

Attitudes Toward Types of Industrial Music

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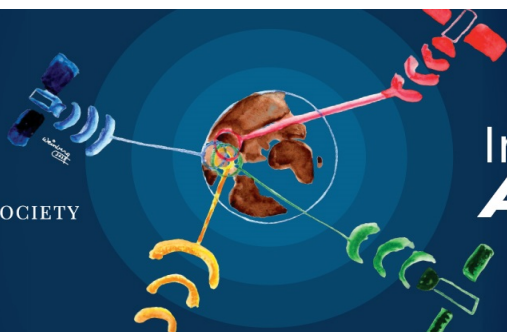
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Attitudes Toward Types of Industrial Music*

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(Received June 1, 1943)

IN the early days of plant broadcasting, musical programs for factory workers were largely unplanned and the average employee had little influence upon the selections. The investment by well-meaning employers in electronic know-how and products was not paralleled by an investment in psychological know-how in adjusting the use of a broadcasting system to the human factor—the individual worker.

As a result of these inefficiencies in use of plant systems, some of the potential value of the broadcasts was lost. RCA Victor has recognized the need for psychological measurements and, utilizing professional assistance, is in the process of setting up an industrial music research program. A preliminary task for such research has been that of developing appropriate instruments and measuring the music preferences of industrial workers.

This paper attempts to present, as briefly as possible, some examples of attitude measurements of four different music audiences. Whether these four groups are representative of the occupational populations from which they are drawn is unknown, but the measurements obtained are reported for their possible indicative value.

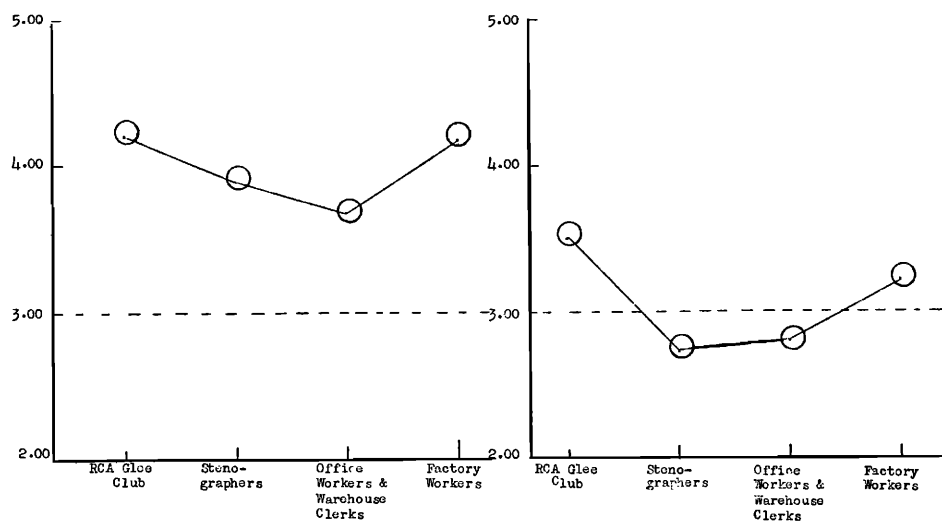
Already we have additional data from several different factories, but time did not allow their analysis and inclusion in this paper. The data here reported do furnish some validation evidence for the "Attitudes Toward Music" scale, a psychological instrument which we have developed, and do provide substantial evidence that various business and industrial groups differ significantly among themselves in the types of music preferred.

The four groups portrayed in the first fourteen figures—the 19 RCA Glee Club singers at Indianapolis; 30 Camden, New Jersey, stenographers; 104 Chicago office workers and warehouse clerks; and 40 Newark, New Jersey, workers in a lamp factory, work in offices or plants now supplied with industrial music and the relative preferences expressed are for "music-while-you-work."

Figure 1 shows that all groups like patriotic songs but that the stenographers and office workers are somewhat less favorable than the Glee Club and the factory workers. As shown by position with relation to the horizontal broken indifference line, the two white collar groups in Fig. 2 actually dislike fast dance music. Perhaps

FIG. 1. (left)
Average attitudes
of four industrial
groups toward pa-
triotic songs.

FIG. 2. (right)
Average attitudes
of four industrial
groups toward fast
dance music.



* Presented before the Acoustical Society of America, Hotel Pennsylvania, New York, May 14, 1943.

