

Stig-Magnus Thorsén

School of Music and Music Education, Göteborg University, +46 – 31 – 773 40 24,
+46 – 302 – 12673, <thorsen@musik.gu.se>, P.O. Box 210, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

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Swedish mission and music education in Southern Africa.

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Global interconnections between continents and countries are not only negotiated in terms of political power or finances. Music is also an arena for the dynamics of international togetherness. I'm here aiming at disclosing a story about relations between Sweden and Southern Africa. A story that tells us something about colonial conditions still in power. This paper deals with one piece in the jigsaw puzzle: Swedish intervention in music education during almost 125 years in Southern Africa.

Today the school of Music, Gothenburg University is working with "development of South African music education". (http://www.musik.gu.se/Forskning/mangkultur/english/SA_general.htm). In the capacity of music consultants we are conveying foreign aid to South Africa. Several projects have been funded through the last years and presently music education and research is in focus, but we have also worked with co-operative projects between musicians. We are well aware about the fact that our historical role can be questioned. We raise issues not only on our role in relation to South African educators, but also on methods and objectives for South African music education.

In implementing Swedish policy for foreign aid we encounter several question in contact with music educators in South Africa. Why is western music in favour? Why is staff notation and examination predominant? Why is traditional African music marginalised, yet honoured? Where is space for popular music? Working internationally together with a South African marimba group have likewise made us reflect on cultural identity and intercultural relations. Is the recent marimba and it's music South African? What do they represent in the westerners ears?

Consequently my field of study has become the history of colonial relations, out of issues generated from today's practice. Recent discussion on post-colonialism (Agawu 2002; Young 2001) has given these thoughts nutrition. In the musical genre World Music (or World Beat) the aftermath of colonial relations are pointed out (Keil and Feld 1994).

I'm presently investigating different phases in the history of South African music education. In this specific paper studies on Swedish mission in former KwaZulu and Natal and former South Rhodesia. I was compelled by a sentence in James Flolu's Ph.D. thesis (1994) where he states that myths from both sides about the mission music education flourishes without empirical studies. Kathy Primos has also in her historical overview stated "influence from Christian church on music learning among Africans can not be underestimated" (2001).

Swedish people in general tend to look at Sweden as not being a colonising country. Regarding colonialism not only as to conquer or own land, but also as cultural imperialism, we are without doubt part of the team. Lasse Berg's book "When Sweden discovered Africa" (1997) samples evidence enough. We find botanists, explorers, and individuals fighting on the Boers side as well as industrialists. However the majority worked as missionaries especially in KwaZulu/Natal and Gauteng, and in Southern Zimbabwe.

Sweden and Southern Africa have certain historical lines in common. Present partnership is part of a long story. Thus, to understand the consequences of history, it's important to involve not only a Swedish perspective. My dream is to receive reactions on my statements from African colleagues. How have people from KwaZulu or Zimbabwe experienced the Swedish contribution to music education? The engine behind my undertaking is a wish to in co-operation seek a course for multicultural co-existence, development, and recapture of human rights. (Young 2001)

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I study music as a fundamental part of man and society. The framework stems from postcolonial theories and cultural studies. My point of departure can be summarised: I have through my reading become aware of the underlying fact that we in many global relations refer to an encounter between colonised people and colonisers. Colonialism has important cultural consequences, which still are salient features of the postcolonial era (Davidson 2001 [1983]; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Baaz 2002; Hall and Gay 1996). Comaroffs' call for more historiography supports my intentions:

We are challenged to write a historical anthropology of colonialism in southern Africa that takes account of all players in the game, the motives that drove them, the awareness that informed them, the constraints that limited them. (Ibid p9)

As well as they're pointing out the ambivalent relations between different Europeans on the colonial stage.

