

Erin Emery
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Silver Burdett Ginn, Inc.
The Music Connection

Kindergarten

I feel that while there was a good variety of song material, this series focused much more on folk songs and ethnic music and lacked art songs and pop music. The appropriateness of songs for grade level was only fair. The language seemed fine, but the range, intervals, and rhythms seemed to be too challenging for kindergarten students. I think the quality of the music was good, but since it wasn't appropriate for these students I marked down on this criteria.

The area I was most impressed by were the teacher suggestions because they gave incredibly clear, step-by-step instructions for each lesson. I was on the fence about how to evaluate the accompaniments. I decided they were fair because while there were chord progressions for most songs, it wasn't always clear on how to translate this for classroom instruments. In relation to this, I gave the provision for playing instruments a "good" evaluation because there is a lot of consideration of rhythmic instruments like rhythm sticks and other percussive utilities, but not melodic-focused.

This series provides a lot of opportunity for movement because each lesson offers multiple movement activities for the students. Each lesson also gave the opportunity to come up with their own nonsense poems, vocal improvisations, and movement freedoms. Each lesson gave examples for active and engaged listening activities. I gave the mention of other arts a "good" rating because while it was present, it wasn't in all of the lessons.

Overall, I think the Kindergarten series book falls between a "great" and "good" rating because my evaluation of each criteria previously mentioned has equally been between those categories. The organization of the book is clear to understand and is straightforward.

Grade 1

Just as with the kindergarten book, this gave many folk songs and ethnic music. It has a few more art songs, but still little to no pop songs. I think these songs were much more appropriate for first graders than those in the kindergarten book. The range, intervals, and rhythms are much more applicable to first graders. Considering that the appropriateness and variety of music were both good or great, I think the quality of music is also great.

I'm seeing a theme so far that the Silver Burdett Ginn, Inc series does a fantastic job introducing concepts and well as laying out each lesson in a precise way for teachers. The accompaniments were organized well, but I think they were way too simple for the music at hand. I think this book gave a lot of opportunities for playing instruments and incorporating Orff into each lesson. It also suggests different movement activities for every lesson.

When it comes to improvisation and creativity, I feel that this book does a decent job incorporating these aspects, but not as much as in the kindergarten book. There are listening

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activities for each lesson. There are cross-curriculum arts in most, if not all, of the lessons. Overall, I think this book is incredibly thorough and helpful.

Grade 2

This book has a wide variety of song materials. It is very inclusive of many styles that I think would be engaging for the students. The songs are age appropriate and fit well in the students' vocal range at this age. Some of the intervals are rather large leaps, but I think if these examples are used later in the year (as they are presented later in the book) the children would be more than capable of performing them well. I think the quality of the music in this book falls between "Great" and "Good." For the most part, I think it is really useful, but some of the lyrics are boring and don't connect to their lives. This is not the case for the majority of the songs, but I think it is definitely something to take into consideration.

Instruments are being incorporated more and more in comparison to the younger grades. These lessons suggest movement activities, but not to the same extent as the Kindergarten and first grade books. As with the other grades so far, this book provides precise step-by-step instruction for the teacher to guide the lesson. The accompaniments are simple, but very achievable for students in this grade.

This book seems to focus more on identifying concepts within the music rather than by improvising or creating, which is why I marked down in this category. Most lessons include listening examples and activities to help convey the concepts. This book connects mostly to language arts and literature, but not really the other arts. Again, I think this book is presented very well and would be incredibly useful while teaching.

Grade 3

This book incorporates an even more inclusive variety of song selections. There are classical pieces, rap tracks, as well as American and other cultural folk songs. The appropriateness of these examples is very fitting for third graders, and the quality is aesthetically appealing to children this age.

While I think the musical concepts are introduced in a logical sequence, they seem to be rushed through rather quickly. I think it would take more than what is given in order to instill each concept. The teacher suggestions are still clear, though, so I think this allows the individual to tailor this to their own classroom's needs.

