

MUSIC TO THEIR EARS: THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILIARITY IN  
LEARNING AND INCORPORATING POPULAR MUSIC STYLES  
INTO THE COLLEGE TEACHING OF AURAL SKILLS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of  
Texas State University-San Marcos  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of MUSIC

by

Anne Caroline Weaver, B.A.

San Marcos, Texas  
August, 2008

**COPYRIGHT**

by

Anne Caroline Weaver

2008

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my wonderful parents for their tireless love and support and for always finding the money in their budget for my piano lessons. I love you, and I am so blessed to have parents like you.

Thanks also to my friends, both past and present. You have been a big part of my life education, as well as my music education. Thanks especially to Kelsie. You have been with me through most of my collegiate experience and contributed as much to my musical knowledge as any of my classes have.

For their endless devotion to their subject and students, I would also like to thank my professors. The knowledge you have imparted to me is invaluable. Thank you so much to Nico for putting up with my stubbornness and helping me achieve my academic goals, and to my thesis committee for their support and input. I know your time is valuable and I truly thank you for giving it so readily.

This manuscript was submitted on July 9, 2008.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
ABSTRACT .....	x
 CHAPTER	
I. MUSICAL PREFERENCE AND THE MODERN STUDENT .....	1
I.1. Preference and Familiarity .....	1
I.2. Concepts to be Grasped in Aural Skills.....	11
II. THE LACK OF FAMILIAR MATERIAL IN AURAL SKILLS	
TEXTBOOKS.....	15
II.1. The Current Problem .....	15
II.2. Discussion of Common Ear Training Texts.....	16
II.2.1. <i>A New Approach to Ear Training</i> .....	16
II.2.2. <i>Music for Ear Training</i> .....	19
II.2.3. <i>Ear Training: A Technique for Listening</i> .....	22
II.3. Discussion of Common Sight Singing Texts .....	23
II.3.1. <i>Progressive Sight Singing</i> .....	23
II.3.2. <i>Anthology for Sight Singing</i> .....	25
II.3.3. <i>A New Approach to Sight Singing</i> .....	27

II.3.4. <i>Music For Sight Singing</i> .....	29
II.4. Discussion of Comprehensive Texts.....	32
II.4.1. <i>The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills</i> .....	32
II.5. Software .....	35
II.5.1. <i>MacGamut</i> .....	35
II.5.2. <i>Auralia</i> .....	37
II.5.3 <i>Practica Musica</i> ....	39
II.6. <i>Aural Learning Coursepack</i> .....	41
III. RESULTS OF A 2007 SURVEY ON MUSICAL PREFERENCES AND FAMILIARITY AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN MARCOS .....	43
III.1. Survey of Musical Preferences – The Questionnaire Used for the Survey .....	43
III.2. Survey Results .....	49
III.2.1. Overall Results .....	49
III.2.2. Results by Gender .....	55
III.2.3. Results by Class .....	61
III.2.4. Results by Ethnicity .....	64
III.2.5. Results by Time Spent Listening to Music .....	67
IV. THE RESOLUTION – INCORPORATING FAMILIAR POPULAR MUSIC INTO AURAL SKILLS .....	72
IV.1 Show Course Material to be Relevant.....	72
IV.2. My Experience Using Popular Music in my Classroom .....	75
IV.3. Incorporating Popular Styles in Listening Assignments .....	76

IV.4. Singing Popular Music.....	77
V. FINAL REMARKS .....	84
APPENDIX A.....	87
APPENDIX B .....	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	118
VITA .....	124

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1: Aural Learning at Texas State University-San Marcos.....	13
2: Mean Values of Genres, in Order of Preference overall average .....	50
3: The Function of Music, overall percentages .....	51
4: Change in Tastes over Past Five Years, Overall Percentages .....	52
5: View of Classical Music, Overall Percentages .....	53
6: Hours per Day Spent Listening to Music, Overall Percentages.....	54
7: Type of Music Played in Non-School Ensembles, Overall Percentages .....	55
8: Mean Values of Top Genres, by Female Students (31) .....	56
9: Mean Values of Top Genres, by Male Students (65) .....	57
10: Question 71 – Function of Music, Responses by Gender .....	58
11: Question 72 – Change in Tastes, Responses by Gender .....	59
12: Question 73 – View on Classical Music, Responses by Gender .....	60
13: Question 74 – Hours Listening to Music, Responses by Gender .....	61
14: Mean Values of Top Genres, Essential Musicianship Responses .....	62
15: Mean Values of Top Genres, Aural I Responses .....	63
16: Mean Values of Top Genres, Aural III Responses.....	64
17: Mean Values of Top Genres, Hispanic Responses .....	66

18: Mean Values of Top Genres, Caucasian Responses.....	67
19: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Student Who Listen to Music for 1-2 Hours per Day .....	68
20: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Student Who Listen to Music for 2-3 Hours per Day .....	69
21: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Student Who Listen to Music for 3-4 Hours per Day .....	70
22: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Student Who Listen to Music for More than 4 Hours per Day .....	71

**ABSTRACT**

MUSIC TO THEIR EARS: THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILIARITY IN  
LEARNING AND INCORPORATING POPULAR MUSIC STYLES  
INTO THE COLLEGE TEACHING OF AURAL SKILLS

by

Anne Caroline Weaver, B.A.

Texas State University-San Marcos

July 2008

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: NICO SCHÜLER

This thesis attends to the necessity of the familiar in learning, researches the styles of music that are most familiar to the average aural skills student at Texas State University-San Marcos, and explores means of incorporating these styles in the collegiate teaching of aural skills.

The first chapter deals with the modern student in the college classroom, the factors influencing musical preference, types of learning, and the role of familiar concepts in learning, and concepts to be grasped in the study of aural skills.

In the second chapter, various aural textbooks are reviewed for familiarity, as well as user-friendliness to the students. This chapter includes data regarding percentage of familiar material versus unfamiliar material.

Results from a 2007 survey of musical preferences are listed in the third chapter. Tables display the ratings for familiarity and preference as they relate to gender, classification, ethnicity, and listening habits.

The fourth chapter presents the author's experiences incorporating popular music into the aural skills classroom, student comments on the use of popular music in the classroom, and assignment ideas.

## CHAPTER I

### MUSICAL PREFERENCE AND THE MODERN STUDENT

#### I.1. Preference and Familiarity

A common assumption in music education is that the foundations for musical skills (similar to language skills) are developed early in life through environment and social interaction. In language and literacy development this concept is called “emergent literacy” – developing literacy through environment and viewing peers and adults talking, reading, and writing (Prytuluk 2000, 3-4). As it relates to music, emergent literacy could refer to the development of musical skills by observing the environment and viewing peers and adults participating in various musical activities. With this in mind, students from a particular area, social class, or background may have different ways of approaching music than those from other areas, classes, and backgrounds; due to the fact that the environments the students have been raised in provide differing experiences.

Natalie Anne Prytuluk’s research compares sound-to-symbol teaching strategies, comparing music literacy development to language literacy

development. With both music and language, a child or student first learns sound before connecting the sound to the abstract written symbol. Prytuluk writes. "Teachers of music or early childhood education need to be aware of the literacy experiences children bring with them" (ibid., 4). By the time students enroll in a college music program, they have had at least 18 years (on average) of experience with music within their environment. While Prytuluk's research is concerned with young children, it is still relevant to the college classroom, and a well-prepared professor should also "be aware of the literacy experiences" college students bring with them.

An article in *American Demographics* (Fetto 2002) presents the results of a survey of 2,051 teens regarding their listening preferences according to radio genre. Current hits and hip-hop / rap scored highest. Current hits represent the favorite genre of 50% of teens surveyed, with hip-hop / rap at a close second (42%). As for the role of ethnicity in preference, the author states:

Where teens live and the color of their skin have an enormous impact on the type of music they prefer. For starters, white and Hispanic teens are 1.5 times more likely than black teens to regularly tune in to current hits on the radio. Likewise, black teens are 1.5 times more likely than Hispanic teens, and twice as likely as white teens, to listen to hip-hop or rap music. In fact, 71 percent of the black teens surveyed said they most often listen to a hip-hop or rap station,

compared with just 46 percent of the Hispanic respondents and 34 percent of the whites who said the same. (Ibid, 11.)

Urban, suburban, and rural teens' preferences are discussed next. Urban teens are more likely to listen to hip-hop / rap, whereas country music, as well as classic rock, is more commonly preferred in suburban and rural areas. Listening to radio online is becoming more prevalent, the author concludes, although it is more likely for girls to do so than boys. (Ibid., 11.)

Christenson and Peterson (1988) discovered differing preferences between college-aged males and females. While parts of the research may be outdated (especially pertaining to the view of the feminine role in society) the fact remains that "even within a relatively homogenous music subaudience or taste culture, there are really two cultures, a male and a female" (Christenson 1988, 285).

A study by McCrary (1993) reveals differences in musical preference and perception between black students and white students. McCrary quotes James M. Jones,

The idea of a color-blind society assumes that the problem is somehow biological. It asserts that there are no meaningful biological differences and that, therefore, race doesn't matter: we are all the same. Although race may not matter, culture does. We are not all the same, as we have evolved from and

continue to evolve different cultural legacies. (James M. Jones, quoted in McCrary, 1993.)

McCrary's study surveyed 102 middle school students and 119 university students. Students listened to 20 taped musical examples and rated the examples first on preference, followed by indicating their perceived race of the performer. Significant statistical differences occurred in the preference ratings of black students; they gave higher preference ratings to the performers they indicated to be black. White listeners' preferences were equal for black and white performers. (McCrary 1993.)

Kevin Droe summarizes research in music education and the role of preference in the music classroom (including McCrary's survey). Droe examines multiple factors influencing preference, and he says of ethnicity and cultural variables:

Ethnicity and gender also are factors that influence perceptions of music and music class. Fredrickson stated that the effect of race "seems to be as strong as that of gender in its influence upon some young people's choices in musical situations" (1997, p. 30). He cited studies (Killian, 1990; McCrary, 1993) showing that students identify with same-race models in music settings. The difference of perception and music participation related to gender can be noticed in the gender stereotypes of instruments played in a musical ensemble (Conway, 2000). Although differences can be observed, they are not related to biological reasons, but

rather social ones. For example, girls see other girls play flute, so they choose flute as their performance instrument (Droe 2006, 27).

Contradictory to this research, a study taken by J. David Boyle, Glenn L. Hosterman, and Darhyl S. Ramsey (1981) indicates socio-cultural factors to be less important than other factors in determining preference. Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsey surveyed students in grades five, seven, nine, eleven, and university students, including students with differing backgrounds and experiences. Melody, mood, rhythm, and lyrics were discovered to be the most important characteristics determining preference. Differences in preference were noted according primarily to grade level than to cultural factors.

Personality traits also play a part in musical preference (Kopacz, 2005). 85 women and 60 men aged 19 to 26 were surveyed to determine personality traits, and then given a survey of musical preference. Subjects were asked to indicate their favorite musical work by title, composer or performer, and recording. According to the study, vivacity, awareness, extroversion, being open to change, and social boldness affected musical preference as it pertains to stimulation or the regulation of stimulation. Tempo, rhythm and meter, number of melodies in the work, and volume were the primary musical factors involved in personality influence.

LeBlanc (1981) concludes that tempo can have an effect on preference. 101 children were tested by listening to musical excerpts and rating preference. Faster tempos were more often preferred with instrumental being preferred over vocal (ibid, 143-155). LeBlanc suggests introducing differing styles to students by progressing from fast instrumental selections to slow ones, followed by fast vocal selections, then by slow vocal selections (ibid., 155).

Further research indicates situational influences can have an effect on musical preference (North and Hargreaves 1996). Students were given descriptions of music listening situations, and they rated whether they would like the musical experience within a particular situation. Factors determining the ratings were social constraint, activity, spirituality, and subdued behavior.

North and Hargreaves (2007a) continued their research by attempting to find correlations between musical preference and lifestyle. In a U.K. study, they found substantial evidence to support certain musical preference personality stereotypes. In their own words:

Therefore the existing research indicates that liking for liberal versus conservative musical styles is associated with respectively liberal versus conservative behaviours, attitudes, and personalities. Accordingly the rationale of the present research is that liking for "liberal" musical styles such as rap, dance music, and rock might be reflected in more

generally liberal beliefs and behaviours as well as higher levels of delinquency/anti-social behavior, and that liking for “conservative” musical styles such as classical music would be reflected in generally conservative lifestyle preferences and relatively pro-social attitudes and behaviours. For example fans of “problem” music styles might be expected to be relatively liberal and anti-social when compared with fans of classical music on factors such as number of sexual partners, levels of homosexuality, co-habitation outside of marriage, religious beliefs, general political preferences (and opinions concerning more specific issues such as taxation and nuclear weapons), levels of criminality and particularly drug use. (Ibid, 60.)

A continuation of this study searches for correlations between musical preference and media preference. In this study, the conservative-versus-liberal divide is less pronounced than the high-class-versus-low-class divide. Fans of various popular music styles preferred less detailed and intellectual news formats than fans of classical music and opera. Internet and mobile phone access was more prevalent among fans of chart pop (North and Hargreaves 2007b). Further correlations were found between leisure time activities, travel, finances, education, and health (North and Hargreaves 2007c).

North and Hargreaves make no indication whether musical preference determines the behavior patterns or the behavior patterns influence musical preference. It is merely evident that a correlation exists.

Interestingly, there is seemingly no correlation between musical aptitude and musical preference. A 2000 study of 204 high school students revealed differing musical genre preferences among the students, but no apparent relationship between genre preference and musical ability (Reynolds 2000).

Educator Angela Provitera McGlynn summarizes the *constructivist* theory of learning;

In the constructivist view of learning, students use what they already know along with their prior experiences to help them incorporate and understand new material. This idea follows Piaget's theory (1952) of the active nature of the learning process. Learners must generate new relationships between and among new material, and between new material and what they already know." (McGlynn 2001, 89.)

Students who can use what they already know and apply it to new information are liable to progress more quickly and have a better understanding of the material.

In her doctoral dissertation, Ulrika Ruebsaat (1999) explores the changes in music curricula in British Columbia from 1919 to 1995. Early music curricula were heavily reliant on moral and religious themes to influence behavior, but later curricula included more songs from mainstream culture. She quotes Matthew Arnold's belief that we need "the best that has been thought and said in

the world” in order to “know ourselves and the world” (quoted in Ruebsaat 1999, 76). However, Ruebsaat claims:

But what is learned of “ourselves and the world” from Bach and Beethoven? The first message is that “noble thoughts in music” are limited to the compositions of a narrow spectrum of composers, many of them dead Germans. (Ibid., 76.)

In other words, the music of what many students refer to as music by “dead white guys” is not the most relevant music to modern-day life. In fact, many students may only encounter classical music in some cartoons and commercials.

In the audition and placement process at Texas State, prospective students are asked to sing back pitches given on a piano, repeat simple melodies, sight-read simple melodies, and sing a familiar song such as “Happy Birthday to You.” If a student cannot sight read, or repeat melodies, but can sing a familiar song correctly, it is possible that the student merely needs a method of connecting the familiar process of singing “Happy Birthday” to the process of singing a new, unfamiliar melody.

Why stop there? If students can learn to make connections between “Happy Birthday” and the melodies in their textbooks, why not also learn to make connections between what they listen to on their MP3 players on the way to the classroom, to the concepts they are studying in the classroom?

In 2001, the music theory and aural skills curriculum at Texas State University-San Marcos underwent review and reconstruction. Nico Schüler describes the necessity for the changes in order to strengthen the core curriculum. Public schools produce insufficient music students, who become insufficient college students, and universities lower curriculum requirements to meet their needs. They then graduate to become insufficient teachers, and produce insufficient students in a vicious cycle that leads to the breakdown of collegiate standards (Schüler 2005, 190-191). In regards to strengthening the aural program, Schüler states:

We especially had to strengthen the fundamentals of aural learning, i.e. basic sightsinging and eartraining, as those fundamentals are the skills that are most often needed in future musical careers. And since students come mainly with a background in popular music, we need to pick up on *that* end, i.e. including melodies and harmonic progressions from popular music and jazz; from there, we should proceed to all kinds and all styles of music, including non-Western music. (Schüler 2005, 195.)

Schüler understands the necessity of using familiar material to introduce and strengthen new concepts.

## I.2. Concepts to be Grasped in Aural Skills

Based on previous evidence, if students learn best by making connections between familiar things and new material, it stands to reason that familiar concepts must be included in the college teaching of aural skills. If students can make the connection between what they are used to hearing and the music they are hearing for the first time, they will understand the new music quicker and most likely better than someone who addresses it with no point of reference.

