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The Second Liberation Struggle
Cultural Identities in South African Music Education

By Stig-Magnus Thorsén

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Introduction

The year 1994 was a milestone in the South African history. The national election gave new hopes for change and legitimacy to an ongoing democratic development in the country. Politically, apartheid ideology was dead; it was to be successively replaced by the new South Africa's negotiated solution comprising the majority's liberation, assumption of power and a nation built on democracy and equity. The new constitution was a first step towards liberation that had vast political, psychological, and physical implications, especially for the Africans in South Africa.

I venture, however, to say that there also remains to be accomplished a second liberation; a cultural liberation, through which all South Africans will experience that they are recognised by having equal value and equal voice. Thus, targeting "issues of redress", I assume that an essential part of the second liberation is a relevant education that contains arts and culture according to the declared policy (Bengu 1995 p. 17). In this paper, I specifically analyse the conditions for general music education against the backdrop of such cultural liberation. In other words: What is conveyed to a growing young South African through music in the compulsory schooling that can support the process of liberation?

I am investigating music in schools from a sociological and anthropological perspective. I use the concept of *cultural identity* as a tool for understanding an important feature of cultural liberation. One of my points of departure is the notion that well-integrated personal identity is a necessity in a multicultural nation. Hypothetically, there is a chain between arts education, cultural identity, and the second liberation. I focus on South Africa as a case study, but the discussion will hopefully be of general interest. In South Africa these issues are palpable, due to the prolonged colonisation by the former apartheid regime. However, I also regard this liberation struggle in a broader post-colonial discourse.

Since 1993, I have myself worked half time as a consultant for Sida (The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), managing projects in music education in South Africa (www 1). I have used these years for ad hoc collection of research material. I am thankful for all the informative talks I've had with students, music educators and policy makers in SA over the years. I will not report on the ongoing process of music education in the country, but refer to earlier reports on

Sida projects (Mannergren 2002). This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the Nordic Africa Institute's conference: Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa. Åbo/Turku, Finland, 2000.

Liberation From What?

South African music education carries a heritage from the mission, where European church music was implanted, and from the British education system, which formatted examinations and teaching methods. Government musical institutions and European music education contributed to manifest the taking over of political power (Coplan 1985, Primos 1996 p. 196). The Christian, Euro centric music education was cemented during the apartheid regime as an expression for the fulfilment of Christianisation and the exercise of power.

South African music education did not just take over many of these government means of power. It has also been stamped by the colonisers' legitimacy. This has underpinned, in a double sense, the devout attitude towards the British music education system.

Arts and culture in South African schools are still imprinted by harsh racial discrimination, set in place by laws from the 1950s (Hauptfleisch 1993, Thorsén 1997). Music didn't exist as an examined subject in practice in the "black" schools. It's also obvious that tangible improvements in music education entailing the new Government's policy have been quite few. A decisive factor for the present state is the "ex-race" label on a school (Frantzich & Olsson 1999).

Music education in South Africa also reflects the modern state's ambiguous culture policy. The musical institutions have, to various extents, lost financial and political support from the state, and media industry shapes the nation's music life. On the one hand, music education supports the market economy. The media industry relies on well-educated musicians and artists. On the other hand, others use the recent "Culture & Development movement" as a vehicle for pushing Government music education that brings musical competence to everyone.

Ambivalence also is noticeable in endeavours of the African Renaissance. Appeals for "decolonising the minds", support to "indigenous knowledge and culture", and "African identity "is met by the promotion of multiple discourses (Ntuli 1999). All in all the concept of cultural identity is an issue, either as a marketable concept, or as a vehicle for the liberation strives.

Steps Towards Freedom In South African Music Education

Practical and ideological issues are constantly discussed in the country's music educational circles. Hope as well as disappointment has followed in the footsteps of the

implementation of the new "Curriculum 2005". The policy of giving equal education to all members of the society has been of great importance. The subject of music in all schools embraced by the learning area Arts & Culture is regarded as a cultural democratic improvement. Expectations arise of the possibility of letting all cultures be represented in the classroom, so as to let all learners share each other's cultural expressions. Disappointments over the new curriculum have been voiced indicating the blur of objectives (equal opportunities) and pedagogical methods (Outcomes-based education) (Jansen 1998).

