

# Music education in Malawi

*Robert Chanunkha*

## Introduction

Since 1929, when government education began, Western music education has not succeeded in attracting the government and policy makers to advocate Music in schools and colleges. As a result, there is a chronic marginalization of music education in the course of developing or reviewing the national curriculum; when allocating budgets or providing resource materials for subjects in schools and colleges. The consequences of not advocating music education has been lack of trained and qualified music teachers in primary schools and teacher training colleges. Until 2002, the 'route map' of Chancellor College, the constituent college of the University of Malawi, discouraged education students (who become secondary school teachers) to study Music to degree level because policy makers had not yet introduced music education in secondary schools. Practically no college had been offering courses such as Music Education or Curriculum Theory and Development in the country.

The question is: 'why is music education in Malawi overlooked or left unsupported? The corollary questions are: When, where, how, and why did Western music education start in Malawi? How has the lack of support for Music in schools and colleges affected school going boys and girls in the country? Is music education of any value in Malawi? How would music education become a subject of merit worth supporting in schools and colleges?

## The history of the problem

There is evidence to indicate that music education took place in mission schools. For example, Phiri (1975:7) presents the school certificate of pastor Charles Chidongo Chinula of the Livingstonia mission, which includes Practice Music and Theory of Music as subjects of study. Phiri explains that the source of the 'composed' hymns was the traditional wedding tunes or war tunes and biblical stories. Mphande (1967/71: 19) further adds that: ' Scots missionaries admired Ngoni choral singing and encouraged Ngoni converts like Daniel Nhlane to take melodies from the tribal stock, even war songs, and create hymns.' The writings of Phiri and Mphande reveal two things. There

was a departure from the Malawian/African harmony and style to those of the Western in creating hymns. It is likely that the artistic creativity among composers was supplanted by the propensity to borrow traditional tunes and biblical expressions in music composition<sup>1</sup>.

Hertherwick's preface to Rattray (1907: v) explains the loss of what were once invaluable customs and the loss of the African cultural identity in the country. Hertherwick reports: 'Examples of native life, habits and customs are rapidly disappearing from the country before the advance of civilization and the work of Christian missions.' Some educated/converted Malawians such as Charles Domingo contributed to the vanishing of the African customs. Ross (1973: 15) provides information on the proceedings of native dances at the Blantyre Mission Native Conference 1901 in this way: 'There was evident feeling that Christians should not only hold aloof, but discourage native dances by every means in their power. The native dancing in this country is to Christianity what darkness is to light'. Kidney (1921: 119) elucidates certain consequences of castigating the Malawian customs: 'It is rare in these enlightened days to come across music, untouched by civilising influences...you will regret that it is rapidly disappearing. I have often heard the younger natives singing, or rather murdering, good old English hymns and tunes, and the children are ignorant of the wild music of their fathers.' Ross (1996: 81) traces the source of these problems to the view of the missionaries on traditional Malawian culture: 'Christianity came to Malawi during the heyday of the Western imperialism and social Darwinism, when there was a powerful tendency to consider African culture and religion to be primitive and backward.'

Such negative views of the early missionaries and their followers on traditional Malawian/African culture and customs encouraged mission education to employ Western ideologies in teaching, learning, and composing songs or melodies. Weman (1960/3: 116), writing generally about Africa, informs us that the African learnt 'new melodies, and rudimentary harmonies (usually restricted to three chords, tonic, dominant and subdominant). This technique had nothing whatever in common with African folk music, which worked on entirely different principles.' In other words, Western music education diverts the Africans from their traditional music practices. In the same vein, Nzewi (2001:1), writing in general about Africa, states:

Primary music education in Africa has irrationally perpetuated the Western models of music education in terms of methodology, philosophy, psychology, outcome and content. The irrational adoption in Africa of the Western educational system in all ramifications has produced critical problems of purpose, content and method besting, modern music education in Africa right from inception. The result is the continued mis-education of the

African child and adult.

Weman's and Nzewi's observations are common with what is currently happening in music education in the country. Above and beyond, the exclusion of the traditional Malawian music paradigms, pedagogy, experiences, and materials in music education are not in harmony with the national goals of education in the country. The Ministry of Education (MOE) (1991: iii) lists some of the national goals of education in Malawi under the ethical and socio-cultural skills. The goals are to: 'help preserve Malawi's cultural practice; develop an appreciation for the practice of one's culture; develop a sense of respect for other people's culture.' Africans may not preserve their culture when it is not given room and support in schools. Furthermore, Africans may not appreciate nor respect a culture of any ethnic group if the culture in question is omitted and goes unsupported in schools. Kamlongera and et. al. (1992: 99-105) stress that both the colonial government and the missionaries proscribed indigenous music performances.

