

Running Head: MUSICIANS AND AESTHETIC SENSITIVITY

Final Research Report

Musicians and Aesthetic Sensitivity to Music Based on Level of Training

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Abstract

The purpose is to further understand the correlations between a musician's level of training and their preference of genre(s) when listening to the actual performed music. Ten structured interviews were conducted to allow insight gain into the education and opinions of musicians. One particular aim of the interviews is to determine the reasons for the musicians' influences; whether the focus is from the training in concentration of music theory, their cultural backgrounds or demographics. These musicians were selected from various skill levels, more specifically, beginner, intermediate and advanced levels of instruction and from different generations who were then presented with genres contrary to their preferred music. The goal is to examine the musicians' reactions to the new, unfamiliar genres. As more experienced musicians tend to have knowledge of many genres, I asked them provide information on genres they tend to avoid and to measure their responses based on those genres. Coding allowed elaboration on these variables to determine the significant influences on musicians and the coding scheme is provided in Appendix C. Through the analysis of the information gained through the interviews, I will show how the most influential aspect of a musician's musical career is personality, in addition to level of training.

### Background

Music is a powerful, sometimes awarding form of entertainment in the world. The types and genres of music vary from each country and culture. The music in America is one to be explored in particular; as the music of America reflects its influence from generation to generation in its creation and advancement. Behind the music, lie the musicians themselves, as well as their competition. What is a musician's aesthetic sensitivity to music? What determines their influences and preferred genres for which they listen most often? Musicians vary from skill levels, specifically beginner, intermediate and advanced for the purpose of this research. There is a level at which many musicians give up, there are also levels at which musicians start believing it is their dream and finally there is a level where there is no advancement or future. As I have observed in the last few years, popular music tends to have much less technical construction in the present than in the past; as in contrasting the blues influenced Led Zeppelin with the contemporary 'nu-metal' band such as Linkin Park. The four eras of music (baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary) may suggest a change in harmonies and song structures, but this does not mean there is a complete absence of complex arrangements.

For example, advanced skill musicians tend to gather influence from all eras because of their lengthy experience in education and performance and likewise tend to enjoy a larger array of genres than a beginner level musician that, again from my observations, tend to enjoy simpler music because the focus of their instruction is not on increased technical aspects of music, but in simpler harmonies and "catchy" choruses.

I have noticed that the majority of musicians tend to enjoy the type of music they are able to play. The influence of a musician arises from not only their technical level of skill but also cultural background and demographics. By exploring the opinions and experiences of different musicians of different backgrounds and generations, I hope to find evidence of change in American music from the middle of the twentieth century to the present. By exposing the musicians to genres to which they are not as familiar, it is important to observe their reactions and understanding the reasons for the particular responses. Will they react a certain way because of their training or a combination of other influences? I am also curious as to how musicians are exposed to new music. Possibilities include suggestions from friends, fellow musicians, or even just a simple internet search.

There are several hypotheses up for consideration.

$H_0$  = A musician's training has no influence on the music that which they listen.

$H_1$  = Musical training is the only factor that determines a musician's preferred genre(s) that which they listen.

$H_2$  = A musician's preferred genre to listen to is determined by alternate influences; perhaps one's cultural background, demographic and personality.

$H_3$  = Different levels of musical training yield varying responses to the new genres.

### Literature Review

The use of peer-reviewed articles is important to my research and I will use such text to expand upon my analysis of the information gained through the interviews.

Halbert Hains Britan (1908) discusses the importance of music in society. Primarily, it attempts to describe the reason why music is the art form that grasps humans more emotionally than any other. He writes of three reasons for this musical grasp. The first reason is the “biological significance of sound,” the second is the “organic character of rhythm” and how humans create patterns in nature (Britan, 1908). The final reason is the psychological significance of music on the mind (Britan, 1908). This article provides an overview on the human reaction to music.

In his article, Leuders notes the development of the criticism of music in America, more notably about the “writers on music” (Leuders, 1951). Music criticism in literature became increasingly common in the latter part of the nineteenth century in America (Leuders, 1951). This article is significant to my research because it outlines how music was reviewed in the past and how musicians, as well as non musicians examined each aspect of the music in assessment.

Schuessler from the American Sociological Review (1948) wrote an article about musical taste in relation to one’s social background. When writing of musical taste he writes, “Musical taste is conditioned by persistent biases and attitudes” and that “musical taste is socially controlled” (Schuessler, 1948). This is an interesting argument because it is similar to my opinion about musicians. More specifically, increased experience in a particular genre most likely suggests a bias to that genre more than others, especially

those that are non familiar. The notion of taste being socially controlled is also relevant to my research because I will also discuss mainstream culture's effect on musical taste. To be more specific, I will discuss the "corporate friendly" music that is heard over the radio and seen on Music Television (MTV).

In expansion to the subject of popular music, Riesman writes about interviewing teenagers about popular music in the 1950s. He noted that when asking about musical preference, a girl replied "If it's popular, we go for it" (Riesman, 1950). Although this article is from half a century ago, it stays current with typical observations of the public and 'pop' music. If a certain song is made popular, many people conform to enjoy it simply because other people do the same.

Levy and Tischler (1990) examine the cultural influence on music in America. As an example, they discuss African-American culture and its influence on "jazz, the blues, folk traditions and soul music" (Levy & Tischler, 1990). This shows how the African slave culture that was brought into America developed the music of its future people; combining old traditions and emotions of African-Americans past and present. This article will aid the examination of cultural effects in music in addition to the information gathered from the interviews.

In 2002, DJ. Hargreaves, R.A.R. MacDonald, & D.E. Miell published an article relating to their book on musical identity. In this book, they cite the importance of music in society and especially to that of musicians. In a quote that will be referred to later in the research, they write, "This concept of identity enables us to look at the widespread and varied interactions between music and the individual" (Hargreaves, MacDonald & Miell, 2002). Further, the book discusses music and its impact on the human psychology.

They note that there are four primary functions of musicians to music: creating, performing, listening, appraising (Hargreaves, 2002). These are the core of any aspiring, ambitious musician. Creating music is important because it explores the boundaries of a musician's talents and reflects their influences. Performing music is another obstacle, but it encourages confidence in one's overall musical performance. With confidence, a musician feels that they may perform to the best of their abilities. Listening to music as well as appraising the art are key observations of my research. By learning about the musicians' educational backgrounds, I will observe to what extent their appraisals of the music they listen to are affected by their musical education.

Another interesting article is found in the September 2005 issue of *The American Music Teacher* by Ken Johansen. This article explores music from the perspective of the musician during performance which I found to be quite interesting in doing my research. Johansen (2005) writes, "There is no separation between the reading and the sound--one produces the other." This article notes the similarities between a person reading a book and a musician "reading" a sound. In a way, one is using their sense of hearing in their mind to produce an internal understanding of the sound that must be played. They are thinking in terms of the music just as a reader thinks in terms of the words.

In a recent article from the *Music Educators Journal*, it states, "When students become fully aware of the sounds around them, they can build musical understanding and performance skills though listening" (Patricia Shehan Campbell, 2005). This point is relevant to my research; taking into account sensory response to musical performance. When musicians listen, they think about the music in addition to hearing it, thus building understanding.

### Methods

This will be a relational, causal study. The study will focus on information gathered through interviews and scholarly journals about musicians and music in American culture. I chose to conduct structured interviews rather than surveys because much of my data is based on subjective answers. Musician responses to music tend to be emotional; therefore structured interviews are crucial to this research. Furthermore, the experimental factor of the research will involve exposing the musicians to genres in which they are either not familiar or tend to not enjoy, and analyzing their reactions based on the information in the relational portion of the research.

### *Variables*

The independent variables are separated into two groups: musical training and genre. The musical training group includes musicians in beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The genre group has the genres grouped according to difficulty as shown in Figure 1 on page 11. The interviewees will be presented with genres which they are not familiar. The dependent, or outcome, variables include the reactions to the exposure to the new music and also the reasons for these reactions based on data analysis.

### *Validity*

In support of this research, the following issues of validity are addressed.

*Criterion Validity.* This type of validity is verified through relating how the musical tastes of musicians are affected by their musical education and training. When the independent variable of presenting alternate genre(s) to the musician is given,



the dependent, criterion variable, is the reaction to this presentation. Based on one's musical ability, criterion validity predicts the results rather than explains them.

*Construct Validity.* This type of validity is verified by the literature review. These articles provide me with a view about cultural effects of music from the standpoint of musicians and historians. More specifically, I will use the relationalist perspective of construct validity because it stresses how there are no absolutes, but various conceptual relationships (Trochim, 2001).

*Content Validity.* This type of validity is verified through both the literature review and the analysis of information in the interviews. These are used to understand the results of the outcome variable. In a sense, the literature and coded interview transcripts will be used to analyze the results of the dependent variable.

#### *Reliability*

The research will be reliable if the results of the data analysis of the interviews and peer-reviewed articles are consistent with the aim of the research. The goal is for the predictive variables to give shape to the outcome. The honesty of the interviewees is crucial for reliability of the data, as well as extensive details in their responses. The collected information will be analyzed by organization. Answers from the interviewees will be grouped according to proper cluster, such as training, genre, positive reaction, negative reaction, generation and demographic. As these are being separately analyzed, the literature, more importantly the opinions and work of others, will be used to reinforce my completed analysis.

*Process*

The following was the procedure for the study:

- ❖ Obtaining the consent of the musicians (Appendix A)
- ❖ Conducting and transcribing the interviews (Appendix B)
- ❖ Coding and analyzing the information gained from the interviews
- ❖ Relating the data from interviews to peer-reviewed literature
- ❖ Examining mainstream culture through the generations present in the interviews and literature review
- ❖ Conclusion to data of research

*Sampling Plan*

The participants in this research were selected based on their level of musical training. More specifically, musicians were selected at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The musicians were also being selected from different generations, as to compare and contrast their musical instruction and influences with musicians of different ages. Cultural background and demographics were also taken into consideration to determine whether one's cultural background or economic status affected the type of music they either learned or listen to most. Although all of the interviewees are middle class males, mostly white with the exception of one African American interviewee, some spoke of experiences and musical preferences of lower income people, so the information is not completely biased. The structured interview questions are shown in Appendix B and the coding scheme for the interviews is found in Appendix C.

