

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION PROCEDURES IN IDMAC-REGULATED SERVICE BANDS

4.1 Inconsistencies in previous evaluation systems

While the history of certain individual service bands dates from early in the 20th century (specifically, the original Police Band of 1904) or immediately prior to the Second World War (the original “official” and professional South African Army Band was formed in 1938), very little standardisation in terms of musical evaluation, promotion on musical grounds or – in some cases – even instrumentation had taken place prior to South Africa's becoming a Republic in 1961 (Coetzer 1999). The general aim, understandably, was to find a degree of consensus with the numbers and instrumentation of the British military band, and it was not until the formation of IDMAC in 1994 that any permanent consensus was reached at a national level by bandmasters and band administrators on the above details, or even the way forward for service bands in the now integrated South Africa.

Until becoming an independent, sovereign republic outside the British Commonwealth in 1961, South Africa was a British colony and as such had inherited the military band format that is still customary in the United Kingdom today. Most of the musical units among South African service bands, under somewhat diverse leadership, appeared to conform to the format of the colonial Military Band up to and beyond 1961. Subsequently, as can reasonably be expected, given the increasingly autonomous nature of the arms of service, the various professional bands – Army Ceremonial Guard, Army Provincial or Command Band, Navy Band, Air Force Band, the Medical Services Band and the relatively independent Police Bands – began to reflect not only the exigencies, *ethos* and tradition of their own organisation, but the individual management style of their own Director of Music, Bandmaster and administrator(s).

Today this is reflected not only in the choice of alternative or non-standard instrumentation – such as the addition *inter alia* of soprano and baritone saxophones to the "marching" or parade bands – but in the choice of concert band repertoire, some of it very different to what would have been considered the norm in colonial times. The manner in which the band's image is projected varies considerably from one individual arm of service to another, and even between bands within the same arm of service reflecting, naturally enough, the predilections and management style of the individual Bandmaster or Director of Music.

A musical unit noted for its individuality was the now defunct Band of the South African Correctional Services, whose members were to a large extent absorbed by the country's other bands subsequent to the dissolution of the SACS bands, and whose premises in Kroonstad (Free State) have now become the home of the SA Army Band in that province. Another professional service band that has been relegated to history is the Band of the erstwhile South African Railway Police, a small but enthusiastic unit under the baton of Denis Wells (Wright 2004).

The musical entry level to these service bands varied considerably, as did the prerequisites for membership; similarly, the technical and musical preparedness of the candidates. The erstwhile Army band – predecessor to the Band of the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) – accepted a limited number of players at the Learner Musician level, while the South African Air Force Band would not accept players below the equivalent of a Grade VIII standard (Senior Musician). In short, a principal problem was not one of musicianship *per se*, but one of inconsistent standards being applied in evaluations (Wright 2004).

4.2 Factors initiating change

Up until 1970 neither the Union (1910) nor the Republic (1961) of South Africa could claim a national history of education in orchestral instruments, other than that provided through the efforts of private schools and educators in the larger urban centres.

A move to broaden the spectrum of "official" music education by encompassing the full range of orchestral and band instruments was eventually made by the Heads of Music of the various Provincial Education authorities with the establishment of education department music centres in the larger cities and towns in South Africa. Initially, these music centres appeared only in the then Transvaal and Free State in 1969/70, with Natal following in 1978/9. The Cape authorities did not introduce their first music centre until 1981, with a second one following approximately four years later (Pretorius 1989).

The present writer was on the staff of one of the earliest of these to be formed, that of the Free State Education Department, with Dirkie de Villiers as provincial Head of Music; this centre is now known as the Bloemfontein Musicon. The writer has a number of colleagues and former students on the staff of some of these music centres, who kept him apprised of developments. As a direct result of the establishment of these centres the musical calibre of school-leavers making application for membership of professional service bands improved markedly, the applicants having benefited from the specialised, one-on-one tuition that was available to most secondary scholars at "white" schools in these centres.

Prior to the establishment of these provincial music centres, instrumental tuition at school level had been limited to piano, organ, recorder and perhaps violin, with a few exceptions in the major urban areas where a symphony

orchestra was present and where orchestra members made their services available for purposes of tuition. The cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban were cases in point. Adding to this national imbalance was the fact that, during the *apartheid* years, this subsidised instrumental tuition was a dispensation offered at "white" schools only, a notable exception being the extra-curricular Pietersen Music Centre situated at Paarl in the South-western Cape, established a few years later through the efforts of a number of so-called "coloured" academics, with limited assistance from the private sector.

Through the use of peripatetic staff, these provincial music centres made a very real effort to bring instrumental tuition to as wide a geographical area as was logistically viable. Instrumental teachers in some of the major centres would visit neighbouring towns on a weekly basis during the school terms, and within a few years South Africa was well on the way to becoming self-reliant in providing its own orchestral players. The cycle began to repeat itself as a new generation of university graduates were able to specialise in their chosen orchestral instrument and re-enter the system, this time as instructors and performers rather than students. Thus, by the late 1970s, a "new breed" of "home-grown" wind and percussion players – many of them with a practical diploma or even a BMus qualification – were presenting themselves for auditions with the SANDF and SAPS bands.

