

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTING THE MUSIC PROGRAMME IN MAURITIUS: THE PILOT STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2 to 4 supplied background information through a literature study to give the reader a better understanding of the listening programme that is proposed in the thesis. In Chapter 5 the practical implementation of the music programme during the pilot project in Mauritius will be explained. The chapter starts with information on the OMEP Training Centre in Curepipe, Mauritius. Seeing that all the workshops that were presented during the different projects (compare Chapter 6) were basically the same, the workshop in Mauritius will be explained in detail in this chapter and only mentioned briefly in the next chapter. It is important that the reader of this thesis should take into account that the Mauritius Music Project was an informal pilot study during which much valuable information on the implementation of the music programme was gathered. This chapter will be divided into three main parts, in each of which a different trip to Mauritius will be explained. It is required that the included VCD-2, which contains the photos of the pilot project in Mauritius, should be viewed when reference to the photographs is made.

5.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MAURITIUS

General information will firstly be given to orientate the reader with Mauritius in general, followed by a brief overview of OMEP Mauritius.

5.2.1 Geographical and cultural information

The Wikipedia free online encyclopedia (Wikipedia 2006b) states that Mauritius lies approximately 900 km east of Madagascar and has, according to an estimate done in July 2005, a population of 1,245,000 people. It is a relatively small island with an area of only 2,040 square kilometres. The Mauritian society is highly multicultural. Although the official language of Mauritius is English, French is used as the main language by the media and business, radio and television. A French-derived

Mauritian Creole, which is widely spoken by the majority of people on the island, can be considered as the lingua franca of the country (Wikipedia 2006b). French and French Creole is used in everyday life. Several other languages, including Arabic, Portuguese, Indian languages (such as Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Bhojpuri and Gujarati) or dialects of Chinese (like Cantonese, Hakka and Mandarin) are also spoken.

According to Graham (1992:179) the complexity of Mauritius's ethnic groups is displayed in its diverse culture with annual Muslim, Hindu, Chinese, Tamil and Catholic festivals. In Creole society, which is an Afro-Malagasy mix, the *Sega* is very popular. It originated from Africa as both a dance and a general word for tunes and melodies. The clearly identifiable *Sega*, with its African roots, is widely enjoyed as a national music style in Mauritius. Even pre-school children are familiar with this style and can perform the *Sega* dance very well.

5.2.2 The Mauritian branch of OMEP

The following information on the Mauritian branch of OMEP, where the pilot study for this research was done, was received via an e-mail from Mr Somoo Valayden on 5 July 2006. The Mauritian branch of OMEP was set up in 1972. The main objectives of this branch are to promote early childhood education across the island and provide training facilities to ECD teachers. OMEP Mauritius is the first non-governmental organization to devote itself to the development, protection and education of young children in Mauritius. Amongst the numerous achievements over the past 34 years, the most outstanding have been:

- the training of over 1600 Mauritian teachers in modern methods of pre-primary education;
- the opening of more than 100 pre-primary schools of a good standard around the island;
- making parents, local authorities and the general public aware of the various aspects of child development through debates, conferences, exhibitions and the media;
- the organizing of seminars, debates, shows and recreational events for parents and children in towns and villages;
- the production of TV and radio programmes for young learners;
- the establishment of a close co-operative partnership between the Mauritian Committee and other pre-school organizations in the Indian Ocean Region, especially with OMEP on Reunion Island, South Africa and the Mauritian Ministry of Education;

- the participation in all activities organized by the pre-primary section of the Ministry of Education and other public institutions;
- giving aid to existing pre-primary schools in under privileged areas;
- the organising of refresher courses and seminars for practising teachers across the country; and
- the organising of sensitisation programmes for parents regarding problems in education and child rearing and leisure activities for children such as in music, art and theatre.

5.3 FIRST TRIP TO MAURITIUS: 15 September to 2 October 2003

With this trip the element of novelty obviously coloured the researcher's perceptions. Nevertheless, this trip will be described using similar headings as with the other two trips.

5.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the first (and subsequently the second) trip to Mauritius was to present a series of music workshops for ECD teachers to introduce them to the proposed music programme. The Mauritius project was launched as a pilot before the main research took place in South Africa. Seeing that the Mauritians are from a different race, ethnic and language group than the South Africans, the researcher saw the pilot project as an opportunity to gather information about the international implementation of the music programme and to find out what the Mauritian teachers' attitudes towards Western Classical music were. Although the researcher did not know what to expect during the workshops in Mauritius, the prospect of implementing the music programme internationally was very exciting.

5.3.2 The initial planning

The researcher had no further contact with Mr Valayden after they met briefly at the 2002 OMEP World Conference in Durban. It was therefore quite a surprise when he phoned her during a business trip to Pretoria and said he wanted to discuss training workshops. She wrote the following in her Diary Notes during September 2003, concerning the planning stages:

My husband (Niel) and I met Mr Somoo Valayden during May 2003 at a coffee shop in the Menlyn shopping mall in Pretoria and my first trip to Mauritius was briefly discussed. Mr Valayden volunteered to organize and

plan the trip to Mauritius for me. All he required was a verbal agreement that I would present the same music workshops to ECD teachers on the island as the one he attended at the OMEP Conference in Durban during 2002.

Impulsive as I am, I booked two air tickets to Mauritius for my husband and myself the following day to depart on 15 September and return on 2 October 2003. To tell the truth, I was too scared to venture to Mauritius on my own and that is why I dragged Niel along. He was very keen and excited to accompany me, because he thought that he was going to bathe in the sun every day and go on fishing trips while I was working.

In the meantime, three months passed without any further word from Mr Valayden. I sent six e-mails to him during August to try and find out if the trip was still on and what the schedule and the programme he planned for my visit looked like. I did not know if the workshops were going to be attended by primary, or secondary schools, or whether they were only scheduled for ECD teachers. I was losing hope of hearing from this friendly Mauritian man again, when he phoned at the end of August to enquire why I seem to be upset and worried (Valayden 2003). He assured me that I had nothing to worry about, because everything was organized on his side and under control. He explained that the Mauritian school terms were not the same as the government terms in South Africa and said that their family was on holiday in Madagascar with no e-mail contact for the whole month of August. Seeing that my flight to Mauritius was only two weeks away, the sound of his comforting voice on the phone was a great relief (Nel Diary Notes: September 2003).

According to McNiff & Whitehead (2005:19) it is important to check in advance what practical resources such as stationary and photocopying facilities will be required for the action research study. These authors suggest that a list should be drawn up in advance of all the material that will be needed. In the case of this research, a handout had to be photocopied before embarking on the trip, but it was not known how many ECD teachers would attend the music workshop per day and how many workshops were supposed to be presented during the 17 day visit (15 September to 2 October 2003). According to Mr Valayden (telephone conversation: September 2003) there were facilities for photocopies: he only needed a hard copy of the fifteen page handout. These copies were mailed to him the following day.

During the planning stage it was not yet clear that this trip to Mauritius would eventually serve as a pilot study or a pre-test to the main research that was planned for teachers in underprivileged areas in South Africa.

5.3.3 Funding

One return air ticket to Mauritius was sponsored by OMEP Mauritius as well as the fee for the excess weight of the resource material. Mr Valayden generously offered accommodation to the researcher in his private bungalow in Blue Bay (see photo no 1) and the use of his second car. Although no allowance was made for meals, cleaning service at the bungalow, petrol and workshop training fees, the trip to Mauritius was a way to widen the researcher's scope of Music Education for ECD.

