

## Where Have all the Folksongs Gone? We've Replaced Them Every One. (Or Have We?)

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### Abstract

*In the late 1990s, NAfME (then MENC) published two volumes of *Get America Singing...Again!*, a collection of songs whose title implied that action was needed to return America to a culture of collective song based on knowledge of folk and traditional song literature. It has been nearly twenty years since the publication of these volumes, and questions abound regarding the status of 21<sup>st</sup> century America's singing culture. The purpose of this study is to identify the extent to which elementary music textbooks published in the United States from the late 1800s through the present have included folk and traditional songs, identify trends regarding types of songs selected for inclusion in elementary music texts, and identify potential trends that may impact future curricula. Results suggest that the number of folksongs included in elementary music texts has increased in the time since early publications. Also, the types of folk and traditional songs included in elementary texts have become more diverse over time. Finally, criteria used to categorize songs as "folk" or "traditional" have changed over time, suggesting a trend of broadening the inclusion of folk song literature which may continue in forthcoming elementary music textbooks.*

**Keywords:** Folksongs, curriculum, literature, elementary/general music

In the late 1990s, NAfME (then MENC) published two volumes of *Get America Singing...Again!*, a collection of songs whose title implied that action was needed to return America to a culture of collective song based on knowledge of folk and traditional song literature (Music Educators National Conference, 1996). It has been nearly twenty years since the publication of these volumes, and questions abound regarding the status of 21<sup>st</sup> century America's singing culture. Although formal music education is available to more children now than before, there is evidence to suggest that 21<sup>st</sup> century children do not sing as much as children of prior generations; or more directly, that children's participation with or knowledge of folk and traditional children's songs has diminished over time (Ward, 2003).

While this may seem like a newer phenomenon, prior research suggests that educators' concerns over folksongs in curricula may be a long-standing issue. In an article from 1903, Smith expressed concerns about music textbooks, stating that books that should include folksong literature were instead dominated by pedagogical song material written by such books' authors (Smith, 1903). In a study conducted nearly 100 years later, Prickett and Bridges (2000) found that nearly 40% of the music education majors who participated in their survey could not identify the melodies of 25 "well-known" folksongs. Prickett and Bridges suggested changes not only to elementary music curricula, but also to curricula for college-level music education programs to ensure that future music teachers know folksong literature and are equipped with the skills to teach folksongs in elementary classrooms.

Additional studies have sought to strengthen the argument that folk music should be included in elementary music curricula by citing its importance in society and as a pedagogical tool towards musical fluency (Whitman, 1963). Other researchers have evaluated the influence of culture on folk music, with particular regard to the increasing diversification of folksongs that

appear in American elementary music texts (Volk, 1993). Campbell (2002) suggested that an over-emphasis on culture instead of songs themselves sometimes weakens the musical rigor of music lessons. Volk (1994) and Heller (2011) studied the impact of popular music on the continued use of folk music in elementary texts. Heller suggested that a growing emphasis on folk music in the 1960s and 1970s may have been a reaction or response to the increasing attention given to newer rock and roll styles of the 1950s, particularly in North America. Apart from one study that analyzed the use of folksongs in children's music, few studies address the use of folksong literature in American children's music curricula (Livingston, 1990). Research into the use of folksongs in elementary music curricula is essential to ensure its place in America's culture and education.

The purpose of this study is to identify the extent to which elementary music textbooks published in the United States from the late 1800s through the present have included folk and traditional songs. A second purpose is to identify trends regarding types and characteristics of folksongs and other song literature selected for inclusion in elementary music texts. Finally, this study endeavors to identify potential trends that may impact future curricula. The research questions addressed by this study are:

- 1) What songs and types of songs have been used in elementary music texts in the United States from the late 1800s to the present?
- 2) Where did the songs used in elementary texts originate?
- 3) What factors may have impacted the use of folksongs in elementary music texts?
- 4) What do these trends suggest about songs that may be included in future elementary music texts?

