity? Will learning Chinese songs enhance conductors' social relationships with cross-cultural singers? Furthermore, how effective will this activity be regarding these contributions?

Moreover, in Lucy Mayblin, Gill Valentine and Johan Andersson's article about the formation of *meaningful encounters*, they believed the encounters must include the contact "on multiple occasions, in multiple sites, and with a variety of intensities".[152] There are three categories of *meaningful* contact: "contact that aims to build bridges across difference, contact which builds upon common interests, and banal everyday social interaction."[153] In choral rehearsals with Chinese conductors and New Zealand ensembles, the conductors act as an intermediary connections between two or more cultures and are part of the connection. For conductors, the three types of contacts can be applied as a benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of contacts during rehearsals to adjust their rehearsing process regarding intercultural and social interactions.

As discussed in Section Two, one fundamental difference between multi- and inter-cultural models is the underlying intentions regarding cultural representation, as multiculturalism aims to promote ethnocultural heritage but inter- reinforces the integration of various cultures in social groups; organised cultural encounters are assembled with both purposes of multi and inter-cultural models.

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[152] Mayblin, Valentine, and Andersson, "In the contact zone: engineering meaningful encounters across difference through an interfaith project," 216.

[153] Mayblin, Valentine, and Andersson, 216.

On the one hand, people from various cultural backgrounds participate in the activities to acquaint them with other cultures; on the other hand, encounter organisers intend to transform the place into a zone for cultural interactions and communications. In other words, organised cultural encounters are both multi- and inter-cultural; they are social activities arranged for culturally-diverse participants to intercommunicate with others to promote one particular culture.

Since the organised cultural encounter initiates to present specific cultures, the accuracy of delivered cultural information must be guaranteed; otherwise, the encounter may increase the cultural stereotypes. For instance, when a Chinese choral conductor is introducing a Chinese song, he or she should avoid overemphasising the Chinese-cultural representativeness of the music but intend to draw a musical and cultural context and explain what the song stands for with its meanings. In this way, musicians will build up their personal understanding of the song based on the cultural and musical backgrounds of an independent piece of artwork, instead of preinstalling personal thoughts toward the Chinese culture.

Within a cross-cultural choral rehearsal context, conductors must be aware of the unpredictability of both rehearsal and cultural encounters and prioritise one to improve rehearsal efficiency. As Christiansen et al. said, “organised cultural encounters occur within already established professional or institutional contexts and are thus shaped in important ways by the existing norms, discourses, roles and hierarchies that govern these arenas.”[154] These words imply that when different problems occur synchronously, cultural encounter organisers can adhere to acting as their initial roles would do under the regular governance and rules. Therefore, musical problems should be the priority when a Chinese director is trying to explain the cultural background of a Chinese repertoire and

[154] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassen, 601.

simultaneously has language difficulties. The cultural contents need to be rearranged before the next meeting and demonstrated with clarified interpretation.

In summary, organised cultural encounters gather culturally diverse people together to construct knowledge based on intercultural dialogues within a social context. In practice, the choral context knowledge includes the rehearsed repertoire, vocal skills, background information about music pieces, and more. When the conductor belongs to a different cultural background from the singers, conductors need to establish meaningful intercultural dialogues to deliver the knowledge effectively. For international conductors, four aspects of culture-centred music rehearsals need their attention:

- the purpose of rehearsing ethnocultural music
- the contribution of ethnocultural music towards choirs' development
- delivery of knowledge about the particular culture
- the unpredictability of rehearsals

It is difficult for Chinese conductors to consummate rehearsals as foreigners, as they need to gather musicians to accomplish effective training within intercultural encounters. However, conductors can prepare for these potential risks as concentrated factors of planning and adjusting the multi- and inter-cultural choral rehearsals to enhance rehearsal efficiency in cultural integration and music production.

The Intercultural 'Contact Zone'

In choral rehearsals, the organised cultural encounters are spaces where musicians learn about music and relevant knowledge about unfamiliar cultures from the musical and social experiences. In Pratt's discussions about the relationship between *the contact zone concept* and *organised cultural encounters*, she described each organised cultural encounter as a sort of intervention of a contact zone, which refers to a "cultural space of contact" that take place among various cultures during

"the process of colonisation".[155] Connected this concept to the music-making space discussed in Section One, a cross-cultural choral rehearsal is a space for the conductors and local singers to learn music and the cultural integration and social interaction to learn and create music for performance. The concept of *contact zone* originates from Benedict Anderson's theory of "imagined communities", as he found that people "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[156] It implies that people are barely aware of the true nature of their communities or how the groups differentiate from others, as the communities they perceive are subjective.

The definition of *a contact zone* centres on intercultural relationships and the social enclosure among people from foreign countries and the native. According to James Clifford, contact zones are spaces for "cultural action" and "the making and remaking of identities", along with "the policed and transgressive intercultural frontiers of nations, peoples, and locales".[157] Marie Louis Pratt, who proposed the concept of *the contact zone* in the first place, describes *a contact zone* as the space filled with people who are "geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other" to establish "ongoing relations"; the word 'contact' refers to "an improvised language that develops among speakers of different tongues who need to communicate with each other consistently".[158]

The concept of *a contact zone* represents a colonial situation, and the language refers to what people speak in its literal meaning. There is no intention of colonisation in intercultural choral direction but

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[155] Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegaard-Lassen, 600; Manathunga, "Research as an intercultural 'contact zone'," 167; Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone;" Pratt, "Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation," passim.

