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# The Effects Of Years In Band On Music Preference

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# The Effects Of Years In Band On Music Preference

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in  
Music.

By

Ben Ratliff

Under the mentorship of Dr. Laura Stambaugh

## Abstract

Music preference is one aspect of music that is sometimes forgotten about in the band world. Many studies have been done on music preference in popular music as well as classical music, but not many studies have been done specifically on band music. This study looks into different categories and difficulties of band literature in order to discover what types of band music students prefer. The ultimate goal of this study is to discover how the number of years in band affects music preference. With this information, band directors can learn what pieces students enjoy to play and how to deliver repertoire that students enjoy without compromising musicality.

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Music educators across all areas have one common goal – to teach aspects of music to students. Teachers often dive into obvious areas of music, such as pitch, rhythm, notation, and even more nuanced areas of musicality. Sometimes, music educators overlook one of the single most important aspects of music, the repertoire itself. A *teacher's* music preference may be one of the most deciding factors on what type of repertoire gets played, which then could directly impact a student's music preference. What exactly is music preference? The music education profession defines music preference as how much a person “likes” or “enjoys” a piece of music (e.g. Leblanc 1983, Gregory 1994). There are definitely other factors that can determine music preference, but this study will focus solely on the enjoyment factor.

This study will focus on band music preference, and specifically, how the number of years a student has been enrolled in band affects their band music preference. Many aspects of band music affect music preference, including tempo, style, tonality, and instrumentation. Many studies have examined how these different factors affect music preference. There are fewer studies that examine how musical training affects music preference, and even fewer that involve specifically middle school and high school band, which is my goal here.

I am interested in this area because I am both a composer and a future band director. I want to examine how musical training and experience can affect the preference of students, so that I can make better choices in choosing repertoire for my students. From a composer viewpoint, I would like to determine the factors that students like at different age groups so I can compose music that students enjoy, while also being musically meaningful. This study will be important to both band

directors and composers for those same reasons. I hope band directors can learn what students enjoy and what students have the ability to enjoy. Some directors may not choose a specific piece of music because they believe that the students may not enjoy it. Likewise, composers may not compose music of a certain quality or characteristic because they believe students may not enjoy it. This study will show band directors and composers how students enjoy different styles of concert band music and how students' preference changes throughout the middle and high school years.

### **Literature Review**

#### Repetition and Familiarity

Lamont and Webb (2010) aimed to discover what influences a favorite piece of music over the short- and long-term. Through their research, they discovered that adults both with previous music experience and without prefer music through repeated listening and listeners tend to control their exposure to certain music. In their method, listeners kept a daily diary for listening to their favorite piece over two different two-week periods with a two-week break in between. This allowed the study to look at both a short-term and long-term period. The most common reason participants chose a favorite piece of music was "because they really like listening to it." Working and studying were the most common activities while listening to music. Daily favorite pieces of music were found to be linked to the context of the day according to interviewees. Participants often picked music that fit their mood.

According to Bradley (1971), training and experience as repetition impact the formation of positive attitudes, musical taste, preference, and value judgments

toward music. Bradley stated that while training does affect the type of listening response, the degree to which training affects preference has not been fully documented. The main question Bradley asked is: To what extent must music be familiar to the listener to ensure an adequate listening response? Bradley stated that in a study by Russell P. Getz, there was a rise in preference during the second and third week of repeated listening. In a study by Robert Hare (1959), students were exposed to art music over a repeated time (fourteen weeks). The art music was further divided into tonal, polytonal, atonal, and electronic. During the pretest, electronic music scored the highest preference scores, with atonal scoring the lowest. After fourteen weeks, which included twenty-eight half-hour periods, the scores of every section went up, with tonal, polytonal, and atonal posting the most gains. The tonal and atonal scores were nearly as high as the electronic selections in the post-test, which did not gain as much as the others. The atonal selections were still significantly lower than the rest, although they did post significant gains. The results show that repetition and familiarity highly affect musical preference.

#### Environmental Factors

LeBlanc (1983) believed music educators do not directly affect public taste in music. LeBlanc stated that it is possible to influence music preference by using different techniques, such as changing something about the music, environment, or listener. In this study, environment included a student's family, peer group, teachers, and other authority figures. LeBlanc stated that students tend to prefer faster tempos, so teachers should select music that catches student's interests, then slowly make the music more complex. He further stated that not all listening

preferences can be changed, but a good teacher can help a student handle increasingly complex and stimulating music. Repetition can also be used to affect music preference, and with each listen, the teacher should describe something more about the piece. LeBlanc concluded by stating that the commercial music industry influences music preference all the time, so teachers should do the same. Teachers cannot make students prefer a certain kind of music, but they can certainly present them different kinds of music, which can affect music preference.

