In two separate studies, we examined fifth graders' preference for authentic and arranged versions of world music recordings, the relationship of those preference ratings to familiarity, and teachers' ability to predict student preferences. In the first study, intact classes of fifth-grade students were randomly assigned to an authentic or arranged listening condition and indicated their familiarity and preference for the same 19 world music songs on a 6-point Likert scale. Teachers of the students in the study attempted to predict their students' preference and familiarity ratings for those same 19 recordings. In the second study, students heard both versions of each song side by side and were asked to first choose the version they preferred, then indicate strength of preference and familiarity. Results of both studies indicated that familiarity with a world music song is positively related to student preference for that song. Subjects in the first study did not differ significantly in the magnitude of their preference ratings between authentic or arranged conditions, whereas subjects in the second study overwhelmingly preferred arranged versions in head-to-head comparisons. Teachers' predictions of preference and familiarity ratings were significantly related to student ratings, though tended to be significantly higher.

Steven M. Demorest, University of Washington


Children's Preference for Authentic versus Arranged Versions of World Music Recordings

During the past 50 years, there has been an increasing focus on using world music in the classroom, as demonstrated by the growing number of publications on this topic in the Music Educators Journal (Volk, 1993) as well as the inclusion of teaching world music repertoire in the 1994 National Standards for Arts Education (Consortium

Steven M. Demorest is a Donald E. Petersen Endowed Fellow and chair of the music education division, School of Music, Box 353450, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195-3450; e-mail: demorest@u.washington.edu. Sara J. M. Schultz received a master of arts in music education at the University of Washington and is currently an elementary general music teacher in the Highline [Washington] School District. Copyright © 2004 by MENC: The National Association for Music Education.
While this repertoire is an important addition to our music classrooms, there are a number of obstacles to incorporating this material into the curriculum successfully. Many music educators feel limited in their ability to teach multicultural music due to their lack of training in this area (Teicher, 1997). Another obstacle has been a lack of high-quality multicultural materials available for teachers (Robinson, 2002). As a result, teachers have often chosen to use the readily accessible world music recordings that accompany the elementary basal series textbooks. Many of these recordings are arranged versions of vocal ethnic songs that do not portray authentically the way the music sounds and is performed within the culture of origin (Damm, 2000; Trinka, 1987). This approach is in direct conflict with the recommendations of ethnomusicologists and music educators, who have stressed the importance of using authentic recordings in teaching children world music (Burton, 2002; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2002; Klinger, 2002; Palmer, 1992). It is not clear what impact a more authentic approach might have on students' preferences for world music.

Investigators in the area of children's music preference have identified factors that may influence preference based on LeBlanc's (1982) theory that states, "Music preference decisions are based upon the interaction of input information and the characteristics of the listener, with input information consisting of the musical stimulus and the listener's cultural environment" (p. 29). In many studies, researchers have looked at children's music preference based on characteristics of the environment, characteristics of the musical stimulus, and characteristics of the listener. Several researchers have even explored how these variables interact with the goals of a world music curriculum.

Studies in which the goal was to examine characteristics of the environment have focused on how approval from adults (Greer, Dorow, Wachhaus, & White, 1973), teachers (Dorow, 1977), and disc jockeys and peers (Alpert, 1982) affect students' music selection. Researchers have found that children prefer musical stimulus characteristics such as low levels of vibrato (LeBlanc & Sherrill, 1986), high levels of humor (LeBlanc, Sims, Malin, & Sherrill, 1992), expressive dynamics (Burnsed, 1998), instrumental versus vocal performing medium (Darrow, Haack, & Kuribayashi, 1987; Fung, 1995; LeBlanc, 1981; LeBlanc & Cote, 1983; Shehan, 1981), fast tempo (LeBlanc, 1981; LeBlanc & Cote, 1983, LeBlanc & McCrary, 1983; LeBlanc, Colman, McCrary, Sherrill, & Malin, 1988), and currently popular styles of music over unfamiliar styles of music (Brittin, 2000; Fung, Lee, & Chung, 2000; Geringer, 1982; LeBlanc, 1979; LeBlanc, 1981; May, 1985). The preference of popular over unfamiliar styles is significant for an investigation of world music preference as most examples are likely to be unfamiliar to students. The extent to which such examples interact with or sound
like popular music could have an influence on preference.

