

Beethoven's Fifth (a.k.a. That Betoven Song) Is Still First

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Books are words that somebody wrote about something that nobody usually cares what they think. Except my books of course.

—Billy Clyde Puckett

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This is the second in what may eventually become a quinquennial series on the music and literature tastes and habits of pharmacy students in a sample of schools of pharmacy around the country. In our first report (1), we justified this only mildly academic exercise by pointing out that knowledge of student tastes in music and literature could allow the teacher to enrich the class with meaningful and familiar allusions. We are going to stay with that justification and add that with two data points in time in hand we can perhaps even identify some trends.

METHODS

As in the previous survey, one faculty member in each of several schools of pharmacy (Massachusetts, Mississippi, St. Louis, Texas/Austin, Southern California, Xavier, and Wyoming) administered a short questionnaire in the classroom to first-year professional students. The questionnaire contained four items:

- Name your favorite classical music piece.
- Name your favorite contemporary musical performer or group.
- Name the *last* book you read for pleasure.
- Name the *best* book you ever read (excluding religious books).

RESULTS

A total of 646 pharmacy students responded to the classroom survey. The number per school ranged from 30 in Wyoming to 191 in Massachusetts. Of course, this means that the potential existed for the larger classes to skew the results. As we are not suggesting projection to any other population, we feel that reporting on an individual school basis will provide ample data for review.

A review of the results shown in Table 1 will reveal that Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5* is the favorite of nearly 10 percent of the students and by more than twice as many as those who chose the second- and third-place numbers—Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Bee-

TABLE 1. Favorite Classical/Musical Piece

Title	Rank in Prior Poll ¹	Percent of Times Listed by Students in School/College							
		MS (n = 93)	WY (n = 30)	TX (n = 53)	Xavier (n = 43)	MA (n = 191)	St.L (n = 151)	USC (n = 85)	Total (n = 646)
Beethoven's <i>Symphony No. 5</i>	1	22.6%	13.3%	5.7%	11.6%	4.7%	12.6%	0.0%	61(9.4%)
Vivaldi's <i>Four Seasons</i>	-	1.1%	3.3%	3.8%	2.3%	6.8%	2.0%	9.4%	29(4.5%)
Beethoven's <i>Für Elise</i>	3	7.5%	0.0%	1.9%	7.0%	3.1%	5.3%	3.5%	28(4.3%)
Mozart, unspecified	8	1.1%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	4.7%	4.0%	8.2%	25(3.9%)
Pachelbel's <i>Canon</i>	10	5.4%	3.3%	5.7%	2.3%	3.7%	2.6%	1.2%	22(3.4%)
Beethoven's <i>Moonlight Sonata</i>	2	1.1%	6.7%	0.0%	2.3%	2.1%	2.6%	8.2%	19(2.9%)
Tchaikovsky's <i>The Nutcracker Suite</i>	4	1.1%	3.3%	3.8%	0.0%	2.6%	3.3%	2.4%	16(2.5%)
Beethoven's <i>Symphony No. 9</i>	5	1.1%	0.0%	3.8%	2.3%	2.6%	2.0%	3.5%	15(2.3%)
Beethoven, unspecified	-	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	3.7%	2.0%	1.2%	14(2.2%)
Rossini's <i>William Tell Overture</i>	6	1.1%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	3.3%	0.0%	8(1.2%)
Do not know/Do not have one/Missing data		2(2.2%)	8(26.7%)	18 (39.1%)	18 (41.9%)	61 (31.9%)	30 (19.9%)	12 (14.1%)	149(23.1%)
Percentage of students listing one of the Top 10		44.1%	33.3%	28.3%	27.9%	34.6%	39.7%	37.6%	36.7%
Total number of different listings		49	17	25	19	62	56	43	163
Diversity index ²		0.53	0.57	0.54	0.44	0.32	0.37	0.51	0.25

¹See reference 1²Diversity index = Total number of different listings/Total number of students

thoven's *Für Elise*. Some kind of constancy is suggested by the fact that eight out of the top ten also made "the top 10 chart" in the previous survey. About one-third listed one of the top ten as their choice. Nearly one-fourth could not, would not, or did not choose a classical selection. In addition to students who did not mention a specific selection, several students (approximately 7 percent of respondents) only mentioned a composer without noting a specific piece of work by that composer. Two of these, Mozart and Beethoven, made "the top 10 chart." While these selections do not represent an actual classical composition, they do provide some insight into student preferences and possibly their knowledge of classical music.

