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Music Education in South Africa – Striving for Unity and Diversity

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Stig-Magnus Thorsén:

Abstract

South Africa now finds itself in a state of dramatic change. Education based on segregation is to be replaced, this time by an implementation of the policy of the Rainbow Nation. To merge traditions from Africa, Europe, North America and Asia into a multicultural music education in a short space of time is indeed a vast and complicated mission.

Introduction

The formation of a music education system on a national level today often necessitates decisions on multiculturalism. Circumstances vary from country to country, but in principle we can all learn from different cases. South Africa is one example where different forms of multicultural standpoints have at times drastically conditioned the nation's music education. Today the country is writing a new curriculum, this time in order to 'bring into being a system serving all our people, our new democracy' and 'create a system which cultivates and liberates the talents of all our people without exception' (Bengu 1995).

For some years I have had the opportunity to follow the debate on music education in South Africa. I am impressed by the striving for reconciliation, but I have also become aware of the long-term disadvantages inherent in a system of educational compartmentalisation. I am convinced that we can all learn from arguments and analyses developed in South Africa during recent years, and in the following article I will give my view of the ongoing process.

Firstly, the article meets a need to formulate standpoints regarding my own involvement in foreign aid projects. Secondly, the questions raised may contribute to the newly awakened attempts to introduce multiculturalism into music education in Sweden.

Background, Swedish – South African co-operation

In 1994 The School of Music and Musicology at Gothenburg University first became involved in South African music education on a regular basis. We have since furthered foreign aid from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to music schools and development projects in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town (Thorsén & Lindgren 1994).

We have focused on support to NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) schools for black students, who were left without any opportunities for training in music during their secondary schooling. Support has also gradually been extended to include projects improving teacher training and methodological development. My colleague Gunnar Lindgren and I have deliberately chosen projects dealing with a variety of musical genres and pedagogical methods with an emphasis on African tradition (Thorsén 1996B).

In my opinion, an important rationale for working with foreign aid is to develop a mutual understanding. I have thus become aware that in our meetings with other persons, cultures, countries or continents we always find ourselves confronted by new questions. ‘In Africa multiculturalism is functional, and it is functioning. If we want to make it function in the north we would be well advised to study ethnicity in Africa also from this perspective, as an asset and not necessarily a problem. This could help us understand in what situations and under what conditions multiculturalism works as enriching a peaceful interchange.’ (Palmberg 1995:10)

South African Music Education

I have chosen to outline the music education in South Africa as a power field with four different cultural forces or points of gravity. This is a perspective that can give us an understanding of the cultural power game which has an impact on current pro-cesses. Each of the points of gravity shows certain characteristics in terms of repertoire, musical practice, pedagogical aims and didactic methods as well as a sense of identity with certain persons or groups in South Africa (see fig 1). The field between the four outermost positions is filled with different blends of genres, which to varying degrees have borrowed traits from these four cultures.

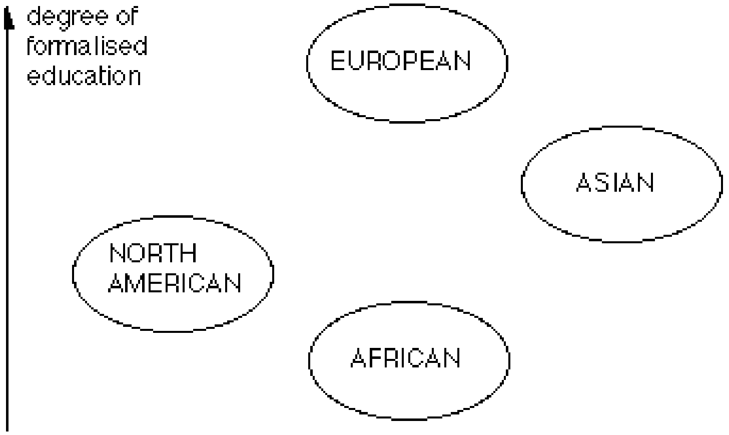

Figure 1: South African musical practices outlined according to the educational power game. Various genres are to be found in the intervening field. The vertical dimension shows a hierarchic order in terms of formal education and cultural legitimacy according to present curricula.