Droe's (2008) review of literature showed that music preference is affected by many environmental factors, and teacher approval or disapproval could have a strong effect on student music preference. There was no research on this factor in a rehearsal setting, so Droe's purpose in this study was to investigate how the approvals or disapprovals of teachers affected music preference in a rehearsal setting with band students. Droe's study used eight middle school bands in which the directors were given one to two pieces to rehearse. The directors were instructed to give verbal comments approving or disapproving a piece. The students were told they were rehearsing the treatment music to supply an audio recording to the composer. The students were then given a music preference survey after the rehearsal to investigate how the comments affected preference. The survey contained six listening examples, and it contained the two treatment pieces rehearsed in the classroom. The results of the study showed that teacher approval or disapproval did affect music preference in students. Disapprovals affected student preference negatively, while approvals affected preference positively. The study also showed that a teacher's attitude or comments could affect the preference

of students. Students who enjoyed the pieces exhibited more on-task behavior. The study shows that teacher approval is one of the environmental factors that can affect music preference.

### Performance Factors

Droe (2006) began the article by stating that musical taste, attitude, and preference can be difficult areas to study. He asked what the difference was between musical taste and musical preference, as well as asked what exactly defines musical preference. Defining what musical preference is can aid those in music education; in fact, musical preference was cited as the second highest reason students dropped out of band in one survey Droe does not define these factors, but he gives an open-ended question to let the reader decide. Droe continues by discussing models of music preference, with repetition being a substantial one. If a stimulus is too complex, repetition will increase preference, while if a stimulus is below optimum complexity, it will decrease performance.

According to Droe, another factor that influenced musical preference was familiarity. Students who are familiar with a piece through performing or listening were more likely to enjoy a piece. Also, performance factors affect preference in that students tend to enjoy pieces that feature their instrument or have an enjoyable part to play. Social influence also matters, as students are influenced by cultural messages in music, friends and family, as well as memories made while performing music that become secondary to the music itself. Teacher approval or disapproval, like peer influence, also affects how music students enjoy different pieces. Finally,

Droe cited the way students first hear a piece affects how they perceive the piece to be “correctly” performed.

Another study (1981) by LeBlanc measured the effects of style, tempo and performance medium with fifth grade students. Past studies showed that tempo might have a higher influence over the emotional suggestiveness of music than anything else. In a study by Wepnick as cited by LeBlanc (1980), subjects showed a bias towards faster tempos. In addition to tempo, rhythm also brought about mood changes. During the procedure, LeBlanc used a listening tape incorporating fast and slow vocal and instrumental excerpts, including rock/pop, country, older jazz, newer jazz, and art music, with an experimental band music category. There were 24 examples, and the excerpts ranged from 26 to 48 seconds in duration. The examples had a clear contrast in tempo, with the slow pieces ranging from 40 to 80 BPM, and the fast ranging from 120 to 280 BPM. The response sheet for each example included a seven-step response using the words “like” and “dislike”. Results indicated that students preferred faster tempos. LeBlanc suggested to teachers to introduce fast instrumental pieces first and then progress to slower tempos to encourage positive listener response. Especially important to band directors, Leblanc states that band music seems to be the form of music most likely to be a competitor to the popular styles based on preference (Leblanc 155).

#### Listening Preference Over Different Age Groups

Gregory (1994) wanted to know if training broadened or narrowed listening preferences. Gregory stated that research with young children as well as high school performance groups and college musicians yielded inconclusive results. Gregory



aimed to isolate several aspects of musical training, including keyboard, chorus, band, and orchestra students, and their relationships with listening preferences. Three age groups of students participated in the study – sixth graders, high school juniors and seniors, and college juniors. These participants were divided into four groups, including keyboards, chorus, band, and orchestra. Students listened to examples individually at a computer with Continuous Response Digital Interface, including four preference dials. The participants turn a dial and researchers can receive feedback in real time. There were 13 music selections from several different categories. The results were divided into different age groups. There were significant differences in the three age groups for the Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Mozart examples in that the college music majors preferred this category the most. Jazz and the Silver Burdett/Ginn selections, which was an experimental group separate from the others, had very little change between the age groups. The eclectic group had around the same amount of preference by high school musicians and music majors. Gregory concluded that music performance experience does play a role in the evolution of classical music preference of musicians. Since music preference for other genres did not drop among music majors, Gregory concluded that music training broadened listening preference.

