

**“Who’s Picking These Hymns Anyway?!”: Familiarity and Musical Features on Hymn Preferences**

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### **“Who’s Picking These Hymns Anyway?!”: Familiarity and Musical Features on Hymn Preference**

Of the hymns most familiar to my church choristers, some hymns are ardently preferred, while others are vehemently disliked. Are the preferred hymns more familiar to my choristers or do the preferred hymns share a greater number of musical features than the hymns that are disliked? It is my intent to discover common musical features of hymns preferred by my choir in order to identify and program music that is both appealing and facilitates meaningful worship. Musical features examined for the purpose of this study include: (a) tonality: major vs. minor; (b) meter: quadruple vs. triple; and (c) ease of singing: vocal range, intervallic leaps, and hymn length.

#### **Familiarity and preference**

Musical preferences are influenced by many things, including, familiarity, enculturation, age, musical education, personality traits, and musical identity (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). In laying the groundwork toward development of a *theory of music preferences*, Rentfrow and Gosling conducted six studies of everyday activities of people, their personality traits and their listening uses of any of fourteen genres, from Classical to Rap. Results of the Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) study demonstrate the value of musical preferences, in the light that people believe their music preferences reveal almost as much about themselves as do their hobbies (p. 1238). “The most important reasons why people like their music are its capability to express their identity and their values and its ability to bring people together” (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, p. 296). Many people, who participate in church choirs, consider singing in choir a hobby, or an integral part of who they are as musical people. This research is warranted because it focuses on the active musicker, whereas much of the previous empirical research, in this largely subjective realm of musical preferences, has sought responses of the music listener.

To date, more studies on musical preferences have cast a wide net into the sea of multiple genres and utilized listeners of diverse age groups (Brickman & D’Amato, 1975; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Kopacz, 2005; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009). My study serves the purpose of learning music

preferences, within the more concentrated genre of Christian hymns, by adult, choristers who are doing more than listening; they are actively making music in church. Because my focus group is made up of people of the same denomination, congregation, with lifetimes of experiences of hymns in common, they might demonstrate “shared emotions,” (Storr, 1992), or “commonalities of response,” (Sloboda, 1995, p. 384). These “commonalities arise only when their intentions, beliefs, cultural background, and experience can also be commonalized,” or “cultural[ly] homogenized” (Sloboda, 2005, p. 384).

Building on Rentfrow’s theory (2003), Schäfer & Sedlmeier (2009), assert that there exist levels of preference, which can be strengthened or weakened by “social and cultural influences on the relationship between functions of preferences” (p. 296). A theoretical framework of music preferences “... should examine the type and degree of music preference” (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2003. p. 296). For my study, the type of music preference is limited to hymns, meaning “songs in praise of the Lord” (Apel, 1972a, p. 397). The function of this music, in the context of bringing together a small, and nearly “cultural[ly] homogenized” group of older people for singing, (Gilbert & Beal, 1982; Sloboda, 2005), does influence the degree of preference for the music they sing (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2003. p. 296). More specifically, the function of musicking being studied is limited to religious services.

Other functions are also at play. J. Gertrud’s Tönsing et al, (2015) made a subjective study to evaluate emotive and cognitive relationships people experience with Christian music “through what they [people] themselves say about it.” Because “some pieces of music may be rather effective in cuing autobiographical memories and that the recollections triggered by music are strongly, and generally positively, affectively charged” (Baumgartner, 1992), it is important that my study consider comments choristers made about the hymns they evaluated.

The majority of my choristers have been involved in church music most of their lives; it is very likely that some hymns may have more meaning, or choristers may have associations of life events with the music. If a hymn was learned and enjoyed as a youth or young adult, it may have more value

because “older adults prefer popular music of their young adult years” (Bartlett, 1980, Gibbons, 1977; Lathom, Peterson & Havelicek, 1982), as well as patriotic and religious music (Lathom et al, 1982). Some hymns can become popular within a congregation or youth group for example.

Brickman and D’Amato, inform us that “...increased exposure increases attraction...” (1975; Hargreaves, 1984), however, the number of times a familiar hymn is sung and how it is experienced within the context of worship services can also function in ways that negatively influence a chorister’s preference for a hymn (Blair & Shimp, 1992; North & Hargreaves, 1995).

