

Malawian ethnic music: concepts of hand clapping, foot stamping and relaxation

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Introduction

Some Malawians are not certain about the significance of studying their ethnic music in schools. One reason, according to Steytler (1939:204), is the belief that this music does not constitute 'serious business' for classroom education. Related to this belief is Chanunkha's (2005:3-9) finding, which indicated that education authorities see music as "a luxury in schools" and something that "we can do without". This has contributed to the placing of music in a category of non-core subjects. Mzumara (2003:1) observes that, "in primary schools, it is normal to ignore music and creative arts for the entire term just because they are not core subjects". The tendency to ignore music is noticed in the writings of Strumpf (2001:5) who further explained, "the Music class is frequently nothing more than a 'filler' period of song singing, a time for the main classroom teacher to catch up with her or his usually overwhelming amount of work". In light of this, the paper aims at discussing the meaning and value of Malawian ethnic music by way of arguing against the aforementioned beliefs and current use of music in classrooms from musicology and ethnography orientations.

Without giving his view, Steytler (1939:204) disclosed that the belief in ethnic music lacking 'serious business' for classroom education originated in the thought of the converted Chewa Christians. They considered ethnic music as 'playful', especially the hand clapping and foot stamping.¹ The outcome of such consideration was, and, is still a disregard of not only a study of ethnic music but also other music in Malawian schools. It is questioned why this disregard continues up to date despite the availability of music research-based knowledge from which a systematic content of theory, practice and pedagogy could be developed and utilized in studying music in classrooms. Several researchers in a variety of disciplines have studied Malawian ethnic music, and they offer

insights into some knowledge about the intrinsic properties and characteristics of this music. The songs used in this article are transcribed as heard and perceived from direct participation in singing them in their contexts. They are chosen because they are readily available and represent considerable content sought for in this paper.

Hand clapping

Investigations of the Chewa masked dance song, *Gundete*, tells us what hand clapping does in this song. Below is a transcription of an excerpt of the song for two bars in compound metre.

Gundete

The transcription is set in 6/8 time with a tempo of 80. It consists of four staves:

- Solo:** A melody in 6/8 time with lyrics: "U na mu wo na na kwera mwa mba Nakwera".
- Chorus:** A shorter melody in 6/8 time with lyrics: "Gunde te!".
- Hand Clap I:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in 6/8 time.
- Hand Clap II:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in 6/8 time.

As seen in the transcription, Hand Clap I is heard as an eighth note triplet rhythm ()², which repeats itself throughout the song.² Each beginning of the rhythm coincides with every occurrence of the steady beat of the melody. This allows Hand Clap I to take a role of supporting the melody by supplying a regular basic framework of pulses, which are essential elements that make up the metrical pattern of the song. Lloyd (1968:472) theorized that pulse is one of the factors that organize music tones in time. It follows then that Hand Clap I functions as a basic time ordering device, which Jones (1954:28) recognized as a mathematical order in African music: “[It acts] as an inexorable and

mathematical background to the song”.³ In the light of this, hand clapping in *Gundete* is a contribution to the understanding of the theories of metre and rhythm. As a visual result of energy release in time and space through arms responding to music sounds, hand clapping enriches discourses on concepts of amplitude (distance of arm movements) and shape (physical contour of the palms). This is useful for obtaining knowledge on how different sound qualities are generated by hand clapping.⁴

Hand Clap II is heard as a dotted eighth note duple rhythm (♩·♩·) that interlocks with the rhythm of Hand Clap I as shown below.



Hand Clap I and Hand Clap II are two distinct rhythms, which sound across each other resulting into conflicting musical movements. Acoustically, their simultaneous sounding is identical with the following compound rhythm:

. Analysed from an ethnography perspective, this rhythm provides a means for understanding the Chewa’s framework of life on the basis that it is an outcome of teamwork. The rhythm is distributed between Hand Clap I and Hand Clap II, reflecting sharing, which is a moral value in the Chewa culture. The view to be drawn from this moral value is that sharing is tied to the perception that individuals are useful and needed members of a culture group. Teamwork in *Gundete* unveils the presence of forms of social interactions: cooperation, conformity, tolerance and obedience through hand clapping. The social interactions assist the performers to maintain cohesion and effectiveness in making music. Perceived in this way, hand clapping reflects and reinforces social values wanted in executing ordinary tasks of daily life not only in the Chewa culture but also in other Malawian culture groups.