The following musicians were interviewed for this research:

✚ Beginner

- Male, guitarist, one year
- Male, guitar, harmonica and trombone

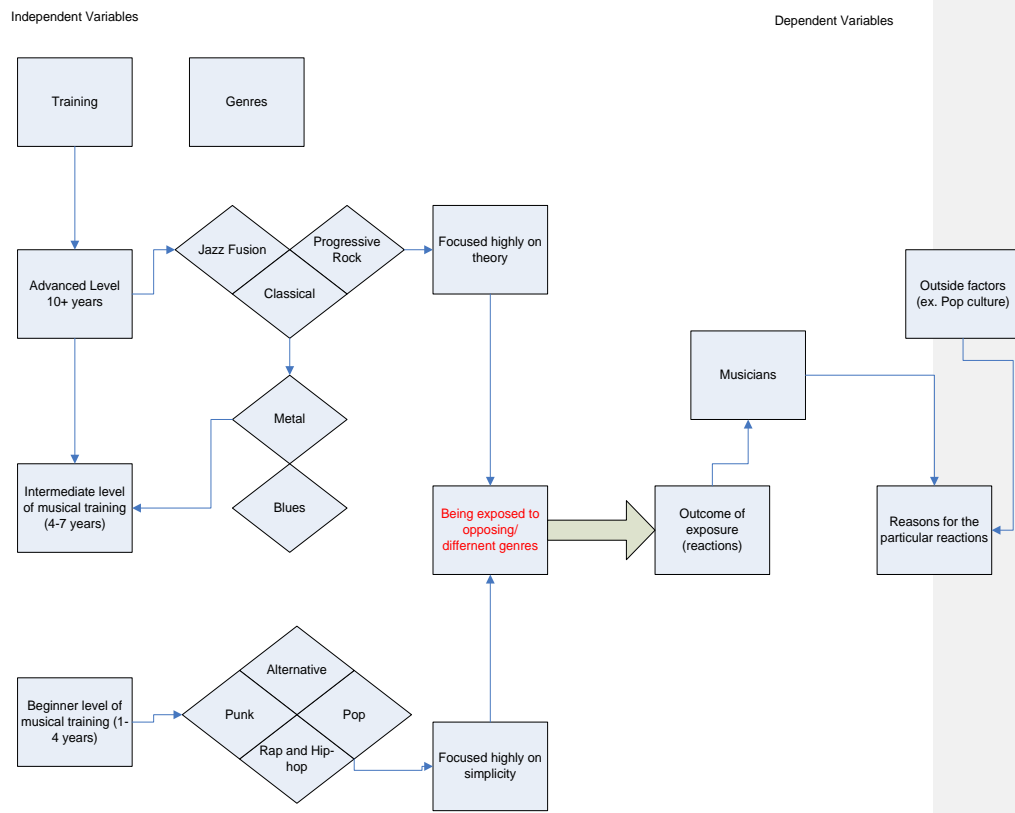
✚ Intermediate

- Guitarist, 5 years, African American
- Drummer, 8 years
- Violin, 10 years

✚ Advanced

- Guitarist, 39 years
- Advanced pianist, intermediate drummer, beginner guitarist
- Guitarist, 15 years
- Advanced saxophone (16 years), intermediate Flute, trombone, flute and beginner in piano and bass guitar
- Drummer, 20 years

Figure 1



Paul Wozniczka

## Results

My primary goal was to learn as much about the individual musicians as possible. I tried to determine the main reasons for their current opinions before I introduced them to unfamiliar or unfavorable genres. Then by gaining insight to their reactions, I was able to determine how significant their musical training was to their reaction to the new genres. I noticed that an important reason for the musicians' reactions was their level of training. This was not in all cases, as in the advanced musicians who had a higher tolerance to all music, but I must first analyze the information from the beginner and intermediate musicians.

### *Level of Training*

*Beginner.* The trend in beginner musicians was quite obvious at the beginning. Due to their limited knowledge in musical theory and technical ability, one would think that they would not be learning a complex composition, but rather an easier arrangement according to the method of teaching selected by the instructor. One of my subjects, a guitar player of one year said, "I prefer to play simple music probably because it's easier to learn at this point." This is an expected result for a beginning musician. In my own experience, when I began to play piano fourteen years ago, the focus of my lessons was not only simple chord and scale theory, but playing easy songs. These are songs such as Christmas carols or American folk songs such as "O Susanna."

This type of music is probably the best for beginning musicians because of the familiarity of the songs. They each have relevance in our culture due to the popularity of the holiday seasons and folk music in general. Rock was also cited as the favorite genre of beginner musicians. Beginners also tend to aspire for increased knowledge in more

complicated music. The same guitarist as mentioned above said when asked about complex music, “I prefer to listen to complex music because it’s more impressive and entertaining than simple music.” This shows this musician’s eagerness to learn more about musical theory and perhaps tackle more difficult songs.

*Intermediate.* As a musician gains more knowledge, they find themselves embracing more genres into their musical experience. At this point, complex music is enjoyed on a higher level because of a musician’s enhanced knowledge of basic music theory and better finger movement to compensate for faster speed. When asked about preference in playing or listening to simple or complex music, an intermediate musician said, “I prefer playing both, it adds a bit of freedom to what you want to play. I love listening to complex music just as much as simple. The most complex Frank Zappa song can sometimes be just as entertaining as a simple Bob Dylan song.” This is certainly a bold statement by this musician. His appreciation for music spans different genres as well as generations, despite his young age, the 18-25 demographic.

Frank Zappa is considered by contemporary artists as the musical genius of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He is probably one of my favorite musicians of all time, one of the most inspiring. I will never forget his quote, “Never stop until your good becomes better, and your better becomes the best.” This statement is relevant to musicians of all different levels.

The intermediate musicians I interviewed tended to prefer type genres such as progressive rock, metal, blues and jazz. This is understandable because all of these genres have difficult aspects. Metal tends to rely on speed; usually the rhythm guitarist is

playing chords at two hundred beats per minute and the drummer matching the speed with hits of the double bass pedal, while the lead guitarist plays solos quickly up and down the neck of the guitar. This is a genre that guitarists attempt as beginners, the rhythm section mainly, but are attainable first at the intermediate level.

*Advanced.* A trend among the advanced musicians is not only did they have extensive knowledge of musical theory, but they were also skilled at many instruments. These musicians showed the most appreciation towards music. As one of the advanced interviewees said, “On the instruments I have more experience with I prefer complex music, but on my beginner instruments I prefer simple music. The reasoning for this is ability level. As I get better on various instruments I’m more apt to start playing more complex music.” As with the beginner and intermediate musicians, the genres they chose to play were relative to their level of musical education. This was a logical assumption prior to the beginning of the research.

Advanced musicians seem to truly identify emotionally with music. Hargreaves, MacDonald and Miell (2002) say, “This concept of identity enables us to look at the widespread and varied interactions between music and the individual.” They refer to musical identity as a fusion between the musician and their skills. Advanced musicians identify more with the word, music, than lower skilled musicians that prefer to say they identify with “rock” or “blues.” The longer a musician has trained and performed, the more they appreciate music as a whole, thus identifying with the art.

My oldest interviewee, who has played guitar for 39 years, noted that much of his education came not only from instructors but from fellow musicians that he played with

either in concerts or that he befriended. By developing an extensive network of musician acquaintances, he was able to learn from different perspectives. Specifically, he said “I have played with many other musicians and they have passed along information that helped me to improve my skill level.” For someone that has played for 39 years, this means that he has developed extensive influences, as stated above. When this same musician was asked on which genres he preferred listening to, he said “When it comes to listening, I really have no preference; I listen because I like the overall song and not how it’s structured.” I found this interesting because my assumption was that a musician with such an extensive resume of experience and influence would strictly enjoy more complex arrangements. It is clear that he has identified with music in general, aesthetic responses are found in many genres rather than a select few.

Although my research involves American musicians, I also wanted the perspective from a European musician. I decided to interview my colleague from Belgium who is an advanced pianist, as well as an intermediate percussionist and beginner guitarist. When asked if his musical education affected his musical preference of listening, he said “Not really, it has inflicted the way I *listen* to music.” I felt this was a significant statement, as relating to the nature of my research.

Ken Johansen wrote an article about what musicians think about when they play. I feel this applies mainly to the advanced musicians because they are most likely the type to be performing in a band or orchestra. Even though musicians are highly trained and have probably played a particular piece countless times, there are moments when they could become self-conscious, becoming distracted by outside factors such as noise in the backstage area, the brightness of the spotlight or even the feel of the very instrument they



are playing (Johansen, 2005). He also writes about how musicians think about music.

Johansen (2005) writes:

“When we read a musical text we have not seen before, we similarly sound out the notes, either at our instrument or in our heads, with our inner ears. There is no separation between the reading and the sound--one produces the other. As with the poem, if we then memorize the piece, we can again think through it in our minds. The thought--our memory--is still connected to the sound in our heads.”

He is comparing how a person reads and understands a book to how a musician reads and interprets musical notation. As Johansen (2005) states at the beginning of his article, it is a way of thinking in terms of sound just as others think in words. The musician must imagine the sound in their mind as they are playing and anticipate the subsequent notes.

#### *Reactions to Alternate Genre(s)*

*Beginner musicians' reactions.* The beginner musicians showed excitement and enthusiasm when they were given the opportunity to listen to unfamiliar genres. A subject that has played guitar for a year noted that he was unfamiliar with Jazz. I allowed him to listen to a song called “CAB” by a band of the same name. This band is noted for its jazz and fusion styles; the technical abilities of this three piece ensemble are highly regarded in the musical community. The interviewee said that he enjoyed the song and recognized the talents of the musicians, but he hoped that there would be lyrics. As a beginner musician, he feels that music may be both simple and complex to enjoy but due to his preference, he prefers lyrics to bring about emotion as well as the music itself.

*Intermediate musicians' reactions.* As a musician gains more experience in their training, they are exposed to more genres, therefore, they are familiar with many genres and tend to avoid certain types of music for various reasons. One of my subjects was an intermediate violinist who was classically trained. From being taught in a prestigious music school, he had knowledge of many genres, so I needed to ask him which genres he tended to avoid rather than any unfamiliar styles. He said that he was not very fond of metal because of the typical screaming and “chaotic” nature of the songs. I gave him a sample of Slayer’s “Angel of Death” to experience. This band is known for its harsh lyrics about social injustices as well as fast, “shredding” guitar solos.

Although he disliked the song due to the lyrics, he had an appreciation for the talent of the musicians. He said, “I do appreciate the technical difficulty and ability of musicians that it takes to create music.” He said he would not listen to more metal often because of its harsh sound. He noted that he preferred to listen to more relaxing music such as classical or even trance. The main reason for this musician’s reaction was due to his personality. He has a more relaxed, calm personality and he prefers that type of music. I, for instance, am a very high energy type of person. I listen to metal in particular because of the adrenaline rush it produces. I am also an intermediate guitarist and I feel that by learning songs in styles such as metal, I am able to improve on speed and accuracy.

Another intermediate musician, this time a guitarist, noted that he was familiar with technically difficult genres such as progressive rock and jazz and that he could not think of any genre he would not have experienced. He chose to select a genre that he generally disliked and that is “Emo,” or emotional music. This subject knows the history

of Emo's beginnings from the early 1980s, but discusses how in its beginnings, the music was about the artists' emotional response to worldly issues; topics such as government policy with foreign and domestic matters, social conflicts and love. He stresses that the way that Emo is now marketed is to discuss not important issues that suggest social reform, but rather the music is targeted and marketed towards teenagers. The music is typically whiney and the generic song structures and lyrics are about nothing except heartbreak and love. The music industry has turned Emo a despised genre by experienced musicians, who often criticize the genre for being too "commercial" or "wimpy."

When asked to listen to a song sample, this subject was given the song "Paris in Flames" by a popular Emo band named Thursday. When asked if his musical education effected his reaction to the song, the subject said "The production value of the song is top notch, but the song and the idea behind it are horrible. I suppose you must take bands like this with a pinch of salt." I will discuss mainstream music in an upcoming section. This musician does not like the image of modern Emo music and he ignores it.

*Advanced musicians' reactions.* The advanced musicians were all familiar with the genres and then chose an avoided genre. They have shown to have the most tolerance to music. This may be explained due to their extensive experience in music in playing with different people and playing all these popular genres. Their level of training gave them an appreciation for the music and it seems as though advanced musicians classify music differently, but this result will be mentioned later in the discussion.