As observed, in the era of the early missionaries and colonialism, there was little, if any, promotion of the traditional music, paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials in education in the country. This state of affairs continues in schools today. For example, nearly most musical examples in primary schools or colleges are Western derived, even though, ironically, music is supposed to be taught in so far as it relates to culture. In primary schools, teachers employ English songbooks that were used in mission schools a couple of decades ago. Teachers are comfortable with singing, which they manage from the 'layman's point of view'. Pupils and teachers use the singing lessons for relaxation before renewing the vigor of studying the supposed subjects of merits. But, according to the aforesaid national goals of education, continuing using the Western music models or theories would make music education unrelated to the needs and interests of the Africans in the country.

Several researchers in a variety of disciplines have done studies on traditional Malawian music and dance. However, the discipline of education has been given less attention.<sup>3</sup> Rattray (1907) collected examples of the customs, stories, songs and dances, riddles and proverbs of the Africans (the Zulus) living in the Central Angoniland, namely, Dowa and Dedza districts. He explained the songs and dances in Chinyanja in Part I and in literal English translation in Part II. He provided just the texts (words) of the chants or songs that Africans sung, for example, at funerals or during story telling. Likewise, Kidney (1921) presented the texts of the chosen Malawian traveling/road songs; harvest, passionate (mourning), and boat songs. He also explained the musical instruments such as the metal rattles, sticks, lute like instruments, handclap, and drums; the antiphonal singing style; the pentatonic scale; and the two classes of male voice,

e.g., high pitch (similar to falsetto), and baritone (close to Western baritone). Read (1937: 1-35) presented a selection of Ngoni songs in words. She recorded songs such as lullabies, praise and war songs, which represented the events of the Africans' life. Read transcribed the songs in Ngoni language with English translation. Similarly, Chakanza (1950: 158-161) presented songs that African boys and girls sung around the fire at night. He proffered the songs in Chinyanja and Chisena with the English translation.

The writings of Rattray, Kidney, Read, and Chakanza offer the texts of the songs, which reveal, *inter alia*, the kind of life and environment in which the Africans lived in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> However, the transcription of these songs, either by staff notation method or tonic solfa system is left out. In addition, graphic presentation of the dance routines is missing. Therefore, it is impossible to reproduce the songs and dances that Rattray, Kidney, Read, and Chakanza documented in their writings. The understanding of the pattern and structure of music is also impossible. The contribution of these writers is the identification and preservation of the words of the traditional Malawian music of the nineteenth century.

Apart from explicating the texts of the selected African children's songs, Nkosi (1978: 135-140), examined the poetic elements found in those songs. He came up with four poetic elements: antiphonal, alliteration (both assonance and consonance), repetition, and rhythm. Zanten (1980: 107-125) presented the analysis of Sena music. Zanten attempted to show the Sena tuning model that achieved the equal intervals between the seven notes within an octave; the differences between the Western Major scale (in which major 3rds or minor 3rds existed) and the Sena Major scale (where the 3rds appeared to have equal intervals); classification of tones; and Sena musical concepts, e.g., *fala* denoting octave. Kubik (1984: 22-35) documented from the Yao traditional stories and their songs; riddles; children's games of all sorts and adults' games such as *Libao*; the process of teaching music and dance, e.g., the use of the mnemonic formula *Wankwangu a likoswe* (my husband the rat). Kubik examined the organization, structure, and history of Yao institutions for the formal education of the young. Malamusi (1991: 55-71) recorded the solo musician of Mario Sabuneti. He expounded Sabuneti's manner of playing the percussions; how sounds were produced on the drums, and on the iron bell. Nkosi, Zanten, Kubik, and Malamusi are examples of researchers who have provided analytical studies of Malawian traditional music. Some of these researchers have conserved the traditional Malawian music through photographs, audio and visual recordings. Therefore, the reproduction of certain music is possible.

