

GLOBAL MUSIC

Rap, Rock, Race, and Rhythm: *Music and More in a Methods Class*

Recently, we stopped to take stock of the materials of our methods courses. We proudly report that they appear to be geared towards the preservation of children's songs, traditional heritage songs of Western and world cultures, and long-standing representations of valued musical genres. Mozart finds a featured place in our exemplar lessons as does Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Saent-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, and Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. We take our university students (in hopes that they will take the children in their classes) on brief excursions to the music of Bali's gamelan, Brazil's samba, and Bulgaria's polyphonic choral sound. There is plenty of evidence in our courses, too, to indicate that certain traditional songs make up a musical canon that is central to the school music experiences of American children, from "Charlie Over the Ocean" to "Mbube". There are so many sonic forms from which to choose, and we are all the richer (if not also running ragged) from the variety. It seems to us that music methods courses are as much about the musical selections we make as the pedagogical ways in which the music is transmitted and acquired.

Still, at the risk of toppling the already burgeoning lineup of musical "musts" for inclusion in our courses and curricular schedules, we have jointly worried that we may yet be falling short of a vital repertoire within the realm of the currently popular and musically meaningful: rock and rap (or hip hop). We seem to have determined that these genres go beyond the limits which we have set within the formal realm of music education. Intentionally or accidentally, we have chosen not to, or have not determined how to, make connections to the popular culture in which young people live. Stretched as we are, we let *that* music go, and may even have made the point that is made generation by generation: the music we teach and facilitate in school is that which young people cannot get through the media or in their homes. For at least a century, school music is definitively not "out-of-school music", and so rock and rap have been blocked from entry to our methods classes.

For a handful of teachers, a venture into popular music culture may be to the nature and substance of the Beatles' "Hey Jude", "Good Vibrations" by the Beach Boys, Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven", and Aretha Franklin's

"R-E-S-P-E-C-T". This is classic rock (and soul), the music of popular culture some 40 years ago when university professors were young (or unborn!). But it is not current popular culture. Rock (and soul) of several generations ago may be amusing to some young people, mildly intriguing to others, and also even occasionally "annoying". But that music is decidedly not their music. Yet for many reasons, their music — the music of *their* time — is worthy of our effort to set up for occasions (alone and together with a friendly colleague) to hear, know, and consider how it might be relevant to the process of musically educating the young.

So this we have done, separately and together: listen, talk to teenagers (and our own university students), read up on popular music and society, and compare notes. This has led us to develop a stance and a strategy, and to provide a thumbnail sketch of rock and hip hop for its musical and social significance — uniquely, as only methods course teachers can do, giving emphasis to what is relevant to us in preparing teachers to include this music as a piece of the picture of what constitutes a complete musical education. It should be known that the two of us are a full generation apart in age, one of us having lived adolescence as it was in the late 60s (with music by Eric Clapton, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, Santana, Stevie Wonder, Sly and the Family Stone), the other recalling it from her time in the 80s (via the sounds of Madonna, Michael Jackson, R.E.M., the Ramones, and M.C. Hammer). The popular music of our individual experiences thus differs, and yet it provides perspective even as we stretch to know another generation's expressions.

Reasons for Rock and Rap in School

The plea for pop music as a curricular thrust has been voiced for decades, but has never fully been heeded nor taken to heart. It's time. When we consider the aims of formal education in music, we cannot help but to recognize that rock and hip hop music have all of the potential to fit the philosophy of music-in-schools: they can be listened to for their musical features, textual features, and sociocultural meanings. If music is "humanly organized sound", as John Blacking (1973) famously defined it, then these popular genres fulfill this open-ended and encompassing definition for all of the

rich variety of melodic and tonal, rhythmic, textural, formal, and expressive possibilities they offer. We think it possible that, with a careful hammering out of the details of aim and active learning strategies, the music of Beethoven and Brazil could be aligned in a single lesson with selected recordings by Blink 182, Green Day, Destiny's Child, Alicia Keys, and OutKast. If we wish to teach music as it is humanly expressed (and we do indeed believe that we are in the business of raising intelligent, thoughtful, and open-minded musicians), then mixed-music lessons that engage our students in a careful consideration of its constituent parts and overall effects seem critical to the cause.