Age is the listener characteristic found to be most influential on music preference as to style, familiarity, and tempo. Fung, Lee, and Chung (2000) and Hargreaves and Castell (1987) found that older children rated unfamiliar music lower in preference than did younger children. In the older grades, boys in particular seem to give lower ratings of song familiarity and preference than boys in the younger grades for any music other than popular music (Siebenaler, 1999). Marked changes happen at third and fourth grade, with a significant rise in preference for fast tempi (Sims, 1987), along with a rise in verbal preference and behavioral selection for rock over non-rock music (Greer, Dorow, & Randall, 1974). May's (1985) study substantiated Greer's findings, with higher grade levels giving stronger preference ratings to currently popular music than did lower grade levels. Students in the younger grades (K–2), however, give all musical selections higher ratings than do older students (LeBlanc & McCrary, 1983; Montgomery, 1996, 1998). Suggestions on how to deal with the overall decline in preference for nonrock and unfamiliar music in the higher elementary grades included introducing more unfamiliar music and nonrock music at the younger grades when students are the most positive in their preference ratings. The goal of this earlier exposure is to broaden students' musical experiences and enable them to be more tolerant of unfamiliar music as they grow older.

Students' familiarity with certain music can influence their stated preference for it. Numerous studies have found that familiarity has a positive relationship to music preference under a variety of conditions. Fung's (1994) study on college-age students' world music preference found significant correlations between familiarity ratings and preference scores. Latin American listening selections received higher preference ratings when compared to African and Asian selections. Fung suggested beginning world music instruction with Latin American music because of its regular rhythm and similarity to Western music. Similarly, Morrison and Cheung (1999), examining the preferences of college music and nonmusic majors from the United States, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China, found that Chinese students preferred Chinese classical selections and American students preferred jazz, indicating a possible correlation between familiarity and preference.

Two studies of children's world music preference focused on comparing students' preference for recordings of familiar, currently popular music and unfamiliar world music. Shehan (1981) examined fourth graders' preference for Asian, Indian, African, Indonesian, Japanese, current popular, and Western classical music. She found that both vocal and instrumental performing mediums of currently popular excerpts received higher preference ratings than did classical selections; currently popular and instrumental classical selections scored higher than all ethnic styles; and non-Western instrumental selections were preferred over non-Western vocal selections. Shehan
suggested student preference for instrumental over vocal timbre in this context was possibly influenced by the use of a foreign language and nasal timbre in the vocal selections. Within the ethnic styles of music, selections with greater rhythmic dynamism from Africa and Japan received higher preference ratings than did Indonesian and Japanese vocal excerpts containing lower levels of rhythmic dynamism. Flowers (1980) examined fourth-grade students’ preference for Top 40 song excerpts and selections of authentic field recordings of African music from records accompanying elementary music textbooks. Preference ratings were recorded verbally and measured continuously on a music selection recorder that allowed students to choose the channel of music to listen to and recorded the time spent listening to each type of music. The results of the study supported previous findings that elementary students prefer familiar music over unfamiliar music. Top 40 songs received higher verbal preference ratings and listening time than African selections, though students did choose to spend some time sampling the African music.

In a number of studies, investigators have explored whether manipulating familiarity can change student preference; they found that increased exposure led to increased preference (Heingartner & Hall, 1974; Peretz, Gaudreau, & Bonnel, 1998; Shehan, 1985; Siebenaler, 1999), even for songs with previously low-rated factors such as slow tempo (Geringer & Madsen, 1987; Moskovitz, 1992). Research in the area of preference for world music also suggests that gaining familiarity through exposure and training plays an important role. In an experiment exploring how familiarity affects world music preference of college students and fourth graders, Heingartner and Hall (1974) found that increased frequency of exposure to Pakistani music selections increased preference.

