Music Education in Malawi and Zimbabwe

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• A Tumbuka child in northern Malawi hears other Tumbuka children singing game songs they recently learned, and absorbs the rhythms and tonal structure of this repertoire in “informal” music learning;

• Chewa girls in central Malawi learn the music and dance traditions of their culture in “formal” lessons at chinamwali cha akazi initiation schools;

• Malawian primary school children study concepts related to the elements of music, skills of making music, and information regarding a number of music traditions in their country;

• Malawian choral directors and singers get together to share their knowledge of choral skills, music reading, and choral repertoire at the annual Choral Workshop in Zomba;

• Music Education students at Mutare Teachers’ College, Zimbabwe learn the number notation system developed by the late Dumisani Maraire to better qualify them to teach mbira in Zimbabwean schools;

• Ethnomusicology students at the Zimbabwe College of Music in Harare learn the theory of African Music and ways of transcribing and composing in a variety of Central and southern African musical traditions; and

• Students from many parts of Africa have class instruction at Africa University, Zimbabwe to assist them to gain greater appreciation for the rich variety of musical traditions of the people of their continent.

All the above are examples of Music Education activities experienced in the Malawi and Zimbabwe area of Central/southern Africa. Within the limits of this paper, and the focus of the current African Arts Education Conference, this study will direct attention to these and other “informal” and “formal” Music Education activities in the two countries studied. The paper will provide a special look at the position of Music in the schools of Malawi and Zimbabwe, the present Music curricula used in these schools, and the training of Malawian and Zimbabwean Music teachers. Suggestions of ways to possibly improve Music Education in these two countries will also be offered.

To start, the paper will make note of the great need to recognize the important role of “informal” music learning. It will examine how young children acquire musical concepts and skills without a designated teacher or course of study. This informal acquisition is a natural course in an individual’s musical development that should be looked upon as an educational beginning of great consequence; an important period of learning that takes place before “formal” training begins.

Later in the paper, “formal” Music Education activities in Malawi and Zimbabwe will be observed, and proposals will be made for ways of improving these endeavours. The basic premise that affirms participation in music activities as a very important and, indeed, necessary area in the holistic development of a person, will prevail throughout.
Informal Music Training in Early Childhood Musical Development

From birth, a child opens up to the music of his/her culture. Among a number of natural musical expressions, very young children often express binary patterns of sound, probably motivated by an early realization of their physical being. So too, children generally enjoy descending intervals and short-length phrases, undoubtedly related to their small lung capacity and limited breathing strength. Young children also quickly learn the sound and concept of the “octave” through repeatedly hearing their own small vocal sounds and relating them to the vocal sounds of the adults they hear frequently. These “natural” musical beginnings are quickly molded, without formal training, as children hear the musical traditions of the people of their culture. As with language acquisition, the very early years make up an extremely important period in the child’s acquisition of musical knowledge and skills, and, as with language training, there is an urgent need for Music educators to recognize this more fully, and to utilize this effectively in music training.¹

Music in Early Childhood Development, as a part of Systematic Musicology, has been a part of Music study at Chancellor College, University of Malawi since the Department started in 1982. Katundu, for one, conducted research in this area, observing movements of Malawian children under the age of 18 months, to study their ability to feel and move to music in a variety of musical metres. There is great need to continue such early childhood music research to determine the extent of influence early music exposure may have on musical growth in young children.

Music Education in Malawi

Formal, Traditional Music Training in Malawi

Chanunkha conducted significant research on music learning and acquisition among Yao children in southern Malawi. His study focussed on the formal music training at Yao initiation schools. In the introduction to his study, he lamented the fact that “Music learning and creating in Malawian cultures has not received sufficient attention as a topic of research. Music traditions have been studied in various parts of Malawi without explaining a) how children learn music, and b) how they acquire their own songs”. Such findings, he added, “may serve as important knowledge, and raw materials for teaching and learning music in local schools.” (p. v)

Much of Kubik’s work over many years of research (see 1974, 1978, 1987a, and 1987b, for example) also focused on African children and their attainment of musical knowledge in initiation schools. These studies

¹ Bronowski makes a very strong statement in relation to the learning of a language that we certainly should note in considering informal learning of music. He says that language learning, and speech in particular, is “localized in two connected areas of the human brain; one area is close to the hearing centre, and the other lies forward and higher, in the frontal lobes. If we do not have the speech centres in tact we cannot speak at all”. This connecting of the two centres of the brain has to be learned and exercised to promote language as well as music learning. Bronowski continues, “I speak English, which I only learned at the age of thirteen; but I could not speak English if I had not before learned language. You see, if you leave a child speaking no language until the age of thirteen, then it is almost impossible for it to learn at all. I speak English because I learned Polish at the age of two. I have forgotten every word of Polish, but I learned language. Here as in other gifts (music abilities, for example) the brain is wired to learn” (p.421), and the wiring connections must be strengthened to learn more fully.
provide useful information on how cultural traditions are learned in a “formal”, yet traditional, setting. In these studies, he repeatedly notes that at initiation schools, and other, especially ‘life-cycle’ events, the culture demands, clearly, that the children attending the occasion learn the significant musical traditions of the culture. He shows clearly that the demands of “cultural expectations” are very important, especially in early music learning.

