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ABSTRACT

The music curricula and the pedagogical methods used in the United Kingdom and in Kenya share trends that are both common and diverse. In this article we present our comparisons of the Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the Kenyan music curriculum. We approach this comparative study using Ralph Tyler's definition of curriculum as a theoretical framework. The paper evaluates how the two curricula are shaped by Tyler's sociocentric model by addressing the following four questions: (1) What are the roles of a music education curriculum in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?; (2) What factors influence a music curriculum selection in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?; (3) How is music education experienced in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?; and (4) How are the student learning outcomes in music education evaluated in the United Kingdom and in Kenya? We achieve this by juxtaposing the two curricula to examine the different concepts of curriculum content, pedagogy, assessment, and cultural milieus. The depth of our comparative study shows that the variability of the definitions of both education and curriculum have a direct impact on the music education curricula of the United Kingdom and of Kenya. Our conclusions show that there is a divergence and convergence of content and pedagogy between the ABRSM and the Kenya music curriculum and that the student learning outcomes are achieved based on the overarching societal expectations and needs. The study finds the hegemonic Eurocentric definitions of education and curriculum tend to impact the music curricula from content and pedagogical purviews of both the United Kingdom and

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Kenya. We argue that because of this internationalization, the learners' musical experiences are enriched leading to improved academic quality, culturally oriented students, and globally informed music teachers.

Keywords

ABRSM of United Kingdom; Kenyan music curriculum; Ralph Tyler; sociocentric curriculum model; culturally oriented students.

INTRODUCTION

Music educators tend to expect curricula and their corresponding pedagogies to provide music programs that are meaningful for learners across all educational and sociocultural settings. Through the understanding of music, as Banks (2017) noted, music educators have the capacity to foster cross-cultural understandings and the roles music plays in the social-cultural milieu of people from diverse backgrounds. The music curricula and the pedagogical methods used in the United Kingdom and in Kenya share trends that are both common and diverse. The diverse trends are due to the prevalent elemental considerations previously embedded in traditional music education but have since been largely discontinued in the United Kingdom due to advancements in technology and industrialization. The elemental considerations in traditional music education are, however, still largely used in the Kenyan music curriculum. In this paper, we compare the similarities and differences of the Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) of the United Kingdom and the African Music Curriculum of Kenya. To help us understand how the two curricula are shaped by their respective societies, we use Ralph Tyler's (1949) curricula and theoretical framework. Using this framework, we answer four fundamental questions:

1. What are the roles of a music education curriculum in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?;
2. What factors influence a music curriculum selection in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?;
3. How is music education experienced in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?; and
4. How are the student learning outcomes in music education evaluated in the United Kingdom and in Kenya?

The objective of this research is to provide an understanding of the overt divergence and convergence of both content and pedagogy between the ABRSM and the Kenya music curricular. This understanding is important because it not only informs music educators in Kenya and the United Kingdom in the creation of a pragmatic music curriculum, but also a curriculum that is rooted in both the socioeconomic fabrics of the people against the backdrop of overarching cross-cultural convergent and divergent philosophies of music education. The ABRSM curriculum was developed in 1889 as one of the precursors of the Model Music Curriculum (MMC) within the British system.

Aimed at making “every young person to be able to experience music and make progress,” the ABRSM curriculum was written to complement the National Plan for Music Education by teachers, leading musicians, and education sector bodies in the United Kingdom (UK Department for Education, 2021, p. 5). In the context of the United Kingdom, music not only represented but actively promoted values that united Europeans such as diversity, tolerance, equality, freedom, and solidarity (European Music Council, 2012). Joseph and Hartwig (2015) argued in support of group and interactive musical experiences as the basis upon which the Kenyan indigenous music curriculum is founded. They stated that “African music is about participation and doing within a group or community context” (Joseph and Hartwig, 2015, 5). The participatory idea impinges upon both social constructivism theory (Dewey, 1938) and socialized education ideology (Wilson & Peterson, 2006). Both views discuss the vital benefits of a curriculum developed based on learning as a social phenomenon.

