

# Music Inquiry

**By:**

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**Online:**

< <http://cnx.org/content/col11455/1.1/> >

**CONNECTIONS**

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# Chapter 1

## How to do Music Inquiry

### 1.1 Inquiry into Music: Course Home<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1.1 Introduction

**NOTE: Please note that this course is under construction.** Some of the links do not work because those modules have not yet been published. I hope to have all of the main parts of this course published by the end of 2012. You are welcome to contact me with comments and suggestions at any time. Thanks for your patience.

This module serves as the orientation and course "home" for an experimental course that takes an inquiry-based approach to learning about music. The purpose of the course is to provide guidance for individuals or groups in designing and carrying out music-learning inquiries that are tailored to the educational goals, learning style, cultural background, musical knowledge, and interests of the individual learners.

#### You will find in this module

- A short general introduction to inquiry-based learning, (Section 1.1.2: What is inquiry-based learning?)
- A description of the specific music-learning inquiry (Section 1.1.3: How does online music inquiry work?) process used in this course,
- Advice for teachers (Section 1.1.4: Advice for Teachers and Group Facilitators) and others who are interested in facilitating a group inquiry,
- A list of inquiry modules and module sections (Section 1.1.5: Inquiry Modules) offered through this course.
- Suggested resources (Section 1.1.6: Resources) for further reading about inquiry-based learning.

#### 1.1.2 What is inquiry-based learning?

**Inquiry-based learning** is an active, learner-centered (p. 2), structured but open-ended (p. 2) approach to education.

Traditional **teacher-centered** schooling methods rely on lectures, textbooks, and rote practice to give students a standardized set of knowledge and skills. Although such methods are efficient and convenient for educators and curriculum designers, many influential educators, psychologists, and philosophers have noted that this approach does not fit well with the way that people learn naturally. Humans have a strong innate interest in learning how their world works, what is going on around them, and how to do things. Think of a toddler who asks questions about everything around him, a child who wants to join in an activity she has been watching, or an adult who takes up a new hobby. All of them are experiencing learning

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m45092/1.3/>>.

as enjoyable and interesting. Unfortunately, standardized lecture-and-textbook approaches are typically too general and abstract to engage this natural inclination to enjoy learning, because they are not well-connected to the students' immediate, specific curiosities about the world around them. If students do not make those connections for themselves, the information and skills seem to be useless and irrelevant in "real life" and are soon forgotten. In this view, education that is more explicitly connected to the students' lives, and to their natural impulses to understand their world and be capable of acting in it, should be more effective as well as more enjoyable.

Based on these ideas, a variety of **learner-centered** teaching methods have been developed that take into account what the students in a course already know and understand, what engages their interest, and what they might want to be able to do with the thing-to-be-learned. Since learner-centered methods are often **active learning** methods that feature learning-through-doing, they are sometimes categorized according to what the students do: for example, a course might be described as inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based learning, or role-playing.

When a teaching method is described as **inquiry** or **inquiry-based learning**, it typically involves active learning in the setting of an **open-ended investigation** inspired by a specific question, problem, or project. The point of such an investigation is not to arrive at a "correct" answer that has already been determined by the teacher. Instead, students are expected to consult a variety of resources, investigate possible solutions, gather data, think critically about what they find, create a response that demonstrates what they have learned, seek dialogue and feedback, and be aware of new questions and problems that arose during their investigation. The last step is key; a good inquiry leads to more questions as the students discover that there are other questions, skills, and areas of knowledge that they would find useful, relevant, or interesting. In this way, instead of teaching students a preset or standardized body of knowledge, inquiry teaches them how to be the kind of person who can discover, understand, use, and discuss that kind of knowledge.

What do these ideas look like when put into practice? Here are a few examples of inquiry-style activities:

- Students in a social studies class investigate a local controversy, with the aim of understanding its historical roots, the viewpoints of various sides, and the possible effects of proposed actions. As a class, the students produce a video presenting what they learned in a documentary or news-item format.
- In a computer programming course, students are expected to create a working video game. Students are encouraged to play each other's games and provide constructive critiques.
- In biology, students study a local park or natural area, forming teams that may choose to investigate its plants, insects, birds, terrestrial animals, or aquatic life. Each team's findings are presented to, and discussed by, the entire class.
- To study music theory, each student is expected to choose a favorite tune and write an arrangement of it that is playable by a group that can be formed from members of the class.

Although each of these inquiries is designed to introduce students to a particular type of knowledge, there is also room for students to engage with the task in a way that makes sense to them personally. For example, one young programmer may focus on creating amusing animations and sound effects for her game, while another is more interested in how to create multiple difficulty levels. The ability of the students to have an active part in choosing the direction of the investigation is intrinsic to true inquiry. For example, the music assignment gives the students room not only for musical creativity, but also for creativity in posing and solving the problem. One student might choose a short, simple tune and harmonize it in four different ways in the course of the arrangement, while another works on creating a jazzy instrumental version of a favorite pop ballad. By the end of the assignment, the first may know more about (and be more interested in pursuing) voice leading and cadence types, while the second has developed an interest in orchestration and jazz harmonies. In contrast, an assignment to "write a two-part invention for piano in the style of Bach" allows a music theory student a degree of musical creativity, but is not sufficiently open-ended to be considered inquiry.

In the short term, the educational results of inquiry are not standardized, because arriving at a standard "correct" answer or acquiring a particular bit of knowledge is not the point. From the viewpoint of inquiry-based learning, a student who responds to the social studies investigation by deciding which side is "right,"

or by memorizing a list of "facts" about it, has not learned as much as the student who can demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the causes of the controversy, including an appreciation for the concerns of all of the stakeholders and the possible positive and negative effects of any proposed actions.

If the goal in the social studies class had been that all students know particular information - such as important dates - inquiry might not have been the best approach. If it is important that all of the students in the music theory course master the rules of Baroque counterpoint, then the Bach study may be the better assignment. However, if the goal is students who grasp the implications of historical and current events, or who are capable composers and arrangers, the inquiry assignments may be better; the students who have connected the knowledge to their everyday life and their own pursuits are more likely to remain engaged and eventually become genuinely interested in understanding history or writing good counterpoint.

In this way, allowing the students the intellectual "space" to develop a personal interest and connection with the materials eventually serves the long-term goals of the curriculum. For example, following the biology investigation, one student may know more about birds, while another has become something of an expert on local plants. However, both have also learned a basic process that they can now use to learn what the other knows, when they want to or need to. In addition, if the project leaves the class wondering why a park has many different kinds of birds but very few aquatic species, the new investigation that follows will be much more meaningful to the students than it would have been if the teacher had given a lecture on bird migration routes or water quality, and meaningful information is easier to remember and to apply to new situations.

### 1.1.3 How does online music inquiry work?

In general, learner-centered teaching methods are more challenging to organize than teacher-centered ones. However, because inquiry is so dependent on the availability of multiple sources of information, the Internet should make inquiry-based learning much more feasible than it has been in the past. In fact, there is so much information openly available online that many learners might be able to conduct useful inquiries with very little assistance, perhaps just a bit of structure and guidance in how to find useful resources and organize an inquiry.

Inquiry is closely related to the everyday skill of finding the answers to immediate questions, but formal inquiry takes a more long-range, "educative" perspective. It benefits from taking advantage of what educators know about how people learn and about the knowledge that is available in the various subject-area disciplines. For example, someone with a practical engineering problem may not realize that a particular type of math would be extremely useful in solving the problem. A beginning musician may have a clear long-term goal of writing songs for her rock band, but no clear idea how to learn what she needs to know in order to do that. In both cases, some structure and guidance could help the learner create a connection - an educational path - between their own project and "what people know" about engineering or music.

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#### Inquiry Cycle

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**Figure 1.1:** Five steps in an inquiry cycle lead naturally to the next cycle.

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This is the type of guidance that this course attempts to provide. Because the **content and context** of your inquiry will depend so much on you as an individual, this course focuses instead on the **structure and process** of an Internet-assisted music inquiry. Inquiry is often pictured as a cycle or spiral with specific steps that lead to the next inquiry cycle, (see Figure 1.1 (Inquiry Cycle)), so each module in this course focuses on a type of question that is common in music-learning investigations and that could be the focus of one

inquiry cycle. Rather than providing specific answers - which will depend on the specifics of your question - the module outlines the process for completing an inquiry cycle when you have that type of question. For example, Setting Words to Music could be adapted for writing pop song lyrics or translating an opera aria into English. Listening to Unfamiliar Music (Section 3.1) could help introduce you to the music of another culture, or the classical music of your own culture.

In addition to music-inquiry modules, there are also some modules that introduce you to each step of an inquiry (see the following sections). You do not need to do all of these modules. For example, if you have a very clear grasp of both the long-term goal and the beginning question of your inquiry, you can probably skip the "ask" module. However, you may want to do at least one of these inquiries, because these "beginners' modules" provide practice in conducting a cycle of inquiry, as well as practical guidance in how to accomplish each step of an inquiry. However, if you are eager to dive right into your music inquiry, you can begin with one of the Organizing an Inquiry modules, and consult the How to do Inquiry (Introductions to How to do Inquiry, p. 8) modules if you find yourself stuck at a particular step. Although this course is published as if it were a typical linear course, **you do not have to do all of the modules, nor do you have to do them in the order that they appear in the course.** (If you view this module as part of the course, your screen should show a left-sidebar that lists all of the modules, as well as a link at the end to the "next" module.) You can find below a list (Section 1.1.5: Inquiry Modules) of the inquiry-style modules that are available, or you can view a list of the course modules as a left-hand sidebar if you open the course in Connexions. I encourage you to start where it seems to make sense for you to start, and to contact me if you have suggestions for how to organize this type of course. (This is an experimental course that I consider to be part of an inquiry into how to create online educational materials that support inquiry!)

Inquiry is often pictured as a cycle. For the purposes of this course, I have borrowed a five-step cycle (Figure 1.1: Inquiry Cycle) that I learned from Chip Bruce. Professor Bruce and others at the University of Illinois have created an online Inquiry Page<sup>2</sup> that includes useful background information about inquiry as well as many examples of inquiries in a variety of subject areas. There are five steps in this cycle: Ask, Investigate, Create, Discuss, and Reflect.

### 1.1.3.1 Ask

A good inquiry begins with an inquiry-style question. If it would be easy for you to find and understand the answer to a question, the result is not really an inquiry, it's just "looking up the answer." On the other end of the spectrum, "how do I learn to read music?" suggests an important long-term goal, but it is too broad a question to be answered in just one inquiry cycle.

A question is a good starting point for an inquiry if it takes you into slightly unfamiliar territory, where understanding will take a little effort. What constitutes a good question therefore depends on you. Consider, for example, three people who hear the term circle of fifths<sup>3</sup> and decide to look it up. One has never studied music, cannot follow the explanation, and gives up after a frustrated attempt to understand what "fifths" are. Another has played piano for years and quickly recognizes that the term refers to patterns that he had already noticed when practicing scales. The third is a beginning saxophone student who has to puzzle through the circle by comparing it to the major scales and key signatures that she knows, then uses the circle to predict and play through some scales she has not yet learned, and from there decides to try to understand the "relative minor" scales that are also part of the circle. All three people had the same question, but that question only led to an inquiry in the third case.

If you do not have a clear idea of the goal of your inquiry, or of a question that can get you started off in a first cycle of inquiry, you may want to do the inquiry in the Designing an Inquiry Question module.