Community Music Training in Malawi

Although there are a good number of formal, community-oriented, music training activities in Malawi, little is actively done, especially by governmental agencies, to organize music-making activities for the average Malawian citizen. While there are a variety of music clubs, associations, and church organizations that meet to rehearse under the tutelage of “experts”, these meetings are occasions encouraged by the need to perform well at cultural events, rather than the concerted efforts of governmental organizations encouraging community musical activity.

In many parts of Malawi, music and dance competitions are conducted to motivate performers to rehearse their skills more vigorously to win performance competitions. On Likoma Island in northern Lake Malawi, for example, mock bomas, mock political groups jokingly taking names such as “London boma” or “America boma”, are organized for New Year’s Day competitions of malipenga, a syncretic, local dance, performance groups. For these competitions, intense rehearsing is done for weeks before the event. Women’s associations in northern Malawi, performing chiwoda and visekese music/dance traditions, also meet regularly to rehearse their skills for competitive events.

In central Malawi, ngoma competitions have been described in the early literature related to the music of the Ngoni people who migrated into Malawi from what is now a southern portion of South Africa (see Read). These competitions are still held today. As in the past, the following description of ngoma competitions holds true:

Village headmen summoned the ngoma dance group leader and informed him of the invitation. The invited villagers, thereafter, got together to practice their songs and dances. Songs were learned by rote, the singers memorizing, line-by-line, that which was sung by the lead singer. Any singer who composed a song assumed the leader position, and the leader’s friends responded with the chorus parts. When the day arrives for the ngoma competition, the ‘owner of the village’…danced first to welcome the invited guests.” (Muyenza and Strumpf, p.24)

Community ensembles of performers on western musical instruments are limited, primarily, to Army and Police bands where members of the Malawi Army and Malawi Police, respectively, are employed full-time to rehearse and perform. Well-trained instructors teach the band musicians with great concern for the quality of the music being made, as performances of these ensembles are very carefully and critically evaluated at important State functions, major ceremonies and large celebrations.

Kubik suggests that at the chinamwali cha akazi, girls’ initiation schools, “Formal education for females begins at a dramatic moment in the experience of young girls, the first menstruation. This is the beginning of an educational process which we may call “formal” because a) there is a clear distinction between a teaching unit and the students, b) the meeting…is structured with a well-defined curriculum of lessons, and c) the educational process is institutionalized” (p. 49). In his studies of chinamwali cha akazi, Kubik focuses on music and dance at these initiation schools and points out that the initiated girl is always referred to as obvinidwa, coming from the word kubvina, ‘to dance’, clearly suggesting that dance, and similarly music, is “a most important vehicle in the educational process.” (1987b, p.50)

While there is a Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture in Malawi - this name changes frequently as Ministries are reorganized and Ministers change portfolios - there is seldom any consideration or promotion of community music activities from the “Culture” section of the Ministry.
Community orchestras are rare in Malawi. Blantyre, the major commercial centre in the country, however, frequently finds a talented musician willing to gather others, Malawians and ex-patriots alike, to form an orchestra to present Handel’s Messiah or other major works every Christmas season.

While individual church choirs of many Christian denominations exist in Malawi, in Blantyre and Lilongwe there are, in addition, inter-denominational “joint choirs”, large in membership, that share conducting and singing expertise to sing with great strength and conviction at special occasions. The “joint choirs” meet regularly and, by moving rehearsal and performance venues to participating churches, good quality performances are heard in many churches that otherwise would not have been able to have such a musically-rich religious experience.

Community choirs that are not church associated, such as those popular in Zimbabwe and South Africa, do not exist in Malawi. Likewise, choral competitions that exist so actively in Zimbabwe and South Africa are hardly a part of the choral music scene in Malawi. Perhaps a reason for this is that it is infinitely more difficult to obtain corporate economic support for music activities, including choral competitions, in Malawi than in wealthier countries. In Zimbabwe and South Africa, where large corporations such as Colgate-Palmolive and Old Mutual Insurance Company have their “Home Offices”, these companies are major contributors to choral music competitions, gaining them high visibility from their demonstration of good will. The benefits of choral competitions are so eminently clear that it is strongly suggested that Music educators in Malawi try, as much as possible, to solicit the needed support to hold such competitive events.

There has been some success in gaining economic support from UNICEF, USAID and a variety of non-governmental organizations to help improve music reading in Malawi. The primary reason for this has been to assist in the dissemination of a variety of health messages (especially ones related to AIDS prevention) and other developmental issues through written forms of music. As more Malawians become better able to read music, the organizations cited above believe that written music, containing the messages they wish to promote, can be offered to schools and churches with the hope that their choirs will perform them and, thus, spread messages efficiently, and in an affective manner. The premise accepted by these organizations is that, by teaching a good portion of the Malawian population to be literate in music, a new, effective avenue of communication becomes available.

One community music activity that has been very successful in Malawi since 1985 is the annual Choral Workshop that brings together over 300 singers and highly-qualified Malawian and international choral directors. UNICEF sponsors the Workshop, primarily, providing funds to help spread developmental messages through the songs composed and presented at the Workshop. These songs are given prominence on the final concert of the one-week workshop. Foreign embassies have also assisted the Choral Workshop by providing funds to help bring conductors from South Africa, Zimbabwe, U.S.A., U.K., and Germany, for example, to lead the Workshop. Choral Workshop activities include classes in Music Reading, Composing, and Conducting, providing excellent opportunities for Workshop participants to broaden their choral repertoire.