5.3.4 The workshops

The workshops that were planned for Mauritius were designed to treat ECD practitioners to a fresh perspective on the integration of the arts. The main idea with the workshops was to introduce the attendees practically to a simple methodology which they could implement in their classrooms to expose their learners to Western Classical music. The workshops, during which a supportive and playful atmosphere was supposed to be created, can be described as "in-role workshops". It provided teachers with an opportunity to express themselves through movement and the physical, theatrical interpretation of a given story. The workshops were practical examples of how participants could expose their learners to Western Classical music through the integration of the arts. Catterall et al (2003:58) state that the same type of "in-role" teacher training workshops are advocated by Dorothy Heathcote, a legendary teacher trainer in Britain who has been presenting dramatization workshops for more than 40 years "to make her point". According to these authors, Heathcote believes that it is very important that teachers should "get into roles" with their students when they teach.

Hetta Potgieter (1997:90), Associate Professor in Music Education at the University of North West in South Africa, agrees with Heathcote and states that the biggest advantage of INSET (an internationally accepted acronym for in-service training) is that the presenter can act as a role model and give participants the opportunity to actively practise and demonstrate new skills. Potgieter has been involved with INSET since 1991. With her own experience in the presentation of INSET workshops for ECD teachers in South Africa, the researcher was well prepared and confident that she would be able to act as a role model at the presentation of these workshops.

Franklin et al (1997:1) state that adult learners are usually goal-oriented and insistent upon relevant, practical instruction. These learners are frequently more interested in a concrete outcome, such as the acquisition of a specific skill or a certain competency level in a given area of study. Potgieter (1997:77), who also believes in that best results can be obtained if participants can be practically involved in the training notes that teachers should be encouraged to “try, evaluate, modify and try again”. The practical workshops would give the participants the opportunity to practically experience the methodology with fellow ECD practitioners. The aim was that after this induction workshop, the participants would try the resource material out at their different sites. During this period the attendees were supposed to implement and evaluate the music programme, make modifications to suit the inclusivity of Mauritius (see Chapter 5.5.3.1 how this was catered for) if necessary, and try the lessons again.

Although the researcher was worried that the contact time spent with the attendees at the workshops would not be enough for them to grasp the methodology, Potgieter (1997) notes that the contact time during a half or full day workshop may seem very short, but will give participants enough time to socialize, encourage and support each other.

During the workshops planned for Mauritius, an opportunity had to be created for ECD practitioners to gain confidence and practical experience in the implementation of the example lessons that were proposed in the resource material. The aim of the workshops, which used play and improvisation as starting points for the development of the listening skills, was to develop and extend the participants' performance sensibilities. This was going to be done in a number of key areas: *storytelling*, *classroom set-up*, *dramatization*, *body awareness*, *focus*, *play*, *characterization*, *ensemble work*, and through improvisation with movement, miming, music, everyday gestures, props and instruments. This active way of involving all the participants in practical demonstrations was to help them develop their listening and observation skills and to give them an opportunity to work with partners and colleagues in groups.

The researcher's assumption was that all stereotyped ideas about Western Classical music, movement, ability, age and gender could be countered through these in-role workshops. It would not only give attendees the opportunity to observe their colleagues in action, but it was also an excellent method through which the

researcher could observe the attendees and evaluate the music programme. According to Paul Lehman (1992:281) informal evaluation has gained increased respectability and legitimacy in recent years. It is not uncommon for individual teachers to evaluate their way of instruction continuously and make changes that they believe will make their teaching more effective. Lehman points out that formal training in evaluation is useful, but is not a necessity. He feels that experience, common sense and good judgment can contribute a lot to help teachers make evaluation decisions. This was indeed applicable in the researcher's case. The workshops would afford her the opportunity to judge the effectiveness of the training by observing the participation of the attendees, the reaction on their faces and the general way in which they would respond to the example lessons. This would hopefully give a clear indication of their attitude towards the use of Western Classical music in a listening programme. This idea of observation which the researcher had in mind is echoed by McNiff & Whitehead (2005:50) who notes that monitoring one's work involves the observation of people's physical actions and reactions and also, more importantly, their relational ones. In other words, the researcher had to determine:

- How did attendees get on together?
- How did they respond to the researcher?
- How did the researcher respond to them?

Implementing this new strategy of exposing ECD teachers to Western Classical music in a country where most of them were unfamiliar with this musical style, meant that the researcher had to take everyone involved in the research into consideration. Although a lot of imagining of what the consequences might be for all, including herself, the researcher was not able to take appropriate action in this respect, because she has never been to Mauritius. She had no idea what the conditions in Mauritian schools were like and what the economic and social circumstances were in the country.

5.3.5 Sorting ourselves out in Mauritius

Four months after the meeting with Mr Valayden in the coffee shop in Menlyn, we eventually touched down on the island of Mauritius on Monday 15 September 2003. Not knowing for four months whether this trip will ever

realize, Niel and I were finally here! I was totally unsure of what to expect of the attitude of the teachers towards foreign trainers. I was also worried whether my methodology would be acceptable for the workshop attendees. If I had known Mr Valayden better, I would have known that there was nothing to worry about. With his excellent management skills as the president of OMEP Mauritius and head of the OMEP Training Centre in Curepipe, he had our total stay of 17 days well planned and under control.

The bungalow in Blue Bay where we stayed was 30 km away from the OMEP Training Centre in Curepipe (see Appendix A: Map of Mauritius). Although the workshop was scheduled for 9:30 am, we arrived at the Training Centre at 8:00 am on Tuesday 16 September. It was a big double storey building with a pre-primary school downstairs and the Training Centre on top. Although the hard copies of the handout were e-mailed to Mr Valayden to be photocopied before the time, the handouts were not ready on our arrival at the centre. On enquiry I learned that the nearest photocopy facility was about a block away from the Centre at a tiny “street stall”. Seeing that there was only one secretary at the Centre with a workload larger than she could handle, Niel had no choice but to become my secretary for the next two weeks. The photocopy machine did not have a sorter and he had to sort and staple the 15 page handout by hand. I was informed by Mr Valayden that a maximum of 40 teachers were expected to attend the workshop on each day and therefore photocopies had to be sorted and stapled every day in advance for a total of 40 attendees (Nel Diary Notes: September 2003).

5.3.6 The presentation of the workshops

It is explained in the following narrative how the researcher experienced the first workshop in Mauritius:

The room in which the workshop was presented was the size of a normal classroom. All the tables and extra furniture were removed. As 40 attendees were expected, 40 chairs were placed in a semi-circle formation along the walls with an open space for the dramatization in the middle. On arrival at the Centre, I unpacked the two large suitcases with fantasy clothes and percussion instruments for the demonstrations and placed it in bundles along the wall in front of the class below the black board (photo no 2). The attendees looked uncertain and frightened, not knowing what to expect. They sat quietly in their chairs while the room was starting to fill up. They just sat there, staring at the bundles of brightly coloured fantasy clothes, masks and shiny accessories. What they did not know, was that I felt exactly the same – unsure, and a bit scared of the unknown. I was worried about the fact that the participants spoke Creole, because I could not predict to what extent they would be able to understand me and be able to follow the workshop effectively. Then the moment was there – my first international workshop! I was standing next to Mr Valayden for the short opening speech and welcome. He welcomed everybody and gave a short explanation how he met me at the OMEP World Conference in Durban in 2002 and why he decided to invite me to do music training with ECD teachers at the Training Centre in Mauritius. Without further ado I started with the ice-breaker. It was exciting to

observe how the uncertain and skeptical feeling and frowns that the attendees had about the music teacher from South Africa melted away at the onset of the lively ice-breaker which was done to the piece of pop music Mambo No 5 by Lou Bega. Smiles of enjoyment and acceptance filled their faces while they were doing actions in time to the music. Off course, my fear also drifted away. I started to relax when I realized that their reactions were the same as those that I have experienced from attendees at previous workshops in South Africa. Maybe I had nothing to worry about, but how are they going to react to the Western Classical music? (Nel Diary Notes: September 2003).

