



Reflections on selected tertiary music programmes in Francophone and English-speaking Africa: a report

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To cite this article: Pascal Zabana Kongo (2007) Reflections on selected tertiary music programmes in Francophone and English-speaking Africa: a report, *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, 4:1, 89-97, DOI: [10.2989/JMAA.2007.4.1.9.406](https://doi.org/10.2989/JMAA.2007.4.1.9.406)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.2989/JMAA.2007.4.1.9.406>



Published online: 10 Nov 2009.



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Introduction: the issue

This report deals with a real gap between music programmes in Francophone and English-speaking tertiary institutions within selected West and Central African countries. It is not a theoretical article, but rather a presentation of historical information with minimal speculation.

This report was initially a response in January 2004 to a request from the Pan-African Society for Musical Arts Education (Pasmae) to write about my involvement in music education, especially in African Francophone countries, for an appointment as an Ambassador-extraordinary. I have dwelt solely on my own experiences with music curricula from West Africa, especially from Ghanaian and Nigerian universities. More clearly, this report is not designed to offer scholarly opinions and arguments on the adequacies/inadequacies of syllabi and course contents in African tertiary music education, because this is definitely a different and open issue. I narrow the focus to concentrate on the discrepancy between English-speaking and Francophone music curricula in West and Central Africa, where Legon may validly stand for a number of other tertiary institutions that have developed a curriculum based on Africa-driven and Western approaches. For instance, the seeds planted in each one of the above directions in Kenya and South Africa—representing an axis between African identities and Western curricula—will necessarily be reflected in my present assessment.

Students from English-speaking countries would find curricula they would regard as standard in, for instance, the 1990s handbooks of the University of Ghana, Legon or the Legon website <University of Ghana>. On the other hand, scholars and cultural agents from Francophone Africa may need an example of such contents for their decision-making.

The roots of tertiary music institutions in Africa

At the time of independence many African countries officially adopted Western languages; along with these decisions, educational decisions were made that effectively re-partitioned African tertiary education according to models developed more or less from the ‘metropolitan’ learning systems. The clear separation that developed between the Francophone and English-speaking countries in their approaches to tertiary music education is what I address here.

Unesco's efforts

For a Pan-African dialogue about music education

It has become apparent that there is a pan-African dialogue about primary school Music education, led by the English-speaking intellectual community. An appropriate example of this was the workshop organised by the Malawi National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) and the Music Department of Fine and Performing Arts in July 1997 at the University of Malawi in Zomba.

The workshop, sponsored by Unesco, was attended by Mitchel Strumpf (then Malawi convenor and resource person), Ezra Abate Yiman (Ethiopia), Moses Serwadda (Uganda), Omibiyi Obidike (Nigeria), Adepo Yapo (Ivory Coast), Ludumo Mngangane (South Africa), the late Dumisani Maraire (Zimbabwe), with Barbara Reeder Lundquist (formerly of the University of Washington, Seattle) and J H Kwabena Nketia (International Centre for African Music and Dance at the University of Ghana, Legon) as resource persons.

The discourse carefully elaborated an educational philosophy—to enable each area and each country to address its cultural identity and specificities—before planning tangible models for a classroom situation, with continuous reference to cultural identity in the choice of resource materials. This dialogue was crystallised in *A guide for the preparation of primary school African music teaching manuals* (Nketia 1999), which addressed the following topics:

- The place of traditional music in education;
- Orientation of the music teacher;
- Developing a philosophy of Music Education;
- Presenting music as a subject of instruction;
- The socio-cultural development of the child;
- In-classroom models for planning the teaching of fundamentals, music in the community, songs, musical instruments, instrumental ensembles and dance;
- Integrating the Guide into the existing syllabus.¹

International Music Council training programmes in Francophone Africa

I was involved as a resource person in a second type of music education programme organised by Unesco's International Music Council (IMC), which included the 1999 symposium and workshop for the training of music teachers in French-speaking Africa, co-hosted by the Market for African Performing Arts (Masa) in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The origins of the participants and resource persons ranged from West Africa (Benin, Ivory Coast, Mali and other countries) to Central Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congo Brazzaville). Beside the contribution of academic and media experts from various backgrounds, the symposium was sensitised to the burning issues affecting representatives

1 I undertook a French translation of this guide which I entrusted to Professor Yacoubou, a cultural consultant for the European Community, with a view to possible dissemination in the Francophone area.

of international music syndicates and music festival organisers, based mainly in France, affiliated to the IMC and working officially with African governments. Among such issues is a divergence of objectives and policies between syndicates and festival organisers. The workshop benefited from sharing the in-class experiences of empirical music teachers; song transmission, organology and dance sessions featured among other topics.