A number of music publications, now widely used throughout Malawi, were first prepared for the Choral Workshop. These include: a) a series of three progressive Music Reading booklets, b) a booklet of choral compositions projecting UNICEF messages, c) a booklet and audio-cassette of Malawi-composed songs of a variety of themes, and d) a collection of eight choral compositions by noted Malawian composer Mjura Mkandawire.

Since 1985, largely through the work of the Choral Workshop, many Malawian musicians have improved their “staff notation” music reading and writing skills. It is interesting to note that Malawi was also a major
Formal, In-Classroom Music Education in the Primary and Secondary Schools of Malawi

Three primary and two secondary “designated” schools, and the well-known Kamuzu Academy in central Malawi have qualified Music teachers and well-equipped Music facilities. Until 1998, British or American teachers filled all Music teaching positions at these schools. Today, qualified, university-trained Malawian Music teachers hold most of these positions. The “designated” schools and Kamuzu Academy offer an international curriculum of Music study, with the two secondary schools, St. Andrew’s Secondary School in Blantyre and Bishop Mackenzie Secondary School in Lilongwe, training students up to ‘A’ Level Music qualifications. The “designated” primary and secondary schools arrange for students to take Theory and practical examinations through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music’s adjudication programme conducted in Blantyre annually.

Primary school Music lessons for the majority of Malawian children, both in rural and urban schools, are taught, generally, by poorly motivated Music teachers with insufficient training in Music. The Music class is frequently nothing more than a “filler” period of song singing, a time for the main classroom teacher to catch up with her or his usually overwhelming amount of work.

The Music teaching situation in Ghana in 1975 was similar to the situation in Malawi today. When asked why the primary school Music class more often than not was merely a singing class, Ghanaian Music teachers most frequently stated the following:

“Primary Music Syllabus? No, I’ve never seen it.”
“We have no money for equipment and materials.”
“We need music books.”
“Teaching methods? No, we didn’t have music methods in the Training College.”
“We didn’t learn much theory. The Principal didn’t encourage music.”
“Music was not a failing subject in the Training College, and we didn’t take it seriously.”
“We didn’t learn instruments. The college had a piano, but the music tutor kept it locked and we were not permitted to play it.”
“Yes, we had singing and a choir that sang at services and on speech days.”(Evans, p.17)

Ghanaian schools progressed quickly since then having, today, highly respected primary school Music programmes.

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4 John Curwen invented this type of notation that became widely used for teaching in anglophone Africa. Tonic sol-fa notation started in England in the mid-nineteenth century and by the early 1900s Scottish missionaries at Livingstonia Mission in northern Malawi introduced it to encourage the people to compose Christian hymns based on traditional African tunes. The Overtoun Institute in Livingstonia in 1959 published Tunes from Nyasaland in tonic sol-fa notation. These songs were carried widely throughout Central Africa as the Livingstonia Mission also has the distinction of having established the first teacher-training college in Central Africa. It is from here that many early trained schoolteachers, especially from Zimbabwe and Zambia, learned, along with their other studies, to read and write music in tonic sol-fa notation (see Kaemmer, p.367).

5 The “Designated Schools” in Malawi are those schools which non-Malawians living in the country are allowed to attend. Some Malawians whose parents are able to afford the extremely high fees that these schools demand, also attend.

6 A similar situation was noted in Ghana as early as 1959 where the first Music Syllabus for Primary Schools in Ghana pointed out “Too often the Music lesson is taken up with song-singing and sight-reading. Guidance is here given in widening the scope of the lesson to form the basis of a satisfactory musical and general education”.

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In Malawi, it was not until 1985 that a first step was taken by the Ministry of Education to improve the teaching of Music in the primary schools. The Faculty of Education at Chancellor College, University of Malawi was asked to establish a two-year course of study for twelve “T2”7 primary school teachers that would lead them to qualify to teach Music at one of the national Teacher Training Colleges. This programme was quite demanding as students started with no music background, save their general enjoyment of music and some church singing experience. In addition, their course was but half of their programme of study as they came to this programme to specialize in two subjects that they would later be asked to teach at a Teacher Training College.

Presently, Music instructors in most Malawian teacher training colleges are certificate holders, having successfully completed the course described above. They are doing very good training work, writing exceptionally creative teachers’ guides in Music, and conducting numerous Music Education training sessions. Most of their work is under the supervision of the Malawi Institute of Education, in Domasi, where a Music Area Specialist has recently been hired to develop curriculum materials, write Music Teaching Guides, and organize workshops for Headmasters and primary school Music teachers.

**The Present Music Curriculum**

In 1990, with funds from UNDP and UNESCO, The Malawi Institute of Education set out to rewrite and improve a very out-dated syllabus for Music in Malawian Primary Schools, and produce Teachers’ Guides for each of the eight academic years of primary school education in Malawi. Writing teams came together in Domasi and a new syllabus was created. Well-written guides were developed and these are now used to assist teachers in their Music teaching efforts. A general philosophy of Music Education in Malawi is expressed in the introduction to the Music Teachers’ Guide for Standard 2:

> Music is a unique language for expressing ideas and feelings. The teachers’ guide that follows offers suggestions for providing a child-centred, discovery approach to music learning. Musical growth should come through an approach that includes numerous experiences with sound, experiences that explore the use of music language. These include experiences in:

- **Making music (performing).** This will enable pupils to gain pleasure and satisfaction. The primary value of music making lies in its power to allow an individual to express her/his feelings.
- **Listening to music.** The primary value of listening to music made by others is to share in their feelings.
- **Creating music (composing/improvising).** The primary value of creating music lies in its ability to provide the pupil with a vehicle for expressing feelings through music originated from his/her own musical thoughts. In creating music, the pupil exercises ways of selecting and ordering sounds in musical, expressive ways. (Malawi Institute of Education, p.v)

While primary school Music teacher training has improved over the years, and worthwhile guides to assist the primary school Music teacher are now available, even the most basic equipment for teaching Music successfully is generally not available in the Malawi primary school Music classroom. Frequently, not even local drums are available for activities of the Music class, much less other musical instruments. Audio/video equipment is, in most institutions, not available to develop good listening skills.

