

**TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE SYSTEM
OF MUSICAL EVALUATION IN
SOUTH AFRICAN SERVICE BANDS**

by

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The purpose
is to elicit what knowledge the candidate has
of the music for his instrument ...
Examiners will give the candidate opportunities
to reveal what he knows,
rather than seek to expose
what he does not know.

(ABRSM 1985: 21)

ABSTRACT

An intrinsic component of South Africa's cultural and colonial heritage resides in the country's deep-rooted tradition of professional musical units known as "service bands": military or concert bands which are an adjunct to the various arms of service of the national defence force and police services.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the demographics of these bands are as varied as those of the country itself. Yet there is a common factor shared by all service bands, whatever their sociological composition: the need to perform at what is perceived to be a professional musical level in the public eye (and ear). This requires a relatively consistent level of instrumental competency from band members, and to this end a number of evaluation systems have been implemented – and supplanted – since the late 1940s. The purpose of these evaluations is not only an endeavour to maintain acceptable standards of musical performance, but to conveniently categorise band members into four fundamental levels of instrumental proficiency for purposes of salary and, to a lesser degree, rank.

Without exception, the previous systems of evaluation were deficient in one aspect or another. More specifically, they were found in the last decade to be lacking both in terms of musical consistency and, since 1994, in the ability to equitably accommodate members of the former "homelands" bands, whose previous training and experience were in the majority of cases confined to the rote learning of band parts, with an almost total lack of formal music training.

In a manner that aims to be at once discursive and narrative, this thesis describes the quest for and the realisation of an equitable process of musical evaluation for South African service band members. It documents the actions taken to address the challenges inherent in that quest, the empirical research that provided a tenable answer, and describes the essentially practical stance adopted by the participating musicians and compilers. The processes leading to the new evaluation syllabus are described in some detail, and a number of specific and practical recommendations are proposed for the further amelioration of South African service bands' *modus operandi*.

KEY WORDS

Music syllabus design, curriculum, evaluation, wind instruments, wind band, concert band, South African service bands, training of bandsmen.

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TERMINOLOGY, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABRSM	The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
ATCL	Associate of Trinity College, London
CV	<i>Curriculum vitae</i>
FTCL	Fellow of Trinity College, London
IDMAC	The Inter-Departmental Music Advisory Committee of the South African Defence Force and South African Police Services
IMC	International Music Corporation
ITA	The International Trombone Association
LRSM	Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music
LTCL	Licentiate of Trinity College, London
MEUSSA	Music Education Standards for Southern Africa
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RMSM	Royal Military School of Music <i>or</i> Royal Marines School of Music
POLMUSCA	The Police Musicians' Association of South Africa
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (UK)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMRO	South African Music Rights Organisation
SANDF	The South African National Defence Force
SAPS	The South African Police Services
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body
<i>Syllabus 2000</i>	The newly-compiled, reconstructed instrumental syllabus used by IDMAC in the evaluation of bandmen in South Africa (Appendix A)
TCL	Trinity College, London
TEQ	Trade Employment Qualification (UK)
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology (Pretoria, SA)
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
UCT	University of Cape Town
UPLM	UNISA Performer's Licentiate in Music
UTLM	UNISA Teacher's Licentiate in Music

LIST OF MUSIC EXAMPLES

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LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND CORRESPONDENTS

Bannister, John Lawrence. A close personal friend of the author during the period 1956-75. A professional commercial artist, he was also an accomplished amateur bassoonist, being a leading protagonist of the French style of instrument (Buffet).

Coetzer, Jan. A Senior Superintendent in the SA Police Services, he was Director of Music of the Police College Band in Pretoria during the author's three years of service as Head of Music Training in that unit.

Davidson, Kevin. A full-time lecturer in saxophone, flute, contemporary harmony, composition and arranging at the TUT, and a friend and colleague of the author.

Hinch, John de C. Prof. Hinch, a leading flute and chamber music specialist, is currently the Acting Head of Music at the University of Pretoria. He and the author have been acquainted since 1987, and remain in regular contact via the University.

Juritz, John W F. Dr Juritz was Professor of Physics and lecturer at the University of Cape Town, also a lecturer in bassoon while the author was a student there. He and the author have been good friends since 1956.

Li, Young-Guang. Mr Li was formerly the principal trombonist of the Beijing National Opera Orchestra. He has been a friend of the author since 1993. They worked together for 3 years in the Band of the SA Military Health Services (1995-98) and the Police College, Pretoria Band of the SA Police Services (1999-2001), where Li remains active as principal trombonist.

Malan, Etienne. Bass clarinetist of the erstwhile National Symphony Orchestra, he was conductor of the Oliver de Groot Clarinet Choir (in which the author performed on bass and alto clarinets). He and the author made a number of appearances and a recording with their "Double Quartet": four players doubling on clarinets and saxophones (Clarinets: Bb 1 / Bb 2 / Alto / Bass; Saxophones: Soprano/Alto/Tenor/Baritone).

Malan, Jacobus. Elder brother of the above, he is an accomplished oboist, teaching part-time at two of the private schools in Pretoria where the author himself teaches.

Marlow, Ronald. Commander Ron Marlow was the Director of Music of the SA Naval Band (Simonstown) in the 1970s and '80s, and a personal friend of the author since 1956. They shared many experiences as professional trombonists in Cape Town during the period 1957-1975.

Pienaar, Matthys. Capt Thys Pienaar is the Musical Director of the SA Air Force Band, an IDMAC member, and has been active as a contributor to the compilation and updating of *Syllabus 2000*.

Pretorius, Johan. A professional trumpeter, he studied low brass instruments as second instrument with the author at the University of the Free State. He has been Head of the brass division at the Hugo Lamprechts Music Centre in Parow, Cape Town, since 1990.

Roberts, David W. A medical doctor who is also an accomplished amateur trombonist. Dr Roberts and the author have shared views on matters musical, pedagogic and metaphysical since they met in 1979.

Schorn, Steffen. Herr Schorn is Professor of composition and arranging at the *Musikhochschule* in Nürnberg, Germany. The author met him on his visit to

South Africa with his group *Triosphere*, which performed at the TUT and other venues. He is an outstanding performer on bass clarinet, baritone saxophone and bass saxophone.

Seveso, Marcello. Son of the late Franco Seveso, principal viola of the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra while the author was a member. He is the principal bassoonist in the SA Naval Band, Simonstown, doubling on soprano saxophone when required in the marching band.

Stevenson, Ronald. A Scottish composer who lectured in composition at the UCT College of Music for a short period during 1963/4, where the author had the privilege of studying with him.

Wright, B. Alan. Sergeant-major Alan Wright was the Bandmaster of the Band of the National Ceremonial Guard (SA National Defence Force) until his untimely demise in February 2004. He became a close friend of the author from 1995 onwards, and was an exceptionally talented multi-instrumentalist.

Zack, Daniel J. A Johannesburg businessman, instrument repairer and amateur clarinettist, who holds qualifications in mechanical engineering and is the owner of an instrument hiring facility (The Instrument Library). Since 2003 Mr Zack has imported a number of wind instruments from The Peoples' Republic of China. He and the author have collaborated extensively in the thorough testing and evaluation of these instruments - which were in most cases an "unknown quantity" prior to this. Mr Zack regularly visits the Frankfurt Music Trade Fair, keeping himself informed of the latest innovations in wind instrument manufacture.

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