It seems to me that many teachers need a more formalised training in music, or a more theoretical and analytical background in music, to benefit fully from what resource persons have to offer and from materials in their environment.

Training of music scholars and educators in Francophone and English-speaking Africa

The legacy

The use of the *Guide* (Nketia 1999) presupposes an Africa-centred view and organisation of musical knowledge and its dissemination in each country. Another way of approaching music as a subject of instruction within an integrated curriculum—at all educational levels—is to observe the training of scholars and educators in non-African contexts.

Although a team of Fellows in African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, focused on the musical aspects of the area study as early as 1952, it appears that tertiary-level music programmes in the areas whose curricula I discuss here did not come into existence before the 1960s. Before that the sites of music learning in colonial West and Central Africa were primarily the church and private music schools. The churches, with seminaries training people for the priesthood and other mission-driven institutions, were meant to meet ecclesiastical needs and the related socio-cultural activities. Within this context, there was some variation: in the predominantly Catholic Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, the Protestant churches proved to have been more effective in developing local musics by promoting the practice of hymn singing with indigenous texts before the Catholics did so, and by teaching a popular tonic sol-fa system of music transmission. They also introduced guitar bands in the 1950s, which indirectly sparked a golden age of secular and neo-traditional music like the Kongo Yombe *kintueni* guitar bands in the western lower Democratic Republic of Congo. Pre-independence private schooling initiatives, such as Mr Alario's School of Music in Kinshasa, were primarily intended for expatriate youths and related to Western culture, but eventually included a small number of Africans.

The advent of tertiary music education in Francophone areas

Recruiting candidates to tertiary level music programmes poses problems that are not peculiar to Africa. Countries with a long tradition of scholarly music owe their yearly intake to judicious recruitment strategies.

Central Africa lacked the intensive and generalised choir practices observable in West Africa as well as the access to metropolitan distance-learning certificates available to

colonial West Africans.² But it had, in turn, produced a flowering of secular popular music that—before independence came to the countries of the region—had not gained the status of subject of instruction. In Kinshasa a state initiative started around 1968 in the form of a National Conservatory of Music led by Kanza Matondo, who studied in Geneva in the 1960s. West European instrumentalists were recruited to enable the study of Western classical instruments. The programme began at an ‘indefinable’ music level, because of the widely ranging ages and experience of the students; recruits included old timers playing popular brass and wind instruments, nostalgic amateurs who had some formal experience on a Western instrument at school, all mingling with adolescents in the new systematic classes.

This institution was soon replicated and its objectives reviewed within the University and Scientific Research Tertiary Education, a government institution, around 1974. I compare the resulting syllabus below with similar syllabi in West Africa.

Concerning the preservation of traditions, the Republic of Mali has done very much better in the fine arts than in music education. Eminent linguists in Congo Brazzaville, such as Patrice Mombonda, have written on aspects of music related to language and story-telling. Central African Republic ethnologists, such as Ngabondo Boniface, studied ethnomusicology in Paris at the tertiary level before returning to their original academic environment. Some officers of the Ministry of Culture in Lomé, Togo, were trained in the Music Department of the University of Ghana, Legon. Since the 1970s the most renowned Francophone tertiary music education centres have been the National Institutes of Arts of Kinshasa and Abidjan, Ivory Coast and the Conservatoire of Dakar, Senegal. The latter has been upgrading its staff by ensuring the training of gifted candidates in institutions abroad, including the Versailles Conservatoire in Paris. Such a policy has been lacking in other African Francophone institutions, limiting the development of curricula to the three-year courses of study with which the programmes started. In Kinshasa, however, the candidates’ need for a formal tertiary music education was compensated for by the introduction of artistic humanities courses—which were in fact common literary humanities courses, but extensively reinforced with music theory and a study of other performing arts—directly managed by the National Institute of the Arts on the same campus.