All the aforementioned researchers have done exceptional work by collecting, preserving, and analyzing the traditional Malawian music. They have provided the raw materials to further analyze and sort out for use in music education in the country. The drawback is that the paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials of either traditional Malawian music education or Western music education as areas of research or study still seem to be topics of little interest among scholars. The researchers' silence on music education may be the issue that is encouraging music education to receive little recognition in the general curriculum in the country.<sup>5</sup>

Chimombo (1987: 1), writing generally on folklore, relates: 'Malawian folklore studies in the sixties and seventies have been characterized by a turning to indigenous culture... a defence of culture... storage and protection of indigenous art forms.'<sup>6</sup> Here, the suggestion is that obtaining a basic sense of traditional Malawian music, and music education by collections, preservations, and limited analysis is incomplete. Also, adhering to the Western models of music, and music education does not offer assurance that our choice is comprehensive and acceptable with regard to paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials. The argument is that a useful music, and music education involves a continuous and rigorous systematic thinking, research, and analysis about the host of related issues that cannot be settled by mere collections, preservations, and limited analysis of traditional Malawian/African music heritage.

In sum, mission education and civilization (besides its merits) is the source of three problems in music education. First, it made the educated/converted Africans learn, sing or perform, and compose in the manner of the Westerners. This was the start of wiping out the activities that constitute the traditional Malawian music making. Second, it viewed the African culture and customs as 'evil'. Such a view led some educated/converted Africans in losing interest in promoting their own art music heritage. It may appear that the 'traditional academic disdain'<sup>7</sup> for the traditional Malawian music practices as not useful gradually stabilized in the period of mission education. Third, it encouraged the educated/converted Africans to arrange music rather than compose it. The tendency to arrange music diminishes the artistic creativity.<sup>8</sup> The limited activities of the scholars on the studies, research undertakings, debates, sharing, and discussions on music education and its principles have made music education seem less important. This may be the contributing factor to the little support for Music in schools and colleges in the country. The suggestion is that there is need to go beyond collections, preservations, and limited analysis of both Western and African music, and music education. A more rigorous scrutiny of the meaning and value of Music (i.e., the possibilities that music has in the African life and the nation as a whole; examination of the

alternative views in music education; the questioning of the old views of music education) in the Malawian/African context may help to offer solutions to the problems of music education in the country.

## **Efforts to address the problem**

Efforts to maintain the traditional social and cultural milieu of the Africans in the country started in the era of mission education. Pauw (1980:153) states that from 1900 the Overtoun Institute at Livingstonia offered students the highest and best Western education in the arts and classical languages. In 1909 the Livingstonia Mission Council perceived the arts course as being very idealistic and that it did not relate to the general goals of education in the country. The council, therefore, recommended the abandonment of the arts course. The educated Malawians, however, objected to the recommendation, which they interpreted as a major decline and fall in education standards. Weman (1960/3: 9), who writes about African music, condemns this kind of attitude by expressing that there is something wrong in the mind of the educated African as regards his/her own music. In Malawi, scholars like Kimble have expressed their concern on the 'traditional academic disdain' for some subjects such as Music in schools. Kimble (1982: 11-12) says: 'Allow me to mention one important facet of our culture which up to now, has been almost completely neglected by the University, namely music, probably because it has not been taught in our secondary schools.'<sup>9</sup> Kimble then, proposes the content of music education in the country:

A study of the ulimba or xylophone, documenting traditional methods of how this instrument is taught locally will lead to a guide/method book for students from other areas to learn, and to appreciate, a different musical expression. Similar studies will be made of various drumming styles, playing of indigenous instruments such as the gourd-trumpets or the mbira or thumb-piano. We need to build up a well-documented collection of Malawian songs, transcribed and analysed for study, preservation, and performance by soloists and choirs.

Unlike the missionaries' view towards the African culture, Kimble considers the traditional Malawian music and its principles as worth studying as well as supporting in schools and colleges. The suggestion to document the traditional teaching methods, drumming styles, playing of other indigenous instruments, collection of Malawian songs, and holding of solo or choir performances may signify an appeal to the educated Malawians to focus on Malawian/African traditional music paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials in the country's music education. Kimble expresses his

expectations: 'Our students without doubt will soon wish to compose their own College songs, as well as perhaps, a university anthem.' But, the examples of 'College songs' and 'a university anthem' are not available anywhere in Chancellor College. Perhaps, the question is: Is the minute response to Kimble's proposal a result of the continued 'traditional academic disdain' of Music or the general marginalization of music education in the country?