### ***Musical Features and preference***

Influences on a chorister’s preference for particular hymns could be due to musical constructs, or musical features, inherent in the music itself. Psychological testing to single out one, or pair of musical features, in search of levels of perception, cognition or musical affect, has only been accomplished with a modicum of success since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kate Henver (1937) established that people tend to imbue major and minor modes with affective qualities of happy and sad respectively, and musical features can exhibit affective emotions in listeners. Hughes and Lowis, (2002), sought to learn about emotional and spiritual reactions people had to hymns played in major and minor modes. Hughes hypothesized that hymns in Major modes and those in triple time (meter) would be rated lower for providing their participants with positive emotion and spirituality, than those hymns in minor modes and quadruple time.

My study seeks, in a small way, to test a couple of the Hughes & Lowis (2002) hypotheses, in a meager way. Unlike the Hughes and Lowis research, I did not query my choristers for their feelings of spirituality with regard to each hymn. I decided to see if my choristers might prefer hymns with major tonalities (modes) and triple meter (time) over minor modes and quadruple time, by virtue of the number of their preferred hymns in major keys and triple meter.

It has been my experience that some intervals within a hymn tune can cause difficulty for singing. Despite the fact that most hymns contain intervallic leaps of fourths and fifths, perhaps for their sounds of stability (Tönsing, 2020), sometimes these leaps can frustrate the average choral singer, and if used in excess, can create difficult-to-sing, disjunct melodies. J. Gertrud Tönsing's thorough, qualitative research into hymns and their emotive and cognitive qualities discusses the interval of a sixth as having particular emotive, sentimental qualities. Tönsing continues to share, it is the interval of a sixth and above that should be studied because they are more difficult to sing, (p. 5). For the purpose of identifying potentially more difficult-to-sing hymns, which can influence preference, my study has considered each hymn for the number of intervallic leaps of a sixth and greater.

### ***Choristers and "Ease of Singing"***

"Ease of singing" is the umbrella term my study uses for musical features of hymn length, intervallic leaps a sixth and greater, and vocal range (tessitura). Comments made by participants in the Hughes-Lewis study (2022), stressed that future studies might want to consider variables such as hymn tempo, length, dynamics, and the influence of collective singing. Of those considerations, I chose to evaluate the length of the hymns, because a singer's enjoyment of a hymn can be affected by how long they have to stand up and sing.

Moore, Staum, & Brotons (1992) found preferred music repertoire for the elderly, including vocal ranges, tempos, and accompaniments for singing. Vocal ranges of elderly men, ages 60-90, were discovered to average between C#<sub>2</sub> to D<sub>4</sub>, and women, ages 60-99 averaging ranges from F<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>5</sub>. Because most of my choristers are older adults in their 60's-70's, my study seeks correlations between the vocal ranges, (tessiturae), of their ratings for "most" and "least preferred hymns" (VanWeelden & Cevasco, 2007).

The expected result of this study is that the hymns preferred by choristers will reveal musical features in common, that of key and mode and meter. At the outset of this research, I do not anticipate

that the length of the hymns will matter, but do believe the hymns with the greater number of intervallic leaps may be heard as more emotive and be preferred despite their difficulty for singing.

### **Method**

Sixteen choristers of the Laurel Presbyterian Church choir were asked their level of preference for forty hymns sung at least once in their worship during the past year. The hymns used in my study were based on hymns sung often in worship services. Of the forty hymns used, only one was a hymn that had only been sung once by the choir, and it came from a Presbyterian hymnal supplement.

A pen and paper, Likert survey was conducted at the beginning of weekly choir rehearsals. The Likert survey listed ten hymn/praise song titles per page and asked each chorister to evaluate their familiarity by levels 1-5, beginning with “very unfamiliar”, “somewhat familiar” to “very familiar”. Each chorister was also asked to rate their level of preference by a similar rating scale, beginning with “strongly dislike,” “neutral” to “like very much.” This “hymn survey” (Appendix A) provided a small comment column in each row where choristers were given instructions to make any notes they wished about any of the hymns, but that they did not have to justify their scoring.