Ginnochio (2009) stated that in the past, music preference studies have used test subjects “with” or “without” training, but no studies have really looked into the specific amount of training. For example, most studies have used simply music majors and non-music majors, without regard to the amount of experience or training. In this study, Ginnochio aimed to discover how three different amounts of

music training and type of music training affected the style preference of college non-music majors. The students were a part of three different music appreciation classes, so they all had different levels of music training. Ginnochio implemented a Music Preference Inventory similar to LeBlanc's studies containing 30-45 second examples of both popular and art music. He also used a survey using a 7-point Likert scale. The results showed that, overall, the popular styles received higher scores than the art music styles. However, the scores for jazz and classical music increased with years of music training. In the areas of specific music training, former choir students showed more preference for dance music. Piano students showed greater preference in all areas. Previous experience in band significantly affected preference for art music, while having no effect on popular styles. This study showed that different types of music training could influence music preference in different ways.

These studies showed many of the factors that affect music preference, but no study looked at solely band music, which is a vital part of music education in the United States. Most studies also did not look at students solely in organized band classes. In this study, I want to see how the number of years in band affects band music preference.

### **Method**

The students that participated in this study were sixth through twelfth grade band members in the Wayne County School District in Wayne County, Georgia. The three schools that were included were Arthur Williams Middle School, Martha Puckett Middle School, and Wayne County High School. The school is a fairly rural district with one county high school and two middle schools. The demographics of

the high school students are: 70% White, 23% Black, 4% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% Two or more races. The demographics of Arthur Williams Middle School were: 70% White, 21% Black, 6% Hispanic, 2% Two or more races, and 1% Asian. The demographics of Martha Puckett Middle School were: 72% White, 19% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 2% Two or more races (Source: greatschools.com). 252 students participated in the study, and it was approved by the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board.

I assigned 10 concert band pieces into five different categories, which were middle school band, classical band, contemporary band, publisher-influenced band, and folk-influenced band music. The middle school band category consisted of *The Tempest* by Robert W. Smith and *As Seasons Change* by James Swearingen. The classical band category consisted of the first movement of *English Folk Song Suite* by Ralph Vaughan Williams and *Irish Tune from County Derry* by Percy Grainger. The contemporary band category consisted of *Gavorkna Fanfare* by Jack Stamp and *Hymn to a Blue Hour* by John Mackey. The publisher-influenced band category consisted of *Ride* by Sam Hazo and *Into the Storm* by Robert W. Smith. The folk-influenced band category consisted of *Wedding Dance* by Jacques Press and *Uncle Sid* by Jonathan Newman. *Uncle Sid* contains “Hava Nagila”, a Jewish folk song, thus putting this piece in the folk category. I selected approximately thirty seconds from each piece. I selected both technical and lyrical pieces for each category, since tempo influences preference (LeBlanc 1983).

Next, I contacted the teachers and principals to get permission to give the survey. Once I got permission from the administration, the teacher sent home a

parental consent form. I created a survey with a Likert-type Scale from 1-6 for students to circle a preference rating (1 = low, 6 = high). I also asked what grade the students were, how many years they had been in band, their instrument, if they had taken music lessons prior to sixth grade, and how many years they had taken lessons. After I made the survey, I visited each site to administer the listening test. Before starting the survey, I read aloud an assent form that each student filled out. The students listened to the pieces over the band room audio system, and they had approximately twenty seconds in between examples.

### **Results**

After the surveys were completed at all the schools, I inserted all the data into a spreadsheet. Table 1 contains all the information about the students at each school, including the number of students surveyed, their average years in band, and the average number of years of prior music lessons. The two middle schools had similar numbers of students surveyed, and the uneven ratio of boys to girls was similar. In contrast, the high school had nearly half boys and half girls. The years of prior music lessons were similar across the two middle schools, while they were higher at the high school. This may show students in high school may be more likely to stay in band if they have a past history with music lessons, which would be an interesting topic to research further.