The workshop proceeded as follows:

<u>Programme</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and brief introduction by Mr Somoo Valayden • Ice breaker: Movements on <i>Mambo No 5</i> by Lou Bega • Active listening through dramatization – Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example lesson 1: <i>Hungarian Dance No 5</i> by Brahms Song: Hungarian Dance (arranged by Hybré Meyer) Example lesson 2: <i>The Syncopated Clock</i> by Anderson Wake me, Shake me (arranged by Hybré Meyer) Example lesson 3: <i>Rondo Alla Turca</i> by Mozart Song: The Mighty Lion (arranged by Hybré Meyer) • Tea break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example lesson 4: <i>The Sabre Dance</i> by Khatchaturian Song: Wa Silasila (African folk song arranged by Hybré Meyer) • Discussion • Lunch break • Instrumental play: <i>Hungarian Dance No 5</i> by Brahms <i>The Syncopated Clock</i> by Anderson <i>Rondo Alla Turca</i> by Mozart • Certificates and closing comments

The researcher started off by telling the story for the *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms. The participants listened with concentration. When it was time for the dressing up of the characters in the fantasy clothes, they reacted similarly as before with the ice-breaker. They started slowly and hesitantly at first, not sure of what was really expected from them. It appeared as if they wanted to make sure that they were not going to make fools of themselves. They quickly realized that the practical demonstration was all about learning through play and that making a fool of oneself is part of this fun way of getting to know Western Classical music; even standing on their knees or sitting flat on the floor with peculiar attire on was acceptable (photo no 3) for the attendees. After the hesitant beginning, the participants gave their full support and acted out each story with passion and delight. It was interesting to observe how attendees at all the workshops were always keen to help each other

dress up in the different costumes (photo no 4). This created an excellent opportunity for socializing, led to active group participation, and created a fun and relaxed atmosphere for learning.

The participants found the second half of the programme, which was based on instrumental play very interesting. It became clear that they were not familiar with the use of percussion instruments. The researcher battled to make them play the percussion instruments in time to the music. Although they initially struggled with the instruments, the participants were anxious to know where they could obtain similar instruments, because it was not readily available in Mauritius. According to the participants, those that were available were very expensive. It was therefore not surprising that all the instruments that the researcher took with her for the presentation of the demonstration workshops, were bought by Mauritian teachers.

A total number of seven similar workshops were presented during the first trip to Mauritius. All of them took place at the OMEP Training Centre in Curepipe, except the one on Monday 22 September. This specific workshop was presented at the International School for two of their junior primary staff members and a few other schools from the surrounding area. The dates and number of attendees at the music workshops were as follows:

- Tuesday 16 September 2003: 33 attendees
- Thursday 18 September 2003: 49 attendees
- Friday 19 September 2003: 30 attendees
- Monday 22 September 2003: 8 attendees
- Tuesday 23 September 2003: 11 attendees
- Wednesday 24 September 2003: 28 attendees
- Friday 25 September 2003: 38 attendees.

The workshops that were presented during the first trip to Mauritius were attended by a total number of 177 Mauritians.

5.4 SECOND TRIP TO MAURITIUS: 20 March to 12 April 2004

Approximately six months later it proved possible for the researcher to return to Mauritius for follow-up work.

5.4.1 Purpose

The response of the teachers was overwhelmingly positive after the presentation of the first music workshop. Mr Valayden invited the researcher to return to Mauritius from 20 March to 12 April 2004 for a repetition of the first workshop to ECD teachers who did not have the opportunity to attend the first workshop. The researcher promised Mr Valayden at the Mauritius airport that she will return to the island for follow-up workshops (photo no 5). She had to plan a different workshop, which will be called the “follow-up workshop” for teachers who have attended the first workshop in 2003.

5.4.2 The workshops

Two types of workshops were presented during the researcher’s second trip to Mauritius, namely a repetition of the one she presented during her first visit and a follow-up workshop for previous attendees.

As during the first trip to Mauritius, it was again mostly OMEP students and pre-primary teachers who were invited to attend the workshop at the OMEP centre. Although OMEP functions as an NGO in Mauritius, the word of the researcher’s second visit to the island spread to the offices of the Minister of Education. Mr Yugesh Panday from the DoE and Scientific Research in Mauritius was, at that stage, in charge of a project for the ZEP schools on the island. He arranged with Mr Valayden that 36 teachers from the ZEP schools would attend the music workshop over a period of two days. They did the first workshop on 5 April and the follow-up on 6 April 2004.

The same handout as the one in 2003 was used for the teachers who attended the 2004 workshop for the first time. Nearly the same procedure was followed, starting with an ice-breaker, followed by the introduction of four pieces of Classical music

through the integration of the arts. Instrumental play, based on the same four Classical pieces, followed after the lunch break.

Five similar workshops as the one that was presented in 2003 were presented on the following days:

- Tuesday 23 March 2004: 40 attendees
- Wednesday 24 March 2004: 29 attendees
- Thursday 1 April 2004: 27 attendees
- Friday 2 April 2004: 20 attendees
- Monday 5 April 2004: 34 attendees.

The workshops were attended by a total of 150 new Mauritians who did not attend the 2003 workshop.

A follow-up workshop was scheduled for teachers who attended the 2003 music workshop. Nearly the same procedure was followed, except that the attendees were introduced to four new Classical pieces. They were also afforded the opportunity to narrate their own story for a given piece of music.

Outline of the follow-up workshop

- Welcome and brief introduction by Mr Somoo Valayden
- Ice breaker: Movements on Mambo No 5 by Lou Bega
- Active listening through dramatization - Recap
- **Example lesson 1: *Baby Elephant Walk* by Mancini**
Song: *The Lion and the Mbira* (From: *African Collage* by Vermeulen & van Aswegen)
- **Example lesson 2: *Punch and Judy* by Mancini**
Song: *Syatatutina ekaya* (From: *African Collage* by Vermeulen & van Aswegen)
- **Example lesson 3: *The Waltzing Cat* by Anderson**
Song: *Alley Cat* (From: *Songs and Activities for the Rainbow Nation* by Hybré Meyer)
- **Example lesson 4: *Norwegian Dance No 2* by Grieg**
Song: *The Mighty Lion* (From: *Songs and Activities for the Rainbow Nation* by Hybré Meyer)
- Lunch break
- Instrumental play: ***Baby Elephant Walk* by Mancini**
***Punch and Judy* by Mancini**
***The Waltzing Cat* by Anderson**
***Norwegian Dance No 2* by Grieg**
- Narration and dramatization of own story
- Drumming session with African music
- Attendance certificates and closing comments

After the instrumental play, the participants were divided into two groups. Each group received a CD player and a CD. One group stayed in the room where the morning's training took place and the other group was sent to an adjacent room. The groups were given one hour to write their own story according to a given piece of music. They could listen to the piece as many times as they wished. After they had written a fantasy story, based on the structure and elements of the music, it was expected from each group to give a creative dramatic interpretation of it. The ideal in this case would have been that the participants select their own piece of music (maximum of four minutes) from any music style, but because of the limited time for this exercise, two different pieces of music were pre-selected by the researcher.

Both groups received the following guidelines to integrating the arts and facilitating active learning and listening in ECD:

- Determine an easy way to introduce the name of the piece of music and its composer to young learners so that they will remember it.
- Analyze the music example by listening to it a few times. Make notes during each listening attempt to determine the structure/form of the music. These notes could be any kind of scribbles (graphic notation) that resemble any mood changes you hear in the piece. You may alter your notes or graphic layout during each listening attempt until you are satisfied with the broad structure.
- Use your imagination, own personal experience, culture and heritage to compile an inclusive story on the development level of a 5-9 year old child, based on the layout of the form of the music you have determined in step 2.
- Make use of character groups in your story, rather than using single characters. Try not to involve more than five character groups.
- Design an imaginative classroom environment for the dramatization of the story. Decide beforehand how you will set the class up and position the characters for the play.
- Divide your group into the different character groups and act out the story by assuming the different roles. Combine dramatic play, mimicry/mime and creative dance movements to depict your written story aesthetically according to the music.