The paper surveys each had a participant number and a separate paper list of participant numbers with chorister names was kept by a designated chorister. This list was not shared with me until the final week of the survey for the purpose of matching participant questionnaires to the hymn surveys for analysis. At the beginning of each week’s “survey session,” of choir practice, the choristers picked up their numbered survey. When the survey session ended, choristers returned their surveys to the clipboard.

For each survey session the choristers sang through ten hymns. I stated the number, title and hymn number, played an introduction on the piano and they sang the first verse. Following each hymn singing I gave the choristers a minute to fill in their responses and then announced the next number,

title and hymn number. No attempt was made to have the participants be silent between singing hymns, so some comments were made aloud and could have had an influence on other choristers.

### ***Midstream Modification***

When choristers were about half the way through the survey, (i.e., had completed two survey sessions, or 20 hymns), I realized by their verbal commentary that we had sung through some hymns for which the hymn tunes were familiar, but the words failed to line up with their memories of the hymn. The corollary had also occurred; they had sung unfamiliar tunes to familiar words in one case. Additionally, it had come to my realization that I had not included the more familiar versions of those hymn tunes (or texts) in the forty hymns to be surveyed.

I made a midstream modification. I created an additional five hymns for the choir to evaluate on the last day; the day they were to complete the participant questionnaire. In this set of additional hymns, #1, “Though I May Speak” was selected for personal reasons. I had tired of the hymn and was curious to know how my choristers would rate it. Hymn number two, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” and hymn number three, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” were both more familiar versions of hymns they had previously surveyed with a different hymn tune and different words, respectively. The comparison of how the differing tune and words were to be rated could be of value.

Fortunately, I realized that in the fourth week of the planned forty hymns, the hymn, “Blest Are They” was to be surveyed and it was the only hymn the choir had sung once prior to this survey. Thinking this might be the one opportunity to obtain significant results with my study, and knowing that the choristers were going to survey “Blest Are They” for the first time; I chose to include the hymn in this group of five additional hymns for our fifth hymn survey session. I wanted to know if singing the less familiar hymn might be rated as more familiar or more preferable on a second singing within a one week period. In order to not confuse the future data collection, I numbered these five additional hymns

for my own record as 1a, 2a, 3a, etc. A sample, completed by a chorister, of the “Additional Five Hymns” is found in Appendix B.

Once the forty, plus five additional hymns had been surveyed, I administered the two-page, front and back, pen and paper, “Participant Questionnaire” (Appendix C). The questionnaire was administered post survey as to not influence participant response. A couple of the hymns, previously discussed, shared hymn tunes, but had different titles and texts. Thinking the differences in the texts could be a factor in my chorister’s preference for the hymns, I included a question about their level of preference for singing a familiar hymn tune with less familiar or alternate words. Additionally, question topics included: age (Bartlett, 1980; Gibbons, 1977; Gilbert & Beal, 1982); gender (Bear, 2019); church and music experience (Batson, 1993); musical preferences regarding hymn singing, and accompaniment instruments for congregational singing (Moore et al, 1992).

Hughes and Lowis (2002) research asked the participants if the music was not just enjoyable but if it gave them goosebumps or if they felt “...the music brought [them] closer to God” (p. 447). Although my intent was not to study physiologic aspects of music and emotion, I did suspect it wise to query my choristers about the value they assign to corporate (or congregational) hymn singing for providing them with increased spirituality. This could influence their preference for the hymns

Not much research has been done in a religious setting to provide empirical evidence for music as a “trigger for powerful emotional or numinous experiences...” (Hughes & Lowis, 1997).

Because so much of the meager studies regarding religious music involve queries of listeners, I thought I’d ask my choristers which they enjoy more, singing or listening. Which may be a moot point for people who sing in a choir.

Using an Excel workbook, the Participant Questionnaire data was placed in the first data sheet. Participant numbers were placed in rows with questions placed in the columns. Responses were then totaled and compared beneath each column. The forty hymns surveyed were placed, ten hymns each, in



four Excel sheets. Participant numbers were at the left, creating rows, while hymn numbers with familiarity and preference ratings were placed in columns. This made it easier to compute sums, means and modes for all hymn ratings.

