Listening to music at home and at school

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This study investigated the differences between the functions of music listening at home and at school, and the potential effects of age and nationality on these differences. 120 participants completed an individual structured interview schedule, which consisted of ten open-ended questions. These covered the role of music listening in young people's leisure interests as a whole, and more specific aspects of listening at home and at school. Sixty participants were from schools in the UK, and sixty from schools in Portugal: within each nationality group, thirty were aged 9–10 years and thirty aged 13–14 years. The findings showed that music listening was an important leisure activity, especially for the older children, and that most children showed moderate positive attitudes towards school music. Home music listening and school music fulfilled different functions: participants reported that home listening was linked with enjoyment, emotional mood and social relationships, whereas school music was associated with motivation for learning and being active, and particular lesson content. There were few clear-cut national differences, and music was generally undervalued in both countries.

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Music plays an increasingly important role in the lives of societies and of individuals, both adults and children. The technological and social changes that occurred in the second half of the twentieth century (such as the impact of radio and television, and the accessibility of equipment for the reproduction of music) are radically changing the nature of musical experience (Hargreaves & North, 1999a). Music is more accessible at different times and places, and musical experience seems to have become more individualised (Frith, 1996). Even though many children do not engage in performance, either in informal or formal settings (playing with friends, singing in a choir, or attending instrumental lessons), the vast majority of them regularly listen to music.

Listening to recorded music is one of children's main leisure activities. Research has shown the importance of music to teenagers (Fernandes *et al.*, 1998; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995; Garton & Pratt, 1991; Larson *et al.*, 1989; Larson, 1995). Some studies have focused on the reasons why they listen so much to music, and on their different ways of listening (Behne, 1997; North, Hargreaves & O'Neill, 2000; Zillman & Gan, 1997). In this study we focus on the cognitive, emotional and social functions of music for individual listeners. In doing so we go beyond the definition of music listening as a classroom activity, along with performing, composing and developing skills (Swanwick, 1979): and we make no value judgements as to the 'seriousness' of the different forms of music to

which they listen. Music listening is broadly defined as an everyday life activity, in which children engage in different ways and contexts, for different purposes, and with different degrees of involvement.

This research focuses on the differences between the home and the school as contexts for music listening. At home children usually decide why, how often, for how long and when they listen. They also choose where and with whom they listen (usually family and friends), and select their favourite musical styles, performers and pieces. Although some informal music listening is conditioned by factors beyond their control (e.g. background music in public places), most of it does depend on them. At school, in contrast, children are presented with music listening as a formal activity with pre-determined frequency, duration, objectives and content. They listen with classmates not chosen by themselves, and the syllabus defines which musical styles and pieces are included. These contextual differences mean that children may well develop different attitudes towards music listening at home and at school: home music listening may be more significant to children because it fulfils functions that are more valued by them than those fulfilled by school.

Developmental and educational issues

The relationship between listening at home and at school is strongly influenced by the age of the pupil. Psychological theories attempt to explain the developmental changes that occur in between late childhood and early adolescence, emphasising the relative importance of family and peer-group relationships in socialisation and identity formation (McGurk, 1992). A growing body of research evidence is highlighting the role of music listening in the development of personal and social identity, in the formation of inter-personal relationships, and in the regulation of mood and emotion (Crozier, 1997; Larson, 1995; Hargreaves & North, 1999a; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Tarrant, Hargreaves & North, in press; Zillman & Gan, 1997).

Research has also investigated age changes in the significance of music listening. Behne (1997) studied the listening styles of 11–20-year-olds, and found significant developments in listening to and appreciating music in later adolescence. Young people's concepts of musical style also develop with age (Hargreaves & North, 1999b): and there are identifiable age differences in 'tolerance' for preferred styles. The literature suggests that 'open-earedness', or tolerance for a wide range of different styles, increases in childhood, declines in early adolescence, 'rebounds' in later adolescence, and then declines once again in adulthood (Hargreaves, 1982; LeBlanc *et al.*, 1996).