- Design simple, inexpensive accessories, masks, fantasy clothes for the characters to enhance the imagination and the dramatic presentation of the story. (To save time during today's exercise, you may choose appropriate accessories from the collection that was used during the morning session.)
- Stage your play for the other group. Remember that someone must be responsible for introducing the name of the music and its composer and for telling the story to the other group before the acting begins. By retelling the narrative, the specific teacher's skills in the art of storytelling will be demonstrated.
- Your performance, creativity, group participation and movement according to the music will be evaluated by your peers in the other group.
- Your own assessment skills will be put to the test when it will be your turn to evaluate and critique the performance of your peers in the other group.

The researcher documented this activity as follows after the first follow-up workshop:

The group activity was found to be very useful and exciting. Nobody felt left out and the participants in each group worked very well together. Only one teacher from one of the groups withdrew herself from the activity because she tried to dominate the group from the beginning by forcing her ideas onto the others. The group members coped well with this situation. They were not disturbed by this "pushy" teacher, but just carried on with their planning. During this particular group's performance, the specific teacher sat all by herself on the side of the class and did not want to participate. Although the group cast her into a character role, she just sat there. When she realized that the group was not being put off by her attitude, she eventually walked over to the bundles of fantasy clothes, dressed herself in something and joined the rest of her group. I think that the idea of not being part of the fun was too much for her, because everybody was sorting outfits out around her and did not pay further attention to her. The reaction of this stubborn teacher was nothing unusual because it compared well with similar experiences I had with young learners in my music groups in South Africa (Nel Diary Notes: 25 March 2004).

Four follow-up workshops were presented on the following days for teachers who attended the first workshop in 2003:

- Thursday 25 March 2004: 26 attendees
- Friday 26 March 2004: 33 attendees
- Wednesday 31 March 2004: 49 attendees
- Tuesday 6 April 2004: 32 attendees.

These workshops were well attended by a total number of 140. The same enthusiasm amongst the attendees was experienced as during the attendance of the first workshop in September 2003.

5.4.3 Additional training opportunities

As previously mentioned, the planning of both trips to Mauritius was entirely in the hands of Mr Valayden. He organized interesting outings for the researcher to different primary schools in Mauritius, ranging from poor to very wealthy. The researcher can be seen on photos no 6 and 7, trying out the *Norwegian Dance No 2* by Grieg at the International School. This school is situated a few kilometres north of Pamplemousse. The children loved the story and were fascinated with the fantasy clothes. Seeing that the main language in this multi-cultural school is English, the researcher had no difficulty to communicate with the children. This was, however, not the case at other schools in Mauritius.

Communication between the researcher and the children at government schools was a problem. She did not attempt one of the stories from the proposed music programme, but decided to present a drumming lesson when she visited one of the government schools. She could have made use of one of the teachers as an interpreter, but to save time, she decided against it. Mr Valayden organized beforehand that the music lesson will be filmed for broadcasting purposes. A Grade 6 class and their teachers can be seen in action (photo no 8) using home-made cardboard pipes, painted in the primary colours. It was encouraging to find that the Mauritian teachers were always eager to learn new ideas and improve their music skills. They joined their learners spontaneously during dramatization and drumming sessions.

5.4.4 Special Needs Education in Mauritius

The researcher did not realize it at the time, but Mr Valayden was directly responsible for an important new research cycle that developed from the visits that he planned. These visits contributed to a new interest the researcher developed in Special Needs Education.

5.4.4.1 Rehabilitation Centre for the Youth at the Mauritius Prison

On Wednesday 31 March 2004 Mr Valayden organized a visit for the researcher to the Rehabilitation Centre for the Youth at the Mauritius Prison. There were 16 boys and 23 girls in the centre whose ages ranged from 9 to 18 years. These children spoke French and could not understand or speak English. It was not possible to use a lesson from the proposed music programme with them, because there was no CD player available, not even a small portable one. Special needs education was a new field to the researcher and she was excited about this opportunity to work with these children, so she decided to take them through a non-verbal African drumming session. She recalls her experience in this centre as follows:

On our arrival at the prison we were informed that an incident had just happened where one of the boys attacked another boy with a broken bottle. We waited patiently until the wardens had settled the boys and everybody moved to the hall where I had to meet the children. We were informed that it was the first time that they have ever attempted to mix the boys and the girls for a presentation in their hall. Unfortunately we did not have a CD player with us and they could not supply us with one at the Centre. I was not put off by these minor setbacks, but handed out coloured cardboard pipes and sticks for the drumming session to the children and wardens. They were sitting in a half moon formation in front of me (photo no 9). Through sounds, combinations of different rhythmic patterns and dance movements, I managed to keep their undivided attention for 40 minutes, without having to say one single word. The atmosphere was light and their spirits were high. Some of the boys really got carried away and broke a few sticks in half during the drumming session. I did not care about the broken sticks, because I realized that beating the sticks on the cardboard pipes served as a stress reliever for the children. I experienced no problems with the teenager's cooperation. They worked well together as a group and enjoyed themselves (Nel Diary Notes: 31 March 2004).

5.4.4.2 Shelter for women and children in distress

On Monday 5 April 2004 Mr Valayden organized an hour long visit for the researcher to a Shelter for Women and Children in Distress in Curepipe. This centre was based in a house close to Mr Valayden's residence and was run by Sheela Baguant. The women and children that were accommodated in the centre were mostly sexually abused by husbands and fathers. The researcher learnt from Sheela that most of the children in the centre had pending court cases and they were not allowed, for their own safety, to attend mainstream education before these cases were resolved. According to Sheela, that could even take a few years to happen. Their education

therefore had to be done in the centre itself. The researcher has documented this experience as follows (Nel Diary Notes: 5 April 2004):

The warm welcome I received at this centre brought a lump to my throat. Sheela told me that the women and children have spent hours to decorate the lounge for my visit (photo no 10). I decided to try the story of the *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms out with the women and children, following the same procedure as during a workshop. I told the story to them, handed out the fantasy clothes and then they acted the story out according to the cues given by the music. I had all the participants' full attention, co-operation and spontaneous participation and was quite moved by the obvious enjoyment they were experiencing from the activity. At that moment I was thinking that although the centre did not have a trained music teacher at their disposal, the resource material that I had compiled could be implemented by anybody who took charge of the education of these children. It was clear to me that the women and children in the centre lived under extremely morbid and stressful circumstances where fun and laughter were the exception, rather than the norm. Their education obviously needed the inclusion of fun-filled activities in which they all could actively take part, have fun and forget about their painful situation for a period of time. The two hours that I spent with them was enough proof that the methodology of the quick and easy music programme was instantly grasped and loved by all of them.

I also observed the willingness of the women to play and act with the children: even lending a supportive hand here and there. They were all laughing when the characters were swapped and enjoyed it to choose new outfits for the repetition of the music. The instrumental play that followed the dramatization was enjoyed just as much. It struck me again how well they co-operated and how much fun they had playing the instruments. Although I was a foreigner and a total stranger to them, the success they experienced with the lesson made them feel special and gave them a sense of achievement which resulted in an immediate bond between us. My visit to the centre that was initially scheduled for an hour eventually stretched to two hours. When we left, all the children ran out to our car and they were not satisfied until I hugged all of them individually. It was so obvious that each one's whole being was shouting out for love, affection, acceptance and the opportunity to have fun like all other children. As we drove away, I looked back and could still see them standing at the gate, waving at me in the distance. It made me feel good to know that I was able to brighten up their afternoon with this fun-filled music programme.