It also seems that many of the intermediate-advanced musicians have discrepancies when it comes to the singing. One of my interviewees was given a song by a well known Hardcore band named Thrice; the song was called “To Awake and Avenge the Dead.” He enjoyed the instrumentals extensively, but when asked if his musical education effected his reaction to the song, this drummer of eight years said “I just can’t see myself liking something formed around poorly written lyrics and screechy vocals.” As with another intermediate-advanced musician, the lyrics and vocal styles were the deciding factors in the musicians’ reactions.

#### *Trends in All Training Levels*

It seems that the opinion of the new genres depends mostly on the instrument(s) the musicians play. Pianists begin their focus on sight reading, incorporating chord and scale theory as they play music from the baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary eras. Guitarists tend to focus on simple rock rhythms in the beginning, and then learn more theory and scale patterns to improve their improvisational skills. Drummers begin with a simple bass drum, snare and hi-hat rhythm in 4/4 time in order to establish a basis for coordination. Later, they gain improvisational skills by playing jazz and blues and develop tricks called “fills” where they play on the tom-toms, snare and cymbals at various speeds within the time signature, as in 4/4. These are same routes I have taken in my musical training because as in any education, one must begin gradually.

*Impact of Cultural Background*

The cultural background of a musician was not as influential as I had anticipated. From personal experience, my earlier years in music instruction were influenced heavily by my background. My parents enjoyed classical music, which I was extensively taught on the piano, as well as music from their home country, Poland. I was also trained in the following genres: Polish folk music, Christmas songs and Christian songs.

As I have found in my research, the influence of the cultural background was not consistent with my interviewees. For instance, one of my subjects was a young, African American male who was an intermediate guitar player. He noted that growing up; his family listened to music such as George Clinton and R&B which is popular in the urban community. Although this musician prefers to listen to music such as rock and metal, he still appreciates his roots.

One of my advanced interviewees had a different opinion. He was classically trained in the violin for ten years and he came from a Chinese background. China has a rich history of culture and music; frequently heard on international television networks and movies in particular. He noted that his cultural background had nothing to do with his musical influences. His parents never involved his musical education with their culture; therefore there was little effect on his instruction.

The effects of a cultural background on a musician's preference of genre and musical training showed no significant results. Perhaps my sample size was not large enough, but due to the time constraints of the project, this was conclusion to which I have come. Although I anticipated a musician's cultural background to be more influential, I

probably was biased to my own experience. People are brought up and taught differently, so an assumption like this was bound to show no significance.

### *Impact of Demographics*

Demographics showed more of an influence than cultural background on a musician, but not by a large amount. I was unable to obtain an interview from musician in a lower income musician, although one middle-class interviewee commented on his experience with lower income families and their musical preference. A majority of lower income families live in the urban areas of the country, primarily large cities such as Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. This musician was African American and he noted that the lower income families with which he was interacting were also African American. As he recalled, the primary music they listened to were “Hip-Hop” and Rap. This is understandable because these genres are aimed towards inner city people in lower income communities.

### *Reflection on Mainstream Music*

*Beginners and mainstream.* As my research has shown, beginner musicians tend to enjoy mainstream music more than the intermediate and advanced musicians. Commercial music, such as that heard on the radio and MTV, always markets its music towards beginner musicians and non-musicians. A guitarist of one year said that he enjoys mainstream music mainly because his friends do. Since he has not been involved too extensively in music study, he tends to focus on simple music. The commercialized music focuses on simple harmonies and catchy rhythms. This is what sells to people such

as this young guitarist and non-musicians. This sells because the market is much larger; therefore trying to sell an album with an eighty minute guitar solo is most likely not going to be at the top of the Billboard 100 chart.

*Intermediate and mainstream.* My results have shown that most intermediate level musicians have little to no tolerance for mainstream music. One of the percussionists interviewed said, "It isn't necessarily a bad thing. While it does serve only to push simple, mind-numbingly poor music into people's heads, it has served to instigate people into making or finding better music." This is true because if someone is annoyed by a genre, they simply ignore it and find something that they feel is more adequate to their tastes.

Another comment on mainstream music by an intermediate guitar and trombone player stated, "I avoid mainstream music for the most part. I would much rather listen to something new than hear the same song spout out of my radio a 100 times an hour." My colleagues that are non-musicians would agree with this statement also. Mainstream music is far too repetitive and rotations on the popular radio stations remain unchanged for long periods of time. A typical "hit" song will be heard twice in one hour, but this of course is controlled by the record corporation that pays the radio station to play this file that frequently.

*Advanced and mainstream.* The advanced musicians that I interviewed expressed the most hostility towards mainstream music. One of these musicians, that has played seven instruments in his lifetime said, "I'm overall not a big fan of "pop culture" because of the stereotypes it implies and continues. That, and a lot of the music associated with pop culture seems manufactured rather than created." As previously mentioned, commercial music has target audiences that rarely include advanced musicians because of the smaller margin of potential sales.

An advanced guitarist that I interviewed said, "I find it both appalling and disgusting, and I don't associate myself with people who enjoy it." This is true of many advanced musicians that are personal friends of mine. They often refer to mainstream, pop culture music as "garbage" and refuse to even regard it. An advanced musician of 39 years that I interviewed also showed little tolerance to mainstream. Musically, he has no respect for what MTV has turned into as of late. He commented at MTV's foundation by saying, "MTV...before it turned into garbage can full of everything but music, I thought it was great. I grew up never knowing what a particular band and its members ever looked like unless they were on an album cover. So when MTV came out I thought it was great, now I could actually see the musicians and watch them play without having to go to a concert." Originally, he enjoyed watching the popular artists and they were mostly there for the music. Bands such as Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Metallica paved the way for upcoming artists by having music videos. Music has changed since then; there are fewer role models for aspiring musicians in the mainstream.

This musician also took a stance from a parental standpoint. He said, "As a parent and raising 3 boys, it's hard to completely control what they watch all the time. I



feel there is too much violence, gang association, and sex and language problems with today's mainstream music." This statement is again from someone that has played guitar for thirty-nine years. He has watched the evolution of music in American society and has noticed its degradation not only in technical qualities, but also in the overall messages.

#### Possible Sources of Error

##### *Sampling Plan*

If there is any existence of error in my research, it will most likely be in my sampling plan. There are a few reasons for this to occur. Perhaps I did not ask enough questions in my interviews and maybe more probes were necessary to learn about the influences of musicians. Another possibility is that my interviewees were not representative of a true demographic sampling plan. By this I mean that because the participants were mostly white and all middle class, there might be some discrepancy if I had, for example, interviewed two minority musicians from lower income backgrounds. I was not able to obtain such interviews, so I was only able to work with the data I acquired.

The final reason for error would be if I did not present enough genres when asking the interview questions. Perhaps there were genres even I was unfamiliar and did not include them because of limited knowledge.

##### *Type I Error*

Type I Error would suggest gullibility and that my null hypothesis would be true. I am confident enough in my results and conclusions to suggest that a musician's level of

training has an impact on a musician's preferred genre. Although it is not the complete influence, it is definitely a major portion of said influence.

*Type II Error*

The null hypothesis is not true; therefore I was not blind to its validity.

Discussion

In order to thoroughly discuss the results and conclusions of my research, I must analyze my results in terms of the predictive variables.

*Training*

*Beginner musicians.* The results have shown that beginner musicians tend to have more of a tolerance towards mainstream music because it is easiest for them to learn. This seems most common sense because, for example, a beginner pianist will not be studying Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony, but instead an American folk song or popular rock song on the "Top 40" Billboard list. The beginner musicians I interviewed were all serious and firm about wishing to study further theory. This showed they had a desire to learn more difficult arrangements. Although they could only play simple music, they listened to complex music also because they wanted a preview in a sense of what is to come in their musical career and experience.

These musicians were also excited when given the opportunity to listen to an unfamiliar genre. Though they have limited knowledge of theory in the more complex arrangements, they were eager to indulge in their musical curiosity to gain an

appreciation for those who have progressed in their musical careers and have now gained either advanced or professional status.

*Intermediate musicians.* I have come to the conclusion that the musical preference of intermediate musicians is most directly related to their level of skill. The intermediate musicians I interviewed mostly despised mainstream culture and considered the music repetitive and cliché. As an intermediate guitarist said about mainstream music, “It stationed itself into a static, never changing format” which suggests the repetitive format.” Another said, “A lot of the music associated with pop culture seems manufactured rather than created.” This shows the intermediate dislike of mainstream culture. In most interviews, the intermediate musicians saw themselves above mainstream music because of their constant pursuit of musical advancement.

The main influences for intermediate musicians were jazz, blues and metal. I conclude this is so because these genres are more advanced than the typical rock that is preferred by the beginner musicians. Although these genres are not mastered until well past the advanced stage, it is only possible to begin studying them, especially jazz, in the intermediate level.

Overall, intermediate musicians seem to welcome the challenge of beginning more complex genres. As an intermediate drummer said, “I prefer to play and listen to complex music because I feel it offers me more of broad spectrum of possibilities I can pick from when I play.” I feel this is an accurate statement because it does in fact “open the door” to new possibilities. Once a musician has mastered the basics and is considered intermediate, they are able to see more difficult compositions as a possibility to be

learned and performed. In this way I feel that the most important factor for intermediate musicians was their level of training as it pertained to their preference in music.

*Advanced musicians.* At first I was surprised about the results of advanced musicians. This is because they have shown the widest range of tolerance to many genres. This surprised me because I felt that once an advanced musician mastered a particular genre, their remaining musical journey would be most directly influenced by their mastered genre, but this was not the case.

As the advanced musicians progressed, they gained influence not only from their education but also their interactions with other musicians. A guitarist of 39 years said, “I played a wide variety of music. Not only because I liked all kinds of music, but being in a local band and playing for a very diverse crowd you needed to know a wide variety of music to satisfy your audience.” This statement is crucial to my research. In addition to extensive musical training, the experience of performing different genres is most important to advanced musician. Due to this man’s long-time musical standing, he has performed in front of many diverse crowds.

From experience, he has learned that knowing a wide range of music is most important in pleasing a crowd. As a result, advanced musicians are the most tolerant of all genres; they embrace almost every genre which they come in contact.

### *Genre*

*Genres most explored by musicians.* The most explored genres were related to the musicians’ levels. Beginners focused mostly on modern rock. Intermediate musicians

focused mainly on progressive rock, beginning jazz and blues, as well as improving their skills in classical styles and metal. Advanced musicians embraced all instrumental genres including rock and country but seem to have most influence from jazz and blues because of the wide range of possibilities in playing these genres.

*Genres least explored by musicians.* The least explored genres by musicians are those that do not require extensive instrumental abilities: rap and hip-hop. This is not to discredit the genres as they are quite popular in American culture, but of all the musicians I interviewed, only a fraction gave any credit to these genres. The participants mainly focused on the previously mentioned genres in accordance to their instrument(s) of choice.

#### *Influences Not Related to Musical Training*

*Cultural background conclusion.* Cultural background plays a conflicting role in musicians' preferences of genre. Most of the participants did not have extensive exposure to music from family figures such as their parents and due to this fact, cultural background was not as a big an influence such as in my life. One advanced musician admitted, "I've been brought up by my parents they to have a broad musical taste, been to a lot of festivals and seen a lot of bands live from when I was little." This would without a doubt have an influence on an aspiring musician because of exposure from a young age.

This relationship was not seen in the other interviews, but this is because they did not have the same experiences, each person had a different upbringing, so it is difficult to say how important cultural background is with my sample size of ten musicians.