A word should be said about the diversity index figures which appear in each of the tables. As the footnotes indicate they reflect, by school, a ratio of the number of different selections to the number of students. As this number approaches 1, the group is more diverse in their selections. The diversity index number under the *total* column is different in that it combines all the data. On the other hand, it is the one statistic that is comparable by questions. Thus, selections for the last book read for pleasure were the most diverse of the four areas.

In Table 2, the data reflect student responses to the contemporary music scene. Not too surprisingly, the responses reflected considerable diversity. Indeed, the diversity index was higher in six of the seven schools than in the classical responses. No performer was listed as favorite by even 3 percent of the students overall, although Garth Brooks was rated comparatively favorably at three schools. The ephemeral nature of contemporary fame is confirmed by the finding that only Billy Joel and U2 were ranked in the top ten in both surveys.

As the data in Table 3 show, pharmacy students seem to share the national interest in the books of John Grisham. Nearly one of five students selected one of his books as last read and they occupied ranks one through four. Mr. Grisham makes his home in Oxford, Mississippi (as did William Faulkner, who doesn't do particularly well in the students' "read for pleasure" rankings), so it might be expected that his works might find favor with Mississippi students.

TABLE 2. Favorite Contemporary Musical Performer

Name	Percent of Times Listed by Students in School/College							
	MS (n = 93)	WY (n = 30)	TX (n = 53)	Xavier (n = 43)	MA (n = 191)	St.L (n = 151)	USC (n = 85)	Total (n = 6)
Garth Brooks	4.3%	6.7%	0.0%	2.3%	1.0%	4.6%	0.0%	16(2.5%)
Billy Joel	3.2%	6.7%	1.9%	0.0%	3.7%	2.0%	0.0%	16(2.5%)
U2	1.1%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	7.1%	15(2.3%)
Pearl Jam	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	4.6%	1.2%	14(2.2%)
Kenny G	3.2%	0.0%	3.8%	9.3%	0.5%	0.0%	2.4%	12(1.9%)
Boyz II Men	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	1.6%	2.0%	2.4%	11(1.7%)
The Eagles	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.2%	11(1.7%)
Whitney Houston	2.2%	3.3%	0.0%	4.7%	1.6%	0.0%	3.5%	11(1.7%)
Bryan Adams	1.1%	3.3%	3.8%	0.0%	0.5%	2.0%	2.4%	10(1.5%)
Aerosmith	2.2%	3.3%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	9(1.4%)
Depeche Mode	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	2.6%	1.3%	1.2%	9(1.4%)
Stone Temple Pilots	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	4.6%	0.0%	9(1.4%)
Do not have one/Missing data	1(1.1%)	3(10.0%)	4(7.5%)	10(23.3%)	43(22.5%)	7(4.6%)	9(10.6%)	77(11.9%)
Percentage of students listing one of Top 10	24.7%	23.3%	15.1%	20.9%	19.9%	26.5%	21.2%	22.1%
Total number of different listings	63	24	43	22	86	78	55	214
Diversity index*	0.68	0.80	0.81	0.44	0.45	0.52	0.85	0.33
*Diversity index = Total number of different listings/Total number of students								