To further explore the concepts the students need to grasp, Gary Karpinski (2000) categorizes aural learning in two sets of skills: listening skills and reading and performance skills. Listening skills include identification of basic musical features (texture, timbre, tessitura and register, tempo, dynamics, and articulation), pulse and meter, pitch, dictation (melodic, polyphonic, and harmonic), and other listening skills (transcription, instrumental playback, error detection and correction, advanced hypermeter, large-scale features, identification of other compositional devices, identification of pitch collections, and aesthetics). Reading and performance skills are divided into fundamental skills (vocal production, solmization for reading, inculcating scale and solmization, establishing collection and tonic, establishing pulse, tempo, and meter, aural imagery prior to sound production, and reading from

protonotation), sight reading (scanning music before sight reading, interval and scale-degree strategies, intonation, visual tracking, metric and rhythmic thinking, harmonic thinking, structural singing, and performance indications and musical expression), and more complex reading skills (chromaticism, modulation, proportional tempo and meter changes, clef reading, transposition, score reading, conducting, and reading Schenkerian graphs). In only four semesters, it is difficult, if not impossible, to cover all of these concepts, let alone give students the necessary time to master them. However, in a well-balanced music program, students should be introduced to all of these concepts (with the possible exception of Schenker graphs, as Schenkerian analysis is often not introduced until advanced studies) in their various non-theory classes (such as conducting, music history, orchestration, etc.).

Table 1 displays Schüler's chart detailing the aural skills curriculum at Texas State. Concepts are split into the corresponding semester of study. Items in bold were added to the revised curriculum in 2001.

**Table 1: Aural Learning at Texas State University-San Marcos (Schüler 2005, 195)**

	Aural Skills I	Aural Skills II	Aural Skills III	Aural Skills IV
Intervals	- all 12 up or down within one octave (C3-C5) - <b>Stress tonal contexts</b>	- all 12 melodic or harmonic (range: varied) - <b>stress tonal contexts</b>	- review all 12, harmonic, open position	Same, <b>but in atonal contexts</b>
Chords	- major in all inversions - minor, diminished, and augmented for quality	- all triads in all inversions - all 7 <sup>th</sup> -chords in root position	- review all chords in open position - <b>added note chords</b> - <b>+6<sup>th</sup> chords</b>	- <b>non-tertian chords: focus on interval qualities (set qualities)</b>
Harmony	- 4-6 chord progressions - indicate bass note - cadence ID: authentic, plagal, deceptive, half	- 6-8 chord progress. - indicate bass note - cadence ID. perfect authentic, imperfect, plagal, deceptive, half	- secondary dominants - Neapolitan - diatonic pivot chord modulation - N <sup>6</sup> & +6 <sup>th</sup> chords	- review +6 <sup>th</sup> chords - enharmonic modulation (Ger6, o7)
Tuning Fork Tasks	ID of key with tuning fork (from given chord progression or melody); singing of intervals, starting on A; determination & singing of key and beginning of songs via tuning fork			ID of given pitches in atonal context
Rhythm (perform and decipher)	- <b>teach strategies for deciphering rhythms</b> - 2-4 measure patterns - 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8 - no ties, no syncopation - <b>rhythmic groupings</b>	- <b>review strategies for deciphering rhythms</b> - 4-6 measure patterns - 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8 - with ties, syncopations	- more complex and longer rhythms with ties and syncopations - 5/4, 7/4, etc.	- <b>complex rhythms as found in modern music</b>

<b>Table 1 Continued</b>				
Melody (decipher)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>teach strategies for deciphering melodic problems</b></li> <li>- simple diatonic melodies <b>with simple rhythms</b>, 10-12 pitches (level: sect. 1 of Berkowitz<sup>1</sup>)</li> <li>- <b>intro melodic forms</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>review strategies for deciphering melodic problems</b></li> <li>- folk songs or level of section 2 Berkowitz</li> <li>- 12-15 pitches</li> <li>- with rhythm</li> <li>- <b>melodic forms ID</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2-part dictation</li> <li>- <b>melodies with chromaticism</b></li> <li>- level of Section 3 and 4 Berkowitz</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- review of 2-part dictation and tonal melodies with chromaticism (level as Section 4 Berkowitz)</li> <li>- <b>modal and atonal melodies</b></li> </ul>
Singing (perform)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Berkowitz, section 1</b></li> <li>- Sing &amp; Play Berkowitz section 1</li> <li>- sing and play all triads</li> <li>- <b>in class: duets (section 1)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Berkowitz, section 2</b></li> <li>- Sing &amp; Play Berkowitz</li> <li>- sing and play triads and tetrachords</li> <li>- <b>sing and play scale harmonizations</b></li> <li>- <b>in class: duets (sect. 2)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>sing &amp; play scale harmonizations (review)</b></li> <li>- <b>Berkowitz, sections 3-4 (Melody, Sing &amp; Play)</b></li> <li>- <b>in class: duets</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>review Sing &amp; Play Berkowitz section 4</b></li> <li>- <b>review singing duets section 4</b></li> <li>- <b>modal and atonal melodies</b></li> </ul>
Jersild	C, G, D, F, B <sup>b</sup> , a, e, b, d, g (omit measures with chromatic alterations)	- all others (omit measures with chromatic alterations)	- review (include measures with chromatic alterations)	

Schüler's chart displays a well-organized design for aural learning curriculum. An explanation of common aural texts follows in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Berkowitz, Frontrier, Kraft 1997.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LACK OF FAMILIAR MATERIAL IN AURAL SKILLS TEXTBOOKS

#### II.1. The Current Problem

As revealed in Chapter 1, familiarity and preference can be key factors in learning and understanding new concepts. However, few aural skills textbooks or anthologies offer musical examples outside of the Common Practice Period or Western folk traditions. This chapter presents reviews of the most common aural skills textbooks, workbooks, and software, as well as supplemental materials written by and used in the classes of theory professors at Texas State University-San Marcos.

Many current aural learning texts present students with little or no music with which they are likely to be familiar. While they are well-researched and constructed resources, they may leave students wondering where the connection is between the music they love and the music they are studying, or even leave students confused as to the purpose of studying musical examples with little to no context.

## II.2. Discussion of Common Ear Training Texts

### II.2.1. *A New Approach to Ear Training*

Leo Kraft's *A New Approach to Ear Training* is a program intended for advancing melodic and harmonic dictation. Kraft explains:

The purpose of this program is to teach you to recognize and write down tonal music. It is generally agreed that the ability to recognize music as it is played or sung is an essential skill for any musician. This skill is taught here by means of programmed instruction. Programmed instruction means that you work through a series of exercises, organized into Lessons, which move gradually and progressively from the beginner's level to a fairly complex degree of difficulty. (Kraft 1999, 1.)

Each section in Kraft's text presents a brief explanation (never more than a page) of how to study the section, followed by guided dictation examples. Students are given a few clues regarding what to listen for or how to listen and then complete a few exercises and drills. Individual lessons do not contain headers, titles, or any other indication about the main concept introduced in each lesson, but the drills at the end of the sections (in the Melodic Dictation chapter only) are divided up into the concepts that were introduced throughout the section. For example, Section I presents eight lessons, followed by five drills: Melodic Contour, High Points / Low Points, Triads and Scales, Outlining Triads, and P's, N's, and DN's (passing notes, neighbor notes, and double neighbor notes). Sections II, III and IV

in the chapter on Melodic Dictation take the student through skips in tonic and dominant triads, elaborating triads, hearing differences, speed hearing, and chromatic non-chord tones in major and minor. Chapter Two (Harmonic Dictation) does not include drills at the end of the sections. Sections I - IV in this chapter take the students through increasing difficulty in chord progressions, modulations, and chromatic harmonies.

Kraft's text includes four CDs with musical examples for melodic and harmonic dictation. Musical examples are played by differing instruments – sometimes piano, sometimes trumpet, sometimes cello, etc. – so students who are more comfortable listening to certain instruments may have a greater chance of understanding the melodies played by that instrument. However, the only tonal preparation for each melody is the tonic note; no cadences or harmonization to help the student really hear the note in the context of the key. While a single note may be enough for students later in their studies, or even later in their first semester, it would aid the students in the beginning of their studies to hear the context of the tonic, as harmonized by a chord, rather than an isolated tone.

*A New Approach to Ear Training* contains few melodies and examples derived from the repertoire. Just over 10% of the melodies and examples (including demonstration melodies) are given a source citation. Citations are

included in the back of the book, but are vague as to the exact derivation of the melodies. Of these melodies, nearly half are taken from the Romantic Era. Melodies from the Classical Period take up an additional 40%, with Baroque, 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and folk music combining to make the remaining 10%. Nothing from popular musical styles is presented in this text. Taken out of context, these melodies provide little to no familiarity to the students and the vague citations may hinder students from familiarizing themselves with the pieces if they desire to do so.

Additionally, the examples are played only one time each, with multiple examples on a single CD track. The only way to repeat an individual melody is either to try to find the time marking where the melody begins, or to start back at the beginning of the track and wait for the melody to come around again. Whereas the book does give the time markings for each example, it is difficult for students to listen to individual melodies more than once. Again, this should be encouraged later in their studies, but increases the level of difficulty for beginning students.

*A New Approach to Ear Training* also contains the answers for each example, printed upside-down on the back of the page. Nothing whatsoever, beyond integrity, prevents the students from merely copying the answers from

the back. Exercise difficulty (one hearing, little preparation, etc.) may drive even the more honest students to peek at the answers more than is necessary. Instructors should be aware of this and watch for signs that students may not be doing their own work. A cheating habit such as this would most likely come to be obvious on a test, therefore frequent tests and quizzes should accompany the use of this text.

### II.2.2. *Music for Ear Training*

*Music for Ear Training* by Horvit, Koozin, and Nelson (2005) is designed to provide students with the equivalent of a private aural tutor. *Music for Ear Training* is a workbook with a CD-ROM, intended primarily for use outside the classroom. In the preface, "Suggestions to the Student," the authors state;

The exercises on this CD-ROM are designed to give the student an ample number of ear-training practice exercises that can be completed outside the classroom and at the student's own pace. The exercises are carefully graded to lead from simple isolated problems, such as interval recognition, all the way to the transcription of short pieces from the literature. You can select from a variety of sonorities. You can listen to each exercise as often as you wish and choose various tempos. You can compare your results with the correct solution by clicking on the "Show Answer" button.

Four categories of exercises appear throughout the CD-ROM and Workbook:

- Rhythmic dictation drills
- Preliminary exercises for melodic dictation, which focus on particular musical patterns, and harmonic dictation, which focus on chord progressions
- Melodies and phrase-length harmonic exercises
- And music from the literature.

(Horvit, Koozin, and Nelson 2005, xix.)

Exercises, examples, and quizzes in the workbook are divided into 25 units.

Intervals, triads, and scales are contained in the first unit alone, and dictation (rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic) comprising the remaining units. The workbook contains a few examples from classical literature in specifically marked sections for “Examples from Music Literature” – Units 10, 14, and 17.

Examples (there are 54, in all) include works by:

- J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
- Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827)
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
- Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832)
- John Farmer (1570-1605)
- Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809)
- Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)
- Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)
- Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
- Jeremiah Clarke (1674-1707)
- Antonio Diabelli (1781-1858)
- Mikail Ivanovich Glinka (1804-1857)
- Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

- Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)
- Joannes Brahms (1833-1897)
- Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
- Edvard Grieg (1843-1907).

In the CD-ROM program, the students may choose the instrument sound for playback, but are given only six instruments to choose from – three woodwinds, one string, one brass, or keyboard. Brass players may feel cheated by only having the option of horn for treble clef and trombone for bass. Playback is in MIDI format, so the instrument choices are not as helpful as they might be. Harmonic dictation exercises allow the students to select or unselect the voices they are hearing, even in the quizzes, so it is entirely possible that the students merely take multiple melodic dictations rather than attempt to hear the vertical harmonies.

Students do have the option to listen to the tonic note or the scale at any time which helps to put the melodies in a tonal context. Students can select “Show Answer” for each exercise, so once again it is merely integrity standing in the way of cheating. However, there are quizzes for each chapter that do not provide the “Show Answer” option.

The only familiar music included in this text is contained in the three units of “Examples from Music Literature.” As indicated by the composer names and

dates, these examples are derived from the Common Practice Period art music traditions. There is no modern popular music included in the text.

### II.2.3. *Ear Training: A Technique for Listening*

Bruce Benward and Timothy Kolosick's *Ear Training* (2005) is another dictation-focused aural text. A CD containing examples for transcription supplements the text (which is available in both Instructor's Edition and Student's Edition). It is intended for two semesters of aural study, but may be stretched to fill four semesters of aural learning. Melodic studies range "from the identification of a single interval to the comprehension of melodic organization in two-part and three-part forms of moderate length" (Benward and Kolosick 2005, x). Harmonic study ranges from recognition of simple triads to chromatic harmonies such as secondary dominants, augmented 6<sup>th</sup> chords, and modulations.

Rhythmic study begins with whole and half beat patterns and gradually increases in difficulty to syncopations and changing meters. Another aspect of study in this text is transcription study, in which the students are presented with sixteen examples from classical music literature and thirty-two examples from commercial music to transcribe. Classical music examples are to be transcribed in standard notation, and the commercial music examples are to be transcribed as

lead sheets. *Ear Training* incorporates two basic concepts throughout the exercises; micro-listening (note-to-note, chord-to-chord relationships) and macro-listening (melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic patterns, key relationships, etc.).

Benward and Kolosick state in their preface that:

Students should be encouraged to explore musical sound freely *outside* the aural skills classroom. Recognizing learned patterns and their embellishments in actual musical compositions can be a joyful learning experience and can establish a strong link between academic work and professional music making. Each student must find his or her own path to aural skill development and should realize that such learning never ceases." (Ibid., xi.)

Perhaps it is this attitude that led the writers of this text to include lead sheet transcription – a skill the students may use primarily for popular music.

## II.3. Discussion of Common Sight Singing Texts

### II.3.1. *Progressive Sight Singing*

Carol Krueger's *Progressive Sight Singing* (2007) is split into two large sections – rhythm (I) and melody (II). Teachers may work through the text in the order they see fit – it is not intended to be studied from beginning to end. Section II, Melodic Reading, contains 18 large chapters:

- 1. Tonic Pentachord in Major Mode; Simple Meters, Undivided Beat
- 2. Diatonic Steps and Tonic Triad in the Major Scale; Simple Meters, Undivided Beat

- 3. Diatonic Steps and Tonic Triad in the Natural Minor Scale; Simple Meters, Undivided Beat
  - 4. Diatonic Steps and Tonic Triad in the Major Scale; Simple Meters, Divided Beat
  - 5. Diatonic Steps and Tonic Triad in the Major Scale; Simple Meters, Dotted Quarter Notes
  - 6. Natural, Harmonic, and Melodic Minor Scales; Simple Meters, Eighth and Dotted Quarter Notes
  - 7. Major and Minor Modes; Compound Meters – Dotted Quarter = Beat Unit
  - 8. I and V<sub>7</sub> in Major Mode; Simple and Compound Meters
  - 9. i and V<sub>7</sub> in Minor Mode; Simple and Compound Meters
  - 10. I and V<sub>7</sub> in Major Mode; Other Rhythms in Simple Meters
  - 11. i and V<sub>7</sub> in Minor Mode; Other Rhythms in Simple Meters
  - 12. I and V<sub>7</sub> in Major and Minor Modes; Half Note = Beat Unit
  - 13. I and V<sub>7</sub> in Major and Minor Modes; Eighth Note = Beat Unit
  - 14. I and V<sub>7</sub> in Major and Minor; Compound Meters – More Rhythms
  - 15. I, ii, IV, and V<sub>7</sub> in Major Mode; Simple and Compound Meters
  - 16. i, iv, and V<sub>7</sub> in Minor Mode; Simple and Compound Meters
  - 17. Chromatic Alterations; Simple and Compound Meters
  - 18. Modes
- (Krueger 2, viii – xii)

As is evident in the chapter headings, the most complex harmonic concepts presented in this text are I (or i), ii, IV (or iv), and V<sup>7</sup>. *Progressive Sight Singing* does not contain atonal or other 20<sup>th</sup> century concepts in the Melody section. Musical selections are mostly newly composed or taken from Western folk music traditions around the world. No musical examples are derived from popular music; the remainder of the examples are from classical art music repertoire.

Additionally, references are vague. For example, in Chapter 8 of Part II, mid-way through the book, students learn to sing skips in the dominant triad in major modes. Melodic exercises one through eight contain no details of origin. No tempo marking or expression, no dynamic marking, and no source (Krueger 2007, 246). Although it is fairly evident that these melodies have been newly composed for the purpose of the text, the following three melodies are little improvement. Italian tempo markings are given and a nationality is the only source reference. No dynamic markings, no accents, other than slurs. Melodies 12 and 13 include dynamics, but dynamic markings disappear again for another six melodic examples. Students may fail to see the connection between these melodies and the music they learn in their applied lessons.