Popular music surrounds our young people on a daily basis. Their intake of these sonic experiences, both consciously and subconsciously, influences the ways in which they feel, listen, and think about music, and even the way they “do” music — that is, how they approach musical performance, composition, and improvisation. Many of our young people — including our teacher education students, along with secondary school students — are performing in rock, rap and popular music bands. Still others “dance the music” because it is the sound they hear at parties, in clubs, and in various scenes where they hang. This is music of their active engagement and, as such, these students have much to bring to the table regarding what the music is, how it is made, and why it is important. One might label a few of them as genuine “culture-bearers”, with the skill and experience to be tapped into for demonstration and discussion. By giving students a voice on the music they know so intimately, they receive validation for who they are musically. In some circumstances, this voice-giving may be the bridge that brings teacher and students together and links “their music” to “our music.”

Undergraduate Students on “Their Music”

In order to understand “their music” — genres and artists favored by the K-12 crowd — we turned to the undergraduate students who fill the seats in our methods courses. After all, they are typically closer to the world of rock and rap — closer in age to the children and adolescents; they are the top end of youth culture. These soon-to-be teachers have often had recent experiences in the performance of rock and rap music, and they most certainly socialize in settings where popular music is pervasive. Some perform popular music in clubs, while many more admit to listening to rock, rap, and other pop genres on a regular basis. A few confess that the juggling of popular music with the classical music of their training is no easy feat, but is certainly necessary for them and their future students.

We interviewed members of *My Book Your Sandwich*

(MBYS), a rock band popular in some of the local clubs in State College, PA, about the role of “their music” in school music programs. They are undergraduate students of music, some of them heading into music education as a professional. Three of the four members are classically trained musicians who found that their passion for rock music did not fit within the frame of their formal music studies in high school (and now college). They each play different instruments than those they are studying in school, and the musical style they meld is dramatically different than those performed in the university symphony and wind ensemble. As rockers-with-a-twist that fuse bluegrass sounds, they take risks in their decision to con-

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It is hardly possible to mention the rhythm of Negro music without thinking at once of that striking rhythmic element that is responsible for most of the characteristic vitality of the Negro's songs—syncopationWhere the rapid syncopated figure, known as the “snap” or “catch” is used in the music of other races, as is in the case of the Magyars or the Scotch, it is almost certain that its origin is in the accentuation of the words used by those people. But for lack of knowledge of the languages spoken by the African tribes, we cannot with absolute certainty explain in like manner the Negro's love of this rhythmic motive.

tinue their participation in their MBYS, and find themselves challenged by the need to switch their musical codes from rock to classical music (often on a daily basis).

Jimmy, a 22-year-old violinist, has become more than a pretty-good banjo and mandolin player in MBYS. He finds little support at the university for his passion of performing popular musics, and often feels tension, if not outright hostility, from his violin teacher. As he recalled, "During my senior recital, I wanted to include a few selections on my secondary instruments (banjo and mandolin), but I'm meeting with difficulties as my studio teacher believed these instruments would detract from the musical quality of my performance." In the first term of his senior year, Jimmy had to make the difficult decision to change studios so that he might find a way to balance his musical interests and skills. He recently performed his senior recital and it turned out as he had envisioned it: the first half featured violin selections by Mozart and Brahms, while the second half brought about a shift to old-timey, Appalachian, and bluegrass music performed on mandolin and banjo. Jimmy believes that "musicality exists regardless of the instruments that are played," and vows he will take that philosophy into the classes he will teach. Along with Jimmy, the members of MBYS have all felt "on the outside" of music education at one time or another, due to their dual interests in popular music and music of the classical conservatory tradition. It may be the strength of their conviction, based upon their performance experience in multiple musical styles, that will help the transformation of music curriculum in the schools in which they one day teach.