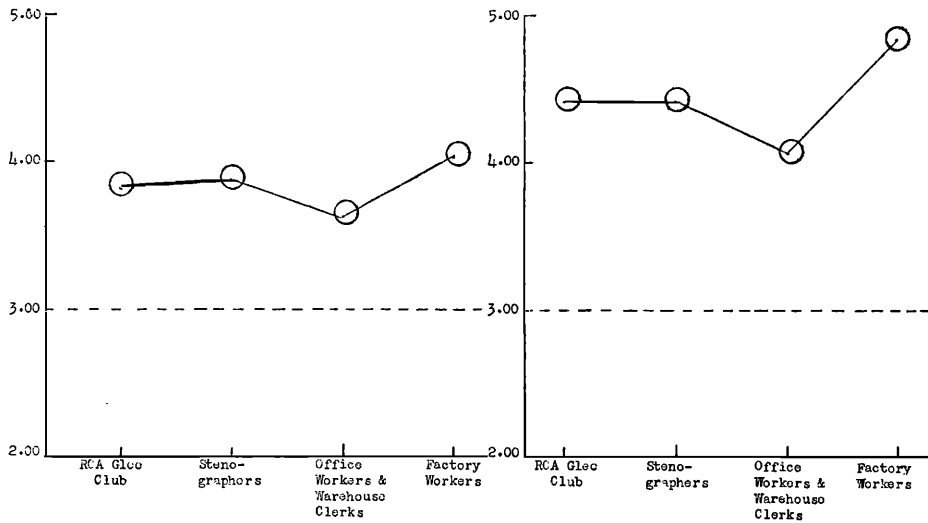


FIG. 3. (left) Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward Hawaiian music.

FIG. 4. (right) Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward popular "Hit Parade" music.

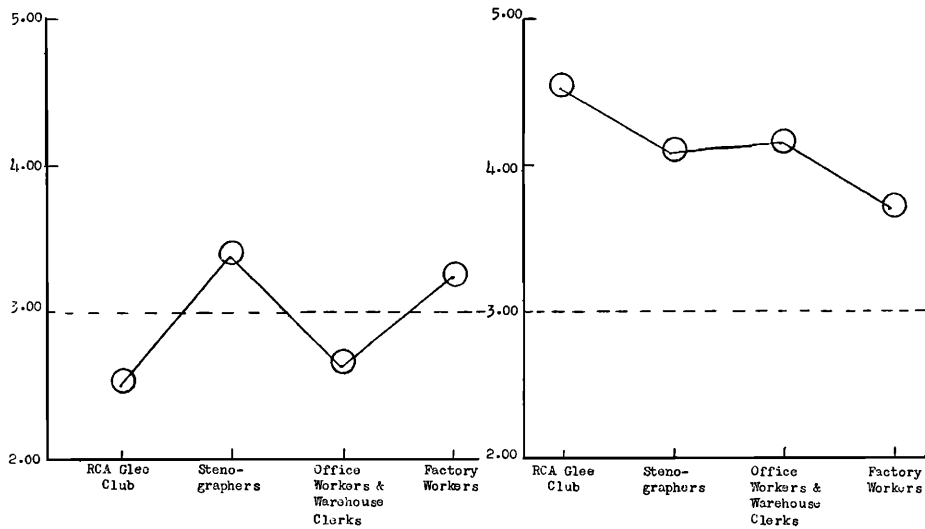


FIG. 5. (left) Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward humorous and novelty music.

FIG. 6. (right) Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward semi-classical and standard music.

this is due to a general tendency for office people to be annoyed by stimuli which may furnish auditory distraction rather than a pleasant psychological atmosphere.

All four groups have a moderate liking for Hawaiian music with the factory group most favorable of all toward this predominantly "sweet string" type (see Fig. 3). Hit parade music (Fig. 4) is the favorite single type with the stenographers and the factory workers, although it is less popular than waltz and semi-classical types among the office-warehouse group. It should be noted, of course, that, relative to the indifference line, hit parade music stands extremely high with all four groups.

Figure 5 suggests a possible regional difference since both of the eastern groups, the stenographers and the factory workers, are more favorable toward humorous and novelty music than are the two mid-western groups. The same tendency is found for attitude toward hillbilly and western music. This evidence is not enough to conclude that a real regional difference exists when other factors are held constant, but it does support the need of our plan of systematic evaluation of regional differences. All groups (Fig. 6) like semi-classical and standard music and there seems to be a tendency for appreciation of this type to be correlated with socio-economic status. The Glee Club and the Chicago office-

FIG. 7. (left)
Average attitudes
of four industrial
groups toward
waltzes.