Several factors limited the scope of this research project. First, this study only includes music textbooks that were published for use in elementary music classrooms in the United States. Second, many textbooks are reprinted as second or third editions after the initial publication; I only analyzed one edition of each textbook, prioritizing first editions when possible and did not compare subsequent editions of the same text to each other. The scope of the study was also limited—there are too many published textbooks from this period to analyze in one study. To get a glimpse of trends over time, I selected approximately one text for every 10 to 15 years, from the earliest found publication to the most recent. Grade level further limited the scope of the study. Typically, textbooks range from kindergarten through grade five or six; it was beyond the scope of one research project to analyze texts for all grade levels in each published series. Further, not every grade level of each text series was available for analysis—specifically, historical text series were often only partially available. Therefore, I selected middle-elementary grade texts for analysis, focusing primarily on 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade texts.

Implementation of music education in schools as a formal subject of study also provided a purposeful limitation for this study. Schools adopted music a subject in 1838. As a result, there would not be a formally-adopted textbook for many years after that time. Before and around 1838, music education would have taken place in churches or community centers, and been taught primarily by preachers or singing school masters (Birge, 1928). Therefore, I analyzed one singing school textbook published in 1886 as a framework in which to evaluate early texts published for use in public schools. Next, elementary texts include songs for a variety of pedagogical purposes (e.g. listening, movement). For this study, I only analyzed songs intended for students to sing. Finally, Whitman (1963) defined folk music as music that has no attributed composer and is maintained through oral traditions. While there are differences between folk

songs and traditional songs, the terms folk and traditional were used interchangeably in analyzed texts. Therefore, I analyzed both types of songs, as identified by the authors and editors of analyzed texts.

### **Method**

I began the research process by obtaining a collection of third-grade music basal texts from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present from a variety of educational publishers ( $n=13$ ). I acquired texts from university library rare-book collections, out-of-adoption inventories, antique stores, bookstores, and personal collections of musicians and music educators. I looked through each text, recording the following for every song: song title, composer (if listed), origin (if listed), topic of song lyrics, and notes. The notes section of the database was solely to provide anecdotal comments for later analysis. Where no composer was credited for a song, I recorded the text that editors listed in place of a composer, which was typically “folk” or “traditional.” In most instances where a song was listed as folk or traditional, editors also listed a country of origin. If the editors listed no origin, this cell was left blank. I included a topic heading to identify potential trends in types of songs selected for use in children’s music textbooks, mainly where folk or traditional songs were not the primary influence. As such, whenever a song was attributed to a composer or lyricist, I read through the lyrics to determine the general topic or subject of the lyrics. Finally, I compiled all information into a spreadsheet for analysis. Table 1 lists the title and date of publication of the texts that I analyzed for this study.

Table 1

<i>Elementary Music Textbooks Reviewed for this Study</i>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>
<i>Rudiments of Music</i>	1886
<i>New 3rd Music Reader</i>	1886
<i>Modern Music Series</i>	1898
<i>New Education Music Course</i>	1905
<i>The Music Hour</i>	1929
<i>The American Singer</i>	1944
<i>Singing on our Way</i>	1957
<i>Music For Young Americans</i>	1963
<i>Discovering Music Together</i>	1966
<i>Silver Burdett Music</i>	1985
<i>Jump Right In</i>	2005
<i>Spotlight on Music</i>	2005
<i>Game Plan</i>	2007

## **Results and Discussion**

### **What Songs and Types of Songs have been used in Elementary Music Texts?**

Of the texts reviewed for this study, folksongs made up 31% of included songs (SD = 21). The text with the lowest percent of folksongs was the *New Education Music Course* at 7%, and the text with the highest percent was *Jump Right In* at 78%. Folksongs represented an average of 16.5% of songs included in texts published before 1900. By the middle decades of the twentieth century, the presence of folksongs had increased to an average of 38%. In the texts published after 2000, the presence of folksongs had increased to an average of 55%.

