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Required Choral Repertoire in State Music Education Performance Assessment Events

This study investigated required repertoire lists for state music education associations' choral performance assessment events in the National Association for Music Education North Central division. Questions included: (a) How many states have required repertoire lists; (b) What categories/genres and historical time periods are represented on these lists; (c) Are there any notable differences between and among states' required repertoire lists within NAfME's North Central region; and (d) Do the required repertoire lists reflect NAfME's National Core Arts Standards for Ensembles? Analysis of 2,714 pieces revealed 74.94% of the repertoire was representative of Western art music, with 60.72% of those pieces composed post-1900, and 25.06% of the total repertoire was Non-Western. Implications of these results may question the concordance between NAfME's National Core Arts Standards and values set forth through required repertoire lists as determined by NAfME state performance assessment leadership.

Keywords: choral, repertoire, performance assessment, national standards, required repertoire lists

Introduction

Repertoire selection is critically important for music educators due to its significant influence on curriculum (Apfelstadt, 2000; Forbes, 2001; Whitlock, 1991). "It [repertoire] is the vehicle through which students learn performance skills, musical concepts, music history, and cultural awareness" (Forbes, 2001, p. 102). Required repertoire lists influence teachers' selection of classroom music,

which in turn influences the genres, historic time periods, and styles of music students will learn. Leading thinkers in music education at the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 endorsed "music of all periods, styles, form, and cultures" and specifically recommended inclusion of pop, avant-garde, American folk, and the music of other cultures into the curriculum (Choate, 1968, p. 139). The National Standards for Arts Education and the National Core Arts Standards set forth by Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) indicate the need for varied repertoire in ensemble performance as documented in both the 1994 and 2014 publications (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994; National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014).

The National Core Arts Standards for Ensemble Common Anchor #6 *(Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context)* encourages students to be able to "demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared or improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles, genres, and historical periods" (MU:Pr6.1.E.IIa). Common Anchor #4 *(Select varied musical works to present based on interest, knowledge, technical skills, and context)* includes the use of "varied repertoire" in criteria such as "Demonstrate how understanding the style, genre, and context of a varied repertoire of music influences prepared and improvised performances as well as performers' technical skill to connect with the audience" (MU:Pr4.3.E.IIa and MU:Pr4.3. E. IIIa).

The standards articulate the goal of students being able to "develop, apply, and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music" (MU:Pr5.4.EIIIa) in Common Anchor #5 *(Evaluate and refine personal and ensemble performance, individually or in collaboration with others)*. Though the National Core Arts Standards do not specify how choral directors achieve balance in exposing their students to varied repertoire, varied repertoire is a priority in the core goals and objectives of music education.

Forbes (2001) surveyed high school choral directors from southern public schools to determine repertoire selection practices and the criteria used in the process, and found that directors' selection practices were unstructured, directors' selection criteria were inconsistent, and the influence of each criterion depended on the style of the work being selected (musicianship criteria used for choosing classical music, entertainment value criteria used when choosing popular music). A closer examination of repertoire selection was found in Reames' (2001) investigation of literature for beginning high school choral ensembles. Results showed that choral directors used similar sources for repertoire selection and appeared

to value aesthetic and technical criteria equally. Reames suggested that directors should include a more varied repertoire of styles.

Results of a questionnaire of Ohio choral directors revealed that overall musical quality, educational value, and the number of voice parts were the most important factors for selection (Devore, 1989). Further content analysis of Ohio's large ensemble required repertoire list for the years 1958-1988 showed a majority of the repertoire (66%) was 20th Century, and the pre-20th Century pieces were not evenly distributed among the other historic time periods. Devore did not differentiate the style of the music in the questionnaire, only the historical time period to which it belonged.