The advent of tertiary music education in English-speaking areas

Biographical sketches of key personalities in the field give some sense of the state of music education in Nigeria and Ghana before independence and of the advent of tertiary music programmes in these areas. I have relied on data from the Contemporary Africa Database website <CAD> for information about four influential people in education.

Fela Sowande (b 1905 in Lagos, Nigeria, d 1987) was known for his exceptional mastery of Western idioms in his compositions. He came from a musical family, and credited his first contact with Western music to his father, ‘a priest who taught at St Andrew’s College,

2 The choirs of West Africa, for instance, prepared Ghanaian and Nigerian audiences remarkably well for African vocal art music.

Oyo, the mission's teacher training institute' <CAD>. As a chorister at the Cathedral Church of Christ, Lagos, in the 1920s and 1930s, he was exposed to a variety of European and indigenous church music and influenced by Thomas Ekundayo Phillips, who gave him private organ lessons.

Joseph Hanson Kwabena Nketia (b 1921 in Asante Mampong, Ghana) displayed exceptional talent and sensitivity to music during his studies at the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong, under the mentorship of the music theorist and organist, Robert Danso. As a linguistics student at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he took private music lessons. His role as a pioneer of African musicology and art music is internationally known. He taught at the University of California (UCLA) from 1968, retired from Pittsburgh in 1992 and directed the International Centre for African Music and Dance (University of Ghana, Legon) from 1993 to 2003. Among his more than 200 publications is the pioneering classic, *The music of Africa* (1974).

Lazarus Edward Nnanyelu Ekwueme (b 1936 in Anambra State, Nigeria) is one of the most learned Nigerian composers. He received much of his music education in Britain and the United States of America, studying at Durham University and the Royal College of Music (1960–1964), and at Yale University in the USA. He studied composition under Gordon Jacob, conducting with Adrian Boult, singing with Mark Raphael, piano under Henry Bronk Nurst, and choir training with Richard Latham. He took a BMus degree at the University of Durham and an MMus of the Royal College of Music, London, in addition to producing sixteen professional compositions and obtaining teaching and performing diplomas from the four Colleges of Music. His degrees and diplomas include the BMus, MA, PhD, LRSM and FTCL.

Joshua Uzoigwe (b 1946 in Umuahia, Nigeria, d 2005) had his first formal lessons in Western music in 1960, as a schoolboy at King's College, Lagos, a leading Nigerian secondary school, where the music curriculum included harmony, theory and the history of Western music; Uzoigwe also received private piano lessons, learning mainly European pieces. He subsequently studied music at the International School, Ibadan (1965–1967) and at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1970–1973).

It becomes apparent from the above that musicians and scholars from the West African English-speaking areas (primarily Nigeria and Ghana), although receiving their music training through church and private initiatives as in the Francophone area, enjoyed a relatively more systematic music education, specifically in Western music theory. This is apparent from the 1920s, with composers such as Ephraim Amu (acknowledged as the originator of West African art music) developing a cross-rhythmic, Africanised, hymn-wise compositional idiom in Ghana before scholars such as J H Kwabena Nketia launched into more formal research activities in African music in 1952.

In the early 1960s Ghana's president, Kwame Nkrumah, wished to acknowledge the nationalist composer Ephraim Amu by entrusting to him the creation of an African Academy of Music, but this did not come about. In 1962, however, with Nketia appointed as the director of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, the Institute of Music

and Drama began with the collaboration of Western instrumentalists for the strings and brass instruction, while African scholars such as Ata Annan Mensah were already available for the theoretical aspects of the new course. As there was a lack of candidates coming from Ghana's secondary schools, where music programmes were either non-existent or poorly resourced, a preparatory certificate was introduced to start the new School of Music. Those candidates already advanced in music, like the ethnomusicologist Fiagbedzi Nissio and the composer Zinzendorf Nayo, entered straight into the African Studies Diploma in African music.