### 1.1.3.2 Investigate

Once you have a clear and useful question, you can start looking for answers. There are two main aspects to seeking new knowledge. One is "what do people know about this?" There are all sorts of resources out

<sup>2</sup><http://www.cii.illinois.edu/InquiryPage/index.html>

<sup>3</sup>"The Circle of Fifths" <<http://cnx.org/content/m10865/latest/>>

there that reflect what other people know, understand, believe, or do. It is possible that you may need to discover information that nobody knows, in which case your inquiry may become a research project - those who have written extensively about inquiry tend to conclude that inquiry-based learning and research follow essentially the same process - but most likely you will find that others have asked similar questions and discovered things that you will find very useful.

The other aspect to consider is "what do I already know?" In order to make sense of "what people know," you have to connect it to what you know, understand, believe and do. You may feel that you know nothing at all that can be connected to learning about music, but if you broaden your ideas about useful knowledge and useful connections, you will find that you do have starting points for your investigation, as well as a "tool kit" of approaches to learning about it.

If you are not certain what knowledge and skills you already have that might help you be successful in your music inquiry, try the inquiry in the Types of Music Knowledge<sup>4</sup> module. If you would like some practice locating resources and evaluating their usefulness and trustworthiness for your investigation, try the Locating Useful Music Resources module.

### 1.1.3.3 Create

If you have already mastered a particular area of knowledge, then looking up the answer or listening to an explanation may be sufficient to give a new piece of that knowledge a place in your personal understanding. That is not inquiry; in inquiry, you are trying to significantly expand, broaden or deepen your knowledge or skills, so that you can understand or do things that you could not understand or do before the inquiry. In this case, simply reading about something is not enough to learn it; the only way to create a place in your head for that knowledge or skill is to practice using it. This is why traditional classwork includes so many exercises and chances to practice, and why sports and music learning also center around practice. You may find yourself tempted to skip this step in order to move your inquiry along faster; **do not skip this step!** Take the long view, enjoy the journey, and realize that if there were short-cuts to becoming educated, everyone would be a world-class athlete, musician, doctor or engineer. This is the point at which many self-directed inquiries fail. The learner looks up an answer but fails to do something that turns "what people know" into "what I know and can do." In this type of situation, even if you manage to remember the disembodied "answer," you may fail to recognize the situations in which the information would be useful.

Since this is not a traditional classroom, you as the learner will decide how to organize, use and practice what you are discovering. You may already have a very clear idea of how to practice what you will be learning and how to present it to others in the "discuss" step of the inquiry. For example, if your goal involves composing songs for your band, no doubt you will try to incorporate what you have learned into your song-writing and ask for feedback from band members. If you are less certain how to turn what you are reading and hearing into something to do or create, try the inquiry in the Creative responses to music learning module.

### 1.1.3.4 Discuss

Learning, understanding, and knowledge generally happen in the context of people doing things together and communicating with each other. You will probably not find your inquiry to be very satisfying if you cannot communicate to others about your understanding or do things that others find to be interesting and skillful. It is therefore ideal to get honest, useful, encouraging feedback - a review or constructive critique<sup>5</sup> - from others with every cycle of inquiry. You may find it easy to arrange for this type of feedback, for example if you are taking part in a group inquiry, in a class or group that is pursuing related inquiries, or have a music instructor who is sympathetic to your inquiry goal.

If this step is a challenge for you, however, you may be tempted to skip it, and in some cycles you may have to rely on self-critique. **It is important that you not skip this step in every cycle.** You may

<sup>4</sup>"Ways of Knowing about Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m45102/latest/>>

<sup>5</sup>"Providing Constructive Criticism in Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m43427/latest/>>

have to be creative and resourceful in organizing feedback opportunities. Practicing Constructive Critique includes suggestions for assembling a "support" system of people who can offer you useful feedback.

Giving useful feedback that helps other people learn is an art that requires practice. Receiving feedback in a positive spirit can also be a challenge requiring a willingness to acknowledge your present shortcomings without getting discouraged. If your inquiry will involve providing feedback or critique to other members of your class or inquiry group, or if you must sometimes rely on self-critique, or if you have trouble receiving even constructive criticism, you should consider doing the Practicing Constructive Critique inquiry.

#### 1.1.3.5 Reflect

Presenting your ideas and creations to others, and receiving their feedback, should help you realize what you have learned, what is still unclear, what questions and interests others might have about your project, what resources and processes were useful (or not useful) to you, and what new questions are beginning to interest you. Because inquiry does not follow a standardized path to a predetermined conclusion, it is important to assess where the inquiry actually led you, and why, and how that will affect your next question and inquiry cycle. For example, you may decide that you have mastered a particular concept that you needed and are ready to take the next step towards your learning goal, or that you need a break from inquiry to digest and practice what you have learned. You may decide that the inquiry did not leave you where you had hoped to be, and decide to alter it, based on what you did learn, and "try again." Or you may decide to alter your long-term learning goal, a little or a lot, because the inquiry has changed your interests and questions.

If you are not certain how to do this step, try the Assessing a music inquiry module.

#### 1.1.4 Advice for Teachers and Group Facilitators

Because many of the people who use these resources are individuals learning on their own, I have tried to design this course so that it can be used by individuals without assistance. However, most of the literature on inquiry strongly suggests that group inquiries are preferable whenever they are feasible, because people learn more naturally and easily in working with others. The modules that are part of this course should be easily adaptable to a classroom, performance ensemble, or other group learning situation. (If you do have difficulties using the course to guide group inquiries, please let me know.)

Guiding inquiries is a skill that must be learned and practiced, like any other skill. If you are accustomed to more traditional teaching methods, inquiry-based learning may feel very unnatural at first. Learners who are accustomed to being told what to do and what they should know may also be uncomfortable with the inquiry process at first, although they are likely to become enthusiastic once they have had some practice (Knowles, 1975, p.33). It may be particularly difficult for you to give them support and structure without insisting on directing them to the questions and answers that you believe they should learn. It is useful to approach the project with the expectation that you will also be learning (about the learners, as well as about the subject area).

On the positive side, inquiry-based learning releases you from the requirement to be the expert source of everything the learner needs to know. Since inquiries can take unexpected directions, it would be unreasonable to expect that you would know the answers to all of the questions, and if you did, that might interfere with the investigation step of the inquiry, in which the learner is expected to deal with multiple sources of information. Malcolm Knowles has suggested that the main functions of the inquiry facilitator are to design and manage the inquiry process and to direct learners towards resources that might be useful to their inquiries (Knowles, 1984, p. 14). If you take this approach, then your most useful assets will be familiarity with the inquiry process, familiarity with many resources, and the ability to help learners locate even more resources if necessary.

You can find a great deal of useful advice on guiding inquiries in the sources suggested in the Resources (Section 1.1.6: Resources) section below. Meanwhile, as you plan the structure and process for the inquiry that you will lead, you may find it useful to ask whether your plan adheres to the following guidelines.

**A good inquiry will:**

- **Begin with a question or problem that the learner is naturally curious about.** For example, a lesson for young children might be about how to share something fairly, a question that is of natural interest to most children, and which can easily lead to exploration of important math concepts such as division, fractions or keeping track of time. Students who are accustomed to inquiry may be able to develop good questions themselves; others may need a teacher or facilitator to help construct a question that is relevant to their interests and will lead to useful learning. However, the facilitator should be careful not to impose an inquiry that holds no real interest for the learners; for example, children who have just visited a zoo may be very curious about what they noticed, which could lead to some good inquiries into science, but they may have little interest in pursuing science questions that the teacher prepared before the trip.
- **Involve the learner in the discovery of the answer.** Giving learners the facts or answers does not require that they think deeply about the information or the problem. It does not give them space to make sense of the facts or to discover connections between a specific problem-and-solution, and the more general, abstract principles that make it relevant to other questions and problems that they will encounter. Involving them in activities, discussions, and creative projects helps them actually connect with and think through the problem.
- **Allow room for exploration and alternative solutions.** The lesson intended for the "sharing" problem may have been fractions or telling time; but the solution that is attractive to the students might be writing a classroom code of conduct, or constructing an hourglass-type timer. In inquiry, the learning happens when the student makes the connection between the question/problem and the answer/solution. It can be sorely tempting to try to impose the "correct" solution, but if the solution has to be imposed by the teacher, the students are not likely to understand where it came from or be able to apply it to similar problems.
- **Not be satisfied with answers that do not involve learning.** For example, curiosity about "pirates" could lead to a superficial lesson that simply reinforces popular imagery and stereotypes, or it could lead to an educational inquiry into a specific historical period, or current events, or the relationship between law and international spaces such as the ocean and the Internet. One important role of the facilitator is to ensure that students are not satisfied with easy, superficial answers.
- **Encourage critical thinking, questioning, and awareness of perspective.** This includes students asking questions that are not on the syllabus, challenging standard answers, and developing their own perspective on the subject. For example, "is downloading music from the Internet really piracy?" is a reasonable question, and it is ultimately more useful for the student to be aware of the complexity of debates and laws in this area; to form and be able to defend an informed opinion on the subject; and to understand why others may have different opinions, than it is to memorize an official answer to the question.
- **As much as possible, mimic, teach, and model the way knowledgeable people answer such questions "in the real world."** For example, real historians and reporters don't rely on a single source; they check multiple sources to develop a more well-rounded and nuanced view of "what happened." When an experiment produces an unexpected result, real scientists do not assume they got the "wrong" answer; instead they investigate the causes of the surprise. Students can learn a great deal about "how to do" and "how to be" in the real world from the example you set in dealing with unexpected problems, consulting and checking sources, and searching for explanations for surprising results.
- **Lead to another question that the learner is naturally curious about,** thus continuing the learning process indefinitely.

### 1.1.5 Inquiry Modules

There are three types of modules that are part of this music inquiry course: modules that introduce you to each step (Introductions to How to do Inquiry, p. 8) of an inquiry, modules to help you organize and begin your inquiry, and modules designed as inquiries about music-learning (Inquiries in Specific Subject

Areas, p. 8). In general, modules that are focused on providing specific information or explanations about music are **content** modules, not inquiry modules; they would be considered possible resources to use in the investigation step of an inquiry, but not as guides for doing inquiry. However, I have included in some content modules a section with suggestions for how to do an inquiry that will help you master that particular content. They are not part of this course, but are listed below in case they might help you with your inquiry.

### Introductions to How to do Inquiry

- Designing an Inquiry Question (Section 1.2)
- Ways of Knowing about Music<sup>6</sup>
- Locating Useful Music Resources
- Creations that respond to music learning
- Practicing Constructive Critique
- Assessing a music inquiry

### Inquiries into Types of Music Knowledge

- Ear Training: Listening to Unfamiliar Music (Section 3.1)

### Inquiries in Specific Subject Areas

- Harmonic Analysis as Inquiry (Section 4.1)
- Choosing a Publication License (Section 3.1) for your musical creation

## 1.1.6 Resources

The course of a good inquiry will depend on specifics, not only on the subject area and goals of the inquiry and the interests and prior understandings of the learners, but also on the resources available for the inquiry, including any teachers or facilitators. This course is my attempt to put inquiry methods into practice in the specific situation of using open Internet-based resources to support self-directed music learning. Even if this course works well, other good inquiries are likely to look very different due to different circumstances.

Inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning will also vary considerably because they are based on the ideas of different education theorists, philosophers, and psychologists; a variety of approaches have been tested by teachers and education researchers in many different types of situations. If you are interested in learning more about inquiry and inquiry-based learning, here are some general suggestions to get you started.

