

Chapter One

Research Outline

1.1 Personal Motivation

Music education in Malawi is in a crisis. There has been little, if any, implementation of ideas on music education by the government and policy makers to make music an essential part of primary, secondary and teachers' training education. As a result, there is a chronic marginalization of music education in the course of developing or reviewing the national curriculum; and in allocating budgets or providing resource materials for subjects in education. The consequence of marginalizing music education has been lack of trained and qualified music teachers in primary, secondary and teachers' training education. In turn, there is no teaching of music in the primary, secondary and teachers' training education in the country.

Chancellor College, one of the four constituent colleges of the University of Malawi, is the only institution of higher learning that offers studies in music. Through the Faculty of Education, Chancellor College prepares and produces secondary school teachers. However, the 'route map' of the Faculty of Education discourages education students to study music to degree level because music in the Malawian education is a 'non-examinable subject'.

The urge to address these problems motivated me to examine music education in Malawi in order to develop possible solutions. This will include tracing the origin of the crisis in music education and arguing ideas for music education in Malawi.

As a Malawian, I did not study music at primary and secondary school. But during my childhood, I learnt Malawian music. My grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Madeya, frequently took me to the garden to chase away monkeys that came to

eat the maize, by beating a traditional drum. Born and having grown up in a village, I was, and still am, participating in Malawian music practices. In particular, I value the music and dance of the initiation rites. In 1985, I undertook a personal project on Lomwe music in Ulumba and Mayaka areas to help me compose spiritual songs that I used to teach my secondary school choir at Mtendere Juniorate. The skill, knowledge and experience in my home music and choirs inspired me to study music at Chancellor College from 1986 to 1991. The courses I took particular interest in were Ethnomusicology, Theory of Music and Music in the Community. At the end of the five-year study I earned my first degree in Education with Music and English as my secondary school teaching subjects.

As a qualified teacher, I worked at Saint Mary's secondary school from 1991 to 1995. While at this school, I served the Music Section of Chancellor College as a demonstrator in Music Education, Elements of Music and Elementary Piano. In addition, I was involved in composing songs, based on stylistic practices of Malawian music, for the University of Malawi graduation ceremonies and for church worship. I also founded the Saint Mary's music club and became the director of various choirs in the Municipality of Zomba such as Zomba Music Society choir, Zomba CCAP choir and Thundu CCAP choir. This was, also, a relevant area of my music learning where I became a music practitioner.

Another important issue in my music education was when I started a Bachelor of Music Honours (BMus Hons) with the University of South Africa (UNISA) between 1997 and 1998. I studied the Philosophies and Research Methodologies of Music, Music Theory, Music Education and Music History by distance education. After BMus Hons, I did a Master of Arts in Musicology by dissertation, with the title, MUSIC LEARNING AND ACQUISITION AMONG YAO CHILDREN, with UNISA, by distance education, between 1998 and 2000. The research for the dissertation was undertaken in Malawi. I have also gained some music knowledge, experiences and skills from students, teachers,

colleagues, friends and other music professionals at various music workshops as well as conferences during the past ten years.

1.2 Malawi

Malawi is a landlocked country and it is located in central southern Africa. The country has 96,000 square kilometres of land and 22,000 square kilometres of water. About one quarter of Malawi is forest which consists of exotic and indigenous trees. Malawi has a population of about 10,000,000 people and according to Naidoo et al (2000:90), the population of Malawi consists of 99% Africans. Asians, Europeans and others make up the remaining 1%. The 99% Africans include people from the nine main ethnic or linguistic groups: Chewa (the largest group), Khonde, Lomwe, Ngoni, Nyanja, Sena, Tonga, Tumbuka and Yao. Malawi is a multilingual society with English and Chichewa as official languages. Many Africans obtain part of their living from agricultural activities. Maize is the staple food of almost every Malawian family and tobacco is one of the crops earning about 60% of foreign revenue.