Even earlier, important steps were taken to address issues of cultural democracy. In 1985, the South African Music Educators' Society (SAMES) was established with the purpose of gathering music educators who wanted to connect the ongoing general liberation process to a fight for equal and relevant music education. SAMES became a powerful forum under the principles of "equal and compulsory "(a legislative aspect of music education) and that "Music education in Southern Africa must shed its exclusive Euro centric basis." (Mngoma 1988, Oehrle 1998). SAMES had a certain impact on the advocacy campaign during late 1980s and early 90s among those who wanted to contribute to a cultural policy change through Government music education.

Some, but too few, projects are now setting these forces in motion (Mannergren-Selimovic 2002). We note a legislative and active potential for a change in South African music education in terms of cultural liberation, as well as an ongoing debate or even a power game among different South African organisations and institutions emanating from different corners of the former Government's education system.

Well aware of the socio-economic aspects of music education in a country, I go on to look at the concept of identity in order to understand cultural aspects of music in South African schools. First, some notes on two central issues.

Musical Knowledge and Musical Context

Some may at this point raise a question about musical knowledge. Aren't "music fundamentals" neutral basic facts that just can be conveyed so as to give every school child musical literacy? Yes and no. Staff notation, chord analysis, and metric notation are musts for anyone who wants to enter professional life in music. Like any international languages such as medical terms and computer jargon, music relies on various kinds of literacy. Nevertheless, this is only part of general music education. Music is also intrinsically permeated with psychological, social, and cultural meanings. In many discussions with our project partners on how to balance between general musical knowledge and culturally influenced knowledge, we have only ended up with the statement that we have to walk on two legs. The identity aspect discussed in this paper looks primarily at cultural values.

It is worth pointing out that even what many of us might call neutral musical

knowledge is based on the western notation system and the concept of written opus. This is in conflict with many other cultures' aesthetic views on music. Concepts describing elements of form and structure could just as well be grounded in other musical practices.

The encyclopaedic musical facts have obvious loopholes. In South Africa, there is a major need for knowledge on African music formulated in general terminology that can be used pedagogically (Björck 2000, Primos 1992 p. 134). This request is not easy to fulfil, as every step in moving music from a real life context to a classroom changes it. The general set up in South African schools is characterised by a westernised way of looking at knowledge. Whereas the indigenous or popular music originally has different pedagogical frameworks, stemming from other social settings. In a discussion on musical identity in education, we must bear in mind the contextual conflict between theory and practice.

Music is related to a social and physical environment. If a musical expression crosses the border of its original connection, its function and meaning will shift (Stokes 1994). The school is a specific environment in this respect as it is actually separate from real life. A school's music has a life of its own, although it is more or less dependent on and related to the outside world.

Music in school lives in an environment where the music is decontextualised and thus culturally neutral or even carries new cultural features. We can talk about a separate genre "school music" mirroring a school's cultural codes. The school itself have been imposed by the dominant culture in which case the training is meant to enculturate those who already belong to this culture, or acculturate those who come from other cultures (Mogren 2000).

South African Government schools are (or should be) independent of a specific cultural context, when it comes to curriculum writing. Music in the schools will, by necessity, be decontextualised. It seems as if South Africa – due to a stronger European influence – has established more decontextualised music education than other African countries (Flolu 1994 pp. 30f)

A South African lecturer in dance – Ben Muzwendoda Nkwanyana, who teaches Ngoma dance at the University of Natal – pointed out one example of the consequences of decontextualisation. He talked about the sorting out of controversial songs that takes place when traditional music is transferred from his home village to the educational environment in Durban. The new function and the new environment compelled censorship into place. Another risk when moving music from one place and time to another is that the emblematic or exotic stereotypisation of the music is over-emphasised (Blacking 1983 p. 52).

Kathy Primos – former professor at Wits University in Johannesburg – developed a course (Music in history and society) where she re-contextualises music from various cultures in the tuition (Primos 1995). The method is based on interaction between the lecturer's and the students' different descriptions of music in terms of

time, space, economics, world views, functions, participants and musical practices. This was an implementation of Primos thesis on holistic music education (1996 pp. 197ff).