The hymn titles were highlighted for extreme scoring, (i.e., highest and lowest), and created the lists of “Top Five Most Preferred Hymns” (Appendix D, Table 1) and “Top Five Least Preferred Hymns,” (Appendix D, Table 2). These ten hymns were then analyzed for similar or dissimilar musical features of tonality, meter, and ease of singing. Bar graphs for “Ease of Singing – Top Five Least Preferred Hymns” (Appendix E, Table 3) and “Ease of Singing – Top Five Most Preferred Hymns” (Appendix E, Table 4), show comparison of the “vocal ranges in octaves,” the “number of intervallic leaps of a 6<sup>th</sup> or greater,” and “length [of hymn] in verses.”

Correlations were expected to exist between the chorister’s self-reporting of experience and preferences, found in the Participant Questionnaire, and the chorister’s hymn survey data. Findings of preferences discovered within my choir were compared for relationships between familiarity and preference and also to a list of “top twenty-five hymns: versus ten years ago,” as several hundred people were surveyed online and posted, in a blog, by Thomas Rainer (2023).

Data collection began October 4, 2023. Each choir practice occurred once weekly, and there were five occurrences of data over the course of five weeks. The data collection ended November 1, 2023.

## **Results**

Sixteen choristers took part in the “Hymn Survey,” although there were three who did not complete all portions of the survey. Most responses were obtained from a core of thirteen choristers. Of the forty hymns rated for level of familiarity and level of preference, only two hymns were rated below 3.5 between “somewhat familiar” and “familiar.” Nearly all of the hymns were rated at 4 and 5, “familiar” and “very familiar,” revealing these hymns are all known well and they are preferred as much,

or nearly as much as they are known. Of the “Top five least preferred hymns” only three were rated with scores under 3.4, a rating of 3 for preference represents, “neutral.” The lowest scoring for preference was 2.9, making that hymn into the “dislike” category. This slightly disliked hymn was familiar at 4.2 average rating. The “Top five most preferred hymns” demonstrated preference averages for preference similar to their ratings for familiarity, with a mode score of 4.6

Three of the hymns received lower scores for preference because choristers knew the hymn tune to different words. Included in this set of unfamiliar words to familiar hymn tunes were: “As Your Family, Lord, Meet Us Here” set to the tune, “Kum Ba Yah;” “God of Grace and God of Glory” set to the tune, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah;” and “Jesus Thy Boundless Love to Me” set to “Faith of Our Fathers.” The hymn, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” earned slightly lower scores when the words were sung to the hymn tune, HYFRYDOL than when it was sung to the tune, BEECHER.

Musical features of tonality were noted to favor major keys over minor. When examining the hymns sung, only one was in a minor key. None of the songs in major keys were found to linger very long in minor chords. There were no distinct key signatures favored by the survey. Hymns surveyed were written in the keys of D, G, F, C, E-flat, A-flat Major and one hymn was written in f minor. Preference scores were averaged for each key signature represented, resulting in these scores: 4.3 for D, G and F Major and f minor; 4.2 for F Major; and 3.9 for C Major. The scores for preference are too miniscule to consider meaningful.

The musical feature of meter demonstrated that 19 of 40 hymns were composed in triple meter and 21 of 40 in quadruple meter. The average preference score for hymns in triple meter was 4.1 and 4.2 for quadruple meter. The numbers suggest preference is not affected by meter in the case of this study.

Quantitatively, the majority of comments made by choristers were on the topic of text and words sung. Some of these comments included: “Tune is good, not words;” “I know I have heard other

lyrics;" and, "God of the Pruning Hook?!! What does that even mean?" Notably, all choristers who included written comments with their scores shared something about their feelings or memories of at least one or more hymns. These more personal comments included, "'This one has really been burned into my head since Covid!;" "Pretty harmony, old-fashioned;" "Story of connection between God and God's people," "Grew up with this one in my Baptist church," and "Reminds me of my granny."

