

# **Re-searching music education for civic activism**

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## **Abstract**

I am nurtured by indigenous African musical arts education philosophy and practice, and encountered literary music education and scholarship in adulthood. It is with dual musical sensibilities that I ponder the human mission of school music education.

My reflections will derive from experiences of applying African indigenous musical arts in classrooms and practical research sites. The objective has been to awaken the instincts of students who are searching to know music for a fulfilling musical life. Researching the nature of the fuel (the innate musical disposition of learners) is critical for better determining the nature of the spark (knowledge content and actualization strategies) that will ignite innate capabilities into a fulfilling professional pursuit or amateur engagement with the music of life.

## **Preface to a role for the musical arts in contemporary human societies**

Musical arts' abuse has advanced to cataclysmic proportions. The entire human race has become inflicted with pandemic musical arts pollution. Musical arts pollution, which engineers pollution of the psyche, conjures disabled spirituality and conscience. Techno-classical sophistication stifles the soul and spirit of humanizing musical arts, thereby proliferating diabolic creative genius. Human survival, basic to humane instincts, has become endangered by materialistic and egomaniac psychopaths who blatantly commandeer and demonize the contemporary political, religious, economic, social, communication and academic systems for wealth and power without conscience. The age-old mission of the musical arts is to mediate and contain the systemic ills that produce conflict in human life, and thereby ensure harmonious co-existence at home and globally. We must revisit that mission in order to sanitize the deviated psyche of the privileged as well as the despoiled masses. Flamboyant musical arts scholarship, creativity and presentation generate a perverted psyche. The need to research and re-instate purposive musical arts is, therefore, a matter of greatest moment.

## Posers:

- Are card carrying musical arts practitioners - composers, scholars, teachers, performers, promoters - irrespective of specializations, collaborating in disorientating the minds of the present generation, and thereby conspirators in the global construction of a disabled posterity?
- People in music are handling a most powerfully proactive and attitude-forming force. Are we compromising the divine mandate by neglecting to apply the intangible but prodigious force of the musical arts resolutely to human-societal services when we celebrate its fancy while burying the substance in curricula and professional practice?
- Are we researching the flash and fame while losing insight into the humanizing force of the musical arts? Have we been painstakingly striving to re-invent the purpose of music by fostering aesthetic entertainment instead of igniting and deploying what is everybody's latent birth knowledge into sublime public action? The equation is not: Who is a musician? It is rather: Who is *not* a musician?
- Music is the original universal religion commanding followers of virtually all of mankind. Winning converts was not an issue, since the divine mission of music welcomed all human souls, and bonded all humanity spiritually, irrespective of the cultural meta-language, theory and humanizing processes of sonic liturgy. The priests at that pristine age of human music told no lies, and neither instigated nor fought any wars. Wars and conflicts are generated by the aggressor's deep sense of inadequate self-merits and material contentment. The resulting envy of better-endowed others is then propagandized as vaguely saving or blindly eliminating the adequately saved. All human and even animal devotees of the Music religion, irrespective of race and region of the world, cherished genuine mutual fellowship in music-worship sites. No outward terrifying or intimidating temples were necessary to harness belief in the Almighty as every heart and performance site constituted a sacrosanct temple for humbly sharing communion and bonding souls. Worship temples are temporal edifices for aggrandizing humans, although insincerely purported to be housing God whose original supreme temple of abode is the heart and soul of every human that welcomes and practices God-essence.
- Exceptionally endowed musicians are the sacrosanct priests of the universal Music religion. Sadly, it is in our moon-grabbing age that the musical arts, the mass religion of benevolent living through active participation, has become misconstrued, personalized, betrayed, and divested of its prodigious societal commission by renegades who have strayed from the sublime oath of the music-priesthood. These are the musical arts specialists who corrupt the impressionable minds of contemporary music worshippers with vain and venal indoctrinations that contradict the godly purpose of the musical arts. Are the hegemonic, materialistic priests of the musical arts, a metaphysical ideology for sublime living, guilty of apostasy?

I deeply appreciate the considered judgment of the 2007 RIME conference organizers who invited me, an unconventional musical arts priest to give an address. I have been pondering why I was deemed an appropriate candidate to address such an august congregation of research luminaries in music education and practice. Next, I worried about what prompted me to accept the invitation. Have I committed the dreaded crime of 'mistake'? Then I reminded myself that the bogey, which contemporary intellectual refinements deem as a mistake is, more often than not, a divine sign, a positive force, a genie that inspires new creative-productive directions when accommodated, explored and resourcefully managed. The challenge then became what story to tell my audience, since I am an exotic research scholar as per the standing orders of metropolitan scholarship. Scholars are acclaimed for deposing what needs to be said in literature in conformity with contrived scholarly regimen. So, scholars are marked by their capacity to celebrate their exclusive cliques through academic citations. On the other hand, I have become increasingly constrained to discern and narrate original as well as abiding African indigenous knowledge lore, which embeds prodigious but unwritten intellectual treasures that need to be cognitively excavated and explicated, sometimes in uniquely African modes of intellectual discourse.