King (1991: 4, 5) attempts to suggest solutions to the problem of music education in the country. She begins by showing the flaws of the 1984 music syllabus of the University of Malawi:

There is much that is still missing that would contribute to students' education. The university must seriously consider its overall commitment to an appropriate, valid, formative, and scholarly music programme. Chancellor College has the 'as-of-yet' untapped potential of making a significant contribution to international learning in the field of music. Emphasis should be placed on VOCAL AND CHORAL INSTRUCTION. The norm at the universities around the world is to include performance of music other than piano, voice, and guitar. This plays an important role in helping the student to understand the theory of African musics from an emic perspective.

'Commitment to an appropriate, valid, formative, and scholarly music programme' may imply three things. First, the academic achievements in the University of Malawi are below the Western school standards. Second, it demonstrates one of the deficits of the Western music education, namely, the emphasis on the mind (the analysis) overlooking the body (performance). Third, what constitutes music education in the country is not completely appropriate and valid. All these may indicate a call to the educated Malawians to fill in what is pertinent to the Africans in the country.<sup>10</sup>

The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (1992: 4) asks for a practical and sound music education in the country. In a pastoral letter, the Catholic bishops say: '*Maphunziro enieni ayenera kukhala ndi zolinga izi: iv. Kulimbikitsa ophunzira kuti akonde ndi kusunga chikhalidwe cha makolo awo, monga chinenero, nyimbo ndi magule komanso luso lamanja.*' (A society, which values its future, affords the highest priority to providing education for all its young people. A sound education will aim at the following: iv. instilling an appreciation of the students' cultural heritage, i.e., the linguistic, musical and artistic legacy inherited from the past). The argument is that the practical experience-oriented Malawian music education, exercised in the villages, may be the way forward to bringing in useful benefits for the Africans in the country. In other words,

Malawi must educationally empower her African child to demonstrate human, cultural, and national identity as well as mental authority at home. Such demonstration ought to extend to the world forum of musical discourse and practice.

Banda and Lemani (1997: 22) give a list of subjects to be offered in secondary schools. Among the subjects there is Music and Dance. Including music education in the secondary school general curriculum bridges the gap in the education system, where for a long time the music syllabus has only existed in the curricula of the primary school, teacher training colleges, and the University of Malawi. In 2001 MOE endorsed Music and Dance as an optional subject. In the same year MOE developed a Music and Dance syllabus. This syllabus is already in effect in the 2002 academic year.<sup>11</sup> Chimwenje (1997), as cited by Banda and Lemani (1997:11, 15), confirms that Malawians recognize their traditional music as legitimate and germane to an important field of scholarly inquiry. Chimwenje explains that the Malawi Institute of Education carried out a survey to determine the needs, expectations and aspirations of learners and the general public, which are not yet met by the current secondary school curriculum in order to establish a rationale for reviewing the curriculum. The results of the needs assessment survey indicate the necessity for the teaching of the local Arts (e.g., Music and Dance) in schools.

Father Chakanza points out that the 1965 Vatican II order of vernacularism of the Mass and the entire Catholic liturgy resulted in stopping Western music education in the Roman Catholic Church Seminaries in the country. The idea of vernacularism stemmed from the efforts of stopping the estrangement of people from their culture and customs by foreign traditions.<sup>12</sup> Weman (1960/3: 13) echoes this kind of effort when he discusses African music in general: 'What we desire, though, is that the African might become conscious of the worth of his own folk music, and that he might be given the opportunity of developing it, as has already happened with folk music in other countries. This is the task of the African himself.' It is wise to insist that Africans in the country will be conscious of their own folk music when music education is fully supported in schools and colleges.

Efforts to address the concern of the arts in the country include the passing of cultural laws: (1) Commercial Advertising (Traditional Music) Control Act of 1978 to protect *Mbumba* music; (2) Copyright Law in 1989 to protect and reward musicians; (3) Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 to develop and study the arts, crafts, and folklore. In spite of establishing the cultural laws, it seems there is no proper interpretation of them within the framework of the policies of the MOE in the country. Maybe, this explains why



music education continues to receive little advocacy in schools and colleges.

In sum, some scholars seek alternative views on music, and music education. These scholars question the relevance of the Western music model in the country. On the positive note, they share a fundamental conviction that the traditional Malawian/African music is worthy, and also its philosophies are essential, to understand and practice. However, despite such congruent convictions, there is little in terms of full support to promote the traditional Malawian music, and music education in schools and colleges in the country.