Results of the "Participant Questionnaire" display the makeup of most of my little choir; eight males and nine females were surveyed. Nine choristers in their 70's, six between the ages of 40 to 69 years of age, and two young men ages 14 and 15 years. All but one adult had instrumental music training, with seven having had three to 15 years' experience and five having 35 plus years' experience. All but one adult had begun singing hymns as a child and all but one had sung in church or civic choirs for most of their teenage and adult lives. The years of familiarity with religious hymn repertoire is apparent by the data.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was twofold: to learn whether hymns preferred by my choristers are liked because they are familiar and to identify and learn the extent to which common musical features of preferred hymns may exist. Based on the Hughes & Lowis study (2001), which demonstrated higher preference for hymns with minor tonalities or modes, similar results were expected. Had this study's 40 hymns had been more closely inspected, it would have been noted that only one hymn was in a minor mode, specifically the hymn, "We Are One in the Spirit (They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love)." It should be noted that the Hughes & Lowis research was conducted in the UK and within the context of the Anglican Church. Christian congregations in the UK are more likely to sing hymns written in minor modes than Christian congregations in the United States.

In 2022, Daniel Jesse scrutinized the top sung religious songs in the United States per the records of the ubiquitous Christian Copyright Licensing International. Of the most frequently sung

hymns during the years 1988 to 2018, Jesse found “There are only ten songs out of 133 songs that have minor keys, leaving 123 songs in the major key. The minor key motifs are often transitioned quickly into a major key” (Jesse, 2022). With my study, I thought there might be a chance that certain tonal or key centers might be preferred over others, however, the results show nominal difference in preference for keys. I do know that my choristers prefer, by default perhaps, major over minor modes.

What was discovered about preference of meter was that the mean score for hymns in triple meter was nearly the same as those in quadruple meter. Approximately half of all hymns surveyed were in one or the other, there were no hymns of irregular meter. Hughes and Lowis (2002) suggest preference tends to favor hymns in triple meter. That was not the case for this study, which appears to demonstrate null hypotheses for both musical features of tonality and meter and demonstrates little to no effect on hymn preference.

The musical feature, ease of singing looked at vocal ranges, intervallic leaps and the lengths of hymns. It was expected that the vocal ranges found in the least preferred hymns would be more extreme and outside an octave. Surprisingly, the vocal ranges for most all hymns evaluated were within an octave range, with a few exceptions of one or two pitches beyond the octave, typically found in the bass voice part.

Of interest, and contrary to my hypothesis with regard to ease of singing, is that the least preferred hymns do not include many intervallic leaps above the interval of a sixth. The more conjunct, stepwise-moving melodies were found more often in hymns given low ratings for preference. The most preferred hymns contain greater number of intervallic leaps and disjunct melodies. Could this mean these melodies convey more emotion and are more interesting to the choristers? Do the choristers find more cognitive and emotional pleasure navigating and singing these more difficult disjunct melodies? North & Hargreaves (1995) suggest there is a correlation between levels of complexity and familiarity for listeners of music. The North and Hargreaves utilize “an inverted-U relationship “ that suggests there is

an optimum level of liking for the familiar and complex music before increase in exposure to the music can decrease liking. The “inverted-U relationship” into which we will not dive deeply here, but suffice it to say that it is possible choristers in my study may have a greater preference for singing the more complex music because it has become familiar and the level of complexity is for them, reduced or at an optimum (North & Hargreaves, 1995).

When considering the musical feature of the length of hymns, the results were that the least preferred hymns were considerably longer, sometimes twice as long, as the shorter, most preferred hymns. It would appear churchgoers really do want to finish worship in time to get to their favorite brunch haunts. My study might suggest church musicians need to follow the minister’s lead and cooperate to program shorter, less time-consuming hymns.

When asked about what they pay more attention to while singing, only one chorister reported attending to the text more than the music. When asked about singing alternate words to a hymn, only one expressed displeasure. Most reported to not care if the words were different, yet their preference rating for familiar hymn tunes sung with unfamiliar text revealed a different, contrary, story.

Comments provided by choristers were reflective of two topics, personal feelings (i.e., remembrances of past experiences with the hymns), or problems with the text (e.g., “wrong words,” “antiquated” [Raabe, 2019], or too gender specific). Words and music interact with and “become integrated in memory...” so that “...each component facilitates recognition of the other component” (Stratton & Zalanowski, 1994; Crowder et al, 1986). This observation from Stratton et al and Crowder et al might explain why my chorister’s preference ratings were generally higher for hymns to which they had prior connection and for those hymns sung in the way (with the words) as they first learned them. Perhaps singing familiar hymns with different or unfamiliar text causes some cognitive dissonance.?

My research yielded a functional list of hymns to provide our pastor for her worship planning and a reminder to self to continue to seek out hymns with interesting melodies and meaningful lyrics.