Admittedly, many of the more ambitious among this younger generation of instrumentalists viewed the service bands purely as musical stepping-stones to the country's symphony orchestras. At the same time a good number of male applicants saw their way clear to providing their services for 24 months in a professional band in lieu of the normally shorter period of compulsory national service that was obligatory for all able-bodied white males during that era. But whatever the motives, an undeniable improvement in the calibre of musical applicant took place and a degree of competitiveness – previously lacking to a great degree – became apparent.

It is a strange and typically South African irony that, in the first decade of the 21st century, the tables have turned in the following manner: with the closure of all but one of the country's state-subsidised symphony orchestras (the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic),¹ the service bands have become the financial "safety-net" for many ex-orchestral musicians. In fact, the IDMAC-regulated bands are now the largest employers of professional wind players in the country. The disbanding – a temporary one, it is fervently hoped – of the majority of our orchestras, plus the severe rationalisation of education department music centres has placed the need for musical survival upon individual professional performers, who can no longer rely on the state for employment as was widely the case in previous decades. This, in turn, has led to the development of much authentic entrepreneurship in South African music.

By 1995, when this writer negotiated a transfer from the Department of Education to the Band of the SA Medical Services, and with South Africa making an effort to re-join the "global village" at the same juncture, the shortcomings of South Africa's service band syllabus had become glaringly obvious to even the most casual observer; to IDMAC it was rapidly becoming an embarrassment. The main musical shortcomings were identified as follows:

- The standard of difficulty of the prescribed compositions within any one given "grade" or category of musicianship was inconsistent, with certain examples being up to two grades less demanding than others and, in isolated cases, a grade too difficult for the given level.
- Not only the standard of difficulty but the length of the prescribed extracts from the band repertoire tended to be extremely variable, ranging from farcically easy to unreasonably taxing within a given category; clearly, there had been a lack of mutual discussion and coordination among the compilers of the "old" syllabus.

¹ The Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, while professional, currently offer part-time employment only.

- As mention in Chapter 1, certain individual instruments, admittedly less frequently used in the purely military “marching” bands but indispensable to the instrumentation of the concert band, were not adequately catered for in the syllabuses, or even omitted altogether. These included piccolo (other than a few examples of doubling in the extracts), cor anglais, alto and bass clarinets, soprano and baritone saxophones, and flügelhorn. In addition, certain Brass Band instruments (which read their parts in the treble clef, regardless of the pitch in which they are built) were not catered for. These instruments had to be taken into account, as they are still being utilised in some of the smaller Command units where a Brass Band – rather than the full Military Band - is employed.
- There was a discernable difference in standard and quality between the syllabuses of certain instruments at any given grade; the individual instruments appeared to have been dealt with in isolation.

The panel of compilers found that only three of the existing instrumental syllabuses were consistent in standard, thus in need of minor adjustments only. These were the "old" oboe, bassoon and French horn syllabuses. Only in these specific areas was a modicum of coordination in evidence. Marilyn Ferguson (1982: 26), in writing of the need for change, writes: "We have to move into the unknown: the known has failed us too completely". The present writer would modify that apophthegm in this instance to: It is not so much the known that has failed us; rather, it is the application of the known that has failed.

4.3 Established categories or levels of musical proficiency in South African Service Bands

The levels of musicianship established at the various post levels within the professional IDMAC-regulated bands are as follows:

4.3.1 First Category: Learner Musician

This category is not common to all arms of service. It is only within the SANDF Provincial Command bands and the various SA Police Services Bands that members are occasionally accepted on the Learner Musician level today. Previously, few official guidelines existed for assessment at this level, and it was left in the hands of the Bandmaster and his senior officers to decide on the merits of accepting a “cadet” instrumentalist – or not. With the advent of *Syllabus 2000*, a simple but structured syllabus was laid out, with two prepared pieces (one unaccompanied) at a level between Grade 3 and 4, and one major, minor, and chromatic scale required, plus an elementary sight-reading test.

This procedure guarantees an approach to basic musical standards, standards that are easily identifiable by the prospective candidate. It removes much of the subjectivity from the learner musician's audition process and provides a fair and accessible yardstick by which the candidate's usefulness (or not) to the Bandmaster can be measured. It simultaneously provides the candidate with a specific example of the absolute minimum standard expected in their initial effort at joining the professional world of music.

IDMAC members, Directors of Music and Bandmasters were thus in a firm position to advise prospective applicants that a standard of performance approaching Grade IV was essential, if they wished to stand a fair chance of passing the Learner Musician evaluation.

4.3.2 *Second category: Musician*

This can be described as the normal professional entry level which, since the implementation of *Syllabus 2000*, can today be directly compared to a South African or United Kingdom Grade VI in performance standards. In addition to a prepared accompanied work, the candidate is required to select and prepare five band excerpts, selected (by the candidate) from a prescribed list of ten. Sight reading (which in the case of clarinet and horn, includes simple transposition), scales and arpeggios, aural tests and a *viva voce* form the balance of the audition.