Nevertheless, there are still questions, which cry for answers. Despite all the appeals and efforts to promote the arts (e.g., music education) in the country, why is there little response or attention? Is Nzewi's (2001: 1) general expression about the educated African: 'The answer is that the mentally misguided modern African has ignored its viable, indigenous knowledge system in the musical arts, in slavish pursuit of the learner-alienating Western models and contents' describing the Malawian situation?

## Malawian views on music and music education

Views of musically informed Malawians were sought, through the media, oral conversations, and written literature on the current problems of traditional music, the entertainment and music industry as well as music education in the country. Below are some of the views.

Khoropa, a Primary Education Advisor, points out that 'primary school teachers cannot manage to teach music. The syllabus is European; it must change or we must revise it; what about the music we make in the villages?'<sup>13</sup>. In other words, the present primary music syllabus alienates Africans from their contextual mental thinking in music. Maybe, this too has contributed to the marginalization of music education in the country.

In another development, Rex Chikoko of *The Malawi News* reports that many local musicians admit that the lack of music as a subject in schools has contributed to the deplorable quality of music since they do not have the basic knowledge in music when they venture into it. Furthermore, Chikoko quotes San B as saying that 'if there would be some schools of music in the country or if music was introduced in schools it could save the situation because musicians could be able to analyze their own music.' San B is the local musician who plays 'Dance Hall' music style, a fusion of

## Raga and Reggae.

Chikoko further states that Wendham Chechamba, a private music educator based in Blantyre, expresses his concern on music education: 'I was in the group which incorporated music into the school syllabus. I am only surprised that up to now nothing has been done.' *The Nation* (2001: 29) quotes Jeff as saying: 'Lack of music education in school is a contributing factor to the break up of groups.' Jeff is another local musician who plays R and B style. Here, Chikoko and *The Nation* exemplify that the local musicians also view music education as essential and worth supporting in the country.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, Plaston Mzumara, a curriculum developer, laments: 'Having written Music Teachers Guides and conducted workshops for primary school teachers, no one has ever conducted a survey in schools to assess the progress. But common knowledge is that pupils are only able to sing by heart; nothing else.' He attributes music education crisis in primary schools to the shortage of music teachers and poor music training in teacher training colleges.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the Rev. Mhango complains that most Malawian musicians are unable to read and write music. Besides, he claims that this is the reason why non-professional and worthless music or 'noise' is flooding the market in the country. Rev. Mhango blames the government and the churches for not taking serious interest in music education.<sup>16</sup>

Through research data Malawians have spoken about their views on music, and music education. The preliminary analysis of some literature reveals these views. When writing about Vimbuza, the music and dance therapy among the Tumbuka people, Chilivumbo (1972: 6, 9) says that Malawians 'dance for both joy and grief...dances for work; hate; prosperity; praise; socialization and invitation; entertainment; grief and for healing. Everyone has a part to play in the dance...the audience provides a chorus, clap hands, shake their bodies and tap their feet.' According to Chilivumbo, music integrates the mind and the body through the healing process of Vimbuza patients and the dance. This integration underscores the belief in the holistic view of the meaning and value of music among the Africans. Second, the music involves the participation of the audience. The participation underlines the belief that music practices are not passive receptions of musical knowledge by distancing themselves from the audience, but they are collective, communal and active undertakings. Besides, the Vimbuza dance therapy demonstrates that Africans have their own psychology of music.

Kubik (1981: 551) stresses the point that: 'Music and dance in Malawi are functional: there are initiation songs; there is the music of secret societies and there is music for healing, religious music and dances for warriors.' In other words, music serves other values other than the 'intrinsic nature' of music<sup>17</sup>. This service lays emphasis on the view that the practical benefits, e.g., 'didactic/educational music,' are the meaning and value of music. Second, music is used to depict the social stratification of certain societies in the country. Such depiction accentuates the view that music is a symbol for identity of particular societies. Kubik's findings are social indicators of the ways music relates to the social-political structures of the culture groups.

Chanunkha (1999: 3) in his study of Yao music claims that the music of the Yao reflects everyday events, activities and sufferings. It helps them to develop the entire personality, wisdom and emotions. It opens and disposes their minds to traditional values like virtues of the mind, the will, the senses and the body. They use music as a vehicle for tribal teachings where music learning becomes a by-product. Music helps children to remember cultural norms and ideas, and it facilitates cooperation and oneness among them in the process of enculturation.