This research process with my choir revealed the importance of time for ruminating on a larger set of hypotheses before settling on a particular focus for research, specifically that of my specific “musical features.” The wider I cast my net into the field of work done, the more I found I could have allowed my focus to gravitate toward textual considerations. Shannan Baker (2022, p. 275), in her research on Christian music shared:

“The lyrics are the aspect of a song that resonates most with people. While the music and experience accompany the lyrics, a majority of people in the church gravitate toward a specific song because of its words and meaning.”

Finally, despite my enjoyment of music analysis, this research helped me understand why it is difficult to conduct empirical study of music and emotion, (one of the early most questions you proffered students of this course). After scrutinizing these several hymns for musical features, I have come to agree, (tongue in cheek) with Hughes & Lowis (2002), that “attempts to explain musical effects by dissecting a composition into its constituent elements destroys the very holistic nature of the piece, and rarely reveals useful data” (p. 453). Hughes and Lowis (2002) quoted Baston et al (1993) speculating that that perhaps truth lies somewhere between, as Hughes & Lowis (2002) “music may not have the power to produce religious experience, but it does have the power to facilitate it.”

Very coincidental and, or, very interesting to this research is how the most preferred hymns of my choristers line up with the “Top 25 Hymns: 2023 Versus Ten Years Ago” (Appendix E), a list that was posted online by blogger, Thom Rainer on the website titled, ChurchAnswers.com. The hymn taking second place for most preferred by my choir, “Great is Thy Faithfulness,” is the second place hymn on Rainer’s list for the year 2023 and for the year 2013. I find this somewhat remarkable. The hymn has may “stress, unstress,” appoggiatura-like or leading tone moments; step-wise motion with short pedals, so that it is harmonically interesting for the singers. In other words, there are several 9-8 and 4-3 suspensions and the hymn has a building refrain with a delayed climax in the third to last measure. The

triple meter gives the hymn tune a slight lilt that may lend to the feeling of enjoyment, and coming in at just three verses of 23 measures, my Presbyterians can leave church in time to beat the Baptists to the nearest lunch spot.

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## Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Using tables below, please rate each hymn/song with a number 1-5 for its level of familiarity to you, and a number 1-5 for how well you prefer/like each hymn. Comments for your ratings are optional, but appreciated.

Very Unfamiliar	Unfamiliar	Somewhat familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
1	2	3	4	5

Strongly Dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Like	Like Very Much
1	2	3	4	5

<u>Title</u>	<u>Familiarity</u>	<u>Preference/Liking</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1. Holy, Holy, Holy (138)			
2. Come Thou Almighty King (139)			
3. All Hail the Power of Jesus Name (142)			
4. Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart (145)			
5. Come Christians Join to Sing (150)			
6. Rejoice the Lord is King (155)			
7. The King of Love My Shepherd Is (171)			
8. My Shepherd Will Supply My Need (172)			
9. Our God, Our Help in Ages Past (210)			
10. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (260)			

## Appendix B

### Additional Five Hymns

Participant # 4

<u>Title</u>	<u>Familiarity</u>	<u>Preference/Liking</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1. Though I May Speak (#335)	5	4	
2. Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	5	5	Grew up with this one
3. Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (#281)	5	5	
4. Gather Us In	5	4	
5. Blest Are They	1	3	

## Appendix C-1

## Participant Questionnaire – Page One

Participant Questionnaire Page 1		Participant NUMBER
1. Age (Check One)		
_____ 80 +	_____ 40-49	
_____ 70 - 79	_____ 20-39	
_____ 60-69	_____ 12-19	
_____ 50-59		
2. Gender _____		
3. At what age were you introduced to hymn singing? _____		5. Number of years you participated in a choir _____
4. Number of years' experience playing an instrument _____		6. Number of years you participated in church _____
(CIRCLE ONE)		
7. Which do you enjoy more? <u>Singing hymns</u> or <u>Listening to hymns</u>		
8. Which do you enjoy more? <u>Singing praise songs</u> or <u>Listening to praise songs</u>		
9. Which do you enjoy more? <u>Singing in unison</u> or <u>Singing in parts</u>		
10. Which do you prefer? Hymns/Praise songs in <u>Major (Happy)</u> or <u>Minor (Sad)</u> or <u>Doesn't matter</u>		
11. Which do you prefer to sing? (Circle one) Hymns/Praise song tempos that are: <u>Slow</u> or <u>Fast</u> or <u>Depends on the context</u>		
12. <i>While singing</i> hymns and/or praise songs, which do you pay more attention to: <u>the music (your part or melody)</u> or <u>the text/lyrics?</u>		
13. Overall, do you prefer singing: <u>energetic hymns loudly</u> or <u>contemplative hymns softly?</u> or <u>Depends on the context</u>		