4.3.3 *Third category: Senior Musician*

This next professional level is regarded as being equivalent to a Grade VIII in terms of practical musicianship. The format of the audition is virtually identical with that of Musician, but the repertoire is commensurately more demanding in terms of technique, musicianship and duration. An appropriate knowledge of instrumental history and repertoire is required. There are certain SANDF musical units - particularly those within whose ranks vacancies occur comparatively rarely - which consider Senior Musician to be their normal entry level. These currently include the bands of the South African Air Force, and the National Ceremonial Guard.

4.3.4 *Fourth category: Principal Musician*

This level was originally designated the "first leg" of the Chief Musician category, but is now independently formulated on the same nominal level as the post-Grade VIII Performer's, Recital or Advanced Certificates found in the United Kingdom, plus the full range of scales and arpeggios. A standard of performance equivalent to a first- or second-year university student is

expected. This category is currently being upgraded by IDMAC to the level of an Associate Diploma (Performance).

4.3.5 *Fifth category: Chief Musician*

Originally designated the "second leg" of the "old" Chief Musician category, the standard here is intended to be on the level of a Performer's Licentiate Diploma, without scales or aural tests, but including a more professionally-orientated *viva voce*, and including an instrumental training component, as well as one where the candidate is required to rehearse a woodwind, brass or percussion section or a chamber group in a previously unseen work or portion thereof. This category is currently being modified to coincide with a Licentiate Diploma (Recital) couple to a mentoring component.

4.3.6 *The category of Group Leader*

Depending on the availability of posts, members occupying the position of Chief Musician for a year or more may apply for evaluation as a **Group Leader**. This is an intermediate position between Chief Musician and Bandmaster which was created by IDMAC as recently as 1996, and which includes a moderate amount of administrative work, as well as the ability to rehearse and conduct the band in the absence of the Bandmaster or the Director of Music. This evaluation is directly geared to fairly specific requirements which usually vary from one band to another, depending on management needs.

On the musical side, the evaluation is not one of individual instrumental competency: candidates are currently required to prepare four works selected from a list of fifteen prescribed works for band, being informed by the panel only at the time of the examination as to which work he or she is expected to

rehearse and conduct. Prior to the examination the candidate is handed a quick study, which he or she is given an hour to peruse before being required to rehearse it with the band. A concert performance is not required; the panel is primarily interested in the candidate's rehearsal technique and communication skills with band members. While there is no actual instrumental performance required from the candidate, it is made clear that the position of Group Leader will only be conferred on the successful candidate on the provision that he or she maintains their instrumental skills at the Chief Musician level.

At the time of completing this thesis, proposals had been submitted to IDMAC that the nature of these posts be revised, making them closer to that of the Band Sergeant-Major in bands in the United Kingdom. Conducting abilities will be downplayed, although an ability to rehearse the band or a section thereof will remain a prerequisite. At the IDMAC meeting of 1 June 2005, it was proposed that the number of prepared band pieces be reduced to two, the motivation for such a proposal being that the incumbent of a Group Leader post will in fact do very little conducting or rehearsing. The final specifications for this level have not been finalised, largely due to the fact that it is more administrative than musical; duties are balanced over a wide spectrum.

4.3.7 Officer categories

Above Group Leader, who usually carries the rank of Staff Sergeant or Sergeant-Major (WO²), there are the commissioned positions of **Bandmaster**, **Director of Music** and **Senior Director of Music**, all of which have their own separate and specialist examinations, which include written papers on theory and arranging. While there is an IDMAC syllabus for these positions, they do not fall directly within the purview of this study.

When it comes to implementing standards of musical direction in South African service bands, it must be pointed out that no institutions exist in this country - military or civilian - which offer complete or integrated training in these categories. The only opportunities for preparation exist within the SANDF/SAPS Bands themselves, with ancillary training being available from the private sector.

Since 2001 two of the SANDF's musical units - the Western Province Command Band situated in Wynberg in the Western Cape and the Band of the National Ceremonial Guard in Pretoria - have undertaken the training of visiting military bandsmen from Namibia and Botswana. Prospective candidates for these senior posts have either to progress through the ranks, with in-house training, or undertake private study in the skills of conducting, rehearsal technique and orchestration/arranging.

Detailed descriptions of the practical standards aimed for in the various IDMAC levels are supplied in detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis. In the event of a South (or Southern) African School of Military Music being established within the foreseeable future, the relevant standards are likely to be applied to the senior professional (officers') categories as well.

4.3.8 The Entertainment Units

Just as the Army's Chamber Orchestra was a product of the national service system within the pre-1994 political dispensation, so was the Army Entertainment Unit a musical adjunct to that system, formed primarily to entertain national servicemen, with popular music groups which were themselves comprised of national servicemen and permanent force members.