Chanunkha, also, lists some of the common activities, which constitutes the traditional Yao music education:

- Speaking and singing songs
- Creative movements, dance and rhythmic activities
- Stamping and clapping; playing instruments, e.g., drums, sticks, bells, rattles
- Playful activities, e.g., game songs
- Live music performances
- The use of traditional songs of neighbor culture groups
- Using music to achieve a variety of non-music-specific values
- Learning by imitation, participation and discovery
- Listening to sound models and observation of dancing/playing models
- Exploration of environmental sounds and improvisation of those into music making

From these common musical activities, speech is one of the components of music practices. Second, the culture groups exchange their music practices. Such an exchange gives emphasis to the belief of appreciating and tolerating the music of other people. Third, the pedagogy in music education includes demonstration and imitation, participation and observation, improvisation and discovery approaches. The pedagogy portrays the belief of music as an active social art and participatory activity. Fourth, music

practices heighten the belief of preferring rhythm to melody. Quite often there may be the rhythm of the melody, clapping hands, beating drums each with its own rhythm pattern but being executed at the same time. In other words, music makers prefer 'rhythmical synchronizations,' 'cross-rhythms,' or 'polyrhythms.'<sup>18</sup>

Although research-based knowledge is not available to prove that Malawians are bi-musical or multi-musical, an informed conjecture can be made that there are signals that Malawians may be inherently multicultural in traditional music practices<sup>19</sup>.

The MOE (1991: 1) summarizes the Malawian view that music is one and the same with life in its rationale for music education in primary schools:

[Music] is a vehicle for self expression; it transmits and preserves culture; it provides enjoyment; it can be a source of income; it encourages creativity and imagination; it promotes social development and also helps to reinforce learning in other subjects. Therefore, the inclusion of music in school curriculum is very important.

Such an observation reinforces the idea that the African child and adult should be the master of his/her own art music heritage through music education in the country.

In sum, some local musicians have indicated that there is need for music education in the country. These musicians represent the public decision, which seeks to lobby political and financial support for music education in schools and colleges. The preliminary analysis of some literature demonstrates that Malawians have their own invaluable original system of beliefs in the traditional music, and music education. Although music education is established in schools in the country, it is not well developed. As the field of inquiry, it needs elaboration. Systematic thinking, and critically reasoned network of concepts as well as beliefs about the nature and significance of the traditional Malawian music paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials are significant if professional practice plans to avoid misdirection and atrophy. Scholars may advocate and market music education by probing into the past and the present assumptions, scrutinizing pedagogies, and making curricula recommendations to policy makers. Besides, it is possible to contribute the knowledge of the traditional Malawian music practices to the global confluence of knowledge and at the same time exhibiting Malawian authentic cultural identity and civilization. The traditional Malawian music paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials may be practical in the general curriculum. These have been perfected, standardized, and successfully practiced over many years since the Africans settled in Malawi. Policy makers may find African music education

worth supporting and Music as a subject of merit.

## **Other African views of music**

Malawi is not the only country that is attempting to emancipate her music education from the peculiar Western models and theories of music, and music education. Generally, Weman (1960/3: 220) supports the African and his/her traditional music: 'Let us establish a School of Music for the African that will not aim at Europeanizing him, that will not aim at making him White...A School of Music that will [be] functionally African in scope.' Weman brings to light two points as the challenge to the educated Malawians/Africans. First, he appeals for a return to the original African music practices. The implication of such an appeal is that Africans have enfeebled their own paradigms, pedagogies, experiences, and materials of music practices. This is the price that the Africans are paying for adhering to the foreign musical ideals. Second, by backing up a school of music that will aim at Africanizing Africans, Weman is validating the assertion that the traditional African music practices and their beliefs are essential, necessary, worth supporting and studying in schools. Such support argues against the Western mentality, which label the traditional African music practices and their beliefs inferior or primitive.