Once the motives, intentions, and imaginings of persons living or dead are allowed to speak from the historical record, it becomes impossible to see them as mere reflections of monolithic cultural structures or social forces. This is especially true of the colonial encounter, and of the civilizing mission in particular. (Ibid p10)

I concur in a general sociological perspective on music education based in Cultural Studies, a field of research that draws from different research disciplines such as anthropology and sociology. Cultural identity is a core concept (Stokes 1994; Barker 2000). Cultural aspects on education specifically is addressed by (Cameron, McCarthy and Crichlow 1993).

Multiculturalism is also a core concept of Cultural Studies. The ideology underpinning my stance is based on Taylor (1992). Much of his thinking is implemented in education by Roth (1999). I have already presented some aspects on Cultural identity and Multiculturalism with relevance for South African Music Education in earlier articles (Thorsén 1997; 2002).

FOCUS AND LIMITATIONS

African music learning can roughly be divided in two parts. The lion's share of music is imparted in traditional formal and informal settings. Much of neotraditional music and popular music is passed through generations or via peer groups in informal arrangements. The fundamentals of music life comprise even a lot of self-tuition.

What in colonial and post-colonial society is called music education is either the formal common school subject, in many African countries an obligatory ingredient, or the formalised pathway to professional musicianship via secondary and higher education.

I'm here only dealing with the second aspect: formal music education. I have chosen to look at a rather narrow material. 1) Written accounts from Swedish missionaries involved in music and 2) interviews with now living persons with experience from the "mission field". Geographically I have focussed on South Africa and Zimbabwe. I know that looking into e.g. British sources might give another picture. But, somebody has to write the Swedish story.

I have focused on the early period roughly from 1875-1910. In the concluding remarks I will, however, consider the work done by Lutheran missionaries in South Africa and Zimbabwe throughout the 20th century. Given the theoretical considerations described above: post-colonial relations, cultural identity and intercultural relations, I have looked at following items in the texts.

1. Musical events whatever.
2. Context: The situation in Kwazulu and Natal, the missionaries, emerging stations. Reactions from non-Swedes.
3. The missionaries use of music in the fieldwork.
4. Music education: Objectives, content and methods.
5. The civilising project: education, economy, culture.
6. Cultural identity. The missionaries approach to the other in general, and view on African culture and African music in particular.
7. Intercultural relations to all partners involved: Zulus, Boers, and Englishmen.

SWEDISH MISSION IN PRACTICE

The Swedish Moravian missionary Hans Peter Hallbeck arrived 1817 to West Cape. He became later on the first evangelical bishop of the continent. 1876 The Church of Sweden (the established national church of a Lutheran denomination) started an organised mission that lasted for many decades in Southeast Africa.

Swedish mission started in Natal, but on "the field" were already American, German and Norwegian missionaries. The pioneer Otto Witt (in isiZulu named uMfundisi uVite) bought 1878 a farm at Rorke's Drift and established the Swedish station called Oscarsberg. It became a stronghold that still functions as a crafts centre. The war between Zulus and Englishmen in Natal disturbed the activities. Oscarsberg became for a while a basis for the English warriors.

I have not found any documents written by Witt regarding his work. Frans Fristedt on the other hand has provided us with a book published 1905 in which he describes his co-operation with Witt in Natal from 1877 and further endeavours up to the establishment of the first Swedish station in KwaZulu: Ekutuleni 1888 (Fristedt 1905). His book is filled with illustrative descriptions about many practicalities. He tells about the art of ox carting, his encounter with the Boers' hostile attitude to-

wards missionaries, and the Englishmen who furnish the country with law, order, and subsidies to the mission schools.

His approach to Zulus is ambiguous. On the one hand he reports about terrible heathendom and its cultural expressions via music and dance. On the other hand he is often astonished by the hospitality he meets when visiting African homes. This ambiguity is a theme that one can trace throughout all missionary accounts.