These official SANDF groups ranged from a jazz, pop or rock quartet or quintet to the Army Entertainment Unit "Big Band", a full 17-piece Stage or

Swing band with the full complement of eight brass, five saxophones and four rhythm. This was ably led by the late Major George Hayden, himself an outstanding saxophonist, pianist and arranger. This band became the benchmark for other groups within the system, and Major Hayden's achievements generated the professional standards built into the revised form of the IDMAC Entertainment Group syllabus, now a part of *Syllabus 2000* (Wright 2004).

In the post-1994 era, catering for a very different audience, the Army Entertainment Unit exists as a 10-piece group within the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG), comprised of a trombonist – who has now become the Group Leader – an "extended" rhythm section and a number of singers, mainly supernumeraries. The degree of musical literacy among members of this group was initially so varied and nondescript that IDMAC – in collaboration with the present writer – saw fit to re-write the *entire* entertainment syllabus, bearing in mind the benchmark standards that had been achieved by Major Hayden and his mainly conscripted musicians.

An occasional echo of the Hayden Big Band could be heard when selected members of the NCG Concert Band were assembled by their late bandmaster, Sergeant-Major Alan Wright, into a 16-piece show band, in which significant use was made of the Hayden arrangements as well as commercially published material. There is every indication that the current Director of Music, Cpt Andrew Strugnell, will continue this tradition.

The Police Band maintained at least one "dance band" – with personnel independent from that of the concert or parade bands – in the years prior to Brigadier Holmes' retirement in 1993. Today, a dance band of sorts remains, but the members have been gradually integrated into the concert or parade band; there is no longer an autonomous entertainment unit *per se* within the Police Bands.

A recent (2005) development is the introduction by TCL of the British RockSchool examinations to South Africa. These may well prove a suitable substitute for the IDMAC Entertainment syllabus.

4.4 Issues intrinsic to Southern Africa

An indirect result of the relative isolation of many members of the previous "homelands" bands in South Africa prior to the integration process of 1994, is what the writer refers to as "the collectivist paradigm" concerning the use of photocopies in an examination or evaluation.

The practice of phot-copying published music is both illegal and immoral – particularly when perpetrated by professional players – and has accordingly been outlawed by IDMAC. In the past, it appears that most bands possessed their own set of photocopies of "favourite" (i.e. less demanding) accompanied pieces in their library. This is yet another factor underscoring the necessity for having removed the "peaks and troughs" – the works that were either too demanding or not demanding enough for the designated level – from the repertoire lists. These photocopies – illegal even prior to the revision – were made available to all interested parties for both study *and* performance purposes.

It is now expected of candidates – who are, after all, about to enjoy a substantial increment should they pass the examination – to invest in their own musical future by purchasing the necessary prescribed sheet music, *all* of which is in print and available through any competent sheet music dealer. Candidates are encouraged to form mini-syndicates with other aspirants at the same level, on the same instrument. IDMAC is not concerned about who owns the sheet music as long as an *original* copy is presented in the examination room.

IDMAC is currently making an effort to establish a central library source where the candidate can view the music and make a choice prior to ordering his or her own copy for study and examination purposes. The *raisons d'être* for outlawing the photocopying of sheet music are eloquently spelt out in the Trinity College (London) publication *Playing Fair* (TCL 2002).

Expectedly – in fact, almost inevitably in the current milieu – the popular (and, for some, convenient) accusation of "Eurocentricity" has been levelled at the syllabus contents. One might enquire as to what the alternative might be. Besides, it is reported by IDMAC personnel who have visited the Edinburgh Tattoo in its latter years that service bands throughout the world maintain a core repertoire of British, Continental and North American marches and band works in addition to their own indigenous or national musical material.

This practice is likewise observable on the local front. Whilst a member of the SAMHS Band, the present writer was informed by an SADF liaison officer that South Africa's Eastern neighbour, Mozambique, manages to maintain an army band in spite of grave fiscal constraints, one with a varied musical diet of which the principal components are "Eurocentric" marches and military band music. This cannot be ascribed to any shortage of local or indigenous music; it is simply their pragmatic choice when it comes to a "military" band programme, and can be regarded as their free choice when it comes to projecting their image, musically speaking.

As alluded to in Chapter 1.12 (Limitations of the Study), it is still a rare occurrence to find published (or even notated) versions of African compositions, although a number of them would be eminently transcribable for instruments of the concert band, or even full-scale arrangements for concert band. IDMAC is acutely aware of the lack of indigenous material in *Syllabus 2000*, and is taking the initiative in addressing the situation.

Taking another representative cultural group present in South Africa into consideration, it must be mentioned that the Hindu classical music tradition relies on one-on-one oral transmission of compositions, and the only examples of published Indian music this writer has been able to access thus far are John Mayer's *Raga Music* for unaccompanied clarinet (Alfred Lengnick 1958) and Eugène Bozza's *Onze Études Sur Des Modes Karnatiques* (Alphonse Leduc 1972) for unaccompanied trombone (these were both incorporated into the 1988 UNISA examination syllabus by the present writer). Clearly, further research needs to take place in the interests of a fully balanced and "representative" South African syllabus. In fact, it *is* taking place on an ongoing basis, and *Syllabus 2000*, being the "live" document that it is, will incorporate appropriate material as it comes to light.