The accompaniments are simple and attainable, especially when in coordination of the instrumental playing that the children are expected to do. Each instrumental part seems to be getting more complex and more integrated into each lesson. These lessons are not incorporating as much movement, but I think it's because there is more playing of instruments. They're improvising more, and I think this is because they are more familiar with the concepts from previous grade levels.

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Unfortunately, there are fewer listening activities in the grade three book, but I think it might be because they are more involved with playing. I suppose listening is inadvertently incorporated into every lesson, but there are not as many specifically listed as listening activities. On the up side, this book includes even more cross curricular connections -- this time they added science to the mix. Again, I think the overall presentation is fantastic and very easy to navigate.

Grade 4

I had to rate the variety of material in this book between “Good” and “Fair” because it did not live up to the standards that the rest of the series has done so far. It seems to be much more Americanized with only a couple ethnic songs and very little variation other than that. I also think that these songs haven’t advanced much since the grade three book. They seem to be the same difficulty while the students should have progressed. However, the quality of the music is still rather good.

In this book the concepts are introduced in a very appropriate manner -- not too fast, not too slow, and in a logical order. The teacher suggestions aren’t as detailed in this book, but I feel that this might have been done on purpose. Maybe the publisher wanted to give the instructor a bit more freedom while teaching.

The accompaniments are okay. They make sense and work well with the songs, and I think the students are more than capable of playing them, but I think that’s the problem. I think the students need to be a bit more challenged at this age. Just like in the third grade book, the children are expected to play more as they are more familiar with the instruments as well as the musical concepts.

They aren’t expected to move as much anymore, which I found to be disappointing. However, nearly all of the movement activities incorporated improvisation. The thorough amount of listening that was at the beginning of the series has returned, and most lessons have listening activities. There are even more arts incorporated now, too. They discuss social studies, science, math, language, and many other cross curricular connections.

While I think the presentation of this book is good, I don’t think the content meets the expectations that I have built from analyzing the Kindergarten through Grade Three books from Silver Burdett Ginn, Inc. thus far. I was hoping for a bit more and did not receive what I was wishing.

Grade 5

I feel that there is a wide variety of song material. While there is a heavy focus on folk music, there is also a lot of inclusion of art and cultural songs. I think the material is appropriate for fifth graders, as it is challenging but definitely still attainable. The larger intervals might be difficult at first, but I think the students would catch on rather quickly. This is the first book that I

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feel that the music is really high quality. It feels and sounds like real music rather than something used to simply teach a concept.

The concepts seem to be introduced in a very logical manner, each one building off of the last. It doesn't seem to progress too quickly or too slowly, so I think the lessons would keep students engaged. Just like the grade four book, I feel as though the teacher suggestions are lacking in comparison to K-3 because they aren't as in depth. Again, I think this is to give the instructor a bit more freedom while teaching and because they are more comfortable with the layout and expectations of the series in general.

The accompaniments in this book fit very well with the age of the students, and I think they will offer just enough challenge while still focusing on the main goal of the melody. They are playing more instruments -- recorder is introduced. However, they are moving even less in this grade. I wish Silver Burdett Ginn, Inc. had incorporated equal amounts of movement throughout the different age groups in order to enforce each concept in a similar manner (habitual learning is good for children).

Students are expected to create and improvise -- both on their own and with others -- quite a bit more in this grade. The listening activities are becoming more advanced and analytical in comparison to the younger grades. The same cross curricular arts are mentioned in this book as they are in grade four, but a bit more in depth. Overall, I think this might be my favorite book of the Silver Burdett Ginn, Inc. series so far.

Grade 6

The variety of music in the grade is by far the best in the series, in my opinion. There are folk songs from various cultures, foreign language pieces with translated English lyrics, orchestral pieces, and so much more. This curriculum seems to be much more fulfilling than the other grades. It all seems very appropriate for a sixth grader to be learning these examples. I think the quality of the music is very high, considering they are "real" pieces of music rather than ones simply composed to teach a concept.

The concepts are introduced appropriately. There is quite a bit of review, but I think that makes for a more comprehensive plan as the students advance later into the year. The teacher suggestions seems even more precise than in the younger grades, which is interesting considering the previous two grades were a lot more ambiguous.