The possibilities, generally speaking, of dealing with the context of the music within the school are however limited. It is possible to enter into a dialogue with social context outside school, but impossible to replace the school environment with its many restrictions. One cannot in the full sense of the word be trained to perform or perceive African music in a European school. One can only learn about it.

To excerpt musical samples from their original use – like writing down a song in class – is, nevertheless, important both for members of the actual culture and for members of other cultures. A symbolic image of one's songs give externalised knowledge, which can be used for comparative discussions among the learners (Mngoma 1999). This process enhances a person's awareness about cultural identity.

Please bear in mind the complex topics of knowledge and context, and let us now concentrate on the concept of cultural identity so as to understand that cornerstone of cultural liberation.

Theories on Music and Identity

In this paper, I assume that one goal of Government music education is to contribute to imparting relevant musical identities to members of the rising generation in South Africa. So, what's the meaning of musical identity?

The concept of identity points at the individual person's self-image as mirrored through others. Thus, we are looking from a learner's perspective, well aware of the fact that the individual is part of one or several communities or cultural groups. By studying music as one factor forming a person's identity, we regard sounds manufactured by people as a means of communication and expression and as a social agent.

It is relevant to focus on music, as it gives holistic experiences simultaneously hitting the intellectual, emotional, and bodily level in unique ways (Thorsén 1980). Thus, it is necessity for most societies to give its members possibilities to participate in musical contexts. (Music is defined here not just as sounds, but, where pertinent, dance, theatre, media etc.)

I will relate to a description used by Ruud in his analysis of music and identity (1997):

> … as a way of constructing oneself with a start in early childhood, i.e. the experience of one's own body, self-image, and readiness to act, in a broader sense. Identity also deals with positioning oneself in a larger social context, about affiliation to time, place, and history […] and experiencing meaning in the existential sense. (ibid p 11)

Or as Stokes puts it: "… music and dance (and talk about music and dance) do encourage people to feel that they are in touch with an essential part of themselves,

their emotions and their 'community'" (1994 p. 13).

Ruud also is of the opinion that music actively contributes to forming a person's fundamental and communicative competence, i.e. areas of competence that are needed to manage one's own life in a culturally complex society (ibid p 19).

> The musical arena seems to be characterized by the cultural complexity that enables a person to develop a fundamental social competence. (ibid p 112)

I use identity as an expression of the individual's perception of him- or herself. Cultural identity is consequently separated from ethnicity or ethnical identity (Kubic 1994).

Identity is, in the post-colonial and post-industrial society, not only based on ethnicity or togetherness in a nation-state. A person's ethnic identity is challenged by social "travelling" (Palmgren et.al. 1992) and nation building is a limited and temporary project (Roth 1999). In his comprehensive socio-economic study of the post-industrialised society Castells points out (1997) how new constructions of identities are shaping new networks.

> For those social actors excluded or resisting the individualization of identity attached to life in the global networks of power and wealth, cultural communes of religious, national or territorial foundation seem to provide the main alternative for the construction of meaning in a society. […] They are culturally constituted; that is, organized around a specific set of values whose meaning and sharing are marked by specific codes of self-identification." (ibid p 65) "Indeed, I would argue that, given the structural crisis of civil society and the nation-state, this might be the main potential source of social change in the network society. (ibid p 67)

Socio-economic structures in South Africa are rapidly and in parallel developing towards both industrialisation and network-based post-industrialisation. Thus, we can imagine that a common ethnic or national based culture may be just but one element in a person's cultural identity. My perception is that South Africa will always comprise a vast number of cultures and cross-over-cultures, defined not only by ethnicity but also by sharing the meaning of life in terms of socio-economic groups, language, gender, religion, urbanity etc. Being a South African is but one component in the construction of an individual's identity.

What role can music play in this game? Moreover, can the demands of this flexible unforeseeable shaping of a person's identity be met on the musical level in a national school curriculum?