Shehan (1985) went further and explored the role of training on music preference. Her study of transfer of preference from taught to untaught pieces of world music focused on attempting to increase familiarity through instruction. A group of sixth graders were taught African, Indian, Japanese, and Hispanic songs for 5 weeks. Students rated preference of taught and untaught listening excerpts from each of the cultures, as well as currently popular and Western classical selections on a pre- and posttest. While currently popular music was the preferred style on both the pretest and posttest, Western classical moved from second to last place. Pretest rankings placed African music in third place followed by Hispanic, Indian, and Japanese selections. Posttest rankings showed an increase in preference for Indian, Hispanic, and Japanese music with Hispanic moving into second place after currently popular music followed by African, Japanese, and Indian music. Scores showed that instruction increased preference of taught multicultural songs, but it did not increase the preference of untaught songs from the same culture.

Familiarity clearly plays an important role in students’ perceived preference for music. Consequently, teachers who wish to introduce culturally unfamiliar music, particularly in the upper grades, need to
understand what factors influence student preference and how to manipulate those responses in a positive way. When teachers are faced with the choice of using authentic or arranged recordings of world music, it would be beneficial for them to know which version children prefer, to what extent familiarity with the pieces or the style affects preference, and whether they are able to predict what music their students will like and find engaging. The purpose of these studies was to investigate the effect of hearing more-familiar-sounding arranged versions of world music selections versus authentic recordings of the same examples on fifth-grade students' preference and familiarity ratings for the pieces. We formed two specific hypotheses based on previous research. The following hypotheses were tested in Study 1:

1. There will be a significant difference in preference ratings between the more-familiar-sounding arranged recordings of world music pieces and the more-unfamiliar authentic versions.

2. There will be a significant relationship between students' reported familiarity with a song and their preference for it.

A third question of interest was whether elementary music teachers could predict which songs students would rate as most familiar and most preferred.

**STUDY 1 METHOD**

At the outset of the first study, the four elementary music teachers whose students would be serving as subjects for both studies listened to two versions, arranged and authentic, of 19 multicultural songs taken from *The Music Connection* (Silver Burdett Ginn, 1995), *Share the Music* (Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1995), and *Silver Burdett Making Music* (Pearson Education Inc., 2002) (see Table 1). The recordings for the arranged versions of the 19 songs were taken directly from the series recordings. While many featured characteristics of the culture such as instrumentation, performances were most often sung by Western children's voices. The authentic recordings were gathered from a variety of sources, with the criteria that the recorded performance was by an artist from the culture. The selections were in random order, were 15 to 20 seconds long, began with the entry of the vocal line, and ended at a logical musical point. On a 6-point Likert scale, the teachers rated each song's relative tempo from "slow" to "fast," rated expected fifth-grade familiarity from "don't know at all" to "know it really well," and predicted student preference from "do not like" to "like very much." Teachers also indicated which songs they had taught their students.