In the UK at least, there is a growing consensus that music is one of the most popular and successful areas of the primary curriculum, but that it becomes one of the least popular in the secondary school (Harland *et al.*, 2000), and is rated as one of the least well taught at secondary level (Welch, 2001). There seem to be three possible explanations for this. The first, following our brief review above, is that it reflects a developmental phenomenon. Early adolescence is a critical period in students' motivation to learn: and their negative attitudes and poor motivation towards school in general may result from their changing beliefs about the nature of ability. As children approach adolescence they begin to think of ability as being stable rather than malleable (Austin & Vispoel, 1998). They focus on their own weaknesses rather than their strengths, and music may be a part of this.

The second explanation of the decline of popularity of music in the secondary school is that there exists a cultural 'dissonance' between the content of secondary school music lessons, and the music that adolescents listen to outside school (Gammon, 1996; Mills, 1994; Ross, 1995). School music is likely to be associated to some degree at least with Western classical music, and associated with parents and teachers, whereas pop music is associated with out-of-school activities, peer activities and the media. This clash of values is borne out by the results of North, Hargreaves and O'Neill's (2000) survey of 2,465 British 13–14-year-olds, who reported that they listened to and performed classical music mainly to please their parents and teachers, whereas this was not the case with pop music.

The third explanation is that secondary pupils' lack of motivation for learning music may simply result from poor or inappropriate teaching (Austin & Vispoel, 1998). Secondary school music teachers are often music graduates trained within the classical tradition, who may consciously or unconsciously regard themselves primarily as composers or performers rather than as teachers. Ross (1995), for example, suggests that many music teachers in the UK have adhered to their traditional concerns rather than adapting to new challenges in recent attempts to modernise the curriculum.

Cultural issues: Portugal and the UK

Children's music learning is determined by the social and cultural context within which it takes place, and Hargreaves and North's (2001) review examines the ways in which national musical traditions, education systems and school curricula shape musical learning and development around the world. The present study presents a cross-cultural perspective on the issue of music listening at home and at school by comparing interviews with primary and secondary school pupils in the UK and in Portugal. In the UK, as we have seen, a clear divergence between home and school music seems to emerge at secondary level.

The situation is less clear-cut in Portugal, and has been explained in some detail by Mota (2001). In the first (primary) cycle of the Portuguese education system (ages 6–9, Years 1–4), music is not taught in a systematic way. It is one of a number of subjects taught by generalist classroom teachers, who often have very little instruction or confidence in their coverage of music. The music curriculum guidelines for primary schools are vaguely formulated, and lack any consistent framework for pupils' development or assessment (Boal-Palheiros, 1993). Although music does have a regular place in the secondary cycle of the curriculum (ages 10–11, Years 5–6), with up to three hours a week taught by a music specialist, most pupils are still relatively undeveloped with respect to music. Music is optional in the third cycle (ages 12–14, Years 7–9), and is available in only a few secondary schools.

It is therefore unsurprising that many pupils' music learning takes place out of school: they take part in pop and rock groups with their peers, or, in the rural areas, in local community bandas. Mota (2001) concludes somewhat ruefully that 'The whole system of Portuguese formal music education consciously ignores this other side of pupils' musical life. There is a clear distinction in pupils' minds between ''our music'' and ''their music''. The National Curriculum guidelines clearly state the need to bring popular music into classrooms. However, our own systematic observation of music teaching in classrooms

found that teachers either do not follow this instruction because they are unacquainted with pop music, or that they bring popular music into their classroom in an uncritical manner, based on the assumption that ''pupils like it''. This is an issue that clearly needs to be addressed' (p. 160).

The present study

The present study examines the relationship between listening to music at home and at school. It does so by focussing on the differences between primary and secondary school pupils, and by comparing pupils in the UK with those in Portugal at each age level. A structured interview schedule was developed in a pilot study, which consisted of ten open-ended questions. These covered three broad issues, namely the role of music listening in young people's leisure interests as a whole, and more specific aspects of listening at home, and of listening at school.