DEFINITIONS OF CURRICULUM ACCORDING TO RALPH TYLER

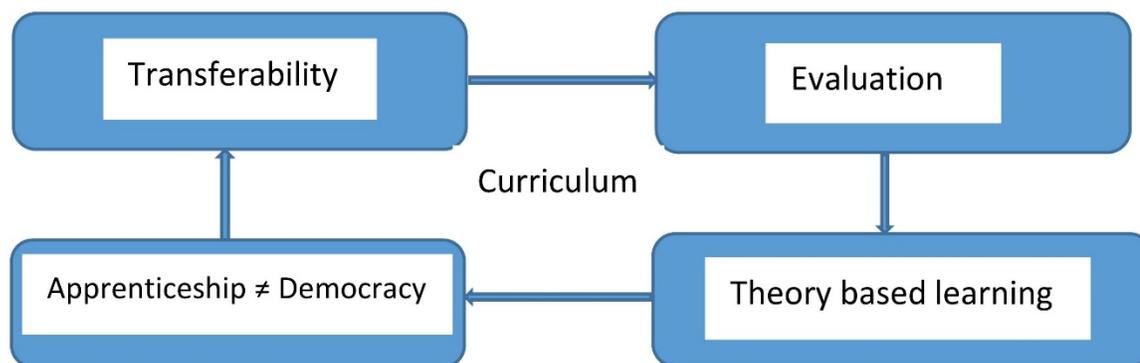
The definitions of curriculum have generated intriguing interpretations from a cadre of thinkers for over a century spanning conservative to reactionary philosophers and educational reformists. These scholars have systematically postulated a plethora of definitions about curriculum, ranging from a conceptualized curriculum that emphasizes content, to one that draws from learning experiences that equate curriculum to behavioral objectives. In this paper, our point of argument is premised on Ralph Tyler, a leading American educational thinker and reformist of the 20th century whose definition has significantly reshaped educational thought. According to Tyler (1957), curriculum is “all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals” (p. 79). The seminal contributions of Tyler have continued to influence many scholars well into the 21st century. For example, Silva (2009) defined curriculum as “what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have” (p. 630).

Tyler (1986) fully-embraced a sociocentric viewpoint on curriculum when he stated, “the larger society was a basis for schooling” (p. 72). He created a four-stage model (see Figure 1), where his domains can be gleaned from four distinctive theoretical constructs as follows: (1) Transfer through identical elements states a fact or condition, but does not explain how the process occurs. By transferability, Tyler referred to the ability of students or learners to carry over knowledge from the situations in which they were acquired to other situations encountered in real life; (2) An evaluation of the evidence fails to support the theory of identical elements. In this context, Tyler considered the ability for learners to match what they learned to identical elements or circumstances prompting the need for evaluation to investigating what students were really learning; (3) The theory is based upon psychic atomism which is untrue as it is incapable educationally of sound application. By psychic atomism Tyler advocated for theory-based or

experiential curriculum and education premised on the preponderance of given elements of knowledge; and (4) The theory leads us back to the apprenticeship system which is incompatible with the democratic ideal. In apprenticeship model, Tyler advocated for classical conditioning theories linking responses that produce a satisfying effect in a particular situation and the likelihood of occurring again in that situation. Prominent curriculum theorists of the 20th century have used Tyler's four-step approach for providing effective curricula as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Tyler's basic principles of curriculum and instruction



Tyler's model was also based on the concept of schooling as it was originally conceived at the turn of the 20th century. Tyler argued that the concept of schooling was expansive and diverse when examined from a social cultural paradigm. The understanding of the idea of schooling precluded other forms of schooling that were monolithically regarded as 'education.'

THE ROLES OF MUSIC EDUCATION CURRICULA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IN KENYA

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the African music curriculum used in Kenya impinge upon the social, political, and economic foundations of their respective multi-ethnic societies. This is because the ABRSM itself is a prototype of the British music curriculum. From the Western educational perspectives, the ABRSM curriculum is self-evident while the African music curriculum of which the Kenya curriculum belongs, is rather a recondite concept that necessitates some elucidation. Curriculum of the United Kingdom is premised on the idea that a national curriculum is that which sets out the body of knowledge, skills and understanding that a community wants to pass on to the young people (UK Department of Education, 2014). This community-based curriculum fosters children towards a real-life context with a tendency to develop a sense of pupils' identity (Estyn, 2018).

In the context of this research, the African music curriculum encompasses sets of taxonomies of educational objectives that use holistic, formal, and non-formal apprenticeships to train members of the society to contribute to their urban and rural informal economies through singing, instrument playing, dancing, and elocution. African music education, therefore, thrives on apprenticeship in teaching. This method of learning is where music skills are transmitted from musically trained parents to their children, or between close family or clan members. Apprenticeship has been an important training system in many urban and rural informal economies of both industrialized and developing nations for centuries (ILO., 2011, p. 1). The apprenticeship-based music education in Kenya continues to be a widespread non-formal method of music teaching and learning. The Kenyan apprenticeship in music education has evolved to be open to apprentices from outside the family or kin group as seen for example, among the Mijikenda, Luo, or the Gikuyu people of Kenya to name but a few. In Kenya, music curriculum developers use apprenticeship to pass on the indigenous knowledge to the children. Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019) clarified this further when he stated “Indigenous knowledge systems, which are a product of the environment and should ideally form the foundation upon which the formal education system of any society is constructed” (p. 1).