1.3 Need for the Thesis

The early missionaries deserve credit for introducing music education in schools in Malawi during the pre-colonial and colonial government. The post-colonial government of Malawi retained music education in the general curriculum. But, music education in the colonial era had shortfalls which still place music education in a critical stage of cultural alienation in independent Malawi. The shortfalls mandate music teachers to search for the content and practice of music education that integrates and values Malawian music. This thesis will produce and discuss samples of this content and practice of music education. Other issues, which have influenced the need for the thesis, are discussed below under 1.3.1 – 1.3.5.

1.3.1 The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) Requirements

The goals of the Ministry of Education and Culture (1991c:iii), listed as ethical and socio-cultural skills, expect that the teaching of music at all levels of education should “help preserve Malawi’s cultural practice; develop an appreciation for the practice of one’s culture; develop a sense of respect for other people’s culture”. These policy goals derive from the purpose of education in Malawi. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2001:14) describes this purpose as: “To equip students with basic knowledge and skills to allow them [to] function as productive citizens in a free society”. Therefore, music education that integrates Malawian music in education will contribute to the achievements of the requirements of the MEC.

1.3.2 The Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) Requirements

The work of the Malawi Institute of Education is to improve and update curricula for subjects that are taught in primary, secondary and teachers’ training education in Malawi. In addition, MIE publishes textbooks and manuals for use in Malawian education. Banda and Lemani (1997:11,15) state that MIE carried out a survey countrywide to determine the needs, expectations and aspirations of the learners and the general public, which are not yet met by the current secondary school curriculum. The purpose of the survey was to establish a rationale for reviewing the curriculum. The results of the survey identified the necessity for the teaching of the local Arts (e.g., Music and Dance) in education.

The MIE is concerned about improving the quality of music education through reviewing or developing music syllabi and publishing music textbooks. This is why the MIE, in collaboration with the MEC, has developed music teachers’ guides for primary school education. The need for the thesis is to provide the MIE with concrete materials that would supplement the content of music syllabi and publications of music teachers’ guides.

1.3.3 The University of Malawi (UNIMA) Requirements

The Music Section of Chancellor College has recently proposed new teaching courses. Some of the courses are intended to promote Malawian music and a sense of individuality and identity among the Malawian people. This is perceived as a necessary step towards music education that preserves, supports, revitalises, presents and disseminates Malawian music. The thesis, therefore, would be a valuable source of reference to the new teaching courses.

1.3.4 The Expectations of the Primary Education Advisors (PEAs)

Between the 14th July and 20th August 1996, I was involved as a resource person in the in-service music workshop for the PEAs. The goal of the in-service workshop was to train the PEAs to become trainers of primary school music teachers. The PEAs, generally, indicated that the music syllabus for primary education was outdated. Deriving from this experience, the materials of the thesis will provide the PEAs, including music educators, with a reference source that would make the music syllabus for primary school education meet the expectations of the PEAs and the needs of Malawians.

1.3.5 The Expectations of Malawians

Traditional chiefs and members of the general public, representing Malawians, attended the 1995 Secondary School Curriculum Review Symposium held in Lilongwe between the 13th and 15th February 1995, where they endorsed Music and Dance as one of the elective subjects in secondary education. Other delegates to the symposium were academicians and policy makers. This thesis seeks to provide appropriate ideas that may guide the development of resources for Music and Dance in secondary education in Malawi.

1.4 Research Questions

This thesis is based on the following main question: What should be done to address the crisis in music education in Malawi? This question can be broken up into the following three sub-questions.

1.4.1 Sub-Question 1

When, where, how and why did music education start in schools in Malawi? Answers to this question will be derived from an exploration of the trends in music education in schools during the pre-colonial period, 1875-1891; the colonial era, 1891-1964; and the postcolonial period, 1964-2005. This exploration is presented in Chapter Two. The pre-colonial era is limited to the period starting from 1875 to 1891 because issues of music and music education of this period are significant to the discussion of this thesis.

1.4.2 Sub-Question 2

How has the lack of studies in music affected Malawians? Malawian teachers do not receive formal training in either Western music or in Malawian music. As a result, the teaching of music in primary, secondary and teachers' training education does not happen. Chapter Three addresses sub-question 2.

1.4.3 Sub-Question 3

Is music education of any value to Malawians? Answers to this question are discussed in Chapter Four.