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7 “T2” designation refers to experienced primary school teachers holding certificates from a Malawian Teacher Training College. Primary school teacher training is a two-year programme where students get a general introduction to all subjects taught in the primary schools and some Education method courses. In Malawi, there is a great discrepancy in training, and consequently in remuneration, between primary and university-trained secondary school teachers.
Methods for teaching the ‘traditional’ music of Malawi have not been successfully prepared. In this regard, there is a great need in Malawi to devise a repertoire of an ensemble tradition, like the marimba ensemble tradition that was developed at Kwanangoma College, Zimbabwe in the 1960s. There are many benefits from ensemble playing, however, unfortunately, these benefits do not seem to be realized sufficiently in Malawi to motivate development in this area.

Very little has been done to promote Music in the secondary schools of Malawi. While in 1998 a syllabus for teaching Music at ‘O’ Level (Forms I through IV) was prepared, the subject has still not found a place on the timetable for secondary schools. It is assuring to know, however, that secondary school Music teachers are being trained, to degree level, at Chancellor College, and will be available to fill Music teaching positions when the secondary schools start offering this subject.

There have been some attempts with having Music taught at some of the many private secondary schools now in Malawi. Phwezi Secondary School, for one, has hired a Music tutor, and a number of other private secondary schools continue to place emphasis on aspects of the subject, especially singing skills, in order to build good quality school choirs.

The Training of Music Teachers in Malawi

Primary school teachers who teach Music in Malawi have their training from one of the twelve Teacher Training Colleges in the country. Here, they receive a basic training in the elements of Music and ways of using the Primary School Music Teachers’ Guides. Music and Music Teaching Method classes, however, are offered for only one semester with but a single class of instruction per week.

The Music Section of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, University of Malawi is the major institution for the training of secondary school Music teachers. This programme, established in 1982, caters to students from the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Education, and offers a B.A. and B.Ed., four-year, undergraduate degree in Music. Graduates from this programme teach Music in the “designated” secondary schools, Kamuzu Academy, and Malawi Teacher Training Colleges. Graduates have also worked for the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, producing Music programmes on radio and television and with organizations such as UNICEF and GTZ to present Music-in-Development type activities. To date, five graduates of the programme have completed masters degrees in Music Education from universities in the U.S., South Africa, Canada, and the U.K., and one is soon to finish a doctorate in Music Education from the University of Arkansas, U.S.A. Graduates of the programme are now hired to organize and teach the Music programme at Chancellor College.

The course of study in Music at Chancellor College includes Music Theory, a comprehensive study of African Music, a study of Music Cultures of the World, Music Education, performance skills on keyboard, guitar and traditional Malawian musical instruments and Music Education. The study of Ethnomusicology is also a major part of the Music programme as students do research on music traditions of Malawi, as well as many other parts of the world. Music Education initiatives have made it possible for major conferences, especially ones concerned with African Music Education, to be organized by the University. Of the

Over the years, this aspect of the programme has been greatly assisted by visiting scholars such as Professors Gerhard Kubik, Robert Kauffman and Ruth Stone. Professor Kubik, besides offering a series of lectures and concerts with noted musician Daniel Kachamba, also contributed a manuscript, Malawian Music: a Framework for Analysis, to help young Music researchers in their study of the music of Malawi. Well-known, neo-traditional musicians, famous in earlier years throughout Central Africa, also visited, taught, and performed at Chancellor College. These included Black Paseli, popular musician of the mid-1940s, and Donald Kachamba, famous kwela performer.

In 1998, UNESCO sponsored a conference for the development of Music Educational Materials for African Schools. Professor J.H. Nketia and Professor Barbara Reeder Lundquist attended this conference as resource people and keynote presenters.
courses offered. ‘Music in the Community’ is unique, designed to assist students with ideas of how best to use Music in community activities. This course includes, among other topics, ways of writing funding applications to obtain support for developmental Music activities.

Music Education in Zimbabwe

Formal, Traditional Music Training in Zimbabwe

In most cultures of Zimbabwe, songs sung by adults offer musical as well as cultural education. This may be considered “formal” training as the adult may be considered the music educator, and the frequent opportunities of one hearing the song may be equated with an established, designated time of instruction. Laade describes a Zulu/Ndebele tradition that has one particular song follow a child from birth to marriage, a long period of music instruction, indeed! The message contained in such a song, a significant cultural message, is one composed specifically for the child. The tonality and rhythm of the tune is the first musical “performance” heard by the child.  

Community Music Training in Zimbabwe

Community music making is very important to all of the major cultures in Zimbabwe. For the African population, children participate in and learn music traditions largely during community music making. These activities are often carefully rehearsed. For the Ndebele community, choral music predominates, solo singing is seldom heard, and instrumental music is not very much a part of the tradition. Dance generally accompanies choral presentations to make the music activity even more a community event.