Wyatt (1988, 1989a, 1989b) completed a series of three studies of recommended repertoire for high school choirs. The first study (1988) was a content analysis of common composers on five commonly referenced repertoire lists and four leading textbooks. The second (Wyatt, 1989a) surveyed leading university methods professors and members of the American Choral Directors' (ACDA) committee for Repertoire and Standards. Participants reported their opinions concerning the selection of repertoire for high school choral ensembles. The results of these two studies were combined to create a comprehensive recommended choral repertoire list (Wyatt, 1989b). This comprehensive list included works by composers who had four or more works from the content analysis of the first study (1988) and received a minimum rating on the questionnaire of the second study (1989a). Wyatt's list included 400 titles of varying historical time periods, all from the Western art music genre.

Hedden and Daugherty (2009) examined repertoire programmed for North American community-based children's choirs and compared printed programs from these choirs over the course of one year. Results from the 3,906 literature titles that were collected indicated an emphasis on post-19th Century and secular repertoire with some arrangements of historical literature. Similarly, Ward and Heil (2017) analyzed 3,960 pieces from ACDA national conference programs spanning 1960-2017 and found a sizable imbalance between early music and modern music, with 51% of programmed works from the modern time period (post-Romantic), as compared to 500 years of Western pre-modern music (Medieval through Romantic works) that accounted for 26% of programmed repertoire. Twenty-three percent represented a broad "other" category (ethnic/multicultural; folk; spirituals/gospel; hymns/carols).

Focusing on non-Western genres, Graves (2000) studied the presence of multicultural music in the choral field with a content analysis of concert programs from ACDA conventions between 1975-1999, questionnaires of conductors from universities with graduate choral conducting degrees, analysis of course syllabi, and

a content analysis of research articles from the *Choral Journal* (1975-1999) and the *International Choral Bulletin* (1982-1999). Results indicated the presence of multicultural music had significantly increased over the years in both programming and research publication. "Multicultural repertoire is becoming more entrenched in the choral canon" (Graves, 2000, p. 39). Graves found, however, this category of music was unequally represented in the curricula of programs of studies for choral conducting. "For multicultural music to be fully accepted into the choral canon, it should also appear in choral literature textbooks and graduate-level choral literature syllabi at leading universities with relative consistency" (Graves, 2000, p. 39). Wang and Humphreys' (2009) study confirmed that relatively little time appears to be devoted to teaching music of non-Western origin when course instructors reported that 92.83% of students' time was devoted to learning Western art music over the course of a four-year music education program at a large university music school in the southwest United States.

Howard, Swanson and Campbell (2014) presented an overview of multiculturalism in the music classroom through different vignettes of both pre-service and practicing teachers' experiences. This research showed the developments in the music education field towards inclusion of multicultural material and encounters. The researchers emphasized that the important thread among the vignettes was seen through the "musical encounters" (p. 35) of cultures outside their own. These encounters allowed teachers to "challenge their musical assumptions and to spend significant time immersed in different modes of musical thinking" (p. 35). The researchers emphasized the importance of continued development of multicultural music education through both university training and personal professional development. Individuals were encouraged to experience and seek out immersive multicultural music encounters throughout their teaching career.

Campbell (1994) discussed the need for well-prepared music educators in the field who are able to meet the musical needs and interests of a diverse student population. She defined multicultural music education as a blend of multicultural views and world perspectives on the subject of music. She encouraged bimusicality in teachers through competency in more than one musical tradition to increase "breadth and flexibility when thinking about music . . . and when teaching some of the universals of musical expression" (Campbell, p. 25). Campbell explained that the study of one musical element through many cultures allows music to remain "at the heart of our mission" (p. 23).

Implementing Campbell's charge to include music from diverse cultures requires vocal teachers to utilize pieces in various languages. Chase (2002) investigated teaching methods and issues associated with introducing foreign language repertoire to secondary choral ensembles. A survey of members of the Florida Vo-

cal Association found that teachers were reluctant to program repertoire in unfamiliar languages due to learning difficulties, time constrains, and lack of resources. Chase recommended resources such as a computer module to help aid instruction for teachers in the inclusion of foreign language repertoire.