[156] Anderson, "Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism," 15.

[157] Clifford, "Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century," 7.

[158] Pratt, "Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation," 8.

unification through conductors' music training, leadership, and management. Therefore, the development of contact zones can be applied to solve problems raised by cultural differences and social distances among people from China and New Zealand. The scenario of Chinese conductors teaching Chinese music can be regarded as an intercultural activity. In contrast, rehearsal is a typical case of the contact zone providing opportunities for people to experience the community they live in objectively with subjective perspectives. As for cross-cultural rehearsals, the *contact zone* can be defined as a social space in which musicians from different cultural and social backgrounds encounter each other and develop long-term relationships to develop professional music development.[159] For example, when I rehearsed the Chinese music with the New Zealand community choir, singers learned the music and gained knowledge about the repertoire. They also started to understand the Chinese culture from which I came. Singers' cultural understandings lead to fewer cultural barriers between them and me, and we can spend more time and effort rehearsing music. Correspondingly, the 'improvised language' in the colonial context can be switched to an improvised communication approach which strengthens the efficiency and consistency of choral rehearsals.

In some social spaces, the asymmetrical power relations lead to more intense conflicts among different cultures, and the leaders need to reconstruct the group's community framework for more effective teaching activities.[160] As for an intercultural choir, the conductor's authority is not utterly asymmetrical towards the rest of the group; thus, some elements of contact zones may not be applicable to scale the cultural matters inside a choir. For instance, when cultural clashes occur, conductors should engage musicians and the choir committee to resolve the situation together, rather than becoming a dictator and giving straight orders. The intercultural interactions do not

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[159] Dag, "Chapter Nine: Modelling Choral Leadership," passim.

[160] Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 34.

follow the unidirectional patterns from directors to musicians within a choral contact zone but foster interpersonal communications under certain circumstances. It should be noted that the democracy in choral contact zones may not apply to un-cultural occasions, such as problems arising from musical techniques and rehearsal instructions, and these two different scenarios should be distinguished with the involvement of interculturalism.

What if the cultural differences cause major problems regarding a contact zone established for particular professions or institutions? In Manathunga's research, she deliberated over how academic researchers deal with cultural problems when travelling to other countries and found that the cultural differences had been "problematic" but "tolerated" in certain situations.[161] As Manathunga states, misunderstandings derived from cultural differences should be resolved with equitability, "a comprehensive engagement with difference".[162] Connected Manathunga's equitable solution of cultural problems to multicultural and intercultural models concepts, the equitability and comprehension of cultural diversity can be understood as the respect, acceptance, and preservation of each other's cultural perspective. Teaching and learning within contact zones also have been discussed by previous scholars. Jane Kenway and Elizabeth Bullen laid out that the aim of teaching in a contact zone should concentrate on "how students, texts or cultures might come together in productive dialogue and without glossing over difference".[163] The dialogue refers to intercultural communications among culturally varied students and educators, who are expected to envisage problems of cultural differences in classrooms instead of ignoring them. As Manathunga explained, these dialogues enable teaching and learning to be more efficient with the potential to create "new

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[161] Manathunga, "Research as an intercultural 'contact zone'," 168; Manathunga, "Doing Educational Development Ambivalently: Applying post-colonial metaphors to educational development?", passim; McKinley, "Brown Bodies, White Coats: Postcolonialism, Maori women and science," passim.

[162] Manathunga, "Research as an intercultural 'contact zone'," 167.

[163] Kenway and Bullen, 10.

kinds of cultural and intellectual identities".[164] From choral conductors' point of view, the intercultural experiences allow them to introduce repertoire and pedagogies from their own culture. Even though the 'new' contents or approaches are unsuitable for local singers, the intercultural teaching and rehearsing experiences will bring them reflections and reviews, contributing to their knowledge and in-depth understanding of intercultural choral direction. In Amy's experiences, the Chinese choir committee and singers refused to perform sacred music because of the singers' and Amy's religious beliefs. Amy was shocked by this situation, but she did not ignore the problem and actively communicated with the singers. Even though Amy did not persuade the choir to rehearse the repertoire, she tried to establish a contact zone to solve the intercultural problem during the communication process and encourage singers to learn Michael Haydn's Requiem

The theory of *cultural layers* in the intercultural contact zone is developed in academic research and can be applied to cross-cultural choral contexts. In Manathunga's research about building postgraduate students' skills in academic contact zones, she summarised four categories of *cultural layers* which structure the communication and interaction between or among cultural differences: ethnic cultures, disciplinary cultures, professional cultures, and workplace cultures. As discussed in Section One, foreign conductors need to consider musicians' personal, cultural and musical development in cross-cultural rehearsals and take responsibility for caring for individuals to avoid potential ethical problems. Particularly in local community choirs, these ethical problems have to be balanced with the outcomes from the rehearsals to be ready for the concert. For conductors, choral rehearsals are where they work with musicians from different cultural backgrounds, develop new music knowledge, and produce music for performance. By applying the four cultural layers to intercultural choral contact zones, foreign conductors can reflect on their behaviour, communication practices, and social interactions in rehearsals with various choirs and enhance their intercultural

[164] Manathunga, 168.

communication skills. In choral contact zones, the ethnic cultures refer to the shared value system developed by musicians of both Chinese and New Zealand societies as part of globalisation.[165] The disciplinary cultures can be transformed from “the pressure grows to engage interdisciplinary research” to conductors' motives towards their musical development and ensembles.[166] Furthermore, the professional cultures are the results achieved by conductors and musicians together as an intercultural group. The workplace cultures are strategies or approaches implemented to accomplish the choir's goal within the contact zone.