The simultaneous sounding of Hand Clap I and Hand Clap II is an example of, what is called, ‘cross-rhythm’.⁵ Weman (1960:60/3) recognized ‘cross-rhythm’ as an outstanding characteristic of African music, and advanced music creation vis-à-vis the Western standards of music. This suggests that this kind of hand

clapping gives *Gundete* the distinction of creative greatness that ascribes to the African concept of music creation and performance.⁶

Hand clapping is found in certain ethnic music in which its role extends to include the assertion of ethnic identity. The following is a transcription of a passage of the Yao ethnic game song, *Bolingo*, in compound metre for three bars.

Bolingo

$\downarrow = 93$

Solo
Lo bodo Bo lingo. Lo bodo Bo lingo.

Chorus
Ah! Njonyo li njo. Ah!

Hand Clap I

Hand Clap II

Hand Clap III

As noted in the transcription, there are three different rhythms of hand clapping and these are:

Hand Clap I

Hand Clap II

Hand Clap III

In the context of aesthetic experiences, these three rhythms of hand clapping prescribe the identity of the Yao amid other culture groups. The prescription is the simultaneous sounding of the three rhythms whose resultant sound is heard as . This resultant sound serves as a rhythmic theme, which is the most significant musical idiom found in many Yao music in the country. The preference of this rhythmic theme demonstrates the existence of a conscious projection of the Yao's views of life within their socio-cultural context. It allows the Yao to possess an idiosyncratic aesthetic expression that has become a means for achieving cultural integration (ethnic solidarity), symbol of resistance to the influence of alien arts expressions, and conceptual ethnic boundary divider. In view of this, hand clapping in *Bolingo* offers a way of obtaining information about the intentions and aspirations of the Yao. As such, *Bolingo* is an illustration of how human thoughts and behaviour could be explained through music.

Furthermore, the rhythmic theme consists of a seven-stroke formula for the onomatopoeic hand clapping syllables: *cha-kwe-le-ke chi-na-ngwa* (cassava hurts) or *wa-nkwa-ngu a-li ko-swe* (my husband is a rat) of the Yao. With their amusing meanings, the hand clapping syllables match with the structure of this seven-stroke formula. Kubik et al (1984:22-35) recognized the formula as a mnemonic device for facilitating the memorization process in learning to play *ngwasala* (percussion beam) and *mangolongondo* (log xylophone) in Makanjila area in Mangochi district. From a standpoint of educational ethnography, the rhythmic theme operates within the larger learning process and offers a means for understanding the concepts of pedagogy and memory aids that serve the Yao well, for they are able to play music competently after learning informally. This may inform the contemporary classroom teachers by providing them with information about how to improve the process of teaching and learning.

Foot stamping

Next consideration centres on foot stamping. An examination of a war dance, *Kumanda*, sheds light in the understanding of the role of foot stamping in this dance. Below is a transcription of an extract of *Kumanda* in quadruple metre for four bars.⁷

Kumanda

The transcription shows a melody in treble clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 60. The melody consists of six triplet markings over a series of notes. Below the melody are two staves: 'Foot Stamping' and 'Metal Rattle', both in 4/4 time. The 'Foot Stamping' staff shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests. The 'Metal Rattle' staff shows a similar rhythmic pattern with double dots indicating a specific sound. The transcription is divided into two systems, with the second system ending with double bar lines and repeat signs.

As shown in the transcription, foot stamping is heard as a rhythmic theme, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, and its sound pattern is simultaneously duplicated by the subsidiary buzzing sound of the metal rattles (*manjereza*), which are tied to the dancers' legs. While the buzzing sound contributes in intensifying a military atmosphere, it also fortifies the basic beat of the melody's metre that is executed by foot stamping.⁸

Historically, in the pre-colonial period, wars between culture groups over wealth and best lands occurred in Malawi.⁹ The Ngoni, who emigrated to Malawi from South Africa in the 19th century, used certain kinds of dances to inspire men into battle or to mark a celebration for winning a war. Before setting out for a fight, the Ngoni soldiers performed dancing rituals to subdue their fears. In these rituals, foot stamping served as a means for physical training and, to achieve this, the stamping was done forcefully either on wet ground or cattle dung. The foul smell of cattle dung and the difficulties of performing feet movements in mud were part of the dance rituals intended to prepare the soldiers to endure unpleasant scenes or hard life likely to be encountered at the battlefield.