1.5 Aim

Deriving from the main question and sub-questions, the aim of the thesis is to:

- ◆ Ascertain the views of Malawians on the values and meanings of music, and music education
- ◆ Identify reasons for the marginalized music education in Malawi
- ◆ Discuss the consequences to individuals and the nation of not advocating and implementing music education
- ◆ Develop new and appropriate perceptions for music education, and recommend the same to the education authorities for implementation for the benefit of Malawians.

1.6 Methodology

Available literature was consulted to gather information on Malawian music and music education in Malawi. A qualitative method of inquiry and data collection was employed, taking account of Marshall and Rossman (1999:105):

Qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information: (a) participation in the setting, (b) direct observation, (c) in-depth interviewing, and (d) analyzing documents and material culture.

Interviews and analysis of documents and material culture were undertaken in this thesis. Marshall and Rossman (1999:108) state: “Interviews have particular strengths. An interview is a useful way to get large amounts of data quickly”. In the light of this, interviews were conducted as a time/cost-effective data collection tool. In addition, the idea of Holstein and Gubrium (2002:541) that physical presence during the interviews enhances thoughtful response, and involves visual signs that encourage informants to clarify their points was followed, with the exception of the cases where only telephone interviews were possible. For this reason, the interviews were conducted in order to gather answers to sensitive questions. Either Chichewa or English, the two national languages, were used for interviewing informants and for ensuring articulate responses to the questions. The data was documented in notebooks, and in some cases it was recorded on audiotape.

The data from face-to-face and telephone interviews was collected with the help of the questionnaire (Appendix 1, pages A-1 to A-5). The questionnaire together with probing questions helped to obtain the key information the thesis addresses. The target informants were the musically informed Malawians in the country's education system; and in government, private, church and non-governmental institutions. This was considered following Borg and Gall (1989:426):

Most questionnaire studies in education are aimed at specific professional groups. Once you have established that the professional group selected actually has access to the information you wish to obtain, you can survey the entire group or you can select a sample from the population.

The idea of Tesch (1990:66) that groups within a culture form “distinctive subcultures, and that these are sufficiently unique to warrant intensive examination and portrayal”, was followed. A selection of traditional composers, performers and educators from subcultures, who had the requisite information for the thesis, was done. Kelle et al's (1998:28) idea that qualitative researchers deal with small samples that meet the analytical requirement guided the choice of fifty informants for this thesis. The informants were drawn countrywide for face-to-face and telephone interviews.

Data analysis was based on the three ideas of Miles and Huberman (1984:21) namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Data reduction included the selection of data such as music for transcription and information for analysis, translation of data from the vernacular language such as Chichewa to English and verification of the translations. Selection of data was based on what was relevant to the discussions of the thesis. Data display involved the assembling of organized information, which guided conclusion drawing.

The following were the sources of the data:

- ◆ Published and unpublished texts about mission/colonial education and Malawian music practices were consulted to discuss the status of music

education during pre-colonial and colonial periods in Malawi. Opinions on the principles of Western music education and of African music in general were consulted. The texts were relied on in identifying the beliefs and views about life and music among Malawians in order to argue ideas for a practical music education in Malawi

- ◆ Video recordings of live music, which enabled in-depth study and analysis of postures; facial expressions; gestures; emotions and other attributes of Malawian music performances were examined. These were then used to examine the relationship between body language and sound in order to gain insights into what constitutes music aesthetics among Malawians. Audio recordings of indigenous music that has resisted much of the social changes were analysed
- ◆ Oral narratives about Malawian views on music of the past and the present, relying on the memories of elderly people and professionals, were conducted in order to grasp the meaning and value of Malawian music
- ◆ Letter respondents on the situation of music teaching and music test answers, which were rich sources of information on Malawian music education, were part of the research data (Appendix II, pages A-5 to A-7).

1.7 Research Design

The 12 samples of ethnic music were taken from 8 research sites which were distinguished by four different factors:

- ◆ Geographical area
- ◆ Ethnic background
- ◆ Degree of acculturation
- ◆ Type of music.