We surveyed undergraduate music education majors, too, in an attempt to know their involvement in rock, rap, and other popular musics. Four out of five students (81%) in a group of 32 students reported a preference for listening to popular music genres during their free time, 18% reported participation at one time or another in a rock band (or other popular music ensembles), and 62% reported that they were currently performing in, or interested in performing in, a rock band or rap group. Jennifer, who had previously participated in a rock band, recalled that she had to stop singing for the band because of the time she needed to practice her studio (private lesson) music. More influential than the time element, however, were signals she received from her applied teachers that "... that kind of singing is not acceptable for music education majors." She continued, "I'm not really sure why (it's not accepted) because if my future students are really going to make it in music, they would be likely to sing in a popular style." Jennifer's concerns are well-founded and prompt further investigation of popular music ensembles in schools, or at the very least, opportunities to listen analytically in order to understand the structures and meanings behind the rock and rap expressions of our time.

Students like Jennifer, Jimmy, the MBYS band members, and students of the undergraduate student survey rightly wonder how popular music might be at least sampled in the school music curriculum, and how they might learn to assist young people to become more active in the "real life" of the popular musical communities in which they live. Methods classes are appropriate venues for figuring feasible approaches to teaching musical genres so that students might learn them, and knowing the depth and breadth of the rich history and evolution of popular musical genres is limited only by the time available. While methods classes for prospective music teachers can only sample the possibilities, the potential is there to motivate interest for individual discovery and study.

Confrontations in Rhythm and Race

Rap in school? To a white middle-class teacher of some distance in age from Nelly or the Ying Yang Twins, and even to a surprising segment of the university students in music education programs, hip hop culture can be a scary proposition. Much of the verse is aggressive, sexually explicit, misogynist, and violent. Sex sells on the popular music market, as does hatred, but no school board, teaching faculty, or parent group would approve and encourage the curricular use of hip hop songs with these themes. Does this render the genre flat-out unacceptable for school use? We think that some of the poetry, the groove-tracks, the technology, the social meaningfulness of the spoken texts, and the mixed-media nature of rap as a performing art make it worthy of careful scrutiny for the learning it can provide to our methods students, modeled for use by them with their students.

Rap is the music, but hip hop is the broader culture which spawned it and continues to surround it. Hip hop is beats and

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12 I call your especial attention to the rhythms and the forms of the melodies in Jewish folksong. Expressive of the alert keenness of the Jewish mind is the sharpness and pointedness of the rhythms. Nothing is so hateful to Jewish sentiment as dull and watery motion.

rhymes, but it is also the content of the poetry, the gestures and movements wrapped up in its delivery, the clothing of the rappers and dancers, and the image that stylists and cinematographers have helped to fashion. It sprang from the uptown streets of New York City in the 1970s when black and Hispanic dancers and graffiti writers were reacting to the disco, soul, and funk of the era. Old-school hip hop began when “breakbeat” music triggered on-the-ground acrobatic solo dancing to the accompaniment of a turntable which a disc jockey could use to “backspin” (turn a disc backwards with his hand), scratching it to create punchy percussive sounds. By the 1990s, digital sampling had displaced turntables as the means of creating musical grooves, just as protest and praise poetry had at times turned to explicit expressions of violence, drugs, material wealth, racism, and sexism.

It may sound like noise to listeners outside the hip hop generation, but a careful listen brings one in tune with the grooves, so that head-poppin’ is a natural response — if not full-out gyrations of the body. Tricia Rose (1994) recounted the argument made by Hank Shocklee of Public Enemy’s production team for recognizing the musicianship in the rappers’ performance: “Music is nothing but organized noise. You can take anything — street sounds, us talking, whatever you want — and make it music by organizing it” (p. 82). (We doubt that Shocklee had read Blacking’s work, but similarities between the two musicians’ definitions of music are startling.) Hip hop music is dense music. It is a multilayered sonic web and a complex verbal interplay (especially in the case of duos and groups of rappers). Listen to the sounds of classic rappers like Grandmaster Flash, Run-D.M.C., Queen Latifah, and MC Hammer, and these qualities become clear. Listen with care to some of the tunes of 50 Cent, Coolio, Common, and Eminem, as the content of their lyrics is typically offensive. Bow Wow, OutKast, and Beastie Boys tend to perform lyrics that are relevant yet classroom appropriate.