Method

Participants

The participants were sixty children from the city of Durham, in the north-east of England, and sixty children of the same age from the cities of Porto and Aveiro, in the north-west of Portugal. Children were selected from two age levels in each country, so that there were four groups in all with thirty children in each. The younger participants (to be referred to as the 'younger' group in the rest of this article) were 9–10-year-olds who attended primary schools (Year 5 in the UK and Year 4 in Portugal), and the 'older' group were 13–14-year-olds who attended secondary schools (Year 9 in the UK and Year 8 in Portugal). There were equal numbers of boys and girls in each group. The sample was chosen according to the availability of children, and the willingness of both children and their teachers to participate. In Portugal only schools that offered music were selected, and so the final sample was drawn from two British schools (one primary and one secondary), and six Portuguese schools (three primary and three secondary).

Development of the interview schedule

A structured interview with open-ended questions was adopted to facilitate children's positive motivation for responding to the questions: the informality of the interview favoured children's spontaneity. The direct interaction between interviewer and participants gave rise to a pleasant relationship that seemed significant to both. Although the open-ended design of the questions generated some unanticipated answers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), any subsequent difficulties in categorising and analysing data were compensated by their richness and quality (Robson, 1993), which was enhanced by children's involvement and expressiveness.

A pilot study was carried out with a small group of 9–10-year-olds in the UK, who were told that they would be asked some questions about their music listening. Each child was interviewed individually, for approximately twelve minutes, during the scheduled

music class or other classes, in a room adjacent to the classroom. The atmosphere was relaxed and children participated well. If they hesitated, perhaps looking for words to express their thoughts, they were encouraged to explain them further. The interview consisted of ten questions, which are shown in Table 1. Question 1 deals with music listening as part of leisure interests in general; questions 2–4 deal with music listening at home (frequency, reasons for listening and feelings about listening); and questions 5–10 deal with music listening at school (opinions about music lessons, reasons for choosing music (for older Portuguese participants only), frequency of listening and liking for music played at school.

The children in the pilot study provided full and detailed answers to all of these questions, and so the original questions were retained in the main study. The participants in the pilot study were included in the sample for the main study. The interviews were conducted in British and Portuguese primary and secondary schools, from December 1998 to April 1999. All interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed into the original language. The Portuguese interviews were also partially translated into English.

Table 1 *Interview questions and response categories*

Interview questions	Response categories
1. What do you usually prefer to do in your spare time?	
(Leisure activities)	Musical; play; watch TV; intellectual/artistic; sport/outdoor
2. How often do you listen to music at home?	
(Frequency of listening at home)	Every day; most days; sometimes
3. Why do you like listening to music?	
(Reasons for listening)	Enjoyment; emotional mood; social relationships
4. When you listen to your favourite music, what do you feel?	
(Feelings about listening)	Enjoyment; emotional mood
5. What do you think about the music lessons at school?	
(Opinions about music lessons)	Good; some good, some boring; boring
6. Why did you choose music? [older Portuguese only]	
(Reasons for choosing school music)	Enjoyment; learning/being active; social
7. How often do you listen to music in the lessons?	
(Frequency of listening at school)	Every lesson; sometimes; rarely/never
8. Do you like the music that you listen to at school?	
(Liking for musical content)	Liking the music; liking some of the music; disliking the music
9. Why/why not?	
(Reasons for liking musical content)	Musical style; musical elements; emotional mood; non-musical
10. Would you like to listen to other music instead?	
(Alternative school musical styles)	No other style; pop; other styles; non-specified styles

Categorisation of responses

A categorisation system was devised on the basis of the responses of the younger children. The response categories were revised and refined by including the responses of the older children, and all responses were subsequently coded and assigned to each finalised

category. There were between three and five categories for each response, which was considered to be an appropriate level of detail: all are shown in Table 1. An inter-rater reliability test was carried out in which an independent judge (a doctoral student in music education) was presented with the responses of ten children and the category labels for each question, and asked to assign the responses into the categories. The mean level of agreement between the blind ratings of this judge and the other rater (the first author) was 85.9 per cent (range 68.7 per cent–100 per cent over all ten questions), which was considered to be acceptably high.