Multiculturality

In his discussion on multiculturality, Charles Taylor emphasises the recognition of cultural identity as a profound dimension of equity (Taylor 1992, implemented in research on education by Roth 1999). Taylor talks about the right to develop tradi-

tions, culturally based knowledge, and a public arena to display a group's culture. All of this is seen as contained in his core concept *recognition*.

He analyses the conditions for ethnic groups' co-existence in the national project. As a scholar in political science, he highlights that the multicultural society specifically crashes in two areas: law and education. The recognition of artistic expression in all groups is important in his discussion.

Taylor elucidates the significance of art in developing respect for the others, but he also urges caution against a simplified understanding of the others' music, literature etc. Multiculturalism is thus not an easy party of understanding, but a harsh dialogue or negotiation between culturally imprinted thinking that can only to a limited extent be reciprocally understood.

In this context, it is crucial to regard the school as one of the public arenas where all cultures need to be recognised. It is worthwhile reflecting on how far we should interpret Taylor's theories. His perspective on the role of art in a society, however, complicates the easy slogan "Teaching World Musics" that often pushes for easy recipes for multicultural music education (Volk 1998, Floyd 1996).

Formal Schooling In Traditional Societies

In a paper on identity, Blacking has (1983), described the processes that take place in the formal training in traditional Venda society in South Africa. He describes not only the performance of music, but also the music education integrated in Venda society.

He sees music as an inevitable ingredient in the socialisation process of every member of the group. The societal dynamics depend on human relations as expressed through music and dance. The identity thus deals with a deeper sense of belonging with other members of the society and a political consciousness as a foundation for vital choices in life.

> [M]usic can be used for all sorts of social and political purposes as a kind of totemic emblem, but it is only affecting and effective as music when it is internalised as a bodily response to a set of cultural symbols. (ibid p. 52)

Blacking claims that the use of the concept of musical identity, has to be related to a broader perspective on society and that it needs to be related to a coherent set of ideas. The use of music as a decontextualised cultural marker for an ethnic group can kill the music's social function and its artistic value.

> Music has no consequences for social action or for the negotiation of personal and socio-cultural identity, unless it can be related to a coherent set of ideas about self, other, and bodily feelings. (p. 46)

Blacking's view adds another aspect to the issue on how to use different cultures'

music in school. South Africa today contains not a "coherent national set of ideas" that can correspond to a common music culture. Transferring African music to the schools cannot simply create Africanness or the growth of an African identity. Instead, the school must be a neutral but critically analysing environment – a meeting place for music of different cultures. The school functions in that case as a discursive arena, relevant to the learners in their socialisation process of forming new cultural identities or even hybrid identities. In this case, personal growth can be supported by music education.

Blacking ends his paper with a description of how such a dynamic process with changes of identities was formed through music stemming from South African syncretistic religions.

> Thus, the Zionist style of singing Christian hymns not only reinforced their group identity; the way the activity was organized, together with the ideas about self and other which members brought to it, gave deep personal satisfaction, nurtured peoples' political consciousness and established a dynamic and coherent interaction between personal an socio-cultural identity. (ibid p. 64)

Primos has (1992) investigated similar processes among music students at Wits. A number of "black" students expressed their ambivalence in "cultural alignment". Their choice in developing competence was primarily between "Western art music" and "African tradition" (including Afro-American music rooted in the urban soundscape).

Based on an analysis of the concept of "cultural identity" Primos finds a crisis of identity among the students. Western art music has given them new knowledge. This knowledge was not, however, experienced as neutral, as it compels the students to leave an environment where they "usually feel most content and fulfilled" (ibid p. 131).

Shaping Identities In Late Modernity

A growing person, through his or her adolescence, acts in different living spaces such as home, school, leisure time activities etc. (Fornäs 1995). These arenas will be used both for encounters with other individuals and for personal exhibition. The traditional school plays a relatively small role when it comes to chiselling out a person's cultural identity or affiliation (Willis 1999, Ziehe 1994). Cultural experiences through the media and in peer groups during leisure time plays a more decisive role. The erosion of established cultural values and authorities puts demands on the individual to take an active part in forming his or her own identity during adolescence. Music has been pointed out as a strong means for the developing individual's discursive behaviour (McCarthy et al 1999).