### II.3.2. *Anthology for Sight Singing*

Unlike the previous examples, Karpinski's *Anthology for Sight Singing* (2007) presents melodies from classical music and folk traditions in their *original* form.

In Karpinski's preface, he explains:

Readers should be able to take a score from the library shelf, read from an orchestral part, play an etude, study an excerpt in a harmony textbook, examine a work in a history anthology, consider a composition for sale in a music store, or look at any

music and apply the skills they learn through studying sight singing. To that end, this *Anthology* strives to maintain the original “look” of all excerpts as one of its guiding principles. (Karpinski 2007, xii.)

The *Anthology* achieves this goal in several ways. Many melodies appear on ledger lines, rather than transposed to be in the vocal range. Music students will eventually have to read open score (i.e., for music history or conducting) and should familiarize themselves with ledger lines as early as possible. All original ornaments (grace notes, trills, etc.) are included, but instructors may choose to address or omit them as they see fit. Additionally, Karpinski’s examples are presented with highly detailed reference sources, including the work, the composer, the measure numbers, and the specific part or instrument where the example occurs. In this way, the musical examples students see in the *Anthology* should look exactly the same as they would in the music printed for performance. Students may find that this aids ‘connecting the dots’ between the aural classroom and performance practice.

The *Anthology*’s 54 chapters are not divided into sections and could easily be studied out of order, if the instructor so desires. Chapters which focus on rhythmic elements do not utilize unpitched exercises; instead they contain melodies that incorporate the new rhythmic ideas. In this way, rhythm is not separate from performance in aural training.

Approximately 10.4% of the 1236 melodies presented in this text are derived from folk sources. 88.1% of the melodies come from classical or art music traditions. A small but encouraging 1.5% of the examples is derived from popular and jazz sources. While it represents only 19 out of 1236 melodies, it is unique in its inclusion of popular sources. For example, melody number 379 is a segment of the chorus from the 90s rock hit “Closing Time.” It is used as an example of syncopation, as most of the notes occur on the upbeat.

The *Anthology* may be used on its own or as a companion to Karpinski’s *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing*. The *Anthology* includes the chapter numbers for corresponding material in the *Manual*, but in the absence of the *Manual*, the *Anthology* can stand alone as a legitimate sight singing text.

### II.3.3. *A New Approach to Sight-Singing*

Sol Berkowitz, Gabriel Fontrier, and Leo Kraft’s *A New Approach to Sight-Singing* (1997) contains five chapters of melodies and exercises for singing. Each chapter is split into four sections corresponding with semester of study – aural I students use section I, aural II students use section II, etc. The chapters are Melodies, Duets, Sing and Play, Themes and Variations (Unaccompanied), and Melodies

from the Literature. The latter is a new addition to the fourth edition of the text.

The authors explain:

Prompted by our own teaching experience and the much appreciated suggestions of many colleagues, we have added a new Chapter Five, "Melodies from the Literature," to the fourth edition. While the chapters carried over from previous editions are entirely our own material, this new chapter provides melodies from the standard repertory, together with folk material. Study of these melodies will enable students to make the transfer of learning from exercises to the music with which they will be working during their professional lives. The melodies in Chapter Five were chosen to represent a wide variety of musical styles, both vocal and instrumental. A few have been adapted for sight singing purposes. The level of difficulty of each section within Chapter Five corresponds to the comparable level within the other chapters. Attributions are given for each melody." (Berkowitz, Frontier and Kraft 1997, ix.)

In this chapter, folk and traditional tunes make up approximately 24% of the melodies, and music from art music styles makes up the remaining 76%. All other melodic exercises in the remaining chapters are original melodies written by the authors. *A New Approach* contains no rhythmic drill, aside from rhythms within the melodies, hence some instructors may require supplemental rhythmic drills.

### II.3.4. *Music for Sight Singing*

Robert Ottman's *Music for Sight Singing* (2001) presents both rhythmic exercises and melodic examples. Rhythmic exercises are usually presented at the beginning of the chapters, and the following melodies contain rhythmic features no more difficult than the rhythms presented at the beginning of the chapter. Occasionally, more rhythmic exercises are introduced within the chapter, but these build easily upon the previous concepts. Four larger sections encompass the 21 chapters.

Part I presents Diatonic Intervals. Chapter 1 is dedicated solely to learning rhythm notation and reading. Chapter 2 introduces the simple division of the beat in common time and scale-line melodies. Chapter 3 follows with intervals from the tonic triad and major keys in common time, followed by the same melodic ideas in compound time in Chapter 4. Minor keys are introduced in Chapter 5; skips are still taken from the tonic triad. Intervals from the dominant triad in major and minor keys are brought in next. Chapter 7 presents the alto and tenor clefs, Chapter 8 presents further use of diatonic intervals, and Chapter 9 brings in intervals from the dominant seventh, as well as intervals from other diatonic seventh chords.

Part II begins with Chapter 10: subdivision of the beat – subdividing the beat into four parts in common time and six parts in compound time. The following two chapters present diatonic melodies for the purpose of practicing practical application of the new rhythmic concepts.

Part III introduces chromaticism. Chapter 13 presents chromatic nonharmonic tones, secondary dominants (V/V), and modulation to the key of the dominant. Chapter 14 builds on these concepts by adding modulation to closely related keys and additional secondary dominant harmonies. Rhythmic difficulty is increased in Chapter 15 by introducing syncopation in both rhythmic and melodic exercises. Chapter 16 increases rhythmic difficulty again by presenting triplets in common time and duplets in compound time, followed by Chapter 17 which brings in changing time signatures, hemiolas, and irregular meters. Chapter 18 presents further subdivision of the beat and notation in slow tempi. Chapter 19 wraps up Part III with additional uses of chromatic tones and remote modulation.

*Music for Sight Singing* ends with the two chapters that make up Part IV. Chapter 20 introduces medieval modes, and Chapter 21 presents 20<sup>th</sup>-century melodic concepts.

In his own words, Ottman explains:

This organization of the text allows a choice in the order of presentation, either straight through or selective. For an example of the latter, upon completion of Chapter 5 (intervals from the tonic triad in major and minor keys, and rhythm problems in divided beat patterns only), study may continue with Chapter 10, rhythmic reading in subdivided beat patterns. Then in Chapter 11, melodies are again either scale-wise or display intervals in known contexts. Study then may even be continued with easier melodies of Chapter 20, Medieval Modes. A careful study of the table of contents will reveal many similar possibilities. (Ottman 2001, xiv.)

Ottman's text presents mostly melodies taken from the classical literature and folk traditions. In fact, newly composed melodies and melodies without sources only account for 7.4% of the text. Folk music accounts for 51.6%, and classical accounts for the remaining 41.0% of the 890 examples in the text.

*Music for Sight Singing* is designed to accompany two to four semesters of collegiate aural study. A few instances of suggested solfege syllables occur (i.e., la-based minor) but the examples could be learned and practiced using any or no solfege system, according to the teacher, university, or student's preference.

## II.4. Discussion of Comprehensive Texts

### II.4.1. *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills*

Presented in two volumes, *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* (Phillips, Clendinning, and Marvin, 2005) is designed to accompany four semesters of aural training. For the purpose of this thesis, only the first volume has been reviewed.<sup>2</sup> *The Musician's Guide* is comprehensive, containing work both for sight-singing and dictation. Additionally, this text also includes exercises for composition. Regarding their text, the authors say:

*The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* is distinctive in two significant ways. First, it emphasizes the integration of skills students need in order to understand and recall common musical patterns. These skills include the ability to imagine and perform the sounds of printed music; to recall music they hear by singing, playing, and writing it; and to demonstrate their grasp of a variety of musical styles in order to invent and perform similar music of their own. Second, the listening examples are from music literature, not contrived. Thus, students will gain their understanding from listening to and imitating the music of diverse composers who wrote in a variety of styles, from classical to popular. (Phillips, Clendinning, and Marvin 2005, xi.)

As a demonstration of the presentation of the *Guide's* material, chapter 16 has been selected for a more detailed review. First, the main concepts of the chapter are introduced and explained. Chapter 16 presents predominant, second-

---

<sup>2</sup> The use of familiar material in learning (the ultimate subject of this thesis) is far more crucial in the beginning of aural training. Eventually, students should be able to read unfamiliar music at first sight. For this reason, only the first volume of *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* has been reviewed.

inversion chords, and other diatonic triads. It begins with section I - predominant function chords, specifically IV and ii<sup>6</sup> to harmonize the fa-sol bass line. A chord progression is presented to demonstrate this function. Two melodies are then presented to give the students an opportunity to practice singing the arpeggiated forms of IV (or iv) and ii<sup>6</sup> (or ii<sup>o6</sup>), immediately followed by four Roman numeral progressions (written simply as Roman numerals, without notation) for the students to practice singing arpeggios without notation. Following this is a similar routine regarding the use of the root position ii and ii<sup>7</sup>. Further insight is provided by displaying examples on how to use predominant chords to prolong tonic and how to create phrases with predominant chords. Section II is set aside for Call and Response. Instructions are as follows:

Your teacher will perform – e.g., (1) play, (2) sing, or (3) play and sing – a number of chord, pitch, or figured-bass patterns followed by a rest.

- If you hear chords, repeat the call and sing, play, or write the solfege syllables, scale-degree numbers, pitch names, or Roman numerals and figures of the call.
- If you hear pitches, harmonize them with the chords we have learned since Chapter 12.
- If you hear a bass line with figures, realize the figured bass of the call in four voices. (Ibid., 442)

The Instructor's Edition of the text presents examples for the teacher to "call."

Section III presents contextual listening, containing 10 examples from music literature and a guide for the teacher regarding which concepts to point out in each example. Composers whose music is used in this section are

- Archangelo Corelli (1653-1713)
- Helen Hopekirk (1856-1945)
- George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
- Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
- Charles Ives (1874-1954)
- Vincent Youmans (1898-1946)
- Clifford Brown (1930-1956)
- Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847)
- Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809).

Similarly, Section IV presents 8 melodies from melodic study. Section V imparts suggestions for improvisation, using concepts gleaned from the chapter. Ideas and assignments for composition are given in Section VI.

Instructions read:

Compose a two-phrase choral work that features the predominant chords we studied in this chapter. Set the text below, or find one similar in its scope.

*Helen (Fiske) Hunt Jackson, from "At Last"*

All lost things are in the angels' keeping, Love;  
No past is dead for us, but only sleeping, Love.

- Write for four voices, in SATB style.
- Analyze the accentuation of the text with / and ∪ symbols so the rhythm of your music will be similar to that of the spoken text.

- Choose a minor key.
- Choose a simple meter, and use patterns characteristic of that meter.
- Conclude phrase 1 with a half cadence, phrase 2 with a perfect authentic cadence.
- Include at least one example of IV and ii6, as well as an example of the progression ii7-V7.
- Use only the voice-leading we have studied in this chapter.
- Take eighth notes as the smallest rhythmic value.
- Sing your work in class. Prepare to sing any of the parts as you play with solfege syllables, scale-degree numbers, or letter names. (Ibid., 461)

*The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* is unique in its presentation and scope, particularly in its inclusion of improvisation and composition. Students may enjoy exploring their creative side through the use of this text and appreciate the inclusion of styles of music with which they are more familiar.

## II.5. Software

### II.5.1. *MacGamut*

*MacGamut*<sup>3</sup> is an ear-training software, available for both Mac and Windows operating systems. It is designed to provide students with practice developing their ear training by use of interval drills, scale drills,

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.macgamut.com>

and chord drills, as well as both melodic and rhythmic dictation exercises. Instructors may create their own presets to design the software around their own specific semester requisites.

*MacGamut* is not intended to teach students ear-training – merely to provide out-of-classroom practice. Students may choose Practice Mode to familiarize themselves with the program or get as much drill as they desire, before moving on to the graded mode. Students' progress is recorded in the program, and students may turn in printouts of their progress reports for the teacher to see and grade.

Many students find *MacGamut* to be difficult to use (according to class evaluations), due largely to a few notation issues. However, if students are careful and methodical, they will experience few difficulties. *MacGamut* software can accompany any aural text and be useful as homework and drill.

The examples included in *MacGamut* software have been written specifically for the use of pedagogical exercises. *MacGamut* contains no music from the literature (art music or otherwise).

## II.5.2. *Auralia*

*Auralia*<sup>4</sup> by Sibelius is a comprehensive aural learning software. It is available for both Windows and Mac operating systems, and a free demo version can be downloaded from the website. In their own words, the creators of *Auralia* explain:

With 41 topics, *Auralia* is by far the most comprehensive ear training package! *Auralia*'s drill based teaching is a fun and easy way to use your computer for ear training. *Auralia* leads you through a variety of graded exercises, and presents instant feedback. All of your results are recorded, and you may sing or play your answers using your microphone or MIDI keyboard. *Auralia* is suitable for both classical and contemporary musicians of any age and ability! (<http://www.sibelius.com/products/auralia>, accessed on June 13, 2008)

*Auralia* includes both sight singing and ear training exercises and offers the capacity to record answers using a microphone or a keyboard. In comparison to *MacGamut*, the main menu screen is by far more colorful and modern-looking, which may aid students in approaching the software with a more positive attitude. *Auralia* also includes jazz and rock styles. Jazz chords and chord progressions are included in the harmony activities, and rock styles (i.e., Ballad rock 12/8) are included in the rhythm activities.

---

<sup>4</sup> [http //www.sibelius.com/products/auralia](http://www.sibelius.com/products/auralia)

Activities include both construction and recognition drills. For example, a melody is presented on the screen and played twice – once correctly, and once incorrectly. Students must then select the notes that are altered in the second playing. Activities like this could easily be connected to error detection in sight singing by asking students to think about what they hear versus what they see.

Problems with *Auralia* may arise in a few areas. Whereas *MacGamut* grades based on percentages – a certain amount of correct notes in a dictation exercise outweigh incorrect notes – *Auralia* does not award credit for being “close.” While precision is desired, students may feel frustrated by having an answer counted as completely wrong, simply because they placed it in a different octave.

Teachers may dislike the endless repetitions. Students may play examples as many times as they desire, which may not encourage careful and diligent listening. Also, each activity is presented in three levels – easy, medium, and advanced. While there is only a small amount of difference between the easy level and the medium level, the difference between the medium level and the advanced level is more profound. *Auralia* users may desire a “bridge” between the medium and advanced levels. However, in activities such as melodic and harmonic dictation, students can enter notes and chords during playback. If a

professor desires students to build their musical memory, this can be seen as a detriment, but students will find it easier to keep up with longer examples with the ability to enter notes as they go.

While *Auralia* may have a few potential problems, students will most likely find the variety of activities and incorporation of jazz and rock styles more invigorating than the drills presented in MacGamut.

### II.5.3. *Practica Musica*<sup>5</sup>

*Practica Musica*, by Ars Nova, is another software program designed to be an at-home tutor. *Practica Musica* combines both theory *and* aural tutoring. Activities can be completed in either beginner, intermediate, or advanced levels. The list of activities are as follows:

Pitch alone:

- Keyboard familiarity
- Single pitches, hearing
- Single pitches, reading
- Vertical reading
- Melody, reading
- Melody, transposition
- Melody, ear training
- Melody, development
- Melody, dictation
- Melody, error correction
- Melody, polyphonic dictation

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ars-nova.com/aboutpm5/index.html>

Melody, polyphonic dictation with analysis

Pitch pairs (intervals)

Pitch pairs (intervals), reading

Pitch pairs (intervals), ear training

Pitch pairs (intervals), theory

Scales and key signatures

Isolated chord, ear training

Isolated chords, theory

Chord progressions, ear training

Rhythm alone:

Ear training

Reading

Polyphonic reading

Meter

Dictation

Pitch and rhythm together

Reading

Dictation

Notation tools

Chord progressions, voice leading

Polyphonic analysis

Polyphonic composition

Notation tools

Miscellaneous

Writing, playing, listening

(<http://www.ars-nova.com/cgi-bin/activity.cgi>, accessed on June 13, 2008)

*Practica Music* (unlike *MacGamut* and *Auralia*) includes examples from the repertoire. Students can learn using new melodies, or select examples from the repertoire, which include mostly Bach chorales, folk tunes, and a handful of instrumental ensemble and keyboard works.

*Practica Music* also includes notation software that enables students to write, listen to, and print their own original compositions (useful for homework assignments), as well as MIDI export which enables students to play problems and examples using devices such as Windows Media Player or Apple Quicktime.

Newer version and updates of *Practica Musica* include many additions requested by professors and teachers who incorporate the software program into their classroom, so perhaps a plea for the inclusion of popular music could soon become a reality.