The process of selecting choral repertoire for performance indicates inherent values held by choral directors. As Ward and Heil (2017) stated, "An ACDA national conference program is, by definition, a powerful statement about what we value and espouse as a profession" (p. 42). Similarly, NAfME state leadership teams communicate priorities to the field when choosing required repertoire for performance assessment events.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to analyze required repertoire lists for state music education associations' choral performance assessment events in NAfME's North Central division. Research questions included: (a) How many states within the North Central division have required repertoire lists?; (b) What categories/ genres and historical time periods are represented (by percentage) on these lists?; (c) Are there any notable differences among states' required repertoire lists within NAfME's North Central region?; and (d) Do the required repertoire lists reflect NAfME's National Core Arts Standards for Ensembles?

Method

This study was modeled on Norris's (2004) similar study of sight-singing requirements at state choral festivals, which indicated how many states had an organized system of ratings-based choral festivals based on information from NAfME affiliated websites, state ACDA websites, and other state music associations. When information was not available, Norris contacted executive officers by email or telephone. Answers to the present study's research questions were gathered from NAfME state association websites and from the J.W. Pepper website (www. jwpepper.com), which provided current required repertoire lists for some states in the region. If information was unavailable through these sources, emails were sent to state executive officers, and follow-up emails were sent to state officers.

Once state required repertoire lists were secured, pieces were analyzed according to text type (sacred or secular), text language, historic time period (Renaissance through 19th Century based on composers' dates; 20th Century/Contemporary based on publication date), style (Western art music or Non-Western music), accompanied or a *cappella*, and if the piece was composed as a stand-

alone work or if it was from a larger multi-movement work. Pieces categorized in the 20th Century time period were further divided into Early (1900-1929), Mid (1930-1969) and Late (1970-1999) periods by copyright date, and Contemporary classifications indicated pieces published between 2000 and 2016 to identify newer publications.

The following definitions were established to classify the style of the pieces:

Western art music: Music of the Western European art tradition originating in countries such as Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and the British Isles (adapted from Meidinger, 2002). This category also included music composed in countries other than those listed above, but using a similar style representing the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, 19th Century, 20th Century, and Contemporary time periods.

Non-Western music: Music not of the Western art music tradition including world music, folk music, spirituals, and gospel music (adapted from Meidinger, 2002 and *Classifying Music*, 2017).

Researchers utilized information in the score to categorize Non-Western music as spiritual/gospel, folk, or world music. Although spirituals are a type of folk song, due to their unique character they were categorized independently. Gospel music was grouped in the same category as Spirituals due to the historic relationship between the two genres.

Spirituals/Gospel Music: Folksongs most closely associated with enslavement of Africans in the American South are referred to as spirituals. Spirituals were the precursor to African American gospel music. Derived from spirituals, gospel music is a form of euphoric, rhythmic, religious music rooted in the solo and responsive church singing of the African American South (adapted from Library of Congress, n.d.).

For the purposes of this study, world music and folk music were separated based on the identification of a composer in the score.

World Music: Music that includes the full body of *composed* musical material wherever found on the globe that contains ethnic or foreign elements (adapted from Palmer, 1975 and Rahkonen, 1994).

Folk Music: Music that is the product of evolution and is dependent on the circumstances of continuity, variation, and selection transmitted by oral tradition. This music has evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by art music (adapted from Cohen, 2013).

Folk music was further classified by its region: North American (examples include Appalachian, Canadian, state-specific) or international (examples include Irish, Indian, Brazilian). It was not within the scope of this study to attempt to

verify the authenticity of the folk source material, as it was likely that folk music found on these repertoire lists were arrangements by Western or Western-trained musicians (Goetze, 2000). The researchers acknowledge that the terms used for classification are ethnocentric and do not universally fit all labeling and catego-rizing criteria. However, they were found to be useful when working with North American repertoire lists.