4.5 Composition of the IDMAC evaluation boards

Three forms of evaluation board exist, coinciding with the level of seniority of the musical category in which the candidate is being examined. IDMAC Board "A" is normally comprised of at least two military or police assessors, of whom at least one is a Director of Music, plus one or two civilian examiners – usually faculty members of a tertiary institution, or a professional conductor – plus a Chairman, making an examining panel of five members.

The Chairman may be the Director of Music of the candidate's unit or, as has been the case over the last two years, a staff officer permanently attached to Music and Ceremonial Services within the South African National Defence Force who is exceptionally well versed in the evaluation process and the convening thereof. Candidates for the position of Bandmaster or Director of Music are examined by a Board "A".

Board "B" is the evaluation panel most frequently assembled, as it examines candidates throughout the full spectrum of professional performance, from

the Musician category up to that of Group Leader. This is comprised of a minimum of one military or police examiner, one civilian examiner, and a Chairman who is more usually not from the candidate's musical unit.

Board "C" is convened on occasions when application for the post of Learner Musician is made, a category which exists only sporadically other than in some of the South African Police bands. Board "C" is comprised of the Director of Music of the unit concerned plus a Group Leader or Bandmaster from the same unit.

4.6 Allocation of marks in the practical examinations

While considerable attention was given to the distribution of marks and the weighting of the different sections of the examinations in *Syllabus 2000*, IDMAC saw fit to implement minor revisions to the mark sheets during 2003. This was done not only to further emphasise the job-related nature of these evaluations, but in order to simplify the tallying of marks by the examiners.

The Chief Musician evaluation was divided into two sections, being A) Practical Performance on Instrument; B) The Training Component, each section being marked out of 100.

4.6.1 *Mark distribution in the IDMAC evaluations*

In the "old" syllabus - i.e. pre-2000 - the section carrying by far the most marks in examinations at all levels was the accompanied solo work. This weighting very often gave a distorted impression of the candidate's real worth in the ensemble. It also tended to promote the dangerous misconception that if the "piece" was well-prepared and successfully performed, the candidate would almost automatically pass the examination, even with minimal regard

for the other components of the evaluation. In short, there was an unrealistic balance within the old system of mark distribution.

In the new syllabus, the heaviest weighting has been placed on the job-related section of band extracts, with the prepared piece coming second, followed in turn by scales/arpeggios, sight-reading/transposition, aural tests and *viva voce*. Those who have persisted in the old misconception have come to grief in the areas of scales, arpeggios, aural tests and *viva voce* and – consequently – in the examination as a whole.

The marks in the IDMAC evaluations are distributed as follows, with the original *Syllabus 2000* marks in parentheses:

TABLE 2: Distribution of marks in the evaluation of Musician/Senior Musician/Principal Musician

<u>Section</u>	<u>Maximum Mark</u>	<u>Pass Mark</u>
A. Scales & Arpeggios	25 (formerly 30)	16 (formerly 20)
B. Aural Tests	20	13
C. Military/Concert Band Extracts	65 (formerly 60)	43 (formerly 39)
D. Prepared Piece	50	32
E. Playing at Sight/Transposition	30	20
F. Viva Voce	10	6
TOTAL	200	130

TABLE 3: Mark distribution in the evaluation of Chief Musician

<u>A Sections</u>		<u>Maximum Mark</u>	<u>Pass mark</u>
Military/Concert Band Extracts		45 (formerly 40)	29 (formerly 26)
Prepared Piece		30	20
Playing at Sight/ Transposition		25 (formerly 30)	16 (formerly 19)
<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>65</u>
<u>B Sections</u>			
Viva Voce		10 (formerly 8)	6 (formerly 5)
Methodology	30		20 (formerly 21)
Practical Training		20	13
Rehearsing/ Conducting	40		26 (formerly 21)
<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>65</u>

4.6.2 The cultivation of a common perspective among examiners

It is generally agreed by those in senior service band positions in South Africa that IDMAC "inherited" an inequitable examining system for service band candidates. As has been pointed out, the evaluation criteria of the past varied considerably from those of today, which are based on those of Trinity College, London, and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. In addition

to creating a relevant syllabus, IDMAC has also had to deal with a certain lack of consistency and varied training among a fair percentage of its examiners.

While the civilian examiners engaged for these duties are generally well-schooled, coming from secondary or tertiary music departments of major institutions, there has been a discernable lack of uniformity in approach within the ranks of senior service band panel members. This can be attributed to the changing emphasis and values of the new syllabus compared to the systems that have preceded it, and to the extremely varied musical background of service band personnel as a whole. The perceived situation was seen on the one hand as being one of over-subjectivity in certain cases, and a lack of "hands-on" experience in the practice of objectively examining graded practical instrumental music performances on the other.