South African music (with an emphasis on *African*), regarded both as a heritage and as a living genre, is the natural departure point for my discourse. The *European* influx over the centuries represents both a counterpart and a co-operative partner versus Africa. The importance of *North American* music cannot be exaggerated. The *Asian* cultural influences show similar patterns to the other two cultures from overseas. The description of these influences is only a very rough outline and is intended purely as a background to the principle discussion on educational matters. It is important to observe the contemporary co-existence of different historic and geographical layers. In this respect South Africa differs from Sweden, where for the most part former cultural systems have successively been replaced.

At first sight the overwhelming mixture of input from the whole world and of both past and present in South Africa would seem to cause major problems. A more optimistic view is that a simultaneous display of different artistic expressions can facilitate a community's sense of diversity *and* wholeness.

In my article I refer to three terms in use in South Africa: *formal, non-formal* and *informal* music education. These terms represent different paths of education. Formal education refers to the governmentally geared system from primary to tertiary education. Non-formal education refers to organised education based on private or NGO enterprises, not tied to a national curriculum. Informal education refers to the life-long learning within families, peer groups etc, often without pronounced educational objectives.

African music education

As in any other society, the early South Africans taught and learned music. Indigenous cultures upheld by the Khoisan and different Bantu-speaking groups such as Xhosa, Zulu, Venda, Sotho, Tsonga and Tswana still exist. Their educational systems form a part of the total multicultural picture of current South Africa.

The enculturation of music within a traditional culture is brought about through a combination of formal and informal education. A chart of Tsonga learning processes in drumming, for example, embraces formal specialists in groups of ‘supervisors’, ‘drumming schools’, ‘circumcision schools’, ‘didactic drumming’ as well as different ways of informal learning, for instance from parents (Malan 1982:389).

The education in such a monoculture is not intended to include the music of other cultures. However, it is never static; acculturation may not be intended, but never-theless exists naturally. Multicultural competence among Africans and an aptitude for switching effortlessly between cultures has been underlined in language studies and could even stand as a role model for Europeans (Palmberg 1995:9).

To what extent indigenous music education still exists is a question for further research. Many rural villages still uphold an unbroken tradition. Groups of ethnic or cultural minorities have also brought with them a rich heritage of music, dance, story-telling and theatre to urban areas (Rycoft 1991). Even in these settings informal education continues to pass on musical practices to new generations. However, South Africa has suffered immensely from the uprooting effect of forced removals and migration as well as the splitting of families and the dissolving of natural social ties. In many respects modern townships are characterised by a lack of cultural continuity and stability. Members of the generation who lost out on schooling in most cases also lost out on informal music training in their community.

Today there is a rich variety of living *neotraditional* music which comprises interesting set-ups of value systems, training and prosperous musicians (Erlmann 1986, 1989, 1991, Coplan 1985). The *music-bow* and *assegais* can be found among youths upholding the tradition of *maskanda* and *Zulu dancing*. Examples of Euro-African and American-African music styles with a predominantly African ethnicity are isicathamiya, for instance, or music from the *Zionist* movement.

Educational practices in traditional and neotraditional African music are in most cases far removed from any school curriculum. Training in music is a part of everyday life in a self-contained cultural system. However, several scholars and educators are taking part in development work which is striving to introduce African didactic traditions into the curriculum with the purpose of raising the status of the African culture heritage. In this context the International Library of African Music in Grahamstown and the African Music Project in Durban are two important development centres.

In some cases indigenous didactic methods are used as role models in the modernisation of the formal education system. Amoaku (1982) points out the similarities between Orff Schulwerk and traditional African music practices. Oral and context-dependent training methods and the use of community musicians as assistant teachers are other examples of the renewal of traditions.

On the simplified map (Fig 1), ‘African’ includes influences from neighbouring African countries. The pan-African culture is an important ingredient in the struggle for identity. Often in South Africa when the African heritage is called upon, musical practices from outside the country are chosen as examples, such as amadinda playing from Uganda, for example, or drumming from West Africa.

North American influences

From the late nineteenth century onwards North American influences have affected South African music immensely. ‘So-called coloured’ people and the African middle class were exposed to American music as early as the 1880s. Minstrel shows, spirituals and the black religious music of the southern states of America influenced the growth of many black and coloured musical activities (Coplan 1985:30 ff, Hamm 1988).