In the Shona culture, children also learn musical and cultural traditions through community music making, especially at story-telling presentations where solo and community singing, with mbira accompaniment, combine with dramatization.

For the white population of Zimbabwe, community music activities have always been very important. Soon after white people started to arrive in this part of Central Africa, around 1891, a meeting was held in what was then Salisbury with the objective of forming an amateur Music and Dramatic Arts Society. On Christmas day, 1891, we read, for example, “the Salisbury Blackbirds gave a capital minstrel entertainment to a crowded house”. As early as 1895, the first major musical performance, a popular British opera, was staged in Rhodesia.

Since that time, the white community has continued to enjoy and encourage music and music training. In July 1948, at what is presently Luck Street, a short distance from its present home in the Civic Centre of Harare, there was established the Rhodesian College of Music. Refusing blacks the opportunity to study

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10 Laade writes, “When a child is born, the Ndebele mother, like the Zulu mother in Natal, composes a ‘Song of Childhood’, ishiabelelo. It is first sung as a lullaby but the song accompanies the person a long way through his or her life. If the child is a girl, the song is sung during its infancy, again at the time of the first menstruation, and once more the day she is married.” (p.29)

11 Laade again states, “Predominance of choral music seems to be associated with societies in which group spirit and group activities dominate the thinking and daily life of the people. This is certainly true of the Ndebele where the individual lives, feels and acts as a member of an extended family, the family as part of a clan and, before British rule, all as part of the Ndebele nation while on every level common ancestors strengthened these bonds.” (p.22)

12 This production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s Trial by Jury was staged in what is now Old Mutare. In the same year, visiting, white musical theatre performers toured the Eastern Highlands of the country and went by stagecoach on the rough trails to Salisbury for additional performances. (see Taylor, pp. 133-26)

13 “In 1962, Sir Stephen Courtauld, a wealthy patron of the arts, made a magnificent donation. It enabled the building of a specifically designed college and its own concert hall”. In 1989, the Ethnomusicology
Music here, this school, renamed The Zimbabwe College of Music in 1980, is now a major centre for the study of traditional African music – as well as the study of western music traditions.

Community Music Education activities appear in many different ways in Zimbabwe. Music festivals, competitions and concerts abound in cities and rural communities. Frequently, arts festivals have music and dance workshops running concurrently with performances. Corporate and foundation support is often given to assist in the presentation of big festivals, such as the Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) or the Chimanimani Arts Festival. So too, weekly music workshops such as the Pop Music Workshop held every Saturday morning at the Zimbabwe College of Music, the Eisteddfod Music Competitions held annually in Harare, and the annual, one-week “Music Camp” in Marondera offer worthwhile community music presentations and training.

Over the years, a number of religious-inspired missions have assisted Music Education in Zimbabwe. In the early 1960s, for one, the United-Methodist Church invited musician-music educator Robert Kauffman to the Old Mutare Mission to help study and promote traditional Shona music in the local churches. This very successful project included the presentation of workshops that focussed on Shona music traditions, and on the promotion of music reading and composing. Today, Church Music Workshops are frequently conducted by most of the major denominations in Zimbabwe.

Formal, In-Classroom Music Education in the Primary and Secondary Schools of Zimbabwe

Formal, in-classroom Music training has been in Rhodesian/Zimbabwean schools for a long time. The present orientation to Music in the schools, however, is quite different from that of earlier days when it had a total focus toward western music traditions. This change is largely due to the efforts of many Zimbabwean Music educators who have worked tirelessly to promote the concept that the course content in Music classes in Zimbabwean schools should reflect the Zimbabwean culture as much as possible in areas of music appreciation and practical work. This philosophy, Unhu/Ubuntu, was described, and talked about in relation to Music Education in Zimbabwe by Denyshed Mugochi, Education Officer for Visual and Performing Arts in the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. He stated:

The indigenous philosophy of Unhu/Ubuntu ...is now bearing fruit. Zimbabwe has now established something to share with the international community. Syllabus developers have taken as a rallying point to research on indigenous music before they involve themselves in music of the world.... Our music educators now want to know their music of the past and compare it with the music of today. All music syllabi for primary and secondary schools now promote the true principles of multi-culturism...We have sensitively formulated a curriculum with a clear rationale that introduces the indigenous Zimbabwean music education into the international community in order that our cultural music is studied on a more serious note. (p. 7)

Presently, there are great strides being made to advance music study in the primary and secondary schools of Zimbabwe. In a speech delivered by the Secretary for Education, Sport and Culture, Mr. Stephen Chifunyise at the official opening of the Pan-African Society of Music Educators Seminar in Harare on 21 August 2000, the honourable Secretary stated:

Programme was established and two years later, with a grant from the Ford Foundation, new buildings were erected specifically to accommodate classes for the study of African music.

One of the enthusiastic participants, then in his late teens, was Dumisani Maraire. Dumi learned well and helped in presenting his own compositions for church use. These include a cantata, Mazuwa Ekupedzisa and a passion play, Runyararo Pasi, both composed in 1965, and over 80 hymns between 1963 and 1967. This led, in 1969, to an invitation by Dr. Kauffman for Dumi to teach mbira and other aspects of Shona music traditions at the University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. where he later continued his studies and successfully completed a M.A. and Ph.D. degree. Today, still largely under the support of the United-Methodist Church, Music is offered as a course of study at Africa University, also in Old Mutare.
This seminar comes at a time when Zimbabwe has just begun implementing the recommendations of the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training. The Commission has recommended the introduction of a comprehensive visual and performing arts curriculum from the first grade of school to the University. This means education cannot continue to be handled in the manner in which it has been handled. There will be a tremendous demand for music teachers from all schools throughout the country. The teacher training colleges will be required to produce the type of teachers who are able to teach music in all its diverse forms and to equip students with skills to use music in the various roles it plays in different societies. Euro-centric music educators presently in the Zimbabwean education system will have to undergo a transformation process in order to enable them to appreciate the existence of a rich music heritage in our different indigenous societies as well as appreciate the demands for the school to prepare talented young people for viable careers in the music industry.