### Online searches

- As of this writing, The Inquiry Page<sup>7</sup> and Thirteen.org<sup>8</sup> had useful introductory information about inquiry-based learning.
- Searches for "inquiry-based learning" will turn up journal articles on education research, as well as suggestions from other teachers for inquiry curricula in the classroom. You may want to focus on "inquiry based lessons" or "inquiry based lesson plans." If you want to know what research is revealing, inquiry methods and study findings depend a lot on the context; look for studies that happened in a similar situation to yours (for example, high school science classes). Keep in mind that "inquiry-based learning" is a very broad concept that different educator/researcher communities may define in different ways. If you are looking for help constructing lesson plans, you may want to search, for example, for "inquiry based learning science" or "inquiry based learning social studies". However, some educators feel that the division of the curriculum into subject areas is antithetical to the idea of inquiry; after all, an inquiry about music can easily generate questions about math, science, literature,

<sup>6</sup>"Ways of Knowing about Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m45102/latest/>>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.cii.illinois.edu/InquiryPage/index.html>

<sup>8</sup><http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html>

history, or culture. If this makes sense to you, try looking for "inquiry based interdisciplinary learning". Finally, if you are interested in taking an inquiry/research approach to your own teaching (basically, researching/inquiring into how best to lead inquiries in your situation), try searching for "education action research".

## Books

- Cochran-Smith, M., and Lytle, S. L. (2009). **Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the New Generation**. New York and London: Teachers College Press. Inquiry-based learning is often considered to be closely related to the practice of research as inquiry. Both this book and the one by Wells discuss inquiry as an approach both to teaching and to researching one's own teaching practice.
- Dewey, J. (1938/1997). **Experience and Education**. New York: Touchstone. This book lays out the argument for taking an inquiry-based approach to education, by the philosopher-educator who is considered one of the founders of this approach.
- Knowles, M. (1975). **Self-directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers**. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company; Knowles, M., and Associates. (1984). **Andragogy in Action: Applying Modern Principles of Adult Learning**. San Francisco and London: Jossey-Bass Inc. **Andragogy** is Knowles' preferred term for learner-based methods, and these two books are practical guides for conducting a widely-tested inquiry-style method.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2005). **Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom**. New York: Teachers College Press. This book makes the argument that learner-centered education is particularly crucial for students whose lives and experiences are furthest away from the assumptions of the standard curriculum (for example, those from locally-minority cultures or low socioeconomic status), and provides advice for teachers who would like to implement these ideas within the confines of standardized curricula and testing.
- Wells, G. (2001). **Action, Talk, and Text: Learning and Teaching through Inquiry**. New York and London: Teachers College Press.

## 1.2 Designing Inquiry Questions<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2.1 Introduction

Inquiry takes an approach to learning that is very different from standard educational practices. One of the most basic differences is that the focus of each learning project has not been predetermined by the instructor or the curriculum. Tailoring the inquiry to the needs and interests of the learner makes the learning process much more understandable, interesting, and memorable for the learner, but one thing that is lost is a ready-made plan designed by education experts to guide the learner in useful directions at reasonable speeds.

This makes the first step of an inquiry - asking a question - very important, because it is the question that determines the "speed and direction" of the inquiry. In formal teacher-guided inquiries, one of the most crucial roles of the instructor/facilitator is to ensure that the question is well-connected to curriculum goals as well as to the learner's present understandings and interests. In self-directed inquiries, the learner can become permanently discouraged if the questions asked don't seem to be leading in useful directions.

#### A good inquiry question:

- **Is challenging** - If the learner can simply look up and understand the answer, there is no need for a structured inquiry.
- **Is within reach of the learner** - If the learner cannot be expected to make significant progress in answering the question after several weeks of reasonable effort, a more manageable question should be adopted.

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<sup>9</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m45070/1.2/>>.

- **Will lead the learner to new understanding, skills, and/or ways of thinking** - A superficial inquiry that concentrates on learning new "facts" is not the best goal.
- **Is of intrinsic interest to the learner** - A teacher may provide suggestions and guidance and even insist that the inquiry take a certain form or lead towards a particular skill or type of understanding, but the actual question should be one that the learner would like answered.

The music-learning inquiry below is intended both to provide practice in conducting an inquiry and also to help the inquirer learn how to recognize and create the types of questions that will be most useful in future inquiries about music.

### 1.2.2 Ask

This inquiry will be the "guided" type, for two reasons. One is to provide a focus so that the instructions and examples below don't get too unwieldy. The other is to give you an example of what guided inquiry might look like. If an instructor has a particular curriculum goal, substantial progress can be made towards that goal by asking the student to ask a certain type of question. In this case, you will **start your inquiry by choosing a composer whose work interests you**. (You can choose a song writer, or a performer of largely-improvised works, but not a musician who primarily performs works composed by someone else.) One of the main ideas in music history/appreciation/theory curricula is that musicians influence and are influenced by the music of others. **You will be asking about the influences on this composer's work or on the influence this composer had on the work of others**. Although the specifics of what you learn will depend on your interests and prior knowledge, this is a "big picture" concept that you can learn more about whether you are a novice or a knowledgeable musician.

Asking questions that will have complex answers, such as "how" or "why," or sometimes "what," will help to produce well-rounded, in-depth inquiries. If you already have some idea of the kinds of influences on or by your chosen composer, you may be able to start with an inquiry-type question, such as "Why did Beethoven have such a substantial influence on Romantic-era composers?" or "What influence has Ravi Shankar had on American music?" or "How did church music influence Elvis Presley?"

Questions that involve "who," "where," or "when" usually lead to bits of knowledge rather than deeper understanding. However, if you do not know who influenced or was influenced by your composer-of-interest, you may have to start with that question. It is not unusual for inquiries to start with some early investigations that help to shape the direction of the inquiry. In fact, in this inquiry, rather than posing one question, you will pose and keep track of a whole series of questions that arise as you investigate, and this will help you identify the "good" inquiry question or questions that you create along the way.

### 1.2.3 Investigate

Begin your investigation with any relevant question (for example "What music influenced Joan Baez?") When a question occurs to you, write it down, and take notes on the answers you find until something in the answers inspires a related question that interests you. Write down the new question, and continue your investigation until you have enough information to create a short but thorough and interesting report or presentation on the influences of or on your chosen composer.

NOTE: Note that it will be very important to the next step in the inquiry that you keep track of all of your questions, as well as all of your answers. You will also find the next step easier if you can keep track of what made you wonder about each new question. Think of your notes as a journal or diary of your curiosities and your investigation.

#### Suggested Resources

- **Online articles** - Articles focused on your composer of interest can provide the orientation you need to start asking relevant questions.

- **Online search** - Focus on pertinent information by searching for phrases such as "influenced Brahms", "Brahms influential", and so on. If you phrase your searches as complete questions, such as "How did Duke Ellington influence American pop?" then your "search history" will include a record of the questions you asked.
- **Books** - You may be able to find a book about your chosen composer. Books about a musical era, genre, or style are often organized as a discussion of how the music developed as it was passed from one influential set of composers and musicians to the next.
- **Recordings** - Listen closely to the music of your chosen composer and the others whom you are discovering in your inquiry. Can you hear the similarities and differences that are being discussed in your reading? Can you analyze and discuss what you are hearing in your report? Does your listening raise questions that are useful for your inquiry?
- **Personal Contacts** - If you have chosen a contemporary composer or songwriter about whom not much has been written, a letter or email stating that you are a big fan and that you wonder who has influenced their music might receive an answer. If the composer is local or is giving a show in your area, asking the question in person after a show or while purchasing a CD may get an answer. Follow up by reading about the musicians named and listening to their music.

## 1.2.4 Create

To encourage progress, both in learning about inquiry questions and in learning about how musical influence works, aim your inquiry at the creation of two things:

- A short essay, report or presentation that summarizes what you have learned about the influences on or by your chosen composer
- A list of the questions that you asked, categorized by their usefulness in your investigation.

### 1.2.4.1 Report your Findings

This step is important because reading a great deal about something can make you feel that you know it and yet leave you unable to recall or explain it. Taking the extra step to organize what you now understand into a coherent report, essay, presentation, or even conversation, is an important step that will help connect the facts you learned to each other and to the other things that you knew before the investigation. It may also lead you to notice gaps in your understanding and ask a few more useful questions before you wrap up your investigation.

### 1.2.4.2 Categorize your questions

Your investigation should bring numerous new questions to your mind. For example, if you were investigating the influence of Johann Sebastian Bach on European Classical music, some of your research might cause you to wonder:

#### Examples of questions inspired by an investigation

- What does "well-tempered" mean?
- Just how many of J.S. Bach's descendents were also composers?
- Does Classical music really sound so different from Baroque?
- What is counterpoint?

Typically, as you do your research, you would just follow up on these questions, to see what the answers tell you in relationship to your main question. But for this investigation you should **write down each question that the investigation inspires** and make notes on what you found out in answer to that question.

After you are finished with your investigation and your report/presentation, categorize your questions. You can do this either by creating a table with three columns and putting each question in the correct

column, or by creating a question "tree" in which each question leads either to an answer, to other questions and searches, or to a dead end. In either case, you should end up identifying three types of questions.

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### A Question Tree

## *Image not finished*

**Figure 1.2:** Two of the questions in this inquiry led to more questions; they were good inquiry-type questions. Three led to fact-gathering, so they were good for the investigation, but not for inspiring an inquiry. The "how did he..." question was too difficult for the inquirer to pursue without more music theory and ear-training background.

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### Question Categories

- Questions that you answered with a few **facts**
- Questions that inspired **further questions, deeper investigation, insights, attempts to test or practice tentative understandings (for example, while listening to or discussing music, or while playing an instrument), or attempts to organize, compare, or check the information you have gathered.**
- Questions that you abandoned because understanding the answer **required background knowledge** that you do not have

It is important to realize that how a question is classified depends on the learner and the context.

For example, Inquirer A might look up J.S. Bach's descendants, note how many were composers, and include that as a "fact" in the report. But Inquirer B might become very interested in those sons and how their lives and music were affected by the fact that J. S. Bach was their father. B's final report might even focus on a musical family "dynasty," a phenomenon that is fairly common in the world of music but that B had never thought about before, making this question one that led to new insight.

On the other hand, Inquirer B might find that discussions of "well-tempered" tuning employ many unfamiliar terms and so require too much background knowledge to pursue during this inquiry, while the same question leads Inquirer A to new insights about tuning systems and the history of keyboard instruments.

So the goal of this creation is to develop some insights about you as an inquirer. What types of questions led you simply to discover facts that you found easy to understand and use in your report? Although they are useful during an inquiry because they lead to relevant information, **"fact" questions do not make good inquiry-guiding questions**, because they do not encourage you to stretch your understanding, abilities, or the ways you think about music.

Which kinds of questions became the focus of your investigation, causing you to ask more questions, dig deeper into the literature, think about what you found, question or compare the answers you found, or change the way you think about music and musicians? **Investigation/insight questions make the best inquiry questions.** Did you have only one question in this category, or was there more than one? Consider carefully what it was about these questions that put them in this category for you.