As for the establishment of a healthy contact zone, Tierney also suggested that people “deal with identity and knowledge from multiple vantage points”.[167] Tierney implies that in cross-cultural groups, either pros or cons of cultural differences can be transformed and applied as an advantage to strengthen the social relationships among each other. The language difference is common in the Chinese-New Zealand choral context. However, Chinese conductors can use the language foible as a bridge to connect them to local musicians as part of rehearsals. For instance, when Chinese directors have difficulties pronouncing English words correctly, musicians may be given opportunities to correct the director’s spoken English, resulting in a positive cross-cultural interaction.

As for choral contact zones, there are specific responsibilities for conductors to take as professionals and group leaders, including intercultural knowledge and skills, crossing cultural and social boundaries, and dealing with their multiple identities. In addition, Paige outlined the characteristics required for building successful contact zones for individuals, including “tolerance

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[165] Manathunga, passim.

[166] Manathunga, 169.

[167] Tierney, “The Autonomy of Knowledge and the Decline of the Subject: Postmodernism and the Reformulation of the University,” 368.

of ambiguity, cognitive and behavioural flexibility, personal self-awareness, strong personal identity, cultural self-awareness, patience, enthusiasm and commitment, interpersonal sensitivity, understanding of difference, openness to new experiences and peoples, empathy, sense of humility and sense of humour." In summary, the development of contact zones requires organisers' efforts to balance themselves between the group and individuals with adequate intercultural activities. It is difficult for Chinese conductors to meet all the above characteristics within an intercultural choral rehearsal. However, it is necessary to recognise the factors directly impacting their rehearsals. Therefore, the following sections will lead conductors to think about what to focus on during music training and how to communicate effectively as foreigners in rehearsals.

Culturally Responsive Teaching in Cross-cultural Choirs

Theories of organised cultural encounters and intercultural contact zones can help Chinese conductors structure, prepare, review and evaluate the social impacts of cross-cultural choral rehearsals. According to Wayne's, Amy's and my reflections on rehearsals with singers from different cultural backgrounds, intercultural communication and social relationship with singers are the two factors that influenced the rehearsal outcomes. By implementing the organised cultural encounters and intercultural contact zones to choral context with foreign conductors and choirs from different cultural backgrounds, conductors will be clear about how the cultural difference influence the rehearsals activities, communications and establishment of social relationship between them and singers, and what actions they can take to reduce the risk of causing cultural or social problems by creating rehearsals as an intercultural social space.

For community choirs in New Zealand, which Wayne, Amy, and I usually worked with, learning music is essential for rehearsals. However, Chinese conductors sometimes find it challenging to work with culturally diverse choirs in a complex sociocultural environment, especially when

conductors expect to shorten the cultural distance between them and the singers. According to Geneva Gay, the "instrumental value" in classroom instructions increase diverse students'passions for learning and help to link together "school, home and community".[168] In choral rehearsals, the 'instrumental value' refers to the instruction conductors deliver to cross-cultural singers.

In previous literature, culturally responsive teaching also refers to a cultural and experiential filter, which is meaningful to individuals from various cultural backgrounds with the "lived experiences and frames of reference of students".[169] Gay found that the culturally responsive teaching method can improve the quality of intellectual development in an intercultural environment, with educators' preparations in intercultural "knowledge, attitudes, and skills" in terms of educators' anthropologic, social, psychological, sociolinguistic, and multicultural-educational backgrounds.[170] The self-identities of musicians and themselves will emerge as parts of the choirs, their individual life, and the social value toward New Zealand. Ladson-Billings also stated that culturally responsive teaching help students structure their social relationships with a positive perception of themselves and others within the same group.[171] To Chinese conductors, the culturally responsive teaching method is a way to interact with New Zealand musicians set in the Māori and European cultures and an approach to reflecting on their teaching and directing regarding what Chinese-cultural characteristics and experiences impact the rehearsals. Furthermore, Gay named culturally responsive teaching cultural validation, implying that educators can use cultural knowledge and

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[168] Gay, "Chapter Two: Power Pedagogy Through Cultural Responsiveness," 28.

[169] Au and Kawakami, passim; Foster, "'It's Cookin' Now': A Performance Analysis of the Speech Events of a Black Teacher in an Urban Community College," passim; Gay, "Chapter Two: Power Pedagogy Through Cultural Responsiveness," passim; Hollins, passim; Kleinfield, passim; Ladson-Billings, "The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children," passim.

[170] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 106.

[171] Ladson-Billings, "The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children," passim.

experiences to test if the teaching contents will improve students' cultural relevance and effectiveness.[172]

Chinese conductors' ideal cross-cultural choral training is to present both New Zealand and Chinese music to strengthen their and members' musical development through experiencing multicultural music. However, with the limitation of knowledge about other cultures, conductors may consider starting from the music styles they are all familiar with and then extending to the music of particular cultures to achieve culturally responsive rehearsals. Thus, the culturally responsive teaching method can be applied as a guideline for conductors, with the underlying socio-cultural, pedagogical, psychological, and musical concepts. Referring to this aspect, Shaw explained that the educators will feel "overwhelmed by the seemingly infinite number of cultures they could experience with students", and will get "discouraged by the impossibility of being personally expert" in all forms of musical presentation.[173] As she goes on, "it might be helpful to approach curriculum design, with repertoire at its core, by envisioning a continuum from familiar to unfamiliar."[174] In other words, choosing repertoire for intercultural choirs is a significant part of a conductor's work since the music performed directly represents the shared value system of a choir and reflects the conductor's cultural identity. In addition, selecting, preparing, rehearsing, and performing ethnocultural music will establish the foreign conductors' confidence and sense of belonging outside their home countries. Furthermore, when foreign conductors involve music of local cultures, musicians will also perceive the familiarity, sense of relevance and accessibility to their cultures. Thus, the culturally responsive teaching approach is partly accomplished.