Malawi is divided into three different geographical and administrative regions. In the southern region, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Sanje and Zomba districts

were selected for sampling indigenous music while in the central region, Lilongwe and Ntcheu districts were selected. In the northern region, Mzimba district was selected for sampling indigenous music. The main ethnic groups from the sampled music are the Lomwe, Nyanja, Sena and Yao of southern region; the Chewa and Ngoni of central region; and the Tumbuka of northern region. The selection of the music was based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Main ethnic group
- ◆ Function of the music
- ◆ Relevance of the music
- ◆ Popularity of the music
- ◆ Music of more traditional origin.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in five chapters. Each chapter has various sections and a summary. After discussing the personal motivation of the researcher and the research outline of this thesis, Chapter Two explores the music practices in mission schools and churches as well as in government schools in the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. It also discusses how some of the Malawians began to dislike their own indigenous songs, dances and music instruments. The chapter proceeds to examine the impact of music research on Malawian music and music education.

Chapter Three describes the status of music in schools and teachers' training education in the postcolonial period, 1964-2005. The chapter discusses some of the school practices that have resulted in undermining music in education. The chapter also highlights how the practices contradict policy statements and goals of music education. Chapter Four discusses ideas, materials, content and practice of music that would remedy the current crisis in music education.

Chapter Five summarises the main points of the thesis and draws conclusions. Recommendations for further research activities and for policy makers, music educators, government and the general public are offered.

Throughout the thesis, indigenous terminology, sentences and phrases are kept to a minimum and are in italic type. Sample materials of transcribed songs and photographs have been included in the main body of the thesis for easy linking to the concepts being described and analysed. The transcription of the melodies and rhythms of indigenous music into Western staff notation cannot be exact and it is used to provide a basic idea of the Malawian music. The melodies and rhythms can be varied at different performances due to the improvisatory manner of performing indigenous music. The English translation of the vernacular texts of indigenous songs is provided. A description of key terms, which occur in the thesis, is also presented. A CD containing two Yao songs is included.

1.9 Delimitation of the Thesis

The thesis discusses the perceived crisis in music education in Malawi, and investigates solutions to the crisis. This study involves analysis of selected content and practices of indigenous music. As a result, the investigated solutions are by no means exhaustive, but may have practical and theoretical implications for music education in Malawi.

1.10 Value of the Thesis

There are no documents on music education that have evaluated the state of music in education in Malawi. This thesis is the first to analyse the shortcomings of music education and to suggest alternative ideas for rectifying the shortcomings. The thesis will provide a point of departure for further research in music education in Malawi.

1.11 Description of Terms

The following terms are used in this thesis with the meanings described:

Aesthetic experiences: Refers to what is perceived to be good or beautiful by specific culture groups in Malawi, within the context of music practices. It includes what composers, performers, educators and spectators consider as appropriate, qualitative and competent.

African music: This refers to music practices that are considered traditional in societies in Africa.

Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence: Refers to skill in dancing and eye-hand coordination.

Colonial period: This refers to the time between 1891 and July 1964.

Creativity: This refers to the ability to produce music that is new, original, appropriate and useful to people who make this music.

Crisis: Time of difficulty or a turning point from good to bad.

Culture: This refers to the beliefs, values and customs of a group of people, and the institutions that bond the people together. This term is also used to give a sense of identity, dignity and security.

Curriculum: This is a document that stipulates a rationale, content, method of instruction and mode of assessment for the teaching of a subject.

Education authorities: An inclusive term that refers to government officials, policy makers, curriculum specialists, research officers, teachers, head teachers,

school supervisors, school administrators and other professionals involved in decision-making in the Malawian education system.

Electronic music instruments: Refers to instruments that generate sound electronically rather than acoustically.

Europeans: Geographically this refers to the people of the countries such as the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales), Germany, Portugal, France, Spain and Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark) as distinct from America. In this thesis the term will particularly refer to the people of the United Kingdom and Portugal who brought the Western civilization to Malawi through colonialism and Christianity respectively.

Examinable subjects: Refers to teaching subjects that receive priority attention in the Malawian education system. Terms such as core subjects and major subjects correspond to examinable subjects and will be used interchangeably.