## II.6. *Aural Learning Coursepack*

Texas State University-San Marcos employs the use of an aural learning packet for the aural students in the music program. The packet is printed on campus and can be used through all four semesters of aural learning. Essays and tips on issues related to aural learning and healthy student behavior are included in the packet, as well as rhythm examples, Jersild progression, and a few other exercises and examples. Instructors may use whichever articles and resources they find to be the most useful to their particular teaching style. However, even though the editor of the packet believes in incorporating popular music into aural learning (Schüler 2005,

195), the packet contains no popular music examples and no teaching strategies involving popular music, beyond the inclusion of a list of song titles (Schüler 2006, 20-21) containing specific intervals (i.e., Perfect 4<sup>th</sup> – The Bridal March), many of which fall outside students' knowledge and familiarity. (Schüler 2006, 20-21).

Aside from a few instances, common aural skills texts contain little to no popular music, and often the examples considered to be derived from 'popular' sources, are outdated and barely relevant to the modern student's realm of preference.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS OF A 2007 SURVEY ON MUSICAL PREFERENCES AND FAMILIARITY AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN MARCOS

#### III.1 Survey of Musical Preferences – The Questionnaire Used for the Survey

A survey of musical preference and familiarity was given to 103 students at Texas State in the fall semester of 2007. At the time, the students were currently enrolled in Essential Musicianship, Aural I, or Aural III, and were asked to rate, first, their level of preference for, followed by their level of familiarity with, 34 different musical genres. Preference was rated on a scale of 1 to 5: 1) Have not heard this style, 2) Do not like this style, 3) Indifferent, 4) Like this style, and 5) Love this style. Similarly, familiarity was rated on a scale of 1 to 5: 1) No familiarity, 2) A little familiarity, 3) Average familiarity, 4) Above average familiarity, and 5) Extensive familiarity.

Eight additional questions asked students for their opinion on the function of music, whether or not their musical tastes had changed in the last five years, their view on classical music, how many hours a day are spent listening to

music, whether or not they are in a non-school related music ensemble and, if so, what genre of music they perform. The survey also asked in which class they are currently enrolled, what their gender is and what their ethnicity is. The questionnaire appeared as follows:

Below is a list of musical styles – Please indicate your level of **preference** for each style:

- A) Have not heard this style
- B) Do not like this style
- C) Indifferent
- D) Like this style
- E) Love this style

1. Classical – Baroque
2. Classical – Classical
3. Classical – Romantic
4. Classical – 20<sup>th</sup> Century
5. Rock – Pop
6. Rock – Punk
7. Rock – Classic
8. Rock – Metal
9. Rock – Hard Rock
10. Emo
11. Easy listening
12. Country – Pop / Current
13. Country and Western / Classic Country
14. Techno

15. Dance
16. Hip-Hop
17. Rap
18. Folk
19. Gospel
20. Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship
21. Christian – Popular / Contemporary / Rock
22. Christian – Rap
23. Blues
24. Jazz
25. R&B (Rhythm and Blues)
26. Soul
27. Funk
28. Disco
29. Mariachi
30. Tejano
31. Salsa
32. Soul<sup>6</sup>
33. New Age
34. World Music
35. Film Scores

---

<sup>6</sup> The genre “Soul” was accidentally included twice in the survey. Students either answered the same as the first or left the question blank

Please indicate your level of **familiarity** with each style:

- A) No familiarity
- B) A little familiarity
- C) Average familiarity
- D) Above average familiarity
- E) Extensive familiarity

- 36. Classical – Baroque
- 37. Classical – Classical
- 38. Classical – Romantic
- 39. Classical – 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- 40. Rock – Pop
- 41. Rock – Punk
- 42. Rock – Classic
- 43. Rock – Metal
- 44. Rock – Hard Rock
- 45. Emo
- 46. Easy Listening
- 47. Country – Pop / Current
- 48. Country and Western / Classic Country
- 49. Techno
- 50. Dance
- 51. Hip-Hop
- 52. Rap
- 53. Folk
- 54. Gospel

55. Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship
56. Christian – Popular / Contemporary / Rock
57. Christian – Rap
58. Blues
59. Jazz
60. R&B (Rhythm and Blues)
61. Soul
62. Funk
63. Disco
64. Mariachi
65. Tejano
66. Salsa
67. Soul
68. New Age
69. World Music
70. Film Scores
71. Please select the view that best reflects your current opinion of the function of music
  - A) Music has many functions
  - B) Music is strictly for entertainment purposes
  - C) Music affects and influences my feelings
  - D) Music is strictly academic in value
  - E) Music has no function
72. Have your tastes in music changed over the past 5 years?
  - A) Yes, I am becoming *more* tolerant for, or interested in, other styles
  - B) Yes, I am becoming *less* tolerant for, or interested in, other styles
  - C) No, my tastes have not changed

73. Please select the **one** statement which best reflects your view on *classical music*

- A) It is outdated and / or boring
- B) "It has no beat!"
- C) It is not my favorite style but it has academic / intellectual value
- D) I love classical music
- E) I am not familiar enough with it to say

74. How many hours a day do you spend listening to music?

- A) Less than one hour
- B) 1-2 hours
- C) 2-3 hours
- D) 3-4 hours
- E) More than 4 hours

75. If you are in a band outside of school ensembles, what type of music do you play?

(Leave blank if this question does not apply; if more than one answer applies, please select the **one** style you play **most** often)

- A) Classical
- B) Jazz
- C) Popular styles (rock, country, etc.)
- D) Praise band / church ensemble
- E) Other

76. Which class are you currently enrolled in?

- A) Essential Musicianship
- B) Aural I
- C) Aural II
- D) Aural III
- E) Aural IV

77. Please indicate your gender

- A) Female
- B) Male

78. Please indicate your ethnicity

- A) Hispanic
- B) African-American
- C) Asian
- D) White / Caucasian
- E) Other

## III.2 Survey Results

### III.2.1. Overall Results

From the overall results, the top ten most familiar genres were Classic Rock, Jazz, Pop, Blues, Punk Rock, Hard Rock, Film Scores, Classical, Metal, and Hip-Hop (Table 2). These ten genres received the highest ratings in familiarity, and eight of them also received the highest ratings in preference, with the exception of Metal and Punk, which scored slightly lower under preference than familiarity. Genres that received the lowest ratings were Christian Rap, New Age, Disco, Tejano, Gospel, Soul, World Music, Emo, Folk, and Mariachi.

**Table 2: Mean Values Genres, in Order of Preference overall average**

	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Familiarity Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Preference Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	Rock – Classic	3.87	1.063	3.65	1.100
2	Jazz	3.63	1.218	3.70	1.092
3	Rock – Pop	3.58	1.103	3.41	1.033
4	Blues	3.47	1.195	3.53	1.187
5	Rock – Punk	3.46	1.203	3.12	1.182
6	Rock – Hard Rock	3.40	1.261	3.22	1.364
7	Film Scores	3.37	1.343	3.39	1.194
8	Classical – Classical	3.32	1.059	3.34	1.090
9	Rock – Metal	3.32	1.254	3.12	1.323
10	Hip-Hop	3.18	1.203	3.18	1.178
11	Classical – 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	3.14	1.010	3.13	1.152
12	R&B	3.14	1.197	3.22	1.204
13	Classical – Romantic	3.08	1.149	3.01	1.150
14	Rap	3.03	1.248	2.95	1.141
15	Salsa	2.92	1.289	3.14	1.335
16	Classical – Baroque	2.90	1.080	2.69	0.954
17	Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship	2.87	1.419	2.60	1.301
18	Funk	2.83	1.248	3.03	1.240
19	Country and Western / Classic Country	2.81	1.288	2.51	1.187
20	Christian – Popular / Contemporary / Rock	2.80	1.458	2.57	1.376
21	Easy Listening	2.78	1.252	2.83	1.001
22	Country – Pop / Current	2.77	1.266	2.59	1.200
23	Dance	2.73	1.214	2.86	1.221
24	Techno	2.71	1.318	2.82	1.230
25	Mariachi	2.70	1.311	2.61	1.223
26	Folk	2.68	1.222	2.62	1.181
27	Emo	2.68	1.260	2.33	1.120
28	World Music	2.68	1.254	2.89	1.212
29	Soul	2.65	1.218	2.84	1.304
30	Gospel	2.64	1.236	2.59	1.294
31	Tejano	2.52	1.356	2.26	1.228
32	Disco	2.44	1.045	2.40	0.963
33	New Age	2.39	1.182	2.57	1.193
34	Christian - Rap	2.22	1.328	2.09	1.164

Question 71 asks students to select the view which best represents their view of the function of music. The choices were “music has many functions,” “music is strictly for entertainment purposes,” “music affects and influences my feelings,” “music is strictly academic in value,” and “music has no function.” No students selected “music is strictly academic in value.” Only one student selected “music has no function.” Because only student chose this answer, no definite conclusions can be drawn. 67.3% of the students selected “music has many functions” and the remaining students selected “music affects and influences my feelings.” Four students did not answer this question (Table 3).

**Table 3: The Function of Music, overall percentages**

<b>The view which best reflects your current opinion of the function of music:</b>	<b>100 Students (4 missing)</b>
Music has many functions	70 (67.3%)
Music affects and influences my feelings	28 (26.9%)
Music has no function	1 (1.0%)

Students were asked if their tastes in music have changed in the past five years. Because most students who took this survey are college freshmen and sophomores, the five year limit on this question should cover most of high school

and their college training thus far. The vast majority, 85.6%, claim that they have become more tolerant over the past five years, while only 2.9% say they have become less tolerant. 7.7% selected that their tastes have not changed over the past five years. Four students did not answer this question (Table 4).

**Table 4: Change in Tastes over Past Five Years,  
Overall Percentages**

<b>Have your tastes in music changed over the past 5 years?</b>	<b>100 Students (4 missing)</b>
Yes, I am becoming <i>more</i> tolerant	89 (85.6%)
Yes, I am becoming <i>less</i> tolerant	3 (2.9%)
No, my tastes have not changed	8 (7.7%)

Regarding classical music, students were asked to select the one statement from a list which best reflects their view. Choices were “It is outdated and / or boring,” “It has no beat,” “It is not my favorite style but it has academic / intellectual value,” “I love classical music,” and “I am not familiar enough with it to say.” No students selected either “It is outdated and / or boring” or “It has no beat.” Nearly half of the students (47.0%) admit that classical music is not their favorite style but recognizes its academic value. 41.2% claim to love classical

music, and the remaining 11.8% declare that they are not familiar enough with it to say. Two students did not answer this question (Table 5).

**Table 5: View of Classical Music, Overall Percentages**

<b>The <u>one</u> statement which best reflects your view on <i>classical music</i>:</b>	<b>102 Students (2 missing)</b>
It is not my favorite style but it has academic/intellectual value	48 (47.0%)
I love classical music	42 (41.2%)
I am not familiar enough with it to say	12 (11.8%)

Question 74 asked students to select how many hours per day they listen to music – less than one hour, one to two hours, two to three hours, three to four hours, or more than four hours. Only one student selected they listen to less than an hour of music per day. 20.2% listen for one to two hours, 23.1% listen for two to three hours, 16.3% listen for three to four hours, and a small majority of 37.5% listens for more than four hours. Two students did not answer this question (Table 6).

**Table 6: Hours per Day spent Listening to Music, Overall Percentages**

<b>How many hours a day do you spend listening to music?</b>	<b>102 Students (2 missing)</b>
Less than one hour	1 (1.0%)
One to two hours	21 (20.2%)
Two to three hours	24 (23.1%)
Three to four hours	17 (16.3%)
More than four hours	39 (37.5%)

Sixty-five out of 104 students selected that they are in a musical ensemble outside of school. From the choices given (Classical, Jazz, Popular / Rock / Country / etc., Praise band / church ensemble, and Other) 5.8% claim that the style of music their ensemble plays is classical. 8.7% selected Jazz, 19.2% selected popular styles, 14.4% selected church music, and 14.4% selected other. 39 students did not answer (Table 7).

**Table 7: Type of Music Played in Non-School Ensembles, Overall Percentages**

<b>If you are in a band outside of school ensembles, what type of music do you play?</b>	<b>65 Students (39 missing)</b>
Classical	6 (5.8%)
Jazz	9 (8.7%)
Popular (Rock, country, etc.)	20 (19.2%)
Praise band / church ensemble	15 (14.4%)
Other	15 (14.4%)

### III.2.2. Results by Gender

Results were tabulated to display the mean values according to each gender. The top ten most familiar genres to the 31 students who selected their gender as “female” were Classic Rock, Film Scores, Jazz, Pop, Classical, Romantic, Hymns / Praise and Worship, Blues, Salsa, and Punk Rock. Compared to the overall results, Jazz drops from second place to third, Film Scores leap up to second place from seventh, Pop remains in third, Classical moves to fifth place instead of eighth, and Blues drops to ninth place from fourth. Romantic, Hymns / Praise and Worship, and Salsa find their way to the top ten and Hard Rock, Metal, and

Hip-Hop lose their place in the top ten. Table 8 displays the results according to the top ten most familiar genres.

According to the results of all 34 genres rated by female students, preference only exceeds familiarity 35% of the time, and 50% of those times the difference between the rate of familiarity and the rate of preference is greater than 0.10.

**Table 8: Mean Values of Top Genres, by Female Students (31)**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock - Classic	3.84	1.036	3.81	1.014
2	Film Scores	3.68	1.137	3.60	1.102
3	Jazz	3.67	0.994	3.55	1.060
4	Rock – Pop	3.61	0.955	3.48	0.962
5	Classical – Classical	3.52	0.890	3.68	1.107
6	Classical – Romantic	3.32	1.013	3.39	1.174
7	Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship	3.32	1.351	2.90	1.300
8	Blues	3.32	1.045	3.29	1.216
9	Salsa	3.29	1.160	3.32	1.249
10	Rock - Punk	3.29	1.006	3.23	1.023

Sixty-five students selected “male” as their gender, and their top ten most familiar genres were Classic Rock, Jazz, Blues, Pop, Punk, Metal, Hard Rock,

Classical, Hip-Hop, and Film Scores (Table 9). This is the same list as the overall most familiar genres, only slightly out of order. Blues is listed before Pop, Metal before Hard Rock, and Film Scores come in last. Overall, the male students' preference ratings were lower than the female students' ratings. The highest preference rating according to female students is 3.81, 0.06 points higher than the highest preference rating of the male students (3.75). Level of familiarity exceeds level of preference except for Jazz, Blues, and Film Scores, in which case preference does not exceed familiarity by 0.10.

**Table 9: Mean Values of Top Genres, by Male Students (65)**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock - Classic	3.94	1.029	3.55	1.076
2	Jazz	3.65	1.328	3.75	1.132
3	Blues	3.60	1.285	3.63	1.180
4	Rock – Pop	3.59	1.151	3.35	1.037
5	Rock – Punk	3.57	1.262	3.06	1.197
6	Rock – Metal	3.48	1.288	3.22	1.340
7	Rock – Hard Rock	3.47	1.309	3.26	1.384
8	Classical – Classical	3.26	1.108	3.17	1.039
9	Hip-Hop	3.22	1.244	3.11	1.174
10	Film Scores	3.20	1.405	3.24	1.197

Question 71 asks students to select a statement which best reflects their current view of the function of music. Only two answers were selected; "Music

has many functions,” and “Music affects and influences my feelings.” 4 students did not answer this question. Results indicate that 67.7% of the female students believe music has many functions, while 25.8% view emotional responses as the primary function of music. 72.3% of the male students believe music has many function, while 27.7% are more aware of the emotional aspects of the music. No students selected that the function of music is purely for entertainment, or purely for academic purposes. No students selected that music has no function. Results are displayed in Table 10. (Note: in the overall results, one student selected “music has no function.” However, this student chose not to select their gender, so the answer did not appear in results according to gender)

**Table 10: Question 71 – Function of music, Responses by Gender**

<b>The view which best reflects your current opinion of the function of music:</b>	<b>Female (31)</b>	<b>Male (65)</b>
Music has many functions	21 (67.7%)	47 (72.3%)
Music affects and influences my feelings	8 (25.8%)	18 (27.7%)

In Question 72, students were asked if their tastes in music had changed over the last 5 years. All but one of the female students (96.8%) answered that

they are becoming more tolerant for other styles, with the remaining student claiming that her tastes have not changed (3.2%). 86.2% of the male students answered that they are becoming more tolerant (56 students), with 9.2% declaring that their tastes have not changed at all (6 students). A small percentage of the male students claim that they are actually becoming *less* tolerant for other styles (3 students, 4.6%) This indicates that male students are less open-minded to other styles of music (Table 11).