Like rock, the music of hip hop has historical precedents. Worthy of exploration is the connection between Africa and the Americas that rap (and every other African-American music) can claim. The principles of rap stem from longstanding African musical and verbal traditions. Its rhythmic drive, varied tone colors, improvisatory nature, dense textures, and sometimes communal interplay of one performer’s sound with another remind the listener of some of the West African narratives and praise poetry out of Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and the Gambia. Yet rap must also be recognized as the voice of the oppressed urban underclass, particularly within the African-American community, as the inspirations for lyrics flow from black culture. For many, hip hop is a means of expression and a source for understanding the challenging conditions of living in America’s beleaguered urban communities.

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17 In examining [Indian music], certain characteristics impress themselves upon the listener. The strongest impression is undoubtedly the beating of the drum, the first sound heard by a visitor approaching a reservation, the pervading accompaniment of his stay, the last echo of the primitive life he leaves behind at his departure.

Finding Hits and Staying Safe

Even among music educators who are convinced that popular music should be integral to the school curriculum, many choose the security of rock “classics” from the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and avoid rap and contemporary rock genres due to the difficulties in finding classroom-appropriate materials. The quick rate at which popular songs fall in and out of favor, and the often mature themes and lyrics of popular music require teachers to be diligent in their search for selections. Methods course instructors may be at a disadvantage in knowing the contemporary music scene, while students in their methods courses are much closer to the source. University students mix with other students in a subtle six-degree network of friends who may be familiar with trends in popular music that are unfamiliar to the methods students. Their search for samples will bear rich findings if, in their dorm rooms and sorority houses, and in the clubs they frequent, they can unearth and bring to class samples of current popular music that sit high on the listening charts and get frequent play.

Beyond the resource of the undergraduate students, the time and extended effort of university professors to seek out rock and rap music can result in both finding the hits and staying safe within the bounds of appropriate texts and wholesome messages. What works in the hunt for hits? We recommend the following: (1) Be flexible and scan the multiple musical possibilities on radio and TV; (2) Tune in for more than a minute to programming that you typically don’t listen to — make it an hour every few days!; (3) Search out docu-

Table 1: Safe Music Selection

	Value		Appropriateness		Value to Appropriateness
	Musical Concepts	Cultural/ Social Concepts	Lyric and Themes	Additional Concerns	
Musical Example	List the important musical concepts.	List the important cultural or social concepts.	What is the theme of this selection?	Are there any additional concerns?	Compare and contrast the value to the appropriateness.
	What will students learn musically from this example?	What will students learn about culture or society from this example?	Is the theme of this song questionable?	Do you believe any student would be offended by the use of this example?	Are there any concerns about either the value or appropriateness of this selection?
	What does this example have to offer musically that is not found in other examples?	What does this example have to offer culturally that is not found in other examples?	Is this theme appropriate to the age level you are teaching?	Do you believe any parent would be offended by the use of this example?	If you have concerns about the either the value or appropriateness of the example, you may want to find a different example.
	Do these musical elements add to the overall goals of your long-range plan?	Do these cultural lessons add to the overall goals of your long-range plan?	Is there any questionable language within the lyrics?	Do you believe any administrator would be offended by the use of this example?	
			Are the lyrics appropriate to the age level you are teaching?	If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, state why they may be offended.	If you strongly believe the value of the selection outweighs issues of appropriateness, use the example but be prepared to defend your selection should students, parents, or administrators question it.

mentaries of artists and groups on MTV and VH-1 stations, as they often offer in-depth coverage of a musical or socio-musical theme; (4) Visit previously unexplored sections of your local music store; (5) Discover the local popular music scene in your community, using the excuse or honest explanation that you are a musician seeking relevant contemporary music; and (6) Make an effort to meet local rock and rap musicians, perhaps inviting them to class to perform, and talk about their music and their music learning experiences.

Because not all music that is of interest to young people will be well-suited to classroom use, guidelines should be established to assist preservice teachers in the selection of musical examples. These guidelines may also be useful for university professors and even secondary school students selecting music appropriate to feature and be shared in educational settings. Worthy of a methods class exercise, these guidelines are easily incorporated in discussions of rock, rap, other popular music genres, and can be applied more broadly to music of many historical periods and cultural styles. (See Table 1.)