Results and discussion

Leisure activities (Q.1)

The responses to the question '*what do you usually prefer to do in your spare time*' were coded into the five broad categories shown in Table 1: Table 2 shows the total number of responses in each category, and the constituent responses in each case, for the four participant groups – younger British (YB), younger Portuguese (YP), older British (OB), and older Portuguese (OP).

Table 2 *Leisure activities in each of five response categories, and constituent responses, reported by four participant groups*

LEISURE ACTIVITIES	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
Musical activities	**89** (26.5)	**17**	**21**	**18**	**33**
Listen to music		10	19	14	26
Play, sing, dance		7	2	4	7
Play	**83** (24.7)	**26**	**26**	**16**	**15**
Play on the computer, play station		13	11	12	11
Play traditional games		13	15	4	4
Watch television	**60** (17.8)	**18**	**14**	**13**	**15**
Intellectual/Artistic	**59** (17.6)	**14**	**16**	**10**	**19**
Read		9	6	3	11
Study, do homework		1	8	3	6
Arts and crafts		4	2	4	2
Sport/Outdoor activities	**45** (13.4)	**7**	**3**	**20**	**15**
Sports		7	3	9	11
Go out (e.g. with friends)		0	0	11	4
Total	**336**	**82**	**80**	**77**	**97**

Chi-square tests revealed no significant overall associations between national differences and the distribution of responses across these five categories, but that there were some significant associations with age across the national groups combined ($\chi^2 = 20.98$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.00$). *Play*, including play on the computer as well as traditional games, was the most frequently reported leisure activity for the younger children and the third most frequent for the older children. Older children played significantly less and engaged more in *musical activities* than did the younger children ($\chi^2 = 6.85$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.009$).

Watch television was the activity with the most regular distribution of frequencies among the four groups, with no significant age or national differences. *Intellectual and artistic* activities include reading, studying and doing homework, as well as arts and crafts. Portuguese children reported a higher incidence of intellectual activities than the British children, although this was not statistically significant. *Sport and outdoor activities* includes various sports such as football or swimming, as well as outdoor activities like going out with friends or going to the cinema. Older children engaged more in these activities than the younger children did ($\chi^2 = 19.09$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.000$), and this is unsurprising given their greater autonomy in everyday life.

If we look more closely at the distribution of the different activities within the *musical activities* category, some interesting age and national differences can be observed. Music listening seems to account for most of these differences. Older children reported listening to music more than younger children (58.0 per cent vs. 42.0 per cent), which supports the idea that music might be 'the primary leisure objective of adolescents – at least in industrialised societies' (Zillmann & Gan, 1997: 162). Portuguese children also reported listening to music more than the British children (65.2 per cent vs. 34.8 per cent), and this finding is supported by a study of Portuguese 11–20-year-old students (Fernandes *et al.*, 1998).

Frequency of music listening at home and at school (Qs. 2,7)

Table 3 summarises the responses of the four participant groups to questions 2 and 7. As far as listening at home is concerned, we can see that the majority listened frequently – 'every day' (55.0 per cent), including several times a day. Many children listened regularly – 'most days' (29.2 per cent) and some listened 'sometimes' (12.5 per cent). These responses revealed age, but not national differences. Older children reported listening significantly more 'every day' and less 'most days' than did younger children ($\chi^2 = 10.30$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.001$), and this result is consistent with the previous analysis of responses concerning the place of music listening among general leisure activities. It is also consistent with the findings of other research: the percentage of older children listening every day (62.1 per cent) is similar to that in the sample of 2,465 British 13–14-year-olds studied by North, Hargreaves and O'Neill (2000), 61.0 per cent of whom stated that they listen to music every day.