Summary statistics represent cumulative data from all eligible states in the North Central NAfME region: Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. To determine reliability coefficient, a second choral expert replicated analysis on 5% (n = 135) of analyzed pieces from the repertoire lists, which re-sulted in a 1.00 reliability coefficient. IRB approval was not required for this study, as it did not involve research on humans.

Results

Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin's repertoire lists were located on J.W. Pepper's website. Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska's required repertoire lists were not available on J. W. Pepper's website or individual NAfME state association websites, and emails were sent to state executives. South Dakota's information was identified as a result of the email cor-respondence. Individual state information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

State Festival Information

State	NAfME State Choral Festival	Required Repertoire	Levels of Difficulty	Number of Pieces
IA	Yes	Yes	4	854
IN	Yes	Yes	3	736
MI	Yes	Yes	3	105
MN	Yes	Yes	3	584
OH	Yes	Yes	4	144
SD	Yes	Yes (Uses MN List)		
WI	Yes	Yes	3	291

Note. Information unavailable for IL, NE, and ND

Table 2 displays the results of the composite data analysis of 2,714 pieces. Western art music comprised 74.94% of all repertoire, and within this category, repertoire from Renaissance through 19th Century time periods comprised 39.28% while 20th Century and Contemporary totaled 60.72%. Non-Western music comprised 25.06% of the total repertoire, with the highest percentage belonging to international folk music (35.91%), followed by spiritual/gospel (24.58%), North American folk music (22.63%), and world music (16.88%).

Text analysis indicated 55.40% sacred text, and text languages consisted of 65% English, 22.03% Latin, 4.35% German, 2.58% French, 2.14% Spanish, and 1.51% Italian. Forty other individual languages comprised less than 1% of the repertoire. *A cappella* works were present in 45.06% of the repertoire, and selections from larger multi-movement works represented 14.29% of the repertoire.

Table 2

Analysis of Required Choral Repertoire from North Central Region

Western Art Music (WAM)		
	Percent of total repertoire	Percent within WAM
Renaissance	6.89 %	9.19%
Baroque	8.07%	10.77%
Classical	5.27%	7.03%
19th Century	9.21%	12.29%
Early 20th Century	2.58%	3.44%
Mid 20th Century	11.17%	14.91%
Late 20th Century	19.10%	25.49%
Contemporary	12.65%	16.88%
Non-Western Music (NW)		
	Percent of total repertoire	Percent within NW
Spiritual/Gospel	6.16%	24.58%
World Music	4.23%	16.88%
North American Folk	5.67%	22.63%
International Folk	9.00%	35.91%

Note. (N = 2,714)

Table 3

Analysis of Required Choral Repertoire cont.

Languages		Other	
English	65.00%	Sacred text	55.40%
Latin	22.03%	Secular text	44.60%
German	4.35%	*A cappella*	45.06%
French	2.58%	Accompanied	54.94%
Spanish	2.14%	Stand alone	85.71%
Italian	1.51%	From multi-movement	14.29%

Note. 40 other languages below 1%

The percentage of works classified as Western art music varied slightly between the six states. Iowa's results indicated the highest percentage of Western art music (81.73%) followed by Minnesota (74.83%), Indiana (73.51%), Michigan (70.48%), Ohio (68.75%) and Wisconsin (63.75%). Late 20th Century repertoire received the highest percentage of frequency in all states except Ohio, where the highest percentage was the Contemporary period. Early-20th Century repertoire received the lowest percentage of frequency across all six states. Outside of the 20th Century category, Classical repertoire received the lowest percentage of frequency, with the exception of Iowa, where the lowest percentage was the Contemporary period. The individual state results also indicated small percentage ranges in Renaissance (4.17-8.22%), Baroque (3.81-10.54%) and Classical (2.86-8.08%) time periods. The widest range of percentages was found in the Contemporary time period (6.56-29.17%).