Contrary to the presumption that the presence of folksongs is in decline, the percent of folksongs has generally increased over the years, at least in the representation of texts used in this study. The regression line in Figure 1 presents the dates of publication of the texts analyzed for this study along the X-axis, and the percent of folksongs included in each text along the Y-axis, showing a gradual increase in the percent of folksongs in the texts reviewed for this study.

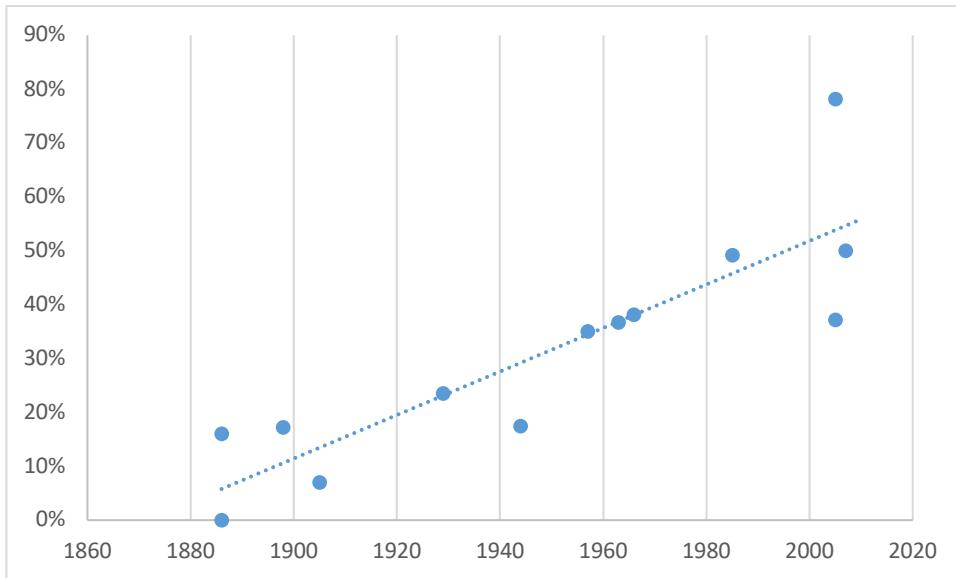


Figure 1. Percent of folksongs in elementary music texts by decade

As an aside, the presence of folksongs in textbooks may not accurately reflect what was being taught in music classrooms at a given time period; it is merely a snapshot of what was included in published texts at that time.

According to Keller (1984), there is considerable inconsistency in the historical classification of folksongs stemming from variations in methods by which songs are categorized over the ages (Keller, 1984). From texts included in the current study, there was noticeable ambiguity in the manner by which songs were classified, particularly in textbooks published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In cases where I could not identify the genre of songs (e.g., folksong, hymn), I categorized songs by topic as indicated by the title and/or the lyrics.

The *Rudiments of Music* (Showalter, 1886) is a singing school text and was not written for use in public school music programs. It has been included herein to provide a baseline or model from which texts written for public school music may have derived. The *Rudiments of Music* contains 12 songs, none of which were categorized as folksongs. Six songs in this text are

religious, five are songs about nature, and one song is a patriotic song. The text provides little information regarding the authorship of the songs except where songs are attributed to the text's author, A.J. Showalter.

The types and topics of songs included in *Rudiments of Music* are mirrored in the *New Third Music Reader* (Mason, 1886), suggesting that religion, nature, and patriotism were topics of prominence in music education during the late 1800s. Among the 137 songs contained in the *New Third Music Reader*, there are 22 folksongs (16%), 28 religious songs (20%), 68 songs about nature (49%), 22 patriotic songs (16%), and about 15 songs about life or work (11%).

The *Modern Music Series* (Smith, 1898) contains 122 songs, 21 of which are listed as folksongs (17%). The rest of the songs are attributed to various composers, most of whom would have been considered contemporary for this period. Of these songs, 49 are about nature (40%), 11 are religious (9%), and five are patriotic (4%). Among the songs attributed to composers, there is an increasing presence of songs about work, hunting, and various other aspects of life.