Finally look at the questions that you could not pursue because understanding the answer requires more background than you have right now. Some of these questions may have lost your interest already. However, there may be a question or two in this category that really frustrate you because you would like to have that background and be the kind of person who can understand the answer to that question. **Questions that require more background than you have right now do not make good questions for your next inquiry; however they can serve as guide-posts to keep you on track in a long-term series of inquiries.**

### 1.2.4.2.1 Setting a long-term goal for a series of inquiries

Inquiry based learning is often driven by a long-term "practical" goal. Typical goals in music learning are often a bit vague, for example:

#### Vague long-term music-learning goals

- I want to know more about music.
- I want to play an instrument better.
- I want to be a better composer.

In inquiry, it is much more useful to have very specific learning goals that are stated in terms of being able to do something that you cannot do now. This helps to keep you on track and measure your progress over the course of a series of inquiries. For example:

#### Specific long-term inquiry goals

- I want to be able to understand what "well tempered" means.
- I want to be able to play my favorite tunes by ear.
- I want to be able to include counterpoint in my compositions.

The long-term goal should be something that would genuinely please you. For example, "I want to be able to play all the scales on my instrument" is almost certainly a goal that comes from your teacher's interests, not yours. However, if you find in your investigations that one reason you cannot play your favorite tunes by ear is that you don't know your fingerings well enough, you may decide that studying scales is an inquiry step that would get you closer to your goal.

Once you have a long-term inquiry goal in mind, you can start looking for the first inquiry question that will start you in the right direction. For example, if your long-term goal is to understand what is meant by "well-tempered," you might decide to begin by studying one of the terms used to discuss it. **Ideally each inquiry will lead naturally to a new inquiry that will bring you even closer to your long-term goal.** However, if your goal is very ambitious or very distant from your present state, you may find yourself getting sidetracked by new interests or backtracking to pick up other necessary knowledge. You can either choose to change your long-term goal or stick with it, but you cannot rush the process any more than a five-year-old can rush the process of becoming fifteen years old. Either way **you should feel you are growing as a musician, and you should be enjoying the learning process.** If there is no progress or enjoyment, take the "reflect" step of each inquiry as an opportunity to try to figure out where the problems are and what changes might help.

Once you have a long-term inquiry goal in mind, you can start looking for the first inquiry question that will start you in that direction. For example, if your long-term goal is to understand what is meant by "well-tempered," you might decide to begin by studying one of the terms used to discuss it. This might lead to an interesting investigation, or you might have to follow up on difficult terminology a few more times before you find explanations that you are capable of investigating right now. If you cannot seem to find an entry point into a subject area, consider doing the Types of Knowledge inquiry to find out more about the types of knowledge and resources you do have that can serve as a starting point.

## 1.2.5 Discuss

If you are doing this inquiry as part of a class or group, share your report/presentation with others in that setting. Also set aside some group/class time to discuss everyone's experience with designing inquiry questions. Did everyone have at least one question in each category? In what ways do people's categories of questions look the same or different? Did the inquiries follow roughly the same course?

If you do not have a formal setting for sharing this inquiry, consider how you might get some feedback on it. Can you adapt the report or presentation to be appropriate for some other class assignment? Can you discuss it with a music teacher, or share what you learned in a conversation with a friend who has similar interests in music?

### 1.2.6 Reflect

Good inquiry tends to lead to more inquiry. One of the main goals of reflecting on the inquiry you just finished is to identify questions that it raised for you that might become future inquiry questions. As you reflect on where this inquiry has left you, here are some points that you may want to consider:

- Do you feel ready to try setting the questions for your own music-learning inquiries? If not, what is missing? Would it help to do more practice in classifying questions? (If so, try doing the question-classifying inquiry above, but starting with the question about music that most interests you right now.) Would it help to do more inquiries that set the question for you? (If so, try Listening to Unfamiliar Music (Section 3.1).)
- Do you still have questions about musical influences that you would like to follow up with another inquiry?
- Was one of the "too difficult" questions something that deeply interests you and that you might want to use as a long-term inquiry goal?
- Did you run into problems that suggest that you might benefit from guided practice in other inquiry steps, for example, Types of Music Knowledge, Finding Useful Music Resources, Creative Responses to Music Inquiry, Getting Feedback on your Music Project, Positive Music Critique, or Assessing a Music Inquiry

## Chapter 2

# Cultural Knowledge

## 2.1 Choosing a Publication License: Four Activities for the Creative Classroom<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1.1 Introduction

Modern technologies have made it easy for students to get into serious trouble for overstepping the bounds of copyright laws or rules about plagiarism. But technology has also made possible a vibrant participatory culture in which all creators, including students, can choose to publish their creative works and share them in varying degrees. Understanding the options that are available for sharing and protecting intellectual property will help students make wise, well-informed decisions about both their own work and the intellectual property of others. Introducing the subject in relationship to the student's own creative work provides concrete, personally meaningful examples of the issues and encourages respect for the intellectual property of others. These activities are designed to be one aspect of an extensive creative-arts project. The module does not include a specific creative project; instead it can be used with any publishable creative work, including:

- Music
- Dance
- Drama
- Video
- Fiction and Nonfiction
- Poetry

This module includes suggestions for:

- An active-learning class inquiry (Section 2.1.2: Activity 1: Inquiry into copyright licenses) into the types of licenses and copyright protections that are appropriate to your project.
- A classroom presentation and discussion (Section 2.1.3: Activity 2: Presentation and Discussion) of intellectual-property issues and options.
- A basic choose a publication license (Section 2.1.4: Activity 3: Choosing a License) activity that can be done, separately, after a creative project is finished.
- A more complex activity that involves sharing and building on (Section 2.1.5: Activity 4: Sharing and building on the creations of others) the creative work of others. This activity needs to be part of the creative process from the planning phase of the creative-arts project.

If you do not have a creative project in mind already and would like some suggestions, the following Connexions modules include activities that could result in publishable creations. (If you would like to add other Connexions modules or links to other creative-activities sites, please contact the author.)

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m44907/1.1/>>.

- Lyric-writing module (under construction)
- Compare and Contrast Visual Arts Lesson Plan<sup>2</sup>
- Interdisciplinary Shakespeare Art Curriculum<sup>3</sup>
- GarageBand in the Elementary Classroom<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1.2 Activity 1: Inquiry into copyright licenses

Copyright law is an extensive and complex subject. Rules change with time, and also vary from one country to another. Although "all rights reserved" and "public domain" seem fairly straightforward, rules (such as what constitutes "fair use," when and how copyrights expire, and what is automatically copyrighted or automatically in the public domain) may vary from one type of work to another and from one country to another. Licenses that permit certain types of use or certain degrees of sharing, altering, and remixing, can also have different ramifications depending on the type of creative work. (For example, some rules or licenses are more relevant or useful to video creations, while others are more pertinent to protecting or sharing written works.) Your class may also be planning to enter creations in contests, display them locally or on a particular website, or submit them to magazines or other edited publication venues, all of which may constrain or affect the licensing that you would want to choose. In short, I cannot even begin to provide here all of the copyright and licensing information that might be pertinent to your project.

As the instructor, you may choose to investigate the subject and create a presentation about relevant licenses for the creative activities in your classroom. If it is feasible, however, I recommend turning this step into a hands-on, active-learning class inquiry on the subject. This should help engage students in the presentation and discussion, and will also help them learn how to find this type of information when they need it.

#### Inquiry Summary

- **Goals** - The students will practice investigating, thinking critically about, and presenting arguments concerning the legal, ethical and creative aspects of intellectual property.
- **Grade Level** - Recommended for secondary and adult students
- **Student Prerequisites** - Students should possess the skills necessary to conduct an independent literature search.
- **Teacher Expertise** - Expertise in copyright law is not necessary. Be prepared to help students locate resources and to guide them in critically thinking about the usefulness and trustworthiness of the sources they find.
- **Time Requirements** - Allow at least two weeks with few other assignments, for the students to organize, research, and create their presentations. Schedule some in-class time during which the group can work on their presentations while you check in with each group to ensure that they have been doing their research and that they are critically evaluating their sources and their findings.
- **Objectives** - In response to a set of questions, each group of students will cooperate to locate relevant sources of information, critically evaluate the usefulness of each source in answering the questions, and create an accurate and well-reasoned presentation to educate their classmates on what they have learned. Students in each group will also engage with other group's presentations, asking pertinent questions and discussing their findings.
- **Evaluation** - You can assess each group's learning based on the extent of their research, evidence that they evaluated their sources or their prior assumptions thoughtfully and critically, the quality of the presentation, ability to answer questions about their presentation, and thoroughness of any written report and reference list.
- **Adaptations** - For younger or less experienced students, you can simplify the investigate task by providing a list of approved resources, or by providing copies of the resources and scheduling time for research during class when you can answer questions and help them locate what they need.

<sup>2</sup>"Compare and contrast Visual Arts Lesson Plan" <<http://cnx.org/content/m36311/latest/>>

<sup>3</sup>"Interdisciplinary Shakespeare Art Curriculum" <<http://cnx.org/content/m41718/latest/>>

<sup>4</sup>"GarageBand in the Elementary Classroom" <<http://cnx.org/content/m18122/latest/>>

- **Extension** - Extend the activity by asking each student to choose a specific example of the reuse or reworking of a creative work to research and write about, with a focus on the effects of copyright freedoms or restrictions. Examples of possible subjects: a reworking of a famous story, such as H. C. Anderson's **Little Mermaid** or Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet**; the rules regarding the reproduction of a famous work of art, such as the "Mona Lisa"; or the negotiations over movie rights to a famous book, for example the Harry Potter books and movies.

### Introducing the Inquiry Activity

- You will begin this activity by introducing the research assignment. Explain that the students will be choosing a publication license for the works that they have been creating, so they need to understand what the options are, and the ramifications of each option, for the creator and for others.
- You can pique interest in this activity by presenting some facts, stories, history, and/or news items that your students will find relevant to their personal and creative interests and to this class project. The list of resources (Section 2.1.2.2: Investigate) is a good starting point for finding information that will get the attention of the students.
- Explain that each group will research a specific type of licensing that is relevant to your project. Tell them the date of the discussion class period, and explain that they should arrive to that class ready to give a formal presentation and to answer any questions their classmates will have about it. Hand out copies of the research questions and your expectations for the research and the presentations (for example, minimum numbers of research sources or time limits on presentations).

#### 2.1.2.1 Ask

Divide the students into groups. Each group is expected to research one area of interest and prepare a presentation on the answers they find, to be given during Activity 2. My suggestion is to divide the class into at least three groups and give each group one of the following: **public domain; all-rights-reserved copyright; Creative Commons sharing licenses; any other sharing licenses that are relevant to your project** (as the teacher, check into this before you make group assignments).

#### Questions for each group

- What are the basic rules of this type of license?
- What does it mean for the creator?
- What does it mean for the people who would like to enjoy the work?
- What does it mean for other creators who would like to make a new creation based on a work with this license?
- Give at least two good reasons for choosing this type of license.
- Give at least two good reasons not to choose this type of license.
- Does your country have laws limiting the ability to choose this license, providing this license automatically to published works, and/or providing a time limit after which the license expires? What happens to the work if the license expires? What do you think are the reasons for these laws? Do you think these laws have any unintended consequences? (Back up your thinking with evidence and/or with well-reasoned arguments created by the group or published by others, and be sure to provide proper citations!)
- What are some famous works with this type of license that are the same type of works that the class is creating (e.g. poetry, pop songs, videos, etc.)?

#### 2.1.2.2 Investigate

Relevant resources will depend on your particular project, but here are some suggestions to help get you started.