Table 1. Participant Information

School	# Surveyed	# Boys	# Girls	Years in Band	Years Prior Lessons	# Took Private Lessons
MS 1	102	36	66	1.59 (0.79)	0.48 (1.31)	22
MS 2	107	42	65	1.55 (0.73)	0.5 (1.41)	24
HS 1	43	20	23	6.16 (1.29)	1.12 (1.88)	13

(Note: MS 1= Martha Puckett Middle School, MS 2 = Arthur Williams Middle School)

In analyzing the preference scores of the pieces, I separated the two middle schools in the data, because some grades had vastly different answers between the two schools. Next, I examined how the scores varied among each piece through each grade level. This is shown in Table 2.

Tables 2a-2e. Mean (Standard Deviation) Scores by Grade Level for Each Piece

Table 2a. Publisher-influenced Pieces

Grade Level	Into the Storm		Ride	
	MS 1	MS 2	MS 1	MS 2
6	4.8 (1.17)	4.52 (1.26)	5.18 (1.31)	4.76 (1.38)
7	3.83 (1.19)	4.36 (1.31)	4.87 (1.25)	5.25 (1.04)
8	3.39 (0.85)	4.13 (1.36)	5.17 (1.1)	4.69 (1.74)
10	4.5 (1.58)		5.8 (0.42)	
11	4.53 (1.36)		5.6 (0.74)	
12	4.78 (1.06)		5.94 (0.24)	

Table 2b. Classic Band Pieces

Grade Level	Irish Tune		English Folk Song Suite	
	MS 1	MS 2	MS 1	MS 2
6	4.18 (1.44)	3.25 (1.5)	5.61 (0.82)	5.29 (1.31)
7	3.04 (1.40)	3.79 (1.42)	5.13 (0.91)	5.22 (1.19)
8	3.44 (0.98)	3.31 (1.74)	5.22 (0.88)	5 (1.03)
10	4.4 (1.17)		4.8 (0.79)	
11	4.2 (1.15)		4.53 (1.3)	
12	4.5 (0.99)		4.56 (1.25)	

Table 2c. Middle School Band Pieces

Grade Level	The Tempest		As Seasons Change	
	MS 1	MS 2	MS 1	MS 2
6	5.84 (0.52)	5.83 (0.68)	4.74 (1.48)	4.46 (1.4)
7	5.57 (0.51)	5.86 (0.36)	4.13 (1.46)	4.25 (1.29)
8	5.5 (0.71)	5.5 (0.63)	4.06 (1.26)	3.94 (1.39)
10	5.6 (0.52)		5.4 (0.7)	
11	5.6 (0.63)		5.07 (1.33)	
12	5.11 (0.96)		4.94 (0.80)	

Table 2d. Contemporary Band Pieces

Grade Level	Gavorkna Fanfare		Hymn to a Blue Hour	
	MS 1	MS 2	MS 1	MS 2
6	4.75 (1.5)	4.57 (1.87)	4.84 (1.21)	3.67 (1.44)
7	4.26 (1.63)	4.93 (1.56)	4.35 (1.27)	4.11 (1.45)
8	4.89 (1.28)	5.31 (1.25)	4.44 (1.29)	3.44 (1.36)
10	5.5 (0.85)		4.8 (1.14)	
11	5.8 (0.41)		4.8 (1.26)	
12	5.17 (1.25)		4.56 (1.1)	

Table 2e. Folk-influenced Pieces

Grade Level	Wedding		Uncle Sid	
	MS 1	MS 2	MS 1	MS 2
6	5.46 (1.04)	4.87 (1.46)	4.51 (1.64)	3 (1.77)
7	5.3 (0.93)	5.54 (0.84)	3.83 (1.7)	3.46 (1.6)
8	5.22 (1.17)	5.13 (1.02)	4.33 (1.61)	4 (1.67)
10	5.6 (0.97)		4.2 (1.03)	
11	5.33 (0.82)		3.8 (1.32)	
12	5.06 (0.64)		3.06 (0.94)	

Overall, the scores of lyrical pieces tended to rise as students progressed through high school. The technical pieces were popular among all age groups, but tended to level off in high school. There were certainly some exceptions, as the sixth grade at Middle School 1 rated some pieces higher than the high school. This made

me wonder if the different grades may have been rating pieces on a different scale, so I made a table examining the difference between the highest and lowest scoring pieces in each grade.

Table 3 shows that the difference between the highest and lowest scoring piece tended to go down through middle school, and then rose once again after tenth grade up through twelfth grade.