**Table 11: Question 72 – Change in Tastes, Responses by Gender**

Have your tastes in music changed over the past 5 years?	Female (31)	Male (65)
Yes, I am becoming <i>more</i> tolerant	30 (96.8%)	56 (86.2%)
Yes, I am becoming <i>less</i> tolerant	0	3 (4.6%)
No, my tastes have not changed	1 (3.2%)	6 (9.2%)

Students were asked to select their view of classical music in question 73. There were five choices – “It is outdated and / or boring,” “It has no beat,” “It is not my favorite style but it has academic / intellectual value,” “I love classical music,” and “I am not familiar enough with it to say” – but only three options were selected. No students selected “It is outdated and / or boring” or “It has no

beat.” “It is not my favorite style but it has academic / intellectual value” and “I love classical music” are the highest scoring answers. However, a larger percentage of female students claim to love classical music than male students. A larger percentage of male students feel that classical music is academic in value, but do not claim it as a favorite genre. This corresponds with the results from the previous questions – classical music was eighth in the top ten genres rated by male students, while classical music (specifically Classical era and Romantic era) received the fifth and sixth places according to the female students’ answers. Only one female student claimed a lack of familiarity with classical music, while a noticeable 15.4% of the male students respond that they lack familiarity with classical music (Table 12).

**Table 12: Question 73 – View on *Classical Music*, Responses by Gender**

<b>The <u>one</u> statement which best reflects your view on <i>classical music</i>:</b>	<b>Female (31)</b>	<b>Male (65)</b>
It is not my favorite style but it has academic/intellectual value	13 (42.0%)	33 (50.8%)
I love classical music	17 (54.8%)	22 (33.8%)
I am not familiar enough with it to say	1 (3.2%)	10 (15.4%)

In question 74, students were asked how many hours per day they spend listening to music. Just over 38% of both male and female students admit to listening to music for more than four hours per day. 3 female students (9.7%) and 13 male students (20.0%) listen to music for 3 to 4 hours per day, eleven female students (35.5%) and 12 male students (18.5%) listen to music for 2 to 3 hours per day, 5 female students (16.1%) and 14 male students (21.5%) listen to music for 1 to 2 hours per day, and only one male student (1.5% percent) and no female students listen to music for less than an hour (Table 13).

**Table 13: Question 74 – Hours listening to Music, Responses by Gender**

<b>How many hours a day do you spend listening to music?</b>	<b>Female (31)</b>	<b>Male (65)</b>
Less than one hour	0	1 (1.5%)
One to two hours	5 (16.1%)	14 (21.5%)
Two to three hours	11 (35.5%)	12 (18.5%)
Three to four hours	3 (9.7%)	13 (20.0%)
More than four hours	12 (38.7%)	25 (38.5%)

### III.2.3. Results by Class

Results according to class reveal that the Essential Musicianship (a remedial, pre-theory course) are most familiar with Classic Rock, Jazz, Pop, Blues, Punk, Hip-

Hop, Hard Rock, Film Scores, Metal, and R&B. Classical music was rated as a 3.29, the same as R&B, but the preference rating for R&B is 0.06 points higher than Classical, so R&B is listed in Table 8 as number 10. Students in Essential Musicianship (collectively) consistently rated familiarity for each genre as higher than preference. There were 66 Essential Musicianship students who took this survey. Results are displayed below in Table 14.

**Table 14: Mean Values of Top Genres, Essential Musicianship Responses**

	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Familiarity Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Preference Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	Rock – Classic	3.89	1.010	3.56	1.111
2	Jazz	3.74	1.141	3.50	1.154
3	Rock – Pop	3.61	1.094	3.45	0.980
4	Blues	3.58	1.164	3.42	1.241
5	Rock – Punk	3.55	1.166	3.14	1.214
6	Hip-Hop	3.44	1.191	3.29	1.250
7	Rock – Hard Rock	3.38	1.221	3.06	1.357
8	Film Scores	3.36	1.320	3.15	1.213
9	Rock – Metal	3.32	1.205	2.98	1.283
10	R&B	3.29	1.212	3.15	1.213

Aural I students who took the test rated Classic Rock, Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship, Blues, Film Scores, Jazz, Metal, Hard Rock, Pop, Punk, and

Classical. Preference exceeds or equals familiarity six times, often by significant amounts. 17 Aural I students took this survey (Table 15).

**Table 15: Mean Values of Top Genres, Aural I Responses**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock – Classic	3.71	1.105	3.71	0.985
2	Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship	3.53	1.505	3.35	1.169
3	Blues	3.47	1.281	4.06	0.966
4	Film Scores	3.47	1.375	3.88	0.993
5	Jazz	3.44	1.504	4.29	0.902
6	Rock – Metal	3.41	1.326	3.24	1.393
7	Rock – Hard Rock	3.41	1.372	3.41	1.306
8	Rock – Pop	3.35	1.057	2.94	0.899
9	Rock – Punk	3.35	1.272	3.06	
10	Classical – Classical	3.29	1.213	4.06	0.659

Aural III students who took the test rated Classic Rock, Classical (Romantic), Pop, Classical (Classical), Jazz, Hard Rock, Classical (Baroque), Punk Rock, Film Scores, and Blues as their top ten most familiar genres. Aural III students are most likely to be in their second year of musical study, and third semester of music theory. By this time in their studies they have encountered all or most Common Practice Period styles, which is evident in their familiarity ratings compared to the lower levels of aural skills. Familiarity only exceeds

preference 4 times. Perhaps by this point in their training, students realize they are not as familiar with certain kinds of music as they may have once assumed themselves to be, but they know what they like. 16 Aural III students took this survey (Table 16).

**Table 16: Mean Values of Top Genres, Aural III Responses**

	Genre	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock – Classic	4.13	0.957	3.88	0.957
2	Classical – Romantic	3.94	0.998	3.63	0.957
3	Rock – Pop	3.87	0.990	3.63	1.204
4	Classical – Classical	3.75	1.000	3.15	0.856
5	Jazz	3.63	1.258	3.94	0.772
6	Rock – Hard Rock	3.56	1.263	3.63	1.310
7	Classical – Baroque	3.50	0.998	3.00	0.816
8	Rock – Punk	3.38	1.204	3.88	0.957
9	Film Scores	3.38	1.408	3.06	1.063
10	Blues	3.25	1.291	3.44	1.094

#### III.2.4. Results by Ethnicity

Thirty-one students surveyed selected “Hispanic” as their ethnicity, and 59 selected “Caucasian.” This accounts for 90 students – 87.4%. Three students selected “African-American” as their ethnicity, two students selected “Asian,” and one selected “Other.” Seven students did not indicate their ethnicity. Since

Hispanic and Caucasian are the mostly highly represented ethnic groups, the results according to ethnicity will include only Hispanic and Caucasian students' responses.

Classic Rock takes the first place for both Hispanic and Caucasian students, but the rest of the top ten are fairly different. According to the results of the Hispanic students, familiarity outranks preference in the top ten most familiar genres eight times, exceptions being Jazz and Classical. In a few cases, the difference between the familiarity mean value and preference mean value is fairly large. Both Metal and Tejano received a rating of 2.97 under preference, but were rated for familiarity as 3.32 and 3.29 respectively and represent the ninth and tenth most familiar genres (Table 17).

**Table 17: Mean Values of Top Genres, Hispanic Responses**

	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Familiarity Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Preference Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	Rock – Classic	3.81	1.108	3.71	1.131
2	Rock – Punk	3.58	1.148	3.32	1.166
3	Mariachi	3.47	1.456	3.19	1.424
4	Rock – Pop	3.45	0.995	3.26	0.999
5	Jazz	3.40	1.380	3.74	1.237
6	Salsa	3.39	1.358	3.39	1.383
7	Classical – Classical	3.35	1.050	3.55	1.028
8	Rock – Hard Rock	3.32	1.077	3.06	1.340
9	Rock – Metal	3.32	1.107	2.97	1.426
10	Tejano	3.29	1.596	2.97	1.402

Caucasian students' top ten most familiar genres were Classic Rock, Jazz, Pop, Blues, Hard Rock, Punk, Metal, Classical, Film Scores, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical. Familiarity exceeded preference eight times, exceptions being Metal and Film Scores. Caucasian students were more familiar with Jazz and Hard Rock than the Hispanic students but less familiar with Punk and traditional Hispanic / Latin American styles such as Mariachia, Tejano, and Salsa (Table 18).

**Table 18: Mean Values of Top Genres, Caucasian Responses**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock – Classic	3.98	0.974	3.63	0.998
2	Jazz	3.71	1.160	3.63	1.049
3	Rock – Pop	3.67	1.145	3.46	1.056
4	Blues	3.59	1.191	3.54	1.088
5	Rock – Hard Rock	3.59	1.298	3.39	1.377
6	Rock – Punk	3.46	1.264	3.03	1.144
7	Rock – Metal	3.41	1.315	3.63	0.998
8	Classical – Classical	3.39	1.083	3.27	1.127
9	Film Scores	3.31	1.380	3.34	1.207
10	Classical – 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	3.17	0.985	3.05	1.090

### III.2.5. Results by Time Spent Listening to Music

Students were asked to indicate the number of hours per day they spend listening to music. Only one student selected “Less than one hour.” 21 students (20.4%) listen to music for one to two hours per day, 24 students (23.3%) listen to music for two to three hours per day, 17 students (16.5%) listen to music for three to four hours per day, and 39 students (37.9%) listen to music for four or more hours per day.

Students who listen to music for one to two hours per day indicated Classic Rock, Classical, Pop, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical, Hard Rock, Film Scores,

Romantic, Jazz, Metal, and Baroque as their top ten most familiar genres. It is interesting to note that the only demographic to indicate the music of the Common Practice Period *and* 20<sup>th</sup> Century admittedly spends less than two hours per day listening to music. Familiarity outranks preference eight times – the exceptions are Film Scores and Jazz (Table 19).

**Table 19: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Students Who Listen to Music for 1 – 2 Hours Per Day**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock – Classic	3.86	0.854	3.38	0.973
2	Classical – Classical	3.62	1.117	3.57	1.028
3	Rock – Pop	3.48	1.078	3.24	0.944
4	Classical – 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	3.33	1.065	3.33	1.354
5	Rock – Hard Rock	3.19	1.250	2.67	1.278
6	Film Scores	3.19	1.470	3.43	1.207
7	Classical – Romantic	3.14	1.195	2.95	1.117
8	Jazz	3.14	1.459	3.86	1.108
9	Rock – Metal	3.10	1.091	2.62	1.071
10	Classical – Baroque	2.95	1.161	2.67	1.017

Twenty-four students claimed to listen to music for two to three hours per day and rated their top ten most familiar genres as Classic Rock, Pop, Jazz, Film Scores, Blues, Punk, Hip-Hop, R&B, Hard Rock, and Classical. Familiarity only

outranks preference half of the time. Exceptions are Film Scores, Blues, Hip-Hop, R&B, and Hard Rock. Students in this demographic collectively indicated lower familiarity ratings overall than students who listen to music one to two hours, three to four hours, or more than four hours per day (Table 20).

**Table 20: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Students Who Listen to Music for 2 -3 Hours Per Day**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock – Classic	3.63	1.279	3.50	1.142
2	Rock – Pop	3.61	1.033	3.42	0.974
3	Jazz	3.54	1.062	3.42	1.018
4	Film Scores	3.38	1.498	3.43	1.409
5	Blues	3.33	1.204	3.42	1.248
6	Rock – Punk	3.25	1.152	3.04	1.160
7	Hip-Hop	3.25	1.225	3.33	1.090
8	R&B	3.17	1.049	3.29	0.999
9	Rock – Hard Rock	3.17	1.341	3.42	1.472
10	Classical – Classical	3.13	1.191	3.04	0.999

Seventeen students selected that they listen to music for three to four hours each day. Their top ten most familiar genres are Classic Rock, Blues, Jazz, Pop, Punk, Hard Rock, Metal, Christian (Hymns / Praise and Worship), Film Scores, and Country (Pop / Current). Preference outranks familiarity all but in regards to Christian (Hymns / Praise and Worship). There is a 0.30 point

difference between the most familiar genre (Classic Rock) and the second most familiar genre (Blues). This is the only demographic other than Essential Musicianship students not to include any style of classical music in their ten most familiar genres. Of the students who listen to music for three to four hours per day, 64.7% were in Essential Musicianship at the time of the survey (Table 21).

**Table 21: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Students Who Listen to Music for 3-4 Hours Per Day**

	Genre	Familiarity Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Preference Mean Value	Standard Deviation
1	Rock – Classic	3.71	1.047	3.71	1.160
2	Blues	3.41	1.228	3.59	1.004
3	Jazz	3.29	1.213	3.47	1.231
4	Rock – Pop	3.24	0.903	3.41	1.121
5	Rock – Punk	3.24	1.147	3.24	0.970
6	Rock – Hard Rock	3.24	1.300	3.47	1.068
7	Rock – Metal	3.18	1.425	3.29	1.160
8	Christian – Hymns / Praise and Worship	3.18	1.425	2.53	1.179
9	Film Scores	3.12	1.269	3.44	1.094
10	Country – Pop / Current	3.00	1.118	3.29	1.160

The majority of the students surveyed – 39 (37.9%) – claimed to listen to music for four or more hours per day. Genres ranked the highest were Classic Rock, Punk, Blues, Pop, Hard Rock, Metal, R&B, Hip-Hop, Classical, and Film

Scores. Students in this group collectively gave higher ratings for familiarity than students who listen to music for less than four hours. For example, the tenth most familiar genre – Film Scores – was rated as 3.59. This rating is higher than the third most familiar genre for students who listen to music for less than four hours (Table 22).

**Table 22: Mean Values of Top Genres, Responses of Students Who Listen to Music for More Than 4 Hours Per Day**

	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Familiarity Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Preference Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	Rock – Classic	4.10	1.021	3.82	1.121
2	Rock – Punk	3.95	1.146	3.51	1.275
3	Blues	3.92	0.957	3.79	1.174
4	Rock – Pop	3.79	1.151	3.49	1.073
5	Rock – Hard Rock	3.76	1.101	3.28	1.413
6	Rock – Metal	3.74	1.117	3.31	1.321
7	R&B	3.72	1.025	3.28	1.297
8	Hip-Hop	3.67	1.060	3.36	1.287
9	Classical – Classical	3.59	0.850	3.46	1.097
10	Film Scores	3.59	1.229	3.30	1.151

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RESOLUTION - INCORPORATING FAMILIAR POPULAR MUSIC INTO AURAL SKILLS

#### IV.1. Show Course Material to be Relevant

Angela Provitera McGlynn, in *Successful Beginnings for College Teaching*, discusses strategies for creating an inviting classroom atmosphere that will inspire students to participate. She states:

“In the first few lectures of the term, discuss how the subject matter relates to your students’ lives. Make the first few lectures particularly engaging by showing your students how learning the material of your course may be relevant, and possibly enriching, to them personally.” (2001, 79)

Most teachers would hope that the relevance of aural learning would be immediately clear to their students, but that is often not the case. Many students who are “not singers” fail to see the use of sight singing, and many students do not understand the necessity of dictation. It is the duty of the instructor to help students understand the relevance of aural learning, but students may find tasks

easier, more enjoyable, and more relevant to their own lives if the music they are used to, and fond of hearing, is brought into the classroom.

There are many ways to use popular music in the undergraduate aural skills classroom. When the topic is one that is liked by the student or is familiar material, he or she may be willing to put more effort into assignments. Therefore, assignments that might otherwise be seen as overly challenging now become enjoyable.

Popular music has been a part of interval training at many universities for a long time. Students may find it easier to remember and recognize specific intervals if they can relate it to something they already know. A fun task to give students during interval training is to find one of each interval in songs from whatever genre(s) they typically listen to – rather than give them a list created by other teachers or students.

A simple assignment for an aural skills class is to allow students to select a song from the broad realm of popular music and prepare it in solfege to sing for the class. This assignment could be required twice: the first time, early in the semester, the student should be able to find the notation somewhere (many popular songs can be found on sheet music either online or at a music store) and show it to the teacher so he or she can check to make sure the syllables and

pitches are correct. To clarify, the students should not write in the syllables; they should merely provide the instructor with the notation so the instructor knows where the student derived the syllables from. In this way, the instructor could also show the student where problem spots were. Later in the semester, the student could be asked to pick a different song to sing without seeing the notation, but still be required to produce the notation for the teacher to check. Students must write down the melody they are singing; this would develop the student's dictation skills as well as singing. In the first assignment, the students could see the notes and determine the solfege syllables based on the notation. But during the second assignment, students must determine the solfege and notation merely by listening. Students who have had little to no experience singing prior to aural skills may find it is easier to sing, even in solfege, when the tune is familiar.

Another simple way to incorporate familiar music is to use popular tunes such as television show themes for dictation exercises. This helps the students put dictation in context. Students are more likely to hear entire phrases or musical ideas than random notes and intervals. Additionally, musical memory is often already in place for familiar tunes, and this exercise can lead to discussions on how to remember phrases of music, especially for the purpose of dictation.