For listening at school, the distribution of responses among categories was more even: 'every lesson' – once a week or more (35.8 per cent), 'sometimes' (29.2 per cent), and 'rarely or never' (25.0 per cent). This is not of course comparable to listening at home, since it is more dependent on external factors such as the curriculum, the teacher, and the

schedule of music lessons. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some interesting compar-isons. There were significant national differences between the patterns of overall responses (χ^2 = 16.30, df = 2, p = 0.000), which were accounted for by the differences within primary schools. The YB group reported listening significantly more 'every lesson', and less 'rarely or never' than the YP group (χ^2 = 14.66, df = 1, p = 0.000), and indeed none of the YB group reported 'rarely or never' listening to music at school. In the 'older' groups, however, no significant national differences were reported in the frequency of music listening, though this may partly depend on particular teachers and particular lesson activities.

Table 3 *Frequency of music listening at home and at school*

HOME	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
Every day	66 (55.0)	9	16	21	20
Most days (e.g. every other day)	35 (29.2)	13	12	5	5
Sometimes (e.g. every now and again)	15 (12.5)	4	2	4	5
Other (Did not respond/know)	4 (3.3)	4	0	0	0
SCHOOL					
Every lesson (e.g. once a week or more)	43 (35.8)	20	4	11	8
Sometimes	35 (29.2)	6	12	8	9
Rarely or never	30 (25.0)	0	11	8	11
Other (Did not respond/know)	12 (10.0)	4	3	3	2

Listening to music at home (Qs. 3,4)

These two questions dealt with children's stated reasons for listening to music at home, and with their feelings whilst doing so. Our scheme included three categories of response to the first question, namely *enjoyment* (63.0 per cent of all responses), *emotional mood* (27.2 per cent) and *social relationships* (3.5 per cent). Our analysis of responses to the second question revealed that the majority of responses could be categorised in the first two of these same categories, namely *enjoyment* (55.7 per cent of all responses), and *emotional mood* (33.6 per cent). This shows that the two questions are very closely related to one another, and indeed reflect the findings of previous research as to the reasons why children and teenagers listen to music (see e.g. Zillmann & Gan, 1997).

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Table 4 *Reasons for listening to music at home and feelings about listening*

REASONS FOR LISTENING	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
Enjoyment	**109** (63.0)	**35**	**35**	**19**	**20**
Sheer enjoyment		18	19	10	8
Enjoyment of musical elements		14	9	5	4
Pastime		3	7	4	8
Emotional mood	**47** (27.2)	**13**	**9**	**15**	**10**
Relaxation		7	5	8	6
Reaction to mood		6	4	7	4
Social relationships	**6** (3.5)	**5**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Identification		3	0	0	0
Reduce loneliness		2	1	0	0
Other (Did not respond/know)	**11** (6.3)	**4**	**2**	**2**	**3**
Total	**173**	**57**	**47**	**36**	**33**
FEELINGS ABOUT LISTENING	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
Enjoyment	**68** (55.7)	**12**	**21**	**16**	**19**
Emotional mood	**41** (33.6)	**12**	**7**	**15**	**7**
Relaxation		7	2	6	2
Reaction to mood		5	5	9	5
Other (Did not respond/know)	**13** (10.7)	**6**	**2**	**1**	**4**
Total	**122**	**30**	**30**	**32**	**30**

Table 4 shows the distribution of responses to these two questions of the four participant groups, and we will consider the two questions together. *Enjoyment* was clearly the main function of home music listening, especially for the younger children (64.2 per cent overall vs. 35.8 per cent in the older groups). The younger children reported significantly more responses in this category than did the older children, and this was not the case for the next category of *emotional mood*. Most children reported positive feelings about listening to music, such as happy, good, joyful, energetic or excited. Some statements were very expressive: '*It's just exciting and exhilarating*'; '*I feel passion for music*'. Another statement by a Portuguese girl illustrates her high degree of involvement in

music listening: '*I feel really great, it seems that I am in heaven. The day might have been very bad, but when I listen to music I feel really good!*'.