5.4.4.3 Schools for mentally handicapped children

The conventional curriculum posed particular disadvantages for the mentally handicapped children at the two schools that the researcher visited. Some of these children had speech impairments and therefore conventional methods of communication were inherently difficult. *The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education* (NACCCE 1999:59) points out in its report that

“many young people with disabilities have profound abilities, but in areas which the conventional curriculum neglects”. Exposure to the proposed music programme gave the children at these two schools the opportunity to communicate expressively through music, drama and the visual arts. According to the *NACCE Report* (1999:59), the point is not that the arts compensate for disability, but it is that present conceptions of ability are too narrow. The successful implementation of a lesson from the music programme at one of the schools for mentally handicapped children accentuated the fact that teachers have to reassess the potential of those who, in conventional terms, are thought to be less able. It was clear that the understanding of the capabilities of all children needs to be broadened.

The researcher was taken to the Apeim Centre in St Paul for mentally retarded teenagers and young adults (photo no 11). There she suggested to the teachers (standing at the back) that they should try to play Western Classical music to these learners when they are busy with their craft work. This could have a calming effect on them.

She also visited a second Apeim Centre, situated in Flacq. The principal of this school, Mario Prodigdon and his wife, Georgette (see Chapter 5.5.4.6), who both love music, attended the first as well as the follow-up music workshops which the researcher presented in Mauritius. Although the proposed music programme was not implemented at Mario Prodigdon’s school, it was still an eye opening experience to visit his school which catered for mentally handicapped children of all ages. The researcher’s visit to the Apeim school in Flacq was documented as follows (Nel Diary Notes: April 2004):

Just before the end of the school day, I was dropped at the Apeim Centre in Flacq. The principal, Mario, proudly showed me around and introduced me to the staff and children. He eventually took me to a large classroom where teenagers were working on a mural of an aquarium. He opened a built-in cupboard on the one side of the class and proudly showed me their instruments. I was delighted to find a recorder amongst a whole assortment of percussion instruments; this was at least an instrument that I was familiar with. Although I cannot play the recorder very well, I spontaneously sat down amongst the children and started to play a few simple songs that I could play from memory, e.g. Baa, baa black sheep, My grandfather’s clock, Ode to joy, etcetera. The mere sound of the instrument caused immediate consternation in the centre. The next moment children from other classrooms came pouring into the big classroom where I was sitting. Mario took the box with the instruments out of the cupboard and placed it in the middle of the table where

we were sitting. He scratched out a harmonica (mouth organ) from the box and started to accompany me on it. In no time each child had taken a percussion instrument from the box and joined in by playing on the beat of the music. The joy on their faces was unbelievable. The bell went and it was time for them to go home. There were many taxis waiting in the school yard to take the children home, but they refused to leave. They wanted Mario and me to keep on repeating the songs over and over so that they could accompany us. I was amazed by these children's sense of rhythm. It was obvious that they loved music and were inspired by it.

The importance that music should be integrated in the daily programme at institutions for Special Needs Education came to light at all the above-mentioned centres. The musical ability and needs of children in these centres seems to be totally underestimated and are not regularly catered for. Visits to these centres showed that music could be used as a powerful tool to make education fun and exciting in Special Needs Education. This discovery equipped the researcher with new knowledge which made her adamant to explore further when she returned to South Africa.

5.4.5 Reflecting on the workshops

The researcher was satisfied that the music training workshops that were done with ECD teachers during her first two trips to Mauritius were highly successful. She experienced an overwhelming need amongst ECD teachers to develop their Music Education skills and knowledge. The proposed music programme was well accepted and the teachers were able to grasp the methodology in a short period of time. Their unconditional acceptance of the methodology, their positive attitude towards the Western Classical music that was used in the programme and their spontaneous active participation at all the workshops inspired the researcher to make a third trip to Mauritius to do observation at different schools. The teachers were warned beforehand that the researcher was going to try her best to come back to the island for observation. The researcher had to find out if she was able to influence the teacher's learning to an extent that they could educate themselves to implement the lessons effectively in the classroom.

5.5 THIRD TRIP TO MAURITIUS: 19 September to 1 October 2004

Although the purpose of the third trip was purely for observation, two workshops were fitted in at the OMEP Training Centre for new OMEP students. According to Frega (1998:158), it is very important to evaluate what one has done, in order to compare

whether one is on the right track with what was initially proposed. Colwell (1970:3) sees evaluation as “a judgment of the worth of an experience, idea, procedure or product”. The researcher’s plan was to observe as many teachers as possible, who obtained the resource material. She wanted to see to what extent they managed to use the methodology from the product in the classroom. Mr Valayden was contacted and it was explained to him why it was necessary for the researcher to visit the island for a third time. With his generosity towards ECD, he made all the necessary arrangements and appointments at the various schools. The researcher kept a list of schools that obtained resource material during the first two visits. This list, plus the *Mauritian Teacher Assessment* form (see Appendix D) was e-mailed to Mr Valayden and he took charge of the final stage of the Mauritius Music Project. A summary of the insights gleaned from the assessment form as well as similar assessment forms that were used for the main research in South Africa will be discussed in Chapter 6.5.

5.5.1 Sample for observation

It was obvious that the sample for observation had to be taken from the 20 schools that were in possession of the resource material. It was assumed that participants from these schools who attended the training workshops and were in possession of the resource material would have implemented some of the lessons by that time and would be able to present a demonstration lesson which the researcher could observe in the classroom.

5.5.2 Funding

There was no sponsorship available for the third trip. Although the researcher had to pay her own airfare, she still saved a lot of money on accommodation and transport. She stayed with the Valaydens at their private home in Curipipe and was taken on field trips to the schools by Mr Valayden, his retired neighbour and Mrs Marie-France Adam (owner of Mickey House Pre-School in the capital city, Port Louis).

5.5.3 Observation at schools in Mauritius: 21-29 September 2004

Mr Valayden arranged an initial meeting at 14:00 on Monday 20 September 2004 at the OMEP Training Centre with teachers from the 20 schools that were in possession of the resource material. Only 15 teachers turned up for the meeting of whom two

said that they were not in possession of the material. According to Mr Valayden he invited a few additional schools to the meeting who gave an indication that they still want to obtain the material and would love to be included in the observation. Seeing that these two teachers that attended the above-mentioned meeting on the day had both attended the previous two music workshops in Mauritius, they were given the opportunity to be included in the observation. A package of the resource material, which they could try out before their schools were visited, was given to each of them after the meeting. Each of the attendees at the meeting received a copy of the *Mauritian Teacher Assessment* form (see Appendix D-2 to D4). The rest of the afternoon was spent explaining the form in order to prepare these 15 teachers for the researcher's observation visit to their schools. Mr Valayden contacted the schools the following day and arranged a convenient time for the visit during the next two weeks. According to these appointments, he then drew up a programme to visit the following 13 schools:

Tuesday 21 September:	Fairyland Pre School (Port Louis) Mickey House Pre-School (Port Louis)
Wednesday 22 September:	International School (Pamplemousse)
Thursday 23 September:	Petit Poucet Pre-Primary (OMEP, Curepipe) Camp Levieux Municipal School (Rose Hill) St Nicholas Private School (Phoenix)
Friday 24 September:	Le Lutins Pre-School (Flacq)
Monday 27 September:	Le Phare Pre-Primary School (Mahebourg) FAC Catholic School
Tuesday 28 September:	La Farandole (Tamarin – Black River) SOS Childrens Village (Bamboo – Black River)
Wednesday 29 September:	La Coccinelle Pre-School (Curepipe) Toddlers Pre-School (Curepipe).