It was principally for this reason that the present writer considered it appropriate to address his colleagues on this particular issue, with the aim of creating a common perspective when it comes to evaluating a candidate. Herewith his 2001 brief to IDMAC examiners/panel members, both military and civilian, on the all-important issue of neutrality in examining a candidate, a quality that is held in high esteem by IDMAC and its examiners. The somewhat metaphysical approach is considered appropriate at this juncture, i.e. the onset of the 21st century (Galloway 2001):

NEUTRALITY

Of all the qualities required of an examiner, arguably the hardest one to attain – and maintain – is that of *neutrality*. By this I mean *true* neutrality in assessing a candidate's performance *vis-à-vis* the prescribed syllabus.

We have learned not to judge a book by its cover. We know how to guard against being side-tracked by alibis, propaganda and "poor me" scenarios from the candidate's side. But from *our* side we need to be equally on guard against two deeply ingrained factors: *ego* and, to a somewhat lesser extent, our *intellect* when it

comes to making a truly neutral assessment. Because from ego stems one kind of prejudice: a subliminal wish to pressurise the candidate into conforming to *our* norms and *our* way of thinking; sometimes even our "norms" of physical appearance.

Yet, from our intellect itself stems another type of prejudice: no matter how well we think we have it under control, most of us are still prone to the odd spasm of xenophobia - shape, speech (dialect) and colour prejudice - attributes which can still be interpreted by the paranoid portion of the intellect as a potential threat, an aesthetic "turn-off", or a cultural or even personal insult! Admittedly, we need a certain amount of ego simply in order to survive in Western civilisation, and I am not suggesting that ego be entirely sublimated - merely *integrated*. And, of course, we need our intellect just to do the job of evaluation decently.

These distractions and conflicts are not solely a phenomenon of Southern Africa: they are characteristics of Western civilisation! And to neutralise them, we need to be *aware* of how they impact on our ego and intellect.

On what, then, should we rely in making our judgements? you may justifiably ask. The answer to that is: your own inner discernment, your *instinct*, if you like. Look for a reaction within yourself that carries with it the resonance of truth, balanced by what you have learned about practical music over the years. It may appear strange that I am advocating such a basic, almost atavistic paradigm within a formal situation, or as a method of assessing something as aesthetically refined as instrumental music. But after decades of adjudicating I have become convinced that this is the surest way to bypass the ego-traps and intellectual side-tracking previously mentioned. If we are going to be truly non-partisan and totally objective, we need to rely on our musical and aesthetic instincts, *not* our "learned prejudices", personal agendas, or "what looks good on *our* CV's". The activities of the "rational" mind lead less often to a balanced solution than to yet another set of prejudices - or the reinforcing of an existing set.

The yardsticks of performance are clearly laid out in the syllabus, and we need to think *only* in terms of how well the candidate rises to the prescribed level of competence and does musical justice to the works chosen. In awarding marks, we should not allow this to be influenced by sociological, economic or any other non-musical factors. We should be primarily influenced by the

standards that have been democratically set (based on *world* standards in the given *genre*), and the upholding thereof.

One thing we *should* most definitely do is to comment *copiously* in writing on the candidate's performance; he or she is most certainly entitled to know the musical and technical reasons why an examiner awarded them the marks that they did. By all means, fill up the page with objective comment and advice; this may be the most important dividend the candidate receives!

As previously mentioned, we examiners should be seen as "resource people" radiating an encouraging attitude, and never as a breed of sadistic ogres or "do-it-by-the-book" theoreticians! I consider it not merely desirable but essential that examination panel members compare notes immediately after the candidate leaves the room, and make a constructive attempt to reconcile any *excessive* differences as far as marks are concerned. At one fairly recent audition of an entertainment group candidate, there was a difference of 20 marks between the external examiner and the IDMAC examiners; the issue was *not* satisfactorily "talked through" or resolved by the panel in spite of reservations on the part of two out of the three examiners, and the "lucky" candidate was passed as the direct result of this excessive mark being awarded by *one* panel member. We need to remain on guard against this sort of discrepancy.

No candidate should fail the total evaluation by less than three marks: the panel should either objectively *find* the couple of marks needed to justify a pass, or fail the candidate roundly.

The main burden of what I have been saying is that it is my strongly felt contention that the *right* decision is only possible in the absence of personal agendas (and other distractions), and with the successful integration of the ego into the judgement process. I dare say that a word to the wise is enough; *verbum sat sapienti*.

4.7 Opportunities for the re-examination of candidates

In certain instances since 1994, where a concerted effort was made to integrate members of not only the ex-"homelands" bands but also of the formerly renegade *Umkhonto We Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation") musical units into the new National Defence Force, appointments were made subject to the requisite

examinations being passed within a maximum period of 24 months from date of appointment.

Training was – and still is – available to this category of candidate, at no cost to the band member, to assist them in passing the necessary written or practical examinations, and this dispensation is perceived as a fair one by all concerned. Candidates failing their first attempt are given another twelve months – with training – and are obliged to pass on the second attempt. Only under exceptional circumstances is a third attempt permitted, and then only under prescribed conditions.