The accompaniments are becoming more full and complete to the rest of the piece. They make a lot more sense musically and help to better convey the concept. While there are a lot of lessons that include playing instruments, I marked this category down to "Good" rather than "Great" because there are multiple consecutive lessons without instruments. I'm worried that taking so much time off could impact the students' learning.

Once again, there is a decrease in movement and improvisation/creative activities. I think the latter is really unfortunate because the students are getting to the age where they have enough

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musical knowledge that they could excel in improvisation if given the opportunity. There is also a decrease in the amount of listening activities. They are consistently involved in the beginning of the book, but the last dozen or so lessons don't have any. This book includes the same arts as the previous two. Overall, I rated the presentation of the book in between "Great" and "Good" because while some aspects of the book were fantastic, I felt others were lacking and needed quite a bit of improvement.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishers
Music Music Music Music Music

Kindergarten

The variety of music in this book is pitiful. It is almost entirely made up of American “folk” and children’s songs, with a few token ethnic songs thrown in there to show their slight attempt at inclusivity. I don’t think the music was appropriate for kindergarten students in the slightest; the very first lesson involves three part harmonies which would be way too confusing for children at this age. The quality of the music itself is fine, but I marked it down in this category because it was not well-planned out for this age group.

The musical concepts within the book are repeated multiple times, which is a good idea because it helps to instill the students’ understandings. However, the order doesn’t really make sense and they seem to be put in a sequence haphazardly. The teacher suggestions are alright, but I wish they were a bit more clear.

I really did not like the provided accompaniments for the music in this book. The chords seem way too advanced for five-year-olds and even lean towards the style of jazz (nothing wrong there, just not appropriate for teaching simple concepts to very young children). There is plenty of opportunity for students to play instruments, but I feel it will be difficult for them to follow along with such an accompaniment.

There is quite a bit of movement incorporated in each lesson, which helps to promote creativity and improvisation. This is where the Holt book seems to thrive. There is provision for improvisation and student creation in the majority of the lessons. In addition, the teacher resource binder has an entire section of cross curricular connections with other arts. Overall, I think this book has the potential to be really useful, but it was not executed well at all.

Grade One

Again, the variety of song material for grade one is not good. Almost all of the musical examples are American traditional. They seem to be a bit more age appropriate, however, as there are less complicated harmonies (I’m not sure why you would be teaching students to sing in harmony at this age to begin with) and the intervals and rhythms are much more attainable. I think the quality of music is good, but I wish there was more variety when it came to selections.

The musical concepts in the book make a lot more sense than in the kindergarten book. Each concept seems to be grouped together in a way that makes logical sense, and they appear in a generative sequence. The teacher suggestions were much more clear in this book.

The accompaniments are simpler and more appropriate for six year olds than those found in the kindergarten book. They are easier chords and fit better with the melody. There are Orff activities for most of the lessons, which allows for a lot of instrumental playing. There are movement activities for some lessons, but not all. However, there is a lot of opportunity for

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creating and improvising, just as in the kindergarten book. There aren't as many listening activities as I would like, but there is a vast improvement in comparison to the previous text. Overall, I think this book is useful but I still had higher hopes for its content.

Grade 2

There is a bit more diversity in song material now. Several of the songs are also offered in another language, adding cultural variety. I'd still like to see a bit more inclusion, though. Nevertheless, I think these songs are very high quality, especially for the age level. The intervals are not too difficult and the lyrical content relates to things in their lives.

The concepts are introduced in a very logical order and are broken down into precise descriptions. (This area seems to improve as we go through this book series). The teacher suggestions are well drawn out and give clear instructions on what to do.

The Orff arrangements for this series seems very appropriate for second grade students. They aren't too difficult, but they're challenging enough to keep the children engaged in the lesson. Almost every lesson includes playing instruments, moving, and creating. I wish there was a bit more provision for listening; it seems like a lot more "doing" right away rather than listening first. Just as in the other books of this series, there is an entire section for cross curricular connections, so there is plenty mentioned of other arts. Overall, I think this is the best Holt book so far.