## Appendix C-2

## Participant Questionnaire – Page Two

Participant Questionnaire Page 2

Participant NUMBER

14. Do you ever have experience(s) hearing a hymn in your mind during a time when you are focused on things other than singing?

YES or NO

15. If hymns “pop” into your mind, which do you remember?

MUSIC and WORDS or Mostly MUSIC or Mostly WORDS

16. Of hymns that “pop” into your mind, would you say they are hymns you learned as a child or young adult?

YES or NO or NOT SURE

17. How often are your favorite hymns/praise songs sung in church?

NEVER NOT ENOUGH OFTEN ENOUGH TOO MUCH

18. How much do you enjoy singing a hymn tune with lyrics/words from another source or hymn?

DISLIKE DOESN'T MATTER LIKE

19a. Does corporate hymn singing in church contribute to your spirituality or feelings of connection to God?

Not at All a Little Not Sure Quite a bit Very Much

19b. With what keyboard instrument do you prefer to sing hymns?

Piano or Organ

20. With what keyboard instrument do you prefer to sing Praise Songs?

Piano or Organ or other \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU!!!

## Appendix D

### *Top Five Least and Most Preferred Hymns*

**Table D-1**

#### *Top Five Most Preferred Hymns*

Hymn Title	Familiarity	Preference
1. Holy, holy, holy	4.9	4.7
2. Great is thy faithfulness	4.9	4.6
3. Come Christians join to sing	4.7	4.6
4. Come thou fount of ev'ry blessing	4.6	4.6
5. Take my life and let it be	4.6	4.6

**Table D-2**

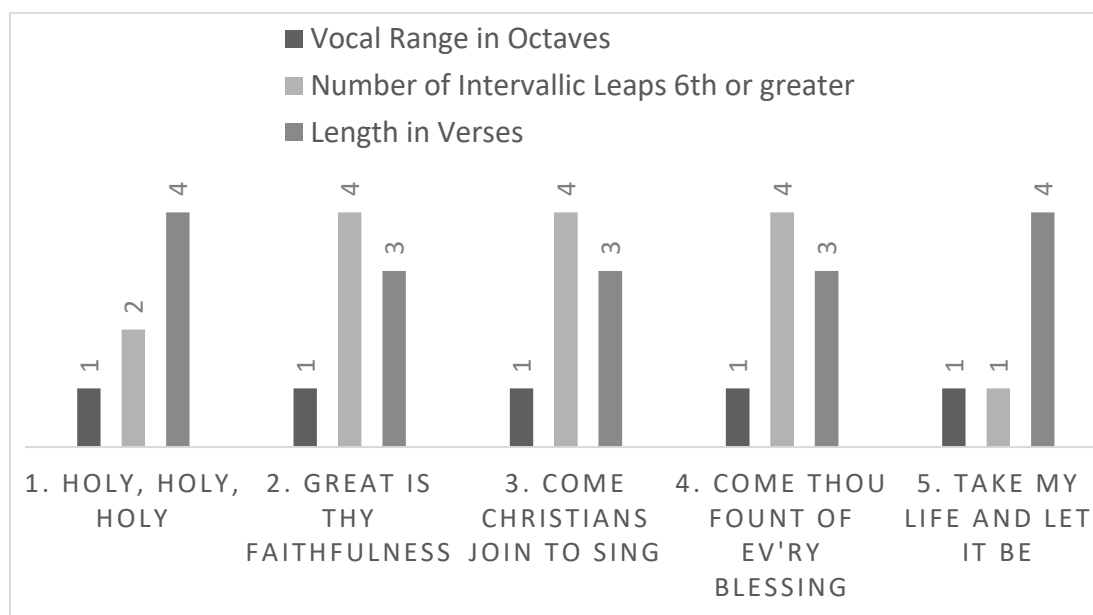
#### *Top Five Least Preferred Hymns*

Hymn Title	Familiarity	Preference
1. God of the sparrow	4.2	2.9
2. Lord of the dance	4.5	3
3. The king of love my shepherd is	3.3	3.4
4. Jesus thy boundless love to me	4.2	3.7
5. Blest are they	1.6	3.7