Candidates at the Learner Musician level are currently afforded a full two years to pass the Musician (Grade VI) level evaluation. This may more usefully be reduced to one year, as the phenomenon of the "musical passenger" is not entirely absent in the two bands that still accept Learner Musicians. The two-year (maximum) period for the higher levels remains, however, as it is felt by IDMAC to be justified.

There is an unfortunate facet of human nature that tends to decry the system rather than make use of the opportunities presented by it, in the mistaken belief that the State (or the trade union) will protect a non-performer should their musical standards be found wanting. Since 1994 a number of band members have been duly informed in writing, through their commanding officers, that they have not honoured the conditions of their letter of appointment, and that their final opportunity to pass the requisite examination is imminent. A fair number of test cases was expected after April 1st 2004, with the commencement of the new SANDF/SAPS fiscal year and the expiry of extension time for these qualifying examinations. In exceptional cases representation may be made to the office of the Senior Staff Officer: Music and Ceremonial and, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, provision can be made in truly deserving cases for the deadline for passing the requisite examinations to be extended on an individual basis.

4.8 Comparison of IDMAC competency levels with those of other relevant examining bodies

By way of introduction, it must be pointed out that the following attempt at an equivalency table is a very approximate one at best. Not only are the various Diplomas of the institutions mentioned below never quite the same as that of their colleagues or competitors, but the body of SAQA is nowhere near the end of its task of establishing precise NQF levels.

TABLE 4: Equivalencies between qualifications

<u>IDMAC</u>	<u>ABRSM</u>	<u>TCL</u> FTCL	<u>GUILDHALL</u>	<u>UNISA</u> Concert Diploma
Chief Musician	LRSM(Perf.)	LTCL(Perf.)	Perf. Diploma	UPLM
Principal Musician	Adv. Certif.	ATCL(Perf.) Perf. Cert.	Rec. Cert.	
Senior Musician	Grade VIII	Grade VIII	Grade VIII	Grade VIII
	Grade VII	Grade VII	Grade VII	Grade VII
Musician	Grade VI	Grade VI	Grade VI	Grade VI
	Grade V	Grade V	Grade V	Grade V
	Grade IV	Grade IV	Grade IV	Grade IV
Learner Musician	Grade III	Grade III	Grade III	Grade III

Just how long these equivalencies remain accurate depends to a large measure on how successful the ex-"Homelands" bands are over the medium and long term in rising to the established standards. Further adjustment may be necessary within the foreseeable future, particularly in the case of some of the more rural SAPS bands.

4.9 Current equivalency levels between IDMAC and other public examining bodies operating in South Africa

TABLE 5: Levels of practical musicianship assessed by IDMAC

<u>IDMAC</u>	<u>AB/TCL/UNISA</u>	<u>Educ.Level/Band</u>	<u>NQF Level</u>	<u>Status</u>
LM	Grade III-IV	School Gr 9/GET	1[Sen.Phase]	1 st exit level
M	Grade VI	School Gr 11/FET	3	3 rd exit level
SM	Grade VIII Post-Sec./FET		4	4 th exit level
PM	Advanced Cert.	1 st yr. Tert./HET	5	National Cert. or level 5
CM	Performer's Diploma (recital)	3 rd yr. Tert./HET	6	Diploma National Performer's Diploma

GET = General Education and Training
 FET = Further Education and Training
 HET = Higher Education and Training

While this is a fairly accurate assessment of the situation as it obtains in 2005, further adjustments are likely in the view of the 2006 subject music curriculum of the SA Education Department.

In addition, it should be noted that SAQA has by no means reached finality as regards the FET and HET bands qualifications, and further adjustments in these areas are regarded as almost inevitable.

4.10 Sociological factors that impact negatively on the IDMAC evaluation process

The writer has observed over many decades that there is a certain element among service band musicians that views the band's daily musical activities as nothing more than a job. The perception of being a member of the music profession, with the potential of doing creative work for a living, escapes this element almost totally. This has been the source of some youthful disillusionment over the years since 1955, when the writer first met and befriended members of the S A Naval Band in Simonstown, where this trait was observed among musicians the writer otherwise admired. In the intervening years, this perception has been reinforced in observing that the above element is by no means limited to any particular service band, nor restricted to any one ethnic or even social group.

A number of possible explanations for this phenomenon are suggested:

- The incumbent feels underpaid for the job;
- The incumbent has a poor self-image, due either to inadequate training or other psychological factors;
- The incumbent is basically unmusical and, if honest, should apply for remustering;
- The incumbent is more proficient on an instrument that is *not* part of band instrumentation, and in fact earns a considerable extra income on it, to the detriment of his day-to-day performance on the band instrument;
- The incumbent's personality or self-image is mismatched with the band instrument played professionally, or with the understood norms of being a professional musician.

While such players tend to maintain a low profile, their attitude almost invariably has a demoralising effect on the more enthusiastic and achieving

members of a band. This attitude, while essentially negative, usually speaks volumes concerning the player's stance regarding band membership and their dedication to the instrument they are paid to play professionally. Constantly fearing exposure or comparison, this musical non-achiever frowns on over-enthusiasm in younger players and, if he or she can get away with it, attempts to disillusion them by finding fault with the organisation or the people who run it. Their own mediocrity is never mentioned. In the words of Francis Parker Yockey (1969: 253): "He is the inner weakness of every organism, the enemy of all greatness, the material of treason".