The Present Music Curriculum

Music in the primary and secondary schools of Zimbabwe has something very good going for it – a philosophical perspective that is just, human-spirit oriented, and based on the making of music, rather than the presentation of mere words about the making of music. Music Education in Zimbabwe is on the right track; a track headed towards the goals it aims to achieve. This, I believe, is due to the spirit of many individuals, Steve Chifunyisa and Dumisani Maraire, for example, and the foresight and knowledge of the founders of worthwhile programmes such as the African Music programme at Kwanongoma College and the Ethnomusicology Programme of the Zimbabwe College of Music.

Primary School Music Education is, indeed, on the right track in Zimbabwe, but there are still problems in getting instruments into the schools, having listening equipment and Music textbooks available, and having a sufficient number of well-qualified Music teachers. The hand full of Teacher Training Colleges that offer Music Teacher Training for Primary School teachers all try their best and, from observations, are succeeding in achieving the aims of their programme. There are, however, clearly too few of these Colleges to provide the many good quality Music teachers needed for the many primary schools in Zimbabwe.

Music in the secondary schools of Zimbabwe has only recently taken a major step in increasing the number of schools offering the subject. The Zimbabwe Junior Certificate Music Syllabus, intended for pupils in the

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15 Professor J.H. Nketia, in his Keynote Address at the Pan-African Society of Music Educators Seminar in Harare on 21 August 2000, started by giving some thoughts about the late Dumisani Maraire. Professor Nketia said, “Music Educators who are not just philosophers or theoreticians but practical exponents of some aspects of the traditions they teach bring to the classroom a dimension of the learning experience traditionally acquired through musical encounters in community life. Dumisani was certainly a shining example of this…”(p.2)

16 The famous, early programmes in the study of African music at the University of Ghana and Makerere College in Uganda were, and are still wonderful examples of research centres in the area of African Music and African Music Performance. These, however, have largely oriented their focus to the interests of university scholars. The most important, early programme on the continent that gave attention to African Music Study in the primary and secondary schools, however, was the programme at Kwanongoma College in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. It was at Kwanongoma College, in 1960, under the Teachers Training College of Bulawayo, that western and African musics were practiced together, and where ways of using African music in the schools was explored (see McHarg, Williamson, and Webb). It was here that students experimented with ensembles of marimbas and established a uniquely African style used in schools to encourage participation in African music making. It was also at Kwanongoma College that a factory for the manufacturing of African musical instruments was established to make musical instruments for use in school music programmes throughout Zimbabwe.

17 These include Mavango Teachers’ College, Morganster Teachers’ College, Kwanongoma Teachers’ College, Mkoba Teachers’ College, and Marymount Teachers’ College.
first two years of secondary school, has been very well prepared and is now being used in a growing number of schools. In the introduction to the syllabus, it states that it “takes into account the fact that some pupils will commence the course with little or no previous formal education in music.” It also states “Pupils will take theory and practical examinations equivalent to Grade Three of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.”(p. 2)

The increase in the number of secondary schools beginning to offer Music is largely because there is a great increase in the number of Music Education graduates in Zimbabwe who are able to fill secondary Music teaching positions. These graduate teachers have either obtained degrees from the University of Zimbabwe or Africa University. There are also now a good number of experienced teachers teaching in secondary schools who have obtained the National Certificate in Music from the Zimbabwe College of Music or diplomas from Teacher Training Colleges that offer Music Education programmes in secondary school Music Teaching.

The Training of Music Teachers in Zimbabwe

Until 2000, the University of Zimbabwe worked, primarily, as a support programme for the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, advising and evaluating Music teacher training at the Teacher Training Colleges. It now has a very strong Music Education programme of its own that offers B.Ed degrees in Music Education. This programme has an emphasis on the teaching of music traditions of Zimbabwe. It encourages the use of music notation systems specifically developed for the teaching of various Zimbabwean musical instruments.

Since 1996, Africa University, a pan-African, United-Methodist related institution located in Mutare, offered a B.Ed degree in Music Education. This programme focuses on a broad study of Zimbabwean and other African music traditions, as well as the music of the west and other parts of the world. Students from a number of African countries are presently studying Music and Music Education at Africa University. All students at the University enroll in a two-semester course in African Studies where lectures on the music traditions across the continent serve to assist them to gain greater appreciation for the rich variety of musical traditions of the people of their continent. For Music Education students, there is an emphasis on developing methods for creative Music teaching. Starting in 2002, there will be a two-year, B.Ed programme for experienced Music teachers holding teaching diplomas but not having degrees. Included in this programme will be a Seminar in Teaching Music and a Seminar on Curriculum Issues in Music.