Table 3. Difference Between Highest and Lowest Scoring Piece

Grade	MS 1	MS 2
6	1.66	2.83
7	2.53	2.4
8	2.11	2.19
10		1.6
11		2
12		2.88

Next, I considered how students' familiarity with a piece affected the preference scores. I selected all the students who circled yes on a piece and averaged those scores, and then did the same with the students who circled no.

To examine the effect of familiarity, I considered the preference of those who knew the piece compared to those who indicated they did not know it. At every grade level for every piece, the students who knew it had a stronger preference score. Table 4 shows this relationship by showing the difference in preference means by familiarity, which was consistent through both middle schools as well as the high school. Although there were a few exceptions, the difference between the two groups was lower in the high school.

Table 4. Difference in Preference Means by Familiarity With the Piece

Table 4a. Publisher-influenced Pieces

Grade Level	Into the Storm	Ride
MS 1	1.03	0.09
MS 2	0.64	0.76
HS	0.42	0.01

Table 4b. Classic Band Pieces

Grade Level	Irish Tune	English Folk
MS 1	1.04	0.32
MS 2	1.55	0.73
HS	0.64	0.46

Table 4c. Middle School Band Pieces

Grade Level	Tempest	As Seasons Change
MS 1	0.21	1.28
MS 2	0.05	1.29
HS	0.11	0.06

Table 4d. Contemporary Band Pieces

Grade Level	Gavorkna	Hymn to a Blue Hour
MS 1	0.55	0.76
MS 2	0.55	0.64
HS	0.33	1.43

Table 4e. Folk-influenced Pieces

Grade Level	Wedding Dance	Uncle Sid
MS 1	0.66	0.7
MS 2	0.84	1.37
HS	0.33	0.96

Finally, I combined the scores of both pieces in each category to make a graph based on each category. Figure 4 more easily shows how preference between different categories changed throughout the age groups.



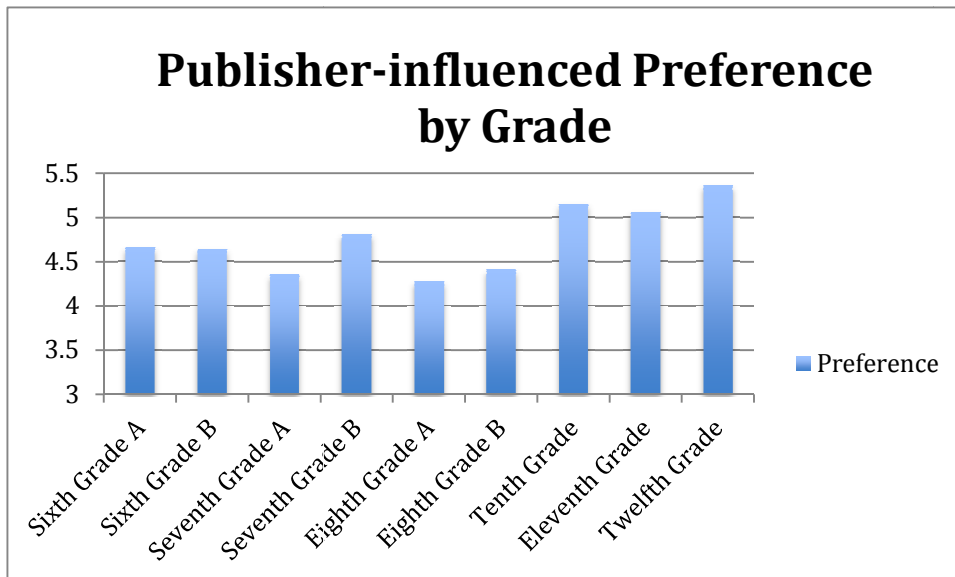


Figure 1a.