TABLE 3. Last Book Read for Pleasure

Title	Number and Percent of Times Listed by Students in School/College							
	MS (n = 93)	WY (n = 30)	TX (n = 53)	Xavier (n = 43)	MA (n = 191)	SLL (n = 151)	USC (n = 85)	Total (n = 646)
<i>The Client</i>	20.4%	3.3%	9.4%	7.0%	3.1%	4.0%	8.2%	47(7.3%)
<i>The Firm</i>	11.8%	3.3%	5.7%	11.6%	5.2%	3.3%	3.5%	38(5.9%)
<i>The Pelican Brief</i>	3.2%	3.3%	3.8%	11.6%	0.5%	3.3%	3.5%	20(3.1%)
<i>The Chamber</i>	8.6%	3.3%	0.0%	2.3%	1.6%	1.3%	3.5%	18(2.8%)
<i>Jurassic Park</i>	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.7%	2.4%	9(1.4%)
<i>The Stand</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	4.0%	0.0%	7(1.1%)
<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	2.3%	0.0%	0.7%	4.7%	7(1.1%)
<i>Nightmares and Dreamscapes</i>	3.2%	3.3%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	6(0.9%)
<i>Rising Sun</i>	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	2.4%	6(0.9%)
<i>Without Remorse</i>	0.0%	3.3%	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.2%	6(0.9%)
<i>Waiting to Exhale</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6(0.9%)
<i>Be True to Your School</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	6(0.9%)
Do not remember/Do not have time/ Do not read for pleasure/ Do not know/Missing data	0(0.0%)	1(3.3%)	6(11.3%)	4(9.3%)	29(15.2%)	14(9.3%)	8(9.4%)	62(9.6%)
Percentage of students listing one of Top 10	50.5%	20.0%	28.3%	51.2%	13.1%	23.8%	29.4%	27.2%
Total number of different listings	49	29	34	22	130	99	58	321
Diversity index*	0.53	0.97	0.64	0.51	0.68	0.66	0.68	0.50
*Diversity index = Total number of different listings/Total number of students								

Indeed, this was the case, but his work was also selected by 15 percent of students from the other seven schools.

Grisham's book, *The Firm*, ranked first in the Best Book Ever Read category as well, as the data in Table 4 indicate. Even without the Mississippi data, the book tied *Gone With the Wind* for top rank. Few books received widespread support and as a consequence the diversity index is nearly as high as that for contemporary music. Only three books, *Gone With the Wind*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*, are common to the top-ten lists in both surveys. A list of all books receiving as many as two votes is included in Appendix A and shows an interesting diversity of tastes and opinions.

A further note on the Grisham books can be made based on the material in Table 5. Here we show that University of Mississippi students were far more likely to select a Grisham work as "best" or "most recent" than were their peers at other schools ($p < 0.00005$).

In order to add a bit of context to the materials presented here, we have added in Table 6, two more "top ten" lists, this time representing books most frequently taught or most frequently recommended to be taught in grades 7-12. Only four of these books were selected "best" by as many as five pharmacy students.

Finally, as was previously done we also offer, in Appendix B, the authors' selections in each of the categories.

CONCLUSION

Other studies of musical and literature preferences of grade school, high school, and college students have been published. We have presented some of the results of a survey of pharmacy student tastes and opinions in literature and classical music. As we described in the introduction, we justify this exercise by pointing out that knowledge of student tastes in music and literature could allow the teacher to enrich the class with meaningful and familiar allusions. Additionally, this knowledge may allow instructors to get to know their students better. The reader may wish to consider conducting his/her own survey with this goal in mind. Certainly, opportunities will be presented for some interesting discussions. What,

TABLE 5. John Grisham as the Author of Last Book Read and Best Book Ever Read by School

	Univ. of Mississippi Students (n = 93)	All Other Students (n = 553)
Last book read for pleasure was written by John Grisham ¹	44.1%	15.8%*
Best book ever read was written by John Grisham ¹	32.3%	5.2%*
$p < 0.00005$		
¹ A Time to Kill, The Firm, The Pelican Brief, The Client, and The Chamber		

TABLE 6. Books Most Frequently Taught or Most Frequently Recommended to Be Taught, Grades 7-12

	Most Frequently Taught ¹	Most Frequently Recommended ²
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	1	8
<i>Macbeth</i>	2	5
<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	3	3
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	4	1 (t)
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	5	-
<i>The Pearl</i>	6	-
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	7	6 (t)
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	8	6 (t)
<i>Hamlet</i>	9	-
<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	10	9 (t)
<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	-	4
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	-	1 (t)
<i>A Separate Peace</i>	-	9 (t)
¹ See reference 2		
² See reference 3		

for example, is the nature of the story in *Man and Mice*?* And what changes were made to result in the 50-year musical sequel, "The 1862 Overture"?* Comments and suggestions for future study in this area are solicited by the authors.

*These were actual responses given by students.