‘For several decades, urban Africans were held in thrall by American culture – but above all by the activities and achievements of blacks in that society. Where American culture fascinated, *black* American culture infatuated.’ (Ballantine 1993:13)

The interest in American jazz broadened into a movement among blacks. Not only the music but also the North American artists’ behaviour was copied and made into a highly valued aesthetic standard (ibid p 16). At the same time acculturated forms of jazz grew up which combined American and African elements. The wave of *marabi* during the early part of the twentieth century was at the centre, but other mixtures of African, Asian, and European music also formed the core of popular music. In addition there was an enormous variety of musical styles such as *kwela* and *mbqanga* as well as *isicathamiya* mentioned earlier.

Training in various forms of Afro-American music started with informal activities. European institutions for non-formal education (see below), especially the churches, also had a great impact. Private lessons started in relatively organised settings during the thirties and a landmark in jazz education was ‘The Wilfred Sentso School of Modern Piano Syncopation’ (ibid p 37).

A variety of educational situations exist in the vast field of popular music. These normally have informal characteristics. The flow of change in society is interlinked with styles and musical practices, thereby mirroring the present position and direction of a particular genre.

A peak in the role of jazz music as a source of identity for the blacks was reached during the fifties. King Kong, the successful musical, was exported. Sophiatown, District Six, Cato Manor and many other suburbs offered a life seething with multicult-ural mixtures of various musical styles. Intercultural exchanges took place, creating a rich flood of new styles which mirrored social experiments and developments.

The fifties also saw a growing black consciousness which among other things led to various forms of non-formal music education. One of the first was the black unionist movement United Artists, with the African Music and Drama Association (AMDA) in Dorkay House in Johannesburg, which was later followed by the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA Academy) and Musical Action for Peoples Progress (MAPP) (Thorsén & Lindgren 1994).

Today education in North American music, in the same way as jazz, is even institutionalised at tertiary level at some of the universities and technikons. North American music has reached a point where it is accepted and organised and therefore recognised by the authorities.

In an industrialised and medialised country a multitude of musical genres can be heard at any one time by participants of almost any cultural group. This creates special conditions for informal enculturation. If cultures are open-minded a rapid alteration of the musical language in use is common as a result of the dialogue with nearby communities. Due to its multicultural history, South Africa has produced the most incredible mixture of musical styles at different times.

European influences

The two invasions of European settlers were immediately followed by a similar invasion of cultural manifestations, including music. As early as 1737 the first church organ was built in Groote Kerk, Cape Town. In 1781 a visiting French group performed Le barbier de Sèville. In 1826 a short lived Academy of Music was founded (Mears 1980).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries South Africa became just as modern as other European fringe countries, for example Sweden. We were both dependent on production and performance on the central European stage. From the time of the first Boer settlers around 1650 up to the end of the nineteenth century, nearly all European music education in South Africa was non-formal or was carried out within churches and schools etc (May 1980).

An authorised music was established which was closely connected to the political power. The first church organ was followed by the development of European musical life in churches and concert halls. In accordance with its function of reinforcing the power of the settlers, this music was hostile towards multiculturalism.

The Dutch farmers brought with them a traditional European folk music, which was later transformed into what is known today as *boeremusiek*, which in many respects is comparable to Swedish *dansbandsmusik*. African musicians in their turn took advantage of new European influences. The concertina, violin and guitar became popular in neotraditional African music.

Missionary education

From the early nineteenth century the Christian mission contributed a tangible input to South African culture. In Western and Eastern Cape the mission stations became 'islands of acculturation in a traditional sea' (Coplan 1985:26). The first and most well known is the presbyterian Lovedal, established in former Transkei in 1824. Within half a century fourteen other important educational centres arose. These colleges have served generations of black students, including people like Nelson Mandela.

Besides converting and training native ministers, special efforts were made in the development of music. Xhosa vocal traditions were merged with Christian hymnody to produce outstanding vocal part-singing, which is still the most well-known form of South African music in Sweden. From 1850 onwards a genuine interest in Xhosa oral tradition gave rise to collections of traditional fables, legends, praise songs, genealogies etc. This early non-formal music education showed evidence of considerable flexibility and pragmatism.

Around 1880 the first Xhosa lyrics were set to music with recognisable traditional intonation. They were printed with the help of the tonic sol-fa system, a pedagogic notation system introduced as early as 1855. Up to the present time tonic sol-fa notation has preserved many songs and is still of crucial importance for music and music education throughout South Africa. Closely connected to this is the vast 150-year-old tradition of mixed vocal cultures, stretching from all kinds of popular music to Handel's Messiah. The Zulu-based *makwaya* singing is a later example of the effect tonic sol-fa had on more urban musical blends, in this case also involving Afro-American traits. Other features of the missionaries' multicultural impact are brass bands, xylo-phone ensembles etc.