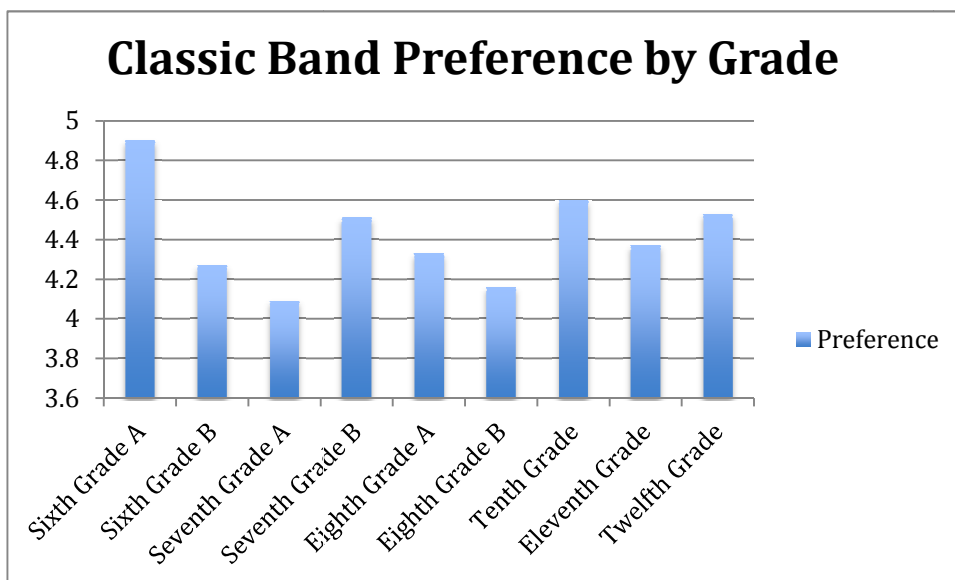


Figure 1b.

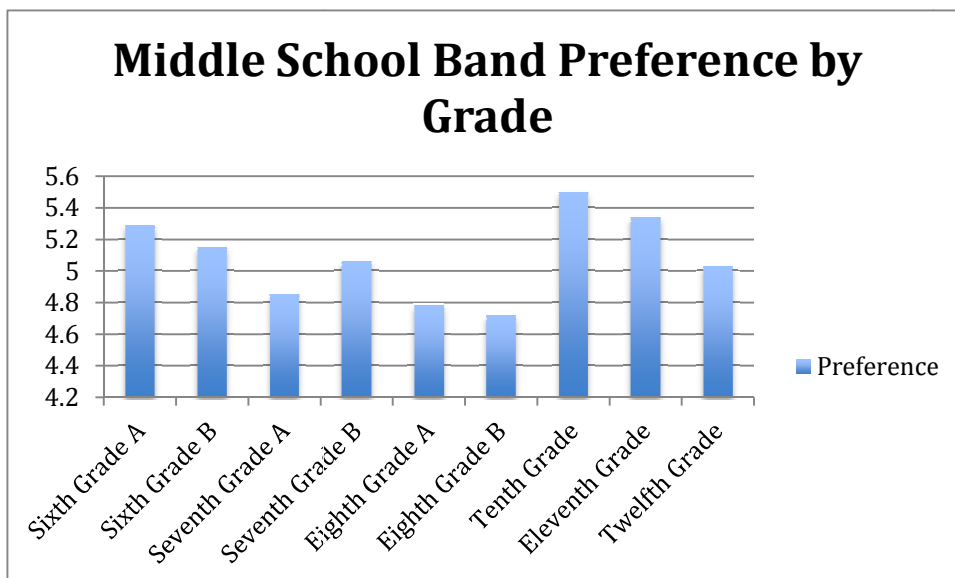


Figure 1c.

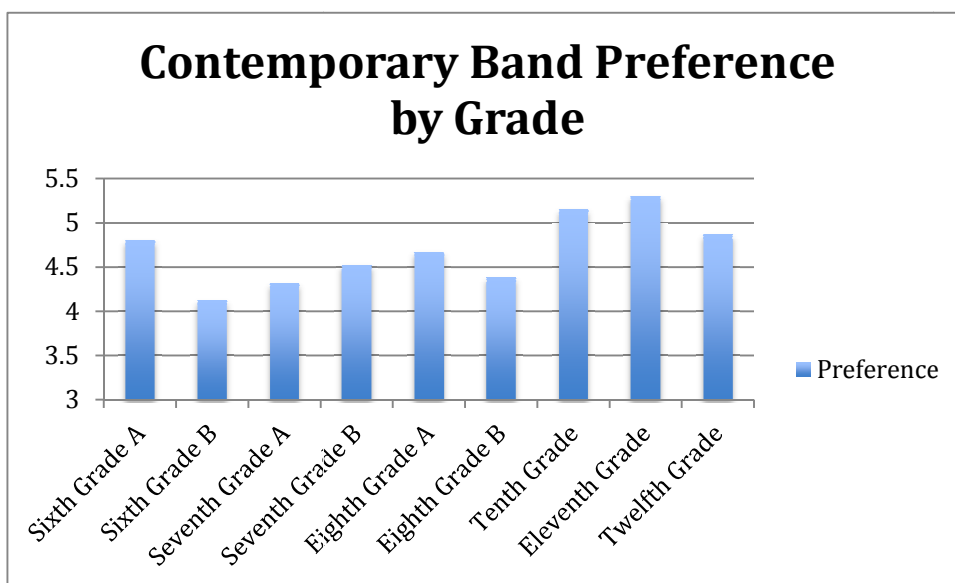


Figure 1d.