Grade 3

This book by far has the most variety of song material in the Holt series thus far. There are classical songs, folk songs, music from other cultures, and even solo instrumental music for listening activities. I think the song are very appropriate for third graders, both in difficulty level and quality.

The concepts might make some sense logically, but they don't seem to fit together as sequentially as the other books did. It kind of jumps around from one area to another without direct connections between the lessons. This book also isn't as clear with its teacher suggestions, which could be viewed in a positive (more freedom) or a negative light.

I think it's interesting to start incorporating recorders in the third grade. That seems a bit young to me, which is why I marked down a bit on both "Accompaniments" and "Provision for playing instruments." I think it would be wise to wait until the fourth or fifth grade to introduce wind instruments. There isn't nearly as much incorporation of movement, but there are several more listening activities. Again, there is a section of cross curricular connections, which is great. Overall, this book is alright, but I think the second grade book was better.

Grade 4

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Like the third grade book, this has much more musical diversity than the lower elementary books in this series. While I think the songs are very high quality, I think they might be a bit too simple for students at this age. I think they should have more of a challenge in order to keep them engaged throughout the entire lesson.

The concepts in this book are introduced in a much more logical sense than in the previous one. It keeps each element of music grouped together and in order of each lesson. However, I think the teacher suggestions are too sparse and could be misleading while trying to teach the lessons.

The accompaniments in this book are great and seem to make the music more fun. The students are playing more but moving less (just as in third grade). However, they are listening and improvising in nearly every lesson. The cross curricular connection section is great, as usual. Again, I think this book is pretty good but I don't think it lived up to my expectations.

Grade 5

This book has slightly less variety of song material in comparison to the third and fourth grade books. While there are plenty of American folk songs and Western art songs, there is a decrease in the amount of ethnic music in this book. However, I think the difficulty of the songs are appropriate for the age group. They are also of decent quality.

Just as with the fourth grade book, the musical concepts are introduced in a very logical and sequential manner, keeping each element of music grouped together in the order of the lessons. The teacher suggestions continue to become less clear; I think the publishers might be assuming that the teacher is used to their process by now and might not need the guidance, but I also don't think that's a fair assumption to make.

The accompaniments in this book are good, but I feel like they are lack-luster and not as engaging as in the previous books. The students are playing instruments more frequently and at more advanced levels, but again are moving even less. They are still creating, but not in as many lessons as before. They aren't listening as much as in fourth grade, but the mention of other arts remains high. This book was just okay.

Grade 6

Like in the fifth grade book, this one is lacking the amount of variety that was offered in the middle elementary books. The songs are getting progressively more difficult, though, which I think is entirely appropriate for this age group. They are being challenged, which in turn keeps them engaged. Overall, I think the quality of music is close to great, but would be even better if there had been more cultural diversity.

The musical concepts are kept in order as before, which helps to introduce them in a logical and sequential manner. The teacher suggestions are very sparse, with almost no

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instruction at all. I wish the publishers had kept the thorough descriptions given in the first and second grade books.

The accompaniments are using more complex chords, which I think is good for the age group. These accompaniments fit well with the provision for playing instruments, too. They are hardly moving at all, though, which I don't find appropriate. They are, however, improvising and listening a lot more in this book. The other arts continue to be mentioned in depth. Overall, I think this is a great book but it has potential to be even better.

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**Macmillan/McGraw-Hill
Spotlight on Music**

Kindergarten

This book has a good amount of variety of song material. It falls short when it comes to ethnic songs, much it seems logical as at this age they are still developing their own language, let alone another. I think the quality of music is pretty good, but the songs seem too difficult for kindergarten students. The vocal range is too large and some of the rhythms seem too complex.

The musical concepts are introduced in a very logical manner that allows for generative learning. There is a lot of repetition for each concept, which allows for the students to better understand the content. The teacher suggestions are written out step by step, making it very clear what the expectations of the lesson are.