In the majority of former black schools African choral singing is appreciated and still in use. It is taught orally or via sheet music. Today's huge choir movements rely to a large extent on this pedagogical practice. A considerable number of composers still write in this musical style, facilitated but at the same time limited by the tonic sol-fa notation.

A significant example of multicultural music is *Nkosi Sikelel' i Africa*, written by the Xhosa teacher Enoch Sontonga in 1897, later adopted as ANC's anthem and now merged with *Die Stem van Suid-Africa* to form the new South African national anthem. This more or less European hymn tune, which was used in the freedom struggle aimed at overthrowing the European oppressors, now expresses reconciliation in the process of building an intercultural nation.

Formal music education

National South African music education institutions arose towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1880 a private music school was started in Stellenbosch, which was established as a state conservatory in 1905 and incorporated under the University of Stellenbosch in 1934 (Mears 1980). It has since had a leading position as an Afrikaans-speaking music school, with a peak during the apartheid era.

In 1910 the South African College of Music (SACM) was founded in Cape Town. It was later attached to the English-speaking University of Cape Town (UCT). In the hands of the English it became more and more progressive and it now caters for one of the most advanced jazz departments in South Africa. In addition it houses the famous Kirby collection of indigenous musical instruments. SACM/UCT's fellow competitor, Natal University, has a similar position in the country but is more oriented towards multicultural and African music education.

About ten more music schools were launched altogether during the period 1920–1980. Most of them have only been accessible to whites. However, one school deserves a mention for taking part in multicultural endeavours: the University of South Africa (UNISA) started examinations and correspondence courses for the whole country, as well as lectures at a later stage. UNISA played an important role during the apartheid epoch: many blacks were able to take advantage of the fact that no-one bothers about the colour of a person's skin when he or she participates in a correspondence course.

Examination and accreditation

In conjunction with the formal English music education a whole system of regulations was introduced for curricula, syllabuses of examinations, standards, plans of examinations etc. This formatted system has left its mark on both the formal and the non-formal schools. Three different set-ups exist: UNISA, Trinity College and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (RSM). The RSM is the commonest system and also the one to which AMDA and FUBA are affiliated.

The RSM syllabus of examinations is very specific and detailed. It consists of exactly formulated standards for theory and musical practice for every grade up to grade 8. There are set pieces for each grade and for every accepted instrument, i.e. orchestral instruments, guitar, recorder, piano and voice.

The standardised examinations are representative examples of how *monocultural* and *content-oriented* curricula are forced on the education and is perhaps the English settlers' main musical influence.

Asian influences

The map of music and music education must also include Asian traditions. Even if they do not have the same impact on the field as the other three main cultural influences, in principle they make an important contribution.

The history, in brief, started with the first influx: during the eighteenth century the *Malays* settled in Durban and Cape Town. This first group has lived long enough in South Africa to develop a South African style of music of their own, which is for instance performed by the numerous Cape Malay choirs. This musical style is definitely eclectic but is related to the characteristic ethnic identity of the minority.

The second group came from India during the nineteenth century, bringing with them folk music as well as classical Indian music. Folk music is still important to today's Indian descendants, and it has also become an acculturated ingredient in other musical styles. Astonishing syncretistic religious singing practices are described by Jackson (1991). Pentecostal congregation members from 'the Jazz Band Church' used Hindu music and Indian dress to reinforce the revival movement parades on Durban streets.

Classical Indian music naturally causes even more complications in the power game, since for certain reasons the Indians were allotted an in-between position, above blacks but below whites, during the apartheid era. Today it is possible to study sitar and tabla-playing at the University of Durban Westville, for example. A formulation of the multicultural South African heritage therefore has to take into consideration Asian influences on several levels.

The Apartheid era

Around 1950 a new political epoch began: *the grand apartheid*. This was the implementation of a political ideology built on the idea of the racial separation of peoples.

A backbone in the political system (as in many political ideologies) was the education system.

As a historical consequence the earlier formal South African education was differentiated according to social and ethnic groups. Following the Bantu education Act of 1953 every inhabitant was given a definite position by law in a strictly compartmentalised hierarchy.