I am surprised at how little he writes about the actual objective for his being there, namely converting Zulus to Christianity. Maybe this was so obvious not worth being elaborated on. His main concern regarding “the blacks” is rather that they were not civilised. Fristedt concludes: “The Zulus’ skills and craftsmanship ought to be developed, to able them to earn their living and clothing.” (Ibid p46) Another important theme is *the difference* between Zulus who are still heathens and they who have become Christians. A theme I will return to in my analysis below.

Fristedt visited the American mission station Inanda, and became impressed by the examines performed by Zulus (p117). He listened to showcased insight in Bible history and general acquaintance. “Some could even read whole chapters of the Wholly Scriptures both in English and Zulu.” Other subjects were mathematics and handicraft. Singing and music was also examined and “some could even play piano and organ”. Consequently schooling became an urgent task at Ekutuleni.

The Swedish mission in east South Africa was enlarged by several new missionar-ies and new stations: E.g. Aangelegen 1883, Appelsbosch 1886, Ifaye 1890, Dundee Coalfields 1891, Emtulva 1896, and Czesza 1910. By 1920 the Swedish Zulu mission comprised 9 main station, 61 satellite stations, 225 places for sermons, 7970 members of the congregation, 133 “black” mission workers of which 7 were ordained and 65 everyday schools with 1668 pupils (Ollén 1920). 1881 the Bible was translated to isiZulu by British and American missionaries. 1902 Axel Liljestränd is heading the first expedition to Rhodesia and in due course the Belingwe station in erected.

The early history can be followed in a 19th century collection of reports “From the mission field of the Swedish church”. Eight of them written from KwaZulu and Natal (Karlgrén 1895a, 1895b, 1895c; Ljungqvist 1895; Posse 1899; Danell 1907; Liljestränd and Hallendorff 1907; Sandström 1908). Compiled texts on Swedish mission can also be found in (Ollén 1920; Hallendorff 1907; Karlgrén 1909). I have also 2002 interviewed persons who had worked in the Church of Sweden’s mission: Axel Ivar Berglund, Nils Joëlsson, Martin Svensson, and Tore Bergman.

THEMATICAL ANALYSIS

I will use quotations of the missionaries’ accounts to summarise essential aspects on how music education in Southern Africa was influenced by Swedish mission. The Swedish journalist J.M. Ollén reports 1920 on Swedish mission in South Africa. His eye fell on the newly constructed church in Czesza outside Durban.

In our country a large church is an everyday occurrence. Out here a large church is a monument to victory, a triumphant, joyful cry of protest and success in reaction to the heathenism that surrounds us on all sides. (Ibid p364ff)

God gave the mission, in its literal meaning, via a personal challenge. The missionary followed his or her inner voice. With the support of a mission society at home the dispersion of Gospel was undertaken. The progress was counted in saved souls, erected school buildings and churches. The task of the Christian vinedresser was

however fulfilled among other Europeans. The Swedes sometimes was on bad terms with German farmers, English tradesmen and Dutch slave drivers. Ollén once travelled with a German's ox-cart and learnt a lesson:

The English are ruining the blacks with their humanity. [...] They are spoiling them. [...] I absolutely cannot have these 'educated' Negroes on my farm any longer, they are too defiant. Better a 'real' heathen than a civilized one. (Ibid)

The missionaries, however, choose to associate with the Europeans and became specifically co-operative with representatives of the British Government in Natal. They formed a good alliance in strives for education. The relation to Zulus was of another kind. The approach to "the black people" is illustrated by Fristedt in a comparison between a "Christian wedding with four-part singing" and heathen funeral:

...it was horrifying to listen to the dreadful, monotonous shouting (aö-mammå-aö), and to see the wild gestures of waving their arms about and swaying their upper bodies forward and back rhythmically, with which the mourners exhausted themselves. (Ibid p106)

Fristedt was at the same time attracted to their "multi-part singing with euphonious sadness" (Fristedt 1905:48-49). This ambiguous stance is frequently reported by many descriptions of the European-African encounter. However, the way out was at that time by no means recognition of African music.