The internet can also be a great tool for incorporating popular music into the aural skills classroom. SingSnap ([www.singsnap.com](http://www.singsnap.com)) is an online karaoke website. SingSnap could be used in conjunction with, or in addition to, the previously mentioned assignments. Students may select songs with which they are familiar, learn them using solfege, and record them onto the website. The instructor may then listen to them directly on the website, or perhaps set up a blog where the students can post their sound files.

#### IV.2. My Experience using Popular Music in my Classroom

I first began incorporating popular music into my classroom teaching in my first aural skills class. None of my students were vocalists, and many displayed an inability to sight-read simple melodies in solfege. In a final, desperate attempt to get through to them, I created an assignment in which they could select a piece of music either from their private lesson repertoire or popular music and prepare it (or a portion of it) in solfege to sing for the class. Many of the students who had been struggling chose rock songs. When they sang for the class, they stayed on pitch, in key, and used the correct syllables and rhythms. This was not an isolated event. After this assignment, they began singing melodies from the textbook correctly as well. Several students thanked me for finally making

singing clear to them, which led me to consider other ways to incorporate the music that is familiar to the students into my assignments.

#### IV.3. Incorporating Popular Styles in Listening Assignments

I have been attempting to include in my aural skills classes an emphasis on developing musical memory. Since most freshman aural skills students have not taken music history, I am trying to prepare them for being able to hear a piece of music and recall the name of it at a later hearing. In my own experience, studying for a listening test in a music history class involves memorizing the orchestration and instrumentation rather than the melodies and themes.

In order to correct this problem, I have students listen to certain pieces of Western art music and explain to them that, on their test, they will have to identify the tunes, but they will be played in a different style. To be certain that the students would actually listen closely to the pieces, I had them notate the melody of the first theme and write down how many times the theme returned, how many other themes they heard, and at what point in the recording these things occurred (See Assignment Sheet in Appendix A.1). For example, they listened to Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 5*, and on their test I played The Klazzbrothers' rendition of the same piece in a Latin style. Also, rather than

simply naming the piece, I asked them to tell me at least three things that differed between The Klazzbrothers' interpretation and the original composition by Brahms, *besides* simply stating that they were in different styles.

Additionally, while listening to the original version of the music, many students complained that it was 'boring' or that 'classical music all sounds the same' (comments made in class). Once I started play the new arrangements, such as The Klazzbrothers, my students started moving along with the music and became much more interested. Therefore, these new versions of Western art music could be a virtual stepping stone for the students; introducing them to Common Practice Period music from the beginning may in fact drive them further from appreciating it. But introducing it in a style they are interested in or familiar with may help them to realize that the music of the past is still valid and 'cool.'

#### IV.4. Singing Popular Music

The first semester I used SingSnap as an assignment, I required my students to write a brief essay about two weeks after they completed the SingSnap assignment. I asked them to write about what they thought of the SingSnap assignment, how / if anything they learned in Aural Skills so far would help

them throughout their academic / professional career, and if they think it is helpful to use popular / rock / hip-hop / etc. music to learn Aural Skills, and why. I assured them that I desired their honesty, and I was not merely looking for positive feedback. "I really want to know what you thought," I told them on the essay assignment sheet. "However, if you say you did not like it, that it was dumb, etc., *you must give reasons!* Be as objective as possible" (See Assignment Sheet in Appendix A.3). I informed the students that they would not be graded based on their opinions, but only on their ability to thoroughly express their opinions (See Selected Essays in Appendix B)

Some student comments regarding SingSnap were:

In class, we were introduced to [www.singsnap.com](http://www.singsnap.com). The assignment on the Addams Family was a tough one because having to know the solfege was a little tricky. I think it was helpful in the sense that we had to sing the song in just pure solfege syllables because it made us think on the different ways we can use solfege, and not only in class by singing scales. (Student 2)

This essay indicates that this student benefitted from applying solfege to an actual song and the assignment helped him / her to realize the benefits of having a solmization system in a way merely singing scales could not.

After my first listen of *Eight Days a Week* I realized that this was going to take much more time than I

thought. The strange thing was that I actually wanted to figure this song out on solfege. I thought at first that this was going to be pointless and boring, but then I realized I could apply some of the things that I had learned earlier in the year to real world music. This made me very happy. I felt like my education was in a way being validated. Once I figured out the song on solfege I understood the song in a whole new way. (Student 3)

It is interesting to note the sentence "I felt like my education was in a way being validated." Such a statement suggests students have a need for their classes to inter-relate. Often students may feel the activities they are required to do to gain the degree of their choice have little or nothing to do with the reasons they selected that degree program in the first place.

The karaoke assignment that was given this semester actually turned out rather well. I thought that it was an ingenious way to blend aural learning with popular music and that extra bit of fun. I must admit that, at first, I was weary about what this assignment would turn out to be; would it be only pre-approved songs, would we only be allowed to learn them a certain way, but after it was said and done I found this assignment to be a great learning tool. In requiring at least two songs done only in solfege, I believe that this helps students to realize the inner-workings of the melodies and verses of the songs instead of students thinking the tune and words are as far as the song goes. (Student 4)

Taking away the lyrics and having the students sing in solfege brings them to an understanding of the melodic elements. If it is a song the students are

familiar with, they have probably sung it before without really thinking about it. The SingSnap assignment takes something they are familiar with and causes them to put more thought into it, focus, and apply the aural skills they have been learning.

The resource of a recording of your voice greatly enables you to hear the quality of which you sing as well as the tonality and adequately assess personal ability. (Student 5)

A comment such as this reveals another practical aspect to the SingSnap assignment – self-correction. The technology allows students to hear and assess their own mistakes.

In addition to using modern music to enhance aural skills, using the program SingSnap.com can be a fun learning tool too. Given that you are familiar with a song, SingSnap can help you fine-tune the notes and rhythm by playing the accompaniment for you. You can also record yourself singing the songs. This can help you practice your singing skills as well as listen to any mistakes that you make. It is definitely something that I will use again in the future. (Student 6)

Similar to the previous comment, this essay also indicates the benefits of singing with accompaniment.

The SingSnap assignment was definitely an excursion I did not foresee enjoying, as I had had no previous

experience with karaoke of any type, much less the kind that could potentially be listened to by millions online, who would then ridicule me from the safety of their home computers. Instead, I found this to be much more enjoyable than I had anticipated. (Student 7)

This comment, as well as a few others, indicates the SingSnap assignment to be enjoyable. When an assignment is fun, as well as beneficial, students may be encouraged to put more effort into it.

Student comments about the use of popular music in class included:

I love innovative and different ways to teach any subject. Most of today's student musicians are very familiar with the latest popular / rock / hip-hop music and love discussing it as well as playing it. Because of this, I feel that using the latest "vernacular" of music, so to speak, is a great way to teach new skills using a medium the students already like and in which they are already interested. (Student 1)

The term "vernacular of music" seems very fitting. Using the music the students know and enjoy is essentially speaking to them in their own language.

One of the arguments, that have been mentioned earlier, is that the use of modern music in aural classes will help because it will spike interest in the course. The spiked interest is a good thing for students and teachers alike, but it's what can stem from that spiked interest that is crucial. Generally, if you can keep the attention and interest of someone, they are more likely to absorb and comprehend what you have told, or shown, them. (Student 8)

It is difficult to argue with the idea that increased interest in a subject may also result in increased effort and understanding.

I believe that using popular music when learning these skills is very useful. Why, the purist may ask? Simply because the music we are most familiar with can be the most beneficial for us to base certain understandings off of. While it's good to be able to take that same knowledge and apply it to new songs, and songs classically based in nature, we must learn with something comfortable first. (Student 9)

The reference to "the purist" is most likely regarding those who feel that popular music has no place in an academic setting. However, the students realize that familiarity is crucial to understanding. Consider the next comment:

It's very helpful in teaching any subject to incorporate ideas familiar to the students in order to get a point across. Taking students that have had little exposure to classical music and then attempting to teach only in the context of that music is impractical. Finding middle ground is beneficial to the teacher and the student. Classical music, however, does need to remain on the forefront of any musical education. Neglecting the genre altogether is not a viable solution. Teachers should attempt to close the gap between popular music and classical music by pointing out the many similarities. Almost all modern popular music comes directly from ideas in classical music. To teach these connections would give students a valuable understanding of the importance of classical music while also teaching in a level and language they can understand easier. For most students, using popular music to learn aural skills

would be significantly less painful and foreign.  
(Student 10)

Many students do understand the necessity of Western art music, both learning it and appreciating it. However, as this essay fragment suggests, they also see the need to make connections between art music and what they hear all around them on the radio, television commercials, in stores, on their MP3 players, etc.

Certain themes seem to remain constant throughout these student essays. "Validation of education," "vernacular of music," "spiked interest," "learning with something comfortable," and "less foreign" all seem to have the same underlying notion. Learning and understanding should be built on a foundation of familiarity in order to prevent new concepts from being "painful and foreign."

## CHAPTER V

### FINAL REMARKS

Many factors influence students' musical listening preferences. Background, ethnicity, lifestyle, mood, mental state, religion, region, peer and adult influence, and gender are merely a few issues that influence listening preferences. Each class body will be made up of different backgrounds, ethnicities, etc. and will therefore be a different organization of knowledge and familiarity. It is unreasonable and illogical to assume that one aural skills class body will be the same as another. Although the concepts taught in aural skills classes are generally the same from class to class, university to university, the students are very different. Instructors must be prepared to learn, understand, and appreciate the role of a student's background in their listening habits and use it to help that student gain the knowledge and skills needed for success in a college music program.

Most current aural skills texts contain little or no popular music. Whereas students need to gain the ability to sing an unfamiliar melody from sight, they are more likely to develop the ability by first connecting it to the music they already know. Instructors should supplement familiar music to their chosen text during the first semester or year of aural skills.

Students surveyed at Texas State University-San Marcos indicated Classic Rock to be the genre with which they are most familiar. Popular styles and jazz consistently made up the ten most familiar genres for all demographic groups, with a few exceptions. Classical – Common Practice Period and 20<sup>th</sup> Century – styles were familiar only to smaller groups; primarily students in their third semester of study.

There are many ways to include popular music style into the teaching of aural skills. It is highly important that aural skills teachers do not merely create a list of songs they believe to be familiar to the students but incorporate methods to let the students pick the songs they know and love and relate them to class material.

Ultimately, we must not forget why we teach music and for whom we do it. Students must remain our constant duty. The future of art music rests solely in

our ability to instill a love of it and appreciation for it in each new generation, and teach them, in turn, to do the same.

If our students are to learn to understand and appreciate classical music, we must first meet them at their own level. Draw them in with the music they love, and then teach them to love the rest. Familiarity is a key factor in encouraging students to learn. Popular music should not be deemed as less worthy, a waste of time, or unimportant. It should be seen as a tool to bridge the divide between what students already know and what they need to learn to become the best musicians they can be.

Incorporating popular music into the classroom may require a little extra effort on the part of the instructors to familiarize themselves with the music, but if they truly desire to aid and encourage students, hopefully they will see the benefit of the added effort. The students should always be a teacher's first priority.

## APPENDIX A

### ASSIGNMENTS INCORPORATING POPULAR MUSIC OR POPULAR MUSIC STYLES

#### A.1. Two-Part Listening Assignment

Use Classical Music Library for the following works:

Bach, Johann Sebastian:

- Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV: 565 (Only the last three artists include both the Toccata and the Fugue – be sure to listen to both movements)
- Clavierbuchlein ii, for Anna Magdalena Bach: Movement 14. Menuet in G – This one can only be found by selecting Michael Behringer (Harpsichord)

Beethoven, Ludwig van:

- Symphony No. 9, Listen to second movement: 2. Molto Vivace
- Piano Sonata No. 8, Listen to first movement: 1. Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio

Brahms, Johannes:

- Hungarian Dances, No. 5 (note: not all artists play No. 5. Your best choice would be Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra)

Liszt, Franz:

- Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

1. Toccata and Fugue in D Minor – listen only, but be prepared to identify it on the test.

2. Menuet in G – Listen only, but be prepared to identify it on the test.
3. Symphony No. 9, 2. Molto Vivace – Listen only, but be prepared to identify it on the test.
4. Piano Sonata No. 8, 1. Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio
  - a. The terms “Grave” and “Allegro di molto e con brio” refer to tempos. Grave is very slowly and somber, and Allegro is fairly quick and lively. Give the time marking where the music changes from Grave to Allegro: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Does the music from the “Grave” section ever return? \_\_\_Y \_\_\_N  
If so, what is the time marking? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Hungarian Dances, No. 5
  - a. Listen closely to the first theme. How many times does the first theme return? (include time markings): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How many additional themes do you hear? (include time markings): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
  - a. How many different themes do you hear? (Do not count returns of previous themes, include time markings): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The music used for the listening test will be the same pieces, but in different styles. For example, I have several CDs of classical music played in a Salsa style – so you will have to identify the music, even though it is played in a different way. I will also ask questions regarding the differences in instrumentation, rhythm, etc, so be at least vaguely familiar with the instrumentation and rhythms in the originals. As always, please contact me with any questions regarding this assignment. I know it is fairly complicated and I am more than willing to help.

### A.2. Dictation assignment

Choose a song from the list below. Listen to the song and figure out the chords – you may use either pop symbols (D, G7, F#m, etc) or roman numerals (pop symbols will probably be easier). Be sure to indicate the key. Turn in your chord sheet typed, with the words lining up with the chords (like a lead sheet).

You only have to do one verse and one chorus of whichever song you choose.

Assignment due on Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.

List of suggested songs to choose from :

Desperado (The Eagles)

Somebody to Love (Queen)

Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds (The Beatles)

Bless the Broken Road (Rascal Flatts)

You may suggest another song, *but you must clear it with me first!*

### A.3. Essay Assignment

Write an essay (at least a page and a half, no more than 4 or 5)

Discuss:

1. What you thought of the SingSnap assignment

It's ok to be honest, I really want to know what you thought. However – if you say you did not like it, that it was dumb, etc, *you must give reasons!* Be as objective as possible.

2. How/if anything you learned in Aural Skills this semester will help you throughout your academic/professional career

Again – be honest. But think very seriously about it – “It won't help me because I think it's dumb,” isn't a reason, it's an excuse.

3. If you think it's helpful to use popular/rock/hip-hop/etc music to learn Aural Skills, and why.

You will not be graded based on your opinions – you will only be graded on how thoroughly you express your opinion and whether or not it seems like you really put some thought into it. I won't grade based on grammar – you have English classes for that – but I may count off for spelling.

Essays should be turned in at the beginning of class on Tuesday, the 8<sup>th</sup>, and should be typed, double-spaced, and have your name, my name, the class name, and date on it.

Example:

John Johnson  
Aural Learning I  
Anne Weaver  
April 8, 2008

You may title it if you wish, but it is not necessary. In your discussion of the SingSnap assignment, please include the title of the songs you sang.

Late essays will not be accepted.

#### A.4. SingSnap Assignment

1. Go to [singsnap.com](http://singsnap.com). You should have already created an account earlier in the semester. If you have not, make one now.
2. Choose one of the following:  
Happy Birthday  
Twinkle Twinkle
3. Record whichever you choose. You figured out the solfege earlier in this semester – now is the time to apply it.
4. Pick a song of your choice. The song must have a singable melody – rap songs won't work. Record this song IN SOLFEGE on SingSnap. Do not refer to musical notation for this assignment – use your ear! You may use the piano or another instrument to figure out the solfege, but do not use any printed music.
5. E-mail me the links to your recordings.

## APPENDIX B

### SELECTED STUDENT ESSAYS

#### B.1. Student 1

The foundation of all music is sound. Without the sense of hearing, music would have little use. As a creator of “sound paintings,” it is very important for any musician to have a firm foundation in aural skills in order to have a well rounded, rich pallet from which to draw upon during their career. In our Aural I class we had a variety of assignments, one being karaoke singing on SingSnap.

I personally found the SingSnap assignment to be great fun. Although I was unable to do it at home, I really enjoyed doing it in class. I always appreciate the use of fun, creative, “out of the box” ways to reinforce a skill. Having an assigned song and a song of choice was a good idea as well 0 gets the solfege pattern of choice learned and gives the student the all-powerful action of choice. The song I chose to sing in class was “For the Longest Time” by Billy Joel in a key that was clearly not intended for a woman’s voice no matter what genre. (Well, maybe Cher could kick it out pretty well!) Having a severe case of stage fright, I

also LOVED the party atmosphere when it came to the actual singing! We all can stand up and do what we have to do in a normal classroom setting, but the experience is so much more fun, relaxed, and memorable when accompanied by a wonderful atmosphere where folks feel comfortable, lighthearted, and receptive. Anything that enhances the learning experience is always a plus in my opinion. Though there were many great days in this class, I think that has been my favorite thus far. But other days were filled with other skills that make up the total Aural Skill package.

