

# **Music Education in Jamaica And the Commonwealth Caribbean**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century music had become a part of school curricula in countries now known as the Commonwealth Caribbean. At the time of its introduction, music, like other subjects, was taught in accordance with practices in British schools. Then known as 'singing,' the subject was shaped by the British 19<sup>th</sup> century choral tradition and promoted the development of musical literacy and vocal skills. Schools concentrated exclusively on the performance of British choral music. It was not until the 1960s, when many of these countries had gained political independence from Britain, that there was a gradual inclusion of Caribbean folk music in schools. Over the last three to four decades, the main concentration has been on broadening music curricula to move beyond the cultural limitations of a Colonial past, and adopting practices rooted in philosophies advanced by prominent music educationists.

The primary aim of this paper is to highlight current key factors in music education and to make recommendations for future developments. First, the paper will outline the state of music education in Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean. Secondly, it will give a brief overview of the main artistic traditions in Jamaican musical culture and discuss the pedagogic approaches that have or should be applied in introducing them into school

programmes. Thirdly, recommendations will be made on the philosophy and practices that should inform music curricula in primary and secondary schools, as well as in teacher education. Fourthly, the paper looks at ways in which schools and practising artists can collaborate to reduce the cultural dissonance that often exists between music in school and music in society, which, in many instances, has resulted in school music being a pale replica of the vibrant musical cultures of the Caribbean.

## **2.0 Provisions and Practices Across the Region**

### ***2.1 Primary Music***

In the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean, music in primary schools has been largely performance-based, consisting of whole-class singing, elements of folk culture such as ring games (in some countries) and the theory of notation. The descant recorder has been introduced during the last two decades as an accessible classroom option, in terms of its affordability, versatility and technical manoeuvrability. A region-wide project funded by UNESCO has allowed teachers to improve their skills in playing and teaching the recorder, and has had a significant impact on the quality of the work done in schools.

Despite the gradual inclusion of melodic and non-melodic classroom instruments across the region, singing continues to be the predominant mode of musical performance in primary (and secondary) schools. Singing has always been reinforced by the religious denominations that were responsible for establishing many of the schools in the Caribbean after slavery was abolished. The religious orientation to school repertoire in primary and secondary schools continues up until today, with gospel choruses now replacing some traditional hymns. In addition to this, there has been a conscious thrust from the mid-1960s to recognise and introduce Caribbean music in schools. The important role that the arts have played in

developing Caribbean cultural identity has been constantly emphasised by the post-colonial theorists in our midst (for example, Nettleford, 1993, 1999).

In the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean, there is therefore a shared aim to elevate the folk music of the region from an earlier position of being seen as inferior to European classical music, to being a valued and worthwhile form of musical expression in all schools.

Where the provision of national curricula for primary music is concerned, St. Lucia and Jamaica have led the way. This is not unexpected, for these are the two countries that have established music schools with a mandate to train teachers. This provision has resulted in a higher number of specialist music teachers in these countries, because both primary generalists and secondary music specialists have opted to pursue programmes offered in these two institutions in order to begin or further their education in music teaching. In both countries, these specialist teachers are employed in secondary as well as primary schools. Other countries in the region are now in the process of developing and disseminating primary music curricula, but music officers in the respective Ministries of Education lack the support needed to complete what is a demanding and time-consuming process. The low status that music has in relation to other school subjects is particularly evident, in that the development of music curricula is often an 'after thought'; and, in contrast to other school subjects, there are countries in which both the development and dissemination of curricula throughout the system have had to be carried out by a music officer without the financial and human resources generally made available to other subjects.

In accordance with music curricula in countries outside of the region (for example, the *British National Curriculum* and the *American National Standards for Music*), recently developed Caribbean curricula have begun to include classroom composing. This comes partly as a response to practices

in other countries and as a result of the influence that the Jamaica School of Music (now subsumed under the Edna Manley College) has had in the region. The Organization of American States made the institution into a regional centre for the entire Caribbean in the 1970s, and over the decades it has been the main institution for music teacher education. The work of this institution in the sphere of teacher education has been strongly based on the philosophy of John Paynter, British music educationist, who, from the 1970s, has been a firm advocate for the development of creativity through classroom composing; the institution has also benefited from the contribution that Michael Burnett, another British music educationist, made during his tenure as tutor of composing. In the region there is now a growing awareness of the necessity for schools to provide opportunities for children to make personal decisions in music classes and to develop their creativity and inventiveness. There will be further discussion on the inclusion of composing in primary and secondary curricula.

#### *2.1.1 Innovations in Primary Music in Jamaica*

The introduction of a *Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC)*, under the *Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP)*, into 30 pilot schools in 1998, and to a wider population sample in 1999, under the *New Horizons Project*, marks the beginning of significant changes in primary music. The new thrust aims to broaden the curriculum by involving children in composing and listening and appraising, in addition to performing. The curriculum is organised in accordance with Swanwick's (1979) 'parameters of music education,' with the three parameters that provide a direct experience of music - Composing, Audience-listening and Performing (*CAP*) - comprising the three profiles of the curriculum.

The RPC goes system-wide this academic year (2001/2002), with the large number of Jamaican teachers experiencing it for the first time. Preparation

for this implementation has been realised through the *Primary Education Support Project (PESP)*, whose role is to provide training and resource materials.