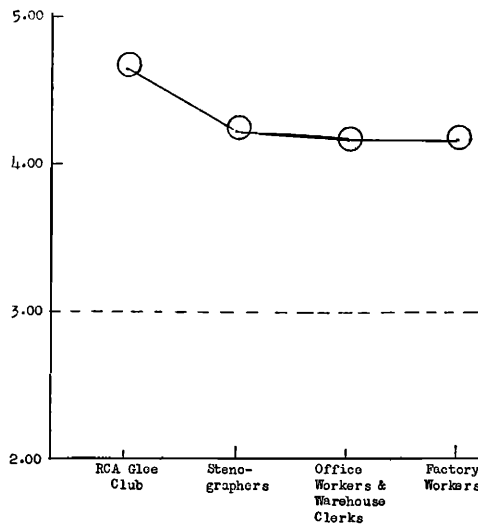


FIG. 8. (right)
Average attitudes
of four industrial
groups toward
polkas and square
dances.

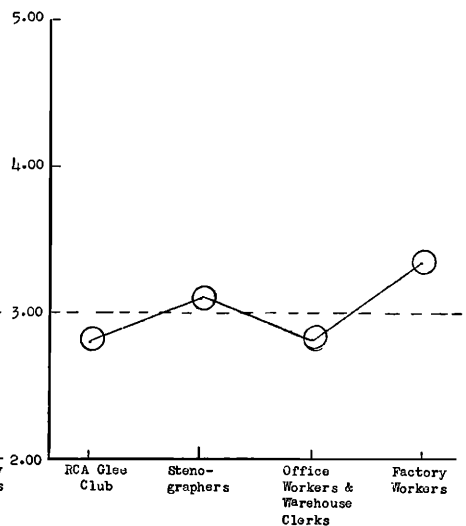


FIG. 9. (left)
Average attitudes
of four industrial
groups toward
Negro spirituals
and blues.

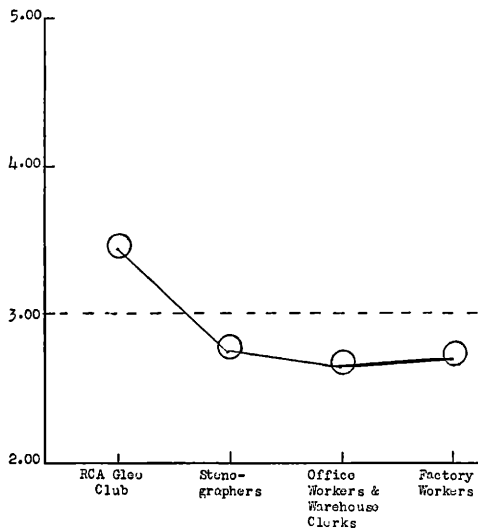
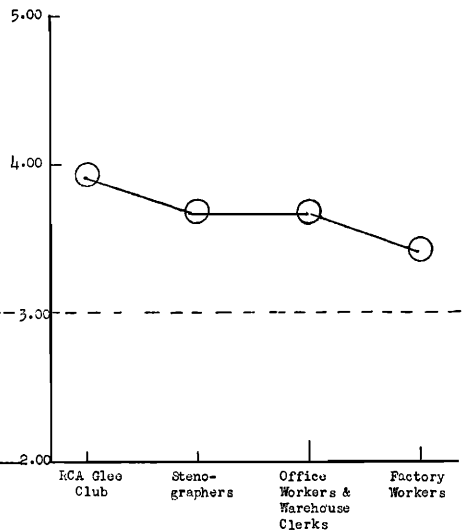


FIG. 10. (right)
Average attitudes
of four industrial
groups toward
marches.



warehouse group rate this type above hit parade music.

Waltzes (Fig. 7) are practically as popular as hit parade music and, in fact, are rated higher than hit parade music by the Glee Club and the office-warehouse group. These four groups respond rather indifferently to polkas and square dances (Fig. 8), although the factory worker group is more favorable than other groups toward this general type. Breakdown of this attitude reveals that all groups are slightly more favorable toward polkas than toward square dances.