Forcefulness, Chanunkha (2005:2-25) observed, was considered necessary for success because it enhanced the spirit of aggression and vigour wanted for the Ngoni to survive through wars. Although the Ngoni wars against other culture groups stopped between 1891 and 1896, forceful foot stamping has been retained in *Kumanda*. This retention permits foot stamping in *Kumanda* to contribute to the provision of resource for gaining information about the history of the Ngoni and their war experiences.¹⁰

A different function of foot stamping is noticed in a Yao ethnic dance song, which is set to a spiritual text. Foot stamping in this song sheds light on how musical activities can be understood from a viewpoint of associative symbolism. Below is a transcription of a passage of the song, *Chetume*, for three bars in quadruple metre.¹¹

Chetume

$\text{♩} = 120$ Solo

Oh! Oh! Che tu me. Oh! Oh! Che tu me. Che tu me.

Grunting Sound
I ya Ai ya I ya Ai ya.

Foot Stamping

Foot stamping shown in this transcription is heard as a rhythmic theme, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, and it covers a full bar. The reason why the dancers stamp their feet on the ground is explained as follows: In Islamic faith, the believers have the duty to deny the devil's control not only of their own lives, but also of others. With this obligation, foot stamping in *Chetume* is aimed at bringing a crushing consciousness to mind to enhance a spiritual conception of demolishing the devil. The crushing of an enemy is speedy and, therefore, the dropping of the dancers' legs on the ground is fast. This is supported by the gestures of the arms that act as if something is bothering the dancers. In addition, the feet make crumpling movements on the ground on every second and fourth beats. This and the percussive sound of foot stamping, the gestures of the arms and coarse grunting sounds resemble the action of crushing found outside music. Seen in this way, foot stamping brings an ordinary event to mind due to prior association and it contributes to the knowledge of the religious feelings and ideas within the context of the Moslems of Mosiya village of Mpili area in Machinga district.¹²

Relaxation

As indicated on the outset of this paper, Malawian education authorities recognize the importance of relaxation through music after or before 'hard' studies such as solving arithmetic problems. Investigations of the music syllabuses for primary, secondary and teachers' training education (Ministry of Education and Culture 1991; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

2001; Malawi Institute of Education 1989) have shown that musical topics such as relaxation messages, relaxation procedures and relaxation music are not included. In an attempt to fill this void, the following observations provide one kind of relaxation music, lullaby, as an example on which lessons can be gained and used in considering the kind of musical materials and pedagogy needed in relaxation settings. Also, the observations offer an analytical process that may be applied in selecting both small and large music creations suitable for practical relaxations in music classroom.¹³

It is noted that when a distressed baby attends to the patting or rocking and hears the singing his/her distress is relieved. The question then is what is in the patting, rocking, singing and song that relieve the baby's unpleasant internal state such as discomfort? An analysis of a lullaby, *Gona mwana*, throws light in the knowledge of the characteristics of its intrinsic properties (e.g., rhythm and melody), non-musical aspects (e.g., text) and relaxation procedures that contribute to the sedative effects of this song. Below is a transcription of *Gona mwana* in quadruple metre for four bars.

Gona mwana

♩ = 70

x y

Gonamwana, Go namwa na u le ke ku li ra, u le ke ku li ra, mba

n

la me zonseza gonamuzi tsaza wozazing' b no, gonamwana go na mwa na.

In the transcription, three melodic segments are labelled *x*, *y* and *n*. Each segment is immediately restated at the same pitch level but with slight change in-rhythm for *x* and *n* only.¹⁴ The outcome of repeating melodic segments in a melody is explained in Ramnath (2006), “The repetition of a line, the regular beating of a drum produce a feeling of physical ease and lull the child to sleep”. The gentle and regular rocking of the baby or patting of his/her back, seen in the course of comforting the baby while singing *Gona mwana*, are identical to the regular beating of the drum. Patting and rocking are rhythmic tactics that make up rhythmic organizations, which intensify the basic pulse.¹⁵ As indicated earlier, pulse provides a mathematical order in music, and Hanning (2002:6) observed that the human soul is kept in harmony by numerical relationship. Related to this is Aristotle’s remarks quoted by Stewartson (1976:150) that “there seems to be a sort of kinship of harmonies and rhythms to our souls”. On the basis of this, patting and rocking contribute to the mathematical order of rhythmic movements that stimulate calming feelings.