In short, the school system was divided up under nineteen different Departments of Education. The major divisions, corresponding to the forced assignment into ethnic groups, were white, Indian, coloured and black. The departments had a very unequal financial basis. As recently as 1990 the whites (13% of the population) consumed 38 % of the educational budget while the blacks (76 % of the population) consumed 9 %. At the same time 30 % of blacks over 15 years of age were illiterate, and in rural areas illiteracy was estimated to be around 50-80 %. (Sellström 1995:560)

Many of the approximately 4500 mission schools which previously functioned as important ethnic meeting places were closed by the Group Area Act (Palmberg, Strand 1995). Even if some new non-formal schools were started with foreign support, the basic pattern was clear: the ‘right’ skin colour was the only ticket to a standard education.

This administrative patchwork was a means of segregating resources, traditions, curricula, school houses, teachers and anything that could cause intercultural educational ‘affairs’. Compartmentalisation was therefore a deliberate and significant fea-ture of grand apartheid with its core idea: *separate development*.

Music education during the apartheid era

The result of a similarly segregated music education, as reflected in official reports, was ‘a crisis of coherence, of relevance and of curriculum-in-use’ (Hauptfleisch 1993). In practice the result was a disaster in which very few black people had access to formal music education.

The curriculum for blacks did not include any arts or natural science subjects. Music was accordingly only taught and examined in ‘so-called coloured’, Indian and white schools, although an extra-curriculum activity of cultural importance was the African choral singing at black schools described earlier.

In some cases non-formal music schools were started with foreign financial support. The best known were AMDA, FUBA and MAPP. Black students from all over South Africa managed to defy group area legislation and achieve musical skills. A relatively small number of students matriculated in music, which in some cases was also followed by admission to higher education.

During the latter part of the apartheid era buffer groups were given strategic privileges. Consequently, 'so-called coloureds' and Indians were given specific benefits. Examples of this are the launching of the University of Western Cape, called a Peoples University, and the Indian University of Durban Westville, both with music departments of high standard.

One example of the confusion involved in the theoretical construction of music education was the turmoil caused by forcing music teachers in Indian schools to follow a hastily written national Indian music curriculum. The Indianisation (with Hindu reinforcement) of the urbanised Indian inhabitants in Durban (who in many cases were Christian) was not an easy task (Pillay 1994). A historical lesson was learned about the difference between ethnicity and culture.

Hamm (1991) provides a good insight into the governmentally geared radio system that developed parallel with the education system, also as a part of grand apartheid. His description gives an interesting side view, since informal learning is often connected to broadcast music.

Hamm describes 'the governmental promotion of a historical myth' with the aid of the South African Broadcasting Company (SABC). Crucial factors are the policies on structural organisation, programme content, the penetration of the controlled stations and the possibility of shielding the population from other radio services.

'Separate Development promised to restore order by a return to South Africa's mythical past. Boundaries of the traditional 'homeland' of each black 'tribe' were drawn clearly, once and for all.' (ibid 152)

Hamm shows how the mythology was founded by the superior tribe – the 'whites' – based on a European and Christian heritage. During the sixties there was an enormous increase in the distribution of radio programmes via racially separated channels. By the late seventies more than five million blacks listened to 'Radio Zulu', 'Radio Xhosa', 'Radio Tswana' etc.

Radio broadcasting is dependent on music. Thus the definition of a tribal radio of necessity depends on the ethnic labelling of music. Obviously this was a big issue for the directors in charge. Each Bantu radio service was directed to set up a review board, and no piece of music could be aired until this board had determined that it met the specified requirements (ibid 160).

The Bantu radio system allowed three types of music: Traditional African music related to the respective 'tribes', 'choral music' and certain types of popular music. Choral music referred to compositions by 'Bantu Composers' or 'Bantu school music'. In 1963 alone, for instance, SABC mobile units visited 435 Bantu schools, recording 7,374 items (ibid 162). The radio system enhanced many musical genres such as *isicathamiya*, *kwela*, *jive* and even gave a name to the *msakazo* (Zulu for broadcast).

The debate on the ethnic labelling of music is of course highly complicated. In the long run the project failed due to its own impossibility, but the musical outcome during the sixties and seventies in terms of the Bantu education and Bantu radio unavoidably underlies the current educational policy debate.