5.5.3.1 Fairyland Pre-School (Port Louis)

The researcher's observation visits started on Tuesday 21 September at Fairyland Pre- School, close to the capital city, Port Louis. There was great excitement when she arrived at the school. The teachers and learners formed a guard of honour for her to pass through and sprayed her with bougainvillea flowers (photo no 12). The narrated story from the music programme for the *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms

was cleverly adapted to accommodate the inclusivity of Mauritius, by replacing the buck character with the extinct dodo bird. Even the small pictures of the buck on the graphic notation chart were replaced by pictures of this. The children loved the lesson and were very excited to act the story out. Simple, effective costumes were prepared to motivate the children. The teacher cut beaks out of cardboard for the dodos and fastened it with elastic around children's heads. The teacher was very active during the storytelling. When she came to the part of the hunter that was after the dodo bird with his long hunting gun, she stuck a big hat on her head and was pretending to stalk the dodo; much to the delight of the children. Although the teacher did not have all the instruments that were used at the training workshop, she used an assortment of bought and home-made instruments to accompany the *Hungarian Dance No 5*. Another interesting thing that was observed was the way the teacher controlled her class. She used a thin wooden stick with coloured stars on as a magic wand and a pointer.

5.5.3.2 Mickey House Pre-School (Port Louis)

The owner of Mickey House Pre-School, Marie-France Adam, were so impressed with the idea of dramatizing Western Classical music and accompanying it with percussion instruments, that she decided to base her entire end-of-the-year concert in October 2004 on the method. The researcher's visit to her school was just a few days before this concert. By that time the children were already very familiar with the pieces. A stunning presentation of *The Aquarium* by Saint-Saëns was observed. The act was a full dress rehearsal of the concert. Costumes that were used for the purpose were interesting and fascinating: appropriate for a concert, but too elaborate for ordinary use in a classroom where it is expected from the learners to dress themselves within a few seconds when characters are swapped (photo no 13).

Marie-France was one of the two teachers who bought all the researcher's percussion instruments that were used for the demonstrations during the music training workshops. The researcher observed the following pieces, played by children ranging from three to five years old on the percussion instruments:

- *Can-can* by Offenbach (3 years)
- *Waltz* from *Coppelia* by Delibes (4 years)

- *Radetsky March* by Strauss (3 years)
- *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms (4 years).

It was exciting to see how well these pre-schoolers coped with the instruments (photo no 14). They handled it with care and were able to play rhythmically and in time to the music. They were well disciplined and worked very well together as a group, carefully following the teacher's instructions. Marie-France explained afterwards how she and her teachers managed to reach such a high standard with the music at her school:

I was very excited after I have attended your music training workshops. This music has actually excited everyone at my school; the children, the teachers and the parents. It was very difficult for us in the beginning. We started off by playing the Classical music in the dining room to get the children's ears used to the sound. I got my teachers together in the afternoons and made copies of the story for each of them. Then we tried it out, practically amongst ourselves before we introduced it to the children. This is how I trained all my teachers (Nel Diary Notes: 21 September 2004).

The researcher was impressed by the fact that Marie-France and her teachers (who were all musically untrained) had the confidence to try out other pieces from the resource material which were different to those introduced at the workshops. This showed that teachers who are motivated and determined to try out the proposed stories at their schools are able to choose any of the stories from the resource material and expose their children successfully to it.

5.5.3.3 International School (Pamplémousse)

The researcher arrived at the school at 9:00 am. Although the school was in possession of the resource material, none of the nine teachers responsible for Key Stage 1 was able to implement the proposed music programme. The researcher decided to have a meeting with these teachers after school (12:45 am) in the form of a mini-workshop to find out why they did not implement the music programme and how she could possibly assist them to do so.

Because the researcher had to wait for the teachers until 12:45 am, she spent the available time to implement some of the lessons with different classes. The Class 2 group that she saw first, was the same group she worked with during her second trip

to Mauritius six months previously. When the children entered the music room, one of the boys pointed his finger at the researcher and said: "I remember you. You taught us the *Norwegian Dance No 2* by Grieg". The next moment he told the story in perfect sequence. This boy's spontaneous reaction demonstrates the power of the methodology to recall information that was stored in the long term memory by making use of a combination of storytelling, music, dramatization, creative dance movements and costumes.

The session after school with the teachers revealed interesting information. On the researcher's question why the teachers did not try the some of the lessons out at their school, the reasons that were given ranged from:

- I had too many children in my class
- I did not have enough space
- I found it difficult to hear the different sections in the music.

A mini-workshop followed during which the researcher introduced the teachers and the principal to the following three Western Classical pieces:

- *The Kangaroo* by Saint-Saëns
- *The Aquarium* by Saint-Saëns, and
- *Comedian's Gallop* by Kabalevsky.

The practical demonstration was loved by all the attendees and the teachers agreed that the outcomes were within their reach; it was just a matter of start doing it. The researcher suggested the following plan of action which could help the teachers with the implementation of the music programme:

- Meet regularly as a group to plan one of the music stories.
- Try the movements for the story out physically.
- Share ideas for the preparation of the fantasy clothes and decide who is going to supply or make what.
- Prepare masks, etc. for the dramatization during Art classes.
- Sort all the available instruments that are lying loose in cupboards and put them in labeled containers.

- Decide who is going to prepare the instrumental chart for the story.
- Make use of children from the higher grades to help with the colouring in of the notation charts.
- Get a flip file for each learner in which they can keep the worksheets of the different music stories.
- Try to get hold of a “clothing rail” for the music room on which the outfits could be hung.
- Teach the learners to sort the fantasy clothes and hang them back on the rail at the end of each dramatization lesson.

Although these suggestions were eagerly accepted by the teachers, it was still a matter of starting to implement the lessons before any success could be achieved.

5.5.3.4 Petit Poucet Pre-Primary (OMEP, Curepipe)

The children at the Petit Poucet Pre-Primary School at the OMEP Training Centre in Mauritius, dramatized the well-known *Baby Elephant Walk* by Mancini. The four baby elephants, wearing the elephant masks (photo no 15), were standing in the middle with the mommy and daddy elephants beside them (without the masks). The teachers used old pinkish scarves for the elephant costumes. Colourful green squares were used for the trees that were swaying from side to side in the wind. An empty green plastic bucket was used for the waterhole where the baby elephants were drinking water.

There were only a few percussion instruments available at the school. Mrs Roussel, the principal of the school, showed a keen interest to obtain more percussion instruments. The few instruments that they had available were used to accompany two songs which they sang for the researcher.

5.5.3.5 Camp Levieux Municipal School (Rose Hill)

This school is newly built with large classrooms. Teacher Nazmah, who attended the music workshops, was very keen to try the music programme out at the school but she did not have access to a CD player. She solved this problem by playing the

music on a computer in a very small computer room that was next to her class. Nazmah mentioned the following (Nel Diary Notes: September 2004):

Although the computer has been at our school since January 2004, it was never connected and operational. I asked somebody from the municipality to please get it going for me so that I could at least play a CD on it when you come to Mauritius again. Luckily this was done for me.

Nazmah explained that the school was situated in a poor area where parents were not always able to pay school fees. Unemployment and drug abuse in the area contributed to the poor social conditions under which most of the children who attended the school, grew up. This led to the fact that many of these children were restless, could not concentrate and were unable to sit still and listen. According to Nazmah she was amazed to find what calming effect the Western Classical music had on the children. She says: “We used the music to calm the children down. They were intrigued by this music and the actions that go with it” (Nel Diary Notes: September 2004).

Nazmah choose the music of the *Menuet in G* by Bach to act out in the lesson that was observed. She managed to cut effective fantasy costumes for the flower characters from an old newspaper. She also designed interesting outfits for the butterflies out of plastic carry bags onto which she stapled coloured pieces of crinkle paper. The children stuck their arms through the handles of the bag with the bigger piece of the bag hanging behind their backs. This gave the perfect effect of colourful wings (photo 16). The teacher improvised her own instruments to accompany the music, ranging from empty yogurt tubs, milk cans (baby food) and baby powder containers. She even threaded beads into a piece of wire for shakers.

