

Investigating the Incorporation of “Non-Western” Repertoire in Wisconsin Secondary Music Programs

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

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PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this project is to determine if and how Wisconsin secondary music educators are using the music they program to promote multiculturalism. Today, it is vital that classroom music is relevant to all student populations (Doyle, 2014). The following questions guided this research:

- Which teachers are programming the most “Non-Western” repertoire?
- What “Non-Western” repertoire are Wisconsin band, choral, and orchestra directors currently programming in their grade six to twelve classrooms, and what criteria do they consider when selecting repertoire?

PROJECT RATIONALE

Promoting multicultural education is how many schools in the United States encourage global awareness and create equitable environments for students (Souto-Manning, 2014). Many teachers utilize “Non-Western” music to teach both concepts and the cultures from which the music originates (Gustafson, 2009). “Non-Western” music is defined as any music originating or depicting cultures that are not considered to belong to dominant western societies.

Though efforts to integrate multiculturalism into curricula have been in place since the early twentieth century (Gustafson, 2009), Western music is still considered to be the standard among the majority of repertoire.

“STANDARD REPERTOIRE” IN WISCONSIN

The WSMA Festival Music List is one of many standard repertoire lists that demonstrates what could be considered as an inadequate representation of “Non-Western” cultures. These lists influence the repertoire selection of students preparing for solo and ensemble, as well as teachers who prepare their ensembles for clinics and contests. Because of its impact on Wisconsin music education, it is necessary to examine how the list represents and includes “Non-Western” music. Three commonly-used lists were examined to determine the presence of “Non-Western” music. Of the three ensemble categories, “Mixed Choir” includes the highest amount of “Non-Western” pieces. The list contains 26 pieces, which make up 12.8% of the list of piece titles.

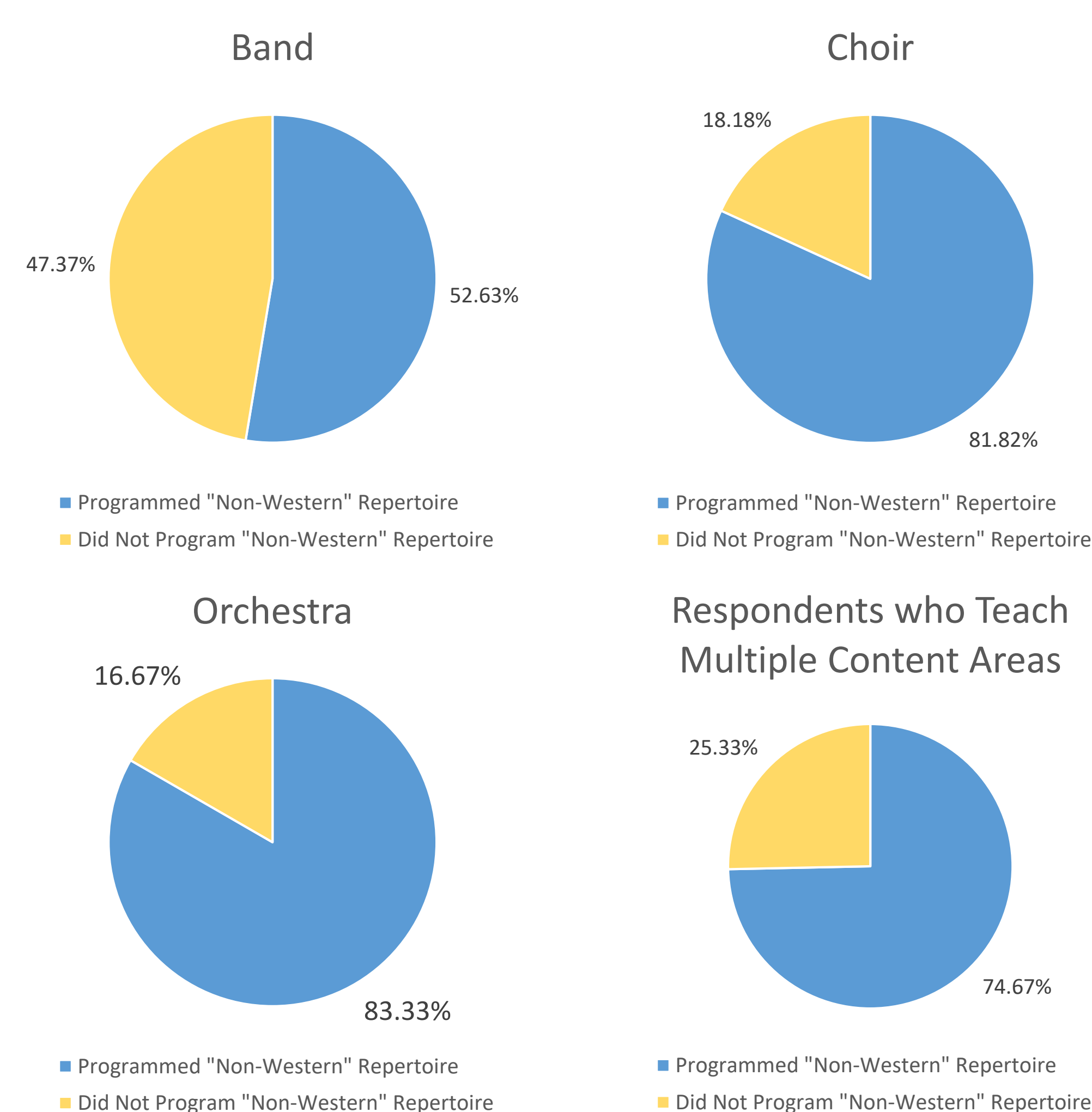
Selected WSMA Lists	Number of “Non-Western” Works per List
Concert Band, Event 3000	14 pieces / 8.3% of the list
Mixed Choir, Event 1000	29 pieces / 12.8% of the list
String Orchestra, Event 2020	17 pieces / 11.6% of the list