The subjects in the first study were 10 intact classrooms of fifth graders (N = 224) from two suburban public schools. The demographic of the district was 45.9% white, 20.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 17.9% Hispanic, 13.3% black, and 2.1% American Indian. All intact classrooms were relatively evenly divided between girls and boys.
Table 1
Mean Preference Ratings by Song for Studies 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Study 1 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Study 2 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Preferred Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Mbube&quot;</td>
<td>4.30 (1.85)</td>
<td>4.94 (1.57)</td>
<td>84/29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;La Bamba&quot;</td>
<td>3.35 (1.96)</td>
<td>4.17 (1.72)</td>
<td>89/24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;This Train&quot;</td>
<td>2.29 (1.45)</td>
<td>4.07 (1.55)</td>
<td>83/30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Saturday Night&quot;</td>
<td>2.83 (1.76)</td>
<td>3.82 (1.73)</td>
<td>84/29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;De Colores&quot;</td>
<td>3.00 (1.89)</td>
<td>3.81 (1.57)</td>
<td>89/24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Qua Cau Gio Bay&quot;</td>
<td>2.63 (1.71)</td>
<td>3.79 (1.61)</td>
<td>69/44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cheki Morena&quot;</td>
<td>2.91 (1.76)</td>
<td>3.51 (1.64)</td>
<td>67/46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Watah Come a Me Eye&quot;</td>
<td>2.64 (1.70)</td>
<td>3.46 (1.69)</td>
<td>96/17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sarika Keo&quot;</td>
<td>2.24 (1.48)</td>
<td>3.27 (1.47)</td>
<td>90/23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Serra, Serra Serrador&quot;</td>
<td>2.12 (1.44)</td>
<td>3.25 (1.72)</td>
<td>106/7**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cotton-Eyed Joe&quot;</td>
<td>2.41 (1.69)</td>
<td>3.19 (1.71)</td>
<td>73/40**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ulili E&quot;</td>
<td>2.49 (1.68)</td>
<td>3.14 (1.55)</td>
<td>78/35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ha ‘kyo jung&quot;</td>
<td>2.16 (1.46)</td>
<td>3.11 (1.45)</td>
<td>97/16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Leak kanseng&quot;</td>
<td>2.26 (1.65)</td>
<td>3.09 (1.69)</td>
<td>90/23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Down by the Riverside&quot;</td>
<td>2.43 (1.68)</td>
<td>3.04 (1.66)</td>
<td>63/50 (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;El Juego Chirimbolo&quot;</td>
<td>2.07 (1.42)</td>
<td>3.04 (1.59)</td>
<td>91/22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Arirang&quot;</td>
<td>2.14 (1.38)</td>
<td>2.95 (1.49)</td>
<td>89/24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;John Henry&quot;</td>
<td>2.07 (1.31)</td>
<td>2.79 (1.46)</td>
<td>88/25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yellow Bird&quot;</td>
<td>1.92 (1.32)</td>
<td>2.65 (1.50)</td>
<td>82/31**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary: $\chi = 2.54$, $\chi = 3.43$, $\Sigma = 1,608/539$

* = Chi Square significance, $p < .05$.  
** = Chi Square significance, $p < .01$.  
NS = Not significant.

Teacher 1 had 119 students and Teacher 2 had 105 students. Intact classrooms were randomly assigned to one of two listening conditions: arranged ($N = 115$, $T1 = 50$, $T2 = 65$) or authentic ($N = 109$, $T1 = 69$, $T2 = 40$). Each student marked a level of preference and familiarity for each of the 19 songs heard on a 6-point Likert scale. Preference was measured, with 1 being “do not like” and 6 being “like very much,” in response to the question “How much do you like this song?” Familiarity was also measured, with 1 being “don’t know at all” and 6 being “know it really well,” in response to the question “How well do you know this song?”