My perplexity was calmed when it occurred to me that I have actually been unwittingly selected to provide the factor of a joker spirit in a gathering of assiduous metropolitan scholars. My confidence grew when I reflected on a philosophy that grounds spirit manifest theatre practice,<sup>2</sup> in Africa. This philosophy expects a joker spirit actor to performatively refract the unpalatable realities and hidden fallacies of life by employing innocuous staging devices that compel introspective disposition in a reflective audience. The joker spirit manifest in African indigenous musical arts theatre is also a medical actor. It particularly conjures mass healing of the varied psychical indispositions, including dissolute spirituality that plague otherwise, outwardly polished and orthodox-posing humans. It is, therefore, with humility but not apologies that I reason my perceptions as a contemporary ancestral, *agent provocateur* intrepidly refracting naked introspections about modern knowledge inventions that star-decked performers are appropriately celebrating. I, therefore, deliver this rather unorthodox academic reflection as a joker-healer spirit factor in global musical arts scholarship.

Most of the discourse tendered derives from indigenous sensitizations that remain contemporaneously valid and viable. The research and theoretical perspectives may contradict some entrenched contemporary scholarship models and patented academic procedures. Thus, it becomes necessary that aspects of the sense and meaning of the African indigenous knowledge system processed by the musical arts, and which established the musical arts as a sacrosanct societal institution, should be foregrounded. These will form the bases for refracting perceptions of current trends in musical arts education and scholarship.

I submit, on ancestral mandate, that the original commission of the musical arts, at least the African indigenous model, which is to research, recharge and mediate a humane society, compels contemporary advancement. My stance echoes recent

thoughts expressed by Agawu (2003) and Bowman (2005), among other music scholarship thinkers, on the role the musical arts, as one of the oldest societal institutions anywhere in the world, should transact in contemporary polity issues. My strident and recurring argument is that more musical arts scholars should re-research and administer societal relevance by determining new modes of packaging the old virtues. As such, the refraction of musical arts education and practice as applied science should be proactive in the public domain, and must transcend esoteric scholarship communion to concretely instill morality and humanizing objectives in contemporary societal systems.

## **The musical arts as applied mystical activist**

Should entertainment be the end instead of a tool, that is, a means to a purposive societal commission, in contemporary musical arts education,<sup>3</sup> and practice? The musical arts was a primary societal institution in Africa. My mentors, who were indigenous African mother musicians, now ancestors, avowed that in performance sites, some musical arts types, especially those transacting critical utilitarian objectives, engineer heightened psychical perceptions that transform them into super-sensitized states of being. In such a state, they perform with divine objectivity, without fear of mundane consequences. As such they caution the society as follows: 'If our musically processed utterances or actions offend anybody's sensitivities, please do not take offence. What we communicate or do musically is not by our normal volition. Rather we are discharging a divine injunction'.<sup>4</sup> The indigenous musical arts as a super ordinary moderator of an orderly human society, is then an agency that transacts divine injunctions that ensure overall moral purity and civic health in a society. I strongly believe and advocate that a seminal grasp of a culture's knowledge lore is a prerequisite intellectual grounding for constructing a humanizing literary education that would advance heritage authoritatively into contemporaneous relevance.

The African indigenous musical arts foster viable models of philosophical, creative and scientific concepts as well as principles of musical arts creativity and professional practice:

- The musical arts are conceived, conformed and applied in public space as a proactive intangible force that effects tangible outcomes. It is explicitly effectual in its human-making and overall societal management capabilities. In the indigenous African worldview and intellectual constructs, the musical arts functioned as an intangible spirit operative (an ombudspirit) that must not be abused; and its human conduits were impartial and inviolable in discharging their civic duties.
- Music is not a discrete intellectual construct in indigenous African creative design. The organized sonic fact is only a sibling of other components of a composite creative design that is proactive in its societal milieu. Hence, indigenous discursive terminology does not commonly represent the term, music as an isolate. The sonic conformation is then integral to a holistic artistic ideation comprising the musical

aural arts, the musically underscored dance arts, the musically interactive dramatic arts and the musically illuminated visual arts.