Emotional mood, the second of our response categories, was divided into two subcategories for both questions, namely *relaxation* and *reaction to mood*. There were no significant associations with either age or nationality for either question. The responses expressing *relaxation* were quite straightforward – children reported that music makes them feel relaxed when they are excited or tired. The responses expressing a *reaction to mood* were more complex and interesting. Both younger and older children seemed to be consciously aware of using music to become happier and forget about their worries when they feel angry, bored or sad:

> '*It makes me calm down when I get really angry with somebody*'
> '*When you do your homework it just takes your mind off it*'
> '*If you are sad it cheers you up*'.

Social relationships, our third response category, includes two reasons why children reported listening to music: *identification* (1.7 per cent), and *reduce loneliness* (1.7 per cent). Some children identified themselves with a parent or with an older sibling of the same sex, who usually listened to the same music. Other children used music to provide company, when they felt lonely. The following statements illustrate these two types of reasons: '*I have liked music since I was a little girl and listened to it with my dad*'; '*You feel you have got company*'.

Listening to music at school (Qs. 5,6,8,9,10)

Question 5 asked participants to evaluate school music lessons: this referred to whole-class music lessons rather than individual instrumental lessons, and participants' opinions were generally favourable. Table 5 shows the breakdown of responses to Q.5 for the whole sample. We can see that most participants rated the lessons as 'good' (60.0 per cent). According to the common suggestion that music is popular in primary but not in secondary schools (Gammon, 1996; Mills, 1994; Ross, 1995), we might have expected that many older children would dislike music lessons. The results show few differences between the age groups, however: the percentages of the younger and older groups rating lessons as 'good' were 51.4 per cent and 48.6 per cent respectively, and those for 'boring' were 47.1 per cent and 52.9 per cent respectively. There were some significant national differences, however. Portuguese children reported significantly more positive and less negative opinions about music lessons than British children ($\chi^2 = 4.62$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.032$).

Table 5 also shows the breakdown of responses to Q.8 for the whole sample: this refers to liking for the music heard in lessons rather than the lessons themselves. Most of the participants (49.2 per cent) reported liking, and only 17.5 per cent disliking the music. There were no significant age or national differences among the four groups, although the older British participants were generally more critical of the school musical repertoire. The older Portuguese were generally more positive because the music they listened in the lessons was often suggested by themselves, rather than by the teacher.

Table 5 *Children's opinions about school music lessons and liking for musical content*

OPINIONS ABOUT MUSIC LESSONS	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
Good	**72** (60.0)	**14**	**23**	**16**	**19**
Some good, some boring	**24** (20.0)	**6**	**3**	**7**	**8**
Boring	**17** (14.2)	**5**	**3**	**7**	**2**
Other (Did not respond/know)	**7** (5.8)	**5**	**1**	**0**	**1**
LIKING FOR MUSICAL CONTENT					
Liking the music	**57** (47.5)	**18**	**15**	**8**	**16**
Liking some of the music	**34** (28.3)	**8**	**4**	**16**	**6**
Disliking the music	**22** (18.3)	**4**	**5**	**5**	**8**
Other (Did not respond/know)	**7** (5.8)	**0**	**6** (*)	**1**	**0**

* Reported no school music listening

It is also worth pointing out that several of the younger participants in both countries reported that they did not have any classroom music lessons. One British teacher admitted that she had been so busy with other subjects that she had not got enough time for music. One younger British girl's statement may not be untypical: '*We did quite a lot of music in the beginning of term, but it has gradually gone out*'. The recent emphasis upon basic numeracy and literacy skills in British primary schools has a direct parallel with the objectives that have prevailed for decades in Portuguese primary education (Boal-Palheiros, 1993), and this may have the undesirable effect of downgrading the status of music and the arts, especially amongst the older children. Some of the older Portuguese participants reported enjoying music lessons because they were easy (e.g. 'easier than French' – the other optional subject), whereas a few British children *dis*liked them for the same reason:

> '*We don't do anything. We are just doing basic keyboard and things*';
> '*We usually end up watching an old video and not doing anything useful*'.