The Zimbabwe College of Music, under its Ethnomusicology Programme, offers a two-year, National Certificate in Music. This programme is designed for experienced Music teachers who have diplomas from Teacher Training Colleges and who wish to specialize in Music as a teaching subject. This programme includes an intensive study of African and western music with a focus on the teaching of African music. The Ethnomusicology Programme started in 1989 and its graduates, from Zimbabwe and other countries of the SADC region, are now teaching in the programme. Graduates of the Ethnomusicology Programme are also teaching in secondary schools, working in Arts programmes of various types throughout southern

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18 Secondary school Music teachers are now trained at Mutare Teachers’ College and Hillside Teachers’ College.
19 These include the tabular notation system for performing marimba established by Muhnlanga, the number notation system of Dumisani Maraire for playing mbira, and the box notation system of Karumazondo for performing a variety of Zimbabwean drumming styles.
20 This seminar will include the following topics: The present position of Music in the school programme in African schools, and where we think this should lead to; Focussed Listening: Its Importance in an African School Music Programme; Contemporary African Music: Its Place in African Music Education, etc.
21 This seminar will include the following topics: The importance of concept and skill learning in the African Music Curriculum; Listening activities in the African Music Curriculum, Performance activities (instrumental and vocal) in the African Music Curriculum, etc.
Africa, performing music professionally, and working for the broadcasting corporations in their home countries. This unique programme has had great success over its twelve-year history.

Suggestions of Ways to Improve Formal, In-Classroom Music Education in Malawi and Zimbabwe

A number of suggestions have already been made in this paper for the improvement of music training outside formal, in-classroom Music educational pursuits. These have called for:

- Increased research into early childhood acquisition of musical skills to better understand the natural processes of learning music;
- Further study of various cultural expectations that demand music learning at events such as initiation schools and others; and
- Increased community music training activities through competitions and workshops.

Suggestions are offered here for the improvement of formal, in-classroom Music Education:

- Music educators in Malawi should study the successes of Music Education programmes in Zimbabwe (and also the wonderful work in Ghana) in teaching traditional African instrumental music. This could start with studies of how traditional musicians teach their performance skills, generally by rote, and then focus could be given to the benefits of using more "modern" teaching methods, for example, the use of notation, method-book learning, a programmed course of study, etc.;
- In Malawi, special interest should be placed on finding an appropriate ensemble type that may be carefully established for use in schools. Although there are panpipe ensembles (ngororombe), some idiophone ensembles (visekese), a number of drum ensembles (vimbuza and likuba), and xylophone ensembles (ulimba), there is no ensemble tradition in Malawi that combines instrument types. Such mixed-instrumentation ensembles would be, perhaps, of greatest use in a school situation. So too, there is no traditional ensemble in Malawi that is used over a large part of the country and, therefore, a new ensemble tradition, perhaps, may be useful to establish a "national" musical identity;
- A concerted effort, in both Malawi and Zimbabwe, should be placed on articulating who the “cultural heroes” of the country are. This may be done through special radio and/or television presentations, articles in the press, or even through cereal-box advertising or photos on postage stamps.
- Music cultural heroes should be invited into the schools to meet students, perform in assembly programmes, and teach their skills;
- Secondary School Music Teachers’ Guides must be prepared to assist teachers working in the new secondary school Music programmes in Malawi and Zimbabwe;
- There is a great need for creative Music textbooks, especially prepared for Central and southern African schools. These should be prepared with a regional outlook. A good quality textbook will certainly improve Music Education and, if it is prepared with a regional distribution in mind, pupils will gain knowledge and respect for other African neighbouring cultures. An audio cassette should be prepared to accompany the text book so that listening opportunities will also be made available to students;
- Songbooks of well-selected, local compositions, in staff notation should be prepared for use in schools. These should include in-depth suggestions to choral directors of how best to teach these songs, and information to students regarding the background of each of the songs;
- Video collections should be prepared showing and discussing music traditions of Malawi and/or Zimbabwe, other SADC countries and other countries of Africa. As there are now video machines available in many secondary schools, this would assist Music teaching greatly;
- A concerted effort should be directed to contemporary music in both Malawi and Zimbabwe. Teaching methods should be devised to assist teachers with building good quality school “pop” ensembles. There is great importance in making the Music
programme an enjoyable one for students and activities with “pop” music, all over the
world, generally guarantee student interest and participation; and
• More and better quality activities of the Music Educator Associations in Malawi and
Zimbabwe should be encouraged. Members in these associations should collect and share
ideas that have proven effective in their Music teaching. A newsletter of these
associations should be established and regularly published.

Music is certainly a very important subject in the schools. Music Teachers can present concepts and skills
to young people that can enable them to understand music better, and communicate more fully through the
infinite varieties of musical creation. Music in the schools can help pupils to better comprehend their own
culture and the cultures of others. It is significant to observe that Music Education in Malawi and
Zimbabwe is now developing, and advancing with great strides. Music Education in these countries is
looking to the future, to the best ways to offer music training and make that training most beneficial to the
personal, and often professional, development of the young. It is interesting to compare this to some
western countries that strongly affirm the benefits of Music Education but, even with educational budgets
far greater than the entire budgets of Malawi and Zimbabwe, are scaling down, and even abandoning Music
programmes in the schools.

The present, impressive efforts to build Music Education programmes in Malawi and Zimbabwe should be
highly commended. These efforts can only lead to a future where the citizens of these countries can enjoy,
more fully, the great significance of music in their lives.
Bibliography


APPENDIX

Reflecting the Current Experience in the Music Curriculum

As suggested in the body of this paper, the musical life in Malawi and Zimbabwe is very rich in both performance and appreciation of older music traditions, as well as traditions that are more contemporary. This appendix is written to briefly examine how the Music curricula can “reflect the current experience”, and to offer suggestions that may help to do this in an effective way.