- The same indigenous intellectual enlightenment has since constrained me to use the musical arts as a singular, composite term that conveys the African sensibility, unless it becomes imperative for academic purposes to isolate the sonic, dance or dramatic component for discrete discussion and experiencing.
- Indigenous African cultures reckon creativity in the musical arts in feminine sentiments. After all, composition and performance are processes of fecundating and giving birth to sonic reality. Hence, 'music is a woman' (Meki & Galane, [2005](#)). Indigenous terminology discusses expert musicianship as mother musicianship, and the key instrument that directs an ensemble as well as undertakes extensive improvisation/extemporization as a mother instrument.
- Aesthetics is not the primary intention informing musical arts creation and experiencing in indigenous African cultures. Yet aesthetic aspiration is normally cherished, discussed and demonstrated interactively on the spur of performance sensitization.
- Entertainment is not a fore-grounded aspiration, an end, in musical arts production and presentation, rather a template for imprinting the more profound human-societal business of musical arts.
- The material and technology of virtually every indigenous African music instrument generate healing sound energy, which combines with the science of sonic structures to promote psychical wellness and communal bonding.
- To re-research is an on-going process of inquiry the outcome of which is not pre-determinable. Hence, hypothesizing the outcome of a human research could discolor research lenses or prejudice research integrity. The objective would then be to merely prove the expected or the preconceived, instead of discerning the actuality of the subject. Hypothetical orientation could block perception of field exigencies that should spontaneously frame the purpose or direction of inquiry. The indigenous African musical arts practitioners are intensive and purposive re-researchers, and the end product results from spontaneous responsiveness to the contingencies of a research or performance site. Hence, performance-composition, for instance, is open-ended but systematic creativity that is sensitive to non-musical arts sensitizations in a performance context. The indigenous musical arts practitioner is thus a re-researcher of humanly applied knowledge primed by context. In this paradigm, the researcher-educator or mother of knowledge, as well as the learner/audience or refractor of experienced knowledge, are quite often partners in the stimulation of intellectual growth. Hence, it is critical that the quintessential re-researcher is the expert who is sensitive about how the knowledge she beams at learners is experienced, queried and refracted in public sites. Effort must be cherished because competence is relative, and mastery a never-ending research beacon.
- The musical arts was a humanizing force. The creative and performance rationalizations in indigenous Africa were common, cognitive knowledge. As

such it was ideal for forming attitudes, that is, imbuing spiritual disposition in the process of tuning and healing the psyche.

Deriving from my induction into the indigenous musical arts through core, [5](#) and thereafter, area studies in Africa, I declare that common creative theory and societal objectives underpin the musical arts conceptualizations and practices of African cultures south of the Sahara. It is on this premises that I posit a common template for explicating African musical arts conceptualizations and creative theory.

## **The searcher: contextualizing the current human-mental ecology for musical arts education and re-searching goals**

The search for the appropriate modalities for enriching and advancing the frontiers of experience is a normal human disposition that children exemplify. The intuitive urge is not a modern academic invention termed 'research'. The searcher then includes the learner, the learned person, as well as the knowledge practitioner. In contemporary academic and research practice, scholars are constantly searching for the best theories and practices in striving to reconstruct or deconstruct knowledge, enable and disable perception, improve and disprove methods, and sometimes to invent the obtrusive ego in the guise of inventing theories of excellence. Research is basically a recycling of the ingredients and potentials of experience for fresh experiencing. Most of the time we are searching the firmament for answers that are already exemplary in the fundamental knowledge of life, and merely need contemporary definition and redeployment. At other times, we are constructing refinements, inevitably injurious, for the sake of upstaging our mentors and predecessors. What is wrong with the philosophy, theory, human-societal objectives and health science of indigenous musical arts that warrants radicalizing instead of discerning and advancing their merits into contemporary utility?

Could it be that the contemporary researcher has been celebrating the superficial refinements of knowledge, and in the process overlooked and undermined the raw, substantial texts essential for humane and humanizing scholarship? Refinement is quite often an outward sparkle that lacks substantial merits. The processing of refinement purifies the natural or original substance of its fundamental material health value and civic virtue. Too much glitter hides base nature; too much brilliance or enlightenment often blinds. Enlightenment becomes shallow and injurious when it neglects to continually draw sustenance from reality. Hence, it is self-debasement when a person insults ancestral knowledge roots while chasing the glare and psychosis of sophistication. After all, the masters of European written classical music are ancestors on whose knowledge eminence contemporary music scholarship and concert performances continue to draw in many parts of the world.

The physical sciences and hyper technology that strive to upstage and appropriate God have so far not successfully cloned any human being with a soul or humane disposition. A person has a chance to be born at all because of a wise and nurturing ancestry. We must, therefore, honor the sublime of ancestral lore by re-searching and

advancing its humanity-based knowledge legacy in ways that should reward psychically stable enlightenment. Otherwise, we shall continue to be blighted by diabolic brilliance. Ignorance and disdain for old wisdom are generating traumatic mental digression, moral regression, psychophysical distress and environmental backlashes in the local, national and global experience. As the elite of the world becomes obsessed with purification, refinement and superstardom mentalities, the world increasingly becomes an impure, unsafe and morally disabled human environment.

I am concerned with searching for appropriate visions that would re-position humane objectives in contemporary musical arts education and experiencing at least in Africa. I am not interrogating formularized metropolitan music education except in so far as it undermines cultural lore which is marked by its humanizing ideology.