*Demographic conclusion.* Although the only represented demographic from my interviews was middle class, one musician noted his experience interacting with lower-income people. He said they grew up in an inner city environment which often has the popularity of rap music. I felt this was understandable because rap is mostly marketed towards minorities living in low-income situations. As for middle class musicians, it seems that the beginners were most affected by their social status. They would find new music by interacting with friends in the same economic situation. As I was unable to obtain a high-income class musician, the full impact of demographics is not known.

*Personality conclusion.* An important aspect of any musician's influence is their personality. Although one of the participants was a classically trained, intermediate violinist, he preferred to also listen to trance music. Trance is a mellower version of techno. This music tends to be relaxing and mystifying in its nature, just as classical may be as well. This interviewee happens to also be a friend of mine, so I know more about his personality than the other participants in my research, although I do see patterns in personality effecting musical preference as well.

In those musicians that expressed the most hostility towards any particular genre or mainstream music, they seemed to mostly enjoy genres such as metal. My personality causes me to feel similarly because of my more energetic personality. My advanced level of musical training has allowed me to gain more tolerance to many genres because I understand the impacts of certain genres on particular cultures and areas of the country.

One's personality is also decisive in which genres musicians will pursue as they become intermediate and advanced in level. It is safe to say that my research has shown that the combination of one's personality and their level of musical training are most

important in a musician's musical preference. In order to play a certain genre, a musician must connect emotionally to the music. One way to connect is to have a complimentary personality.

*Social networks conclusion.* Social networks are most influential on beginner and advanced musicians, rather than all three groups. Beginner musicians often listen to music that their friends present them (whether the friends are musicians or not, it does not matter) and these people have taken influence from what their peers have listened. Social networks, along with demographics are important in discussing beginner musicians' musical tastes. An important quote from my literature review is, "Musical taste is conditioned by persistent biases and attitudes...musical taste is socially controlled" (Schuessler, 1948). A trend in middle class, beginner musicians was that they would listen to what most of their friends did, and this is understandable.

The trend was not completely explained, however, I feel that an unmentioned factor that affects musical taste is peer pressure. This especially includes the "this band is cool, so we listen to them" mentality. The reason this is a possible alternative is to simply look at how mainstream music is marketed towards non musicians and beginner musicians. The songs are not as complicated and they tend to be very "catchy" with repetitive choruses and verses. The non-musician crowd may relate to this because they have limited knowledge in music; the beginner musician group sees that these people enjoy this music and then learn it because it is not that difficult. They are socially accepted because they learn what they are expected to learn. As they gain more musical experience, they tend to challenge themselves with more difficult compositions and then become intermediate musicians.

*Summary of the Research*

Aesthetic responses to music vary according to level of training, social networks and personality of a musician. Each level of training contains varying dominance of these three causes. Beginner musicians are mainly exposed to simpler music and much of what they learn is based on interactions with their peers. Social networks play an important role in the lives of beginner musicians because of the exposure to what music is popular and what the young musician is almost expected to learn to play. As a musician becomes more advanced, they tend to draw upon personal life experience and their own personality in dictating their musical preference.

Cultural background and demographic may be seen as contributors to this aspect of intermediate musicians, but the levels at which they are influential varied. Some musicians were not affected by their background or demographic and some where. Perhaps a larger sampling plan was necessary to study these factors, or that because each person has a unique experience, it may not be possible to determine how much of an impact background or demographic has on aesthetic responses to music at the intermediate level.

Advanced musicians showed the most tolerance to varying genres and this is due to experience not only in education but in performance as well. The more they perform, their social networks among other musicians increase and they seem to develop new skills and preferences among these interactions. One thing for certain is that intermediate and advanced musicians are not influenced by mainstream culture because they do not enjoy the music much at all from a musician's standpoint. They see mainstream music as an opportunity to break away from norms and develop their own styles and experiment.



Innovation is a key factor to music. Innovation represents the true knowledge and talents of a musician. Beginner and intermediate musicians strive to become innovative in their favorite genres and even aspire create new genres when they become advanced in level.

According to my research, there are two alternate hypotheses that represent the overall results:

H<sub>2</sub> = A musician's preferred genre to listen to is determined by alternate influences; perhaps one's cultural background, demographic and personality.

H<sub>3</sub> = Different levels of musical training yield varying responses to the new genres.

The combination of a musician's preference is not only their level of training, but also a combination in varying degrees of their background, demographic and personality. This is what my research has urged me to believe and I feel this is accurate. The degree to how influential these aspects have been is not completely known, but the right direction for further hypothesizing has been reached. Perhaps further research must be conducted on a larger scale to understand aesthetic responses to American musicians.

Appendix A

**Consent to take part in a research study**

**Title of study: Determining the correlation between musical study and musical taste**

**Conducted by: Paul Wozniczka**

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will give information that will help you to decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study. It will help you to understand what the study is about and what will happen in the course of the study.

If I have questions at any time during the research study, I should feel free to ask them and should expect to be given answers that I completely understand.

After all of my questions have been answered, if I still wish to take part in the study, I will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

Paul Wozniczka will also be asked to sign this informed consent. I will be given a copy of the signed consent form to keep.

I understand that I am not giving up any of my legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

This study is asking you if you would like to be a volunteer in participation. You have the right to decline now or any time during the research.

**Why is this study being done?**

This study is being done to see if musical training has an effect on one's musical taste. I wish to find the differences between the opinions of musicians in various skill levels. This information will be used to determine why the conclusions reached are as such.

**Why have I been asked to take part in this study?**

Music is a universal medium. You have been asked to take part in this study because you are a musician and probably enjoy music and your information will be important to my research.

**Who may take part in this study? And who may not?**

Anyone may take part in this study that is a musician and has an interest in aiding the research.

**How long will the study take and how many subjects will participate?**

The study will take place from October 2005 through November 2005 and there will be about 10 participants, but this number may change due to time restraints and availability.

**What will I be asked to do if I take part in this research study?**

You will be asked to take part in an interview. The interviews will take about 45 minutes to an hour because they are in depth questions about your knowledge of music theory, what kind of music you listen to often and what kind you do not listen to much at all (as well as a sample of an unfamiliar genre).

**What are the risks and/or discomforts I might experience if I take part in this study?**

There are no risks in this study and you may choose to keep your name confidential, if you prefer to have an alias or if you will allow me to use your name in the research. The interview will also be tape-recorded. If you feel more comfortable with a telephone or email interview, then you may choose that instead of being recorded.

**Will I be paid to take part in this study?**

No.

**Who can I call if I have any questions?**

**Paul Wozniczka**  
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**What are my rights if I decide to take part in this research study?**

- You have the right to take part in the study
- You have the right to decline participation
- You have the right to leave the study at any moment

**Signature**

I have read this entire form, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand and questions about this form and this study have been answered.

I agree to take part in this research study.

Subject Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B

Structured Interview – Musicians

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?**

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why?**

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why? What do you look for in music?**

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

**9. Has your cultural background affected the music you listen to? Why/Why not?**

**10. Do you see yourself as lower, middle or upper income/class? Has this affected your taste in music?**

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**11: What do you know about the following genre?**

**I will play The Song – [Will be entered upon transcription for interview]**

**12: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

**13: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

**14: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

**15: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

Appendix C

Interview Codes

**A1: What instrument do they play and in what skill level are they present?**

**A2: Do they play more than one instrument?**

**A3: Their primary genres of training**

**B1: Preference of complex music**

**B2: Preference of simple music**

**B3: Preference of genre in performance or practice**

**C1: Primary genre influence**

**C2: Genre they prefer most to listen or play**

**C3: Effect of music level on genre selection**

**C4: What is their unfamiliar/avoided genre(s)?**

**D1: Opinion on current mainstream/pop culture**

**D2: Cultural background**

**D3: Demographic**

**E1: Knowledge/current reaction to unfamiliar/avoided genre**

**E2: Reaction to this alternate genre**

**E3: Does level reflect on opinion of genre?**

**E4: Does this genre have a new fan?**

Structured Interview – 1

Training

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

Intermediate to advanced . I play the drums for 20 years now, I've had little instructions from a teacher but I play a lot with other drummers which helps growing in play a lot.

**Comment [PJW1]:** A1: drumming for 20 years, I feel he is modest when he is saying he is intermediate/adv so I am placing him in the advanced category

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

Depends on the build-up of the song and genre but I tend to not make it to difficult because it often fills up the song with a wall of noise, harmony is the main goal for a great song.

**Comment [PJW2]:** B1, B2: He does not specify his preference. As an advanced musician, it is safe to say it would not matter to him.

Genre

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?**

I prefer a broad mix of different influences of genres in a band, and with all that it will probably fit in the Blues/Hard Rock section with my most favorite influence for drumming is Funk Rock

**Comment [PJW3]:** B3, C1: Many genre preferences; as an advanced musician with so much experience, it is understandable

**Why?** I don't know... grew in to it I guess.

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

Blues, I think most musicians can say that

**Comment [PJW4]:** C2: Blues (like jazz) are highly dependant on a solid drum beat

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

I listen to all sorts of music really, from Metal to Classical  
It has to do with the way I've been brought up by my parents they to have a broad musical taste, been to a lot of festivals and seen a lot of bands live from when I was little

**Comment [PJW5]:** C2: He says he listens to many, but metal and classical require a high level of skill.

**Comment [PJW6]:** D2: His background has not been as influential as his actual parents/family. They exposed him to many types of music, like myself, and that gives him an increased exposure.

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

No... I play and listen to a lot of different music styles

**Comment [PJW7]:** C3: I have found this is understandable among drummers because even complex music can have intermediately difficult drum beats.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

Everything that's not made with instruments such as techno, house, trance etc...

**Comment [PJW8]:** C4: He does not like music that lack instrumental recording

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

Well I don't like the commercial way about it but its necessary for bands to make money that's all, if I could make a decent living with a band without going commercial I would gladly do it

**Comment [PJW9]:** D1: He does not like the commercial way (generic quality), but notes that if he had the chance to make money from music, he would NOT be as commercial

**9. Has your cultural background affected the music you listen to? Why/Why not?**

No, it just hasn't.

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**10: What do you know about the following genre?**

It is typically for club music, like repetitive, synthesized drum beats. There is nothing too fancy about it, I really don't think it involves any musical talent if you can program it on a computer in 5 minutes.

**Webster Hall Mix – Track 6**

**11: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

It sounds just like every other song I hear in a night club. It is fine for that scene because no one is going to listen to a Neal Peart solo at a night club and dance the way they do. For a musician this isn't challenging, but for it's purpose it is fine for non-musicians.

**12: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

Yes. As an int/adv drummer, I feel this would be too easy to re-create on a computer. It is the same thing over and over and it's boring.

**13: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

If I'm out drinking with friends at a club trying to pick up girls then yes, otherwise no.

**14: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

Nope.

**15: Where do you go to find new music? Friends, internet, etc?**

Online forums that talk about the bands I like. Usually someone mentions a similar band.

**Comment [PJW10]:** E1: Feels the music is not challenging; in personal experience, I have experimented with software and synthesizers to make techno-type music, it really isn't hard to make, although I admit it was fun.

**Comment [PJW11]:** E2: notes there is a time and a place for this kind of music. he mentions the best drummer in the world (Neal Peart of Rush is seen as the best with all the contests he has won)

**Comment [PJW12]:** E3: Because this genre is not instrument intensive, he does not impress him.

**Comment [PJW13]:** E4: Again a time and a place, he will not listen to this in private



Structured Interview – 2

Training

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

I would consider myself a beginner. I play the guitar, and have been playing approximately 1 year. I take lessons from an instructor.