“Youth Music” in Courses and Classes

The mission of American school music programs has tended to be traditional musical skill development, and the

acquisition of music (of some variety) as experience, creation, and re-creation. In limited ways, music has been linked to the arts, humanities, and social sciences, and some interdisciplinary attempts have made headway toward fostering substantive understandings of the world in which we live through the musical experience and active engagement of our young students. The potential of “youth music”, the music of rap and rock, is there for the making and the taking, for understanding more of the world of music and the people from whom these expressions have sprung.

We who choose to actively engage our students in a variety of musical genres, including the continued preservation of children’s songs and the traditional and art genres of the West and the world, must also consider the music of ‘now’ — rock and rap. Its rhythms are tantalizing, and its cultural implications are considerable. Our discovery of these missing pieces in the music education puzzle, coupled with our beliefs in the importance of these styles to young people, have led us to believe that we must press to find “school-safe samples” and innovative approaches for their inclusion in the curriculum. Although we continue to be challenged in selecting rock and rap music appropriate to the classroom setting, we recognize that these styles have value and meaning to our university methods course students (and their students).

Safe-and-Sound Music for School Use

Examples of Hard Rock

Shadows Fall (2004). *The Power of I and I*. On *The War Within* [CD]. Hawthorne, CA: Century Media.
Hatebreed (2003). *A Lesson Lived is a Lesson Learned*. On *The Rise of Brutality* [CD]. West Haven, CT: Universal / Stillborn Records.

Examples of Pop

Lavigne, A. (2005). *My Happy Ending*. On *Under My Skin* [CD]. New York: Arista.
Stefani, G. (2004). *Rich Girl*. On *Love.Angel.Music.Baby*. Santa Monica, CA: Interscope Records.
Clarkson, K. (2003). *Miss Independent*. On *Thankful*. New York: RCA Records.
Lifehouse (2005). *You and Me*. On *Lifehouse: Enhanced*. New York: Geffen Records.

Examples of Alternative

Blink 182 (2001). *First Date*. On *Take Off Your Pants and Jacket*. New York: MCA Records.
Green Day (2000). *Minority*. On *Warning*. New York: Reprise Records.

Good Charlotte (2005). *I Just Want to Live*. On *The Chronicles of Life and Death*. New York: Epic / Daylight Records.

White Stripes (2004). *We’re Going to be Friends*. On *Napoleon Dynamite*. Beverly Hills, CA: Lakeshore Records.

Examples of R&B

Carey, M. (2005). *We Belong Together*. On *The Emancipation of Mimi*. New York: Island Records.
Destiny’s Child (2005). *Girl*. On *Destiny Fulfilled*. New York: Sony Records.
Keys, A. (2003). *If I Ain’t Got You*. On *The Diary of Alicia Keys*. New York: J Records.

Examples of Rap

Bow Wow (2001). *Thank You*. On *Doggy Boy*. New York: Sony.
OutKast (2003). *Hey Ya*. On *Speakerboxxx: The Love Below*. New York: La Face Records.
Beastie Boys (2005). *Time to Build*. On *To the 5 Boroughs*. New York: Capitol / EMI Records.

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We believe it is a teacher's obligation to seek out these resources by sampling different stations on the radio, browsing through different sections of the music store, exploring websites for song lyrics and sound and video samples, and going to our students for musical material so as to become more aware of these streams of popular music. It may seem a squeeze, given the material that already comprises our curricula, but finding a place for rock and rap may be the way to begin bridging the gap between school and "out-of-school," and to offer a more complete musical education to our young people.

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Patricia Shehan Campbell*



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6 AUTHOR'S NOTE

The actual steps and figures of a folk dance are far more easily described than its real essence-atmosphere-spirit.

One may be fairly sure that the spirit of the dance is caught if the dancers laugh from sheer pleasure in the dance itself.