Culture studies of adolescence socialisation have been crucial to changing music

education in the UK, the Nordic countries and elsewhere. Scholarly findings have been rapidly implemented and accepted by the reformers of education. New programmes for training of music teachers have been set in place (Olsson 1997), music curricula have been altered and a vast number of music teachers have worked with the playing and the studying of popular music in schools, in order to meet the learners via their "mother tongue music". The core ideas are based on a broad view of musical genre, focusing on appreciation and creativity, all seen from the learner's perspective.

In South Africa the same modernisation process is taking place in society (Björck 2000). What is still lacking is the implementation of culture studies and music education research or a debate on the consequences of this societal change. This may mirror the international isolation during the apartheid era.

The Broader Educational Perspective

The concept of identity reveals important aspects of cultural liberation in South Africa. It marks the necessity of considering the active role of music in the societal process. It explains the connection between the individual and the surrounding society on the one hand and the relation between music and context on the other. It shows the dynamic characteristics of a person's construction of an identity, comprising the complex relation between the individual, the group, and the nation's identity. The concept underlines the need for dynamic, discursive, and pluralistic music education. The way out of colonial dependence must start with a freedom for everyone to construct ones own cultural identity.

In the discussion below, I intend to put these demands on music education in a broader framework, i.e. different forms of educational situations in modern South Africa. A person's road to musical competence takes many routes; some of them not regarded as deliberate training. Without this broader picture, it is difficult to discuss the specific task of Government schools.

Principally we can distinguish between four pedagogical systems for musical training. They can be labelled as traditional, informal, semi-formal, and formal. All of them are interrelated and overlapping. The individual forms a holistic perspective on his or her construction of identity, by picking parts from different environments.

1. Traditional African Education.

In many rural areas of the country, there is still a dominance of African culture. Music is more or less taught according to the traditions of many years, as described by Blacking (1967), sometimes in a strict formal framework. Especially the musical

enculturation of children and adolescents as well as some performance of ritual music are done according to manners and customs. Even after members of an ethnic culture have moved to a township, many musical rites are still kept more or less unchanged, for example wedding songs (Primos 1996 p. 194). Very few societies are, however, untouched by western musical practices brought by colonisers and missionaries. It is impossible to draw a clear-cut border between traditional African music and acculturative changes set in motion by other cultures (Flolu 1994 p. 26).

These pockets of traditional music education will probably function for a long time still, with a rather slow pace of acculturation. In many cases, the traditional environments have been supported and preserved from outside influences, mainly by ethnomusicologists – during the apartheid era due to the policy of separate development, today due to an African renaissance policy. At several of the former English universities (Natal, Rhodes and Cape Town) major efforts are being made to investigate and support preservation in a sensible dialogue taking part in the inevitable cultural alteration. In some projects connected to the universities in Durban and Cape Town (Opondo 1999, Muller 1998) schoolteachers have been in-service trained in traditional and neo-traditional African music and dance. A great deal of efforts is put into developing relevant teaching methods. Preserving and developing the South African cultural heritage has a clear educational dimension.

A national school system under a common national curriculum will be a force in these changes. But it is necessary to be cautious in unifying within a common curriculum. This must allow for a flexibility and sense of the tradition and the ability to take the perspective of the tradition-carriers into account.

Musical training in traditional societies affects a person's identity deeply. As long as the identity contains an ethnic component, music "from home" will be of great importance. It is thus decisive that the nation-state's formal music education is developed in dialogue with traditional African pedagogy.

2. Informal Training – Leisure Time

Within the full panorama, we also need to consider various forms of *informal* musical training. Musical socialisation is often even dominated by training in different social contexts such as the family, public rites, worship etc. Music making together with peer groups at leisure time is of growing importance.

The media also occupy an increasing share of the musical training. Listening to radio, CD:s, film, or television gives an immense foundation of musical knowledge. In the market-governed society informal music education will thrive. For many South Africans this informal training is partly overlapping the traditional African formal training.

The forming of new identities seems to occur above all in informal structures.