The *New Music Education Course* (McLaughlin & Gilchrist, 1905) contains 72 songs. Of these, only five songs are categorized as folksongs (7%), and the rest are attributed to composers. Among the songs attributed to composers, twenty-five songs are about nature (35%), and nine songs are religious (13%). There is a continuing decrease in the percent of religious songs, and while the general trend of the use of folksongs increases during this time period, there are fewer folksongs in this text when compared to its contemporary counterparts. There is also greater diversification of song topics, making it difficult to assign any particular theme or themes.

*The Music Hour* (McConathy, Miessner, Birge, & Bray, 1929) contains 191 songs, 45 of which are listed as folksongs (24%). Of the other songs, nine are religious (5%) and 78 songs are about nature (41%). Evidently, religious songs are included less frequently compared to other

texts in this study, while the percent of folksongs is steadily increasing. Similarly, there is a steadily increasing diversity of songs' country of origin in texts of later publication.

The collection of songs in *The American Singer* (Beattie, Wolverton, Wilson, & Hinga, 1944) is unique compared to other texts reviewed for this study. *The American Singer* contains 115 songs, only 20 of which are listed as folksongs (17%). One of the unique traits of this text is that 38 of the songs are written by the text's authors (33%). The text also attributes one of the songs, *Our Song of Thanks*, as being written by the "children of Evanston schools." (Beattie, Wolverton, Wilson, & Hinga, 1944, p. 70). Of the songs not listed as folksongs, 27 are about nature (23%), seven are patriotic (6%), and the rest are of diverse topics. Overall, this text is non-representative of the other texts from this era where folksongs make a more significant contribution to the inventory of songs.

*Singing on our Way* (Pitts, Glenn, & Watters, 1957) contains 180 songs, 63 of which are listed as folksongs (35%). Among the songs attributed to composers, 25 are about nature (14%), 15 are about holidays (8%), and the rest are of diverse topics. Similar to *The American Singer*, *Singing on our Way*, contains a total of six songs attributed to student musicians: two to the Kansas city school children, and four to the Meadowbrook school children.

By the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, texts included in this study all demonstrated similar attributes regarding the types of songs included and the percentage of folksongs versus other types of song literature. *Music for Young Americans* (Berg, Hooley, Pace, Wolverton, & Burns, 1963) contains 147 songs, 54 of which are folksongs (37%). *Discovering Music Together* (Leonhard et al., 1966) contains 131 songs, 50 of which are folksongs (38%). The highest percent of folksongs per text in this century was in the *Silver Burdett Music (Centennial Edition)* (Crook, Reimer, & Walker, 1985). Of the 114 songs included in this text, 56 were identified as

folksongs (49%). Among songs included in these texts, there are no real discernable themes as were evident in earlier texts. Instead, most songs are about everyday life experiences as evidenced in titles such as *Soap Bubbles* (1985, p. 53), *Starting the Day* (p. 2), *Painting* (p. 3), *Jungle Drums* (p. 30), and *Sunset* (p. 38). This trend is reflective of prior research citing a growing interest in folk music beginning in the 1950s and continuing through subsequent decades, “signaling a new era in the choice of song materials for the classroom” (Livingston, 1990, p. 76).

Similarly, texts published in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century contain songs of diverse topics and themes, and the inclusion of religious texts all but disappeared, apart from folksongs with religious implications such as Spirituals that are listed in the texts as folksongs. Also, except for *Spotlight on Music Music* (Bond, et al., 2005) there is a generally increasing use of folksongs in elementary music texts. *Jump Right In* (Bolton et al., 2005) contains 133 songs, 104 of which are folksongs (78%). *Spotlight on Music* (Bond et al., 2005), also published in 2005, contains 183 songs, 67 of which are folksongs (37%). Finally, *Game Plan* (Kirske & Delellles, 2009) contains 72 songs, 36 of which are folksongs (50%).