Questions 6, 9 and 10 deal in more depth with the reasons for the positive and negative opinions expressed above, and reflected two broad concerns: *motivation for learning and being active*, and *lesson content*. (A few children also referred to liking the teacher, and socialising with their classmates.) Many children reported enjoying music lessons in which they could be active and learn something new, and disliked difficult and passive lessons. Many music teachers emphasise passive activities (listening, analysing, learning facts), whereas students prefer to be active and perform (Austin & Vispoel, 1998). Participants

reported preferring practical activities (such as playing instruments) to theoretical lessons (e.g. history of music).

Some of the older participants commented on a decrease in motivation for music: some reported that they dropped out of learning an instrument they had played in primary school. They seemed to prefer lessons with a level of difficulty that was related to their perceived ability: one older British boy said '*Well, I am not particularly good at it, playing music. So, I am not particularly enthusiastic about it*'. The poor motivation of secondary school children may also be the result of changing beliefs about their ability (Austin & Vispoel, 1998): they may perceive school music as a subject in which they are less likely to do well (Gammon, 1996).

We have already summarised the broad response to *lesson content* in our analysis of the responses to Q.8 (see above, and Table 5). In the responses to Q.9 (Table 6), four main reasons for liking or disliking school music were cited: *musical style* (39.7 per cent of all responses), *musical elements* (15.9 per cent), *emotional mood* (20.6 per cent), and *non-musical* reasons (10.3 per cent).

Table 6 *Children's reasons for liking/disliking musical content and suggested alternatives*

REASONS FOR LIKING/DISLIKING MUSICAL CONTENT	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
Musical style	**50** (39.7)	**11**	**8**	**16**	**15**
Musical elements	**20** (15.9)	**8**	**7**	**2**	**3**
Emotional mood	**26** (20.6)	**5**	**9**	**3**	**9**
Non-musical (e.g. being fun/easy, socialising)	**13** (10.3)	**4**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Other (Did not respond/know)	**17** (13.4)	**3**	**3**	**6**	**5**
Total	**126**	**31**	**29**	**30**	**36**
SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES	Total (%)	YB	YP	OB	OP
No other style	**50** (41.7)	**12**	**13**	**11**	**14**
Pop	**33** (27.5)	**9**	**8**	**13**	**3**
Other styles (rock, jazz, classical)	**7** (5.8)	**3**	**2**	**1**	**1**
Non specified styles (e.g. modern, loud, with drums)	**17** (14.2)	**3**	**3**	**4**	**7**
Other (Did not respond/know)	**13** (10.8)	**3**	**4**	**1**	**5**

There were significant overall age differences across the four categories of reason for liking or disliking school musical content (χ^2 = 8.10, *df* = 3, *p* = 0.044). Older children referred significantly more to musical style and less to musical elements than did younger children (χ^2 = 7.83, *df* = 1, *p* = 0.005). Of the total number of reasons, 61.5 per cent were positive and 38.5 per cent were negative, and this result is consistent with children's previous opinions about musical content and music lessons. There were also age differences in this respect: younger participants stated significantly more positive and less negative reasons than older ones (χ^2 = 5.23, *df* = 1, *p* = 0.02).

Children clearly preferred modern/pop to old/classical music: '*I don't like fifteenth century and stuff like that . . . I can feel it is old*'. '*I didn't like that music of the Middle Age, they were shouting ''Alleluia'''*. Classical music '*is long and boring, it is not dramatic*'. Pop music '*is dramatic, it's faster and it has a wide range of instruments*'. The musical elements most frequently mentioned were tempo and beat. Classical music was associated with features like 'instrumental' and 'slow', whereas children preferred 'vocal' and 'fast' music: '*You don't have any words in it, I don't understand what I am listening to*'; '*I don't get the beat of it*'; '*It is slow, like you can't really dance to it*'. As far as emotional mood is concerned, most children liked 'lively' and 'relaxing' music, and disliked 'boring' music. An older British boy expressed his difficulty in understanding school music: '*It is boring, I don't like it. It's just boring. I can't get into it*'. A few children referred to non-musical reasons, such as music being 'fun' or 'easy', as well as socialising with their classmates.