Almost like home

I find in the accounts quite many notes on how the missionaries combined the Christian mission with a cultural. Alien cultural patterns were to be replaced by well known:

... and when you see this crowd of blacks, heads bent in confession and prayer or faces raised in hymns of thanksgiving and praise, you feel and you understand that the spirit of the Lord is at work, and you are grateful and proud to be part of this missionary work, which is carried out at the command of the Lord our God himself, and has his benediction.

So to all of you, our dear Christian congregation at home, I say rejoice! Your songs and hymns are being sung in the language of the Zulus, but often with your melodies. The beautiful Swedish liturgy is also ours. And, Sunday after Sunday, your texts form the basis for our sermons. (Sandström 1908:7)

Almost like home was a cultural answer to the ambiguity or despair of the mission. By clinging to the well known the Swedes promoted their own non-verbal expressions and symbols: the songs and the liturgy. Only the texts in the Bible and the hymnal were translated. *In the fight against paganism, the cultural clash with the Africans was resolved by introducing Swedish ideals.*

The Difference

Consequently conversion to Christianity embraced a material and cultural entirety. Fristedt (1905) explains this by depicting the *complete difference* entailing adherence.

Their straightforward, cheerful, candid gazes ... they are clothed ... their houses are constructed in the form of rectangles ... and equipped with doors ... a bag of books or a bookcase with a bible and a hymnal ... the Christian men work ... doing all

kinds of woodworking ... their homes are varied and pleasant ... daily, morning and evening prayers, at which some biblical passage is read and hymns are sung ... the Christians rinse their mouths and wash themselves. On Sundays they dress in their best and carry their hymnals in a pocket or under an arm ... listen attentively ... join energetically in on the singing ... to show that they are more cultivated than the heathens ... monogamous of course ... eager to learn ... ready to make sacrifices ... full of hospitality ... and remorse. (Ibid p368-369)

These constructed cultural differences are explained in many terms. Joëlsson reported the use the *Old house* and the *New house*, as metaphors for the change. An interesting note in Fristedt's book gives an example on "good manners" acquired by King Dinuzulu, who 1898 visited Ekutuleni.

He sat down by the piano in our drawing room, and sang and played one piece after the other, some songs in isiZulu and some in English. A British lord on St Helena had taught him the piano. (p361)

The question about work and work ethics was at stake for the Swedish mission. In opposite to other societies a crucial part of the civilisation was to improve skills in handicraft such as bricklaying, carpeting, and gardening. Entrepreneurship was favoured indicating that not only the cultural life but also economy was a central feature of the difference.

Education.

The utmost measure for chiselling out the difference was education. The word missionary in isiZulu was translated to *umFundisi* meaning the one who teaches (Posse 1899). Literacy teaching was however not per se just a part of the civilising project. It was in the Swedish mission the only way to Christianity. Fristedt elaborates on how becoming a Christian starts with reading and understanding the Bible. The Lutheran conversion was founded in an understanding of theology and exegesis. The classes were aiming at baptism after at least a year, sometimes even more. The school became also the natural place for teaching music and hymns.

Schooling to Christianity was conducted in the "Sunday school", whereas general education took place in the "Everyday school". However, in many accounts on Zulu persons I find evidence on that the two school systems were very much integrated. Literacy endeavour was made in co-operation with the British authorities. The colonial government inspected the schools and "The British bishop of Natal did in particular benefit the mission through his literary activity: textbooks for schools, translations to isiZulu, Zulu legends, songs and stories, a good grammar and dictionary for isiZulu etc." (Fristedt 1905:49-50) The reading and writing was part and parcel of the difference in the missionary's eyes. Liljestrang (1907) is puzzled by the Zulu's lack of logical thinking. And he explains to himself that the reason might be that "they do not have a written language", obviously without understanding the possibilities of an orally based knowledge.