From rhythmic and harmonic dictation to sight-singing and interval training, I think that the skills used this semester will be very useful to me. Granted, I have already implemented most all of the listening skills already, so it was a real good review and drill. Of course, this is not implying that I am perfect at everything – nothing could be further from the truth. Though, I did find working the solfege rather than numbers to be especially challenging. But, I feel that it is a good thing to be able to do it all. So, while I struggled a bit (and still do) I am glad that it is required.

As I have previously stated, I love innovative and different ways to teach any subject. Most of today's student musicians are very familiar with the latest popular/rock/hip-hop/ music and love discussing it as well as playing it. Because

of this, I feel that using the latest “vernacular” of music, so to speak, is a great way to teach new skills using a medium the students already like and in which they are already interested. Of course, all students may not like those particular genres, but that’s ok. We all could use a bit more stretching when it comes to various types of music.

All in all, I have enjoyed this class more than any other. Perhaps it was the room filled with silly, outspoken youngsters that did this older gal (who is quite young at heart herself) some good. Perhaps it was a relaxed atmosphere with a laid back teacher that has a sense of humor and quick wit. Perhaps it was a combination of it all. I am glad I took it, and I will certainly look back upon it with fond memories and a certain smile.

## B.2. Student 2

This semester Aural Skills I was a mind refreshing course because I previously took this course in high school, I did learn new things that are helpful that would really help me in my career later on.

When I was in high school, I took two years of theory/aural and it helped me learn new things I didn’t know. This year as a freshman taking Aural Learning I, I took this as a helpful review because most of the material I learned

in high school was covered in class. One of the things I didn't learn was the "du-de" form of singing rhythms because I learned a different style which helped me. The "du-de" form of counting the rhythms confuses me at times but over the course of the semester, I've gotten a little more familiar with it. The program we have been using in class, MacGamut, has been somewhat of a challenging program to finish, especially when getting to the tougher levels. Using MacGamut has helped me distinguish the different intervals, like knowing how the M7, m6, and TT sound like. Also, it helped me listen carefully when dictating a certain chord whether it'd be in the first inversion or second. All these things that I've learned in class will help me later on in my professional career as a band director. For example, if some of the students want to play a rock song or a hip-hop song at a football game, I would be able to use my Aural and Theory skills to be able to write out the song for the band to perform. I also believe that I will be able to use my aural skills at my local church back at home because I will be able to help out the youth choir sing by knowing what/how the intervals will be used in the song.

In class, we were introduced to [www.singsnap.com](http://www.singsnap.com). The assignment on the Addams Family was a tough one because having to know the solfege was a little tricky. I think it was helpful in the sense that we had to sing the song in just

pure solfege syllables because it made us think on the different ways we can use solfege, and not only in class by singing scales.

Using popular music in Aural Skills can be really helpful, especially when learning the different types of intervals. For example, the song titled, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," can be seen as a P8 interval because of the "some-where" being the same pitch, only an octave apart. There are many songs which you can relate to with the different pitches, which can be beneficial because for example, when you hear the wedding song, you automatically think of a P4 interval. Being said, by learning how every interval sounds, you can easily point out the different types of intervals when you listen to music on the radio or on your iPod.

### B.3. Student 3

Throughout the year in Aural I we have been given many assignments. Some of the assignments have been difficult others have been easy, but none were as enjoyable or as challenging as the sing and snap assignment. We were introduced to a karaoke website called sing and snap. We were then instructed to choose two songs, but instead of singing them in traditional karaoke style we were told to use solfege syllables instead of lyrics. We were also told to pick one

song and just sing it on its normal lyrics. I chose to do *Eight Days a Week* by The Beatles to do on solfege, and Happy Birthday for my other choice.

I quickly found out that the assignment was going to be more difficult than I had expected it to be. I am a voice major and was looking forward to doing as assignment where I would be able to sing and quickly get it over with. I learned that this was not the case. After my first listen of *Eight Days a Week* I realized that this was going to take much more time than I thought. The strange thing was that I actually wanted to figure this song out on solfege. I thought at first that this was going to be pointless and boring, but then I realized I could apply some of the things I had learned earlier in the year to real world music. This made me very happy. I felt like my education was in a way being validated. Once I figured out the song on solfege I understood the song in a whole new way.

The Addam's Family theme presented a whole new challenge. I was given a song that I had heard hundreds of times in my life and was asked to figure it out on solfege. The song was actually pretty difficult, but since I was familiar with it it seemed to get completed much quicker. I suddenly realized that solfege was a very valuable tool to help in discerning melodic dictation. The Addam's Family theme is a great way to start learning how to define songs on solfege. I felt however, that the assignment would have been better if we only had to do

the two songs on solfege. I felt that by making us choose a third song to sing on lyrics excluded the student who weren't vocalists.

Overall this assignment helped me realize how practical my aural training really is. I saw first hand how easy it was for me to use concepts talked about in the classroom and apply them directly to real life situations. I feel that the classroom would benefit greatly from the use of more modern music as examples. I noticed through this assignment that my training was incredibly practical and useful. I think that other students would also benefit from the use of modern pop and alternative music in the classroom.

#### B.4. Student 4

The karaoke assignment that was given this semester actually turned out rather well. I thought that it was an ingenious way to blend aural learning with popular music and that extra bit of fun. I must admit that, at first, I was weary about what this assignment would turn out to be; would it be only pre-approved songs, would we only be allowed to learn them a certain way, but after it was said and done I found this assignment to be a great learning tool. In requiring at least two songs done only in solfege, I believe that this helps students to realize the inner-workings of the melodies and verses of the songs instead of students thinking the

tune and words are as far as the song goes. One song that was required to be solfeged was "The Addams Family," this was a good standard as the melody didn't skip too much or travel too far outside of the pentascale. Additionally, letting the students pick a song to sing with actual words let them have a little fun with it as well as get real work done, they may even figure out the solfege on their own because now they have that interest. The song that I chose was John Mayer's "Why Georgia," this song traveled a lot more and I chose it to show off the range that I have, I'm sure that some students will do this simply to take pride in how high or low they can sing.

After graduating I plan to be a choral director and there are many things that have been taught or introduced this semester that I believe I can use in the future, and even now. For example, this class has already improved my sight-reading skills, not to mention my coordination between piano and voice simultaneously. I remember once we got a bunch of flashcards with simple measure to sight-read, not only did we have to do them in class, we had to try to memorize the ones before ours, in the right order. This actually struck me as another good learning tool that I could use with any students that I have, to help them learn from and with each other.

I have also found that one can learn aural skills by using popular music, as opposed to just classical music. While instilling the basics of ear training, it has proven effective to use popular music to help the students connect with the material more. For example, giving the students songs that correspond with certain intervals so that they remember the intervals with more ease. Not all students can be completely captivated by Mozart or Haydn (I could personally), so this assignment proves, I think, that it is good to leave the beaten path every now and again so as to keep everyone on track.

#### B.5. Student 5

Aural skills, by definition exists to provide growth within the areas of sight singing and ear training by whatever means deemed justified and within music education parameters. Whether it be through constant repetition of intervals until memorized completely, unending practicing of rhythmic passages, or playing of piano until physically unable to continue, aural can be forcefully implemented in a pupil. An alternative way though was sought after this semester as a new, fun, even creative way was sought about through the use of [singsnap.com](https://singsnap.com), practical application of music into everyday life as well as a

career, and the use of modern music and popular genres to show use of the skills. The effectiveness of this shall be discussed in the latter.

The use of [singsnap.com](https://singsnap.com) enabled us as students to experience a different application of sight singing to our portfolios rather than a traditional melodious line to stumble through, we were able to bring favorites out and sing them. The resource of recording your voice greatly enables you to hear the quality of which you sing as well as the tonality and adequately assess personal ability. The assignment in turn was very effective in providing growth in and among sight singing and ear training, the purpose for which aural exists. What's more to the assignments success is the fact that of the three assigned songs, two of them had to be sung through in solfege, applying that skill to be effectively used in everyday life. Although in my opinion, a very tough assignment as to the nature of hearing oneself through recording, the use of the online resource was effective. Although the camera not so much, still a very well thought fun activity in which to participate that can affectively work to train individuals in a college level aural classroom. Singsnap became a fun outlet for using aural skills (which I used "Sol, the Grundy County Auction Incident," and "The Space Between" to show that fun in) along with everyday music that can be used down the road, which is my next area of discussion.

The lessons learned in aural skills can and will be used throughout the academic and professional careers of individuals placed specifically into a music degree generating program such as Music as a B.A. or Music Education, but I am having trouble finding ways to adequately put the skills obtained in the class to good work in a recreation administration career path. Maybe the skills learned can play a part to a ministry one day as I hope to pursue such, but in the likes of my degree, not so much. As a hopeful to seminary one day, music and singing aloud are a great part of worship in the Christian faith as singing and such talents are used to praise God. So therefore, in my career, which I hardly equate ministry to, shall be an outlet to share with others the learning equipped in my aural 1 class at Texas State. Now as for those people pursuing a degree and eventually a career within music, the foundation of everything needed to be successful in those fields are and were provided in the classroom. With no doubt, a person of music will be able to pull out a skill learned in this class one day and adequately apply it in teaching, performing, or entertaining. Therefore, in conclusion, the skills taught shall be one day put to good use by those choosing to remember back and grasp the concepts.

In my personal opinion, music of these days is becoming more and more monotonous among the “pop” genre. The same chords over and over keep

reappearing on the music scene and I was able to come to that conclusion by practical application of aural skills learned. With the help of using popular music styles in applying learning, I can now hear and testify to the overused works. We were able to sample everything from classical music in the baroque on up to present styles and were challenged to dig down and listen closely, using our skills, to pick apart tunes and classify what we heard. We used such classifications as the themes being revealed, the intervals used, as well as the solfege appearing within the lyrics. All of which were excellent alternatives to the same old boring compositions heard elsewhere. I can now use these skills while listening to my music and can knowledgeably understand what it is that I am listening to from a musical standpoint rather than from a feeling aroused. So in turn the use of modern day music impacted and properly supplemented the aural learning process.

In conclusion, the semester was useful in teaching the basic foundations behind aural skills and actively showing common day application to every life, and future careers. Although not entirely useful to the max in my particular destiny, for those others pursuing music, very helpful indeed. With the use of singsnap, common application as well as the use of modern listening styles, aural skills have been learned that will not likely be forgotten.

#### B.6. Student 6

Aural learning has defiantly been an adventure. There is so much that is crammed into one semester that it is a wonder we ever retain anything. Having taken the class before and seeing the great differences in the curriculum, I would say that everything taught in the semester now is very useful and helpful to a career in music

Many people would believe that popular music and rock music is for listening and recreational purposes only. I would have to disagree. The music that is being written and produced today is heavily influenced by the music of different centuries and cultures of long ago. Because of this, we can very much use music written now to enhance rhythm and aural skills. Music is also becoming more abstract and unique as technology grows, thus giving us an opportunity to compare and study the original pieces of music that have influenced it. Enhancing our aural skills is easier with modern music because it makes learning classical and 20<sup>th</sup> century style music much more enjoyable.

In addition to using modern music to enhance aural skills, using the program SingSnap.com can be a fun learning tool too. Given that you are familiar with a song, SingSnap can help you fine-tune the notes and rhythms by playing the accompaniment for you. You can also record yourself singing the

songs. This can help you practice your singing skills as well as listen to any mistakes that you make. It is definitely something that I will use again in the future.

Aural skills are something that can aid you in your musical career for a lifetime. Vocalists may understand this more than instrumentalists because their voice and their ears are the main parts of their instrument. But aural skills is useful to anyone playing or teaching music. The skills you gain from learning things such as solfege and melodic dictation can help you with everything from playing music by ear (no sheet music) to writing a song on the spot for a business deal. Whatever you choose to do for a career in music, you won't succeed unless you have good aural skills.

#### B.7. Student 7

So far, during my first semester in college, I have learned a great many things. I've learned how to make unhealthy eating choices, how not to do my laundry, the uses of a Phrygian half cadence, and how to play a C major scale on a piano, in two octaves, with *both* hands. But, I've learned more. I've learned about life, compassion, friendship... and the benefits of ear training. Throughout the semester, through the use of books, a piano, computer software, an interesting

rip-off of YouTube, and various classical pieces reworked into a hip-shaking salsa style, my ears have become accustomed to identifying many new sounds and their musical context. It is here that I present to you my humble opinions as to the degree of success these methods have had on my absorption of the aural skills curriculum.

The SingSnap assignment was definitely an excursion I did not foresee enjoying, as I had had no previous experience with karaoke of any type, much less the kind that could potentially be listened to by millions online, who would then ridicule me from the safety of their home computers. Instead, I found this to be much more enjoyable than I had anticipated. Singing a song in Solfege is much more challenging than I thought it would be. I also think that the activity works well on different levels, since it required us to figure out a song on the piano, and then translate the notes into the proper Solfege, and finally to sing them back in the newly remixed format. Also, having to pick our own songs was entertaining (for me at least), and provided me with some humor when I played back "Highway to Hell" in Solfege. The only criticism I have is that it seemed to take up a considerable amount of class time without having any real bearing on the test requirements, unlike the Jersilds, even though I despise those with a passion.

As much as I may dread MacGamut's harmonic dictation exercises, I know that it will be useful in my future career. As someone who hopes to market himself as a composer/arranger in the future, I can see how the ability to identify progressions/melodies in the music of others, as well as be able to notate the sounds in my head directly to paper (cutting out the middle man, so to speak), could be very useful in helping to speed up the compositional process.

Using genres that today's teens are more familiar with to teach aural skills could have several positive and negative affects. On the up side, it would allow entering students to learn basic aspects of aural skills, such as intervals and rhythm, via songs that are more "hip" with today's youth. However, songs such as "Yeah" by Usher and "Crank Dat" by Soulja tend to not have much academic value, besides being hilariously retarded. I might have some bias here, but I do believe that older songs could provide more academic study, such as The Beatles "Michelle" as an example of motif development. Pink Floyd's use of extended harmonies, or the disco-hit "I Will Survive's use of the circle of fifths. To ease into the classical realm, use of songs by Deep Purple or any 80's guitarist would lend itself nicely to approaching a Bach type classical sound, Bach-and-Roll, so to speak. For rhythmic study, I imagine that even the Aural IV class would be hard pressed to write out the stops for Rush's "YYZ" or any Dream Theater song. The

downside is that most students are also polarized on what contemporary music they like, and thusly it would be hard to find songs that everyone would be familiar with.

I hope you have found my input on these topics useful. The realm of aural skills is a vast one, and the task of choosing how to present it to the new student leaves one with many options. I would just recommend to not use a sitar and classical Indian music examples, I hear that gets hard to sing.

#### B.8. Student 8

For quite some time now, there has been a debate over the thought that using modern music in classes, such as Aural Learning, will aide in comprehension. Some say that this technique will be beneficial because the use of modern music will spur interest in the course. Others will say that the technique is not beneficial, but instead, it's harmful. So, which camp is right, and which one isn't? Let's take a look at both sides and some of their common arguments. From there, I will explain my point of view on this matter. Who knows? You may think the same way as I do.

First, we'll take a look at the arguments for the people who advocate the use of modern music in courses, such as Aural. One of the arguments, that have

been mentioned earlier, is that the use of modern music in aural classes will help because it will spike interest in the course. The spiked interest is a good thing for students and teachers alike, but it's what can stem from that spiked interest that is crucial. Generally, if you can keep the attention and interest of someone, they are more likely to absorb and comprehend what you have told, or shown, them. This higher absorption rate of the subject is definitely a good argument for modern music. Another valid argument for the use of modern music in aural classes is that the use of such music can help to broaden the horizons of music students in general. Modern music has so many genres that occur in it, that one would have many new perspectives with which to show the use of intervals, scales, chords, and so on. The rich diversity of modern music, in the eyes of the advocates of this thought, is what could be the key to a better learning experience in aural classes.

The naysayers of the idea of modern music being used as a teaching aide also have a pretty impressive arsenal of arguments at hand. One argument that may often come up is the fact that the diversity of modern music may actually hinder the learning process. The common thought is that older music is much studied, and for the most part, very precise. This precision, not the sometimes abstract form of modern music, is what ultimately leads to ease of learning. Also,

another argument that may come up is the fact that modern music isn't the correct foundation to start students with, for the fact that classical music and the genres before it are ultimately what built the foundation. An extreme view that some might have is that if one takes this foundation away, then they would essentially be throwing away everything from the works of yesterday...

So, is one right? Is the other wrong? In my opinion, I can see the pros and cons in both. I believe that ultimately, there should be a good balance between the "old" and the "new" ways of teaching. My argument is that students should be started out learning the basics and the classic way of teaching. Then, to reinforce the points that classical music shows the students, one can then bring in the modern music. Mind you, that if you use modern music, it should more or less be something that at least most of the students know, because straying away from familiarity is what will cause confusion in the learning process. I believe that if one uses modern music as an aide to the older music genres, a greater understanding of chord progressions, intervals, etc. can be gained. To say that only one view of this matter, alone, is ultimately what will inhibit the process of learning, instead of helping it.