41.7 per cent of the participants did not suggest alternative styles for school music in response to Q.10: and of those who did, pop music was clearly the first choice (27.5 per cent), especially of the British groups. A few children (5.8 per cent) referred to other styles (e.g. rock, jazz, classical), whilst 14.2 per cent did not specify a style, but rather mentioned musical features (e.g. 'loud', 'with drums'). Children seemed to be aware of the appropriate styles for the school context, and of their teachers' perceptions of it:

'*I wouldn't like listening to rave at school, because it could get a bit rude*'.
'*I'd rather listen to pop, to more exciting music than opera. I doubt she* [the teacher] *would play it*'.
'*I think he* [the teacher] *wants a lesson to be a proper music lesson like playing keyboards, instead of listening to pop music*'.
'*Pop has nothing to do with what we are learning, it would not fit in the lessons*'.

General discussion

Our results clearly show that music listening fulfils different functions in children's lives at home and at school. We might suggest that music listening at home and in other informal contexts seems to fulfil primarily *emotional* and *social* functions, whereas that at school tends to have mainly a *cognitive* function. Emotional functions do not seem to be emphasised at school, yet enjoyment of music and emotional mood were the main functions attributed by children to music listening at home. At home, children develop a personal and a social identity, as they enjoy listening to music with their family and friends, with whom they have strong emotional ties. At school, however, they interact with their teachers and classmates. The stronger emphasis on the emotional and social functions

of music at home might therefore be one of the most important reasons for disliking school music.

School stresses cognitive functions, which may not be valued so highly by children with respect to music (Behne, 1997). The National Curriculum guidelines for Music in England have traditionally emphasised cognitive aspects of music listening (e.g. DfE, 1995), and the importance of music in emotional and social development has only recently been acknowledged in the recent version of the Curriculum (DfEE, 1999). At school, students listen to music to learn about music history, styles, musical elements and instruments, and to learn how to play, sing and compose. Learning rather than enjoyment tends to be emphasised: teachers are mainly concerned with conveying information and developing concepts. In listening activities pupils are commonly asked to recognise musical elements, instruments, voices, and so on. They are less often asked to identify musical moods, to express their emotional states, or to comment on the feelings and images that they experience while listening to music.

Our results clearly show that pupils prefer listening to music at home than at school. At home they listen in privacy, choose the music, and share their enjoyment through significant social interactions. The participants seem to be well aware of the differences between these two contexts:

> 'At home I am alone with my brother, we put the music on that we like to listen to, not the music that we listen to in the lessons'.
> 'Home has nothing to do with school. At home we listen to music because we feel like it. At school we listen because it is a school activity'.

Two other factors, which were investigated in this study, were differences between primary and secondary pupils (developmental and educational factors), and national differences (cultural and educational contexts). The findings overall indicated more significant age differences in home than in school music listening: generally speaking older (secondary) pupils reported listening more than younger (primary) pupils, as was expected from the research literature. Music listening was an especially important leisure activity for the older pupils, fulfilling the functions of enjoyment, emotional mood and socialisation. There were few age differences in music listening at school: all pupils expressed moderately positive attitudes, and cited their motivation for learning and the musical content of lessons.

Very few clear-cut differences between British and Portuguese pupils emerged. It appeared that the latter reported listening more at home, and liking music more at school, and that younger British pupils listened to music more at school than did younger Portuguese pupils, but it is difficult to draw any general conclusions from these findings. The only clear and somewhat disappointing finding is that school music tends to be of low status in both countries.

Our findings throw some light on the significance of children's informal and formal music listening, and may help to explain the unpopularity of school music. School music education seems to have 'little effect on children's interpretation of emotion in music' (Kratus, 1993). Enjoyment and emotion are neglected in school music listening, yet they are among the most important functions of music for children, and therefore deserve more attention at school. The 'cultural dissonance' between school and home music listening deserves greater attention from music educators. Our study suggests that musical develop-

ment and learning are more likely to flourish outside rather than within the school curriculum. This divergence is likely to increase as technology advances, and as music becomes an increasingly prevalent part of most people's everyday lives.

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