Only the Glee Club, as a group, is favorable toward Negro spirituals and blues (Fig. 9). Figure 10 indicates that all groups are moder-

ately favorable toward marches and the trend of mean ratings suggests that liking for marches may be related with socio-economic status.

No group, although the factory group is almost indifferent, is unfavorable toward classical music (Fig. 11). The Glee Club rates classical above both semi-classical and hit parade types, while the stenographers and the office-warehouse group like classical better than nine other types during the work period. Figure 12 reveals extreme disagreement in preference among the four groups for hillbilly and western type music. The factory group is significantly favorable toward this sentimental folk-type music, the office workers and warehouse clerks are rather un-

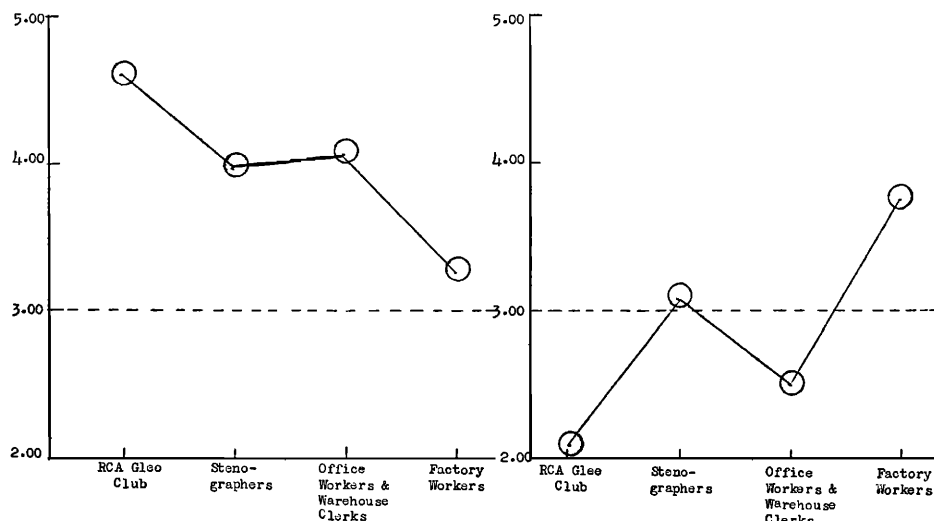


FIG. 11. (left) Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward classical music.

FIG. 12. (right) Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward hill-billy and western music.

favorable, the stenographers are indifferent, and the Glee Club is definitely unfavorable.

The Glee Club and the factory group like sacred music during working hours, the stenographers are almost indifferent, and the office-warehouse group is indifferent (Fig. 13).

Reviewing a summary (Table I) of the responses of four groups toward thirteen types of music reveals data which support the validity of the instrument used. One would expect an adult Glee Club to be composed of individuals with critical and rather well-crystallized attitudes toward various types of music. The fact that the range of type preferences is greater for the Glee Club than for any other group supports this expectation. It is significant to note that no two of these groups fall into the same pattern. In one Pennsylvania factory, Hawaiian music has the second highest mean rating and in a Texas factory just surveyed, patriotic songs score above all other types.

The figures which follow will report the mean attitudes of six groups toward six types of folk or near-folk music.

Western music (Fig. 14) is regarded with mild favor or indifference by all groups except in the Texas gage and machine shop, which tends to be slightly unfavorable. Here again is evidence that common-sense judgment on program planning must yield to an attempt at scientific audience management. It seems practically impossible for any one person, no matter how

learned that person is in music, to guess the music preferences of any sizable group of industrial workers. This point is further supported by the fact that the New Jersey lamp workers are more highly favorable toward hillbilly music (Fig. 15) than any other group.

Most of these groups are rather indifferent toward negro spirituals (Fig. 16) with the Glee Club showing greatest appreciation for this type. Blues music as shown by Fig. 17 is regarded with moderate favor by the Glee Club and by all three factory groups, while the two more characteristic white collar groups are relatively indifferent toward the Basin Street classics.