I continue to ponder why, in our modern fancy of scorning parental wisdom, it became necessary to dismember the appropriately holistic musical arts into unbodied music studies, de-toned dance studies, dehydrated drama studies, immobilized visual arts manifestations, etc. Each disjointed branch then strives too stringently to exercise autonomy by being mentally insulated from other disciplinary siblings in the politics of academia. Then the study of music as sound becomes further dismembered into segregated academic enclaves of musicology, music history, music education, performance, music therapy, composition etc. This atomization breeds the psychosis of isolation that leads to factionalized intra-disciplinary insecurity and infighting. The argument could be that the micro-divisions are strategic for job creation in the modern ideology of digitalizing the brain, to the detriment of the psychical equilibrium that inter-stimulating intellectual engagements engender.

The background is perhaps, not far to search. As enlightened humans mortgage godly disposition in the craze to attain super-star ego, obsession with establishing scholarship eminence or specialization kingdoms for self-emergence becomes a creed. This breeds internecine power plays, and higher brain energy is expended on schemes to upstage the other. We then become too mentally exhausted or dissociated to know humanness through creating and sharing knowledge as a team. Is it backward looking to devote time to a concerted search for the strategy for re-unification of the dismembered musical arts factions, especially when our forward-looking segmentation of sameness is breeding so much psychical tension and a depressive environment for learners?

The fundamental problem with academic music is that it is all head and little heart. It is consumed with a search for the bogey of excellence. Excellence or refinement is sparse in human value or virtue as is easily witnessed in the mass deceptions that mark and mock modern industrial, political, business, social, sporting and pure entertainment inventions.

The bane of professional music practice, especially in the popular music scene, is that it is demonically consumed with marketing mass entertainment hysteria for the systematic mental and material exploitation of impressionable minds. It thereby insanely jettisons the human-making potentials of divine music. Indigenous musical

arts imbued the operation of political systems with human value and virtuous principles, and instilled human-centered dispositions in the collective minds of system operators. That was possible because indigenous musical arts focused on balancing the heart and the mind, engendering sublime emotions in order to moralize mind and actions. The problem is not with music as a proactive sonic phenomenon, but with how it is currently mal-appropriated to effectively serve base, materialistic and ego ends. Hence, popular music producers in particular, are exploiting the engaging force of the musical arts for unmitigated commercial gains by feeding frivolity and mind-pollution to the entranced youth of the world.

The vanguards of a technology-possessed music pollution age could easily misconstrue and dismiss the viewpoints being expressed here. Everybody appears hell-bent to join the bandwagon of base materialism and insensate star-culture that increasingly obsesses and destabilizes the world. Modern technology is an able tool that facilitates the mass disablement of humane disposition and fellow feeling. Mass human imagination has become overwhelmingly enchanted by the Siren-gospel of technologically developing the world, a sermon that ironically, systematically mentally under-develops the enslaved populace. The backlashes are the megalomania and criminality that mark and mock our techno-digital age civilization.

Techno-digital civilization has fostered the profligate inventions that instigate and proliferate crimes in contemporary global experience. These include weapons of mass murder, the narcotics industry, artificial food poisoning promoted as food coloring and sweetening, de-humanizing education practices, knavish business mentality, corrupt and corrupting bureaucratic systems legalized as democratic governance, mind poisoning mass entertainment, toy culture, phenomenal sexuality, artificial and virtual musicking, etc. If championing a crime deluge is what the modern civilized world cherishes, and we all feel compelled and complacent to conform, so be it. After all, Armageddon is also biblical prophecy that the elites of a materialistically demonized world is striving stridently to fulfill in quick time. And yet, some original models of the musical arts can still remedy the epidemic of anti-human life dispositions.

I am concerned about Africa as a continent of incoherent nations and a gravely endangered populace that unwittingly consume plastic knowledge infestations that they are neither mentally nor biologically equipped to digest. There was neither the epidemic of hunger nor the scourge of malnutrition in Africa before the modern religious and colonial encounters that unrelentingly impoverish the continent, mentally and economically. Hunger and malnutrition are now endemic in the continent. And yet there is abundant nutritious natural food and vast landmass on which to economically cultivate them. But the African leadership and intellectual minds as well as the external manipulators have become dementedly materialistic, corrupt and spiritually debased. So they have no compunction whatsoever in blatantly mortgaging the basic survival needs of the mentally deviated, and thereby repressed general populace. The privileged smugly get away with all manner of criminality, thanks to modern democratic legalities purposefully fabricated by the political, business and legal elite to protect their self-centered interests while expropriating and abusing the masses. These atrocities have been made possible by

the modern law enactment and enforcement machineries. In practice and in truth, democracy as currently experienced, at least in all Africa, can only be defined as the 'government (expropriation of the rights and lives) of the people by the elite for the aggrandizement of the elite'.

