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**The Popular Pedagogue: Popular Music's Role in Music Education as Articulated in Wayne D. Bowman's Article, "Pop Goes?...Taking Popular Music Seriously"**

It is rare that I agree with nearly every single point that is argued in an article but Wayne D. Bowman sounds entirely too similar to myself as an advocate for the education of popular music. Popular music, whether it is pop music, country music, electronic music, or any other musical genre that appeals to a large mass of listeners, is something that I have always strongly believed should be taken more seriously and be implicated in the music education curriculum. As Bowman points out in his article, what we classify as classical music in our modern society was hundreds of years ago, music that would appeal to large masses, consequently making it popular music of the time period. We should not look down on popular music of the twenty first century as something that is lower than classical music just because it may not have been around as long, or because it may not constitute the same things that classical music does. The more that we can adapt the educational system and curriculum to the interests of the students, the more likely we will achieve successful learning outcomes and interests of these same students. If popular music is something that appeals to incoming youth and students, why not introduce it in an educational system by breaking down its elements in a dynamic way that will allow the students to understand some of the benefits and characteristics of this music they are frequently consuming?

One point that Bowman ponders in his article is how we chose which popular music to study and how exactly we introduce popular music into the curriculum in both an entertaining, and educational way. I think this is where the students have a large pedagogical contribution and the idea of reciprocal learning comes into play. I suggest that students pick their own piece of music based on what they believe falls under the category of popular music. They would bring this piece to class and share it amongst peers where it can be critically examined in a dynamic discussion facilitated by the teacher based on some kind of circular structure. This allows for three key things: 1) The student is contributing to his/ her/ its own learning experience 2) The teacher is able to maintain some kind of control over the class while still allowing for the students to play a somewhat pedagogical part 3) The piece of popular music is analyzed through the lens of consuming youth, and through an educational structure that maintains the school system's need for rubric and curriculum in order to interpret and validate the "good" or "bad" of something.

Solely focusing on one genre of music, classical for example, is in my opinion, elitist, classist, and just plain ignorant. It's like an English professor saying that we should only study Shakespeare because he wrote so many impactful plays and sonnets that allowed us to explore and create the type of literature that we have today. We cannot just focus on one small part of the music world, no matter how significant and fundamental it may be. We need to study William Shakespeare, yes. But we also need to study William Wordsworth, John Donne, Sir Phillip Sidney, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Bronte, Franz Kafka, Edgar Allen Poe, John Milton, Joseph Conrad, Aristotle, Sophocles, Homer, Geoffrey Chaucer, Augustine etc. the list is essentially endless. We will never expand our horizon of learning if we simply focus on

one area of it. Classical music is something that is essentially stagnant and never changing. What Beethoven wrote is what he wrote and we can't ask him to change it or what he meant by it when he wrote it. What we can do, however, is explore musical pieces that Beethoven wrote by studying popular music and applying it to the ideals of classical music. Incorporating the new and the old will allow our incoming youth and students to better understand and relate to the classical music experience by comparing it to the emergence, and continuously evolving genre of popular music.

### Work Cited

Wayne D. Bowman, Wayne D. (2004). "Pop" goes ...? Taking popular music seriously “ In  
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