**Comment [PJW14]:** A1: beginner, guitarist, 1 year

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

I prefer to play simple music probably because it's easier to learn at this point. I prefer to listen to complex music because it's more impressive and entertaining than simple music.

**Comment [PJW15]:** B1 and B2: prefers to play simple because of skill, prefers to listen to complex because it's more entertaining to him

Genre

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?**

Progressive Rock and Rock.

**Comment [PJW16]:** A3: these are challenging genres, it is evident that he wishes to gain more experience and pursue more complex music (prog rock)

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

Rock

**Comment [PJW17]:** B3: at his level, he should be learning easier music (rock)

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why?**

I tend to listen to Rock because it's what I've been exposed to the most.

**Comment [PJW18]:** C1,C2: beginner, exposed most to rock, therefore he has not been exposed to new genres

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

No, I can listen to something even though I couldn't perform it.

**Comment [PJW19]:** C3: Because he has not been exposed to much music, his genre preference will not be as broad

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why? What do you look for in music?**

I tend to avoid Hip-Hop the most probably because it doesn't impress me very much. I look for music that I can relate to whether it be lyrical or musically.

**Comment [PJW20]:** C4: not impressed, does not challenge his musical experience, too generic

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

Some mainstream music is alright, but for the most part I think it's just people out for fame and money. It just doesn't seem very challenging. The stuff that I play as a beginner is similar to what I can hear on MTV.

**Comment [PJW21]:** D1: is not impressed by mainstream

**9. Has your cultural background affected the music you listen to? Why/Why not?**

I wouldn't say my cultural background has an influence on the music I listen to, but rather my friends and surroundings. When I will hang out with people, they tend to all listen to something and I usually get into it because of my similar tastes.

**Comment [PJW22]:** D2: culture not an issue, I have seen this in almost all of my interviews, friends are a popular influence

**10. Do you see yourself as lower, middle or upper income/class? Has this affected your taste in music?**

I would say I am middle-class. I wouldn't imagine this has any effect on my taste in music, as I'm sure there are people of all classes who listen to all different types of music. I don't think you can say that one sect of people is more likely to listen to a particular genre of music based on income. That sounds silly to me, but I guess it's not impossible.

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**11: What do you know about the following genre?**

I know little to nothing about Jazz. The only thing I know is that I've never heard any lyrics in the little amount of Jazz I've been exposed to.

**I will play CAB - CAB**

**12: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

The song is pretty interesting. You can tell the people who put this song together were very talented and the outcome is unlike anything I've ever heard, but still pleasing to listen to. I can't say there is anything I dislike about the artist, but I prefer lyrics in my music.

**13: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

Yes because I have an idea of how hard it is to accomplish what they've done.

**14: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

I don't think I would listen to it too often. Not to say that it is bad, or not my taste, but I think a big part of music is lyrics. I did find it enjoyable though, I will probably check out more.

**15: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

**16: Where do you find new music?**

Friends mostly, also internet searches that show similar bands to the ones I already like.

**Comment [PJW23]:** D3: This is been shown to be true and untrue in my interviews, perhaps more information about particular demographic is needed

**Comment [PJW24]:** E1: as a beginner, has not been exposed, knows very little. It will be interesting to see his reaction

**Comment [PJW25]:** E2: notes the talent of the band, he is surprised because he has never listened to anything like this. He still prefers lyrics in his music, as he said before as something to relate to.

**Comment [PJW26]:** E4: As a beginner, he can appreciate the long road it takes to gain such a skill

**Comment [PJW27]:** E4: Even though it is not his preference, he said he might check out more music by the band or similar ones.

Structured Interview – 3

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

I am at a beginner to intermediate level musically. I am teaching myself to play guitar and harmonica in what little free time I have. I played trombone in High School and was involved with music for about 7 years in various forms through the high school I went to and on my own.

**Comment [PJW28]:** A1,A2: He puts himself as a beginner/intermediate. He plays 3 instruments.

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?** I prefer various kinds of music. Music in itself is an expressive experience and no single type of music is the same. Each song has its own nuances that make it interesting for me. Mood type of music and my own energy level really determine the type of music I like to work on.

**Comment [PJW29]:** B1,B2: He prefers both kinds of music, dependent on mood and energy level

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?** I love old Jazz and blues music but I listen to a lot of different styles of music from various cultures because I get something different from each type of music.

**Comment [PJW30]:** C2: jazz/blues are int/adv genres, but he likes to listen to many styles

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?** Definitely the old blue and jazz pieces; I love to listen to B.B King and Eric Clapton play blues guitar. They have an amazing style that is distinctive in the way they play the guitar. I really got into this type of musical expression from the Nirvana unplugged CD's cover of the piece "Where Did You Sleep Last Night".

**Comment [PJW31]:** C1: int/adv genres as influences, comments on their innovative styles

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?** Mostly rock or alternative; there is definitely a varying range in what you can get (from energetic and aggressive to passive and soothing)

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen to?** To some extent yes. Because of my education in music I have sought out and now listen to way more classical and neo-classical music than I used to. Music like the Trans-Siberian Orchestra has found its way into my everyday listening much more and I have a large collection of classic recordings.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why? What do you look for in music?** I do not listen to much country music. I find I like the older blues and new alternative music more than I like the contemporary Country music.

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?** I avoid mainstream music for the most part. I would much rather listen to something new than hear the same song spout out of my radio a 100 times an hour.

**Comment [PJW32]:** D1: avoids mainstream, annoyed by repetitiveness

**9. Has your cultural background affected the music you listen to? Why/Why not?** Yes as a 20something year old I find I like some or most of the music my contemporaries listen to, but I also work with several older adults and find I give what they listen to a second chance whereas I might not have in the past.

**Comment [PJW33]:** D2: background some impact, mostly with people he hangs around

**10. Do you see yourself as lower, middle or upper income/class? Has this affected your taste in music?** I am from a middle-income family and I work with very low-income families and individuals. My middle-income roots firmly placed me in a position to get involved with classical music through school-based programs very easily but because of my work I have started to listen to more rap and R&B music than I did in the past. College in it and of itself was an experience for me that really opened my eyes to musical genres outside my norm though. I listened to everything from Easy E to Christopher Walken reading an Edgar Allen poem to Rage Against the Machine. From that I gained a real understanding of how music reflects culture and culture can inspire musical change.

**Comment [PJW34]:** D3: Yes because of his experience interacting with different people, he has been exposed to many genres.

### *Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them. (Probably the hardest for me to listen to is country, I listen to almost everything else. Though if you pick something else that is fine too.)**

**11: What do you know about the following genre?** Well I was never much of a fan of country music but I grew up with grandparents that listened to Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton and the like.

**Willie Nelson – On the Road Again**

**Comment [PJW35]:** E1: Grew up with the genre because of his grandparents' preference of the genre.

**12: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

Although not a fan of country I do like most of Willie Nelson's songs.

**Comment [PJW36]:** E2: He likes Willie Nelson, probably more so than his music I feel it is the respect he has for Nelson because of how long he has been a successful musician.

**13: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

Yes and no. I think I am more open to different kinds of music but it doesn't necessarily change whether I will listen to a song more than once.

**Comment [PJW37]:** E3: I have seen many "yes and no" reactions to this question.

**14: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**  
Probably not that much.

**15: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**  
Nope.

## Structured Interview – 4

### *Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

Intermediate-Advanced, Guitar, since 1990 – 15 years, self taught

**Comment [PJW38]:** A1: guitarist, 15 years, int/adv

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

I tend to stick to playing what I am adept at. I can play Jimmy Page or Angus Young, but you won't find me playing a lot of Satriani.

Either. The music needs to have a hook that is interesting to keep me listening. Whether it is complex or not is really irrelevant in what I listen to.

**Comment [PJW39]:** B1: Complex, Jimmy Page solos are difficult, but not as hard as a Joe Satriani song (a phenomenal guitar player). He says

### *Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?**

Classic Rock/Blues

Why? I prefer a good beat to what I listen to, something you can tap your foot to, either hard or soft. I tend to find that in Classic Rock and Blues. I dabble in metal and alternative. Punk never really did it for me, too frenetic.

**Comment [PJW40]:** C2: prefers classic rock/blues the most to perform, this is typical of musicians in his skill level

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

Classic Rock

**Comment [PJW41]:** C1: same as above

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

I listen and play pretty much the same things.

I grew up on country music and finding Rock was pretty much the first taste of anything

NOT country. Country stations outnumber Rock 2:1 here and I'm not sure my cultural background had much influence on my choice. Country has some interesting beats, but it's just too "twangy" for my liking.

Comment [PJW42]: D2: cultural background not important

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

No. The listening came way before the playing. Playing is an extension of what I like to listen to.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

New Country – Thematically I couldn't care less. Old country (Autrey, Rogers, Williams, etc) I have no issue with. New country lacks soul.

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

I could take the moment and go into my thoughts on file sharing, which might crossover into this:

Aug, 2003

"File sharers not the big cause of falling cd sales? .....But the real pirates these days are crime bosses - and the rewards are plentiful." - news article

"...and I thought it was the dilluted talent that the RIAA was pumping into the mainstream at such an enormous rate that was creating a virtual vacuum in the area of "good music" that was causing CD sales to fall..."- Mike Beane

I think M(iscellaneous)TV did the most damage to the listenable music by turning it into a completely visual event. Mainstream music, while it has a few good musicians surfacing, seems populated by a deluge of record industry waste that they are pumping out nonstop just to turn a buck. Long dead are the days of a good grass roots movement to secure a fan base.

Comment [PJW43]: D1: Dislikes, again noting it's generic nature.

In short, there is some new good talent out there, but you have to really want to sit through the posers before you get to it.

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**9: What do you know about the following genre?**

I think it's too stereotypical... I think about some "redneck" singing about some southern thing.

**Dixie Chicks – Goodbye Earl**

Comment [PJW44]: E1: Again, another person discusses the stereotypical nature of this genre.

**10: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

It was pretty much how I expected it to be, it wasn't interesting at all and sounded like overmarketed country if that's possible. The song just wasn't enjoyable

**Comment [PJW45]:** E2: He hated the song, did not challenge him at all and he did not enjoy the song.

**11: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

I'd say so, yea. I've played guitar for 15 years and this song wasn't challenging at all.

**Comment [PJW46]:** E3: level affects his reaction to the song, probably because he has played only guitar for so long and this song lacked guitar complexity.

**12: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

Not by this band, heck no.

**13: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

Nope.

Structured Interview – 5

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

I consider myself an "intermediate musician". I played the violin for 10 years, and stopped during 10<sup>th</sup> grade. However, I recently picked it up again the past year, and have played it occasionally. I received instruction by a music teacher at a music conservatory in Princeton, NJ.

**Comment [PJW47]:** A1: He has played for 10 years, so he has a tight grasp on musical theory.

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

I like to play both complex, and simple music. Learning complex music can be more satisfying since it's more difficult. I also enjoy simple music because it can be easier to learn.

**Comment [PJW48]:** B1: Prefers complex music because he feels more accomplished, this is concurrent with many musicians, including myself. You get a great feeling of "wow, I can't believe I did it"

I prefer to listen to simple music. Sometimes music too complex can be a headache if it isn't put together properly. Simple music can have just as much effectiveness towards emotion as complex music can.