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[172] Gay, "Chapter Two: Power Pedagogy Through Cultural Responsiveness," 32.

[173] Shaw, "The Skin that We Sing: Culturally Responsive Choral Music Education," 79.

[174] Shaw, 79.

Overcoming linguistic differences has also been recognised as a part of culturally responsive teaching. Delpit and Dowdy described language as "the most intimate expressions of identity" and "the skin that we speak".[175] When we reject someone's language, we reject the contents expressed by them and who they are. Therefore, within culturally responsive teaching, conductors should be aware of the accuracy of their spoken language when giving instructions to avoid being refused by singers from the 'skin'. Besides being a barrier, language positively contributes to one's cultural identity. Courtney Lindl conducted an exploratory study about the Chinese American adolescent identity within a children's choir located in the United States. She found that language had been "a major driver in creating ethnic pride" in young musicians' identities as either Chinese or American with unique individualities.[176] As New Zealand is a diverse country and contains various music groups, Chinese conductors can navigate musicians from any cultural background to gradually construct individual cultural identities through culturally responsive teaching.[177]

The culturally responsive teaching approach works as a cultural filter: conductors can transform music teaching and learning into rehearsals with ethnocultural contents, including the presentation of multicultural repertoire, adjustments to spoken language, and the construction of musicians' cultural identities as individuals. The difficulties of culturally responsive teaching in choirs include the conductors' lack of ethnocultural knowledge and the disadvantage of speaking in-native languages, which require choral directors to minimise the effects through introducing various repertoire in the order of 'familiar-unfamiliar-culturally appropriate'. Gay claimed cross-cultural communication as an essential element of culturally responsive teaching in her writings, aligned with clarifying classroom instructions. The following section will examine how foreign conductors

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[175] Delpit, "No Kinda Sense,"47.

[176] Lindl, "Chinese American Adolescent Identity in a Children's Choir: An Exploratory Study," 44.

[177] Lindl, 44.

can overcome the linguistic and other culturally relevant challenges to lead efficient intercultural rehearsals.

Section Four: Communicating as a Foreign Conductor

Communication plays a significant part in conducting and rehearsing. Unlike conventional music education in school classrooms, the communication process is more flexible, interactional and professional in choral rehearsals. In this thesis, musicians' professional ability restrictions are not counted as the primary factor in choral contexts but New Zealand's choirs' cultural and social impacts. Therefore, the core of communication skills only includes how conductors cope with cross-cultural problems as a profession. Communicating as foreign conductors means building up a causal relationship between cultural differences, quality of rehearsals, and the conductors' professionalism. Ideally, the conductors can direct choirs with their professional capabilities as who they naturally are, instead of taking the cultural effects as disadvantages that correspondingly deteriorate rehearsals and performances. In the last section, language has been identified as an essential factor in culturally responsive teaching. Now, we will take a closer look at the relationships between culture, communication and language, which are applied to the choral context of Chinese conductors and New Zealand singers.

Communication and Culture

Communication is defined as a "quintessential way" for human beings to "make meaningful connections with each other" and takes place on various occasions, including "caring, sharing, loving, teaching, learning."[178] Montagu and Matson referred to communication as "a ground of meeting and the foundation of community."[179] According to Porter and Samovar, communication

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[178] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 80.

[179] Montagu and Matson, "The Human Connection," vii.

takes extensive responsibility for constructing people's "individual repertoire of communicative behaviour and meaning" and is possessed by different regulations in particular "social and physical contexts".[180] Earlier, Samovar and Porter's writings emphasised that communication functions as an "ability" that connects people from different backgrounds into peaceful coexistence.[181] It implies that communication is so powerful that it tightens up individuals inside societies and communities and forms a unity of social groups; as Samovar and Porter described, communication "can not only benefit us in our own neighbourhoods but can also be a decisive factor in forestalling nuclear annihilation."[182]

Communication includes an interrelationship between social and cultural attributes. Sociologically, the essence of communication is "an intricate matrix of interacting social acts that occur in a complex social environment", which "reflects" how people live, how they interact with each other, and how they "get along in their world".[183] According to Larry Porter and Richard Samovar, communication is a social act in people's everyday lives and is a channel for people to interact with others while establishing social relationships.[184] A choir's social environment is constructed by the communications, interactions, and relationships among conductors and singers representing their cultures in a cross-cultural context. As for the relationship between culture and communication, Geneva Gay referred to culture as a "rule-governing system" that "defines the forms, functions and content of communication".[185] Communication is restrained by culture –the social environment consisting of default rules. Thus, communication effectiveness reflects the quality of cultural and

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[180] Porter and Samovar, "Basic Principles of Intercultural Communication," passim.

[181] Samovar and Porter, "Intercultural communication: a reader," 1f.

[182] Samovar and Porter, 1f.

[183] Porter and Samovar, 10.

[184] Porter and Samovar, 12.