Flolu (1996: 182) argues that: 'African education is practical, aural-oral and informal. Teaching is by example, not by precepts; and learning is by doing, not by reading.'<sup>20</sup> Flolu emphasizes that aural and oral is one of the beliefs in the pedagogy of the traditional African music practices. Nzewi (2001: 2) conclusively asserts: 'The practical experience-oriented education is undisputedly African.' African scholars such as Okafor are emphatic about obtaining alternative philosophies for the value and meaning of music, and music education. Okafor (1989: 11) argues: 'Schools of Music in Nigeria should recognize the necessity of freeing music education from its restricted and almost elitist approach whereby students have been presented with more classical music than anything else.' According to Okafor, the Africans in Nigeria also feel the adverse impact of the Western music education. Besides, Oehrle (1989: 71) sheds light on analogous trends that are taking place in South Africa when she states: 'Professor James Standifer...addressed the philosophical and practical aspects of multicultural music education and his ideas were greeted with enthusiasm and interest. They gave impetus to our efforts to move away from entertaining primarily a Western concept of music education towards entertaining the concept of multicultural music education.'

The above quotation solidifies the argument that scholars are now questioning the sig-

nificance of the Western philosophies in music education. Elliott's (1995: 40) argument that: ' Music, is a four-dimensional concept at least. Music is a tetrad of complementary dimensions involving (1) a doer, (2) some kind of doing, (3) something done, and (4) the complete context in which doers do what they do,' suggests that the problem with Western music education is its insistence to distance itself from the social context. The implication of Elliott's argument is that the society's musical beliefs and tastes should determine its own philosophy or a workable theory for music education and musical instructional priorities. It follows then that it is desirable to Africanize music education in Malawi where the original beliefs of the Africans will constitute a system of guidance to the music curricula. In other words, music education is essential when it addresses the cognitive modes that the Malawian societies emphasize and when the mediums of communication are 'appropriated' to the African cultural concepts.

It is, also, worthy asking: In this modern age whose music education do Africans choose; Western or African? Is there a universal music education? Strumpf (1983:7) advises: 'It is important for African scholars to define as only they can, what African music really is. This is necessary not only as a significant contribution to the study of an important area of world music, but also to give other African individuals greater insight into their own music.' Strumpf encourages African scholars to document concisely a divergent body of theories of the nature and value of the traditional music practices. Such documentation may help in decision-making about the purposes and priorities of music education in Africa. In the present age differences among people of various cultures are recognized. Therefore, a claim that the Western music education and its philosophies are the only universals is a thing of the past and is a threat to the multiple universals of musical ideals of the African cultures.

In Kenya, the search for promoting traditional Kenyan music and dance has been done. Omondi (1984: v) informs us about this development when he states the purpose of the Presidential National Music Commission in Kenya which was to undertake a detailed study and make recommendations on the preservation and development of the rich music and varied dance traditions of our people.' It is clear that some African countries question and re-examine the Western thinking in music, and music education. Countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana have returned to their traditional African music, and music education. Malawi will have to re-examine herself with regard to her art music heritage.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the social and religious trends of the eighteenth century made the educated /converted Malawians to become callous to their traditional music practices, principles, and philosophies. These Malawians put premium on cultivating a Western music mentality that is not really very useful. Consequently, they welcome the Western musical tastes, canons, and music education. This is unfortunate because the Western mentality undermines the national goals of education that represent the needs and interests of the Africans in the country. Representative members of the general public have expressed the need for the practical music education in the country. This reflects what the school-going Africans are missing as they prepare for their livelihood. For example, students who experience difficulties in other subjects of study are denied success or livelihood opportunities. In fact, music education prepares students into new areas of success, life skills, and careers in the music industry. In addition, scholars have supported the idea that music education based on the traditional Malawian/African premises is useful to the country.

However, the limited research, debates, discussions, exchange of ideas, publications on either the Western or traditional Malawian music, and music education have made music education look less important. This being so, policy makers continue to marginalize Music in schools and colleges in the country. But, the traditional Malawian archetype music practices, principles, and philosophies may offer a rich and fertile ground on which scholars can build workable theories for African music education in the country. Therefore, any wise Malawian would consider the alternative ways, which can provide the divergent body of theories of the nature and value of music and priorities of the African music education.

If Music is to secure a firm place in the curriculum for the socio-economic benefit of both the African child and adult, then the 'traditional academic disdain' for Music has to end. The tendency to perpetuate the misleading notion that Music is not a priority in the socio-economic development of the country is a fallacy as well as counter productive to the socio-economic development itself. Music is a part of the media economy where it is turned into a commodity, e.g., compact discs that are sold and bought for profit; the music industry benefits greatly by producing and marketing music. It is a known fact that the Malawian society has been a great admirer of progress. Therefore, in this age of consumerism, economic and technological determinisms, advocating music education would be both the result of progress and progress itself. Music education will assist Africans achieve self-growth and self-knowledge, which help to affirm individuals and identities as well as socio-economic development of the country.