Wisconsin's results indicated the highest percentage of Non-Western Music (36.43%) followed by Ohio (31.25%), Michigan (29.52%), Indiana (26.49%), Minnesota (25.17%) and Iowa (18.27%). Spirituals/gospels ranged from 5.82% (Minnesota) to 14.58% (Ohio). The most frequently represented geographic areas in folk and world music: North American (5.67%), English/Irish/Scottish (3.83%), South American/Latin American (2.06%), Eastern European (1.47%), Middle Eastern (1.18%), African (1.07%), and Asian (0.37%).

English was the most frequent language, as results among states ranged from 59.05% (Michigan) to 72.22% (Ohio). The second most frequent language was Latin, where results ranged from 17.36% (Ohio) to 24.05% (Indiana). All other individual language results occupied less than 6% in each state. Classification of sacred/secular text types indicated similar results between Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Sacred text results ranged from 52.85% to 54.79%. Iowa and Michigan results indicated outlying percentages at 60.66% and 38.10%, respectively. Secular text results ranged from 45.21% to 47.28% between Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Iowa and Michigan results indicated outlying percentages at 39.34% and 61.90%, respectively. The percentage of *a cappella* works ranged from 34.29% (Michigan) to 50.28% (Indiana). The percentage of pieces taken from a larger multi-movement work spanned a smaller range from 12.71% (Wisconsin) to 16.67% (Ohio).

Other findings of this study included common composers, arrangers or editors, and publishers. The most frequent composers were: Wolfgang Mozart ($n = 56$), Felix Mendelssohn ($n = 55$), Johannes Brahms ($n = 50$), Randall Thompson ($n = 46$), Z. Randall Stroope ($n = 45$), J. S. Bach ($n = 39$), Franz Schubert ($n = 33$), Rene Clausen ($n = 32$), George F. Handel ($n = 28$), Eugene Butler ($n = 28$),

Benjamin Britten (*n* = 25), Eric Whitacre (*n* = 25), Giovanni P. Palestrina (*n* = 22), Hans Leo Hassler (*n* = 21), and Joseph M. Martin (*n* = 21).

Interestingly, the most frequently represented composer (Mozart) is attributed to the least frequently represented time period (Classical). The most frequent arrangers or editors were: Alice Parker (*n* = 48), Norman Greyson (*n* = 33), Patrick Liebergen (*n* = 33), Robert Shaw (*n* = 28), Walter Ehret (*n* = 23), Hal Hopson (*n* = 19), Moses Hogan (*n* = 18), Russell Robinson (*n* = 17), Donald Patriquin (*n* = 16), Stephen Hatfield (*n* = 13), and William Dawson (*n* = 13). The most frequent publishers were: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. (*n* = 280), Shawnee Press (*n* = 195), Hal Leonard (*n* = 191), Boosey and Hawkes (*n* = 182), and G. Schirmer, Inc. (*n* = 170).

Discussion

Western art music repertoire was the most frequent category/genre on all six states' required repertoire lists, occupying approximately two-thirds to four-fifths of each state list. Within the Western art music category, emphasis was on post-1900 compositions (60.72%), which is consistent with Devore's (1989) findings that showed a majority of required repertoire (66%) was from the 20th Century and earlier repertoire was not evenly distributed among the historic time periods. Analysis of required repertoire does not inform understanding of the relationship between required repertoire lists and performance practices in the field; however, a comparison of results of the present study with Hedden and Daugherty's (2009) and Ward and Heil's (2017) findings of a strong presence of 20th Century and modern repertoire for programmed music reveals a parallel between required repertoire lists and programmed repertoire. This foundational realization serves to confirm a relationship between leadership actions (creation of required repertoire lists) and practices in the field (programmed music). Leadership actions and professional standards need to be aligned to most effectively reach the field.