This information is from the 2018 WSMA Festival Music List.

ANALYZING SURVEY RESULTS

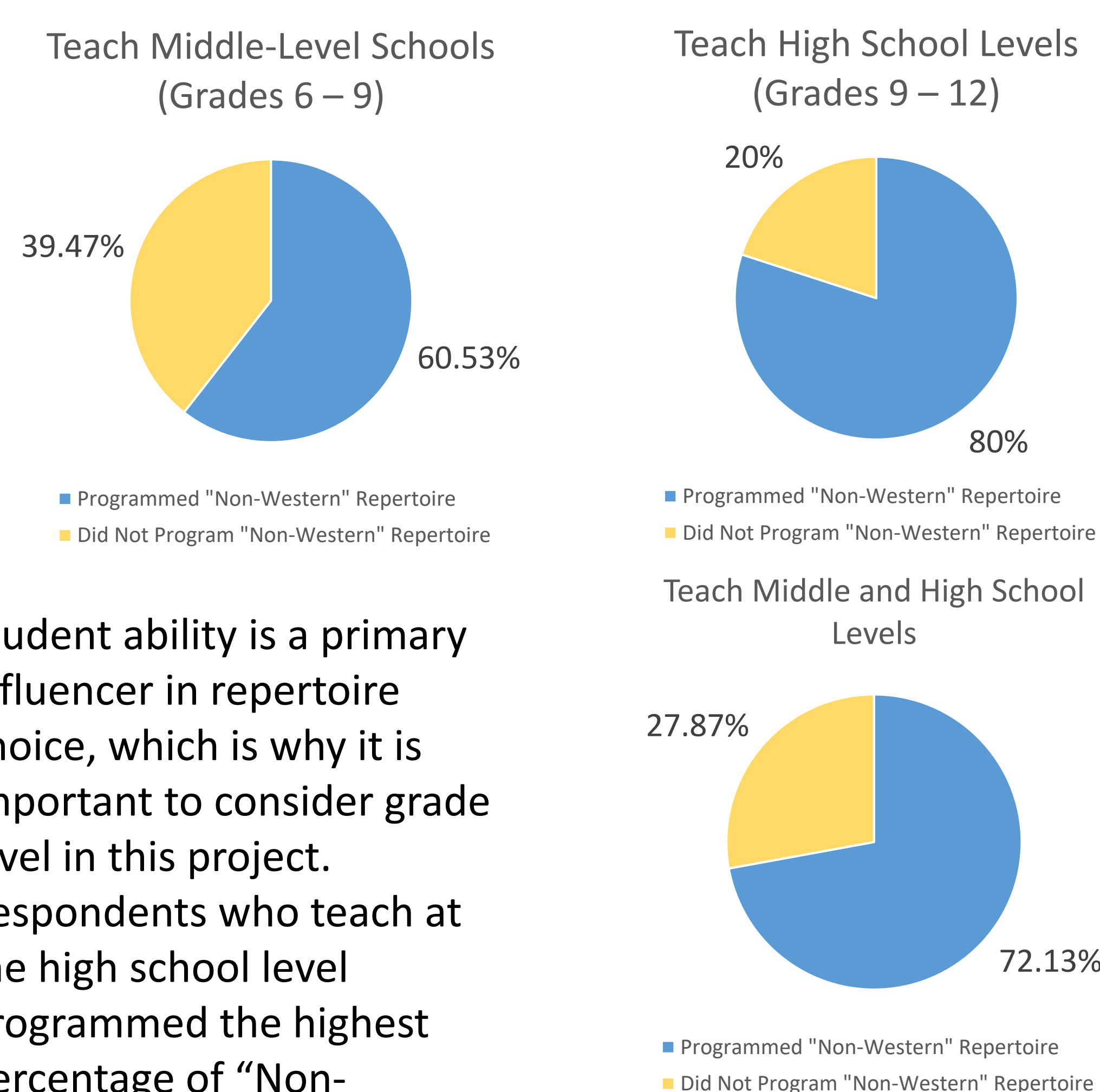
WHO PROGRAMMED “NON-WESTERN” MUSIC?