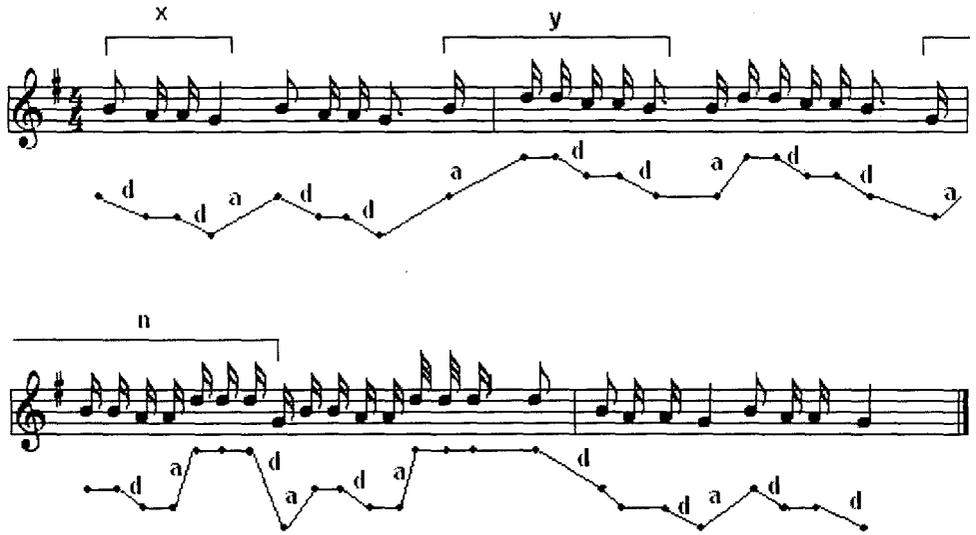
Occurrences of conjunct and disjunct motions are summarized below to observe tone relationships by way of showing how individual pitches progress in *Gona mwana*. The summary is based on the transcribed song presented above and it involves the counting of the number of melodic intervals that move by repetition, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh.

Repetition	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
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18 14 9 2 1 - -

From the summary, of the total melodic intervals 18 (41%) are repetitions, 14 (32%) seconds and 12 (27%) leaps consisting of 9 (20%) thirds, 2 (5%) fourths and 1 (2%) fifth. The statistics demonstrate that *Gona mwana* is predominated by repetitions followed by seconds. This predominance allows the melody to progress by smooth movements (conjunct motions) that coincide with the gentle and regular movements of the rhythmic tactics performed in calming babies. Pitch repetitions allow the melodic line to move straight across while seconds progress by stepwise motions.

A visual representation of the melody of *Gona mwana* is displayed below to examine the direction it moves specifically the upward and downward motions. The ascending motion is labelled **a** and descending motion **d** and their totals are counted.



As seen in the visual representation, the melody combines the ascending and descending movements. Statistically, ascending motion occurs 8 times representing 35% while descending motion occurs 15 times representing 65%. Apel (1969:518) explained that a melody is a ‘geometrical’ design of upward and downward steps, and is a ‘physical’ phenomenon of a moving body subject to forces that regulate its motion. Through the concept of musical gravity, an

ascending motion of a melody generates tension while a descending motion produces relaxation. Harder and Steinke (2004:171) recognized this when they state that a descending melody evokes relaxation. According to this view, the melody of *Gona mwana* is more of relaxation as it is predominated by descending motions.¹⁶

The style of singing *Gona mwana* is characteristic of unstrained, non-shouting and comforting tone at a moderately slow tempo. Distressed babies are carried in comfortable positions, whether in the hands, on the chest or at the back of parents or caretakers. A notion of whether a baby understands the meaning of the lyrics of *Gona mwana* is not attended considering Harris' (1992:69) admission, "at this very early stage [before the end of the first year of life], it is sometimes difficult to be certain whether a child is responding to what is said or to some more general—non-verbal—aspects of the situation in which the words are used." This and the above observations suggest that: a relaxing tone; predominance of descending and stepwise motions; regular and gentle rhythms; repetitions of rhythms, pitches and melodic segments; and a relaxing method of carrying a baby contribute to the sedative effects that relieve the baby's distress.