The National Core Arts Standards place emphasis on varied repertoire representing diverse cultures, styles, genres, and historic periods. The standards do not quantify the amount of repertoire needed from various cultures, styles, genres, and time periods as they encourage individual teachers to make the best choices for their students in order for them to be able to "demonstrate how understanding the style, genre, and context of a varied repertoire of music influences prepared and improvised performances as well as performers' technical skill to connect with the audience" (Core Anchor #10 *Connecting: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music*, MU:Pr4.3.IIa and MU:Pr4.3.IIIa). One possible interpretation of NAfME's call for "varied repertoire" could focus on the concept of balance.

Although the standards do not specify an ideal balance of repertoire taught in a year-long or multi-year curricula, the required repertoire lists serve as suggested pieces for teaching and learning. It is likely that a choral singer will receive an unbalanced choral music education, focusing mostly on 20th Century and contemporary Western art music. If music educators believe it important to balance choral singers exposure to music from various Western time periods and Non-Western music traditions then balance should be reflected in the required repertoire lists.

An increased presence of Non-Western music could continue to increase familiarity and therefore comfortability and sociocultural awareness in students as suggested by Fung (1994), Demorest and Schultz (2004), Bradley (2006) and Martin (2012). While there is a low percentage of Non-Western music overall, an increase in this category would consequently decrease the percentage of Western art music, leaving each time period with less than 12.50% of repertoire, if the categories/genres/time periods were equally distributed. This could lead choral directors to choose between a decrease in the amount of Western art music in favor of more Non-Western experiences for our students, or rather strive for an equal representation of all categories and time periods understanding that Non-Western music may receive less emphasis. Choral music educators should be challenged to look at their state's required repertoire list with open eyes, focusing on the unequal proportions of historic time periods and musical styles.

Some states showed a large variety in language type while having a low percentage of Non-Western Music. Minnesota results ranked highest in language variety with 27 different languages, but second lowest in Non-Western repertoire (25.17%). Iowa results indicated 23 different languages, but only 18.27% of the repertoire was Non-Western. Conversely, Ohio only reported 12 different languages, but ranked second highest in Non-Western repertoire (31.25%). These results could indicate that large varieties of language types in required repertoire lists do not always correlate with a high percentage of Non-Western music.

The high percentage of English and Latin languages in each state may be due to teachers' reluctance to teach unfamiliar languages as suggested by Chase (2002). Campbell (1994) insisted upon meeting needs and interests of a diverse student population, and introducing various languages is one way to accomplish that charge. Choral directors should be encouraged to offer or participate in community music ensembles that are out of their comfort zone, as this will help facilitate a means to expand their awareness of various musical styles and immerse themselves in multiple modes of musical thinking (as described in Howard, Swanson & Campbell, 2014).

The results of this study are applicable to choral directors to inform them of current repertoire requirements in the North Central region of NAfME. Leader-

ship teams' priorities of repertoire category/genre, time period, language type and text type are visible through this data. The large percent of post-19th Century Western art music clearly indicates the emphasis placed on the 20th Century and Contemporary time periods. By selecting these particular works, NAfME leaders are seemingly endorsing the repertoire as high quality and of educational value. Defined characteristics of quality repertoire are left up to the individual, but there is opportunity for individuals and state leaders to work with NAfME to establish some criteria for quality repertoire. In addition, high school choral directors may wish to compare their state's required repertoire lists with that of other states in their region to observe commonalities and differences. As a result, directors may want more investment in influencing the process of repertoire selection in their state. This may increase participation in state chapter discussions and interaction with state leaders.

Future research could include state, regional, and national trend analysis. Other studies could be focused on a comparative basis between ACDA required repertoire lists and NAfME required lists, both regionally and nationally. This may indicate similarities or differences in values held by the leaders of each organization. Future researchers could survey choral directors about desired repertoire for required lists and comparatively analyze the data with current required lists. Results of the present study focus on the required repertoire lists for one academic year; further research could document the repertoire selected from these lists for actual performance, which could be measured from year to year or state to state.

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