#### Web Resources

- The Copyright for the Rest of Us<sup>5</sup> course in Connexions is intended to be an introduction to the subject for high school and college students.
- The Creative Commons<sup>6</sup> website has information about open licenses, including videos introducing the idea, and detailed information about each type of license.
- Stanford University Library<sup>7</sup> provides information about both public domain and fair use of copyrighted materials.
- The National Association for Music Education<sup>8</sup> website has a copyright center with a great deal of information aimed at helping music teachers navigate copyright issues pertaining to student performances and recordings.
- The Music Publisher's Association<sup>9</sup> website has a copyright resources center featuring a guide to researching the publisher or copyright holder of a piece of music.
- The Public Domain Project<sup>10</sup> is a source for public domain and royalty-free music

### Books

- James Boyle's **The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind** (2008, Yale University Press) explains the implications of various aspects of copyright law and their impact on culture and creativity, and makes good arguments for a strong and healthy creative public domain.
- Lawrence Lessig's **Free Culture** (2004, The Penguin Press) recounts the history of intellectual-property law, including some very instructive and engaging stories which students might enjoy. He also details the consequences of current laws and makes a well-reasoned argument for policies that allow, encourage, and reward creative activity by individual citizens rather than favoring powerful media corporations.

#### 2.1.2.2.1 Create, Share, Reflect

As a group, the students should create a presentation that will clearly relate to the rest of the class the most important points that they have learned in their investigations. You may want to also require a written report that includes their answers to all of the research questions, and a reference list that includes all of the resources they used. The type of presentations you permit will depend on your goals for this activity as well as the equipment available to you and your students. You can require a particular type of presentation, or give groups a choice of format. Here are some suggestions for possible formats:

- Poster or other visual presentation of their findings, with students taking turns speaking about the most important points
- Powerpoint or other computer-based slide presentation, with student taking turns speaking about the information on the slides
- Audio/video presentation or web tour, narrated by the group
- Blackboard/whiteboard/overhead-based lecture with handouts, prepared and presented by the group
- Mini-drama, acted out by the group, illustrating the most important information they have learned, accompanied by a more formal written report to be turned in to you
- Poem, song, story, or visual work featuring what they have learned, to be presented and explained to the class, accompanied by a formal written report to be turned in to you

Groups will **share** their presentations and **reflections** in the presentation/discussion activity (in the following section).

<sup>5</sup> *Copyright For The Rest Of Us* <<http://cnx.org/content/col11385/latest/>>

<sup>6</sup> <http://creativecommons.org/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://fairuse.stanford.edu/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://musiced.nafme.org>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mpa.org>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.pdinfo.com/index.php>

### 2.1.3 Activity 2: Presentation and Discussion

If the class did not do the inquiry activity, you will need to research and prepare a presentation that gives an overview of the types of licenses that might be appropriate for the students' creations in Activities 3 and 4.

#### Activity Summary

- **Goals** - The students will learn about various options for licensing creative works, including the consequences and legal ramifications of each and the differences between them.
- **Grade Level** - Recommended for secondary and adult students
- **Student Prerequisites** - Students should be capable of thinking critically about law, ethics, and consequences as they relate to intellectual property.
- **Teacher Expertise** - Expertise in copyright law is not necessary, but the discussion will be more lively if the discussion leader is prepared with facts, points, and stories that are relevant to the students' creative and publication interests.
- **Time Requirements** - Allow 15-20 minutes for each group's presentation. If the students did not do the inquiry activity, you can prepare a 20-30 minute overview of the information you have gathered. Also schedule time for questions and group discussion following each group presentation (5-10 minutes) or after your presentation (15-30 minutes).
- **Objectives** - The students will discuss a variety of licensing options that are relevant to their creative work, including the ramifications of each for the creator and for others.
- **Evaluation** - You can assess student learning based on engagement in the discussions of other people's presentations, including asking thoughtful questions and making good points in discussions. Alternatively, you may ask students to create notes, charts, or diagrams that organize the information they learn from each presentation.

#### Procedure

- Use clocks, timers, or reminders to keep each group to its allotted presentation time.
- After each presentation, point out to the class the aspects of the presentation that you particularly liked. Then, if the presentation did not include key points that you want emphasized, ask the group to also address those points. For example, "You didn't mention why a creator might choose this type of license. Can you tell the class what you think about that?"
- Ask the class for any questions they have about the group's researched subject or presentation.
- If the class does not have enough questions to start a good discussion, begin directing thought-provoking questions to the students who did not make the presentation, for example, "Do you think the laws they told us about should be changed?" or "Would you choose this license for your project?" Ask students to give reasons for their opinions, and encourage (polite, respectful, thoughtful) discussion of any disagreements among class members. If all the students agree, try to play devil's advocate; for example if students all agree that music should not be copyrighted (or that music copyrights can be ignored), ask them whether and how good songwriters should be paid.
- If there is further time for discussion, you can ask the students what the effects might be if that license was not available, or if every work was automatically published under that license.

### 2.1.4 Activity 3: Choosing a License

This activity should be done after the students have completed Activities 1 and 2 (or similar introduction to creative intellectual property concepts and law). Before this activity, students should also have created publication-worthy works, with your guidance as a creative-arts instructor (see preparation (Preparation, p. 20) section if you would like some suggestions.). A process of constructive criticism<sup>11</sup>, reworking, and editing is strongly recommended so that students can confidently share their work with the rest of the world.

<sup>11</sup>"Providing Constructive Criticism in Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m43427/latest/>>

However, students should not be required to publish if they are not comfortable doing so (see the activity adaptation below).

### Activity Summary

- **Goals** - The students will learn about the process of licensing and publishing creative intellectual property.
- **Grade Level** - Recommended for secondary and adult students.
- **Student Prerequisites** - Students should have completed, or be close to completing, a creative work of publishable quality. Students should also have completed Activities 1 and 2, or similar introduction to publication licenses.
- **Teacher Expertise** - The activity leader should understand the relevant laws and implications of the publication licenses under discussion, as well as any relevant district, school or publication-venue rules regarding student publications.
- **Time Requirements** - If the students have completed Activities 1 and 2, you should not need to schedule much class time for this activity.
- **Objectives** - Each student or group of students who has finished a publishable creative work in the class will choose an appropriate publication license and publication venue for their work.
- **Evaluation** - You can assess whether licensing and publication options were considered thoughtfully and procedures were followed correctly. (But allow students free reign to make their own choices without fear that it will affect their grades.)
- **Adaptations** - If some students or groups wish to publish and others do not, provide an alternative path for non-publishers to finish the activity; for example, they might write a short report listing the steps that they would need to take to publish their work. If you feel that many or most of the students in the class are not ready to develop and publish creative works alone or in small groups, you may want to undertake an entire-class project that results in a publishable work (for example, a video) that all students have helped to create, and for which the class as a group will choose a publication license.
- **Extensions** - For complex creative endeavors that are collaborations by groups of students (for example, a video might include writers, actors, photographers, costume designers, and editors), make sure the discussions and activities include appropriate consent and attribution for everyone involved. For a more involved exploration of publication licenses, or if students wish to build on each other's work, see Activity 4.

### Preparation

1. Lead the class in creating work that they will be proud to publish and share. When you introduce the creative activity, emphasize that publication, or planning for publication will be part of the process. Discuss the available methods and venues for publication. (For example, as part of a school district art expo or literature contest, in a school magazine, in a newsletter created by the class and distributed to parents or other classes, or in public or private online spaces.) Also make sure students understand your expectations concerning what constitutes a publishable work, as well as any widely-accepted benchmarks of quality.
2. Design the creation part of the project so that it includes steps for planning, sketches, revisions, edits, or other steps that result in polished, high-quality work.
3. Be sure to offer your own critiques and suggestions well in advance of the final product, and give the students sufficient time and space to respond to them. If the students are mature enough to offer constructive criticism<sup>12</sup> of each other's work, this can also be a good step to include, again early enough that the creator has plenty of time to consider critiques before creating the final work.
4. When the works are complete or nearing completion, discuss licenses, as outlined above (Section 2.1.2: Activity 1: Inquiry into copyright licenses).

### Procedure

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<sup>12</sup>"Providing Constructive Criticism in Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m43427/latest/>>

- Tell students that they may publish their works if they like, and ask that they wait until you have reviewed their proposal to make sure that everything is in order. Remind them of any rules for contests or publication venues that are relevant to your class. In explaining this step, make it clear that each student or group of students that has created a work may choose a license for it. Nobody is required to publish. Students are not required to choose a particular license because that is the one they researched, or because others in their research group are choosing it. However, if any creation is a group effort, everyone in the group must freely agree to publish using a particular license, or else the work cannot be published. Tell groups to speak to you if they are having trouble reaching an agreement. They may ask you or another student to act as arbitrator for their discussion, or they may choose to write up a report explaining their unresolved disagreement. If there is time in the course schedule for it, and if the students can conduct a public disagreement maturely and without putting undue social pressure on any of the participants, you may want to ask the group to present their problem to the class for discussion. Be sure to point out that these types of disagreements can also happen when creative professionals publish their popular works.
- You can schedule class time for discussion, or assign the discussion and choice process as home work.
- Each student or group should submit a short report listing their chosen license and their reasons for it (or their group difficulties in choosing a license).
- Provide feedback, pointing out any issues you feel the student may not have considered. Then allow students who wish (and groups who have reached an agreement) to publish.
- As a final step, students should submit to you either a copy of the work with the licensing and copyright notices properly attached, instructions for easily viewing the published work (for example a web link to a work published online), or a short report listing the steps they would have taken to publish the work properly.

### 2.1.5 Activity 4: Sharing and building on the creations of others

#### Activity Summary

- **Goals** - The students will learn about the artistic, legal, and ethical aspects of borrowing from and contributing to the body of creative works that is part of their culture, through active learning that provides an opportunity and concrete, personal example of participating in this process.
- **Grade Level** - Recommended for secondary and adult students.
- **Student Prerequisites** - Students should be mature enough to give a project the thorough attention that published work deserves. In addition, it is very important that students doing this activity are capable of understanding and respecting the legal and ethical boundaries involved.
- **Teacher Expertise** - It is recommended that the teacher be well-versed in the creative art that is the focus of the activity. It is also strongly recommended that the teacher be familiar with or capable of identifying the copyright status of any published work that the students use for this project.
- **Time Requirements** - Schedule in-class time for students to work on this project if they are working in groups, if you want them to present their works-in-progress to the class, or if they need classroom resources and equipment in order to locate useful published works or to work on their own creations. Assign a due date that allows sufficient time for the creative process and for students to work on the project outside of class. If possible, schedule time for students to present their finished works to the class.
- **Objectives** - Each student or group of students will choose a published work from which they would like to borrow elements or ideas. They will then develop a plan for creating a publishable original work that substantially borrows from the published work, in accordance with any relevant intellectual property laws and cultural mores. Once the plan has been approved, each student or group will then create the planned derived work.
- **Evaluation** - Evaluation and feedback at every step are strongly recommended for this project. The teacher should evaluate/approve the choice of borrowed materials, the planned use of the borrowed

material, and the licensing and publication plans for the new work before the creative phase of the project begins. An evaluation of the work-in-progress, including your concrete recommendations and expectations for finishing the project is also recommended, as well as a final evaluation. The rubric should include your usual standards for grading creative works, as well as assessment of the students' success in creatively, conscientiously, and legally using the borrowed work.