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MUSIC CURRICULA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IN KENYA

Music education curricula in the United Kingdom and in Kenya are based on the knowledge that is desired as an outcome of learning. What constitutes knowledge is complex and diverse, especially in Africa where “thousands of ethnic groups and sub-cultural groups exist” (Shizha, 2014, p. 113). Cultural pluralism in traditional and contemporary Africa and the postmodern cultures in the United Kingdom lead us to ponder on the ever elusive and idiosyncratic cultural definitions of music education. It is fitting, therefore, that 19th and 20th century philosophical propositions on the matter have continued to impinge upon the trends and foundations of music education curriculum throughout the 21st century. For these reasons, we hold that both the United Kingdom and Kenya are still perpetually confronted with the onerous task of developing their ever-changing economically viable and culturally relevant music education curricula. In the United Kingdom for instance, the process of curriculum development became inseparable from the politics and cultural milieu in third quarter of the 20th century (Braund, 2010). This is confounded in the work of Bourdillon & Storey (2002), who argued that in the UK, the word ‘curriculum’ became more and more ubiquitous in the educational linguistic canon in the early 1970s. This was largely due to the so-called the “British compromise” which came as a result of competing values and approaches within the British private and the public sectors (Braund, 2010, p. 346).

With reference to Kenya, its geo-political status as a former British colony bears on its music curriculum, thus making it multi-faceted. As a result, several Kenyan curricularists have oscillated between imperialistic ideologies of standardized music assessments and learner-centered and community needs-based curricula (Mfum-Mensah, 2009; Kobiah, et al., 2015). In Kenya, music educators are continually influenced by the curriculum subscribed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. Music educators are also informed by the United Nations' millennium development goals (MDGs) such as music's potential to increase the opportunities available to all members of society (United Nations, 2021), and music as a resource for sustainable and economic development (UNESCO, 2021).

The processes of developing sound music education curricula for both the United Kingdom and Kenya in the last century have been relatively expansive in scopes and content. This expansion has been due to the varying definitions of the curriculum itself, educational models, and the diverse cultural underpinnings that undergirded the role of music as one of the pillars of a sound education in both nations. Music curricula in these two nations seems to align with Taba's (1962) perspectives of a societal needs-based curriculum. In this regard, we observe that the two nations make a deliberate focus on a curriculum that draws from the learning experiences that equate curriculum to behavioral objectives subscribed by the society. The primary purpose of developing a curriculum is to make sure that students receive integrated and relevant learning experiences that contribute towards their learning, growth, and development (Brady & Kennedy, 1999). To this end, the Kenyan apprenticeship-based music education curriculum is, therefore, the most widespread non-formal method of teaching and learning music in Kenya.

HOW MUSIC EDUCATION IS EXPERIENCED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IN KENYA

The Kenyan music education curriculum uses culturally responsive pedagogies connived based on the multiple ethnicities that form the Kenyan linguistic and demographic landscape. The curriculum is, hence, broadly categorized into two distinct curricula: First, the Kenyan music curriculum; and second, the British music curriculum. The Kenyan music curriculum is thus carefully adopted to reflect both the teaching and learning which utilizes both shared experiences and the African apprenticeship models. Here, we see Tyler's (1949) model espoused since the Kenyan music curriculum is directly linked to behavioral objectives within the framework of the societal needs. In Kenya, family units served as an important structure for music knowledge provision and acquisition long before the debates on the meaning of education in the first quarter of the 20th century (Mosweunyane, 2013).

In Africa, more generally, music has been considered an art form and a means for expressing African attitudes and ways of thinking about the world (Nketia, 1974; Teffera, 2006). It is, therefore, fitting to inspire the 21st-century music curricularists to

connive Taba's (1962) model to fit the music education curriculum by formulating music learning objectives, music learning content, and activities. When implemented, this curriculum will reflect and embrace the expectations of the much broader, larger multiethnic and multiracial societies.