In order to maintain the necessary degree of morale, Bandmasters and Directors of Music need to deal with this "inner weakness" and to accept the challenge of bringing about *further* transformation in South African service bands, in this case to convert the widespread culture of "doing the minimum" into a culture of learning and achievement. This is a professed priority both at government level and in the private sector. Even so, "people are never inherently lazy, but will not be motivated to work if they do not feel that the work will satisfy needs" (De Wachter 1995d: 23).

The writer believes that the implementation of *Syllabus 2000* has gone a considerable distance towards satisfying musical needs within the service bands. Unavoidably, it has further polarised the protagonists of errant non-involvement identified in the previous paragraphs, who fortunately constitute a minority only. Patently, neither creativity nor culture can be conferred on an individual. The requisite training is offered to those who need it in order to rise to the standards for which they are being remunerated. With the accommodation of all personality types in mind, the compilers of *Syllabus 2000* can claim that:

Syllabus 2000 is designed to enhance the candidate's self-esteem, through a fair, broad and enjoyable choice of repertoire for every instrument of the military/concert band, as well as being

job-related in the most practical sense of the word (Galloway 1999b).

4.11 Reserve Force opportunities

A new category of Learner Musician position currently exists in the SANDF bands, but under an entirely different dispensation, i.e. that of a probationary two-year Reserve Force position. Sonya Raymond, Trinity College's National Manager in South Africa, covers this development in her article *The Defence Force Plays Trinity* (Raymond 2004: 8/9):

The Defence Force is also involving young musicians. Colonel Williams says the Defence Force wants to ensure a large defence capability at a more affordable cost, and to this end it has implemented a new system which will result in a higher turnover of young musicians.

The purpose is to create a pyramid structure of musical expertise throughout the Force, with a large contingent of young personnel; a smaller corps of professional military personnel, essential for management, administration and training; and a very small component of top leadership.

With this in mind the Defence Force is attempting to identify young musicians who show musical potential but have not had the training to develop that potential. The Defence Force offers these youngsters the opportunity to earn a salary while developing their musicianship. Potential young military musicians are required to pass an audition. Successful youngsters will be employed for a two-year contract period after which they may join one of the Reserve Force bands.

4.12 Summary

In Chapter Four the writer has endeavoured to provide an insight into the history of the "official" evaluation procedures of professional band personnel in South Africa, the various measures taken to ameliorate their musical working conditions, and the "inherited" anomalies with which IDMAC has to cope. Bearing in mind that in the 1950s, the audition process for service band

candidates consisted of a government "trade test", with musicians rated in the same division as waiters and wine stewards (Marlow 1956), it is clear that substantial progress has been made.

Also discussed in detail are the various professional categories or levels of musician with the IDMAC system, the examinations they take, and the training that is available to them in preparation for these. The details and philosophy of the examination panels have been discussed, and direct comparisons are made with the equivalent levels of other music examining institutions.

The exact procedure in researching and evaluating the material included in *Syllabus 2000* has likewise been described, as have the specialist panel members involved, and an alternative examination structure considered. This having been delineated, the first research sub-question has been addressed and answered: To what extent do previous evaluation systems need to be taken into account? The answer is, to a *considerable* extent, along with other non-musical factors which did not exist prior to 1994. Without this intensity of investigation, a balanced estimation of the required components for a new syllabus could not have been formed with any degree of efficacy. Further mention of this sub-question is made in Chapter 7.2.

While the image of a Utopian system remains a remote one, evidence has been provided that at the very least, an equitable and fair system is now in the early stages of its implementation. The developing cooperation with Trinity College, London, and a policy of gradual, ongoing improvement provide a clear indication that these positive trends will not only continue, but consolidate into a worthy dispensation for all concerned. It is clear that further provision for in-house training still needs to be made, both at the lower and the intermediate levels of musicianship.

It appears equally evident that through the dissection and reassembly of the various components of the evaluation process, and by making provision in certain areas for sociological and "inherited" inequalities, a workable balance has been struck. Credibility has been enhanced and a firm foothold established for the further evolution of the IDMAC evaluation system. If any bias remains in the system, it is in favour of Western art music, almost solely due to the fact that the other musics considered are not, as yet, available in print to any accommodating degree.

In a memorandum to Col Kevin Williams on the completion of *Syllabus 2000* (Galloway 1999b), the present writer saw fit to comment:

Possibly one of the most valuable qualities of our new (and part of our old) syllabi are that they expose the service bandsman and -woman to **art music** with which they might never otherwise come into contact, particularly if they had a mediocre teacher who was unaware of the instrument's repertoire.

The psychological aspect is also receiving attention from musical management and trainers. IDMAC panels find themselves in accord with the words of Don Greene (2001: 95): "No performance can be 100% perfect, but one done with courage and focus can win the audition with flying colours".