### Materials and Preparation

- Before doing this activity, students must have an understanding of the legal issues involved. Activities 1 and 2, or similar preparation, are strongly recommended. If you are planning to do this activity, make sure that the students come away from those activities with a clear idea of what types of alteration, derivation, or borrowing, are allowed under each type of license.
- A classroom discussion of the cultural mores and ethical issues involved in borrowing from creative works is also strongly recommended. These usually go beyond legal issues into what people generally believe to be "good" or "bad" types of borrowing. For example, in the U.S. it is generally considered unethical to borrow from the title or concept of a popular work in order to confuse audiences into buying your work instead, while borrowing from a popular work in order to create a clever parody of it is generally approved. Such issues vary greatly from one culture to another. If students will be borrowing from works within their own culture, a simple classroom discussion may suffice. If some are considering borrowing from the works of other cultures, they should become acquainted with the issues that might be involved, in order to avoid giving harm or offense. If your classroom is sufficiently multicultural, again a classroom discussion might suffice. If not, you may want to assign relevant reading or research.
- Prepare for this activity by planning and preparing for a creative project that is appropriate for your classroom. Consider not only what you want the students to learn from the creative process, but also what you want them to learn from the process of working with material created by others. For example, a student who harmonizes a borrowed tune will be learning a different lesson about creating music than a student who writes a new tune for a borrowed text. Set the parameters for the assignment (the types of creations, borrowings, and alterations you expect or will permit) to align with your creative-arts learning goals.

### Procedure

- As part of the preparatory activity, have each student or group propose a project. The formal, written proposal should identify a portion of a published work that the student(s) will be modifying (for example, a soliloquy from a Shakespeare play) or borrowing (for example the harmony "changes" of a jazz tune), the specific plans for using it in a new work (for example, creating a parody of the soliloquy or a new tune to go with the jazz harmonies) and reasonable proof that the work can legally be used in that way (for example, evidence that the soliloquy was published before 1923 or that jazz "changes" are not considered copyrightable).
- Review the proposals carefully, making sure that the works to be created are appropriate for your course goals, within the students' capabilities, and clearly legal. Require revised proposals if necessary.
- If a proposal raises other issues (for example, if the proposed work is legal but could be considered an act of cultural appropriation), be sure to address those issues also as early as possible in the planning process.
- Once the proposals have been approved, provide a time frame and support for the creative process that is in line with the way your class typically operates.
- It is not necessary, but you may want to include the option of publishing the derived works. If so, once the creative process is well underway, follow the steps outlined in Activity 3 for publishing student-created works.
- If at all possible, schedule time for students to share their creations with the class. Performances or displays should include appropriate attribution of the borrowed material and a short explanation of how it was incorporated into the new work.

# Chapter 3

## Aural Knowledge

### 3.1 Listening to Unfamiliar Music: An Inquiry Module<sup>1</sup>

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

One of the main reasons that you enjoy your favorite music is that you can understand it simply by listening to it. You don't have to make any conscious effort to make sense of what is going on, just as you don't have to make any conscious effort to understand someone who is speaking in a familiar language with a familiar accent. But if the language or accent are unfamiliar, you may have to work harder at comprehension, or may fail to understand at all. Your aural (ear-based) understanding of music is related to, but separate from, any formal understanding of music theory or notation, just as your ability to understand spoken language is related to, but separate from, any formal knowledge of grammar and writing. The purpose of this module is to help you (or your students) **develop a better aural understanding of an unfamiliar type of music.**

This module is a guide to creating your own inquiry into the music that interests you. That means that it focuses on the process of learning how to listen to an unfamiliar music, rather than on providing you with information about a specific kind of music. The suggestions below are general; you will choose the music that you want to explore, based on your interests or learning goals. You will find below:

- Guidance in choosing pieces (Section 3.1.2: Ask: Choosing the music to study) to study.
- Suggestions for how to listen (Section 3.1.3: Aural Investigation: Finding answers using your own ear).
- Suggestions for researching (Section 3.1.4: Formal Investigation: Finding answers using other resources) the music of interest and furthering your inquiry.
- Sharing and reflecting (Section 3.1.5: Sharing and Reflecting on your Inquiry) on individual inquiries
- Lesson plan information for teachers and facilitators who would like to lead a class or group (Section 3.1.6: Listening and Discussion as a Class Activity) in this exercise.

#### 3.1.2 Ask: Choosing the music to study

This module does not include specific suggestions for which music to study. The assumption is that you have already decided that there is a type of music that you want to appreciate and understand, but that is so unfamiliar that you can make little sense of it right now. It is difficult to get satisfying, useful answers, though, when you start by asking general questions about a whole genre or type of music. You'll make more progress if you pick one or two pieces and begin by asking specific questions about them. If you have not already picked out specific pieces or recordings, the following checklist may help you choose a focus for your study.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m43540/1.2/>>.

- First, narrow your focus of interest as much as possible. For example, "Classical music" or "Chinese music" are too general. You might find a focus based on what you like (vocal music? flute? strings? sweet melodies? powerful rhythms?), or based on your reasons for wanting to learn about it (your friends enjoy going to the opera? you bought a bamboo flute when you visited Beijing?)
- Don't get overwhelmed. Limit your initial study to one piece, (maybe two if you get bored easily or if the variety will help you listen more carefully). If you are studying a composed style of music, you might want to listen to different recordings of the same composition, to get some idea of the variation in performances. If you are studying an improvised style, just stick to one or two specific recordings. Although you will probably want to enjoy live performances, too, choose recorded music for study, so that you can hear the same music repeatedly.
- Try to find high-quality recordings of good performances, so that everything that is supposed to happen in the music is clearly audible in the recording.
- If dancing or other activity is typically an integral part of a performance (for example, ballet, opera, samba or capoeira), a video recording can provide a great deal of insight into how the music is perceived by those who create it. Even when that is not the case, a video of a performance can put the music into context for you, help you understand how the instruments create the sounds, and show you how knowledgeable listeners typically react to the music. If the sound quality of the video is poor, consider alternating between studying the video and a high-quality audio recording.
- Choose pieces that have some appeal for you, that you will be willing to listen to carefully and repeatedly. If you are choosing music for a group, consider what they might enjoy. If you're not certain, consider assembling several possibilities and letting the group choose.
- Starting with the "great works" or core repertoire of a tradition is not necessary. If the fusion, pop, "world music", tourist, or children's versions of a tradition are more appealing and easier to understand, it may make sense to use that as a starting point. Most people find it more enjoyable and rewarding to study the masterworks of a tradition after they have developed an ear for the music.

**The main question you will be asking "how can I begin to make sense of this music?"**

### 3.1.3 Aural Investigation: Finding answers using your own ear

When musicians talk about **ear**, what they are really discussing is the part of your brain that makes sense of what you are hearing. It normally does this without any conscious effort, and most people are not even aware of how much their ear understands. The "rules" that a piece of music follows - rules about what types of sounds are good, how they should fit together, and how a piece should start, progress and end - are actually quite complex. You don't have any trouble deciphering familiar musics, though, because your ear already knows the rules. You picked them up just as you picked up the rules for speaking your language, just by hearing it often, in context. You are most likely to notice "ear" when it fails you, when you hear a piece of music that makes no sense to you. Because you don't understand how sounds are supposed to be organized in this kind of music, it may sound boring, foreign, exotic, annoying or noisy.

So the first few times you listen, your main goal is to find some points of reference, things that you can actually hear in the music. These will be based on the knowledge that you already have about music, including:

#### **Listen with all the knowledge you already have**

- **Ear-based knowledge** - Even if you have no formal ear-training, you can make use of the aural knowledge you have about more-familiar types of music. Does the recording sound at all like any of the music you already know and like? What specifically sounds different? See the what do you hear? (What do you hear?, p. 25) list for suggestions.
- **Movement-based knowledge** - Some of your intuitive knowledge about music may not be in the "ear" part of your brain, but instead is in the part of your brain that controls your movements. If you are a dancer, or if you like to clap your hands, tap your feet, or move to your favorite music, then you may find that letting yourself move with this unfamiliar music - dance, clap, conduct, etc. -

actually helps you understand the music, and also helps you locate the elements that you do not yet understand. (For example, I find that the easiest way to check whether I am "getting" the rhythm of a piece is to try to conduct along while listening.)

- **Formal music knowledge** - This is an exercise in developing intuitive, ear-based understandings, so it is not necessary to have formal knowledge about music theory and notation. But if you do, by all means, make use of it! You may find that your formal understandings are not that helpful - for example, your knowledge of major and minor scales may be inadequate when trying to listen to music based on ragas - but exploring exactly how and where and when they fail will help you understand how this music is different and help you focus on what to listen for.
- **Instrument-based knowledge** - Again, this is not necessary for this activity, but if you do know how to play an instrument (or sing), you may want to get out your instrument and either try to play/sing along with the recording or try to reproduce parts of it immediately after listening to it. Can you reproduce the timbre in the recording? How is it different from the timbre that you usually use? Are there stylistic elements (such as ornaments or articulations) that you have trouble reproducing because they are unfamiliar? Is the tuning in the recording different from your normal tuning? Do the notes used seem to belong to a scale, raga, or mode that you know? If not, how are they different?
- **Cultural knowledge** - Where does this music come from? What is it for? Who creates it? Who enjoys it? What are their lives like, and how does music fit in? Again, you do not need to know the answers to these questions, but anything you do know may help you understand the music.

As you study a piece, **create a journal** or record of what you hear, what you want to listen to more carefully next time, guesses about what is going on in the music, reactions, and questions. It may be difficult at first to come up with descriptions, but the struggle to write something that makes sense to you is an important step in making sense of the music. Pictures and diagrams can also be part of your journal. You can use any music notations you know, or make up your own. Choosing words, phrases and pictures that describe elements and characteristics of the sound will help you to think about them, listen for them, remember them accurately, and discuss them with others.

You won't be able to listen carefully to everything at once. If the piece is long, you might want to start with just your favorite section of it. Start by listening to the characteristics or elements that are most interesting or obvious to you. Save more challenging elements for later. You can think about the music in any way that is useful to you, but if you have no idea where to start, here are some suggestions:

#### What do you hear?

- **Text** - Are there sung or spoken words? Can you understand the text? If not, why not? Is understanding the text important to you? If you can understand the text, can you relate to what it is saying? How different is it from the texts of your favorite songs?
- **Meter** - Can you feel a steady beat? Are beats organized into stronger and weaker pulses? Are they all the same length, or is there a pattern of shorter and longer beats? Does the pattern seem too subtle, too slow, too fast, or complex for you to follow? Is it possible that the music moves forward freely, without reference to a predictable beat? How is it different from the beat in familiar kinds of music?
- **Rhythm** - When do notes begin and end, (on a beat, in between beats, at irregular intervals)? How long do they last (one beat, many, an indefinite length)? Do they follow each other quickly or slowly? Can you hear specific rhythmic ideas or patterns? How complex are the rhythms? How repetitive are they? Do different parts (different instruments or voices) have the same rhythms or different ones?
- **Mode** - Do some of the sounds have pitch? If so, do they slide up and down, hitting all of the possible pitches, or does the music only use specific pitches in each range? Does it use a lot of different pitches that seem very close to each other, or only a few pitches that seem to be spaced far apart? Do some pitches seem more important than others? Do you think this music is using the same set of notes (the same scale, mode, or raga, for example) as familiar musics? If not, how would you describe the difference?
- **Tuning** - Do pitched notes seem "in tune" or "out of tune" by the standards of more familiar music? If the tuning is noticeably different, how would you describe the differences?