It is intriguing to think of music in terms of schooling and education from both Eurocentric and African milieus. Gobby and Millei (2018) reminded us with their poignant but striking remark when they stated that "... we often confuse education with schooling" (p. 1). African music has been delivered through what they referred to as "governmental schooling" (p. 4) and through what Horton (1997) referred to as predominantly "[African] endogenous education" (p. 16). Their propositions reflect Tyler's (1949) conjectures of three perspectives about schooling: (1) The liberal democratic view - which believes schooling is a tool for individual self-development and democratic participation; (2) The critical view - which believes schools reflect economic and social inequalities of society and is used by social groups to reproduce the status quo; and (3) The governmental view - which views schooling as a means to regulate and [re]shape individuals according to society's norms (p. 4). These conjectures presuppose that "schooling is a formal way of educating children" (Gobby & Millei, 2018, p. 1). But, if we look at this model from the African perspective, music education would not thrive purely through schooling because, as (Illich, 1973) summed up eloquently, "... in this way, the school stands between knowledge and the learner" (p. 9). Despite impinging upon Dewey's (1902) constructs on education, the tenets of Gobby and Millei (2018) remained coherent and unimpeachable, thanks to the Tylerian mid-20th century juxtapositions of schooling and curriculum.

COMPARISON OF SIMILARITIES AND CONTRASTS

Music in both the United Kingdom and in Kenya plays a role in historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural development. The ABRSM curriculum largely provides music education through the traditional schooling paradigm while the African music curriculum provides music education through the educational paradigm. In the contexts of Tyler, the concept of schooling and education are therefore mutually exclusive paradigms.

The analysis of the curricula is based on content collected from existing ABRSM data and Kenyan music curriculum - hence the use of content analysis. The data is tabulated and juxtaposed for comparison to identify themes that provide salient idiosyncrasies. The ABRSM gives two sets of examinations as follows: (1) instrumental playing or singing; and (2) music theory. Instrumental performance examinations are given in several European instruments. The examinations call for performance before an external examiner from the Royal Schools of Music. The examination scoring includes sight reading with the various complexities of rhythms, scales, and transposition. The sight-reading score also incorporates transposition test for Horn, Trumpet, and Organ at Grades 6 to 8 and a figured bass realization test for Harpsichord (Table 1).

Table 1*The total number of marks available for each exam element*

Instrumental exams		Singing exams		
	Grades 1-8		Grades 1-5	Grades 6-8
Piece 1	30	Song 1	30	24
Piece 2	30	Song 2	30	24
Piece 3	30	Song 3	30	21
-	-	Song 4	-	21
Scales and arpeggios	21	Unaccompanied traditional song	21	21
Sight-reading*	21	Sight-singing	21	21
Aural tests	18	Aural tests	18	18

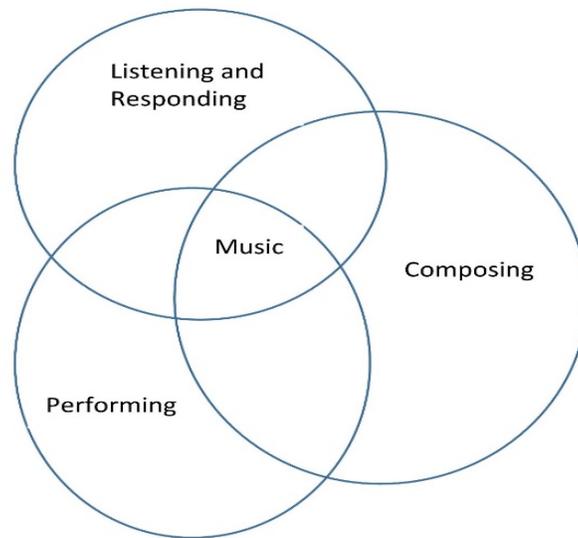
Adopted from (ABRSM, 2022)

The theory examinations are written and cover harmonization of figured and un-figured basses as well as work in strict counterpoint.

The ABRSM follows the Model Music Curriculum framework (MMC) designed by the Government of the United Kingdom that highlights four key areas of learning which include singing, listening, composing, and performing (UK Department for Education, 2021). Modeled from Dewey's (1916) social constructivism theory, the Basic Education curriculum framework of Kenya uses an experimental and participatory approach to teaching music, to help learners to express themselves through creativity, experimentation and collaboration (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2021). As such, there is no actual guideline that teachers should adhere to while teaching Kenyan music. Figure 4 shows the symbiotic relationships between listening, composing, and performing that are germane to both the British and the African music curricula. In the United Kingdom, the "composing" component refers to the use of musical notation with standard rules of musical harmony because, in Western cultures, the canon of harmony and voice leading rules have been considered "... one of the essential foundations of the art-music craft" (Huron, 2001, p. 1). However, the United Kingdom emphasizes the use of musical notations while in Africa, composition is analogous to "improvisation," which is achieved without the use of musical notation in favor of creativity that adheres to specific cultural idioms. As

shown in Figure 2, listening, composing, and performing are central to the music education curriculum for both the United Kingdom and Kenya.