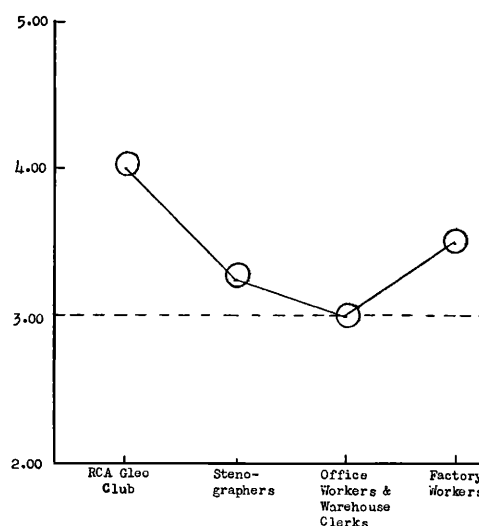


FIG. 13. Average attitudes of four industrial groups toward sacred and religious music.

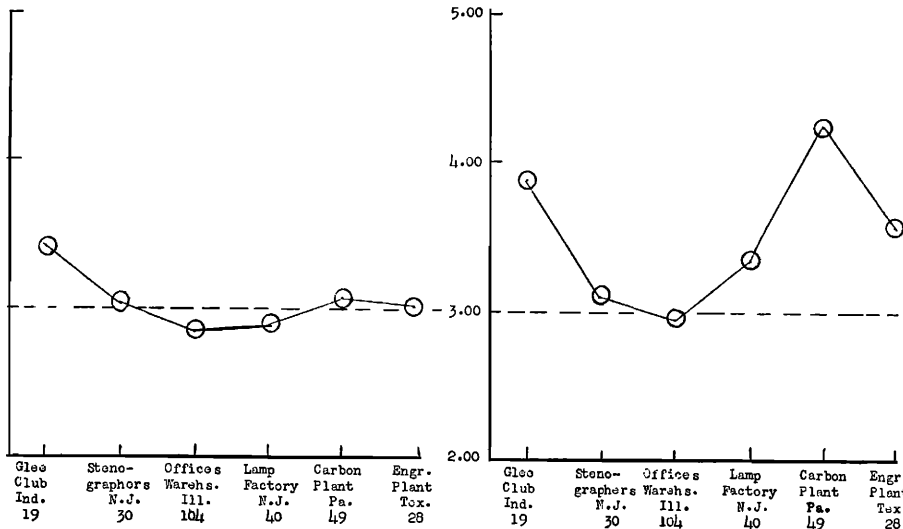


FIG. 16. (left) Average attitudes of six industrial groups toward spirituals.

FIG. 17. (right) Average attitudes of six industrial groups toward blues music.

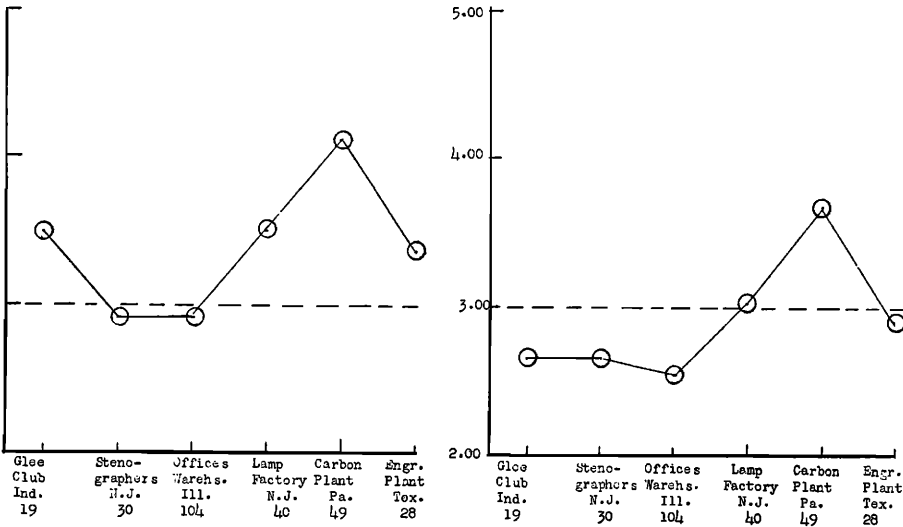


FIG. 18. (left) Average attitudes of six industrial groups toward polkas.

FIG. 19. (right) Average attitudes of six industrial groups toward square dance music.

Thorough description of the instrument used in this study will appear as a validation article at a later date in an appropriate scientific journal. Some conclusions from these preliminary findings may be stated thus.

1. Attitudes toward specific types of industrial music differ considerably for various business and industrial audiences.

2. A given type of music may be liked by one audience but actually be disliked by another audience.

3. Consideration of employee attitudes must be regarded as a definite variable in the development of scientifically planned programs for industrial music audiences.