- **Articulation and ornaments** - How does each sound begin and end? (For example, do notes seem to be separate, or do they glide into each other? Are they cut short, or do they die away slowly?) Is each note a single pitch, or does it include little ornamental variations? What do the variations do to the pitch (does it slide, waver, bend)? Do they happen at the beginning or end of a note, or all through it? Do they connect one note to the next?
- **Timbre** - What adjectives would you use to describe the tone quality of the sounds you hear (for example, squeaky, nasal, warm, resonant, fiery)? What do the sounds do (crash, flow, clang, buzz, echo)? Are the instruments that make the sounds familiar or unfamiliar? Can you name them or picture them? Are the sounds they make like any instruments in your favorite musics? How is the tone quality different from what is familiar to you? If there are singers, is the quality of the voice very different from the voices in your favorite musics? If it is noticeably different, how would you describe the difference?
- **Range** - Does the sound of the music seem higher or lower than you are used to, or is it in a range that is comfortable and familiar? For each specific instrument (or voice) that you can distinguish, do you hear it playing only high notes? Only low notes? A wide range? Does it sound as if the instrument (or voice) is near its upper or lower limit, or in the middle of its range?
- **Texture** - Are there multiple lines or parts going on at the same time? Can you tell what instrument (or voice) is creating each part? What role does each part have in the music, and how do the parts fit together? Which parts catch your attention, and which seem to be supporting/accompanying parts? Does the piece include recordings of sounds such as traffic or ocean waves? Does it include recorded samples of music, and if so, what do these contribute to the piece (for example, in terms of rhythm, meter, harmony, timbre, and so on)?
- **Harmony** - If there are multiple pitched parts going on at the same time, do the pitches interact with each other to form harmonies? Are there two notes at a time? Three or more? By the standards of the musics you like, do they seem harmonious or discordant? Do you seem to hear changing chords that direct you to an expected ending chord (functional harmony)? Are any of the parts unchanging drones? How different is this from familiar musics?
- **Small-scale form** - Are there pauses, rests, ebbs and flows, or sudden bursts in the sound that seem to organize it into ideas, motives, themes or phrases? Are there any rhythms or melodic ideas that are repeated often? Are they exactly the same with each repetition, or do they change? If they change, how do they change? Do individual ideas overlap each other, flow seamlessly into each other, or happen one at a time with pauses between? How easy or difficult is it for you to follow the way the music is organized from moment to moment?
- **Large-scale Form** - As the piece develops, do you hear major changes that seem to divide the piece into sections? How many sections are there? Are they all different, or do some seem to be a return to an earlier section? What is it that marks the different sections: changes in rhythm, instruments, range? Is it easy for you to recognize sections (for example, verses and refrains of a song) or difficult?

Remember, these are just suggestions to get you started on your exploration. There is no expectation that you will hear all of these things or discuss all of them in your journal. Start with the easiest ones, and, for the moment, ignore anything that does not make sense or seems too difficult. **If you are still drawing a blank and don't know where to start, listen to a favorite familiar piece, and see what you can write about that.** What draws your attention? Why specifically do you like this piece? What are your favorite parts, and how would you describe them to a friend? Then listen to the unfamiliar piece again and compare it directly to what you said about the familiar piece.

### 3.1.4 Formal Investigation: Finding answers using other resources

After you have listened to the music a few times, and have begun to identify the things that you can hear, the things that make sense to your ears, and the things that puzzle you, you may have some questions that could be answered with a little bit of research. When you feel ready to find out what other people hear in this music, and how they discuss it, try the following:

### Suggestions for locating useful information

- Can you find any **commentary about this particular piece**? Commentary on a piece by knowledgeable musicians or critics can be extremely useful. Note the vocabulary they use to discuss it. Look up the definitions of words and read any background information (for example, about the composer or the genre) that interests you. Listen to the piece with their comments in front of you, and see if you can hear any of the features they are discussing. It can be a challenge to connect words on a page with sounds you hear. If you are uncertain whether you understand a term, look for other pieces that are also described using that term. Listen to them and see if you can locate the point of similarity.
- If you can't find any commentary about the piece, can you find general **information about the composer or performer**? This can also provide you with useful terms and context. Be careful, though: Just because most of a composer's work is Latin jazz, classic ragtime, or microtonal doesn't mean this particular piece is! Read up on terms that interest you, and then look for and listen for any clues that they might be useful for describing the piece you are studying.
- You may be able to find commentary written by **someone who shares your musical background**. You may also be able to find commentary written by **the people who make and enjoy this music**. Seeking out both of these perspectives will give you multiple possible routes to understanding the music.
- Remember to **follow your own interests!** If the concept of microtones fascinates you, then read all about it. If it seems difficult or boring, skip it for now and pursue a different aspect of the music that does interest you.
- If at all possible **discuss your interest** with others who share it. Ask your friends about their musical interests. Go to live performances and strike up conversations when the musicians take a break. With some luck, you will find someone who knows more than you do and enjoys discussing it. Serious enthusiasts may even be happy to listen to their favorite recordings with you and provide commentary about what they are hearing.
- If the music has a sung **text**, and you cannot understand the words, either due to the language or the singing style, it may be very helpful to find a copy or translation of the text. If the music does not have a text, but is meant to tell a **story** (for example, the music for a ballet), learn the story.
- If the music was created for a **context** that is unfamiliar to you (for example, music for a religion that you know little about, or music that was part of a protest movement in another country), you may find it very helpful to read a little bit about the general context and how the music fits into it.
- **Take notes** in your journal on useful definitions and information that you find, so that you can refer to them easily during your listening sessions.

After you have done some research, you will want to listen to your chosen music again, to see whether the new orientation helps you hear and understand what is happening in the music. If so, you may develop new questions, leading to a new cycle of research and listening. If you do not feel that your research is helping you listen more knowledgeably, you may want to try taking a different direction; look over the research suggestions again, or get different suggestions from someone familiar with the genre. Or you may prefer to put away your journal for a time and simply listen to the piece so many times that it becomes very familiar and predictable. Then get your journal out again, and describe what you hear now, and how you keep track of the way the music develops, and see if this leads to some interesting insights or questions to research. In either case, at some point, you will be ready to pick a new piece to study.

### Continuing your study with new pieces

- You will progress more quickly if you choose a related piece, for example something in the same style, same genre, same composer or performer. If you have become interested in a particular aspect of the music, you may even want to choose something, for example, in the same raga, same meter, or same form.
- If you feel you have made a lot of progress, you might want to choose a more challenging piece. If you're not sure whether you are making progress, try choosing something related but a little less challenging. If you find yourself becoming frustrated, remember that the learning curve is steepest at the beginning.

- Always keep your goal in mind when choosing music. What is it you would like to get out of this music, and why? Search for pieces that sound like they are, or that your research suggests are, good examples of what you want to hear and understand.
- Continue making notes about your observations, questions, and interests in your journal. As well as following a similar procedure to the first piece, compare each new piece directly with the pieces you have already studied. In what ways does it sound the same or different?

### 3.1.5 Sharing and Reflecting on your Inquiry

If you are pursuing this inquiry on your own, you will find it very useful to bring in others for the "share" step. Taking care not to be a nuisance, seek out teachers, friends, and relatives who like this music and would enjoy listening to and/or discussing it with you. Share with them one or two of the things that have caught your ear as you listened to the music, and listen carefully to what they say in response. Attend live concerts of the music, looking for a chance to hear what others say about the performance and compare it to what you are hearing. If the chance presents itself, ask the performers or other audience members one or two well-thought-out questions that might help you gain insights that are eluding you in your solitary listening.

When you feel you have gotten what you can from this inquiry, here are a few useful suggestion for reflection:

- Are you still interested in learning more about this kind of music? If so, what aspect of it would you like to learn more about, and how might you learn it?
- Are you satisfied with the progress you have made in understanding this music? If not, how might you change your investigation so that it is more helpful?
- Have you become more interested in another type of music, or another aspect of music?
- What types of music knowledge, and what aspects of the music, were most accessible to you, and how can you use them in future music-learning projects?
- What types of music knowledge, and what aspects of the music, were most difficult for you? Do you want to tackle any of these difficulties now (take them one at a time!), and if so, what might help you do this?

### 3.1.6 Listening and Discussion as a Class Activity

#### Lesson Plan Information

- **Purpose-** To give students a framework for, and practice in, understanding and discussing unfamiliar styles of music, using their listening skills and their knowledge of the basic elements of music.
- **Objectives** - Presented with aural examples, students will identify similarities and differences between a familiar and an unfamiliar musical style, using appropriate music terms.
- **Grade Level** - Recommended for students of any age who have the appropriate prerequisites.
- **Student Prerequisites** - Students should have some familiarity and facility with the music and cultural terminology that you want them to use during the discussion. Prior practice in discussing what they hear in a more-familiar style of music is strongly recommended. (See the materials and preparation section below for details.)
- **Teacher Expertise** - The teacher should have sufficient listening skills and knowledge of the terminology to guide the discussion when students are not certain what to listen for or how to describe it. If you are not trained as a musician and are doing this lesson as part of a group inquiry with the instructor acting as co-learner, you may wish to either invite a musician or music teacher to assist with this activity, or study some useful music concepts, as part of your inquiry, before doing this activity. (See the materials and preparation section below for ideas.)

- **Time Requirements** - One class period of 45-60 minutes that includes at least two cycles of listening-and-discussion, or two or three 20-minute sessions of one listening-and-discussion cycle each.
- **Evaluation** - May be based on any combination of: active participation in the discussion; written essay summarizing the discussion; listening "quiz" (oral or written) in which the student listens to a new example in the unfamiliar style and discusses it.
- **Music Standards Addressed** - National Standards for Music Education<sup>2</sup> standards 6 (listening to and describing music) and 9 (understanding music in relation to history and culture).
- **Other Subjects Addressed** - This inter-disciplinary activity also addresses social studies goals concerning the understanding of geography, culture, and perception, for example U. S. National Geography Standard<sup>3</sup> 10 (The Characteristics, Distribution, and Complexity of Earth's Cultural Mosaics).
- **Extensions**- Present another unfamiliar tradition and have the students discuss its similarities and differences both with their own music and the tradition just studied. Students in a music class may also want to try to learn a piece or two from the unfamiliar tradition, performing it in an appropriate style; or borrow phrases, ornaments or ideas for improvisations; or include stylistic elements in their compositions.

### Materials and Preparation

- If students are not already practiced in discussing what they hear in a piece of music, it is strongly recommended that you precede this activity with several opportunities to practice discussing more-familiar musics. If appropriate, ask the students for suggestions. This will engage their interest and help them develop as a discussion group before introducing more challenging listening.
- If introducing correct terminology is part of the lesson goal, decide beforehand which terms you will introduce. Terms from the local musical culture? From the culture that produced the music? Students do not need to be familiar with terms for all of the elements of music; you may choose to focus on just a few. See *What do you hear?* (*What do you hear?*, p. 25) for a list of elements that should be useful in this discussion. If the terminology is unfamiliar to the students, you may want to introduce it as a separate lesson before attempting listening discussions. (See, for example, lesson plans on Meter Activities<sup>4</sup>, Timbre Activities<sup>5</sup>, and Rhythm Activities<sup>6</sup>.)
- Particularly if this lesson is part of a social studies or interdisciplinary unit on a country or culture, you may want to introduce some of the concepts and terms that are used within that culture to describe the music. Again, it may be best to do this in a separate lesson before this listening lesson (See, for example, Caribbean music: Calypso and Found Percussion<sup>7</sup>, gamelan dance activity<sup>8</sup>, and Story and Place: Lessons from Australian Aboriginal Storytelling<sup>9</sup>.) You and the students may also be able to make connections between other things you have learned about a culture (for example, religion, language, festivals, history, politics, philosophy, or geography) and what you are learning about its music.
- If the students have not seen any information about the culture that produced the music, you may want to prepare a short introduction, and gather materials such as maps, pictures, or story books to accompany your introduction.
- You will need the equipment to play the audio or video recordings for the class.
- Choose the pieces you will play, and be prepared to locate and start each recording quickly.