## Notes

1. The hymn as a form of composition is not Malawian, but Western. Composition is distinct from arrangement and artistic creativity is more associated with composition rather than arrangement.
2. Most native church elders representing twelve different churches castigated the traditional Malawian music after deliberating on Charles Domingo's paper during the Blantyre Mission Native Conference 1901. Ross (1996:131) calls Charles Domingo the most outstanding of the students at the Overtoun Institute in Livingstonia.
3. Cory (1948), Zanten (1971), Hooker (1971) appear on the bibliographical list of music education. However, published literature of these three writers is not available in the (national) archives and libraries of this country.
4. Rattray (1907: 164), for example, gave the song of the frog which depicts the behavior of the frogs, while Chakanza (1950: 158-159) showed Arithmetic concepts, e.g., number counting, in the songs titled 'Three Hammocks', and 'Stretchers'.
5. Other researchers who recorded music include Tracey (1958), and Hillegeist (1962). Nurse (1964) documented music and dance. Kings (1982: 55-58) gave a commentary on the historiography of Nyau music. Rupert and Poschl (1990) as well as Friedson (1992) produced visual recordings of Vimbuza music and dance.
6. The term folklore connotes folksongs, folk stories, folk riddles, folk proverbs, and clichés (certain expressions).
7. 'Traditional academic disdain' refers to the trend of some scholars who castigate subjects such as Music as unimportant in the curriculum or socio-economic development of the country. Such a trend enhances the marginalization of music education in the general curriculum.
8. Graham (1989: 294) informs us that Malawian artists bring home much of the popular music from Zimbabwe and South Africa. This state of affairs weakens further the creative capacity among the Malawian artists.
9. Kimble makes reference to the secondary school, but practically there is no teaching of Music in primary schools and teacher training colleges although the music curricula exist.
10. King evaluated the University of Malawi Music Syllabus during her External Examiner's duties in 1991.
11. The idea to introduce Music and Dance as an elective subject in the secondary schools originated in the 1995 Secondary School Curriculum Review Symposium held in Lilongwe between 13th and 15 February. Among the delegates to the Symposium were academicians, chiefs, and representative members of the general public. This is positive development, but there are no trained and qualified secondary school music teachers or musical materials for use.



12. Personal communication with Father Chakanza, a Catholic priest and Associate Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Chancellor College, about music education before and after the arrival of the missionaries in the country. He confirms that traditional music education in the villages is successful in that it produces competent musicians: 18/09/01.
13. Personal involvement in the in-service Music Workshop for the Primary Education Advisors (PEAs): 14th July to 20th August 1996. The intention of the in-service workshop was to train the PEAs to become trainers of primary school music teachers. The PEAs generally indicated that the syllabus was outdated. They called for its review.
14. Chikoko, R. (June 30- July 6, 2001). 'Consumers Unhappy with Malawian Music.' *Weekender Malawi News*. 4-5. The results of the *Weekender* survey reveal that Malawian musicians are not creative and they lack basic knowledge of music and international exposure.
15. Personal communication with Plaston Mzumara, Senior Curriculum Development Specialist, Malawi Institute of Education: 06/09/01.
16. Personal communication with Rev, Chimwemwe Mhango, Board member of the Copyright Association of Malawi (COSOMA): 22/03/02.
17. 'Intrinsic nature' of music refers to sound for sound's sake or the inherent properties of music, e.g., harmony, melody, tone color, rhythm, texture, dynamics, and form.
18. Chanunkha's fieldwork on traditional music practices of the Yao people of Mpili area in Machinga district: December 1997 to January 1998.
19. Personal observation of examples of bi-musical, even multi-musical knowledge and skills among music students hailing from different ethnic groups in the country. The ethnic diversity in the country means that there are many kinds of the traditional Malawian music, and music education. However, within the diverse music cultural practices there are underlying principles and philosophies that are common among the Africans in the country.
20. This declaration does not underline the fact that Africans cannot write down on paper their traditional music. Furthermore, the fact that Western music is written down does not mean that it is better than the traditional African music. Whether music is written down or not, it is the quality of the music that matters. In addition, the traditional African education is not only informal but also formal.

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Department of Fine and Performing Arts  
University of Malawi  
Chancellor College  
P.O. Box 280, Zomba  
Malawi