

Teaching methods and didactic materials used during music lessons in history and analysis of set works in Kenyan secondary schools

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#### Abstract

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (KCSE) in Music consists of Theory and Practical examinations. One of the subsections of the theory part is the history of composers and an analysis of selected works of African and Western music. It is common practice among Secondary School Music teachers to buy ready-made teaching and learning resources for teaching history and set works every year. In addition, Secondary School Music teachers often attend music workshops that deal with analysis of set works, and their heads of schools appear willing to sponsor their attendance at such workshops. Taken together, these actions might suggest that there are concerns about teaching music history and the analysis of set work. This study was conducted to find out what methods teachers use for teaching history and analysis of set works and to further determine what other material teachers are using in their courses. The study was conducted in seven (7) schools offering Music and presenting students for examination at KCSE in Siaya county, Kenya. Qualitative data were collected from six teachers through oral interview. It was not possible to carry out observations because pre-mock examinations were going on in the county. Data collected were analyzed qualitatively and presented in prose form. Analysis reveals that these Music teachers use various books and resources in addition to ready-made resources (handouts) for teaching history and analysis of set works. The majority of the books are not authored in Kenya. The analysis also shows that teachers use various methods of teaching, such as lecture and discussion; however, drill and memorization are the main methods used in teaching history and analysis of set works. In most cases, learners are left to study on their own, and thus memorize the materials needed to pass the examination. The results of the study also revealed that there are no standard textbooks on the history of composers, so teachers tend to borrow materials from various sources. The study recommends that teachers employ the use of local resources in teaching Music, the adoption of learner-centered teaching methods, and the publication of materials on local composers.

Keywords Kenya, secondary schools, history, set works, analysis

There are various methods of teaching, defined here as ways of presenting instructional materials or conducting instructional activities, not only in Music but other subjects as well. Several studies have been done on teaching methods and resources for teaching Music however, they are not readily available in Kenya. A study done in Kenya that includes aspects of teaching methods and teaching resources in Music is that of Mbeche-Owino (2009), which discusses resources and methods used in teaching aural. The author's findings showed that there were inadequate resources for teaching aural in secondary schools in Kenya. In their absence, teachers used varied methods like identification of pitches and teaching theory followed by using pre-recorded music to illustrate the same. A study carried out by Mutuku (2005), although concentrating on the use of folk songs in teaching Western music concepts, reported a mixed reaction by respondents on the availability of text books for teaching Music. Of those queried, 1%

indicated having enough textbooks, while 75% indicated having inadequate textbooks for teaching Music. The same study also reported that there were enough instruments for teaching African music, yet teachers made little use of them except for in the annual Kenya Music Festival (KMF). Persellin & Bateman (2009). in their comparative study on the effectiveness of two song-teaching methods: holistic vs. phrase-by-phrase, found no significant difference in learning a song either using these two methods, even though children sang the songs using the holistic method with fewer errors than with the phrase-by-phrase method. One of the objectives of a study by Auma (2002) on music aural performance in Kenyan secondary schools was to establish the instructional strategies employed in musical aural activities. However, the study failed to clearly show the strategies used and instead revealed the scarcity of resources for teaching Music, such, music instruments, text books and equipped

music rooms. The study also found out that 33.3% of learners had difficulties understanding prescribed works and only 10 % had difficulties understanding Western Music History. Despite the dearth of studies in this area, teaching methods in Kenya are many. In traditional African informal settings, music is learned through aural-oral processes, movement or dance, and other artistic aids (van Heerden, 2006). Methods of teaching music propagated by Kodaly, Suzuki, Dalcroze and Orff are known worldwide. The Orff Method is a way of teaching children about music that engages their mind and body through a mixture of singing, dancing, acting and the use of percussion instruments such as xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels. (Estrella, E. [http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonplans/tp/orff\\_method.htm](http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonplans/tp/orff_method.htm). Retrieved February 2011) Lessons are presented with an element of "play," helping the children learn at their own level of understanding. However, this method may be relevant for the History of music and Analysis because it is meant for young children. The Kodaly Method's philosophy is that music education is most effective when started early and that everyone is capable of musical literacy. (Estrella, E. [http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonplans/p/kodaly\\_method.htm](http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonplans/p/kodaly_method.htm). Retrieved February 2011) Singing is stressed as the foundation for musicianship, as is the use of folk and composed music of high artistic value. This method may be relevant to the study of history and analysis if materials/songs used in teaching are drawn from the culture of the learners. Teachers can use folk songs, for example, in teaching the identification of keys, scales, phrasing, and repetition. The Suzuki Method is an approach to music education that was introduced in Japan and later in the United States during the 1960s. Although this method was originally developed for the violin, it is now applicable to other instruments including the piano, flute and guitar. This method may not be relevant to the study since it is instrumental based. The Dalcroze method, also known as Dalcroze Eurhythmics, is another approach used by educators to teach musical concepts. This method, which connects music, movement, mind, and body was developed by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and is good for lower levels of learning. (Estrella, E. <http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonplans/p/dalcroze.htm>. Retrieved February 2011.) Other teaching methods/strategies are available to secondary school Music teachers, such as assessment, brainstorming, computer-assisted instruction, cooperative learning, debate, and drill and exercise. The current study seeks to determine which methods are used by teachers in teaching the History of music and Analysis of set works. Brief information on the Kenyan system of education and the structure of the Music curriculum is necessary at this point before detailing the methodology and data analysis.