Existential intelligence: Ability to wonder, ask philosophical questions and see the ‘big picture’.

Folklore: For the purpose of the thesis, folklore includes extant songs, stories, riddles, proverbs and clichés of a human group.

Formal education: Refers to education from the first grade of primary school to the highest level of the university. Also it refers to indigenous education where there is the presence of rules, able teachers, methodology and teaching and learning materials.

Holism: The ability to conceptualise things as wholes rather than separating them into their constituent parts.

Imperialism: This refers to the policy of extending a country's rule over other people's lands. In this thesis, the term is restricted to the rule of the United Kingdom in Malawi.

Implementation: Put decisions, ideas and plan into effect.

Informal education: Refers to the life-long process by which every individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from the daily experiences and exposures to the environment at home, at work or at play.

Interpersonal-social intelligence: The ability to deal with and understand the behaviour, moods, desires and intentions of other people.

Intrapersonal-emotional intelligence: The ability to deal with and understand your own feelings, emotions and behaviour.

Logical-mathematical intelligence: This refers to mathematical and quantitative skills as well as certain kinds of reasoning.

Malawian education: Refers to education that takes place in public schools and colleges as distinct from indigenous formal or informal education.

Malawian music: This refers to all the music practices that are considered indigenous to culture groups in Malawi. The terms indigenous music, home music and Malawian music will be used interchangeably in the thesis.

Matrilineal culture group: Refers to a community in which succession and inheritance is traced through the mother, or the children born belong to the mother.

Moral: Refers to a message, a story, a lesson or an experience such as treating other people with respect.

Musical-rhythmic intelligence: Ability to identify rhythm, tempo, sound and other aspects of music; and to understand and create music.

Musically informed Malawians: This is an inclusive expression depicting individuals who make expert and meaningful contribution in matters of Malawian music and music education in the country. The expression includes composers of music, performers of music, music researchers, music educators and all other music professionals.

Naturalistic intelligence: Refers to the awareness of plants, animals and rocks.

Non-examinable subjects: Refers to teaching subjects that do not receive priority attention in the Malawian education. Terms such as minor subjects and optional subjects correspond to non-examinable subjects and will be used interchangeably.

Non-formal education: Refers to systematic education actively carried on outside the framework of the formal system for both adults and children.

Policy makers: Refers to government officials, professionals, curriculum specialists and research officers responsible for decision-making and the overall plans that determine the general goals and procedures in the provision of the Malawian education.

Postcolonial period: This refers to the time between July 1964 and 2005.

Pre-colonial period: This refers to the time between 1875 and 1891.

Principles: Refers to the rules, views and theories that are used as bases for music practices in a specific Malawian culture group.

Route map: This is a guide for subject combinations for each level of study at Chancellor College.

Social Darwinism: A social policy which allows the weak and unfit to fail and die. As applied to Africa, it considers the Africans as savages who belong to a weaker race than the Europeans.

Values: The term refers to the preferences that are useful or matter within the confines of particular people in Malawian culture groups. In the context of Malawian music, the term refers to useful issues such as the ability of music to unite and bring people together as well as to heal the sick.

Verbal-linguistic intelligence: Refers to language skills reflected in good vocabulary and reading comprehension; and to being sensitive to the meaning and order of words.

Visual-spatial intelligence: The ability to understand relationships between objects; and to think in pictures.

Western music: All the music practices of the Europeans. In the thesis the term will be used interchangeably with the term European music as distinct from the music of America, Africa or Asia.

1.12 Notes to the Reader

- ◆ Single inverted commas (‘ ’) are employed for words and phrases that are used out of their normal context. The use of double inverted commas (“ ”) signifies direct quotation.

- ◆ Documentation of published texts does not occur in a chronological order according to the years of publications. The purpose is to allow a logical flow of discussions, and all references are supplied alphabetically in the List of Sources.
- ◆ Some Web sites are continually changing their structure and content, so the information deriving from the Web sites included in the thesis may not always be available.
- ◆ Square brackets [] will indicate the author's inserted words in a quotation.