### **Where Did Songs Originate?**

The next research question pertains to origins of songs included in elementary music texts. In this section, two primary questions are considered: 1) For songs that credit a composer (e.g., songs not considered folksongs), what composers served as primary resources for songs included in elementary music texts; and, 2) What countries, regions or cultures were primary resources for folksong literature selected for inclusion in elementary music texts?

In response to question one, it should be noted that there are too many composers to discuss each one individually. Instead, composers will be discussed in broader categories, except

in certain circumstances wherein a particular composer's prominence warrants specific mention. As a generalization, there are two main categories of composers whose works were included in elementary music texts. In earlier texts, mostly from the late 1800s to early 1900s where songs about religion were common, many songs were composed by contemporary hymnodists such as J.H. Teehey and W.T. Giffe. This would have been customary in singing schools and first generations of public school music, as one of the original purposes of music education was to improve the quality of singing in churches (Mark & Gary, 2007).

Second, many songs included in texts reviewed for this study were composed by musicians who would have been considered contemporary composers or conductors of the era. For example, Franz Abt (1819-1885) was a German composer and choral director who is credited with 12 songs in the *New Third Music Reader* (Mason, 1886). Also, eleven songs in the *New Education Music Course* (McLaughlin & Gilchrist, 1905) were attributed to American composer Harvey Worthington Loomis (1865-1930). While most songs were attributed to lied composers and other musicians more closely affiliated with art music, there were also many songs attributed to American song composers such as Stephen Foster who would have been considered contemporary songwriters of the day. In addition to the use of newly-composed songs, beginning in the *New Music Education Course* and continuing for the following decades, there was a growing trend of authors writing new lyrics to previously composed melodies of western European composers. In *The New Music Education Course*, "Echo Song" is listed as an adaptation of Beethoven's "Scottish Song" (McLaughlin & Gilchrist, 1905, p. 8). In *The Music Hour*, "Early Morn" is attributed to W.A. Mozart (McConathy et al., 1929, p. 126). In *The American Singer*, there are five songs listed as "old tune with words by [lyricist]" (Beattie et al. 1944, 160). By the middle to later decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this practice all but disappeared in

the texts reviewed for this study. By the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was a gradually increasing number of songs attributed to children's song composers and songs from movies and musicals including *The Muppet Movie* and *Mary Poppins*, particularly in *Spotlight on Music* (Bond et al., 2005).

The second question I will discuss in this section pertains to the country or region of origin of folksongs used in the reviewed texts. The answers to this question must be presented in two specific contexts. First, a tradition of folksongs takes time to accumulate. As the United States was still a fledgling country when music education was adopted into public schools, there had not been sufficient time to accumulate a canon of American folksongs. Similarly, as westward expansion was in its infancy, regionalism was not prominent.

It is first necessary to note that most early texts reviewed for this study did not attribute folk or traditional songs to a particular country or region. In the few examples of attribution in the texts from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, most folksongs were listed as German. Other prominent countries of origin included Denmark and France. This is indicative of research presented by Bryan (1952) who cited an overdependence of European folksongs in the music textbooks of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In *The Music Hour* (McConathy et al., 1929), there were two songs from Japan and one from the Philippines, marking the first instance of the use of folksongs primarily from western European countries (McConathy et al., 1929).

*Singing on our Way* (Pitts, Glenn, & Watters, 1957) was the first of the texts reviewed for this study to attribute songs as American, and to specific regions of origin. Specific attributions included "Over in the Meadow," listed as Southern Appalachian, "Bluebird, Bluebird," listed as a Texas song, "Trip a Trop a Tronjes," listed as New York Dutch, and "Hush My Baby," listed as a Mississippi song.

The first example of a song listed simply as American was “Pop Goes the Weasel” in *Music for Young Americans* (Berg et al., 1963). *Music for Young Americans* was the first of the texts reviewed for this study to provide differentiation of types or genres of folksongs to include Sailor Shanty, *Captain Columbus*, Traditional, *Row Your Boat*, and *Coming on a Rainbow*, listed as a “Negro song.” Finally, this was one of the earliest texts to include a diverse range of folksong origins, including songs of Creole, Spanish, Cantonese, and Pennsylvania Dutch origins.