The hymnal

Harriet Posse was an outstanding missionary when it comes to music. She was an upper class lady from Stockholm (capital of Sweden) and, as expected, especially dealing with upbringing of "the blacks". Her reports are filled with empathetic biographies of Zulus. The general story tells how they were convinced by the missionaries

to become a convert. But also how they fought for permission to leave their family. Education, Christianity and a cultural change were incentives for their step into the European realm (Posse 1899).

Posse worked for a long period at Oscarsberg at Rorke's Drift. After having visited a morning service she puts down following quotation. Once again we find a note on the use of Swedish tunes *almost like home*:

After the sermon we, just like you back at home, rise and sing, to organ accompaniment, "The Lord bless you and keep you", which has always been one of my favourite moments in the service. When the altar service is done, the children from the school and the orphanage sing, in parts, the most recent song they have learned from our songbook. It contains 100 songs for school and church, many of which are based on Swedish folk melodies. Others, like "Here a bright spring ripples" and "So God loves all the world" and others come from the collections of songs we have come to love from home. (Ibid p15-16)

Posse explains that singing Christian songs was instrumental for the teaching. For non-literate Zulus learning songs was a first step towards taking part in liturgy and prayer.

The hymnal became a fundamental guiding rule in many mission schools for the entire 20th century as the mission of The Church of Sweden moved to Zimbabwe. Bergman (2002) reported that in Zimbabwe even after independence 1980 the only existing music material was the hymnal NZIYO that was produced by the Dutch Reformert Church with a Swedish supplement. It comprised hundreds of hymns all written with four-part tonic sol-fa arrangements.

Earlier I established the fact that in the fight against paganism, the cultural clash with the Africans was resolved by introducing Swedish ideals. After having added a discussion on *the difference* and *the education* I can now venture to say that *the hymnal with European songs and four-part homophony became a tangible feature of the content and method of music education established in the framework of the civilising project*.

NEW TRENDS IN APPROACH TO AFRICAN CULTURE

From the mid 20th century the history of Swedish mission became connected with three leading persons: Bengt Sundkler, Henry Weman and Olof Axelsson. Sundkler became well known for his recognition and research of African independent churches (AIC). 1948 he published *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* where he describes around 2000 syncretist denominations (Sundkler 1961 [1948]). Sundkler worked most of his time as a missionary in kwaZulu, but travelled on the whole continent. After his death his studies were published in the extensive overview *A history of the Church in Africa* (Sundkler and Steed 2000).

He writes against racism and European supremacy in the mission. Sundkler took a clear standpoint in the harsh debate among mission societies regarding AIC. His friendship and scholarly studies reflect a political opinion in favour of African culture. A lot of his time was spent in the midst of the inner circle of the independent churches, specifically together with Isaiha Shembe. Later on many other scholars likewise gave voice to recognition of the cultural role of the AIC (Young 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Chitando 2002).

Where Sundkler opened up for new approaches to African culture, Henry Weman continued the same path in music. He was a Swedish cathedral organist, but went to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Tanzania 1954, a journey that was followed by several more. He learnt about African music from the leading music anthropologist of the time (J. Blacking, A.M. Jones, P.R. Kirby, and H. Tracey) and made his own field studies. A major report was published 1960: *African music and the church in Africa* (Weman 1960).

Weman writes that he suffers from the fact that the Africans were forced to swing between European “Sunday music” and African “everyday music”. When many other missionaries talked about the dark Africa, Weman is curious about the “folk music out in the villages and kraal schools [that] was sporadic, such lightening glimpses”. He advises the Europeans to rethink in order to open up for new aesthetics and to give up ingrained opinions on intonation, scales in major and minor, functional harmony etc. He critiqued the use of hymns in schools, the westerners patronizing attitude in general and the British school inspectors in particular, they who only “will bring up the African so that he can give a practical account of himself in European music”.