[185] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 79.

social interactions among people. The New Zealand mixed culture Amy worked with indicated the cultural constraint to musicians' communication, especially for the conductor. Even though Amy had been working with the mixed culture choir for ten years, she commented that institutional cultural constraints within the choir made it difficult for her to feel a sense of belonging to the mainstream New Zealand-style communication. Thus, Amy had to spend more time adapting to the choir's social and cultural system. In this case, the institutional and invisible rules stopped her from naturally communicating with musicians in her way until she found her mixed Chinese and New Zealand manner of speaking became effective in rehearsals.

On the one hand, communications foster social interactions that gradually impact upon the culture. On the other hand, culture influences what people talk about, how they talk about it, what they see, what to "attend or ignore", how they think, and what they think.[186] In the cross-cultural choral context, the social environments of choirs influence the content of rehearsals, the interactive way among musicians, and their understandings of the music created. When working with local choirs, Chinese conductors need to consider the social environment of choirs and how they can influence the culture of choirs as organisers through intercultural communication. Hinnenkamp claimed intercultural communication to be "a form of communication in its own right", as it has a speciality in "phenomenology", "constituency" and "relevance" in regards to "communicability and comprehensibility of symbolic human interaction".[187] It implies that the significant difference between regular and intercultural communication is that what people say or think about and how they say or think about it are culturally symbolic. When interacting with people from other cultures, the *what* and *how* to deliver cultural information to others may cause either cultural comprehension or misunderstandings. As Gay laid out, communication is "irreversible" and "invariably

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[186] Porter and Samovar, 21.

[187] Hinnenkamp, "Constructing Misunderstanding as a Cultural Event," 212.

contextual"; once the communication takes place, "its effects are irretrievable", "despite efforts to modify or counteract them."[188]

The risks of cultural misunderstandings in intercultural communication derived from disconnections between or among culturally-diverse people due to the lack of "shared background knowledge".[189] In his discussions about cross-cultural conversations, John Gumperz stated that "since contextualization conventions are not shared, attempts to repair these misunderstandings fail, and conversational cooperation breaks down."[190] More specifically, when people from different backgrounds interact with each other, "the communication practices and behaviour of individuals reared in those cultures will also be different".[191] Gumperz also mentioned how shared background knowledge could affect "cultural praxis", and he advised organisers of intercultural groups to repair the cultural difference problems "by relying on a common stock of conventionalized routine".[192] Therefore, if Chinese conductors expect to adapt to the choirs' social environment, following the choirs' previous rehearsal mode will be helpful concerning repertoire choices, concert themes, and rehearsal planning. To Chinese conductors, the problems of communicative differences can be fixed by preparing themselves before meeting and talking with local singers. As cultural minorities in New Zealand, Chinese conductors are responsible for experiencing and observing how the local people speak, behave, and interact during rehearsals to build up their cultural knowledge and minimise cultural misunderstandings while working with them.

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[188] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 79.

[189] Gumperz, "Mutual inferencing in conversation," 120.

[190] Gumperz, 120.

[191] Samovar and Porter, 12.

[192] Gumperz, 225.

Culture and Language

Effects of language can be divided into two parts: socio-cultural and mental. Linguist Edward Sapir concluded that "language is a guide to 'social reality'" and "a symbolic guide of culture", and "it powerfully conditions all of our thinking about social problems and processes."[193] Similarly, psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky declared that "thought development is determined by language" and "the social cultural experience of the child".[194] Gay also found that in culturally diverse classrooms, "the absence of shared communicative frames of reference, procedural protocols, rules of etiquette, and discourse systems" set the boundaries for teachers and students "genuinely" understand each other and "for students convey their intellectual abilities."[195] In a cross-cultural choral context, language refers to how musicians speak and reflect on their perspectives of viewing the choir as a social group and a culturally friendly environment to deliver information, which defines their language expressions in the institutional, social and cultural context. Therefore, language externalises people's social position, cultural identity and inner selves.

The language difference, meaning that conductors' first language is different from singers', also influences multilingual conductors' sociocultural identities since they do not stand inside an "objectified world" that does not require language adjustments.[196] According to Edward Sapir, language is not a "mechanical instrument" used for information delivery; however, people are "very much at the mercy of the particular language" since language becomes the intermediate of "expressions for their society".[197] In New Zealand's cultural and social phenomena, Chinese conductors' self-identification and verbal communication approaches differentiate from those in

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[193] Sapir, "The status of linguistics as a science," 162.

[194] Vygotsky, "Thought and language," 51. Cited by Gay, "Culturally responsive teaching : theory, research, and practice," 81.

[195] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 81.

[196] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 81.

[197] Sapir, 162.

their home country. The English-based sociocultural systems impact their thoughts, perceptions, sensations, and actions.[198] Benjamin Whorf and Thomas Carroll informed this phenomenon as a reference to the *principle of linguistic relativity*, which explains that the language structures in different regions image various cultural modes and values.[199] Combining both sociocultural and philosophical meanings of language, Humboldt laid out that language is a "formative organ" of people's thoughts and ideas, and people are separate "nations" that have their language and underlines—in Gay's words, "people's innermost spirit".[200] To Chinese conductors, language is the fundamental factor of their communication with musicians since "a language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas", but the language itself is "the shaper of ideas".[201] As Whorf said, the language is "the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, his analysis of impressions, and the synthesis of his mental stock in trade."[202] In my rehearsal experience, I sometimes found it challenging to construct my ideas in mind and speak in English. This is because my choice of words, phrases and expressions are more likely to be 'Chinese'. In other words, my mindset and style of English speaking originate from the Chinese language, which stops me from presenting my ideas clearly to English speakers.