One point of general interest is worth noting. On the one hand the identity of a community group can be strengthened by tracing the musical roots. Even today I hear people talk about the apartheid radio as a force that in some respects was good, at least where the maintenance of traditions was concerned. On the other hand it is obvious that the myth of apartheid was soon exposed. The demand to return to a 'Bantu' way of life can never be accepted by Africans, who for centuries have been taught that European and Christian ideals are the most advantageous in all walks of life. It is therefore no easy task in today's South Africa to try to encourage people to find their roots and relate to their cultural heritage.

The effects of apartheid

It is obvious that South Africa has suffered from problems during the last four decades due to specific characteristics of the apartheid music education. The present government has definitely not inherited a functioning multicultural community (Thorsén 1996A).

A majority of the citizens lack musical resources for their own cultural reproduction, which leads to low self-esteem and a poor sense of identity. This is a tangible reality for young Africans living as migrant workers or as unemployed in urban areas, many of whom also lack schooling or a permanent social network.

This majority has been deprived of the necessary resources to take part in official musical life, and have thus lost the possibility of expressing themselves in public in a democratic way or of participating as professional musicians or educators. The lack of basic requirements, i.e. musical literacy, keeps many musicians out of the music copyright system and other similar sources of income. A cultural marginalisation has silenced musical voices that could uphold important traditions and knowledge.

Apartheid established a value system where European cultural manifestations were not only regarded as the most valuable but also as the only accepted. In comparison, various African traditional and neotraditional musical practices were successfully carried on in informal musical life. However, these genres had no infrastructure in terms of concert arrangers, musicians' organisations or archives which could pass on the music to new generations. The state as such avoided any official recognition of African music education, causing a loss of important methodological knowledge.

Sanctions from foreign countries during the apartheid era caused isolation to a degree that was highly painful to all levels in South Africa. This has meant that the country's music industry as a whole has been substantially damaged. A flourishing music industry, which today is usual in many other countries, has not been developed in spite of the enormous potential in terms of musical resources.

The Government of National Unity

In 1994 there was a shift of government that caused what many have described as the biggest change in education in South Africa's history. Until the new election in 1999 a transitional Government of National Unity (GNU) is responsible for the implementation of a totally new concept of education.

A drastic reorientation is described in official documents. What is most important in this context is that all citizens will now have access to music education. A gigantic project has been set in motion that involves theoretical work (writing a curriculum), and practical work (building up human and material resources) which affects about nine million school children who were previously dependant on 'black only schools'.

This vast redressing of music education will take time and effort. Unfortunately the administrative work has been delayed. At the present time (December 1996) there are still no concrete plans in existence in terms of a formulated curriculum. Budget allocations and legislative documents for music education still resemble those of the former government.

The new government does not have to start completely from scratch, however. Many important steps in the process of rethinking were taken during the eighties. One is the long-term work done by NGO schools, while progressive development in some of the University Music Departments is another important contribution.

The main discussion and ideological aims are supported by the South African Music Educators' Society (SAMES) which was founded in 1985. In its charter it states the following:

1. Education must be equal and compulsory for all children.

2. Music education in southern Africa must shed its exclusively Eurocentric basis. All music of South Africa should be studied in teacher-training programmes and made available to all children. Our belief in a multicultural music education programme is not a belief in a plurality of separately nurtured musical cultures but in a free intermingling of different types of music in one common school curriculum applicable to all schools.' (Oehrle 1990)

During several conferences held almost annually important aspects of a democratic multicultural music education have been worked out by SAMES and documented in printed proceedings. Similar ideas have been presented in many other constellations and reports (Hauptfleisch 1993, Smith & Hauptfleisch 1993).

Several fruitful ideas have been formulated, about music as an educational cornerstone, for example, and its intercultural characteristics (Oehrle 1992, 1993, 1996A, 1996B), about the holistic and contextualised paradigms in class music (Primos 1995, Gibson and Petersen 1992), as well the crucial question about unifying methods: European theory and staff notation versus the African use of oral/aural methods or the Euro-African use of tonic sol-fa notation, which has been brought up by Ngoma (1988) and Ensor-Smith (1988), among others.

The work done by many educators has been in agreement with the educational aims of the ANC, which address the fragmented apartheid education and training system with its inequality of access and lack of democratic control (ANC 1995). This ideological work later formed the basis of the ANC document 'The Reconstruction and Development Plan' (RDP 1994).