The increasing diversification of folksong origins was also evident in *Discovering Music Together* and by the publication of *Silver Burdett Music* (Crook, Reimer, & Walker, 1985), it was common to find folksongs from anywhere in the world. *Silver Burdett Music* includes folksongs from Ghana, Israel, Puerto Rico, British Guiana in addition to the more common countries mentioned in the other texts. The trend of diversifying folksong literature is aligned with Campbell’s (2002) research citing a growing focus on culture and multiculturalism in the 1900s, and continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Similarly, Volk (1993) suggested that the inclusion of the Victrola into the music classrooms beginning in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century allowed students to hear and sing songs from countries that were previously inaccessible, thereby influencing the diversity of song literature in elementary music curricula.

### **What Factors may have Impacted the use of Folksongs in Elementary Music Texts?**

In some cases, there are clear societal or political factors that either directly or indirectly impacted the types of songs included in elementary music texts. In most cases, the evidence is correlative; however, it may provide indicators as to developments in the use of folksongs in elementary music texts. First, as was mentioned earlier in this paper, when music was adopted as a formal subject in the schools, America was a fledgling country and had not yet developed its

own folk traditions or musical repertoire. Therefore, authors of early music texts were forced to write their own materials and adopt or adapt music from other sources. This practice explains a number of the findings from this study. In earlier texts, materials were frequently borrowed because there was not an established canon of American folksongs. As the United States gradually established its repertoire of folk and traditional song literature, these songs were increasingly used in elementary texts, gradually replacing contemporary songs or songs written by the text's authors. This also explains why more folksongs in earlier texts were from western-European countries, as most of North America's population emigrated from those countries. As North America's population diversified, so did the folksong literature in texts.

Second, music education in the United States developed from the tradition of singing schools, which were started to improve singing in churches in the late 1700s and early 1800s (Mark & Gary, 2007). As a result, many singing school masters relied heavily on the use of pre-existent hymns in their textbooks, or wrote their materials usually on religious themes. When the first texts were written for use in the public schools, there may have been a tendency among early music educators and textbook publishers to continue using hymns and songs written specifically for the text. The lyrics of many songs suggest that the Biblical books of Psalms and Proverbs may have been the impetus for the many references to nature in song lyrics. The authors of Psalms and Proverbs suggest that nature (God's creation) is evidence of God's glory, and that people worship God through admiring nature, primarily through poetry and singing. As such, songs about nature may have been considered suitable substitutes to hymns and other overtly religious songs in early textbook publications.

Folksongs were traditionally composed and disseminated orally and, as a result, there is often little record of composer or origin. Over time, however, composers and publishers became

both more consistent and accurate in chronicling and attributing songs to their composers (Bohlman, 1988). This accounts for inconsistencies in attributions and categorizations of certain songs in earlier texts, and more consistent attribution of songs to composers in later texts. As an example from this study, “The Wheels on the Bus” is listed as a traditional song in *Singing on our Way* (Pitts, Glenn, & Watters, 1957), but is listed as a German melody in *This is Music* (not reviewed for this study) (McCall, 1967). Similarly, “America” is listed as a folk melody in *Singing on Our Way* (Pitts, Glenn, & Watters, 1957), but is more frequently attributed to Samuel F. Smith in other texts.

There is a clear shift in focus from the 1920s to the 1960s regarding the types of songs included in elementary texts. In a prior study, Branscome (2005) suggested that the public-school music curriculum may have developed as a direct result of, or at least in tandem with societal, religious, political, and other national or global trends. For instance, most of the folksongs in texts published before 1930 were from western European countries, or people groups of Anglo descent. From the 1930s to the late 1960s however, the origins of folksongs become increasingly diverse. This is reflective not only of North America’s increasingly diverse population in these decades, but also in the increased focus on diversity and racial equity that began in the 1960s and continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There is a similar instance in two of the texts reviewed for this study where songs may serve as a predictor of forthcoming pedagogical agenda, rather than a response to it. In *The American Singer* (Beattie et al., 1944) and *Singing on Our Way* (Pitts, Glenn, & Watters, 1957), the authors include original songs attributed to the school children where the text’s authors served as music supervisors. This may indicate a growing interest in composition among music educators in these decades, perhaps culminating with the Contemporary Music Project where the

Ford Foundation-funded composers-in-residence in public school music programs (Mark & Gary, 2007).