Music that relies on basic technology and mystical guidance transacts civic morality. The musical arts in indigenous Africa alleviated hunger and disabled poverty because they socialized wealth and engendered the spirit of sharing. Indigenous cultures researched the appropriate medium of musical arts production, and deployed the science of structures to mold noble dispositions.<sup>6</sup> The musical arts performed the role of cautioning, querying and correcting social, political and economic deviations in its indigenous society. Hence, there is need for re-researching strategies for deploying the musical arts in the contemporary milieu as a force that can counter polity crime. Humanly inspired musical arts cannot be compromised by materialism. Crime grows and crystallizes in the mind before being perpetrated in public experience. Deterrent action should then first target the psychical dispositions that produce avarice, selfishness and fun loving. Fun is becoming systematically fabricated, promoted and disseminated in demoniacal fashions that make it a primary global calamity. Technology has become a key role player in processing and disseminating deleterious modern ideas of fun, which vastly disable minds and criminalize dispositions of all and sundry, in mass media, private and classroom education sites. The primary guilty instigator of criminal disposition is contemporary public education (media and classroom) that molds and nurtures such criminal mentality. Indigenous musical arts most effectually coerced the individual in society to be very mindful of what is best for all concerned by relying on the natural science of timbre, mind disposing structures and theatrical processing of fellowship. The earlier in upbringing the mind-forming imperatives of the musical arts is administered, the more enduring in inculcating social responsibility and public morality.

Searchers, learners and practitioners, will be the vanguard of the mission to re-instate the many roles of the musical arts in human and societal formation as well as reformation. It is natural that contemporary learners should instinctively search for the meanings and relevance of a phenomenon that conditions human behavior and builds social relationships. Unfortunately, the current academic and media representations of the musical arts tend to divorce social force and civic action from the purpose of its professional practice. Instead, the promotion of the musical arts as sheer fun has generated a flippant imagination about its potency in contemporary searchers.

The contemporary search for, and education in, system responsive musical arts is the responsibility of specialist musicians in academia and professional practice. Hence, critical attention must be devoted to the value/virtue content of the knowledge base that underscores classroom musical arts education, and which learners refract in public practice. Musical arts students enter institutions with varied baggage of ideas about the discipline, as well as varied knowledge and aspirations. They want to pass examinations and get famous, or access jobs. How many of them are induced to engage in self-reflection: to meditate and listen to their intuitions, to perceive their innate capabilities, predilections and human nature, to value and

engage with music as a humanizing religion or, otherwise, as a profit and fame beckoning enterprise? Are some students pressurized and frustrated into music studies, maybe by selfish parents who pressurize their children to become superstars?

Musical arts educators and role modelers also need deeper reflections on their professional competencies, dispositions and attributes: do the college music education curricula and learning procedures generate stress or enthusiasm in learners and educators?

How much positive mentoring and knowledge integrity do the educators offer? How much of the knowledge insecurities, professional frustrations and human prejudices of the musical arts educators are infused into students who thereby become disenchanted with the subject matter but hang on to it as a possible source of employment?

How about the increasingly aged and disappearing audience for college music productions? How about re-researching the ways and means of starting from early education to sensitize and nurture the future audience for college musical arts productions? Patronage is sustained when the audience is a partner in creativity, and a participant of some sort in performance as is the lesson of indigenous musical arts productions. The illumination imparted in early education instills the prevalent values and virtues of the musical arts as much as conscious adult experience. Sensitization should secure a knowledgeable audience for specialist practitioners. There is a need to begin to re-orient and re-educate the audience on the strategic role of the musical arts in healing the mind of the individual and the society as well as in shaping humane societal systems. Such re-research orientation could re-instate musical arts practitioners as the responsible conscience of society. Do we, the specialists, bother to conduct audience research to elicit why the audience attends any performance type? Or have we distanced ourselves from empathy with the human milieu in which we must demonstrate momentous relevance? The issue of conventional behavior versus cognitive behavior raises the question: is concert going a fashionable social gathering such as visiting a park to admire animals, without actually experiencing much cognitive illumination or spiritual regeneration from the event?

My concern is about how to again generate enhanced public respect for what musical arts practitioners do as much as how the musical arts could once again perform its specialized function of harnessing virtue/value-enriched living. In the old cultures, everybody was acutely spiritually regenerated in a musical arts context because everybody was enculturated to be cognizant of the philosophy and idioms of creativity and performance.

Sometimes we are fixated on expounding the how (technique), and the what (theory) of musical arts education, and do not pursue the why (utilitarian intentions) that is no longer common knowledge.