### Activity Procedure

1. Play one of the recordings

<sup>2</sup><http://www.menc.org/resources/view/national-standards-for-music-education>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/standards/matrix.html>

<sup>4</sup>"Musical Meter Activities" <<http://cnx.org/content/m13616/latest/>>

<sup>5</sup>"Timbre Activities" <<http://cnx.org/content/m14259/latest/>>

<sup>6</sup>"Simple Rhythm Activities" <<http://cnx.org/content/m14258/latest/>>

<sup>7</sup>"Caribbean Music: Calypso and Found Percussion" <<http://cnx.org/content/m11688/latest/>>

<sup>8</sup>"Coordinating Music and Dance: A Classroom Activity" <<http://cnx.org/content/m15797/latest/>>

<sup>9</sup>"Story and Place: Lessons from Australian Aboriginal Storytelling" <<http://cnx.org/content/m16919/latest/>>

2. Ask the students to describe what they heard.
3. If they don't know what to say, ask them to describe specific elements. What is the rhythm like? The vocal timbre? Other timbres and texture? The melody? (See notes on materials and preparation, above)
4. Gently discourage observations that are simply about preference (such as "I don't like it" or "it's pretty") by reminding the students that this discussion is about hearing what is in the music, not about preferences. (If it seems appropriate, you may want to discuss musical preferences at another time as part of a social-studies unit on culture and identity.)
5. Students who are having trouble articulating what they hear may find it easier to describe how the piece **is different from** a familiar music.
6. If their descriptions are understandable but do not use the proper music terms, you may want to introduce or remind them of the correct vocabulary, but **try to avoid telling them what they should have heard**.
7. When students make good observations, you may want to list them where all can see, such as on a classroom board, to serve as a record of what the class has heard and also as examples of what good listening-observations look like.
8. After an initial attempt at discussing the piece, have the students listen to **the same piece again**. If there is a particular element that you feel has not been discussed adequately (such as rhythm), remind them to listen closely to that element this time.
9. Continue the discussion, and add a new question: What did they notice this time that they did not notice the first time?
10. If you feel the students have discussed the piece to the extent that they are capable, you can introduce another piece, following the same procedure.
11. When appropriate, remind the students not to make generalizations about a music genre or tradition from just one or two examples. Familiarity with many pieces is necessary to develop a more general picture. This exercise is about developing the skills to listen so that they can develop that familiarity (with this genre, or any other) if they wish.

# Chapter 4

## Music Theory

### 4.1 Harmonic Analysis as Inquiry<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this inquiry-style lesson is to help you better understand music by studying the way chords are used to organize the music, create moods and effects, and evoke genres and styles. You do not have to be able to read music in order to pursue this inquiry, but you must have some way (for example, using chord symbols<sup>2</sup>) of identifying, understanding, and keeping track of the chords that are being used.

In this inquiry, you will choose a piece or pieces to study, and will study the harmony of those pieces with the goal of answering a particular question about the harmony. You will then demonstrate in a creation of your own what you discovered in your studies.

#### 4.1.1 Ask

The questions that can be answered by analyzing the harmony of a piece of music are typically questions about what is happening in the harmony and how it affects the form, style, mood, and other aspects of the piece.

Questions that are useful for inquiry (Section 1.2) are those that are interesting to you and will require some effort to discover and understand the answer. They should be specific. For example, "What is jazz harmony like?" is too general, but "What is it about the harmony of this piece that makes it sound jazzy?" is specific enough.

Even though you have a specific question in mind, you may have trouble stating it at first, because you don't have the vocabulary to talk about it yet. For example, you may begin with the question "What is going on in the harmony" at a particular point in the music that sounds interesting to you.

#### **Examples of the types of questions that can be answered by analyzing harmony**

- How does the harmony help create the mood of this piece?
- What is it about the harmony that makes it sound like it belongs to a particular genre or style?
- What is it about the harmony that makes this piece sound different from other pieces in this genre or style?
- How are persuasive cadences (endings) created?
- How does the harmony create interest and variety? How does it create a sense of pleasant familiarity and predictability?
- How does the harmony support and interact with the melody, rhythm, form, or other aspects of the music?
- How are smooth modulations (changes to a new key) created?

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m45091/1.1/>>.

<sup>2</sup>"How to Read Music": Section Other Types of Music Notation <<http://cnx.org/content/m43040/latest/#eip-787>>

- Is this music tonal, modal, diatonic, chromatic, atonal?

## 4.1.2 Investigate

### 4.1.2.1 Choosing the Music to Analyze

Once the inquiry question has been identified, some careful thought should go into choosing music that is likely to help answer the question.

**NOTE: Don't choose a project that is unnecessarily big!** In order to answer your question, you may decide that you need to analyze an entire piece of music, but you may just need to study one or a few sections of a piece, or short sections of two or three pieces.

**For example:**

- If you want to understand how the harmony makes a piece sound "sad," choose particularly sad-sounding pieces, or sections of a piece of music, and compare the harmony in these pieces or sections to other pieces or sections that do not sound sad.
- If you want to understand how to write a classical-sounding modulation, choose one or two classical pieces, locate the sections that lead up to a change in key, and analyze those sections.

You may also want to choose at least one musical "counterexample" that you can compare with your chosen music. For example, if you want to know what it is that makes harmony sound "jazzy," you might want to compare sections from two jazzy pieces with one piece that does not sound jazzy to you, and look for the differences.

### 4.1.2.2 Analyzing the Music

Bring to bear all the resources that are available to you as you try to analyze the harmony and try to understand how it affects the music.

#### Useful Resources

- Find recordings of the music and listen to them.
- Find written versions of the music that you can read, for example full scores, piano or guitar lead sheets, or song sheets with chord symbols.
- Get out any instruments that you play and read through the music, play along with the recording, and/or try to play the music by ear, to get a feel for the melody, chords, and voicings.
- Look for analyses of or essays about the piece by other musicians or critics. What do they say about the harmony? Is it relevant to your question?
- Look for useful general discussions of the subject. Can you find a good text about jazz harmony or about modulation or cadences that would shed light on the music and the question you are trying to understand?
- Is there a teacher or musician available whom you could ask specific questions when you get stuck? If there is an instructor available to help you with this inquiry, you may also want to ask for suggestions as to what specific pieces to choose, what sections of the pieces to analyze, or what aspects of the harmony you should study most closely.

You may already know what aspect of the harmony interests you. If you are not certain what it is about the harmony that is creating the effect that interests you, here are some useful things to ask as you analyze the music:

- What chords are being used? What is their function in the key<sup>3</sup>?

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<sup>3</sup>"Beginning Harmonic Analysis" <<http://cnx.org/content/m11643/latest/>>

- What type of chords (major, minor, seventh, suspensions, etc.) are being used?
- What chord progressions are used; in other words, which chords tend to follow which other chords?
- How often do chords change? Every beat, every measure, every few measures?
- What chord voicings are being used: Which notes are on the top and bottom of the chord? Are all the notes of the chord being used? Are they clustered close together or spread out over multiple octaves?
- What instruments are used to play the harmony parts? Is the harmony played in a high, low, or medium range? How would you describe the timbre<sup>4</sup> of the harmony?
- What kind of texture<sup>5</sup> is used to create the harmony: block chords, arpeggios, counterpoint, a bass line that simply implies the harmony?
- Are the answers to any of these questions different for different parts of the music? (For example, do chords change more often in the refrain than in the verse?)

As you listen to, look at, read about, and otherwise study the music, you may find yourself struggling to answer some of these questions. If a question does not seem relevant to your investigation, you can ignore it. If you feel that understanding it may be the key to your inquiry, however, you may end up focusing your investigation, for example, on understanding counterpoint, chord voicings, or how a bass line can imply an entire harmony.

### 4.1.3 Create

In order to test the understandings gained in your investigation, you should compose a creation of your own that demonstrates the insights that you have discovered. Because music is in the end "understood" aurally, your creation should involve sound, not simply a text-based report or critique. Your creation can be large or small, and it may be completely original or include borrowed musical ideas. For example, it might be composing the harmony for a song that you are writing, an arrangement of a favorite tune, or a short etude that would help you practice performing a certain type of harmony.

#### For example

- If you discovered that certain types of chords are used in your favorite jazz piece, jazz up a favorite non-jazz piece by re-writing it using those types of chords.
- If you discovered that your favorite composer uses a particular progression in modulations, compose a piece that uses that progression to modulate to a new key.
- If you discovered that an "eerie" atmosphere was created by using certain chord voicings in a piece, write a short "eerie" piece of your own using similar voicings.

### 4.1.4 Share

If you are doing this inquiry as part of a class or group, share your creations with each other. As each creation is presented, everyone else in the group should take a turn providing constructive criticism<sup>6</sup> that focuses on the harmony of the piece. If you encountered a specific problem in creating the piece, or if you are unsure what you might do to make it better following the constructive criticism, this is also a good time to discuss the problem and collect suggestions and possible solutions from the group.

If you are not part of an inquiry group, share your creation with someone: music teachers, classmates, band mates, friends, relatives, or fans. Request the feedback that is feasible from your audience. For example, a relative with no formal music training may be able to tell you which parts of a piece achieve a particular style of effect, while a music teacher may be able to help you identify why a particular chord progression feels awkward.

<sup>4</sup>"Timbre: The Color of Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m11059/latest/>>

<sup>5</sup>"The Textures of Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m11645/latest/>>

<sup>6</sup>"Providing Constructive Criticism in Music" <<http://cnx.org/content/m43427/latest/>>

### 4.1.5 Reflect

Final reflections on this inquiry should include considering any feedback from people who heard the creation, as well as your own critique of the success of the creation. It may also be useful to ask:

- What other questions arose during your investigation? Are any of them a good focus for your next inquiry?
- Do you feel your investigation answered the original question to your satisfaction, or would it be useful to study other pieces using similar questions?

## Chapter 5

# Music Literacy



## Chapter 6

# Embodied Knowledge

## Index of Keywords and Terms

**Keywords** are listed by the section with that keyword (page numbers are in parentheses). Keywords do not necessarily appear in the text of the page. They are merely associated with that section. *Ex.* apples, § 1.1 (1) **Terms** are referenced by the page they appear on. *Ex.* apples, 1

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- C** chords, § 4.1(31)  
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- T** teacher-centered, 1  
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- U** Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom, 9
- V** video, § 2.1(15)
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### **Music Inquiry**

An inquiry based approach to learning about music provides flexible lessons that deepen and broaden learners' understanding of music while engaging with their current musical interests, preferences, and goals. This hands-on experience with inquiry in a subject area that appeals to most learners also provides practice in self-directed learning that can be applied in any area of life-long learning.

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