Finally, it is worth noting that the views, pedagogical approach or the philosophy of the authors and publishers may have played a strong role in the song material selected for inclusion in elementary music texts over the ages. All but three of the texts reviewed for this study were within one standard deviation of the mean regarding the percent of folksongs included in the text. Only 7% of the songs in *The New Educational Music Course* (McLaughlin & Gilchrist, 1905), published by Ginn and Company, were folksongs, possibly suggesting that this publisher may have valued other content more highly than folksongs when compared to other publishers. However, texts published by Ginn and Company before and after the *New Music Education Course* both had higher percentages of folksongs, suggesting that the publisher may have had a different purpose or vision for the *New Music Education Course*.

*Jump Right In* (Bolton, et al., 2005) is the only text reviewed for this study whose folksongs accounted for more than one standard deviation above the mean percentage (78%). *Jump Right In* is based on Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory (GIML), and according to the publisher (GIA), is grounded in authentic folksong literature as a pedagogical tool for cultural and musical development. Consequently, *Jump Right In* includes more folksongs compared to other texts reviewed for this study.

### **What do These Trends Suggest About Songs that may be Included in Future Elementary Music Texts?**

This study endeavors to use evidence from historical trends as indicators of what may occur in forthcoming elementary song curricula. First, if trends of the past 100 years endure, there may be a continuing increase in the use of folksongs in elementary curricula. However, this

statement may imply that the use of folksongs may increase to the exclusion of other song literature. In contrast, based on trends revealed in this study, I suggest that the continued use of folksongs may only persist based on three considerations.

First, it is essential to consider that what is now studied as folk or traditional music was at one time contemporary. In that paradigm, I propose that songs of the contemporary era may one day be studied as folk or traditional music, but perhaps under a different label. Mainly, we may experience either a broadening definition of the folk music label, or an expanding view of the type of song that is necessary to include in elementary curricula based on its cultural importance. As anecdotal evidence, numerous songs were considered contemporary forty to fifty years ago, but have endured the test of time to become musical and cultural mainstays; these songs are sometimes held in the same esteem as many folksongs that still persist in America's music culture.

Second, a common trend in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century was for traditional or folk music to be reintroduced to younger audiences as new, popular, or in many cases, as children's music. The folksong genre may live on through recordings and performance intended for very young audiences—particularly media products like Raffi, Barney, the Wiggles, children's entertainers of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the innumerable adaptations of folksong by children's performers on YouTube in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On the other hand, it may be the case that folk or traditional song genres may have been short-lived labels, or perhaps ones that now only refer to styles of music from prior generations. Specifically, returning to Whitman's (1963) definition of a folksong as music that has no attributed composer and that is maintained through oral traditions, technological innovations have made it easier to notate music and track the authorship of artistic works. Therefore, there

may no longer be a need for the folk music label, except when referring to historical music for whom no authorship is credited.

### **Conclusion**

While the findings from this study suggest a growing interest in folksongs, particularly among elementary music texts, there may be too many extraneous factors to predict what future texts may include. Ongoing research into the factors that influenced prior authors and publishers may provide additional indicators as to what lies ahead. This study did not address statistical differences by publisher; perhaps philosophical or pedagogical views of publishers have had, and will continue to have, impacts on the types of songs that are included in curricula. Similarly, while this study made mention of various societal, religious, and political trends that may have influenced curricula, future research might delve more deeply into these factors and their possible impact on curricula as indicators of future trends. This research may provide an impetus to ensure that folksongs remain a staple of elementary music education, and an essential component of American culture.

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