Since linguistic variety is one fundamental challenge of intercultural communication, Chinese conductors should understand how their speaking approach and content influence their rehearsal skills. It should be noted that communication includes both verbal speech and non-verbal movements. During rehearsal, every action conductors take will cause musicians to change their

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[198] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 80.

[199] Carroll, "The Philosophy of the Rights of the Individual," passim; Whorf, "Collected papers on metalinguistics," passim; Whorf, "Language, thought, and reality; selected writings," passim.

[200] Humboldt, "Culture in School Learning: Revealing the Deep Meaning;" Cited by Germperz, "Contextualization and Ideology in Intercultural Communication," 35.

[201] Whorf, "Collected papers on metalinguistics," 5.

[202] Whorf, 5.

attitudes, reactions, and voices. In Geneva Gay's concepts of culturally responsive teaching, she emphasised "language and communication styles" as "systems of cultural notations and the means through which thoughts and ideas are expressively embodied."[203] To keep a sustainable intercultural environment, foreign conductors must ensure efficient communications with culturally diverse choristers as a fundamental technique. Thus, musicians will establish a relatively critical understanding of each other's cultural values instead of superficially prejudicing people based on their ethnicities or races. When a Chinese conductor steps into a culturally diverse New Zealand choral rehearsal, there are no pre-settings of who the musicians are, where they come from, or how they will react to "me' as a foreigner. To construct the role, a foreign conductor needs to talk, act, think as a professional and who he or she is, and deliver instructional information without any cultural concerns.

Besides the socio-cultural formation, communication also represents people's core intelligence through speaking different languages. Gay believed that communication contains more than "the content and structure of written and spoken language" and "serves purposes greater than the mere transmission of information".[204] Language is an essential part of communication and is "the semantic system of meaning and modes of conveyance" that people use to "code, analyse, categorise, and interpret experience."[205] Gay implies that communication effectiveness determines that of intercultural integration, and a unified language system will increase intercultural communication quality. The spoken language and communicative interaction will automatically transform into part of local musicians' comprehension of the conductor, and the cultural background of the conductor will be naturally established in their minds during communication. Thus, within a

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[203] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 81.

[204] Gay, 80.

[205] Carroll, passim; Hoijer, "The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis"; Mandelbaum, "Selected writings of Edward Sapir in language, culture and personality." Cited by Gay, in "Chapter One: Changes and Perspectives," 8.

culturally diverse choir, a foreign conductor's language will not define his or her cultural identity or representation directly; instead, the *how of communicating* determines the conductor's position with a dimensional representation of culture, thoughts, ideas and professionalism. Due to the language barrier, it is difficult for Chinese conductors, who speak English as their second language, to deliver firm instructions. The situation will stop them from representing their professional knowledge and skills. For Chinese conductors, speaking English during rehearsals is a representation of how they comprehend and reflect on the social environment of the ensembles. The more progress in initiating the cultural identities through the interactions with local musicians, the more opportunities for Chinese conductors to enhance their communicative skills for rehearsals. At last, the more culturally and socially approachable conductors will become.

If language unity is established, people from various cultural backgrounds will be freed from the bilingual barriers, as they will have more confidence and comfort while talking to each other. The language unity here does not refer to people speaking the same language but rather a consistent style or mode of speaking a communal language within an intercultural group. Language unity is framed by the sociocultural values of the group and shaped by the regular interaction and communication among culturally diverse people. In an intercultural choir, a Chinese conductor can establish a language system that New Zealand's singers are familiar with, and instructions will be more efficient. In other words, the language itself is a communicative tool for conductors, who are not required to be English experts but must construct a unified lingual model for rehearsals based on the words, tones and modes so that singers can easily comprehend during rehearsals. Conductors' language development should be aligned with establishing intercultural rehearsal plans regarding how to speak to musicians with clarification and present oneself with sufficient knowledge of both the culture and the music direction. Therefore, the language a conductor speaks reflects the inherent abilities of a musician and presents the inner strength of an ensemble leader.

Establishing Communicative Approaches

The relationship between conductors and musicians needs long-term adjustment based on reflection of each rehearsal's communication to sustain a healthy relationship among the rehearsal participants. In an intercultural choral context, effective communication between conductors and singers is based on an adequate understanding of each other's cultural values and a communal language system. The less talking between conductors and musicians during rehearsals, the more musicking will occur. Therefore, Chinese conductors need to shorten the adaptive phase and gradually build up the language system by enhancing their communication skills to better interact with ethnocultural musicians and focus on music. In Wayne's cross-cultural conducting experiences, he used the method of writing rehearsal reviews. By writing down the sentences and words he found effective for singers, Wayne recorded and reflected on his spoken words and communications with singers during rehearsals to improve his rehearsal language.

Besides writing rehearsal reviews, planning spoken words or expressions of English is another approach to preparing for cross-cultural rehearsals. To establish qualitative intercultural classrooms, Gay suggested culturally responsive teachers design the program by preparing before the classes, in regards to "the communication styles of different ethnic groups", which can "reflect cultural values and shape learning behaviour" and "modify classroom interactions" for better accommodating them.[206] Gay also mentioned that educators should know "the linguistic structures of various ethnic communication styles", including "contextual factors, cultural nuances, discourse feature, logic and rhythm, delivery, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures, and body movements."[207] Therefore, to construct an intercultural choral context, the first task of

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[206] Gay, "Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching," 111.