The accompaniments are simple and fit well with the melodies. They don't play instruments very often, but pat a lot. Movement is involved in nearly every, but creating is not. There are creative evaluations near the end of each unit to assess the students' understanding of the concept, and I think that is where most of the creativity is. There are plenty of listening activities, and an entire section for cross-curricular connections. Overall, I think this book is good but it has a lot of potential to be great with a few small changes.

Grade 1

This book has more variety than the last as it includes culturally diverse songs. The music is appropriate for first grade students, and therefore I think the quality is high. The way the music is presented, however, is a completely different story.

While the concepts within the music are introduced in a logical order, this book switches students over to symbolic reading in first grade. That is way too early, in my opinion. If they had kept them reading icons I would have given this criteria a much higher rating. Again, the teacher suggestions are very clear and seem to be helpful for lesson planning. I like that it gives assessment plans as well.

The accompaniments for each song remain relatively simple to follow. The students aren't playing instruments as often as I'd like, but they are playing more than they were in kindergarten. They are still moving in almost every lesson, and they are now improvising and creating a lot more, too. They have listening activities to go along with these plans, and the other core standards are connected to in nearly every lesson. Overall, I think this book is pretty great.

Grade 2

This book has a wide variety of music. There are plenty of American and cultural folk songs, several art songs, and a few pop songs (from musicals). They all seem simple enough that

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the students would be able to successfully perform them, but still challenging enough to keep them engaged. Therefore, I think this book has a great quality of musical selections.

I think the musical concepts are introduced in an alright order, which is why I rated this criteria between “Great” and “Good.” I wish they had kept some of the musical elements a bit closer together throughout the school year, but I think the amount of repetition throughout makes up for that. The teacher's suggestions are very precisely laid out. Again, I really appreciate that this series gives suggestions for assessment and creativity activities.

The accompaniments are alright, but I think they are either too simple or too difficult without an appropriate in-between. They are playing instruments a lot more, but are moving a bit less. I appreciate that they are creating in most lessons, but they aren't listening as often as they used to. There is mention of other arts in nearly every lesson. Overall, I think this book falls right between “Good” and “Great.”

Grade 3

The variety of song material, appropriateness of songs for grade level, and quality of music are all similar to that of the second grade book. I rated them all equally for the same reasons as explained above.

The concepts are introduced in a logical and sequential order, and everything is reviewed and has plenty of repetition to instill an understanding of the content in the students. Again, the suggestions for teachers are great. They are very in depth and easy to follow.

The accompaniments remain simple, but now I think they are engaging enough to keep students occupied with the material. They are playing instruments more often, but I marked down in this criteria because I think third grade is too young of an age to begin playing recorder. They aren't moving as often (more like every other lesson rather than each and every one), but they make up for it with improvisation, listening, and connections to the other arts. Overall, I think this book is a great tool for teachers.

Grade 4

This book doesn't have as many art or classical songs as the previous books, so I marked down a bit in this criteria. The songs seem appropriate for the most part, but some of them look rather difficult, having up to three-part harmonies at times. Therefore, I rated the quality of the music “Good” rather than “Great.”

The musical concepts are introduced sequentially in a manner that promotes generative learning. The teacher suggestions are still thorough, but are slightly more confusing than in the previous books.

The accompaniments, like the melodies themselves, seem to be a bit difficult for this age group. The rhythms are tricky, and the harmonies are dense. They are playing instruments in almost every lesson. They move sometimes, but not as often as they should. They create a lot,

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but again, listen less (there seems to be a trend here). They mention the other arts and core classes in every lesson. Overall, I rated this book “Good” but I think it has potential to be “Great.”

Grade 5

Again, this book is lacking classical songs but has plenty of folk songs (both American and ethnic). The songs seem a bit difficult, especially when it comes to harmony and rhythms. The range seems rather large for a fifth grader, mostly in the upper register. Because of these reasons I rated the music as “Good” rather than “Great.”

The music concepts are introduced in a very logical order and are repeated throughout the year. I like this because repetition is really important in generative learning. The teacher suggestions in this book are thorough, but I found them to be rather confusing (as in the fourth grade book, as well).