## Re-searching

Over the past five years, I have been trying to discern the human-musical impulse of our students by requiring my second year African music class in the Department of Music, University of Pretoria, to write narrative accounts on: 'My personal motivation for studying music' (see Appendix). Narrative liberates imagination and enables the expression of gut feeling on the basis of which a person could imaginatively engage with a topic. When the mind flows, some hidden truths are revealed. When self-expression is encumbered or constrained by regimentation and sophistry, lies may be packaged as truth in a manner that conforms to the boundaries of specification. And we could be cloning robotic minds instead of creative individuals in a community. The students freely told the stories of their route to choosing music as a discipline of academic study, their experiences of the department, and their visions for post-graduation musical life. Interesting stories get told, which indicate that by the second year of University academic study, the experiences of students are already enabling them to reflect, and confirm or reformulate career visions in the consciousness of their human-public ecology for envisaged professional practice. A random sampling of 50 students' career visions in 2005 and 2006 shows that 13 would wish to specialize as music therapists, 11 as music teachers, nine as performers, five as commercial music producers, three as composers, two as music technologists and one as a conductor, while five remained undecided. One student was considering both performance and composition. Of the sampled students, 44 started learning and playing European classical music instruments with private music teachers before entering the University. None of the students, including the nine black students, indicated having any intellectual disposition towards African indigenous musical arts as a performer or audience, even though they are all born and bred in southern Africa. And yet virtually all the students are likely to practice music in the African human environment. Also, none of the students had any imagination of music as a potent societal activist.

It is significant that music therapy has fascination for a good number of the students in the sampled essays. The choice may have implications for their intuitive or actual perceptions of the health environment in the world. It is a matter of whether they are thinking about healing the clinically sick or the abnormally sick. The abnormally sick are the physiologically normal persons suffering from deleterious psychical indispositions that cannot be detected through techno-scientific tests, but which a clinical drumming ensemble test easily reveals. For instance, a person who hires a vagrant to kill another human for any reason whatsoever, invariably greed or egotistical love, could be competently addressing a board meeting at the same time as the murder is taking place. Such a powerful executive is not clinically sick, but is spiritually debased and psychically diseased, and yet is considered an icon of social-moral respectability. Indigenous music or indeed any other music that derives from natural instrumental timbres combined with the healing science of sonic conformations has potency for managing and correcting such psychical and spiritual disablement. Rough textured or toned instrumental timbres are particularly effective for redemptive therapy.

Indigenous musical arts in Africa are fundamentally processed as a therapeutic medium. Their effectiveness derived from the material and timbre of instruments, the

science of sonic structures and interrelationships, modes of creative and performance interaction, and the venue as well as layout of presentation. Some musical arts types, such as psychotherapeutic drumming interactions and objective improvisations, are then specifically researched and applied as mass restoratives or to heal/control specific indisposition.

Specialization in performance is a glorious dream about stardom, and is often psychically frustrating and disabling. For instance, how many can consistently win competitions in order to remain famous or in successful practice of elusive excellence. To fail in a competition could be psychically defeating, and incur a permanent injury to self-perception for life. Composition has the college music problem of regimentation and suppression of creative individuality. European classical music ancestors who enjoyed free creative adventures are still worshipped, and continue to intimidate the genius of regulation-composers processed by college composition regimen. And who is not a music educator? Often when defeat is encountered in pursuing more fashionable specialization some searchers resort to carrying the classroom music educator card. Such a compromised music teacher operates with the psychic injury of being a non-achiever; and enabling music knowing becomes a torture instead of a passion. That is when the teacher becomes a public enemy, disliking the job, and frustrating learners.

Students should be spared compartmentalized college music regimens, and enabled to attain working competence in as many contrived specialization factions as possible. Interestingly, none of the students who have so far written the short essay has indicated interest in specializing in African music in order to impress me, the lecturer, especially since the essays earn examination marks. Hence, I view their self-revelations seriously. A number of the students demonstrated philosophical disposition about their current as well as future life and career as musicians.

A few students lamented that there is no financial success in studying classical music, even though the popular music industry is a billion dollar business field. This calls attention to the rating or relevance of academic music and musicians in the broad public imagination about music as entertainment. Inquiry into public imagination about music could reveal why popular music has captured the aural-attitudinal imagination of the youth, while the older and disappearing generation still clings to the classical oldies; also why the indigenous peoples, at least in Africa, still cherish emotional rapport with indigenous musical arts in spite of its being increasingly divested of systemic relevance. Re-searching the basic education imperatives and sites that would prepare the masses for life-long support of academic music products should be of concern to academic musicians who are interested in the future relevance and job security of their student-searchers. It could be rewarding for assessing and re-assessing curricula and music education priorities to target research on the refracted field experiences of ex-music students. Their retrospective reflections about music as a career choice could inform the curricula, methods and objectives of college music studies.

## **Musical arts action to counter polity crime**

Perceptions of the leadership conscience that commands the political, religious, business, communication, academic and social manipulation of the world of today and tomorrow, furnish glaring evidence that spiritually diseased and stone-hearted humans are determining and dominating the public affairs of all human societies. This is because world peoples are no longer cherishing humanizing music arts. All appear to be entranced by the absurd sensationalist culture orchestrated and choreographed by the civic leaders and the electronic mass media. The two glamorous villains in the non-musical drama of contemporary existence have effectively amputated the will and mind of the populace as per the sermon not the spirit of modern democracy. Members of the modern leadership class have no humanizing music in their souls, no enspiriting dance in their bodies, and no down to earth emotion in their hearts. Power and money transform the privileged into diabolic brains and base human dispositions. And the masses are bereft, adrift, blinded and brainwashed with media jingles and diabolic political dances. My studied perception is that modern democracy has failed humankind, in fact double-crossed Africa, and bastardized the minds of leadership and followers alike in all aspects of life and after life.