Figure 2*The intersectionality between listening, composing, and performing*



Both the ABRSM and the Kenyan curriculum have analogous foundations in music as a utility. Thus, music serves a purpose in society. The idea of utilitarianism was coined in the middle of the 19th century by the English philosopher John Stuart Mill. According to Mill (2001), education was premised on the utilitarianism theory or the “Greatest Happiness Principal” (p. 55). He argued that actions in education are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness.

In Kenya, music at all levels includes both Kenyan music and Western music while in some schools, musics of Asia is also included. Using the current rubrics developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, the curriculum reinforces that music lessons in the first six years of school (Pre-Primary 1 through Grade Four) are to focus predominantly on the Kenyan cultures (Molendyk, 2021). Thereafter, the curriculum incorporates three quasi-British models: instrumentation or singing, theory, and music history. With regard to composing, the Kenyan component of the curriculum applied improvisation techniques which substitute for notation-based compositional techniques. In the African context, however, composition and improvisation are not thought to be mutually exclusive since both the oral and aural traditions form the oldest music pedagogies in indigenous education ever known and practiced in Kenya. Given the fact that in a country like Kenya—a former British colony where the learners using the African music curriculum must additionally cover musical content from both Great Britain and Africa—the expansive nature of these music contents have a greater impact on the depth of knowledge (DOK) that the learners can achieve at each given grade level. Depth of knowledge is a taxonomy of learning levels that analyzes the cognitive expectation demanded by standards, curricular activities, and assessment tasks (Webb, 2005). As shown in Table 2, the African music curriculum tends to utilize Level 1 of DOK.

Table 2

Depth of Knowledge showing musical skill acquisition

DOK Level	Curriculum	Type of Level
1	African Music Curriculum	Recall and Reproduction
2	ABRSM & African Music Curriculum	Skills and Concepts
3	ABRSM & African Music Curriculum	Short-term Strategic Thinking
4	ABRSM & African Music Curriculum	Extended Thinking

Adopted from Norman Web (2005)

Learners who matriculate exclusively through the ABRSM curriculum tend to demonstrate higher musical abilities at an earlier age on their instrument of study compared to their peers trained using both ABRSM and Kenyan curricula. This is because the ABRSM levels allow for a graduated approach to music education, with a wide range of musical repertoires in different styles and from different musical periods (Zhang, 2019). These repertoires motivate students at various stages in their learning process than those exposed to both curricula. In addition, those trained using both ABRSM and Kenyan tend to generally matriculate late compared to those trained using only the ABRSM. Conversely, those trained solely on the ABRSM curriculum tend to demonstrate lesser cultural musical abilities on competencies in world music repertoires while they usually exhibit advanced performance skills. This is what Wright (2013) referred to as “cultural imperialism” because the ABRSM curriculum was a hold-over from the music education curriculum which was offered by the foreign colonial governments to the newly independent African nations such as Kenya. Cultural imperialism tends to perpetuate “the values of a foreign culture at the expense of the native culture” (Tomlinson, 1991, p. 3). British students trained on ABRSM curriculum have continued to graduate using largely Western European musical repertoire and pedagogy and minimal experience with the world’s musical cultures (Kindall-Smith, 2013). Grounded mainly through levels two and three of the depth of knowledge (DOK), Kenyan students learn music without musical notation which is the quintessence of level one of the DOK requiring only recall and reproduction – a pedagogical cornerstone of African music curriculum including Kenya. Consequently, the learners exposed to both ABRSM and the Kenyan curricula, tend to exhibit superior performance skill levels in the cultural musical competencies.

Scales

Due to the history of multiculturalism and diversity in music education, the area of assessment presents its own challenges and philosophical considerations to music education. While the ABRSM’s (2021) graded music exam grading criteria offers quantifiable scores on abstract constructs such as “sensitive use of tonal qualities,” the African music education training focusses on broadly norm-referenced considerations where the learner is either an amateur or a master of the art. The Kenyan music largely still contains the cultural nuances whose assessments does not rely on a point system. Elliot (1995) introduced the argument as to whether such cultural music should keep

the language, food, dress, customs infused into the musical training in tandem with pluralism or whether to blend in with the dominant European educational culture and try to assess these musical nuances through the assimilative prisms. Here again is the perspective of Taba's (1962) model in which she advocates for a curriculum that is directly linked to the cultural norms within the society. In any case, these are intriguing considerations in the context of the ABRSM and the African music curriculum of Kenya.