Another lullaby to look at is *Mwana alira* (Child cries). Below is a transcription of *Mwana alira* in compound metre for six bars. The same analytical process applied to *Gona mwana* about the concepts of conjunct and disjunct motions, and direction will be used to analyse *Mwana alira* for comparison purpose.

Mwana Alira

Sliding Voice

Mwana li ra. Lu lu lu. Ma ke a ku phi ka.
Ma ke a ku li ma

Sliding Voice *Sliding Voice*

Lu lu lu. Ma ke a ku cha pa. Lu lu lu.
Ma ke a ku si nja. Lu lu lu.

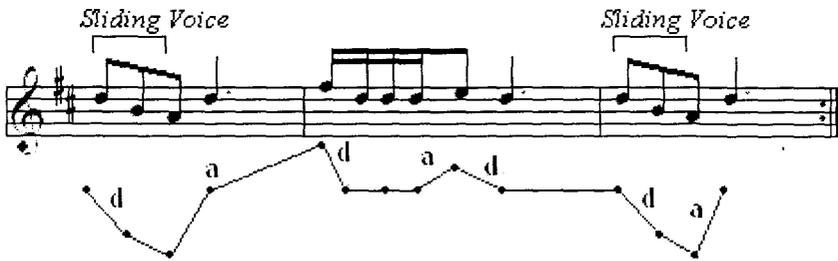
In accordance with the above transcription, the following display indicates the summary of tone relationships in *Mwana alira*.

Repetition	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
	7	9	8	3	-	-

From the display, 7 (26%) are repetitions, 9 (33%) seconds and 11 (41%) leaps comprising 8 (30%) thirds and 3 (11%) fourths. The figures show that the melody is more of conjunct motion (smooth motion) than disjunct motion (jagged motion). Acoustically, the conjunct motion is enhanced by the melodic line that slides from D down to B, a vocal feature that coincides with a drop of the interval of the minor 3rd, and is set to the soothing vocable, *lu*, in bars 2, 4 and 6. Besides this, below is a visual representation of the same melody to observe its movement from beginning to conclusion.

Sliding Voice

a d a d a d



As noted in the above visual representation, both ascending and descending motions of the melody exist. There are 6 occurrences of ascending motion representing 43% and 8 occurrences of descending motion representing 57%. From the figures, the melody is predominated by descending motions, which are recognized to induce a relaxation mood.

One striking outcome of the search is that in both songs, *Mwana alira* and *Gona mwana*, the melodic lines are predominated by conjunct and descending motions. These and other identified characteristics of the intrinsic properties, non-musical aspects and relaxation procedures are the kind of resources to be sought in selecting or composing relaxation music. Babies respond to the singing of lullabies (e.g., *Gona mwana* and *Mwana alira*) and rhythmic movements (e.g., patting and rocking) by keeping quiet or sleeping. This is a sign that babies are conscious of musical sounds and rhythmic activities. Such consciousness reinforces the concepts of listening and movement as essential modes for obtaining musical knowledge.

Music exists in time on the basis that once a melody is sung or played on an instrument its sounds are immediately gone. In the light of this, attentive listening skill is needed for children to follow what the sounds are doing and their meanings in the course of listening to music in records or live musical performances. Also, kinaesthetic skill is desired to allow children to express and experience musical rhythms, melodies and phrases in movement. Clifton as quoted by Bowman (1998:267-268) recognized music as a bodily experience that integrates mind and emotions.¹⁷ Singing and dancing in which children let off their stored up energy should not only be seen as the expression of pleasure but also as a means for developing the aforesaid skills.

To let the babies' consciousness of musical sounds and rhythmic activities develop and reach full potential, an appropriate musical environment is required when the babies grow up and start classroom education. This environmen

includes but not limited to adequate and relevant teaching and learning materials, musical equipment, good music rooms, and dedicated trained and qualified music teachers.