The most practical suggestions I can make for catching the spirit of a dance are these:

1. Have a musician who can feel the folk quality of the music and express it with charm and irresistible rhythm.
2. Pay particular attention to the expression marks and metronome tempi of the music.
3. Pay particular attention to the instructions, given in almost every description, in regard to the general character, meaning and spirit of the dance.

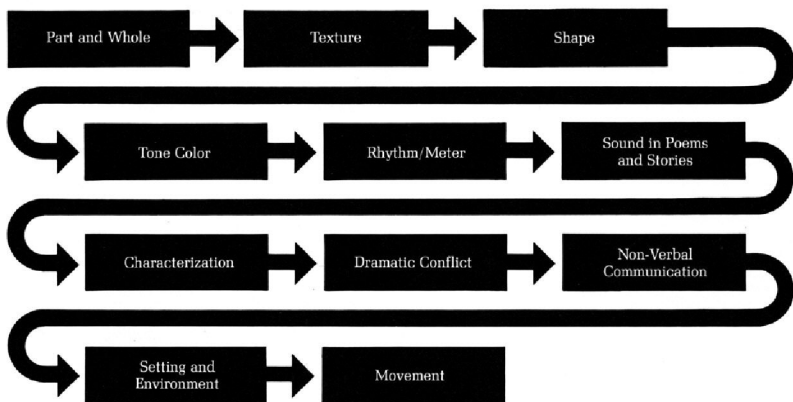
Intercourse with people of other countries has given me what knowledge I possess of their dances. I wish it were possible to express to every one of these people all my thanks for the pleasure and benefit which I have derived from their friendship.

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13 XXXX's aesthetic education curriculum is a comprehensive approach to aesthetic education using all the arts as its content. This curriculum is unlike traditional arts programs, however, in that while it also provides students with the opportunity to engage in performance and production of a variety of art forms, it does this in the broader context of perceiving, analyzing, judging, and valuing all the art forms as

exemplars of aesthetic experience. In most—although not all—elementary schools, arts programs are confined to “art” and “music,” and perhaps some “dance,” often as a part of the physical education program. XXXX's aesthetic education curriculum introduces each student to dance, film, literature, music, theatre, and visual arts as experiences that can enrich each of their lives.

Figure 4:
Level 2 Related Activities



1. Visit a potter's studio. Talk about wheel-thrown pottery in relation to movement. Discuss the effect of the part/whole relationship, texture, and shape on pottery.
2. Visit a large record store and categorize the music by rhythm. Ask the students to bring records from home and discuss their rhythms.
3. Visit a dance studio and talk to the staff about the different kinds of movement in dance, about the different kinds of dances, and about creating mood through movement.
4. Take a “texture and shape” walk in the community. Pay attention to interior and exterior uses of texture. Discover the predominant shapes of buildings. Discover parts and wholes.
5. Ask a playwright or director to talk about and demonstrate how arts elements such as sound, shape, color, texture, movement, setting, characterization, conflict, and non-verbal communication, are used in theatre. Ask artists working with other art forms to do the same thing.
6. Categorize the sculptures in the community according to shape. Are they mostly people shapes? shapes within shapes? part and whole compositions? and so on.
7. Take a “part/whole” field trip. Have students keep a list of parts they see in their environment and of the whole works the parts create. Use a camera to document some of these.

Contributors

The spirit of The Mountain Lake Reader draws upon the conversations, inspiration, and encouragement of the many participants at several of all of the first eight colloquium gatherings. Actual production of this fourth issue rested upon a variety of subgroups from this community.

The writers, whose signatures appear at the end of each piece, made the time to put some of this conversation on the page, and had the courage and grace to revise based on suggestion and friendly criticism.

The multifaceted technical aspects of production were delegated among a number of people. Most notably, Alexandra Andeen served cheerfully as an indispensable assistant working with all phases of the MLR project. Members of the Editorial Board worked with authors to ensure clarity and precision in their writing. Dawn High at UC Creative Services entertained our design suggestions with patience and good humor while proceeding to do what worked well despite our "artistic" visions. Finally, Sandra Stauffer orchestrated the Editorial Board retreats in Arizona (aka Mountain Lake West).

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