**Comment [PJW49]:** B2: I find this odd for a classical musician, his position supports the null hypothesis at this point.

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?**

Classical because it's all I ever played with the violin.

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

Classical.

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

I listen to trance mostly. I enjoy listening to it because it's relaxing to me like classical music, and does not require lyrics. While also being relaxing, it can also be very uplifting, and energetic at the same time. My cultural background has not affected my taste in music.

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen to?**

My musical education has not affected the genres of music I MOSTLY listen to. However, I will on occasion listen to some classical. My education has given me a better perspective, and appreciation for that type of music.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why? What do you look for in music?**

I tend to avoid metal because the sounds of it are just too harsh for my tastes, and my perception of that genre is that it's too "dark" to me. I don't really have anything I specifically look for in music, I just enjoy relaxing things.

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

My opinion on mainstream music is that it's like any fad that will come, and go. I try to avoid it in order to retain my individualism, and not fall into the "norm", or fad at the time. Not to mention I just don't like a lot of the music that's put out there.

**9. Has your cultural background affected the music you listen to? Why/Why not?**

No. I have an Asian background, and I do not listen to Asian music.

**10. Do you see yourself as lower, middle or upper income/class? Has this affected your taste in music?**

I am in a middle income class. I do not believe this has affected my taste in music.

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**Comment [PJW50]:** B3: He has not been able to explore other genres unfortunately, but violins tend to be used mostly in classical, although they do appear in country music from time to time in my observations.

**Comment [PJW51]:** C2: He listens to this music most because it relaxes him as classical. Trance is a mellow form of techno, often used in video games such as Final Fantasy and the music presents an aura of mystery.

**Comment [PJW52]:** D2: His background does not affect his taste in music. This seems to vary among different people, mainly due to parental influence of music such as my parents pushing classical music heavily on me

**Comment [PJW53]:** C3: Although his education has not affected him completely, it has given him the chance to appreciate the music in which he was educated.

**Comment [PJW54]:** C4: This deals with his personality. My opinion on this is certain because I know the interviewee well as a friend. People tend to listen to music that reflects their personality. He is a very relaxed and mellow person, so he does not prefer metal at times such as I do because of my stress and personality.

**Comment [PJW55]:** D1: Most musicians, of ALL levels, seem to want to avoid trends and present some sort of individuality, which is respectful among the true, non-commercial music community.

**Comment [PJW56]:** D2: His background does not affect his music, but this again is due to his family because they never pushed Chinese music onto him as my parents often played Polka and other Polish folk genres since I was an infant

**Comment [PJW57]:** D3: Unlike my previous interview, he is not affected by his demographic. This further shows his individuality as a musician and audience member because he does not allow his position in society affect his opinions.



**11: What do you know about the following genre?**

I honestly don't know much about the metal genre because I never took a particular interest in it, or bothered to really sit down to listen to it.

**Comment [PJW58]:** E1: Not familiar with the genre, so introducing a new genre will be interesting in measuring his reaction as a musician and audience

**Slayer – Angel of Death**

**12: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

I dislike, and do not really enjoy listening to this song, and genre. My reason for dislike is that the music is too harsh, and chaotic. The hateful feeling of the music also does not suit my tastes, along with the need for screaming lyrics.

**Comment [PJW59]:** E2: I was not surprised by his reaction because the subject's personality suggested he was not into such an aggressive form of music

**13: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

I'm not sure how used to playing a violin, and classical music as affected my reaction except that it's a huge difference. However, I do appreciate the technical difficulty, and ability of musicians that it takes to create music.

**Comment [PJW60]:** E3: Although he does not like the song, he DOES appreciate the technical skill of the musicians involved. This is typical because musicians, especially of the intermediate and advanced levels, know what is hard to play and how much study and dedication it takes to play difficult music. Although Slayer may be branded as a satanic/death metal band, even the most accomplished musicians regard them as founders of the metal genre (along with Black Sabbath) and note the difficulty and originality of the instrumental breaks (there are few guitarists that solo like King and Hanneman of Slayer)

**14: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

I highly doubt I will listen to this type of music because I do not enjoy its harsh sounds.

**15: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

**Where do you go to find new music? Friends, internet, etc?**

I talk to friends about what they're listening to, and I sometimes browse a forum at [www.tranceaddict.com](http://www.tranceaddict.com) to find out what's new in trance.

**Comment [PJW61]:** E4: He does not enjoy this aggressive music, so he will not listen to it again unless he really feels like it, but mainly for the technical aspects

Structured Interview – 6

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

I would have to say that I probably fall within the intermediate class of musicians. I played both rhythm and lead guitar and some keyboard and both lead and harmony vocals. The Guitar I have been playing since I was 12 years old, so that means about 39 years. At first I taught myself, but over the years I have played with many other musicians and they have passed along information that helped me to improve my skill level.

**Comment [PJW62]:** A1: He says he is int, but he is being modest; after 39 years he is more than advanced. A2: he plays two instruments.

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

Interesting question, I would say that it depends on the actual song. What I mean is that if I am singing the song, I liked to keep the guitar parts as simple as possible so I could focus on the vocals. Then if I wasn't singing I liked the more difficult or complex guitar parts. Kind of like walking and chewing gum... When it comes to listening, I really have no preference, I listen because I like the overall song and not how it's structured.

**Comment [PJW63]:** B1,B2: Dependent on the song; as an advanced musician this is understandable because of his extensive experience.

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop? Why?**

Well I'm retired now from playing, but back when I was actively playing in bands, I played a wide variety of music. Not only because I liked all kinds of music, but being in a local band and playing for a very diverse crowd you needed to know a wide variety of music to satisfy your audience.

**Comment [PJW64]:** C2: Has played for many crowds, so recognized the need for wide knowledge scale.

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

60's, 70's and 80's rock/pop/top 40

**Comment [PJW65]:** C1: These are popular for many cover bands, he has played for many years and this is understandable

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

Today I would say that I listen mostly to Country. I will listen to classic rock stations from time to time but mostly Country. Well in my younger days I would say that who I was with had a greater effect on what I listened to. Back then I knew very few people

**Comment [PJW66]:** C2: Prefers country most, it is relaxing to him

who listened to country. Today I listened to country because I enjoy it and not because someone thinks it's cool.

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

No

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

Rap I really do not care for it. Rap...being a musician and a vocalist...I personally feel that Rap in general, is the same beat and done, in general, but those who cannot sing...like I said ..IN GENERAL....there are always exceptions...but that's just my take on it....

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

MTV...before it turned into garbage can full of everything but music, I thought it was great. I grew up never knowing what a particular band and its members ever looked like unless they were on an album cover. So when MTV came out I thought it was great, now I could actually see the musicians and watch them play without having to go to a concert. Personally I feel mainstream music sends a wrong message to kids and I mean teenage kids not only preteens. As a parent and raising 3 boys, it's hard to completely control what they watch all the time. I feel there is too much violence, gang association, and sex and language problems with today's mainstream music.

**Comment [PJW67]:** D1: Doesn't like mainstream, feels it is not appropriate for his kids, many parents are concerned about images on MTV.

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

Haiku De'tat - Mike, Aaron and Eddie

**9: What do you know about the following genre?**

Pretty much what you see on tv... the reinforcement of racial stereotypes

**Comment [PJW68]:** E1: Knows it how it is presented in the mainstream culture.

**10: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

The lyrics weren't too bad, and I can tell this is not the typical mainstream rap that I try to keep my kids away from. The song flowed pretty well for its style but I still wouldn't listen to it often.

**Comment [PJW69]:** E2: He notes that the song is not as the stereotypical ones. He still doesn't like the genre that much, but seems to give credit to a more original rap artist.

**11: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

Although I have been exposed to many genres over the years, I think that my experience has affected my reaction. The lyrics are pretty good, but the instrumentals do lack like in the rap I have heard.

**Comment [PJW70]:** E3: He has had so much experience in music and I believe it effects him because the genre is so much different than what he is used to listening to.

**12: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

Maybe if someone wants to show me a sample like you did, but if I had the choice I probably wouldn't.

**13: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

No.

Structured Interview – 7

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?** Intermediate. Guitar. 5 years. I taught myself the first 4 years and just recently started guitar lessons

**Comment [PJW71]:** A1: Interesting that he is self taught and went to listens. I was the same way with guitar.

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?** I prefer playing both, it adds a bit of freedom to what you want to play. I love listening to complex music just as much as simple. The most complex Frank Zappa song can sometimes be just as entertaining as a simple Bob Dylan song.

**Comment [PJW72]:** B1 and B2: Prefers playing both and listening to both the same.

**Comment [PJW73]:** This is a great comparison because both Zappa and Dylan are regarded as two extremely influential figures to musicians. Zappa more so instrumentally and Dylan lyrically

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?** I like all of these genres, just some more than others. I would have to say Rock and Roll and Metal. Because they both combine other genres into a new breed of music. Rock and Roll (Blues/Jazz/Rock), and Metal (Classical/punk/rock).

**Comment [PJW74]:** C2: Main genre influences: Rock and Metal incorporate many styles, so I can tell this person has an appreciation for all of these styles

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?** I would have to say that metal have influenced my overall musicianship for the better. Mostly metal musicians such as Yngwie Malmsteen, and Jeff Loomis.

**Comment [PJW75]:** C1: He notes two of my favorite guitarists; masters of their genres. Both incorporate classical and jazz in their playing, both guitarists can really "shred" playing as fast as 300 notes per minute, they had heavy instruction in jazz and classical (as most metal musicians do)

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?** Well being black I was exposed to a lot of R&B, blues, and rap/hip-hop when I was younger so it's not odd for me to still listen to the music that my parents listened to (Funkadelic in particular). I think the same goes with any family. White parents listened to Ac/Dc so their kids are going to listen to Ac/Dc

**Comment [PJW76]:** C2: Preferred genre is not typical of his race. He does not fit his stereotype which means he rejects it, that is very rare nowadays, especially with the way rap music is marketed to African Americans.

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?** Well I have noticed that the more I learn about music the more I can appreciate other styles of music, mostly classical orchestral work

**Comment [PJW77]:** C3: As I feel, the more one is trained in music, the higher their appreciation, especially in orchestral music because of its complexity and overall beauty.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

Well I avoid emo, new age country, and indie rock when I can. The thing that has always bugged me about these musical genres are that the bands/artist all seem like caricatures of that scene (Country and emo most notably). This image just sucks away all the "magic" that they try to make, and thus they pigeon-hole themselves into a static style of music for the rest of their musical life.

**Comment [PJW78]:** C4: Note that these genres typically have generic qualities, country is seen as the "redneck" music of NASCAR fans and emo is seen as the style for generally "wimpy" people

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

Well I would be lying if I said I never watch Mtv ( I myself do enjoy watching MTV2's Head Bangers Ball, and Viva La Bam), but you cant ignore the damage that these types of channels do to not only music but pop culture it's self. Even these new stations such as FUSE (formally Much Music) which have only been around a sort while, 3-4 years, it has already stationed it's self into a static, never changing format. It had 5 musical related shows, there's the indie/emo rock portion of the programming (Steven's Rock Show I believe the name of it is), the rap section (Hip Hop Countdown), the metal/hardcore section ( Metal Asylum/Uranium/Slave to the Metal), the top 40 list (Daily Download) and the pop culture section (The F list) and so on and so forth. I can't help but imagine that this isn't somehow damaging our culture in some manner.