[207] Gay, 111.

foreign conductors is to formulate a pre-rehearsal plan. The plan should be tailored by the conductor's and the ensemble's cultural and social backgrounds regarding specific communicative skills, to-dos, and not-to-dos to avoid ethical conflicts.

The pre-rehearsal plan lays out the cultural boundaries of intercultural communication. During rehearsals, the conversations among culturally diverse musicians should also be carefully constructed. Hinnenkamp introduced the *intercultural communication approach*, which can improve the "instruction and language learning" and "secure smooth international business and an undisturbed conduct with non-native clients".[208] Though Hinnenkamp's approach is not based on music training, it can be transformed into intercultural choral conducting. Instead of utilising this approach from a perspective of a business agency, Chinese conductors can apply it in rehearsals to prevent cross-cultural challenges from language and conversational difficulties. Regarding interpersonal communication, Gumperz referred *to conversational inference* as assessment for the interpretation that takes place in cultural encounters.[209] When people exchange their ideas through conversations, from the moment they hear the information from speakers, the listeners will quickly comprehend the information and move on to "planning their responses".[210] Interpreting information is the *conversational inference*; as Gumperz explained, "what talk does is to impose more or less determinate constraints on possible interpretations"; correspondingly, the talk "sets the framework in terms of which interpretive assessments are made."[211] When singers speaking while the rehearsal, their talkings are disruptive and limits for rehearsal outcomes. Therefore, while singers are talking during rehearsals, conductors should 'join in' the conversation by listening and extracting

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[208] Hinnenkamp, 211.

[209] Gumperz, "Contextualization and Ideology in Intercultural Communication," 37.

[210] Gumperz, 37.

[211] Gumperz, 37.

information instantly and lead the communication back to music-making by delivering talk constraints based on immediate conversational inferences.

In Gumperz's findings of conversational inferences, the interpretations are affected by participants' cultural values. One significant factor of the interpretation is the encounter participants' "perceptions" of the interactional activities, which consist of "a priori extra-textual knowledge, stereotypes and attitudes" inside people and will influence how they reflect on the experience.[212] For instance, when New Zealand singers attend rehearsals directed by a Chinese conductor, they will perceive the rehearsals as cultural encounters unconsciously with preinstalled cultural stereotypes. As Gumperz stated, these cultural stereotypes represent "a large extent constructed through talk" from people's previous experiences.[213] In the choral direction, the conversation between conductors and singers could eliminate the cultural bias between them and singers and unconsciously break through the limitations of musicians' *linguistic ideology*, referring to the cultural beliefs and values that musicians hold during their interactions.[214]

In addition, the communicative style of *rapport-talk* can also help foreign conductors to construct more smooth and directive conversations during rehearsals with singers who speak a different language. Regarding potential problems of intercultural communications, Gay found that the skills of "rapport-talk" among European American females can resolve the problems.[215] In her discussion about culturally responsive teaching, Gay claimed the "rapport-talk" and the "call-response" styles of talking is problematic in the classroom.[216] Unlike the conventional classroom setting, rehearsals

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[212] Gumperz, 37.

[213] Gumperz, 37.

[214] Gumperz, 37.

[215] Gay, "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 104.

[216] Gay, 104.

allow musicians to ask questions and talk with conductors more casually to enhance the quality and effectiveness of rehearsals. Rapport-talk refers to a "response and talk-story" communicative style, which usually occurs in "casual and friendly" conversations and is helpful to community construction.[217] In Tannen's words, the casual talks among these women are "cooperative overlapping" since they intend to indicate "participation and support" to each other.[218] Summarised from Gay's explanations about *the rapport-talk* concept, some communicative skills can help foreign conductors: 1) listening more than talking, 2) "deep-phasing expertise", 3) "focusing on individuals" instead of "exhibiting power", 4) "negotiating closeness", and 5) "avoiding conflicts and confrontation".[219] Rapport-talk is not applied to choral dialogues yet. Foreign conductors can implement practical approaches in the intercultural choral rehearsals, which could help conductors establish interpersonal relationships with individuals to build up "friendships" and "networks" and avoid cross-cultural confrontation. When musicians have questions or inquiries during community choir rehearsals, conductors should be more a listener than a dominant speaker, as they need to show their support as educators and leaders. The in-rehearsal communications should be centred on the music or relevant content to keep the conversations formal and professional.

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[217] Gay, "Chapter 6: Cultural Contexts: The Influence of the Setting," 385.

[218] Tannen, "You just don't understand: women and men in conversation," 208.

[219] Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, "Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind;" Maltz and Borker, "A cultural approach to male-female miscommunication." Cited by Gay, in "Chapter Four: Culture and Communication in the Classroom," 104.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis aims to help international choral conductors to identify and solve cultural, social, and communicative problems in cross-cultural choral rehearsals with a combined qualitative methodology of autoethnography and one-on-one in-depth interviews. By analysing Chinese conductors' cross-cultural rehearsal experiences in New Zealand, this thesis has shown that cultural-relevant problems, social relationships, and language challenges are the main barriers to leading cross-cultural rehearsals.