Educational Implications

Gundete, *Bolingo*, *Chetume* and *Kumanda* are examples of Malawian ethnic music used in this article to argue against the belief that hand clapping and foot stamping are 'playful', and contribute to the lacking of 'serious' business of this music in classroom education. The examples are not exhaustive, but they do provide a means for gaining the knowledge of human worldviews by mirroring the values of a culture group in which they are created and practiced. Cooperation, conformity, obedience and tolerance are some of these values that Malawians want for their societal progress. Chafulumira (1987:1-3) emphasized that togetherness and social cohesion are important values in Malawian societies. This and the above findings imply that ethnic music is useful for Malawian children to study in order to acquire and become more sensitive to the values of life. Besides this, hand clapping and foot stamping have demonstrated to have both substantial theoretical and performance concepts. This suggests that the study of ethnic music could be approached theoretically in classrooms starting from junior primary education to tertiary education.¹⁸

Mzumara (2003:1) and Strumpf (2001:6) noted that music is largely ignored in music classrooms. This entails that children are unable to fulfil the Ministry of Education and Culture's (1991:iii) policy goal, "help preserve Malawi's cultural practice, develop an appreciation for the practice of one's culture [and] respect for other people's culture". In analysing *Bolingo*, it was found that there are musical expressions most important to a culture group. Studying such musical expressions would allow children to know and maintain them as an identity of the nation's musical heritage. In addition, it was noted that musical expressions do unveil the thinking, feeling and beliefs of people creating them. This means that a study of ethnic music would broaden children's opportunities for them to know how people in diverse culture or sub-culture groups conceptualise life and how such conceptualisation command musical arts from a social science perspective. This is desirable as it may lead children to appreciate and respect other people's culture, but starting with their own.¹⁹

The concept of associative symbolism emerged when foot stamping was being explored in *Chetume*. This demonstrates that ethnic music could be used for the philosophical debate about the meaning in music as symbolic in nature. Associative symbolism is an orientation that has never received the attention it deserves by scholars of Malawian ethnic music. Another orientation that has not been emphasized is the historical approach to the study of ethnic music. In analysing *Kumanda*, it was found that foot stamping is a means for understanding the history of the Ngoni, and as such, discourses of ethnic music could be carried on in the light of its history. The historical approach would provide an opportunity for children to follow the development of events, theoretical principles and change in music. This is useful for gaining insight into how any music that is experienced as contemporary has been created or sustained overtime.

The findings in *Gona mwana* and *Mwana alira* illustrated several points that need to be considered. There are certain traits of intrinsic properties and non-music aspects that contribute to the calming of babies in their moments of anxiety or discomfort.²⁰ These are resources on which music professionals could draw musical principles that would command new music compositions or guide the selection of suitable relaxation music. A point of method, listening and feeling, surfaced from the analysis of *Gona mwana*. This implies that the aptitudes of listening and feeling need to be crystallized and internalised in children's brains before they reach adolescent stage if they are to become committed to music activities in classroom education. Besides taking pleasure in sounds for relaxation settings, focus on the sound itself through active listening is important because it would help children to know and understand the phenomenal nature of music. Active listening to music would include but not limited to taking interest in attending to music's specific intrinsic properties, direction of sound movement, intervals between pitches, patterns, order and meaning in what the sounds are doing. Such inclusion could be extended to submitting the children's musical findings to questioning and reading processes in which concepts or topics perceived, from active listening, would be consolidated and clarified.²¹

Conclusion

What has emerged in this paper is that music does offer more than enjoyment or relaxation. The activities of music in classrooms should be implemented and expanded from the current practice of mere singing to active listening, practical dancing, analysis of concepts and their application in music arts. As observed earlier, Malawian ethnic music provides considerable examples of the kind of resources that educators require in teaching music, which would serve the children well in other subjects such as social studies (moral values), geography (locations, distribution of music styles and instruments) and history (human's movements, activities and past life as relate to music). This and the above observations demonstrate that music is worthy a study in its own right and is highly applicable in other study areas. On this basis, music qualifies not only to be a core subject, but also an examinable subject in Malawi.