**Comment [PJW79]:** D1: Many musicians feel this way, music is being manufactured rather than created

**Comment [PJW80]:** D1: These shows reinforce gender and ethnic stereotype which is damaging to society

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**11: What do you know about the following genre?**

Well I know the emo was formed way back in the 80's by ex- Minor Threat front man Ian MacKaye. He formed the first few "emo" bands, Fugazi, Rites of Spring, and The Evens I believe. Although back then their definition of emo was far from what it is today. They didn't just sing songs about love and heart break. They sung about their feelings towards any issue (although to be honest they still sucked pretty badly). During the early and mid 90's emo had resurfaced with the help of Weezer. They used some of the "emo techniques" that are still (over)used to this day. They sung songs about love, how they were social outcasts. This was most obvious on their Pinkerton album. Although the band had reached international fame, no one knew them, their lead singer River Coumo enrolled at Harvard for a music degree and was surprised that no one knew who he was. He saw people wearing Weezer shirts, yet no one even noticed him. The Pinkerton album cause the sudden burst of "3rd" wave emo that we all know and hate today.

**Comment [PJW81]:** E1: He has knowledge of many musical areas, but has chosen emo because he dislikes the current handling of the genre in the mainstream and how most people react to it, not like the original musicians that found the genre

**Comment [PJW82]:** E1: This is true about most musicians because studying at an especially intensive musical program will not find people that follow "pop" culture too often.

**He is presented with Thursday – Paris in Flames**

**12: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

Well I've had to listen to Thursday a number of different times, most of the time against my will, although I didn't say anything at the time. As I have already stated, I hate new emo with a passion. This song is no different. It follows the basic patterns that every other emo band plays. Soft medley with echo effects, into a slow build up into the chorus, breakdown, repeat. I will say this song is better than the others I had to listen to,

**Comment [PJW83]:** E2: He dislikes this genres because of its generic nature, he does not find any uniqueness of this song, as most musicians tend to feel about emo. There are often jokes around the internet about emo and its fans (the target audience of which is young teenagers).

I'm just glad it wasn't their "Broke Glass Car Crash" song, I loath that song.

**13: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

Well, yes and no. I know that the song is very simple to play, but I do notice that they guys have been playing together for a long time. They are "tight" musical I suppose you could say. The production value of the song is top notch, but the song and the idea behind is horrible. I suppose you must take bands like this with a pinch of salt.

**Comment [PJW84]:** E3: He knows the song is simple to play and previously he noted his appreciation for both complex and simple music, but he shows some respect for the band because he knows they have been around for a while together and even compliments on their production quality, which doesn't necessarily mean their musical quality.

**14: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

I've had my punk phase and I don't plan on returning there. But while I was there I hated emo even more (mind you it was 4 years ago and I was much younger). I remember all the "cool punk" kids were in punk bands. There were another group of kids that hung out with us that we all hated, they were an indie/emo group of 4 or 5 people. Them being "indie" (like that word still has a meaning today) wasn't why we didn't like them. They were, for lack of a better word, dicks. They would stab you in the back in a second (They would have went far in the music industry). I remember we used to play shows with them, and being the little bastards that we were, we would raise all sorts of hell. I remember the greatest show I've ever been to was a friend of mine's band. They were unbelievably horrible, they were brothers who had just gotten a bass and a guitar 3 months before, but their drummer was very musical inclined (all be it "wishy washy"). Well to make a long story short their band plays and they play these 3 somewhat offensive songs in a row. They weren't really offensive they were just in the punk spirit. You know something to piss off the squares with. The songs were entitled if I remember correctly, "France Is For Fags", "Jimi Hendrix Sucks" and "Emo Is For Little Girls". Well half way through "Jimi Hendrix Sucks" a guy from the crowd who was offended starts yelling at Lee, the singer/guitarist, so Lee tells the guy to come up on stage. When he gets up there they start arguing about Jimi Hendrix, a process Lee so affectionately dubbed "Crowdbating". After they get done playing, that they start playing "Emo is For Little Girls" they get stopped half way through and get kicked off-stage by one of the emo bands we were playing with's mom. It was nice; I think we did Dr. Gonzo proud.

**Comment [PJW85]:** E4: He has had an established dislike for this music and thus it will continue, although he presents a humorous story about how emo has been perceived, though the language is crude in the song titles of the band criticizing emo

**15: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

I think I answered the question to the best of my efforts. This by far one of the more interesting college projects I've seen. I hope you do really well on it, I would like to what your final report looks like it looks interesting as hell.

Structured Interview – 8

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

I consider myself intermediate. I've been playing drums for about eight years, which isn't a monstrous amount, but I have more than mastered the basics, so I believe I qualify to be above a beginner. I watched a friend and tried to copy him and what I heard on records for my first two years, with the following three having me receive actually training in my instrument in order to master rudiments and other technical details. I have been teaching myself to create my own flavor and style for the past three years.

**Comment [PJW86]:** A1: intermediate drummer, he has been exploring new methods

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

I prefer to play and listen to complex music because I feel it offers me more of broad spectrum of possibilities I can pick from when I play. Normally, when I listen to music, it's just to learn how to play better, and when I do listen for comfort (which, to be fair, is about 40 percent of the time), the complex music gives me more satisfaction once I have completely digested it. I can listen to one song numerous times and hear it differently each time, making a twenty minute song sometimes last for almost a week straight before I can throw it on for background noise. All of that is important because I consider myself an intellectual and strive to better my mind whenever I can, so working to figure out a song becomes both satisfying and rewarding. It is like in a meal. One can either have one piece of bacon (rather simple), or have eggs benedict (far more complex). I prefer the eggs benedict over 99% of the time. That is not to say that I don't like simple music at all, simply that it is not preferred.

**Comment [PJW87]:** B1: prefers playing AND listening to complex music. he does say he still likes simple music, but he prefers the complex. As a musician who is trying new things, he is bound to challenge himself with more difficult music, so it depends on his personal choices in instruction.

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop/Other? Why?**

I prefer prog rock, metal, jazz, fusion and classical the most for the same reasons as why I listen to them. It's not very satisfying to play something slow- or mid-tempo and rather simple when it could be fast, complex and innovative. Yes, that's it: Innovation. *That's* why I prefer them. They do things that are new to music more often. I enjoy playing all of these except for pop and will play any for money, but my passion resides in prog, metal, jazz, fusion, and classical.

**Comment [PJW88]:** C2: These are advanced genres, innovation is key to int/adv musicians

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

I would say metal. I never liked the genre as a child, but in the last six years, I've grown to like it quite a bit. Testament, Opeth, Ayreon; it's one of the most internally varied genres out there right now. The other major, major influence would have to be prog rock. I grew up on Yes, Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Amon Duul II, Procul Harem, Jethro Tull, ELP... They still have a specially reserved place in the record collection today. I was just listening to Yes songs earlier this morning, as a matter of fact! I guess that leads to the only other one, jazz. While less influential than all the others as to the overall motif, I use mainly jazz technical techniques to get across the other genres, so it deserves a place here, too. Oddly enough, though I was trained classically, that rarely gets into my music, and when it does, it's for a rather short time.

**Comment [PJW89]:** C1: many int/adv musicians listen to metal because of its speed and complexity, as well as jazz

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

I tend to listen mostly to metal and prog. Growing up as a middle-class white kid didn't serve to affect my musical taste much except that my love of hip-hop had to be made secret. Metal and prog, though, speak to my mind more than anything else (and really get the testosterone flowing!), and I'd like to think my mind would be the same no matter what body it was placed in.

**Comment [PJW90]:** D2, D3: metal prog are his main influences, so he listens to them the most. He was sarcastic about the hip-hop "love"

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

I'd say so. Since I've master the basic rudiments and have started moving on to hard ones, such as polyrhythm, polymeter, abstract time signatures, etc., I've drifted rather quickly towards music with those traits in them in order for me to do them well. To answer directly, it most definitely has had a major impact on my musical taste.

**Comment [PJW91]:** C3: His skill has effected the music he listens to, he notes advanced music terms. He says it has a major impact on his music.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

I really try to avoid most electronica and any hardcore based music because it all is so very derivative of itself. While there are the occasional artists in each that do something new and innovative, such as Dillinger Escape Plan and Aphex Twin, the songs and albums could mostly have their names changed to other songs or albums without anyone knowing the difference. If they made any major leap forward, I'd possibly listen to them, but I definitely avoid them now.

**Comment [PJW92]:** C4: I chose to give him this genre as a sample because it was not mentioned in my other interviews.

**Comment [PJW93]:** C4: Again, this intermediate musician notes the generic nature of this music

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

It isn't necessarily a bad thing. While it does serve only to push simple, mind-numbingly poor music into people's heads, it has served to instigate people into making or finding better music. It helped me find prog and metal after I became disgusted with the current crop of bands. It helped prog get born from jazz and R&B. The music it pushes is bad, but if it could be harnessed as a tool to direct people towards more complex and intellectual bands, it could be the best thing that's happened since the Johannesburg printing press. You know, provide clips and information, vary up the set-lists a little more

**Comment [PJW94]:** D1: He thinks it's good because it motivates better musicians. He feels there should be more exposure to more complex music such as in television.



to allow more room for shows on jazz music and world music. A couple channels already do this, like International Music Feed with its blocks of world music and popular music from around the globe that may not get coverage in America. Right now, though, it's mostly just drivel. It most certainly could be great, though.

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**Thrice – To Awake and Avenge the Dead**

**9: What do you know about the following genre?**

I know a little when it comes to hardcore- the Summer Revolution and whatnot- but not altogether a great amount. I almost avoid knowledge (which says a lot, considering the way I soak information up normally) about it because of such a great distaste over their distorting a genre I really enjoy, this case being metal. Admittedly, I don't know a great deal, though.

**Comment [PJW95]:** E1: He knows a little bit about this genre, not too much, so I provided him a sample.

**10: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

It had a really great start! Very energetic and very strong with little to knock on for what they were going for. It would have been a great metal riff! Unfortunately, they followed with terrible vocals, the part I hate most about Thrice and hardcore in general. I ignored the vocals from their introduction on as they were too overwrought. The rest of the music wasn't too bad, though. A new vocalist might net them a new fan.

**Comment [PJW96]:** E3: For him the vocals ruined the song. Otherwise he thought it was very energetic and metal-like.

**11: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

I would say so. Having spent eight years (admittedly not long, but long enough, really) honing my craft, I've gone past not liking to actually taking umbrage with those who perform poorly. I feel almost like Gauguin when he first saw the works of Van Gogh; derisive, judgmental. I just can't see myself liking something formed around poorly written lyrics and screechy vocals.

**Comment [PJW97]:** E3: His music has been an influence, I have seen this in most of my intermediate musicians that I interviewed.

**12: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

If it becomes instrumental! I can't imagine myself not liking anything that showcases abilities, but when they start focusing on poor performances is where they lose me. Nothing else to say about that, really.

**Comment [PJW98]:** E4: again the lyrics ruined it for him.

**13: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

No, actually, you did a very good job! It's been a pleasure being interviewed and I hope my information is useful.

Structured Interview – 9

Training

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

Guitar: Beginner / Self taught  
Piano: Advanced / Self taught and instruction  
Drums: Intermediate/ Self taught and instruction

**Comment [PJW99]:** A1,2: plays 3 instrument at varying levels.

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

I listen to a lot really, depending on how the song is built I fancy both of those types of music. Complex music suits rock more in my book, while "simple" music is better for the "indie" genre. Rock is for me the best way to express my feelings through music. It gives me a way to release all my anger or fear, and as I like to think I'm a complex person I try to find the more complex songs and test them out.