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APPENDIX A

Name and Number of Mentions for All Books Receiving
at Least Two Mentions for Best Book Ever Read

Title	Number of Mentions	Title	Number of Mentions
<i>The Firm</i>	34	<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	3
<i>Gone with the Wind</i>	21	<i>Les Misérables</i>	3
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	20	<i>Watership Down</i>	3
<i>The Stand</i>	14	<i>Interview with the Vampire</i>	3
<i>Jurassic Park</i>	13	<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i>	3
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	12	<i>The Color Purple</i>	3
<i>The Client</i>	10	<i>Flowers in the Attic</i>	3
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	9	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	3
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	7	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	3
<i>Waiting to Exhale</i>	7	<i>The Giving Tree</i>	3
<i>The Pelican Brief</i>	6	<i>Brave New World</i>	3
<i>A Time to Kill</i>	6	<i>Paradise Lost, Paradise Gained</i>	2
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	6	<i>Old Yeller</i>	2
<i>A Separate Peace</i>	6	<i>Mixed Blessings</i>	2
<i>1984</i>	5	<i>East of Eden</i>	2
<i>Little Women</i>	5	<i>Oliver Twist</i>	2
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	5	<i>Doctors</i>	2
<i>It</i>	5	<i>The Prince of Tides</i>	2
<i>The Hobbit</i>	5	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	2
<i>Lord of the Rings</i>	5	<i>Christy</i>	2
<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>	5	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>	2
<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>	5	<i>Catch-22</i>	2
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	5	<i>Needful Things</i>	2
<i>Bridges of Madison County</i>	4	<i>Patnot Games</i>	2
<i>Great Expectations</i>	4	<i>The Way Things Ought To Be</i>	2
<i>The Thorn Birds</i>	4	<i>Trinity</i>	2
<i>The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</i>	4	<i>Moby Dick</i>	2
<i>The Cat in the Hat</i>	4	<i>Roots</i>	2
<i>Everything I Need to know I Learned in Kindergarden</i>	4	<i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	2
<i>The Good Earth</i>	4	<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	2
		<i>The Fountainhead</i>	2

APPENDIX A (continued)

Title	Number of Mentions	Title	Number of Mentions
<i>Kitchen God's Wife</i>	4	<i>Misery</i>	2
<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	4	<i>Sons and Lovers</i>	2
<i>Green Eggs and Ham</i>	4	<i>The Pillars of the Earth</i>	2
<i>The Outsiders</i>	4	<i>The Old Man and the Sea</i>	2
<i>The Witching Hour</i>	3	<i>Fried Green Tomatoes</i>	2
<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	3	<i>Atlas Shrugged</i>	2
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	3	<i>If I Should Die Before I Wake</i>	2
<i>The Hunt for Red October</i>	3	<i>Handmaids Tale</i>	2
215 other books were named, receiving 1 mention each.			

APPENDIX B

The Authors' responses to these questions, in no particular order, were:

Favorite Classical Music Piece

Tchaikovsky's (only) *Violin Concerto*
 Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker Suite*
 Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*
 Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*
 Prokofiev's *Lt. Kije Suite*
 Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*
 Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances*
 Mussorgsky's *Great Gate of Kiev*

Favorite Contemporary Musical Performer or Group

Manhattan Transfer
 David Allen Coe
 Michael Franks
 Pearl Jam
 Crosby, Stills & Nash
 Billy Joel
 Yanni
 Mariah Carey

Last Book Read for Pleasure

The Last Chronicle of Barset-Anthony Trollope
The Client-John Grisham
Men Are from Mars; Women Are from Venus-John Gray
True North-Jill Kerr Conway
Particles and Luck-Louis Jones
And the Band Played On-Randy Shilts
The Alienist-Caleb Carr
Maybe (Maybe Not)-Robert Fulgham

APPENDIX B (continued)

Best Book Ever Read

The Goldbug Variations-Richard Powers*
Megatrends-John Naisbit
How to Stop Worrying and Start Living-Dale Carnegie
Henderson the Rain King-Saul Bellow
The Little Prince-Antoine de St. Exupery
Old Man and the Sea-Ernest Hemingway
To Kill A Mockingbird-Harper Lee
The Invisible Man-Ralph Ellison

*Bach and Poe fans will appreciate the title.

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