**STUDY 1 RESULTS**

While we expected higher preference and familiarity ratings for the arranged recordings based on previous research, all analyses
were two-tailed, since no such direct comparison of recordings had ever been tested. Contrary to the prediction of Hypothesis 1, there were no significant differences between students' preference ratings between the authentic and arranged listening conditions. Familiarity ratings, however, were significantly higher in the arranged condition \([F(1, 222) = 11.60, p < .001]\), though the actual difference was quite small (Figure 1). There was a significant correlation between familiarity and preference for songs across both conditions \((r = .87, p < .01)\) as predicted by Hypothesis 2. To further explore the connection between familiarity and preference, we compared ratings based on how many of the songs each teacher reported having sung with the students prior to the study. Students of Teacher 1, who had taught 6 of the 19 songs, did not report significantly higher familiarity ratings, but did rate preference significantly higher in both conditions than did students of Teacher 2, who had not taught any of the songs \([F(1, 222) = 13.76, p < .001]\). The third question dealt with teachers' ability to predict students' preference and familiarity ratings. There were significant correlations between teachers' and students' ratings for familiarity \((r = .60, p < .01)\) and preference \((r = .54, p < .01)\) across both conditions, but teachers' predictions of both preference \([F(1, 74) = 62.41, p < .001]\) and familiarity \([F(1, 74) = 105.61, p < .001]\) were significantly higher than students' ratings (Figure 2). Tempo ratings were not significantly related to students' preference.
STUDY 2 METHOD

In the first study, subjects did not differ in their reported preference by type of recording, but did rate arranged recordings as slightly more familiar. We wondered what would happen if they were forced to choose one version over another in a direct comparison. Based on the findings of the first study, we explored two additional questions in the second study:

1. Which version of a world music song would students choose when comparing them directly?
2. Is there a significant relationship between preference and familiarity in this judgment condition?

The subjects in the second study were fifth graders from two different suburban public schools. Teacher 3 had 76 students and Teacher 4 had 37 students who turned in complete data. All students heard 19 pairs of arranged and authentic selections in random, counterbalanced order of presentation and were asked to check the version of each song they liked best. They were also asked to indicate their preference for and familiarity with the song version they chose on a 6-point Likert scale. Preference and familiarity were measured
by asking the questions “How much do you like it?” and “How well do you know it?” Students chose from 1 (“not at all”) to 6, (“very well”).

**STUDY 2 RESULTS**

When students were given an opportunity to choose between song versions, significantly more students chose the arranged version in 18 of the 19 examples (Table 1). Arranged versions were chosen nearly 3 times more often than authentic overall (1,608 to 539). There was, however, a significant difference by teacher. Students of Teacher 4, who had taught 7 of the 19 songs, chose the authentic version significantly more often than students of Teacher 3, who had not taught any of the songs \[F (1, 36) = 5.27, p < .05\], though both groups preferred arranged selections overall. There were no significant differences by teacher for overall preference or familiarity ratings. When ratings by students of the two teachers were compared only on the seven songs taught by Teacher 4 a curious paradox emerged. Students of Teacher 3 actually rated their preference significantly higher \[F (1, 111) = 4.89, p < .05\], while students of Teacher 4 reported significantly higher familiarity ratings \[F (1, 111) = 5.74, p < .05\]. In both cases, the mean ratings were less than positive (i.e., below the midpoint of the scale).

The correlation between familiarity and preference for the song versions selected was again significant at \(r = .92\) \((p < .01)\) and students’ mean preference ratings in Study 2 were significantly correlated to the mean preference ratings for the same songs in Study 1 \((r = .88, p < .01)\). However, subjects in the second study rated their preference almost a point higher on average than did subjects in the first study. This difference was statistically significant \([F (1, 36) = 23.51, p < .001]\).

**DISCUSSION**

The most consistent finding from these two studies is that students’ familiarity with a song has a significant positive relationship to preference for that song. This is consistent with the results of a number of studies examining student preference (Hargreaves & Castell, 1987; Heingartner & Hall, 1974; Peretz, Gaudreau, & Bonnel, 1998; Shehan, 1985; Siebenaler, 1999). Such a strong relationship implies that the more often teachers present world music songs to their students, the more students will like them. Other aspects of the results, however, suggest that nurturing world music preference is not quite that simple. In Study 1, students’ average preference ratings for these songs rarely crept into positive territory on the 6-point scale. In the second study, ratings were higher overall but not strongly positive (mean rating = 3.43), suggesting that students might not prefer world music if given other choices. There are, however, some possible explanations for the low ratings other than lack of cultural familiarity. All the songs were vocal, a medium that has been less preferred
by students in other studies (Darrow, Haack, & Kuribayashi, 1987; Fung, 1995; LeBlanc, 1981; LeBlanc & Cote, 1983; Shehan, 1981). Tempos were mixed with a number of examples being relatively slow, though no relationship between teacher tempo ratings and preference was found. Outside influence may have also played a role, as two of the three songs that averaged 4 or above in Study 2, "Mbube" and "La Bamba," have been recorded in commercial versions that are played on the radio.