RESPONSES BASED ON TEACHER CONTENT AREA



Survey respondents shared information about their teaching experience, including the content area they teach. Of band, choir, orchestra teachers, and those who teach more than one content area, respondents who teach orchestra and choir programmed the highest percentages of “Non-Western” repertoire.

RESPONSES BASED ON GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT



Student ability is a primary influencer in repertoire choice, which is why it is important to consider grade level in this project. Respondents who teach at the high school level programmed the highest percentage of “Non-Western” repertoire.

MOST COMMONLY-PROGRAMMED WORKS

PIECES NAMED FOUR TIMES OR MORE

Title of Work	Composer/Arranger	Number of Times Programmed
“Africa: Ceremony, Song, and Ritual”	Robert W. Smith	4
“Arabesque”	Samuel Hazo	5
“Hotaru Koi”	arr. Ro Ogura	6
“Variations on a Korean Folk Song”	John Barnes Chance	8

SELECT QUOTES FROM RESPONDENTS CONCERNING REPERTOIRE

- “I don't ever specifically look for multicultural music. If it happens to be, then it's because it's just good music. Usually what I hear I don't consider high quality enough. I will not program anything just to be politically correct.”
- “There are pieces I have encountered that particularly seem to exploit Native American music and culture in a non-authentic way...”
- “From my experience, it seems that “cultural” repertoire becomes less authentic as the grade level or skill level decreases.”
- “I take pause whenever I see literature that says ‘African style’...”
- “In the band medium, I struggle with this, as we perform on Western instruments, with Western performance practices. I strive, using the Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) model, to study the source material with my students, so that we are learning about the traditions in as authentic a way as possible.”

PROJECT CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the majorities of all teacher groups programmed “Non-Western” repertoire in the 2017-2018 academic year. Teacher responses were varied when rationalizing the selection of “Non-Western” repertoire. While many teachers consciously programmed “Non-Western” repertoire to encourage multiculturalism, others claimed that repertoire quality should be the primary reason for selection. Other respondents stated that they “needed to do better,” and begin to include “Non-Western” repertoire. Though responses were extremely varied, most respondents were aware of the necessity to promote multiculturalism in the music classroom.

SELECT SOURCES

- Doyle, Jennifer Lee. (2014). Cultural Relevance in Urban Music Education: A Synthesis of the Literature. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 32(2), 44-51.
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- Wisconsin School Music Association. (2018). *2018-2019 WSMA Festival Music List*. Retrieved from <https://wsmamusic.org/music-list/>.