Around 1967 the Institute of Music and Drama was renamed the School of Performing Arts, which came into its own only in 1976 with the introduction of the Bachelors and Masters programmes. The curricula for the Diploma in General Music and the Diploma in African Music, the levels that initiated the programme, have been stable since then, with minimal changes being introduced.

The University of Nigeria (Nsukka) started with a United States' educational model in 1948, offering both a Bachelors and a Masters degrees, including curricula in music in 1960.³ But I will start comparing curricula from the 1970s, when both Francophone and English-speaking music tertiary institutions were becoming established in sub-Saharan Africa.

Comparison between the Francophone and English-speaking tertiary programmes in Music Education

From 1976 to 1979 in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), the music course outlines of the National Institute of Arts of Kinshasa included the following programme for

Table 1: Music course outlines, National Institute of Arts of Kinshasa 1976–1979 (French)

1st year (<i>Premier Graduat</i>)	2nd year (<i>Deuxième Graduat</i>)	3rd year (<i>Troisième Graduat</i>)
<i>Français</i>	<i>Français</i>	<i>Harmonie</i>
<i>Anglais</i>	<i>Anglais</i>	<i>Pédagogie de la musique</i>
<i>Langue Nationale</i>	<i>Langue Nationale</i>	<i>Éléments de composition</i>
<i>Civisme et Développement</i>	<i>Civisme et Développement</i>	<i>Ethnomusicologie</i>
<i>Psychologie générale</i>	<i>Psychologie de la musique</i>	<i>Problèmes économiques et juridiques de l'art</i>
<i>Philosophie</i>	<i>Pédagogie musicale</i>	<i>Contrepoint et Fugue</i>
<i>Solfège</i>	<i>Ethnomusicologie</i>	<i>Esthétique</i>
<i>Harmonie</i>	<i>Solfège</i>	<i>Théâtre musical</i>
<i>Orchestre</i>	<i>Harmonie</i>	<i>Instrument traditionnel</i>
<i>Histoire de l'Art</i>	<i>Contrepoint</i>	<i>Instrument principal</i>
<i>Histoire des civilisations</i>	<i>Histoire de l'art</i>	<i>Interprétation musicale</i>
<i>Transposition</i>	<i>Problèmes juridiques</i>	<i>Ethique et Déontologie</i>
<i>Histoire de la musique</i>	<i>Instrument principal</i>	<i>Stage</i>
<i>Linguistique africaine</i>	<i>Histoire de la musique</i>	<i>Présentation d'un travail de fin d'études</i>
<i>Instrument principal</i>		

3 1948, too, witnessed the opening of the University of Ghana, Legon.

Table 2: Music course outlines, National Institute of Arts of Kinshasa 1976–1979 (English)

1st year (<i>Premier Graduat</i>)	2nd year (<i>Deuxième Graduat</i>)	3rd year (<i>Troisième Graduat</i>)
French	French	Harmony
English	English	Pedagogy of Music
National Language	National Language	Rudiments of Composition
Civics and Development	Civics and Development	Ethnomusicology
Elements of Psychology	Psychology of Music	Arts Copyright issues
Philosophy	Pedagogy of Music	Counterpoint and Fugue
Musicianship	Ethnomusicology	Aesthetics
Harmony	Musicianship	Music Theatre
Ensemble	Harmony	Traditional Instrument
History of Art	Counterpoint	Major Instrument
History of civilisations	History of Art	Music Interpretation
Transposition	Copyright issues	Ethics and Deontology
History of Music	Major Instrument	Training Period
African Linguistics	History of Music	Final Year Dissertation
Major instrument		

music educators, which combined music theory with pedagogical and profession-specific disciplines; this mix of subjects differentiated it from the conservatoire programme that preceded it. I reproduce the course listing in French (Table 1), followed by an English translation (Table 2).

By contrast, the three-year Diploma in General Music offered at the University of Ghana, Legon, represents a curriculum with no non-music courses, but sharing with the Kinshasa programme the compulsory character of the courses and the number of years of tuition (Table 3).

Although a number of candidates at the Diploma in General Music level in Legon have been teachers intending to rejoin the teaching profession, the Pedagogy of Music has been better entrusted to specific University Colleges of Education at Winneba and Cape Coast, adding Psychology to a solid practice of music.