### Kenyan System of Education

The current Kenyan system of education is called 8-4-4. This means learners study for eight years in primary school before proceeding for four years of secondary education and four years of tertiary (University education) education. Classes in secondary schools are referred to as Forms—Form One, Form

Two, Form Three and Form Four. The current aims and outcomes of Kenyan formal music education at the secondary level are based on the revised Curriculum of 2002.

The 2002 Secondary Music Curriculum The 2002 curriculum has the following components: □ Basic skills, which consist of Rhythm (note values), Time Signature (simple time of 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and compound time of 6/8), Bars and bar lines, accents, grouping of notes.

□ Melody, covering aspects of pitch at various levels □ Harmony, covering Triads and intervals and part harmony at various levels □ Aural, comprising rhythm, melody intervals and cadences □ History and Analysis, comprising the study and analysis of both African and Western music □ Practicals, which involve performance of scales, arpeggios, sight singing and performance on an African and a western instrument □ Project, which requires learners to collect and archive folk songs, participate in live music performances including choirs, and so on.

Content of History of Music and Analysis of Set Works This section describes the History and Analysis of set works sections of the 2002 Music Curriculum. The syllabus introduces this section as early as Form One. Western Music covered in this area includes works by major composer from the Renaissance to the 20th Century. The History of African music components involve the study of music in society, such as: the role and function of music, occasions of musical performance, categories of music, general characteristics of African traditional music, effect of modernization on traditional music/s, African instruments and Traditional African musicians, types of performances (solo, ensemble), costume, décor, ornamentation, vocal techniques, and how music relate to other art forms and dance, and the training of musicians. Analysis of Western music begins by learners studying shape, form and dynamics in Form One. In Form Two, analysis is specific to melodic analysis: AABA shape, ABCD shape, melodic curve, phrasing marks, dynamics, terms, and symbols. In Form Three, learners are restricted to melodic and harmonic analysis that covers binary form, ternary form, rondo form, theme and variation, perfect cadences, imperfect cadences, plagal cadences, interrupted cadence, and signs. In the final year, the syllabus introduces for the first time the study of prescribed composers, to include their life history, works, contributions and compositions, style and forms, and an analysis of set works. The analysis of set works is studied under the following subheadings: forms, key systems, terms and signs, rhythmic features, orchestration, styles and texture. Analysis of African music, on the other hand, begins at Form One by studying melodic structure—scales, ornaments, solo, chorus, Performance (ensemble, role of instruments, and interrelationship of the members of the ensemble). In Form Two Analysis of African Music covers types of melodies, scales of melodies, ornaments, and vocal and instrumental ensemble. At Form Three, Analysis of African music includes melodic structure, rhythmic structure, harmony and counterpoint, new instruments (guitar, accordion), and a repertoire of African choral music. In the final year of study Analysis of African Music, Prescribed Work includes form, ensembles, the role of various performers, and type of work. The syllabus uses the terms —prescribe work|| and —composers|| for the first time in Form Four, even though the basic theory that enables learners to carry out analysis is built in to the curriculum from Form One. Set works for examination include: □ Set composers. Every year particular composers and their works (compositions) are selected for examination purposes □ Set pieces, both vocal and instrumental

▣ Prescribed western and African works. It is also common practice for the examination council to select compositions by western musicians for analysis and Kenyan folk songs or folk dance as prescribed African set work.

## Method

The study was carried out in Siaya County, which is comprised of the Gem, Ugenya, Alego-Usonga, Bondo, and Rarieda constituencies. Music teachers in the county were contacted over the phone and the purpose of the study explained. Appointments were made to visit schools to conduct oral interviews with the teachers. It was initially arranged to collect data through observation and oral interviews. However, it was not possible to carry out observations since premock examinations were on in the whole county. The researcher thus conducted interviews to collect data. The study was initially designed to be carried out in the Siaya district but was eventually carried in Siaya County instead, in accordance with the new administrative set-up in Kenya. This alteration raised the number of schools from 5 to 7. One teacher could not be interviewed due to scheduling issues. Thus, a total of six teachers were interviewed. Data collected was coded and analyzed qualitatively. The result of that analysis is presented below.