The African Independent Churches, and recent outburst of Gospels music emanating from Pentecostal movements are examples of new musical genres (Mapaya 2002). These religious environments are so far relatively unnoticed by researchers (Chitando 2000). Other strong genres with profound strong emblematic identity are crossover and neo-traditional musical practices such as Makwaya, Maskanda, and Isicathamiya. Many of these musical styles are in various ways important for the music and media industry. It is thus important to understand the cultural impact of social settings outside (or in between) the main agents as the traditional African societies, colonial churches, and colonial education. These informal structures are crossing national borders of the country. They are instead part of religious or economic global network structures. This implies that other forces will influence the development.

3. Semiformal Education – NGO-schools

Music education in semi-formal environments has been of particular importance especially for the Africans in South Africa. As music was not in practice a curricular subject, the only road towards formal education started with extracurricular music activities in Government schools, music in community music schools and music education in NGOs. For the educationally marginalised majority in South Africa semi-formal education has been the only option, and thus crucial to giving them a musical or artistic voice.

Many of the NGO-schools use the pedagogy of formal music education. Otherwise, the competence they give will not be accredited for higher education. This is a dilemma, as Africans are running schools which could enhance or relate to African traditions, nevertheless the schools have to adapt to the European educational system, often even by using pedagogical material produced overseas. At the same time, there is a wish for many students to become acquainted with the European or North American music, which gives them both empowerment and access to the dominant culture (Primos 1992). Many semi-formal schools are, however, accommodating and can host many kinds of music without conflict.

Going to a "black" semi-formal school is per se clearly beneficial for the shaping of a person's musical identity (Björck 2000). Consequently, the know-how gained today through semi-formal music education needs to be taken account of in future constructing of formal education.

4. Government National Schools

The new state has hitherto played a rather passive role in the culture education. In documents we find a well-pronounced ambition to strengthen the African identity via the learning area of Arts and Culture. In reality personal or economic resources

have been scarce. Governmental schools have even cut down posts for music teachers in favour for technical subjects. Music departments at several "historically black universities" have closed, and the bad conditions for music in schools have turned down interest for enrolling to teacher training in music.

The compulsory schooling can't be regarded as an alternative force against the colonial education, which promoted the Euro-centric and culturally hierarchic ideals, let alone to give space for strengthening new identities. The Governmental schools must, sooner or later, take a position on these issues. Otherwise the support for a second liberation will fail to come off.

Conclusions

From the outset in this paper, I have discussed cultural liberation in relation to music education. Along the way, I have given various pieces of evidence of the necessity of forming a person's musical identity – a component in the second liberation in South Africa. I have pointed out the need for dynamic, discursive, and pluralistic music education.

The stage for music education in South Africa is multifaceted and capable. Compared with other colonised countries in Africa we can see it as a field with various strong power centres to a large extent pulling in different directions. There is the culturally informed elite stemming from European, Asian and African people deeply concerned about arts education; an infrastructure comprising several universities with music teacher training; a vast number of music education societies; a musicological stronghold; the music industry extensive in terms of the sub-Saharan continent; informal environments like in NGOs; churches and community based organisations catering for a massive musical socialisation. The possibilities are comprehensive.

The formal school system can only fulfil its objectives if the curriculum is inclusive enough to act in dialogue with other educational settings. Traditional, informal and semi-formal tuition will always be of great importance, and the school in which every child is obliged to spend day-to-day time must walk hand in hand with this surrounding world. The school must integrate with other parts of society in order to strengthen the learner's personal identity. It can also offer a meeting place between individuals from different cultures, thus enhancing curiosity and understanding in relation to different musical practices and identities.

I consider the linkage from a general music education to the second liberation in present South Africa as weak. Being a trans-national and multicultural nation relying more on local and global networks, the liberation seems to be handed over to each and everybody as individuals. Cultural identity has become a more complex concept. Important, then, is that several independent structures with a capacity to underpin

various cultural identities trespasses the limits of a simple dichotomised debate, where the aim is to de-colonise or re-Africanise in order achieve liberated identities. South Africa has an unique historical and geo-political background that enhances the trend to individualise the forming of cultural identity. By this token we find features common with many countries around the world: the decreasing cultural role of the state in favour of informal networks and global economic structures.

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