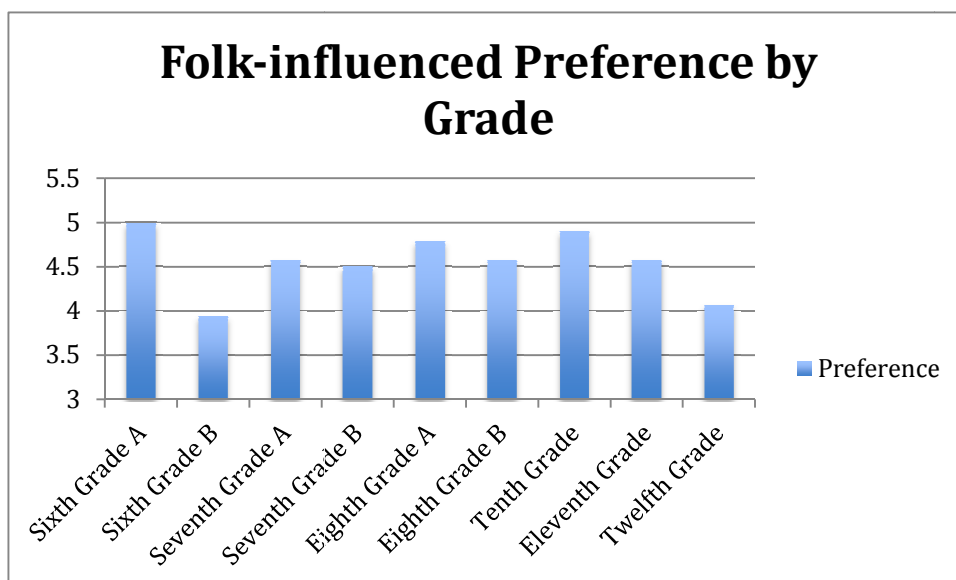


Figure 1e.

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the number of years in band affected music preference. I selected five genres of band music, and I selected both a technical and lyrical piece for each genre. The genres were middle school band, classical band, contemporary band, publisher-influenced band, and folk-influenced band music. I then had 252 middle school and high school students complete a preference listening test.

Looking strictly at lyrical and technical pieces, the middle school students rated the technical pieces higher than the lyrical pieces. The high school students rated the lyrical pieces much higher than the middle school students did. This supports LeBlanc's studies (1983) on music preference, which showed that younger listeners preferred faster passages. There was not a meaningful difference in scores

between classic band and publisher-influenced categories among middle school students. Band directors should not be afraid to play classic wind band pieces with students based upon preference. This study shows that students actually like those pieces just as much as the publisher-influenced pieces. As students got older, they preferred lyrical pieces more and more. Therefore, Band directors should try to incorporate pieces that contain both technical and lyrical qualities to ease students into lyrical pieces.

In general, the standard deviation decreased from sixth grade through twelfth grade. This was not always the case, but this trend shows that more students appreciated and agreed on each piece the longer they are in band. The biggest drop in standard deviation was in *Ride*. The biggest explanation for this is that the seniors performed *Ride* at LGPE two years prior to the survey, so they are all extremely familiar with the piece. As Bradley studied (1971), the more someone has heard a piece, the more likely they are to enjoy it. This is supported elsewhere in this survey, because every group of people that had heard a piece rated it higher than the group that had not. This was consistent throughout all grade levels.

Another interesting trend I observed was how Middle School 1's sixth grade scored nearly every lyrical piece at least a point higher than Middle School 2. I talked to the director at middle school 1, and he said that the group never complained about any music put in front of them. They just play it. Not all groups are the same, and the preference scores from these two middle schools support this statement.