Kenya has about 42 different ethnic communities with versatile traditions and complex musical cultures with musical repertoires embedded within functional melodic, rhythmic, and extramusical idioms. Therefore, the scale systems of all these communities vary widely based on their languages and musical instruments associated within their respective linguistic intonations. The African cultural tonal languages, denote how scale systems are developed. Nzewi (2003) argued that the scale system was standard in any culture and that the scale gave the idiomatic insights of the music from that particular community. Whether the music is for a singer or instrumentalist, the melody of a piece of music in the Kenyan curriculum will vary depending on the cultural scale and the performer for whom it is intended. Both the ABRSM and the Kenyan curricula have similarities in the way they regard the singers' pitch. When it comes to singing performance for example, the starting pitch must not strain the comfortable vocal range of any singing participant, allowing any song to be performed in any key and voice type (Nzewi, 2003; ABRSM, 2018). While the ABRSM curriculum is also an option available for Kenyan music curriculum, the proceeding tables illustrate the variation of assessment of specific musical nuances in each system.

The ABRSM curriculum uses a plethora of standardized Western tonalities based on major, whole-tone, minor, pentatonic, modal, and chromatic scales. These scales are based on the Western musical scales in equal temperament (ET). Table 3 shows how the two curricula use scales in their pedagogical schematic frameworks.

Table 3

Similarities and differences in Scales

Scales	
UK's ABRSM curriculum (Assessment: Maximum score 21 points)	Kenya's music curriculum (Assessment: Amateur or Master)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy of notes/pitch is assessed. • Fluency of rhythms is assessed. • Musicality and shape is assessed. • Confidence and response is assessed. • Scales are generic in nature and can be applied across subjects and modes of learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scales are none-existent except as part of the repertoire. • Pitch organization largely absent since Kenyan music does not rely on a fixed pitch. • Scales are influenced by the geographical area of the music (and their influences) • Taught through demonstration.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scales make clear how the qualification differs from level to level or grade to grade. • Scales provide clear points of reference for each level and cater for progress in difficulty and qualification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtuosity is determined by student ability to play what the teacher has demonstrated fluently and with a good feel of rhythm, tempo, etc. depending on the instrument. i.e., a student who shows a mastery of skill on tonguing while playing a wind instrument will graduate from apprenticeship training.
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Aural Tests

ABRSM (2019) considers aural tests to be significantly vital to music learning as they enable learners to assess their own sound and perform harmoniously in groups. Nompula (2011) argues that when children learn through the rote method, they are better equipped to recognize rhythm, melody, and musical form and structures. Aural skills are considered valuable in both the United Kingdom music curriculum and the Kenyan music curriculum. Kenyan music is based largely on polyrhythms. This makes the training of aural skills in Kenya especially vital for most performances where exceptional aural skills are needed to execute a commendable performance, especially in group performances where rhythmic vitality and accuracy are significant in polyrhythmic interpretations. The ABRSM design for aural tests is structured whereby student learning outcomes (SLOs) are to demonstrate certain musical skills at various stages. In addition, it incorporates assessments beginning from basic recognition of major or minor modality in melody and simple or compound time in rhythm to the advanced harmonic analysis of complex musical passages. Due to the demonstrative nature of music teaching of Kenyan traditional music, the assessment of aural tests in the Kenyan music curriculum is problematic. The difficulty is caused by a culturally deliberate choice to exclude musical notations hence executing melodic and rhythmic phrases which vary each time they are presented to the learner. These variable musical nuances have been described as byproducts of a close relationship between music and feelings, which are created in part by a musically induced homeostasis (Habibi & Damasio, 2014). Musically induced homeostatic refers to the biological conception of music making as an evolutionary achievement that is related to a long history of cognitive and affective-emotional functions (Reybrouck, et al., 2021). Therefore, emotional musical experiences of music are notably difficult to describe and have resisted philosophical and psychological as well as vernacular explanation through symbols or otherwise. The complexity of these aurally varying melodic and rhythmic nuances are largely neurologic phenomena that are triggered biologically and altered externally by the cultural milieu. Despite these aurally based, cultural, and musical processes, it should be noted that the Kenyan education system also performs assessments of notation-aural skills using the ABRSM curriculum during music teaching of Western music in Kenyan schools and conservatories. Notation-based aural tests allow the teacher to render the exact replica

of musical nuances multiple times with precision. Table 4 shows how the two curricula use aural skills in their pedagogical and schematic frameworks.