5.5.3.6 St Nicholas Private School (Phoenix)

The previous music teacher at St Nicholas Private School, who obtained the resource material from the researcher, got a promotion post somewhere else and left with his resource material. The replacement music teacher was a young, 20 year old man who was teaching music at both the primary and the senior school. Seeing that there was no music lesson prepared in which the resource material was used, the researcher introduced two combined pre-school classes with a total number of 27 learners to *Comedian's Gallop* by Kabalevsky. The young music teacher was very

interested in the lesson and was used as interpreter, because the little ones did not understand English. He translated every sentence of the story with the necessary emotion, facial expressions and actions. The children were then divided into groups and given the opportunity to dress in the fantasy clothes. The dramatization of the story was repeated four times before the bell went. It was interesting to observe that the children were reluctant to leave and kept on begging that the music must be repeated once more.

The headmistress insisted that the same lesson was repeated with the level 6 children (in South Africa this will be Grade 5). Although the older children understood English well, they seemed very sceptical when they entered the room and saw me with the fantasy clothes. After the story was told, one of the boys even asked: “Are you serious about this acting out business?” Not being put off by this unexpected question, I divided the group into lions, monkeys, clowns and a ringmaster for the circus scene in the story. I made sure that all the “busy bodies” were chosen to act out the role of the monkeys that were locked up in an imaginary cage. My plan to accommodate the restless children worked out well. The monkeys really tried their best to be as funny as they possibly could. They were somewhat taken by surprise when they were praised after the performance for their brilliant act in the “monkey cage”. The story was eventually repeated three times. It was, strangely enough, the “busy bodies” who complained the loudest when the bell went and it was time for them to leave. This example points out that teachers should always be aware of the fact that awkward situations in a classroom could be cleverly reversed to their own advantage.

5.5.3.7 Le Lutins Pre-School (Flacq)

A visit from a foreigner was regarded as great excitement at schools in Mauritius. The researcher was welcomed at the gate of Le Lutins Pre-School by teacher Georgette Prodigdon and her Grade R class where they presented her with a flag of Mauritius (photo no 17). The children at this pre-school treated the observer to an excellent interpretation of *The Kangaroo* by Saint-Saëns. Teacher Georgette made an A3 copy of the A4 picture of the kangaroo that appears in the resource material. Beautiful fantasy clothes, which looked exactly like the ones the researcher used at the demonstration workshops, were made for the dramatization (photo no 18). Excellent co-operation and team work were observed amongst the teachers.

According to teacher Georgette, they started off with the *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms after they attended the music workshops. The teachers said that they felt confident to begin with the presentation of this piece at their school, because had tried it out practically at the training workshop. Georgette mentioned that they found the instrumental section very hard to understand. The researcher made use of the opportunity to guide the teachers through the instrumental play for *The Kangaroo* by Saint-Saëns with the few instruments they had to their disposal (bought ones, as well as a few home-made ones). Thereafter the teachers were shown how to act out the story for *The Aquarium* by Saint-Saëns. They were so eager to learn, that one of the teachers filmed on video everything the researcher demonstrated and explained to the teachers.

It is necessary to mention at this stage that the researcher is only in possession of photos that were taken up to her visit at Le Lutins Pre-School on Friday 24 September 2006. The spool, with the photos that were taken with her Kodac pocket instamatic camera during her visits to the schools below, was damaged and could not be used. Highlights of her observation visits to these schools will still be described.

5.5.3.8 Le Phare Pre-Primary School (Mahebourgh)

This school was a perfect example of a multi-aged school where children between the ages of 2 and 5 years are all accommodated in the same class. The teacher in charge attended both the music workshops and made beautiful costumes for the dramatization out of odds and ends that did not cost much. It was interesting to observe how the music programme was implemented at this school. Instead of choosing a specific piece of music from the resource material, the CD was started at track 1 (*The Kangaroo* by Saint-Saëns) and was never stopped. It was just playing from the one track to the next while the children were dramatizing a story about a mother goat that went shopping and met a wolf along the road. This story was based on the well-known fairy tale of *Little Red Riding Hood*. Although the children loved the dramatization and acting out their own story, dressed in costumes, no real active listening took place. The reason for this was that the structure of the music and the musical elements in the pieces, were not attended to. The music was playing a secondary role in the lesson, with the main focus placed on the story. I stopped the lesson after the second track on the CD (*The Aquarium* by Saint-Saëns) to give tips

and guidance. The story in the resource material for *The Kangaroo* by Saint-Saëns was demonstrated with the class according to the structure of the music.

5.5.3.9 FAC Catholic School

I was very keen to visit this specific school, because I had fond memories of Sister Gabriella, the teacher from FAC Catholic School, who attended the very first workshop in Mauritius. Though she was appropriately dressed in her nun attire on the day of the workshop, this elderly lady surprised everyone with her active participation. She was also the first attendee to obtain the resource material.

When I arrived at the school, I was told that Sister Gabriella was not teaching at the school anymore, because she was doing missionary work in Zambia, one of the SADC countries (see Appendix A-2). I learnt that the resource material that she bought at the workshop was not for FAC Catholic School, but for herself. The music programme was, therefore, never implemented at this school. A demonstration of *The Kangaroo* by Saint-Saëns was done with the children, while the teachers observed the lesson. After the children went home, the researcher shared tips and ideas with the teachers at a short staff meeting.

5.5.3.10 La Farandole Pre-School (Tamarin, Black River)

Tessa Perrier, from *La Farandole Pre-School*, attended both the first and the follow-up music workshops. She used *Baby Elephant Walk* by Mancini for her observation lesson. The children listened carefully and with concentration to the clues in the music as they were sequencing the narrated story from the resource material. What I observed, was exactly what I visualized how these lessons should be implemented in the classroom. The listening lesson was fun for the children *and* the teacher. Interesting, inexpensive costumes were made that added to the enjoyment of the lesson. The children, as well as the teacher, knew the music very well and were ready to proceed from the dramatization to instrumental play. Tessa informed me that she did not have instruments available, apart from a few odds and ends. She was highly inspired by the methodology of the music programme and made the following comments to the researcher (Nel Diary Notes: 28 September 2004):

This music programme gave me the opportunity to have fun. I am not a specialist in music, but I like this methodology. After I have started the method at the school, parents asked me: “What are you doing at the school, because the children tell us every day about the elephant and movements that they are doing with music. In the past when we asked them what they did at school, they would answer, oh, nothing much! But now all of a sudden they talk excitedly about what they did at school.”

Children of this age need music. In Mauritian schools they learn only the ABC. I say they must first learn music and then they will be able to learn the ABC much easier.

The researcher was presented with a booklet that Tessa compiled of drawings that her children made of the *Baby Elephant Walk* (photo no 19). Each of these art pieces (photos no 20-22) is unique in its own right and point out how well Tessa managed to integrate this piece of Western Classical music with the ECD learning programme. Her thankfulness for the music knowledge and skills that the researcher shared with her is reflected in the following inscription which she wrote at the back of the front cover of the booklet: “Thanks for the wonderful ‘gift’. The children enjoyed it so much. The dramatization made me feel a lot closer to my pupils.” The fact that she referred to the music programme as a “gift” made the researcher feel that her effort to train ECD teachers in Mauritius on how to expose young learners to Western Classical music was worthwhile and appreciated.