Looking at the difference between the highest and lowest scoring piece can help us understand why and how students score a certain way. Other than the sixth grade at middle school one, the difference between the highest and lowest scores decreased until tenth grade, and then went back up through twelfth grade. I believe this is because throughout middle school, students get introduced to more and more music, so they begin to rate certain pieces higher the longer they were in band. As students progress through high school, they are truly immersed in the music, so they can more accurately determine their own musical opinions. This would explain why the difference goes up after tenth grade, since the students have finally been introduced to enough music to form their own musical opinions.

Familiarity has a huge impact on how much a student enjoys a piece (Bradley 1971). On every piece at every level, students familiar with a piece rated it higher than students not familiar with it. The difference went down through high school for the most part, which may reflect why the “no” scores were higher. Students were more familiar with that type of music. This shows that band directors simply need to familiarize their students with more music. Just that familiarity will open up students’ minds to new and different types of music. Band directors who are afraid to try newer and different types of music are doing their students a disservice. Students will never enjoy a type of music if they never hear it.

Looking at each category of band music (middle school band, classical band, contemporary band, publisher-influenced band, and folk-influenced band music), preference change differed for each category. This could be because students at the high school are more familiar with certain categories, or it could be because those

categories naturally score higher. More in depth research would need to be done. Preference improved among high school students in the Publisher-influenced category. This is no surprise, because it is a category students are most familiar with. It was also a generally high scoring category compared to all other categories among all ages. Classic Band preference only slightly increased. This could be because students are not introduced to as much Classic Band Literature as they are Publisher-influenced. The sixth graders overall scored this category just as high as the high school students, so band directors should introduce this type of music to students early on, even if it is just through listening.

It is interesting to note that the Middle School Band Category went down through middle school, and then went up in high school. The main reason for the jump in high school was due to *As Seasons Change* being rated higher. This is probably due to high school students being more perceptive to lyrical pieces and not necessarily due to enjoying the style more than middle school students. Contemporary band scores went up in high school, and a lot of that rise had to do with the rise in score of *Hymn to a Blue Hour*. The middle school students actually enjoyed *Gavorkna Fanfare* at a high rate. Band directors interested in introducing more contemporary works should probably begin with technical pieces in order to get the best response. In the final category of Folk-influenced pieces, years in band did not seem to influence the scores that much. This is possibly due to all grades being just as unfamiliar with this type of music, as both pieces were influenced by the harmonic minor scale.

The results from this study can be beneficial to both band directors and composers. Although this study was done in only one school district, educators and composers can get an idea on how music preference changes throughout years in band. Many band directors may have concerns about how students will react to certain pieces. The results of my study show that we should not let fear of our students' music preference negatively impact the quality of literature we present our students.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

More research should be done to further our understanding of musical preference. This study was done in a localized rural area. A study investigating how consistent results are in more urban and suburban areas could teach us even more about music preference. A study with more and broader categories could also be useful, including more aleatoric and atonal types of music. This study was done with different age groups of students who went through the same school district. Different groups of students can respond differently to different types of music, as the sixth grade students at Middle Schools 1 and 2 showed. A study that includes the same group of students as they progressed throughout band would be ideal in determining how years in band affected music preference.

### **Final Recommendations for Teachers and Composers:**

Students ultimately want to play music that they enjoy. Part of the job of being a band director is picking repertoire that students enjoy. Students playing music they do not enjoy is a lot like a student playing a sport they do not enjoy – they probably will not stay! However, band directors should not use this to fuel their fear of certain types of repertoire. One of the biggest parts of music preference is enjoyment, and my research has proven that students can be taught to enjoy a wide range of music. My biggest suggestion to band directors is to introduce as many types of music to students as early as you can. Performance of every type of music is not necessary, but at least allow students to listen to music every day to allow their own intrigue to lead them to explore all music has to offer. Our job as music educators is to teach students about music. If we are only introducing students to a fraction of the type of music that is out there, are we really doing our job? Based on this and past studies, band directors should introduce technical pieces first, and then branch out into lyrical pieces. Familiarity is important, so as long as band directors introduce different types of music to students, then the students will respond more positively to that music.

Composers should also not be afraid to compose music based on perceived student interests, as this study shows. They should not limit themselves to certain musical elements simply because students may not respond well to new elements. Middle school composers should aim to write music that contains both fast and slow sections to introduce students to lyrical elements early, while still having fast elements that the students already enjoy.



In addition to students listening, band directors should listen to new music and listen to it often. Band directors should be able to listen and know what music will help develop their students' musicianship. If a band director can do this, they can pass it down to their students, allowing students to come out of band with their own unique music preference, which will continue advancing our repertoire of band music.

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