## Appendix E

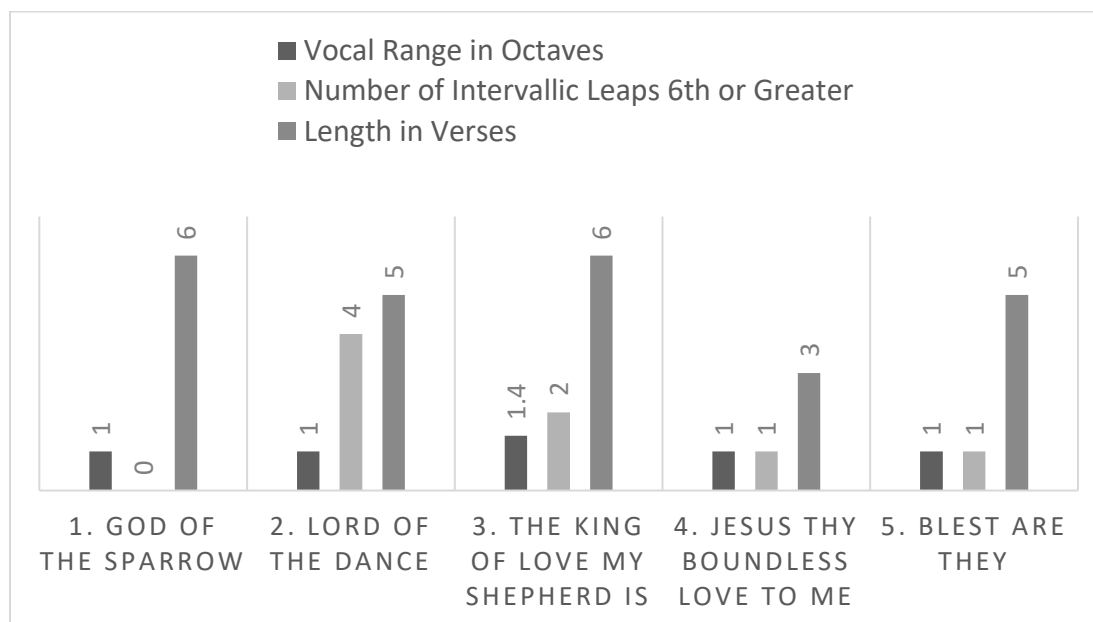
**Figure E-1**

*Ease of Singing: Top Five Most Preferred Hymns*



**Figure E-2**

*Ease of Singing: Top Five Least Preferred Hymns*





## Appendix F

### *Top 25 Hymns: 2023 Versus Ten Years Ago*

2023	2013
1. It Is Well with My Soul	How Great Thou Art
2. Great Is Thy Faithfulness	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
3. Amazing Grace	Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine
4. How Great Thou Art	All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
5. Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing	Holy, Holy, Holy
6. Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine	Jesus Paid It All
7. Holy, Holy, Holy	Christ the Lord Is Risen Today
8. Be Thou My Vision	Crown Him with Many Crowns
9. Victory in Jesus	It Is Well with My Soul
10. The Old Rugged Cross	To God Be the Glory
11. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	The Solid Rock
12. In Christ Alone	Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing
13. And Can It Be	I Stand Amazed in the Presence
14. Because He Lives	Victory in Jesus
15. The Solid Rock	Nothing but the Blood
16. When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	Amazing Grace
17. I Stand Amazed in the Presence	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
18. All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	At the Cross
19. To God Be the Glory	Revive Us Again
20. There Is a Fountain	Be Thou My Vision
21. I'll Fly Away	Because He Lives
22. Crown Him with Many Crowns	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
23. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
24. Nothing but the Blood	For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
25. Love Lifted Me	America the Beautiful

*(Rainer, 2023)*