Subjects in the first study did not differ significantly in their preference ratings for authentic or arranged versions, but this finding changed considerably when subjects heard both versions of a song and were asked to choose. Students overwhelmingly preferred the arranged versions, suggesting that these may be the best choice as a starting point for introducing world music, even if the eventual goal might be to make students aware of more authentic recordings. Average preference ratings for each of the 19 songs were strongly correlated between the two studies, but subjects in Study 2 rated the same songs almost a point higher on average (Table 1). What produced this higher rating? Teachers of the students in the second study did not report having taught more of the songs than teachers in the first study, though that doesn't necessarily reflect students' total exposure to world music. It may be that the forced-choice format of Study 2 led to significantly higher preference ratings. This is consistent with the well-established phenomenon of cognitive dissonance (Brehm, 1956; Festinger, 1957). Dissonance theory predicts that when subjects choose one thing over another, it can positively influence their attitude about their choice. This suggests that having some kind of context in which to make a preference judgment may be an important influence on that judgment, at least for relatively unfamiliar music.

Teachers do seem to have a sense of which songs their students will know better and prefer more, though they consistently overrated the students' preference for a song. The connection between the number of pieces taught and students' preference was more tenuous. In Study 1, students who had learned some of the 19 songs rated their preference significantly higher than students who had not learned any of the songs, but they did not report greater familiarity. In Study 2, prior exposure may have played a role in students of Teacher 4 choosing authentic versions a little more often, but it had no effect on overall preference or familiarity. As Shehan (1985) discovered, the transfer of preference from specific music to a broader repertoire may be difficult to achieve. Future researchers might look specifically at the effect that exposure to world music in the younger grades would have on students' preference and openness to world music in later years.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

The findings of the present study suggest that teachers should introduce world music to their students using examples that sound
like music the students know. If we combine this suggestion with older students’ well-known preference for popular music, it suggests that “world pop” music, with its fusion of Western and non-Western elements, may be a logical starting point for introducing music of unfamiliar cultures. We are not suggesting, however, that students’ exposure to world music stop there, but that such an introduction may create a more positive context.

The forced-choice task in Study 2 seemed to provide students with a more contextualized listening experience than the single-example rating task of Study 1, and that in turn seemed to have a positive impact on reported preference for the songs. Teachers might explore ways to provide an engaging context for introducing new music, rather than simply playing or performing a single version of the song. Future investigators should examine teaching strategies based in choice that may promote a more open or positive response to world music. One cautionary note: Dissonance theory also predicts a decrease in preference for the alternative not chosen which, in this study, was most often the authentic recording of the music. Any future study would need to include examination of the possible presence of a negative effect as well.

Teachers should expect students’ preference for world music to increase with familiarity. This study was done with fifth graders (9–10 year olds), a group that has consistently shown lower preference ratings for anything other than popular music (Fung, Lee, & Chung, 2000; Greer, Dorow, & Randall, 1974; Hargreaves, 1987; May, 1985). It would be useful to know the effect of age on students’ openness to and preference for world music. Students who enter fifth grade having heard this music frequently may have a much more positive view of it. Given the importance of world music to the curricular goals of music programs in the United States and around the world, more research is needed on children’s responses to music from a variety of cultures and under a variety of listening conditions. This information can help teachers to create a more positive and enjoyable musical experience for their students while expanding students’ musical worlds.

REFERENCES


Submitted July 1, 2004; accepted October 20, 2004.