Weman, however, finds a dilemma. Can we develop the African music, the adequate expression for the indigenous people, when many Africans want to embrace the western music? Today we can understand that this paradox is a legacy of a long term impact of mission. Joëlsson explains to me in an interview (2002) that, many years attempting to Africanise the Zulu hymnal that followed on Weman's pioneering, ended with a full stop. The order of *the new house* should not get run over by re-introduction of the music of *the old house*. Joëlsson was the only Swede remaining in the ecumenical hymnal committee during the 70ies in kwaZulu/Natal.

Yet, Weman's own intentions carried an ambiguity towards the African music. There was a limit for multiculturalism. He could not accept music directly from the African sources.

The music must not be kept at kraal stage. (Ibid p15)

One cannot help being reminded of music of the less developed sects, in which coarse folk music and dance is allowed to develop unchecked, without either finesse or polish in movement or voice. (Ibid p188)

Weman's paradox shows the conflicts of music education under the banner of mission. His hesitation is probably based on religious standpoints and feelings. It is here not my undertaking to discuss the possibility of Africanisation of Lutheran liturgy. However, the issue of Africanisation of music education in general seems to be tied, as schooling was in the hands of the mission.

Henry Weman's strives for including the African music in the Christian mission were continued by Olof Axelsson. He started 1968 in Zimbabwe after having written a master thesis on the work of Weman (Axelsson 1971). His major work was fulfilled at the Kwanongoma College in Bulawayo. Axelsson was interested in the *kalimba* and the *marimba* and contributed to a pedagogical adaptation of the instruments, which went through changes in construction, sound and tuning. Part of this story continues in South Africa as Dave Dargie who worked together with Axelsson at Kwanongoma brought the instrument to the Catholic mission at Lumko in Eastern Cape, from where it was spread both to the churches and the profane music scene of

South Africa. Revealing more details in the “marimba story” from its origin as a Chopi instrument to the World Music arena could give yet another piece of understanding the musical encounter between Europe and Africa. That might be my next research project.

CONCLUSIONS

I started my investigation with questions on South African music education and on the present relation between the two countries, and with a focus on cultural identity and multiculturalism. My conclusion is that more than hundred years of Swedish impact has changed the African musical identity in some areas, due to domination of Swedish musical practices and approach to teaching and learning.

The core issues are: the Swedish wish to convert the Zulus and Ndebeles to a cultural behaviour as similar as possible to the Swedish. The themes *Almost like home* and *The difference* run all through the story. The music was normatively condensed in the hymnal with four-part harmony notated in tonic sol-fa, used in many school in Zimbabwe even after independence 1980.

In parallel there has been a move from the Swedes towards recognition of African culture from circa 1950. Pedagogical development of musical instruments and the use of African tunes and rhythms have to a certain extent shifted the western dominance towards a musical fusion. The Swedes have sometimes met Christian orthodox resistance from the African side. Likewise, pronounced from the Swedish side, there is a limit for multiculturalism based on religious and cultural positions.

The global musical encounter is also influenced by the Swedish impact on African music. I have two contradictory hypotheses: 1) Swedes tend to more easily accept music from Africa, as it, to a large extent, is coloured by Swedish music. Marimba groups in South Africa playing Christian hymns sounds *like home*. Or 2), we have, via long-term colonial relations, begun to understand the essence of African culture. Our ears have opened up.

Besides looking at the mission’s musical rampaging or blessings, it’s crucial to carry out studies on intercultural musical phenomena such as *makwaya*, music in African Independent Churches, the *gospel music* etcetera. We also need to understand more about the role of religion and what embracing Christianity means to African identity. Another area of interest is the relation between the mission’s music education and the, about 1900 introduced, British formal music education system in South Africa (ABRSM and Trinity College). My wish is that studies on the colonial history and its aftermath, preferably also undertaken by Africans, could contribute to a better understanding of the background for the present debate on African music education and cultural identity.

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