The RDP was followed by more detailed and concrete planning. The Department of Education under minister Sibusiso Bengu has approved the 'White Paper on RDP' (Feb 1995) which states that:

> Education in the arts, and the opportunity to *learn, participate and excel in dance, music, theatre, art and crafts* must become increasingly available to all communities on an equitable basis, drawing on and sharing the rich traditions of our varied cultural heritage and contemporary practice. (Bengu 1995:17)

Still under discussion is the question whether every school should have the necessary resources to provide education in all the arts. The idea of instituting a mandatory minimum of two out of four subjects (music, visual art, dance, drama) to be available at schools is a plausible solution. The constitutional right 'to establish educational institutions based on common culture, language and religion' (ibid 47) is especially remarkable in comparison with Swedish praxis, where a general school system for 'everybody' is preferred.

Parallel activities are taking place in the governmental bodies for Art & Culture. During 1995 a nation-wide network of groups worked under the umbrella of the Arts & Culture Task Group (ACTAG 1995). Statements approved in this process underline principles of multiculturality expressed in the White Paper on education.

As for the question of priority where Swedish financial support to South African music education is concerned, we have outlined several problematic areas, some of which will be given special attention: NGO schools recruiting from underprivileged groups and the development of teacher-training programmes and teaching methods. We also try to encourage networks on different levels (Thorsén 1996A). The policy of our co-operation is worked out independently but is in accordance with the core policy of the RDP and subsequent documents.

Discussion

As in many debates on multicultural music education, an underlying pattern of striving for *unity* and *diversity* is apparent. On a superficial level these concepts appear contradictory which can cause locked positions.

A one-sided striving for *unity* is of course highly prioritised in a country that has been racially divided down to the last detail. South Africa wants to redress the former education system which was based on *separate development*. But just around the corner lie such questions as: Will this striving for unity produce a uniform education and if so, whose uniform should be adopted?

Similarly, the diversity concept has two faces. Recognition of the multicultural *rainbow nation* calls for diversity. Yet a diversified education tends to offer better opportunities to richer and more privileged regions and groups. *Diversity* is indeed a sensitive issue in a nation that has been stigmatised by the myths of ‘natural differences’.

It is therefore important to find ways that combine these aims and treat them dialectically, which is to say that the contradictions are not antagonistic but condition each other. Unity is the result of a desire to recognise the manifold within *one* nation. Similarly, the manifold only becomes meaningful when viewed in relation to the powers that strive for unity. By the same token equality cannot be a blind aspiration, it has to recognise differences.

The declaration of the new government (as quoted earlier), to ‘bring into being a system serving all our people, our new democracy’ and ‘create a system which cultivates and liberates the talents of all our people without exception’ (Bengu 1995), is built on the assumption of a dialectic perspective on unity/diversity. In other words, a policy, as I understand it, that gives equal opportunities to all, but which at the same time recognises each person’s culture and group affiliation.

Discussions on the dialectic approach to unity and diversity can be found worldwide. In an outstanding and knowledgeable text the Canadian dilemma is described in Taylor’s discourse (1994). Taylor advocates a possible (but difficult) way of combining the two concepts: a ‘policy of recognition’ for each different cultural group on the one hand, and a common goal in writing the country's laws and curricula for the compulsory school system on the other hand. His thought-provoking and clarifying philosophy is equally applicable to music education (Thorsén 1995). An outline of the Swedish educational policy in terms of multiculturalism which describes the parallel concepts of *democracy* and *integrity* can be found in Nordlund (1996:23).

The South African historic heritage implies a hierarchic pattern of cultural legitimacy as outlined earlier in Fig 1. An inclusive curriculum that can embrace European, North American, Indian and African cultural traditions and identities on an equal basis is desirable, yet it has to address the pedagogical tradition implemented in the European methodological framework. At the same time it is necessary to find a fruitful intercultural exchange between the various historic layers, between tradition and modernity.

South Africa is in the midst of constructing a curriculum, thereby addressing changes in policy, content and methods of music education. Starting in 1998 a new curriculum is to be launched. Many people doubt that the core questions will be solved in the new curriculum, but it is easy enough to find pioneering work which is clarifying many complicated methodological issues. More details of the process will be reported soon, as the bilateral co-operation with South African music education continues.

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