Table 4*Similarities and differences in aural skills*

Aural Skills	
UK's ABRSM curriculum (Assessment: Maximum score 18 points)	Kenya's music curriculum (Assessment: Amateur or Master)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABRSM considers aural tests to be significantly vital to music learning as they enable learners to assess their own sound and perform harmoniously in groups. • Musical perceptivity is assessed. • Accuracy is assessed. • Confidence and response is assessed. • Aural skills are structured, where students are expected to learn certain skills at various stages, with grading beginning from basic recognition of both melody and rhythm to complex knowledge of these elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no set graded testing for aural skills. • In the Kenya curriculum, learners are expected to learn through apprenticeship. • Due to the demonstrative nature of traditional music learning, a learner's aural ability is indirectly and simultaneously tested, while learning instruments and songs.

Sight Reading

Kenyan vocal and instrumental music are taught through demonstration. Therefore, the African music teaching pedagogy is devoid of musical notation. The traditional conduit for music education in Kenya is to pass it down generations orally to communities – a practice that has lasted for centuries pre-dating colonial periods. This scenario explains the scarce nature of notational music in Africa.

Questions have been raised regarding the sophistication and lack thereof in the use of oral music teaching methods as opposed to sight reading. However, in some communities, learning and playing music without sight reading is the principle learning method (Killick, 2020). As Nompula (2011) points out, children should understand that African music is not inferior simply by the fact that it is orally taught. The oral musical traditions in Africa and in Kenya particularly have led to the inaccessibility of these rich musical repertoires. This inaccessibility has led some scholars to attempt the transcription of African music for the main purpose of access and dissemination. Agawu (1995) has argued that musical staff notation of African music has the benefit of “bringing the music into a sphere of discourse that is enabled by a distinguished intellectual history and undeniable institutional power” (Agawu, 1995, 392–93).

On the inclusion of the Western music curriculum in Kenya, the ministry of education highlights the need for music literacy, both reading and writing, for learners to gain the skills necessary for individual and ensemble music exploration (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2021). The ABRSM (2019) curriculum emphasizes the importance of sight reading as a skill that helps students develop fast recognition of tonality, repetition, and rhythm, enabling them to discover new and unfamiliar music easily and independently. Table 5 shows how the two curricula use sight reading skills in their pedagogical and schematic frameworks.

Table 5*Similarities and differences in sight-reading skills*

Sight Reading Skills	
UK's ABRSM curriculum (Assessment: Maximum score 21 points)	Kenya's music curriculum (Assessment: Amateur or Master)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sight reading is an important skill for students to learn tonality, rhythms, and common patterns. • Fluency and accuracy of rhythm are assessed. • Accuracy of notes, pitch and key are assessed. • Musical detail is assessed. • Confidence in presentation is assessed. • It helps students to carry on through mistakes while practicing, allowing them to figure out music on their own. • Emphasis on note reading through sight-reading or sight singing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sight reading is non-existent. • There is no fixed scale in traditional Kenyan music, hence reading sheet music is impossible as traditional African music is not notated. • Transcribed Kenyan music is based on Western scales and is notated mostly for interpretation using western Instruments.

Assessments using graded examination set pieces

The ABRSM examinations ordinarily assess the performance skills learners through graded examinable pieces or songs, technical skills through scales and arpeggios, notation skills through sight-reading tests, as well as listening and musical perception through aural tests. The ABRSM utilizes criterion-referenced tests because these tests determine whether students have achieved certain defined skills. A student is compared with a preset standard for expected achievement. In contrast, the Kenyan music curriculum uses norm-reference tests because these tests evaluate how well students have learned and mastered the singing, dancing, and performance on an instrument com-

pared to a subset of the population that also performs a similar musical genre. According to (Mapaya, 2018) African music grading requires a wide range of expertise due to its entwined nature, its conjunction with dance, costumes, and other art forms. Because Kenyan music provides a holistic artistic experience, it is exceedingly difficult to grade it on its own merit separate from dance movements and other extra musical nuances which form its fundamental existence. The Kenyan music curriculum does not use graded exam pieces or songs, technical skills like scales, notation skills, or sight-reading tests. The Kenyan music curriculum examination is a quasi-norm-referenced test because it measures broad musical skill areas, then ranks learners with respect to how the demonstrator, local musician or group of musicians performed on the same instrument. The learners' scores are not reported in percentiles, or normal curves, or any magnitudes of that nature. Instead, the demonstrator will approve the performance if it meets the culturally approved standard, and the learners will be on their way to their communities to participate in the cultural, political, and socioeconomic activities in their respective societies. Table 6 shows how the two curricula use graded examination set pieces in their assessments and schematic frameworks.