Table 3: Course outlines of the Diploma in General Music, University of Ghana, Legon

1st year	2nd year	3rd year
001 Introduction to Part-writing Techniques I	041 Harmony and Counterpoint I	071 Elements of Composition
002 Introduction to Part-Writing Techniques II	042 Harmony and Counterpoint II	072 Elements of Composition II
003 Outlines of Music History I	043 Outlines of Music History II	073 Outlines of Music History IV
004 Outlines of Music History II	044 Musical Form and Analysis III	074 Musical Form and Analysis IV
005 Musical Form and Analysis I	045 Music in African Cultures III	075 Music in African Cultures V
006 Musical Form and Analysis II	046 Music in African Cultures IV	076 Music in African Cultures VI
007 Music in African Cultures I	047 Orchestration I	077 Orchestration III
008 Music in African Cultures II	048 Orchestration II	078 Orchestration IV
009 Practicals	049 Musicianship I	079 Musicianship III
012 Practicals	052 Musicianship II	082 Musicianship IV
	053 Practicals	083 Practicals
	054 Practicals	084 Practicals

Table 4: Course outlines of the Diploma in African Music, University of Ghana, Legon

1st year	2nd year
013 Form and Structure in African Music I	055 Cultural and Historical Background of African Music I
014 Form and Structure in African Music II	056 Cultural and Historical Background of African Music II
015 African Music and related Arts I	057 Comparative Musicology I
016 African Music and related Arts II	058 Comparative Musicology II
017 Ethnography and Musical Styles of Selected Areas I	059 Practicals
018 Ethnography and Musical Styles of Selected Areas II	062 Practicals
019 Theories and Methods in Ethnomusicology I	064 Long Essay
020 Theories and Methods in Ethnomusicology II	
023 Practicals	
024 Practicals	

Coexisting with this Diploma in General Music, a two-year Diploma in African Music is more centred on Ethnomusicology, linking analysis to the anthropology of African music (Table 4).

Unlike their Francophone counterparts, Ghana and Nigeria pursued a programme of supporting academics who undertook further training in music, specifically by studying for Masters and PhDs in the USA and Britain. As a result, African scholars and educators soon became available in those countries to run programmes in music offering Bachelors and Masters degrees around the mid-1970s, leaving Kinshasa and Abidjan where they had started, a situation that continues to the present. West African English-speaking music departments that effectively match Western requirements with African realities may serve as a point of departure for a Francophone reflection on the issue.

PhD programmes are nowadays available in the English-speaking area. This, even in terms of Africa-oriented production and organisation of music knowledge, preparation of pedagogical material, training of music educators, philosophy of music education, transcription of traditional music and art music, might in the long run become detrimental to the Francophone area.

Steps for developing tertiary music education in Francophone Africa

Francophone Africa's current priorities appear to be heritage preservation, festivals and marketing. If the goal of assuring vibrant, high-quality tertiary-level music education is to prevail there, Africa's English-speaking tertiary education institutions might lend a helping hand by accepting a generation of Francophone students into their degree programmes before those scholars, educators and composers and performers return to teach extended tertiary-level curricula in their respective countries.

Fundraising interventions should be focused on this process, which could possibly be extended initially to the creation of university posts, before the respective governments take over this financial obligation, thus avoiding financial constraints on development.

It is also possible that things may improve inside the Francophone area in the course of time, provided a closer dialogue with the English-speaking world brings about a sustained awareness of music education issues at all levels.

Most Francophone African scholars, whose essentially 'musical' profiles match the achievements of their English-speaking African counterparts, have already entered the English-speaking environment. They include, among others, Kazadi wa Mukuna (University of Kent), Damien Pwono (Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, IMC Secretary-General), Adepo Yapo (IMC Regional Secretary, Pasmae Vice-President), Pascal Zabana Kongo (Pasmae, International Centre for African Music and Dance at the University of Ghana, Legon), and Anicet Mundundu (University of Pittsburgh). At this stage it would thus also be appropriate to pay tribute to the linguistic, psychological, philosophical, historical and journalistic contributions that Francophone Africa's many music scholars and educators have made.

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