The disciples of the musical arts have a divine responsibility to re-search strategies for re-humanizing the leaders as much as regenerating the souls of the robotized masses. A sublime leader who seeks empathy with the masses needs to occasionally dance in public, and to the right live music that imbues and regenerates humane spirituality. A leadership dance is a bonding metaphysical communion with the followers. This is the lesson in leadership from indigenous democratic cultures. Even in African political systems that fronted kings, the ruler was required to dance in public in order to show empathy with the people. The indigenous musical arts functioned to caution, contain or dismiss derailed leadership, and could still accomplish such goals in contemporary times, given a supportive mass audience.[7](#)

Learners are searching for models of disciplinary knowledge that would accrue them meritorious reckoning in society. The mentors need to re-search the contemporaneous effectiveness of extant indigenous models. The abiding meanings should be advanced in performative manners that could re-instill public conscience and compel what is best for all humans in the conduct of public affairs and inter-personal relationships.

Emotive dancing heats the entire body to kindle a benign spiritual disposition. A person who does not experience the sobering spirituality of free public dancing invariably nurtures a diabolic spiritual disposition. Hence, we started this discourse by stating the obvious: that persons who command what happens in all spheres of contemporary life everywhere in the world are rational psychopaths visiting all manners of atrocities in the minds and lives of the automated human populace. Divinely inspired musical arts practitioners should re-search ways and means of coercing all modern humans to dance routinely in order to humanize their spiritual dispositions through fellow feeling in somatic interactions. The music for such

dances is critical, and definitely not techno-generated music that produces plastic sound energy. Plastic sound beats rather than massages sensitive human and animal organs. Electronic sound hardens and deadens feelings, and scarcely re-generates benign spirituality. The disposition of the body in dance is critical: a stiffened up body stiffens the psyche, a relaxed body relaxes the psyche, and accords salubrious dance experiencing. Hence, the rationalization of body deportment in indigenous African dances repairs the psyche, and imperceptibly enables coping with the adverse circumstances of life. The waist is the pivot of the dancing body such that the sensitization of both the psychically elevated upper parts and the physically grounded lower parts of the body harmonize heavenly orientation (spiritual enrichment) and earth-orientation (mundane consciousness) of life. More often than not, the modern science of, and contraptions for exercising the body in body-fitness or elegant dance inventions develop muscles but could strain the mind. They do not tune or compose the spirits. The psyche may become rigid and deleterious, more so when the activities have the orientation of competition or aesthetic refinement.

In the indigenous reckoning, music elevates the spirit dimension of life; dance stages the emotions of being, while drama interrogates the issues of life. The indigenous creative intention researched materials, structures and presentation modes that made it an effectual agency that monitored and proactively managed public morality and mass, as well as personal psychical health. The practitioners were not humored as entertainers, rather respected as the objective custodians of the communal conscience who have the corporate mandate and responsibility to bring about ordered societal systems. Contemporary entertainers have little system relevance, and are accorded euphoric acclaim because patrons perceive their performances as trivial accessory to life. The modern wealthy class engages entertainers as subservient humorists to keep the masses sedated with fun while their democratic rights and privileges are expropriated and raped with impunity. And yet music was originally the indefatigable voice of the masses, the ombudspirit. It has the capacity to penetrate high, low, public and private spaces; to reach out and coerce egalitarian relationships irrespective of wealth and status, between the ruler and the ruled, the priest and congregations, the mogul and the beggar with equal respect and impact. This was when the musical arts was sustained by the mandate of its human collective in indigenous societal polity, and was thereby able to tackle its civic responsibility with objectivity.

## **Conclusion**

How can the subverted humanizing tunes, motions and emotions be re-searched and reinstated as the objectives of musical arts studies at all levels of education in this global stage of threatening Armageddon? Classroom musical arts education could still play a key role. Musical arts research and studies have no need to adopt the diabolical refinements of the physical sciences, communication technology, business practices and religious as well as political demagoguery that worship materialism.