Table 6*Similarities and differences in graded examination set pieces*

Graded Examination Set Pieces	
UK's ABRSM curriculum (Assessment: Maximum score 30 points for each piece)	Kenya's music curriculum (Assessment: Amateur or Master)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance skills based on grades for grade 1 through Grade 8 • Emphasis on technical skills such as scales and arpeggios, • Exam is Criterion-referenced tests • Pitch and accuracy of notes and intonation are assessed. • Fluency of timing with fluency of intonation are assessed. • Sensitive tone qualities are assessed. • Expressive and idiomatic musical phrasing are assessed. • Assurance and vivid communication of style are assessed. • Exam is criterion referenced test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastery in singing, dancing, and performing on an instrument is assessed on two tiers. • Performance on instrument or singing is in conjunction with dance, costumes, and other art forms. • Exam is a quasi-Norm-referenced test

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Kenya, music is considered a valuable component of indigenous education where the society serves in making decisions on the music curriculum's development. Communal music, for instance, is central to learning and transmitting Kenya's diverse

cultural values and awareness in schools through both formal and non-formal settings (Maina, 2003). Some curriculum scholars have attempted to unify the divergent curricula by synthesizing their components in an attempt to create an eclectic model (Carder & Landis, 1990). We argue that both the Afrocentric Kenyan music curriculum and the Eurocentric ABRSM curriculum of the United Kingdom provide points of interest within the context of the 21st century eclectic music curricular trends that are “effective and contain only the most meaningful content” (Shand, 2004, p. 103).

Despite this progress, since the late 20th century, many music critics have argued against attempts to foster diversity in the arts. For example, on his proposition to preserve cultural identities in the arts, Allen (1996) argued that an overemphasis on pluralism inevitably led to the balkanization of creative expression, the abandonment of aesthetic standards, and the diminution of Western high art. Four decades earlier, other scholars had challenged the argument of the balkanization of creative expression with Waterman (1952) arguing that, when the West European and West African cultures are in close contact, their folk ‘musics’ share similar concepts of scale and harmony making musical exchange and blending of styles inevitable.

We argue that music curricula and music education should be examined in totality. This should include the philosophical foundations of music education in the Western civilization as well as the indigenous paradigms of non-Western music education. Other viewpoints should embrace the mid-20th-century trends in the disciplines of anthropology and ethnomusicology. Since these paradigms are still largely accessible, they have continued to emerge throughout the non-Western cultures such as Kenya. The music curriculum in Kenya, in particular, continues to be made more relevant to Kenyan society by music scholars to ensure that the modern music education curriculum reflects the practices of local communities (Casimir et al., 2015). This, in fact, is a replica to the “British compromise” (Braund, 2010, 346). The Kenyan communalities regard music as utility and, therefore, expect formal and non-formal education systems to provide culturally informed and talented musicians for roles in cultural, political, and socio-economic life in the community. Similarly, the British system, through the ABRSM, encourages teachers to use musical pieces from a wide range of cultures and traditions that reflect the community in which they are teaching (UK Department of Education, 2021, p. 8).

We propose that Kenyan music curriculum should be developed to include Eurocentric pedagogies that develop all skill levels found in the DOK. There are a few success stories in Africa, particularly in Kenya where music learners have in the last five decades been trained using both the ABRSM and the Kenyan music curricula. By acquiring superior performance ratings on both ABRSM criterion-referenced tests and Kenyan curriculum norm-referenced assessments, the learners will matriculate seamlessly into professionalism. Kenyan music curriculum should continue to foster indigenous music literacy and also provide for the inclusion of the ABRSM curriculum for the learners to build these cultural competencies through performances in European

music ensembles that are readily available in Kenyan urban centers. There should be a deliberate effort to harmonize the two curricula thus combining ABRSM and African curriculum. When these are equally harmonized, teachers then can provide anti-bias education by “creating classroom environments that reflect diversity, equity and justice” (Teaching Tolerance, 2014, p. 2). The facilitation of this broader assimilation of curricula can be advantageous on many fronts because assimilation promotes “homogenization of the internal diversity which are normally present in every society” (Drozdowicz, & Mickiewicz, 2022, p. 164). A harmonized curriculum of this magnitude would promote the internationalization of the music curriculum across the two countries because internationalization leads to improved academic quality, culturally oriented students, and globally informed music teachers.

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