

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Undergraduates' Familiarity With and Preference For Arabic Music in Comparison With Other World Music

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This study examined undergraduate, non-music majors' familiarity with and preference for Arabic music as compared to other world music. Several factors were examined to assess their effect on music preference including familiarity, musical characteristics, and student characteristics. Study participants included 203 undergraduate, non-music majors enrolled in six sections of music appreciation classes. Participants were divided into Caucasian and non-Caucasian groups ranging from 18 to 42 years of age. Music excerpts from Africa (Congo), Latin America (Mexico), Asia (Japan), and the Middle East (Kuwait) were used as examples of different world music. Arabic music was introduced as a new factor in this study that had not been explored in previous research. Knowing about students' familiarity and preference for Arabic music may help in understanding the ramifications of its inclusion in music programs, and the proper method of introducing it to the students in the classroom. Participants listened to the 12 musical excerpts and completed the WMFPT questionnaire. Results indicated that participants were not familiar with the world music excerpts, but did like the excerpts to a moderate degree. Significant positive relationships were found between preference and familiarity, within preference ratings, and within familiarity ratings. The most influential musical characteristics in liking world music were rhythm, tempo, and timbre, with rhythm being the most influential. Participants' background seems to have no significant relationship with either familiarity or preference. Results revealed that playing a musical instrument, musical training, and previous exposure to music of other cultures significantly affected preference and familiarity ratings.