**Comment [PJW100]:** B1: Prefers complex because he feels he is a complex person, again personality seems to be a factor.

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop? Why?**

Progressive rock, it suits me best personally.  
I do fancy Jazz occasionally, mostly it depends on the crowd/people I play with, just sort of go with the flow.

**Comment [PJW101]:** C2: Progressive bands tend to be very complex in their arrangements, as he noted he enjoys most. I am the same way; prog rock is my favorite genre.

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

This is a hard one, the Piano was my first instrument and I learned to play classical songs first, so my guess is that that genre has the most influence.

**Comment [PJW102]:** C1: classical is his primary influence (along with being a part of prog rock), this makes sense because most advanced piano players have had extensive classical training.

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

I listen to everything mostly, except metal.  
In Belgium cultural background (my 2 cents about it) is stronger for people who live in the ghetto, such as the Turkish people in Brussels. They listen to French rap, which has a lot of anger. I myself have a broad cultural background due to music school and me visiting a lot of museums. I do believe this is reflected in my taste of music, as I listen to a lot of different genres.

**Comment [PJW103]:** D2, D3: In his area, it seems that demographic is more important than one's cultural background.

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

Not really, it has inflicted the way I listen to music. I'll dismantle a song and listen how they arranged the drums, how the vocals come into place etc...

**Comment [PJW104]:** C3: It has changed *how* he listens to music, rather than actually affecting his overall style.

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

Metal, all sorts of it.

Hearing guitars and people screaming into a microphone isn't just my cup of tea.

Also I don't fancy standing somewhere and getting "mashed" around.

I can listen to it, and "dismantle" the song, but please don't make me do it for long.

**Comment [PJW105]:** C4: Lyrics seem to be a big issue for people that do not listen to metal.

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

Some musicians tend to look down on this type of music, but I'm finding that elite-alike.

Apparently there's a market for this type of music, and it may not add up a lot to music itself its still music.

The listeners of that type of music should be respected, it's not because you don't listen to Bach or Mozart that you're dumb, or less worth then someone who does.

Taste is different for all of us, let people decide what they listen to, and as long as they enjoy it it's all right.

MTV should show more different types of music though, instead of always the mainstream stuff.

Or maybe there should come a new music network, which would broadcast a wider variety of music, so that people who enjoy other genres have a place to get served.

**Comment [PJW106]:** D1: He doesn't seem to mind mainstream music. Mainstream is much different in Europe than it is in America, and this is probably the cause.

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**Slayer – Angel of Death**

**9: What do you know about the following genre?**

I know of it as its image. When I think metal I think about fast guitar playing and screaming. The screaming is too much for me sometimes.

**Comment [PJW107]:** E1: Many people avoid genres because of the images associated with them, ie. Metal for it's screaming, loudness and rap for it's glorification of gang violence (mainstream)

**10: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

They are one of the biggest metal bands in the world. Although I don't like the metal because of the screaming, this band can really play. The guitars are fast and the solos are amazing. It's a song to sort of pump you up before a big event.

**Comment [PJW108]:** E2: Respects the band even though he is not into the metal genre in general

**11: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

A little bit yes. I am just beginning guitar so one day I would like to play that good, even if I don't listen to lots of metal. I have played drums for a while, so I could follow the drums in the song, they were really fast too. I think the singing was the only part that made me not like it totally.

**Comment [PJW109]:** E3: He knows what to listen for each instrument that he plays, he notices certain patterns and chord structures.

**12: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

Yes and no. If the singing was softer instead of shouting, then I could listen to it more. The instrument work was very good and I like to hear those kind of solos like in progressive rock. If you gave me something that I describe then I will probably enjoy and listen more.

**Comment [PJW110]:** E4: If it was more progressive than "metal" he would listen to this. A band perhaps like Dream Theater that has metal-like instrumentals (the musicianship of this band will amaze even the most advanced musicians), but the vocals are from an opera singer, rather than typical yelling/screaming.

**13: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

No.

**14:**

**15: Where do you go to find new music?**

I usually just do a search on the internet. If I buy a cd and enjoy it I look for similar bands in same genre.

Structured Interview – 10

*Training*

**1: Would you consider yourself a beginner, intermediate or advanced musician? What instrument(s) do you play? How long have you played these instruments? Where did you receive instruction or are you self taught?**

Advanced. I've played the Saxophone (Alto, Baritone, Soprano, Tenor) for 16 years. I received instruction both at school and private lessons. I also play the piano (beginner – instruction), bass guitar (beginner – self taught). I've had some basic instruction on how to play French horn, trombone, trumpet, and flute as well (though I consider myself less than a beginner on those).

**Comment [PJW111]:** A1 and A2: Experience with 7 instruments, advanced knowledge of music in general, knows what to look for when he is listening to the music

**2: Do you prefer to play complex or simple music? Why? Do you prefer to listen to complex or simple music? Why?**

It depends on the instrument. On the instruments I have more experience with I prefer complex music, but on my beginner instruments I prefer simple music. The reasoning for this is ability level. As I get better on various instruments I'm more apt to start playing more complex music.

**Comment [PJW112]:** B1 and B2: Subject's preference of music depends on his instrumental experience. The longer he has played, the more that he has challenged himself.

In listening to music I like complex music. I'm a big fan of harmony and a very "full" sound.

**Comment [PJW113]:** B1: Although when he is playing an instrument he is not as skilled in (ie. Bass), he plays simple music. Because he has advanced experience in saxophone, he prefers to LISTEN to complex music, noting the harmonies and "full" sounds.

*Genre*

**3: What is your preferred genre of music to play/perform? Progressive rock/Jazz/Fusion/Classical/Metal/Blues/Alternative/Punk/Pop/Hip-hop? Why?**

I primarily play classical, jazz, blues, and rock. These are the types of music I like to listen to, so playing them comes more naturally to me as a musician. If I had to choose just one to play it'd probably be classical just because of the variety of music available and the deep intricacies of the genre. You can really do a lot with classical music.

**Comment [PJW114]:** B3 and C2: Preferred influences of classical, jazz, blues and rock. His advanced experience with the sax suggests the jazz preference. He says they come the most natural, and sax players often excel at improvise, it is "natural" to them

**Comment [PJW115]:** C2: I feel the same about classical music, because it is so broad and difficult, it is what many musicians strive to play as they progress, it is quite challenging to master

**4: What genre is the most influential to your musical style?**

Classical and Jazz as these were the genres that I learned to play.

**Comment [PJW116]:** C1 and C3: Classical and Jazz are primary influences, because he has been trained in both extensively, those are his main influences

**5: What genre of music do you tend to listen to and why? Have aspects of your cultural background affected your taste in music?**

I tend to listen to rock more than anything else. I do like classical music and listen to it occasionally, but most of the time I listen to rock.

**Comment [PJW117]:** C2: preferred genre to listen to, it makes sense because jazz, blues and classical had a tremendous impact on rock (ie. Led Zeppelin)

**6: Has your musical education (skill level) affected the kind of music you mostly listen?**

To some degree, yes. If not for my classical music education I probably would never have listened to it.

**Comment [PJW118]:** C3: His education directly influences what he listens to the most, otherwise would probably not be exposed to such music because of typical complexity of jazz, blues and classical

**7: What genre of music do you tend to avoid and why?**

I avoid Rap and hip hop because I really just don't like them. I barely consider rap to be music at all...There is such a lack of instrumentals, seems like anyone can make this music.

**Comment [PJW119]:** C4: He dislikes rap because there is an absence of jazz, blues and classical in the genre. It focuses more on lyrics than the background music

**8: What is your opinion on mainstream music (MTV, pop culture)?**

I like a lot of mainstream music that fits the genres I listen to. I'm overall not a big fan of "pop culture" because of the stereotypes it implies and continues. That, and a lot of the music associated with pop culture seems manufactured rather than created.

**Comment [PJW120]:** D1: Is selective of the mainstream culture, not a fan of "pop" and notes the stereotypes implied such as in my other interviews. Similar with my opinion in the manufacturing sense rather than creative

**9. Has your cultural background affected the music you listen to? Why/Why not?**

I don't think my cultural background has effected what I listen to. I don't associate much with any particular culture so it's difficult for me to say.

**10. Do you see yourself as lower, middle or upper income/class? Has this affected your taste in music?**

Middle Class. I think this effects my tastes somewhat as I'm more apt to listen to music that relates to my life.

**Comment [PJW121]:** D3: Middle class white males tend to listen to rock most often, they along with the upper class have the most opportunities to receive musical instruction, which might suggest why they prefer music such as jazz, blues and classical over rap

*Outcome*

**At this point, I will determine which genre the interviewee is not accustomed to and I will play songs for them.**

**The Song – Deltron 3030 - Madness**

**11: What do you know about the following genre?**

Not much. I know only the stereotypes about that type of music and what I see/hear on TV/radio about it. **What do you mean by stereotypes, can you be more specific?**

Just the stereotype that rap is for the more urban crowd. When I think of rap I think of crime, drugs, violence. I'm a middle class white guy, the music just doesn't seem like it's really aimed at me.

**Comment [PJW122]:** D3: Again, he is from the middle class, the mainstream rap is not targeted towards him

For example there was a shootout at the local movie theater (it's usually a safe place). The movie the shooting happened at? "Get Rich or Die Trying". To me, that just re-

enforces the stereotype. It's a movie about an African American rapper who's been shot a bunch of times, then a couple of other African Americans shoot each other in the lobby. I really don't mean to come across as racist (trust me, I'm not) but to the average suburbanite that doesn't look good for the movie (or the rap "culture" that surrounds it).

**Comment [PJW123]:** D3 and F1: Not part of the targeted audience, due to the stereotypes, he does not identify with this culture, therefore, does not listen to it

Rap videos also enforce stereotypes. Men exploiting women, doing/selling drugs, shooting each other (and bragging about being shot), and talking about being pimps? I'm not saying that other genres of music are that much better, but (to me at least) that seems to be what the majority of rap is about.

**12: What is your opinion on this song/genre? What do you like/dislike about this artist/band?**

- I'm not a rap fan at all, but this song was almost tolerable to me. I liked the music in the background of the song, even if I wasn't a fan of the lyrics. I actually listened to the song a few times before I made any decisions, and I think I liked it better each time.

**Comment [PJW124]:** E2: Lyrics were not as important as background music and he enjoyed this song. Side note: Deltron3030 has worked with a band named Gorillaz that tends to have the suburban rap style, incorporating more background music and having slower lyrics

**13: Has your musical education (skill level) affected your reaction to this song?**

Probably. I think that my musical education has helped me appreciate this song more than I would have otherwise.

**Comment [PJW125]:** E3: His instruction has affected his opinion on this song

**14: Do you think you will listen to more of this type of music? Why/Why not?**

- Probably not. While this song was a better example of this type of music, I'm still not a fan. It was by far better than a lot of other rap I've heard (or typically hear on the radio or on TV) but still not anything I'd want to listen to on a regular basis. The song you sent will at least make me reconsider dismissing the genre as a whole (which is what I've done up to now).

**Comment [PJW126]:** E4: Although he is not amazed by the genre still, he liked the example of this artist and has reconsidered his opinion on the genre "as a whole" as he states

**15: Anything to add that you feel I did not cover in my questions?**

No, that is all.

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