## Results

Preliminary data shows that one of the six schools has three music teachers. The majority (four) of the teachers have a Diploma in music while the rest hold a Bachelor's degree. All the teachers interviewed agreed that the syllabus introduces history of music and analysis from Form One, however not all of them begin teaching the sub-sections at the same time. All teachers begin teaching history of music at Form One, but they vary on the time for introducing analysis. Teachers who begin teaching analysis at Form One introduce basic elements like identification of keys. One of the teachers commented that it depends on the innovativeness of the teacher to look for simple materials in order to introduce analysis at this level. Generally, the teaching of analysis and set works begin when teachers receive their informational circular from the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE). This circular contains the set works for analysis, selected composers for study, and a list of practical music pieces for various instruments. Teachers explained that KIE releases the circular two years in advance, and that they release the set-works list for Form Three and Form Two at the same time. Most teachers, therefore, teach analysis of set works and prescribed composers starting in the third term of Form Three. KIE designs materials for teaching set works, and each teacher is responsible for acquiring their own materials. Some teachers, however, get materials from the Western Music Teachers Association (WMTA). The WMTA receives information on the set pieces early so that they can prepare analyses of them as means of raising money. The association does the analysis for teachers, who buy and use them for teaching. The teachers explain that, in the majority of cases, —we start teaching prescribed works at Form Four using material prepared by the

western teacher's association. || The rest of results are presented in subsections as follows: Methods of teaching History, methods of teaching Analysis, books for teaching History, books for teaching Analysis, other resources for teaching History and Analysis, and finally challenges in teaching History and Analysis.

#### Method/s for Teaching History of Music

Methods listed for teaching history include: ☐ Lecture method ☐ Discussion

☐ Group work drawing instruments ☐ Giving notes to learners to read, which teachers later ask question on ☐ Listening to prescribed music of the period (one teacher added that sometimes the listening material is not available). ☐ Drawing instruments on charts for pupils to study

Methods for teaching analysis of set works ☐ Lecture method ☐ Discussion. —We have material to give them to read, then we discuss|| ☐ Listening to tapes followed by discussion. Discussion is centered around music scores on keys, dynamics, and modulation. ☐ Question and answer method, whereby teachers photocopy material from books. The question and answer method is also used in score reading of prescribed works and after listening to the recorded music of the scores. One teacher however said that —in reality, most of the times teachers do the analysis or somebody else does it (like the WMTA), the teachers buy the material, and give students to study and memorize.|| Books for teaching history ☐ Foundation music, by KIE ☐ History of western music, by D. Grout ☐ KIE Books, Form One to Form Four ☐ Harvard dictionary of music ☐ Foundations books for Form One to Four, by Jomo Kenyatta Foundation ☐ East African instruments, by Graham Hyslop ☐ Folk music of Kenya, by Zenoga zake ☐ Music of Africa, by Kabwena Nketia ☐ Music appreciation, by Roger Kamien

Books for teaching analysis ☐ KIE Books, Form One to Form Four

☐ Foundations books for Form One to Four, by Jomo Kenyatta Foundation ☐ Music appreciation, by Roger Kamien ☐ Basic Music Knowledge, by Annie Warburton ☐ Classical Analysis, by Annie Warburton ☐ Prescribed composers come in a booklet by KIE for Forms One Two, Three and Four.

Other teaching resources apart from books ☐ Analysis material made by the Western Music Teachers Association ☐ KCSE past papers for teaching analysis ☐ Tapes from KIE, and from Western Music Teachers Association, ☐ Audio CDs ☐ Computer (One teacher composes melodies for analysis using Music software and plays back for learners). One or two teachers use computer to play CDs for learners ☐ Charts showing western orchestral instruments ☐ clips from daily newspapers ☐ Resource persons ☐ —Is sometimes run back to the Maseno University library to read and get materials for teaching,|| one of the teachers said. ☐ —My university notes on Form and Analysis, || one teacher said. ☐ Keyboard

Challenges in the teaching of history of music and analysis of set works ☐ Music is usually not taught in primary schools, and what teaching is done is only for festival purposes; hence, starting music at Form One is challenging. Starting so late makes learning difficult, especially learning analysis, which may be why some students chose not to study Music