The accompaniments, like the songs themselves, are rather difficult for fifth graders. Surprisingly, they’re playing less than in fourth grade, and unsurprisingly, they’re still not moving nearly as often as they should be. However, they are improvising quite often and have several listening activities in each unit. The other arts continue to be mentioned throughout the series. Overall, I rated this book as “Good.”

Grade 6

This book has the most wide variety of musical selections in the entire series. There are a lot of classical and ethnic songs, giving an equal balance to the American folk songs. The melodies seem to be appropriate for sixth grade students, and therefore I gave the quality a “Great” rating.

I gave this book a “Poor” rating when it comes to the concepts being introduced logically because it has students learning all of the different modes as well as many other extremely complex concepts that I didn’t learn until late high school and some even in early college. This was such a large jump from where the students were in fifth grade that I don’t think it is appropriate to introduce these ideas at this age. I also gave the teacher suggestions a “Fair” rating because they continue to become less clear in their instructions.

The accompaniments use chords that are very complex that I deem to be too difficult for sixth graders. However, they are playing instruments in almost every lesson, which gives them plenty of opportunity to improvise. They hardly ever have movement activities, which I think is a shame. Listening activities have returned, and they connect to other subjects. I gave this book a low “Good” rating.

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Comparing Lower Elementary (K-2)

I think the Silver Burdett Ginn, Inc. series had an equally great variety, appropriateness, and quality of music for their students, especially in comparison to the Holt series. I did not think the Holt series offered a substantial variety or high quality music for their lower elementary students.

For the most part, I think all three series introduced the musical concepts in a logical and sequential manner even though these orders were not even remotely the same as one another. I also think that they all had incredibly useful teacher suggestions, precise enough to the point that I think a substitute, non-music teacher could lead the lessons.

The accompaniments were all pretty decent, within the “Good” or “Fair” rating for the most part. There is some provision for playing instruments, but they get a lot more experience with this later in their education. They all include movement in most of their lessons, which is great to include at this age level. The Holt and Macmillian books have more opportunities for creating than the Silver, but this isn’t to say the Silver is bad by any means. They all include plenty of listening assignments, and connect to other arts.

Comparing Middle Elementary (3-4)

The Holt and Macmillan books offer a wider variety of song material than the Silver, but I think they are all equally appropriate for the age level. I rated all three series with “Great” quality of music except for the fourth grade book of Macmillan.

I think the Macmillan series introduces musical concepts in the most logical and sequential order, but the Silver and Holt books are not far behind. The teacher suggestions become less clear than in the lower elementary books. I think this might be because the publishers assume the teacher is now familiar with their methods and should already know how to apply and prepare the lessons based on the content given.

I rated the accompaniments equally. The Silver offers the most provision for playing instruments, but Holt and Macmillan offer quite a bit as well. At this point, all three series neglect the amount of movement they should be providing in their lessons. The Macmillan has the most provision for creativity and improvisation because of their “creative assessments” in each unit. The Holt offers the most amount of listening activities at this age, which I think is very important to continue to incorporate throughout the years. They all do a great job of cross-curricular connections.

Comparing Upper Elementary (5-6)

I thought that the Silver books offered more diverse variety of song material than the Holt and Macmillan did. The Silver and Holt were the more age appropriate than the Macmillan, but this one was not too far off. Overall, I thought they all had high quality music for the fifth and sixth grade lessons.

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I found that the Macmillan introduced some very complex concepts that did not fit within the rest of what students were learning, and therefore I gave it a very low rating in comparison to the other series, both of which I rated as “Great” in this criteria. It seems to be a trend that as students get older, the teacher suggestions get worse, as I mentioned in my middle elementary comparison.

The accompaniments in all of the upper elementary books teetered between “Great” and “Good” as they were age appropriate and fit well with the melodies. They all include a lot of instrumental playing, as one would expect as a child grows older and more familiar with musical concepts. All three series had a strong lack in movement activities, which I found to be very disappointing. They do, however, give more opportunity for improvisation and give ample listening activities.