### B.9. Student 9

The aural learning skills class online SingSnap assignment is one that I believe both extremely beneficial and enjoyable for virtually everyone involved. In my opinion there were a few distinct advantages gained by everyone that performed the exercise. One is that it helped to alleviate a sense of tension that many people may feel about performing, or more specifically singing, in a public setting. Being in an environment more friendly to nerves (surrounded by friends and peers) constitutes a kinder stage for developing a more professional and comfortable approach to singing and or sight singing even if the voice is not one's main instrument. While you may be in or assisting with a choir that has incredibly talented singers and musicians, if they cannot get through a part and it becomes necessary for you to demonstrate the raw nature of the section, the ability to follow through and teach it to them by way of example is an unmatched technique in most circumstances. This ties in to how imperative aural skills really are in the professional world.

Being a professional musician working in the "real world" constitutes some very odd requests and prompts at times. I know personally as an accompanist that our worlds are also extremely spattered with expectations and requests many times unreasonable. Having a solidified base of knowledge in the

realm of aurality (coined word for the purposes of this essay) is necessary to be an extremely proficient musician. If you are an instrumentalist and not even a vocalist, but you are working with a choir that is having difficulty on a section, or if the director is late or can't make it to that rehearsal, you may be called upon to run certain sections, or the entire work. The ability to analyze the piece by way of using theory and aural skills is, once again, the mark of a true professional. The reputation you will receive by being able to step up to the challenge without skipping a beat and making things run smoother drastically helps your reputation as opposed to it crashing and burning if you froze under pressure and were not able to help out. Say for instance you are with an instrument, and the key of the piece is not relevant at that time. Solfege is a great tool to use if you are adept enough at it to figure out a melody. Overall, "aurality" is necessary in the realm of music to be able to hear good parts, mistakes, intervals, and help with tuning.

I believe that using popular music when learning these skills is very useful. Why, the purist may ask? Simply because the music we are most familiar with can be the most beneficial for us to base certain understandings off of. While it's good to be able to take that same knowledge and apply it to new songs, and songs classically based in nature, we must learn with something comfortably

first. If it helps us to have a deeper understanding, then it is quite ignorant to deny someone the chance that could aid them in the future.

To wrap up, SingSnap was a valuable assignment that helps us tremendously with our performing and aural skills. Aural skills are very useful in the music world as we may be called upon to use them at a professional or simpler level. And finally, using popular music that we are comfortable and familiar with to learn certain skills is extremely beneficial. Just because something may sway from a standard harmonic progression, or only use a total of four or five chords throughout the song does not justify ignoring it. Music is a vast array of knowledge, feeling, emotions, and the expression through the heart. Any way to assist should be deemed useful, and should be taken advantage of.

#### A.10. Student 10

I should preface my opinion of this assignment and class by briefly explaining my personal situation this semester and how it makes my experience in this class very different from that of my classmates. I'm currently a junior taking twenty-one hours here and Texas State while waiting tables around thirty hours a week and playing for the women's lacrosse team. I commute from east Austin so I schedule my classes with little time in between in order to maximize my

availability to work. As a new music major it's difficult to find enough time to get in a decent amount of daily practice. I only mention this because these time constraints and obligations make an assignment such as the SingSnap assignment especially difficult

On my first free Saturday night since the beginning of the semester, I drove across town to southwest Austin where my parents live to do the SingSnap assignment on their computer which has a webcam and microphone. However this computer is also very slow and often freezes if it is doing anything complex such as recording video and audio material because it has very little memory left. After about an hour I made it all the way through the Addam's Family Theme without any problems but then the internet connection wouldn't work – another problem they have had recently (My father is a crafty engineer who loves salvaging old and broken electronics and appliances. My parents have been married for 26 years next month and in their marriage have bought only one new appliance – a refrigerator). Needless to say, I gave up on the assignment so that I could work on my research projects and study for tests (I'm a history minor). For these reasons I did not do the SingSnap assignment and wouldn't recommend it for people in a similar situation. However, I understand that the majority of the class is made up of freshmen who live in dorms and therefore

have easy access to computers on campus and often don't have to work. For these students my objective opinion is that this assignment is a great way of incorporating aural skills into something that they can have fun with. For me personally, however, it was a hassle.

This semester has definitely helped me solidify aural skills that I haven't used in years. The most helpful exercises have been on MacGamut because I can do them while doing other homework or while practicing. I tend to learn better on my own so this program works very well for me. I'll definitely continue to use these skills to become a better sight-reader, composer, and overall better musician. I eventually want to be able to look at any piece of music and be able to hear it in my head and analyze it clearly in my head. Likewise, I want to be able to write down music that's in my head. Aural skills are essential to a musician's versatility and the skills I have reinforced this semester will help me to develop farther.

It's very helpful in teaching any subject to incorporate ideas familiar to the students in order to get a point across. Taking students that have had little exposure to classical music and then attempting to teach only in the context of that music is impractical. Finding middle ground is beneficial to the teacher and the student. Classical music, however, does need to remain on the forefront of

any musical education. Neglecting the genre altogether is not a viable solution. Teachers should attempt to close the gap between popular music and classical music by pointing out the many similarities. Almost all modern popular music comes directly from ideas in classical music. To teach these connections would give students a valuable understanding of the importance of classical music while also teaching in a level and language they can understand easier. For most students, using popular music to learn aural skills would be significantly less painful and foreign.

Though some of the assignments in this class, such as the SingSnap assignment and buddy study groups don't work well for me, I think other students definitely benefit from them. Because of differences in personal situations and preferences it is very difficult to satisfy the needs of every student. The only suggestion I have for the SingSnap assignment is to offer an alternative for those of us who don't have the necessary materials or the time to use the computers on campus. Maybe some students could transcribe the melodies of a couple of songs and the class could use them as a sight-singing exercise. Overall this class has been helpful to me, though I admit I'm nervous about entering Aural II with very little in-class practice on basic skills. I understand that a huge part of learning aural skills is practicing them on your own, but I've found that

the only time I'm practicing these skills is on my own. I think everyone in the class would benefit and feel more comfortable if we prepared more for the tests in class. Rather than singing the Jersilds straight through, we could break them down into segments and pay attention to singing intervals correctly. Simplifying things and paying attention to details would help us all out a lot. Though I always appreciate a fun class, I'm very eager to learn, improve, and be challenged in aural skills.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adler, Marvin S. 1973. "Get involved in the 20th century: Explore the known and unknown in contemporary music," *Music Educators Journal*, USA 59/6: 38-41.
- Benward, Bruce, and J Timothy Kolosick. 2005. *Ear Training: A Technique for Listening*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Berkowitz, Sol, Gabriel Fontrier, and Leo Kraft. 1997. *A New Approach to Sight Singing*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Boyle, J. David, Glenn L. Hosterman, and Darhyl S. Ramsey. (1981) "Factors Influencing Pop Music Preferences of Young People," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29/1 (Spring 1981): 47-56.
- Bruhn, Herbert, and Joachim Roth. 1994. "Musik-Hörgewohnheiten und sozialer Gruppendruck bei Jugendlichen: Eine follow-up-Studie zur Arbeit von Renate Müller über soziale Bedingungen der Umgangsweisen Jugendlicher mit Musik [Music listening customs and peer pressure among young people: A follow-up to work by Renate Müller on the social conditioning of young peoples' music preferences.]," *Musikpädagogische Forschungsberichte* (1993), ed. by Heiner Gembris, Rudolf-Dieter Kraemer, and Georg Maas. Augsburg: Wissner, 1994. pp. 151-163.
- Christenson, Peter G., and Jon Brian Peterson. 1988. "Genre and Gender in the Structure of Music Preferences," *Communication Research* 15/3 (June): 282-301.
- Denski, Stan W. 1990. An examination of popular music preferences and functions by the contemporary popular music audiences. Ph.D. dissertation. Athens, OH: Ohio University.

- Droe, Kevin. 2006. "Music Preference and Music Education: A Review of Literature," *UPDATE: Applications of Research in Music Education* 24 (Spring / Summer): 23-32.
- Fetto, John. 2002. "Young Listeners," *American Demographics* 24 (Dec. 2002 / Jan. 2003): 11.
- Fung, C. Victor. 1994. "Undergraduate Non-Music Majors' World Music Preference and Multicultural Attitudes," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 42/1 (Spring): 45-57.
- Fung, C. Victor. 1996. "Musicians' and Non-Musicians' Preferences for World Musics: Relation to Musical Characteristics and Familiarity," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 44: 60-83.
- Gembris, Heiner. (1994) "Musikpräferenzen, Generationswandel und Medienalltag," *Musiklernen und neue (Unterrichts) Technologien: Jahrestagung des Arbeitskreises Musikpädagogische Forschung* 7/9 (October): 124-145.
- Hörmann, Stefan. 1996. "Beurteilung von Musik im zeitlichen Verlauf: Präferenzforschung mit dem Reactoscope [Judging music as it is heard: Research on preferences with the Reactoscope]," *Geschlechtsspezifische Aspekte des Musiklernens*, ed. by Hermann J. Kaiser. Essen: Blaue Eule. 259-282.
- Horvit, Michael, Timothy Koozin, and Robert Nelson. 2005. *Music for Ear Training*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Schirmer.
- Hoppe, Andreas. 1997. "Musikpräferenztests als Werkzeug zur Ermittlung von musikalischen Vorlieben," *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft und Musikpädagogik: Festschrift für Rudolf Weber zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Erwe and Werner Keil. New York, NY: Georg Olms. 267-278.
- Karpinski, Gary S. 2007. *Anthology for Sight Singing*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

- Karpinski, Gary S. 2007. *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Karpinski, Gary S. 2000. *Aural Skills Acquisition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- Kopacz, Malgorzata 2005. "Personality and Music Preferences: The Influence of Personality Traits on Preferences Regarding Musical Elements," *Journal of Music Theory* 42/3 (Fall): 216-239.
- Kraft, Leo. 1999. *A New Approach to Ear Training*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Krueger, Carol. 2007. *Progressive Sight Singing*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- LeBlanc, Albert. (1981) "Effects of Style, Tempo, and Performing Medium on Children's Music Preference," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29/2: 143-156.
- Lehmann, Andreas C. 1993. "Habituelle und situative Rezeptionsweisen beim Musikhören im interkulturellen Vergleich [Habitual and Situational Modes of Reception in Listening to Music: A Cross-Cultural Comparison.]," *Musikpsychologie: Jahrbuch der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Musikpsychologie* 10: 38-55.
- Luger, Kurt. 1994. "Zwischen Verweigerung und Anpassung: Jugend-Kultur und Medien 1945-1990 [Between denial and adjustment: Youth-Culture and media, 1945-1990]," *Musikerziehung: Zeitschrift der Musikerzieher Österreichs* 47/3 (February): 109-117.
- McCrary, Jan. 1993. "Effects of Listeners' and Performers' Race on Music Preferences," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 41/3 (Fall): 200-211.
- McGlynn, Angela Provitera. 2001. *Successful Beginnings for College Teaching*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.
- McNamara, Linda, and Mary E. Ballard. 1999. "Resting Arousal, Sensation Seeking, and Music Preference," *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs* 123/3 (August): 229-250.

- Miller, D. Merrily. 1977. "Effects of Music-Listening Contingencies on Arithmetic Performance and Music Preference of EMR Children," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 81/4: 371-378.
- Mohamad, Shah Shahanum. 2000. Relationships Among Musical Style, Ethnicity, Age, Gender, Musical Training, Familiarity, Intercultural Tolerance, and Music Preferences of Malaysian Students. Ph.D. Dissertation. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.
- Müller, Renate. 2000. "Die feinen Unterschiede zwischen verbalen und klingenden Musikpräferenzen Jugendlicher: Eine computerunterstützte Befragung mit dem Fragebogen-Autorensystem-MultiMedia [the subtle differences between verbally-expressed and aural music preferences in teenagers: A computer-supported survey using the questionnaire-authoring software MultiMedia]," *Musikpsychologie: Jahrbuch der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Musikpsychologie* XV: 87-98.
- North, Adrian C., and David J. Hargreaves. 2007a. "Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference. I: Relationships, Living Arrangements, Beliefs, and Crime," *Psychology of Music* 35/1 (January): 58-87.
- North, Adrian C., and David J. Hargreaves. 2007b. "Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference. II: Media, Leisure Time and Music," *Psychology of Music* 35/2 (April): 179-200.
- North, Adrian C., and David J. Hargreaves. 2007c. "Lifestyle Correlates of Musical Preference. III: Travel, Money, Education, Employment and Health," *Psychology of Music* 35/3 (July): 473-497.
- North, Adrian C., and David J. Hargreaves. 1996. "Situational Influences on Reported Musical Preference," *Psychomusicology* 15 (Spring-Fall): 30-45.
- Novak, Jennifer Doud. 1994. Music Preferences 1980 versus 1989 and Their Relationship with Selected Environment and Listener Variables. Ph.D. dissertation. Denton, TX: University of North Texas.

- Phillips, Joel, Jane Piper Clendinning, and Elizabeth West Marvin. 2005. *The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Pickert, Dietmar. 2002 "Amateurmusiker: Musikalische Präferenzen in Relation zu Genrespezifischer Ensemblepraxis [Amateur musicians: Musical preferences in relation to genre-specific ensemble work]," *Jazzforschung / Jazz Research* 34: 199-213.
- Picket, Dietmar. 1993 "Über den Zusammenhang zwischen Instrumentalspiel und Musikpräferenzen,". *Musikvermittlung als Beruf*, ed. by Maria Luise Schulten. Essen [Germany]: Blaue Eule. 143-155.
- Prytuluk, Natalie Anne. 2000. Sound-to-Symbol Pedagogical Practices in Music and Language. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Alberta. Edmonton, Alberta.
- Rentfrow, Peter J., and Samuel D. Gosling. 2003. "The Do Re Mi's of Everyday Life: The Structure and Personality Correlates of Music Preferences" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84/6 (June): 1236-1256.
- Reynolds, Geoffrey. 2000. "Relationships Between musical Aptitude and Musical Preference Among High School Students," *Contributions to Music Education* 27/1: 78-90.
- Rösing, Helmut. 1990. "Musikpräferenzen Heute: Abbild Spezialisierter Hörerschaften? [Music Preferences Today: The Reflection of Specialized Audiences?]." *Quo vadis musica?: Bericht über das Symposium der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung Bonn-Bad Godesberg 1988*, ed. by Detlef Gojowy. Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter. 133-150.
- Rozin, Paul, Jordana Riklis, and Lára Margolis. 2004. "Mutual Exposure or Close Peer Relationships Do Not Seem to Foster Increased Similarity in Food, Music, or Television Program Preferences," *Appetite* 42/1 (February): 41-49.
- Ruebsaat, Ulrika Hedwig. 1999. *What the Songs Say: an Examination of the Role of Song in the BC Music Curricula and their Required Song Books, 1919-1995*. Simon Fraser University. Vancouver, British Columbia.

- Schüler, Nico. 2006. *Aural Learning Coursepack*. San Marcos: Texas State University.
- Schüler, Nico. 2005. "Teaching Approaches to Music Theory in the United States: Towards a Stronger Undergraduate Core Curriculum," *On Methods of Music Theory and (Ethno-) Musicology: From Interdisciplinary Research to Teaching*, ed. by N. Schüler. Frankfurt / New York: Peter Lang. 189-202.
- Schüler, Nico. 2002. *Teaching Music Theory at SWT*. San Marcos: Texas State University.
- Schultz, Carol, and Gerhard Lang. 1963. "The Reliability of Music Preferences Under Varying Mood Conditions," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 19/4 (October): 506-506.
- Schwartz, Kelly. 2004. "Music Preferences, Personality, Style, and Developmental Issues of Adolescents," *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 3/1 (Fall): 47-48.
- Tourinho, Irene. 1998. "Educational Considerations about a Study of Young Students' Musical Preferences and Habits," *Dialogue in Instrumental Music Education* 22/1 (Spring): 36-45.

## VITA

Anne Caroline Weaver was born on May 15, 1984, the daughter of Joe and Linda Weaver. The Weavers bought a piano when Anne was young. No one realized at the time what an impact that would have on Anne's life. Eighteen years later, she entered Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, with both music and academic scholarships. Anne graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in 2006 and began her Master's degree at Texas State University-San Marcos the following fall. She had a teaching assistantship and has enjoyed teaching the first semester of Aural Learning during her last three semesters at Texas State. Anne hopes to continue making music and making music possible by teaching music to others.

Permanent Address: 27 Crockett

Tulia, Texas 79088

This thesis was typed by Anne Caroline Weaver.