☐ Recorded music is lacking for History, which makes it difficult for learners to comprehend. ☐ The timetable is congested with so many subjects, so securing enough time for each sub-section of music is difficult. ☐ Lack of enough books ☐ Lack of a center where learners can watch live performances of the works being analyzed. Not seeing live performance makes studying analysis abstract and difficult to comprehend. ☐ The syllabus is not specific on which composers should be studied in Form One, Two, Three or Four. Thus, most teachers wait to be given prescribed composers by KIE, and then begin teaching History and Analysis. ☐ African history is not studied at all. The history of African composers is not taught because the syllabus does not specifically list any African composers. In addition, there are inadequate books and published research on African composers ☐ The syllabus limits potential African music offerings to those from Kenya ☐ Most of the school administrators have the notion that teaching Music is very expensive. Consequently, they do not support the subject ☐ The career trajectory for studying Music is not well defined, so students are hesitant to study it ☐ Non-music teachers discourage students from taking Music because they see limited career opportunities. This makes talented, bright students shy away from selecting Music as one of their subjects of study ☐ Teaching materials are had to come by ☐ KIE does not provide instructional books, yet it provides the syllabus ☐ Schools often lack music rooms with facilities for teaching Music. The few available textbooks are too technical for students ☐ The technical terms used in the setting of analysis of set works and composers make it difficult for students to grasp. For example —melodic capabilities which Orutu ( a single string Luo fiddle) has over Nyatiti (eight string lyre among the Luo) . . .|| ☐ Male learners in particular tend to discontinue studying Music at Form Three when they learn that they will be assessed performing live during the practical examinations ☐ Lack of audiovisual teaching resources like tapes and CDs on western music ☐ The many sections of Music (Practical, aural, theory) make it look so challenging that bright students shy away from the subject.

## Discussion

As can be read from the data presented above, the methods used for teaching the History of music are heavily teacher-centered; teachers use the lecture method, providing students with notes to read beforehand (homework), and with drawings of the instruments on charts. The discussion method is typically not interactive, but rather answering questions on the homework. Learners therefore are left with no option but to memorize the material contents to enable them pass the examination, but they may not be grasping the meaning of the materials. This arrangement results in a superficial knowledge Music History. This finding supports research that shows that students admitted to study Music at Universities have difficulty understanding the basics of music theory (Mutuku, 2012). The methods used in teaching Analysis are no different, regardless of whether the method fits the material. Discussion is more appropriate when learners can make meaning of what they discuss and debate on.

The teaching materials compiled by the WMTA are abstract, and may have been compiled without considering the learner's level of Music knowledge. It may be profitable for teachers to try other methods of teaching these subject. For example, the African Musical Arts approach involves participatory learning using local resources like folk songs and stories for teaching concepts that can be applied in analysis of works. A teacher can use storytelling to teach about the set composers and either sing or play a song by the composer. In the world of technology, teachers can also make learning of History and Analysis more accessible by allowing learners to compose simple melodies that the then teacher notates to guide learners in identifying specific elements such as repetition, keys, rhythm, and modulation. This approach allows learners to discover so much on their own. In order to use technology in this way, most teachers will need to learn how to compose using computers so they can guide their learners. The question is

whether all schools are equipped with computers and whether the teachers themselves are literate with computer programs for music. There are basically four primary books for teaching Music History and Analysis. These are the books by KIE, the books by Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, the book by Kamien, and the two books by Warburton. The History of Western music by Grout is very technical, even for learners at the University level, however it is used because the majority of the Music syllabus content is Western. What is described in the syllabus as History of African music should actually be entitled something like —music in society. || As such, this topic should include local musicians and their music. To bolster teaching in this field, music educators, researchers, and ethnomusicologists need to combine forces and develop teaching materials on African music history and composers (Agak, 2001). Inadequate teaching and learning resources aside, it cannot go without saying that teachers need to be innovative and creative. This point is made by House (1958), who states that teachers should be flexible enough to look for new methods and techniques that will impact on their work. Additional changes should be made in the syllabus and examinations associated with the study of music. Music is not taught at primary level as a result of the curriculum reforms of 2002 that merged the Creative Arts into one subject. The Creative Arts teacher is supposed to be knowledgeable in all Creative Arts, however, the teacher will emphasize subjects where they are best skilled. Further, time allocated for Creative Arts is often used to teach other subjects such as Mathematics, English and Sciences (Atieno, 2012). These problems contribute to a secondary music curriculum overloaded with a content that cannot be completed in the four years. KIE is aware Music is not taught at Primary level; they should thus adjust the syllabus to reflect this gap in learning. The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) should do the same by setting examinations that are at levels appropriate for the student's learning. The two institutions should also use experts to design a curriculum whose content of study is specific and whose coverage is reasonable. Finally, negative attitudes from school administrators and others about Music can be overcome if the Music teacher stand his/her ground, educate the ignorant on what music is, is innovative, resourcefully highlights the many career opportunities in music, and makes Music education interesting.

## Conclusion

There are a few books in addition to the handouts from the WMTA that teachers use for teaching Music. There is, therefore, a need for more textbooks with a content that reflect local history. Beyond textbooks, however, teachers may need to be innovative and use other

teaching methods that are more learnercentered and less teacher-centered. Further it would be better for continuity of learning if the teaching of Music began at the Primary level. Such a change will ensure proper basic knowledge of Music by the time learners join tertiary institutions.

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ISME Twenty-Fourth International Research Commission Seminar 12

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