Music syllabi have been prepared for both primary and early secondary (the first two years of secondary school) in both Malawi and Zimbabwe. They are very similar in their aims and objectives and, therefore, I use but one of these, the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate Music Syllabus, as a model. I first wish to consider what “the current experience” is of a young person attending junior secondary school, and then note how the curriculum “reflects” this.

The "current experience", that is to say, the characteristics of a Zimbabwean child in the school programme today, to which the junior certificate Music syllabus is addressed, is:

- Approximately 13-15 years of age and is psychologically and physiologically
  - Energetic
  - Very receptive to movement
  - Eager to have his/her senses, including the hearing senses, made active in "open", overt ways
  - Eager to participate in a great variety of activities
  - Very concerned to be socially accepted
  - Eager to quickly learn to perform an activity well, and be looked upon with admiration for the successful performance done
  - Eager to focus on the attitudes and actions of today rather than the traditions of the past, and others.
- The student is very group-oriented, and eager to have the groups to which she/he belongs to “shine” and, thus, reflect his/her success. The student belongs to
  - An ethnic group
  - A national group
  - A church group
  - A club
  - A music ensemble, and others.
- If the learning of new information appears to lead to useful gain, and if it is accompanied with positive “strokes”, i.e., positive reactions, the student is, generally, eager to learn
  - Factual information
  - Skills, and
  - Concepts.

The above expresses the reality of the characteristics of the individual to which the syllabus should be directed. Too often, however, one may observe that a syllabus is written to satisfy the needs of a Music programme rather than the needs of the Music student. The Zimbabwe Junior Certificate Music Syllabus expresses its aims in the following way. Alongside these aims, I suggest a more “student-oriented” way of stating the aims.

The Syllabus states, “The syllabus will enable pupils to…

“Enjoy music through personal involvement,”

Satisfy the students’ needs to express herself/himself using personal energy, frequently through movement, that clearly activates the senses.
“Participate in a wide variety of musical experiences,” Satisfy the students’ interest to participate, frequently with others, in a great variety of musical activities.

“Become musically literate,” Satisfy the students’ desire to read and write music to personally express himself/herself through composing and performing the musical expressions of others, especially friends. In addition, to satisfy the students’ desire to be able to quickly perform music she/he has composed and is presenting to others.

“Develop aesthetic values through music,” Satisfy the students’ desires to be part of a culture and be able to express and appreciate this by knowing the agreements of music traditions of the culture, i.e., the aesthetic values of the culture.

“Develop an understanding and appreciation of music from the various traditions within Zimbabwe”. Satisfy the students’ interest in knowing more about his/her own ethnic group and other groups of her/his country (Zimbabwe) and continent to be proud of the ethnic group, country and continent to which he/she belongs.

The content of the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate Music Syllabus is divided into three areas: Theory of Music, Practical Work and Music Appreciation. For various reasons, a great deal of emphasis is put on the first of these categories22. Of the 23 pages of the Syllabus, 11 pages are devoted to identifying and defining, for example, crotchets, clefs, staff, keys, and so on. Only one page is devoted to the music of Zimbabwe, and only 3 lines is devoted to contemporary music: “Singing, playing and dancing to contemporary musical styles such as folk songs, jazz and pop”. While movement is so important to young people of this age, the only mention of movement is “…designing dance sequences for African and Western music.”

Knowing the traditions of one’s past is of great importance in knowing who you are. As educators, we must also realize that a child is a part of his/her present generation, and that, perhaps above all, the curriculum must offer musical experiences satisfying to the individual as a person living today. With this in mind, and in summary, the curriculum for Music in African schools must consider the needs and interests of young African people, and direct the teacher to help provide ways of fulfilling these needs and interests through appropriate musical experiences.

22 I believe the major reason for this is that it is much easier to teach a definition than it is to teach a skill or an attitude. It is easier to teach, "This is what a crotchet looks like and it indicates a specific length of sound”, than it is to teach a creative skill, a way of evaluating a musical performance, or an attitude of appreciation in music. Teachers are more able to teach information than develop true musical attitudes and skills. It is much easier to teach that the Shona play the mbira than teach how to play the mbira.
AFRICA UNIVERSITY

(A United Methodist Related Institution)

TO:   The Vice Chancellor…through the Dean, FHSS
FROM:  Professor Mitchel Strumpf
DATE:  10 July 2001

Report of Conference Attended

I am writing to express my gratitude to you for allowing me to attend the African Regional Arts Education Conference in Port Elizabeth, South Africa from 24 - 30 June 2001.
UNESCO and the South African Department of Education and Department of Arts, Sciences and Technology sponsored this conference. Ninety-six participants from many parts of Africa, Europe, and Asia attended this meeting. It was the first in a series of such conferences sponsored by UNESCO that will follow in other parts of the world to reemphasize the importance of the Arts in the education of children. A programme of the activities of the conference is attached to this report.

I was asked to present a paper on Music Education in Malawi and Zimbabwe and this I later expanded to include comments on the same topic in Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The paper was very well received and will be published as conference proceedings.

I was very pleased to make Africa University well known at this conference, and to establish numerous contacts that certainly will benefit Africa University.

Sincerely yours,

Mitchel Strumpf