Notes

1. Chanunkha (2006:2-9) indicated that the idea about ethnic music as 'playful' was an imposed thought on the Achewa by Western Christian leaders who were unwilling to include this music in classroom education. Other culture groups were not spared from this kind of imposition.
2. Repetition does not mean monotonous. Different rhythm patterns repeat in combination resulting into generating complex sounds and subtle timbres, which are points of importance in psycho-acoustics
3. Pulse is counted (measured out) in music and is comparable to the heartbeat upon which human life depends. It is order in music like logic in science.
4. A chorus of women perform the hand clapping, which is referred to as *mang'ombe*. They change the shape of their palms to create palm chambers that amplify and give the characteristic qualities of sounds being produced. The changing of the shape of the palms results into low, high, heavy or light percussive sounds. Variations in intensity and volumes are achieved by adjusting the amplitude of the arms.
5. In performance, hand clapping produces a percussive sound unique to *Gundete*. In combination with the drums, they serve as an added accompaniment to the dance song
6. Scruton (1997:31-32) documented that 'cross-rhythm' is also found in African drum music as an important device for creative practices
7. *Kumanda* is an old traditional war dance song, but with new lyrics that reflect contemporary incidents. The lyrics are not included in the transcription in order to facilitate clarity
8. This assists the dancers to maintain strict time. The melody of the war dance represents a multimetric song on the grounds that it moves in groups of three eighth notes against duple pulses. Multimetric is another notable characteristic of African music.
9. The pre-colonial period is restricted to 1875-1896 in this paper.
10. War experiences helped the shaping of some of the present characteristics of the dance that have become a common treasury of cultural music.
11. Up to now, the Yao children of Mosiya village in Machinga district perform this ethnic dance song, which was created by Willesi Lemani when he was twelve years old.
12. The perception of the acts of foot stamping, hand gestures and coarse grunting sounds by the Moslems of Mosiya village is not the same for other Islamic believers such as the Moslems of Lambulira area of the Traditional Authority Chikowi in Zomba district. Identical acts of foot stamping, hand gestures and coarse grunting sounds were observed at Lambulira village centre where the Moslems of this area perceive them as rhythmic activities necessary for accompanying the singing of *Sikili* (Islamic religious songs). Therefore, *Chetume* shows how a sub-culture, music being part of it, contributes to the explanation of human behaviour unique to that sub-culture.

13. The article's recognition of music for relaxation does not imply an admission to the idea that the meaning and value of music in classrooms is solely 'luxury' or relaxation. Unfortunately, discussions of music for relaxation in the Malawian context have failed to develop a systematic theory, practice and pedagogy for relaxation settings that would have extended to include mental hospitals.
14. The principle of repetition in *Gona mwana*, and in other ethnic songs, mirrors one of the habits of people in many culture groups. They always make their demands or assertions over and over again.
15. The use of these rhythmic organizations for calming discomfoted babies need to be encouraged as it serves the babies well in developing their rhythmic consciousness. As babies grow up, this could lead them to appreciate music, starting with their own. About half a century ago, Moorhead and Pond (1942) demonstrated that even pre-school age children have vast potential to understand different types of music.
16. The visual representation of the melodic line is consistent with the recognition that a melody has three tendencies as it moves upward, downward and straight across (Wilson 1966:48).
17. This suggests that musical experiences are unique for they combine both the mind and the body as perhaps no other subject does.
18. Kofie (1994:69) asserted, "hand clapping and stamping of feet on the ground, whether deliberately or as a result of dancing, all go into enriching the overall rhythm. This does not mean, however, that the complex rhythms of African music are arbitrary".
19. It is worth noting that a culture group could best be understood through its arts, of which music plays a prominent role (Parker 1990:23). Ignoring music deprives children of their opportunity to understand others and also to develop their musical capacities, which Myers (1998:339) informed, "humans have multiple intelligences, each independent of the others. One of these intelligences is the aptitude for musical activities including movement as in a dance".
20. The present evidence, however, needs to be joined by future research, which may allow both scholars and educators to draw definitive conclusions.
21. While education authorities acknowledge the use of music for relaxation, little is available that informs teachers exactly how to go about implementing relaxation activities. Adherence to the relaxation theory as the only concept for explaining the value and meaning of music makes a negative contribution to the purpose of why people make music. This appears to have started from the failure to see music concepts in terms of the interests that require them, and from the tendency to treat one kind of information as the sole idea.

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