

FROM THE EDITOR

In the past year a large number of articles dealing with topics such as music related to HIV/AIDS, gender issues, and musics which had not yet been scrutinized in publications, among others, were submitted to *African Music*. Space aside, it was not possible to publish most submissions for various reasons, more notably, many up and coming scholars, particularly from Africa; who, although they have among the most interesting research areas, struggle to make themselves understood in English. The challenge with regard to writing in the English language is worth thinking about because academe very consciously promotes the hegemony of the English language. There may be no way out. The challenge, however, requires intervention, especially since publications such as *African Music* continue to privilege the voices of non-Africans and of Africans who are well acquainted with the English language. This situation is not tenable. In the past year it was incumbent upon me, as it was with my predecessor, to mentor those authors deemed publishable, up to a point where there was a greater measure of conformity with the requirements of the journal. A partial solution to this challenge worth thinking about is combining African languages with English language texts, although articles in more than one language may reach unmanageable lengths.

African Music will continue in its mission to present research on African music in all its diversity, but it will seek more inclusivity so that young scholars from disadvantaged parts of the continent are not deterred by the challenge of writing in English for academic purposes. In this edition, the inclusion of young scholars who are on the rise in academia speaks to the journal as a platform for supporting and encouraging novice researchers. To this end, reviewers and members of the editorial board should have a greater role in harnessing the potential of scholars who focus on the music of Africa. In Africa, the transference of skills from senior academics to young scholars is an urgency.

One theme in this edition deals with what is understood as “traditional” music. Otchere’s article is a study of the internal migration of the Anlo social group and the songs of Anlo fishermen on the Cape Coast in Ghana. Readers are urged to view the accompanying video [V] and to listen to the song on Track 1, which provides a glimpse into this declining repertoire of music. The author focuses on Anlo fishing songs as a vehicle for exploring the extent to which these fishing songs serve purposes beyond their perceived role of accompanying and easing work, and examines how the fishing songs negotiate individual and collective memories and identities. The second article in this direction examines the “buzzy” timbre on African instruments in the Mande region of west Africa. In it Driver describes and defines the buzz aesthetic of African instruments in a highly detailed account of the instruments and the associated meanings of the buzz effect, which could represent anything from advancing communication with the ancestors to having a purely musical effect. He describes how the buzz effect is giving way to a “cleaner” western aesthetic which is forcing the practice into decline. In a third article analysing west African bell patterns, Paulding asks how bell patterns can be used as a tool by researchers to establish meter? What

information do they provide about the “feel” of the music, and how do these patterns interact with the underlying meter and feel, and what does this reveal about phrasing in west African music? His article examines the *dawuro* iron bell in Asante *Kete* drumming and offers a close analysis of the *Kete dawuro* bell pattern. Still dealing with “traditional” music, Chamisa’s article focuses on Zimbabwean popular songs that use and adapt traditional Shona *ngoma* genres. Her article identifies Zimbabwean popular musicians’ various approaches to the adaptation of traditional rhythmic patterns and song texts associated with certain *ngoma* genres. An analysis is conducted on selected *ngoma*-influenced Zimbabwean popular songs and the opinions expressed by the popular musicians who create the music.

The encounter with the west has left behind an indelible imprint on the music of Africa and this encounter is described by authors Lucia, Brukman and Kunnuji. Their articles unpick the nuances of the colonial encounter in diverse contexts. Lucia’s article is on the Se(Sotho) composer, Mohapeloa, who published the “Coronation Song” in 1937. “Coronation Song” celebrates the coronation of King George VI and is ostensibly rooted in his colonial experience of the British Protectorate of Basutoland, now Lesotho. Reprinted in 1939, 1945, 1955, 1966, and 1980 with minor changes, Lucia describes how the song became increasingly anachronistic. Her article traces the song’s journey through decades of political change by means of a close hermeneutic reading of its text, musical language and structure, arguing that the music had always identified with two political tendencies, the one European and colonizing, the other American and decolonizing. Kunnuji is a jazz music composer who is motivated by the idea of a living archive through musical composition. He describes the processes involved in syncretizing the traditional music of the Badagry-Ogu social group in Nigeria with American jazz. Listen to Tracks 2 and 3 for the original songs and Tracks 4 and 5 for the composer’s versions of the songs. Kunnuji is concerned about the decline in Badagry-Ogu music and believes that an interest in the music could be revived only if the traditional music is combined with jazz music in a process which he refers to as “guided syncretism”. His article describes the process of creating an experimental musical style which involves the collection of traditional music, engagement with performers, the analysis and arranging of music to appeal to youth trained in western music. Continuing with the musical encounter between Africa and the west, is the article by Brukman. Focusing on the work of South African composer, Anthony Caplan, Brukman examines Caplan’s application of African art music through the lens of three works whose instrumentation and compositional processes result in pieces that transcend conventional boundaries. Brukman describes how Caplan’s employment of “creative ethnomusicology” (a term first used by Euba) becomes evident as his knowledge, experience and familiarity with a wide range of musical styles and cultures coalesce in the creation of original works of musical art.

Finally, Carver’s article brings together experiences in the field of music education with an erudite, critical analysis. In this article Carver interrogates the dismal state of affairs in the music education curriculum of South Africa. She iterates that the need for redress in South

African education includes calls for the decolonisation of the curriculum, although simply replacing the “hegemonic” Western classical canon with orally transmitted musical traditions in Africa is not enough because the epistemological framework of Western music is retained for the “decolonised” curriculum. This results in a disjuncture between the practice of African music and the way it is understood on a conceptual level in the curriculum.

In closing, this edition of *African Music* is available because of the support it enjoyed in the past year. I am grateful to all the reviewers who made a considerable effort at providing their assessments of submissions to the journal. Their lives will be made easier in future as the reviewing process is now automated. It is not only the editor who has to ensure that the publication remains in good standing. Rather, the reviewers, authors, and my predecessor as editor, Diane Thram, have collectively ensured that this edition comes to pass. The statistics for this journal provide evidence that its reading traffic is increasing substantially. It is hoped this edition will continue to invite and increase the interest in writing about the music of Africa.

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