The analysis has shown that Chinese conductors' cultural backgrounds and identities significantly impact building relationships with cross-cultural singers and performing ethnocultural music. It is also indicated that the language challenges can be solved flexibly depending on the conductors' situations. The analysis and reference to various socio-cultural theories were applied to the cross-cultural choral context, consisting of foreign conductors and singers from various cultural backgrounds. Firstly, Aristotle's praxis philosophy can help foreign choral conductors take musical, cultural, social, and ethical responsibilities in planning and rehearsals with the four types of consideration. Foreign conductors can apply the four-part concepts, referring to *theoria, techne*, *poiesis, phronesis*, to plan and organise rehearsals as personhood-centred human activities to prevent problems raised by cultural differences and boundaries between them and singers from different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, theories of multiculturalism and interculturalism can assist conductors in interpreting cross-cultural rehearsals as music activities constructed by musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds and social interactions among the musicians to create a culturally-healthy rehearsal space. To effectively create music knowledge from cross-cultural rehearsals, conductors can use multiculturalism theory to define their rehearsal goals, such as performing multicultural music and introducing music from cultures unfamiliar to singers. However, conductors may not achieve these goals without establishing intercultural relationships

between them and the singers. Thirdly, conductors can apply cross-cultural rehearsal approaches to establish a more culture-friendly rehearsal space and enhance cultural integration through social activities, including constructing organised cultural rehearsals, building intercultural contact zone within rehearsals, and implementing culturally responsive teaching methods. Furthermore, through understanding the relationship between communication, culture, and language, foreign conductors can construct their rehearsal communication approaches in non-native languages to deliver formal and professional conversations during rehearsals with local musicians.

The combined methodology of autoethnography and one-on-one interviews effectively gained insights into Chinese conductors' real-life problems within cross-cultural rehearsals. Nevertheless, as for rehearsal strategies, it was unexpected that the interviewed conductors emphasised much more cultural and social challenges than the rehearsal strategies from the musical aspect of rehearsals. For conductors, socio-cultural challenges have been significant to their work experiences with cross-cultural choirs. These challenges influenced their collaboration with choirs, communicating with singers and committees, and choosing repertoire with adequate cultural and social considerations.

The limitation of this research includes the small sample size and the lack of practical rehearsal strategies due to the information lost from the interviewees. With the particular theme of Chinese conductors and New Zealand singers, it might not be wise to generalise from this theme to other cross-cultural situations. Nevertheless, some larger theories may apply in other cross-cultural situations. Future studies could widen the research of choral conductors' cultural and social problems from or work in other countries, address the rehearsal strategies that international conductors implement in cross-cultural rehearsals, and explore the impact of second language speaking in rehearsals.

In conclusion, cultural and sociological problems make it difficult for Chinese singers to develop and sustain effective cross-cultural choral rehearsals. As for me, the lack of cultural identity as a Chinese, my sense of ethnic difference, and my lack of spoken English skills stopped me from rehearsing New Zealand choirs with confidence and presenting my conducting skills. In Wayne's experiences with choirs in different countries, he received cultural disrespect when rehearsing Chinese music and had difficulties communicating in English as his third language. According to Amy's rehearsal experiences with both Chinese and New Zealand choirs, she felt a lack of cultural identity as a Hong Kong immigrant and a sense of cultural differences in both Chinese and New Zealand choral settings. Amy also received racial and religious discrimination when conducting one Chinese choir; the dilemma stopped her from rehearsing sacred music and completing her job as a conductor.

In short, aspects of cultural identity, disrespect, sense of cultural differences, and inequity are the main factors influencing the interviewed Chinese conductors' rehearsals in cross-cultural choral settings. Sociologically, conductors' ethnicity, religious belief and racial discrimination also cause difficulties rehearsing ethnocultural music. Chinese conductors' cultural and social challenges led them to confront problems including repertoire choice, uneasy adaption to the social system of choirs, and social disconnection with choirs. In addition, rehearsing in a non-native language is also a significant challenge for foreigners, decreasing communication effectiveness and efficiency in rehearsals with singers from other cultural backgrounds. There are also some benefits that Chinese conductors find in cross-cultural settings. For instance, conductors felt encouraged to rehearse and introduce Chinese music in the multicultural concert programme. The cultural differences encouraged them to explore the unfamiliar culture, and conductors are self-motivated to learn or improve the non-native language to enhance cross-cultural rehearsal skills.

This research shows that Aristotle's *praxis* philosophy helps investigate connections among culture, social values and rehearsal strategies of cross-cultural rehearsals from a human-centred angle. Theories of multiculturalism and interculturalism can be applied to the cross-cultural choral context to establish Chinese emigrant conductors' understanding of their cultural identities and intercultural relationships with singers, to create multicultural music knowledge and design effective rehearsal plans for the choir. In addition, concepts of organised cultural encounters, the intercultural contact zone, and culturally responsive teaching methods can help foreign conductors to create value in musical knowledge and creativity in a culturally diverse social space. Finally, Chinese emigrant conductors' can improve their language skills by connecting the elements of culture, communication, and tongues to construct a mutual speaking style in a cross-cultural choir.

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Appendix

Topic
Interviewer Self-introduction
Research Background Introduction
Participant Information Clarification
Q1: Could you please briefly introduce yourself?
Q2: What is your music-educational background?
Q3: Why did you decide to be a conductor?
Q4: Are you currently conducting any choir(s)? What is the cultural, social and musical background of the choir(s)?
Q5: Are you experiencing challenges while rehearsing the current ensemble?
Q6: Are you experiencing challenges brought by language, cultural, or social differences?
Q7: What are you previous rehearsing experiences?
Q8: Any other experiences you want to share with me?
Other comments (for interviewees to share their thoughts about)