Humans must be made to feel and live humanely again through experiencing the potent musical arts models that have the capacity to induce psychical wellness. The purpose of re-researching the musical arts of Africa implies reclaiming the divine mandate of the musical arts as a healing science and art in the contemporary milieu. The deployment of the composite musical arts discipline could again make significant impact in government, business, communication, social services, health care, sports and games forums through re-researching, packaging and staging in strategic public sites. Re-research endeavors and theoretical conformations would then aim to infuse humane dispositions and transact civic morality. To make a serious impact in societal affairs musical arts practitioners should resist promoting entertainment that lacks humanizing-civic ballast as the ideology of professional specializations. To again reclaim its role as a relevant institution in society, musical arts creations, presentation or discourse should proactively imprint indelible virtues in the consciousness and imagination of the public. The masses should be re-researched and involved as active partners in fulfilling the divine mandate of the human musical arts mission as a potent mystical force. The reward is the soul-fulfillment of intervening to accord psychical wellness and godly living for all in a humanity conscious societal polity. Academic musical arts research and practice should eschew celebrating the institutional conceit that marks cosmopolitan academy, and query its essence in the public domain.

Basically, for a genuine scholar, human and social sciences research is an adventure into self-interrogation. When we mourn the dead we query our living; how we research a topic reflects our motivation. The factual humanly and civic outcome of research proves the conscience of the researcher.

## **Notes on contributor**

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# Appendix

My personal motivation for studying music

Discuss your musical experience since childhood up till your current interests as a music student as well as your career expectations. The following pointers should guide you:

Childhood music experiences - the various genres, styles and types of music you were directly or indirectly exposed to, and any opportunities you had to participate in any manner. Modes of early music experiencing.

What music types appealed to you in early life, and what influenced your preference (family, peers, technology, religion, social life, etc)?

The beginning of your formal music studies in or outside school environment.

Motivation for studying music as a subject of specialization. Influences as well as the genres, styles and types of music that interest you as a student or as a social person.

Discuss your current music milieu - the music that is available in your human environment, those that you pay attention to, those that you participate in as a performer/conductor/producer, the music types you prefer or do not like. You must argue the reasons for the music types you like or do not like.

Your areas of interest in music studies with respect to your future career expectations in music. Give reasons why you prefer such area/s of music specialization. Do you consider any alternatives should your preferred career objectives not be possible?

With respect to your envisaged career in the music profession, what do you find positive and negative about the university music education, and the learning environment you are now part of. Deriving from your current experiences and expectations as a music student, recommend any changes you would like to see in the Department of Music that could best prepare you for your envisioned career in the field of music.

Evaluation will take account of the ability to make a logical presentation of facts, experiences and visions about self as a process of self-reflection and self-evaluation; ability to argue opinions, and critique with objectivity; also demonstration of original thinking. Evaluation recognizes that English is not the first language of some students, and, as such, no marks will be lost for quality or standard of English as competence in a language improves with opportunities to think, reason and express oneself (orally and in writing) in the language.

## Notes

1. Conference keynote from the 5th International Conference for Research in Music Education, University of Exeter, April 2007.
2. Indigenous Africans do not conceive or practice [European] **masquerade** theatre. **Spirit manifests** in African musical theatre conceptualizations are believable extra-terrestrial (masked) agents that adopt extraordinary physical forms, behavior and sometimes voices, and interact in realistic human experiences in order to dramatically transact and accomplish concrete, beneficial societal missions.
3. I use education in the broadest sense that includes what card-carrying musicologists, historians, instrument teachers, theorists, composition teachers, ethnomusicologists, choreographers, music dramatists, etc., accomplish in and out of the regulation classrooms.
4. Israel Anyahuru's recorded deposition during my fieldwork tutelage under him and the other four mother musicians in 1976.
5. My formative research perspectives on musical arts studies and college education were primed by the indigenous knowledge systems of Africa. My seminal and theoretically articulate mentors were five Igbo mother musicians specialized in three species of the tuned drum row, which are indigenous keyboard instruments that play highly structured contextual events. They inducted me into the philosophy, theory and humanist principles of the African indigenous musical arts system. The three orchestral music types furnish complex compositional theory, and are structured into three, five and six compartments (partially comparable to movements in European classical music), respectively.
6. In July 2000, I experimentally applied the indigenous science of musical arts structures to reform the social attitudes and self esteem of a group of street children in South Africa. Within nine months of the Soccajasco Kids project, the participating children performed with the English Chamber Orchestra, the overture of the first International Classical Music Festival of South Africa in 2001. Since then, the same Soccajasco Kids have toured internationally with the Palissander choir, which is a prominent South African modern classical choir. The Soccajasco Kids, some of whom are still school children, have given other performances and workshops internationally, and are currently resident instructors on classical drum ensemble music in the Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance Practices of Africa (CIIMDA). CIIMDA is an extra-governmental initiative funded by NORAD of the Norwegian Foreign Office. CIIMDA is re-orientating the mentality and cultural content of musical arts education in southern Africa. The CIIMDA programme trains musical arts educators and learners from the South African Development Community (SADC) countries in the philosophy, theory, health principles and performance goals of indigenous musical arts.

7. When I tried this at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1974 with a music-drama production 'Ordeal for regeneration', I received no public support, not even from among my University staff colleagues. So, I was dismissed by the University Council, and remained unemployed for four years while in court.

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