5.5.3.11 SOS Childrens Village (Bamboo, Black River)

This school was not in possession of the resource material. Although a representative from the school attended both the 2003 and 2004 music workshops, there were no funds available to purchase the material. The teacher was very keen to implement the lessons and therefore she attended the meeting on Tuesday 19 September when arrangements for observation at different schools were made (see 5.5.3). She insisted on trying out the material and that her school should be visited for observation. Resource material was then lent to her so that she could prepare a lesson.

When the researcher visited the school on 28 September, the theme for the week was Day and Night. The teacher adapted the story in the resource material for the *Norwegian Dance No 2* by Grieg for this specific theme. Interesting fantasy clothes were made for the sun, stars, night, day, clouds and butterflies. Although the story

was altered to fit the theme, the dramatization worked out well and active listening was observed. The few instruments that were available at the school were not used as suggested in the resource material, because there were not enough for each child in the class to have one. The teacher constantly referred to the name of the piece and that of the composer during the lesson.

After the presentation, the teacher told the researcher in an informal interview that they (the teachers) are always willing to attend workshops in Mauritius, but it is never evaluated in practice. According to this teacher, OMEP is caring about what is presented to teachers, but there is no follow-up afterwards. Her suggestion is that OMEP should train a core group of teachers that can go out to schools to evaluate and observe if the teachers are able to implement their training. She says further that sponsors should be found to finance the traveling fees of such a group.

5.5.3.12 La Coccinelle Pre-School (Curepipe, Forest Side)

Radha, the wife of Mr Somoo Valayden, owns La Coccinelle Pre-School in Curepipe. She is a well known drama educator in Mauritius and therefore the idea of dramatizing a piece of Western Classical music appealed to her. Although the new school year in Mauritius starts in September and many of the little ones were still new and uncertain, Radha and her staff managed to implement the music programme extremely well. Everything was just perfect. By saying this, I mean that the resource material was implemented exactly the way I had in mind for the development of the children's listening skills. The children knew the names of the different pieces and composers very well. The dramatization of the stories with the children dressed in fantasy outfits were followed up by instrumental play. Seeing that Radha bought all the instruments that were used for demonstrations at the first music workshop in Mauritius, she had all the resources to her disposal that were needed. Enlarged copies of the graphic notation were made, which were coloured in with bright colours and displayed on the wall where they were clearly visible for the children.

The six teachers at La Coccinelle Pre-School attended both the music workshops in Mauritius. They managed to implement many of the lessons in the resource material successfully at the school. An article and photos of a concert that was staged by La Coccinelle Pre-School appeared on 13 June 2004 in *Le Mauricien*, one of the main weekly newspapers in Mauritius (Burren 2004:29). The concert was based on the

Four Seasons by Vivaldi (photo no 23). The researcher derived from the article and the photos of the children dressed in colourful costumes that the methodology of the proposed music programme was well understood by Radha and her staff and well implemented at the school.

Both Radha and Marie-France Adam from Mickey House Pre-School in Port Louis (see 5.5.4.2) felt that all the effort that they, as pre-school teachers, had put in to expose their young learners successfully to drama and music in the pre-school should be continued when their learners start primary school. Their concern is shared by the *Carnegie Corporation of New York* (1994:1) which warns that “high quality preschools will not, however, produce lasting benefits for children if they are followed by poor elementary school experiences.”

5.5.3.13 Toddlers Pre-School (Curepipe)

Toddlers Pre-School is a multi-age pre-school which is situated within walking distance of the OMEP Training Centre in Curepipe. The teacher in charge, Christine, did not have a CD player at the school and therefore waited until a week before the researcher came to Mauritius for observation before she started implementing the music programme. She brought her own CD player from home for the purpose. Two Classical pieces were dramatized during the observation:

- *Hungarian Dance No 5* by Brahms, and
- *On the Trail* by Grofé.

Seeing that these two stories both take place in a forest, Christine cleverly combined the two. Instead of using a donkey as suggested in the story for *On the Trail*, she used a wolf sneaking through the trees. The two and a half year old children played the roles of small animals in the forest that want to get away from the wolf. The children listened with concentration and knew the two pieces very well. It was interesting to observe that active listening was taking place according to the structure of the pieces. It was not a question of just starting the music and acting out anything that the children imagined. The parts where Christine changed the story slightly, by using her own initiative, still fitted in perfectly with the different themes and concepts in the piece. She used inexpensive fantasy outfits which complemented the lesson and stimulated the imaginations of the children.

This lesson made such an impression on the researcher that Christine was asked to demonstrate the lesson with her pre-school children the following day at the OMEP Training Centre during a mini workshop with OMEP students.

5.5.4 Informal interview with Marie-France Adam

The researcher had an informative conversation in the car with Marie-France Adam on 28 September 2004, when she drove her to La Farandole Pre-School and the SOS Children's Village for observation visits. She stated the following when she was asked to explain her viewpoint on Music Education in Mauritius (Nel Diary Notes: 28 September 2004)

According to me, there is no general vision amongst pre-schools in Mauritius to develop culture, communication and socialization. The school's main aim for children is to excel academically and to do better than the next one. Pre-school teachers do not always understand that play is learning.

It is part of a global development to incorporate Arts and Culture at school. Owners of pre-schools in Mauritius are mostly Indians who are still very stuck to their own type of music.

Marie-France could be right, on the one hand, with her statement that Indian pre-school owners are still very stuck to their own type of music, if it is taken into consideration that, out of all the schools that attended the music workshops, only 20 obtained the material. The fact that overseas postage is very expensive could also have played a role why they did not order the material from the researcher after she had left the island.

According to the researcher, the pre-school owners cannot, on the other hand, be blamed in this case, for only exposing the children to Indian music and the *Sega*, because this is in most cases the only music style that they are familiar with and felt comfortable to teach. Those teachers, who managed to obtain the research material, were willing to try the lessons out at their schools. They were positive about the implementation of Western Classical music and were open for new ideas.

5.5.5 Reflecting on the observation at schools in Mauritius

The researcher was pleasantly surprised with the excitement and joy with which most of the lessons were presented at the different schools. Teachers showed a great deal of creativity and came up with highly effective, inexpensive fantasy outfits to brighten up their lessons and motivate their learners. Dressing up in the fantasy clothes contributed to the fun and success of each lesson.

No negativity towards Western Classical music was observed. Even at schools where teachers were only in possession of the resource material for a week, the teachers managed to implement the lessons successfully. It was striking to observe how the teachers enjoyed the presentation of the lessons with their learners. The dramatization of stories was an activity that was loved by everyone and was found, as the researcher predicted, to be a powerful educational tool through which young learners could be exposed to Western Classical music.

Although workshop attendees found the instrumental play section very interesting and enjoyed it very much, this part of the music programme was neglected at many schools. The reason for this could be attributed to the fact that percussion instruments are not readily available on the island and therefore teachers are inexperienced with the use of these sound makers.

5.6 SUMMARY

On the researcher's first trip to Mauritius she did not know what to expect from workshop attendees, because they were from different culture and language groups from those to which she was accustomed. The main obstacle was the shortage of funds to obtain the available resource material. Sponsorship will have to be found to make future ECD training on the island sustainable, especially for OMEP students.

As the researcher looked through the photographs of Mauritius, it was not difficult to see the message that the pictures communicated. Active involvement of teachers and children having fun were reflected on most of them. It was quite a challenge to make a selection from the many photographs that were taken in Mauritius that could be presented in the thesis, because they all conveyed the same message; the integration of storytelling, dramatization, instrumental play, creative dance

movements and the arts is an exciting and fun way of active listening to Western Classical music.

An overwhelming need for an effective method through which ECD teachers in Mauritius could develop their musical skills and knowledge was experienced in the pilot project. The teachers' unconditional acceptance of the methodology of the proposed music programme, their attitude towards Western Classical music and their spontaneous active participation at all the workshops inspired the researcher to continue the study in South Africa.