### *2.1.2 Lower Primary*

The first three years in the RPC (grades 1-3) are represented as an integrated programme in which subject boundaries have been muted in order to provide the child with a seamless series of experience within a spiralling cycle. A thematic approach in which learning inputs are generated from Social Studies and Science concepts, guides the development of the units.

While this has its advantages of reinforcing concepts through varied activities and disguised learning for the child, it is more ideal than realistic, because the majority of teachers have not acquired grounding within the arts that will allow them the versatility and flexibility required to deliver an integrated curriculum. One is therefore cognisant that certain aspects of the integrated programme might be neglected while teachers will gravitate to teaching the high status academic subjects that are assessed at key stages of a child's life, and may also only attend to those arts subjects that they are comfortable to teach. Some Jamaican primary schools are fortunate to have trained music specialists who teach music to all grades. The advantage of this is that a more reliable and thorough music education programme is delivered; but then it is a drawback to exclude the subject from the integrated pool, for logical sequence can become haphazard and subject integration does have its value.

### *2.1.3 Upper Primary*

Upper primary (grades 4-6), while encouraging some levels of integration and correlation, is based on the delivery of discreet subject disciplines, which may be taught by an individual class teacher (generalist) or may include some teacher-subject rotation (specialisation). It should be observed, however, that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEYC) does not officially recognise the subject specialist at the primary level: any arrangement for this kind of delivery is treated as an internal deployment within the individual school.

## ***2.2 Music Education in Secondary Schools***

It is apparent across the region that music in secondary schools is in a less healthy state than music in primary schools. This is largely due to the shortage of secondary music specialists and to the absence of a shared understanding of the aims and content of secondary music. There is also a belief that one music teacher per school is sufficient, despite student enrolment. When class teaching is added to extra-curricular duties, music specialists are confronted with many hours of work and are constrained to use their energies only in ways valued by the school community. This often results in teachers failing to deliver structured music classes that could provide all students with a sustained and comprehensive growth of musical knowledge, which on a purely personal level will have emotional and educational benefits, but on another level may provide needed pre-vocational education for those who want to progress to a career in music. The tensions between providing for the total musical development of all students and providing ensembles that highlight the ability of a few, thereby enhancing the school's public reputation, are general problems shared by Caribbean teachers. These problems were highlighted in research carried out in St Lucia recently (*St Lucia Commission on Music Education, 2000*).

### ***2.2.1 National Curriculum, Jamaica***

Where Jamaica is fortunate to have developed a music curriculum for the lower-secondary years - that is, grades 7-9 (forms 1-3) - many of the other Caribbean countries are only now in the process of attempting to do the same. In the past, secondary music in Jamaica was an unspecified area, lacking the printed guides developed for other subjects. Therefore, the music curriculum resulting from the *Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE)* was the first national programme for secondary students.

This curriculum is intended to facilitate progression from primary to secondary school music, and to provide the basis for further study in grades 10 and 11, where students may opt to pursue the public music examinations offered by the regional *Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)*. The ROSE music curriculum is structured to:

- § Provide activities in the experiential domains of performing, composing and listening and appraising;
- § Encourage the development of student creativity, decision-making, inventiveness and the expression of musical ideas through these activities;
- § Provide a programme in grade 7 (form 1) that constitutes a foundation for students who have had a limited experience of music in primary school;
- § Expose students to music (made available as audio and print material) that reflects the eclecticism of Jamaican musical culture;
- § Offer a wide range of suggested activities in each parameter of music education, to allow for the teaching of students of mixed abilities from rural and urban communities, who have different musical aptitudes, skills and interests.

### *2.2.2 Resourcing and Disseminating the Curriculum*

Although the variety and quantity of instrumental resources provided to support the secondary pilot programme was not likely to be a sustainable one, due to the economic factor, the pilot schools in particular have been supplied with a substantial array of instruments. Where the dissemination and implementation of the curriculum is concerned, the MOEYC has not yet completed its system-wide dissemination. The kind of provisions made for other secondary curricula in the initial stage of the reform have not been made for music and those subjects developed in the second phase of ROSE. Two MOEYC officers have been responsible for the dissemination of the curriculum across the country; as a result, there is an obvious shortage of human resources. Nevertheless, through introductory workshops approximately 30 teachers per year have been brought into the scheme over the past two years, following three years of field-testing. But all areas of musical knowledge have their associated skills, and time is needed for the acquisition of these skills and for teachers to fully grasp needed changes in methodology. A single two-day workshop is insufficient for the type of professional development required.

### *2.2.3 The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate in Music*

The recently-introduced *Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)* music examination by CXC makes one encouraged by how much the potential of the subject has developed at the regional level, yet awakens one's conscious of how limited our human and material resources really are, to take full advantage of this development. The syllabus was piloted in 1997, in six Caribbean territories – Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St Lucia, Guyana and the British Virgin Islands - with the first sitting of the examination in 1999. Since then, only two additional territories (Antigua and St Kitts-Nevis) have participated. Examination results over the past three years have indicated an approximate 66% success rate. But the syllabus has been slow in attracting new schools within participating territories as well as

new territories - such as St Vincent & the Grenadines, Dominica, Grenada, Belize, and the Bahamas. Nevertheless, secondary music education in the Caribbean assumed a new respectability with the introduction of the CXC music syllabus. Three major attainments were realised:

- § The subject joined the ranks of its counterparts that had long before been regarded as 'legitimate' subjects because they were formally assessed;
- § Caribbean upper-secondary music education became a unified concept and force to be reckoned with as a regional corporate entity;
- § Students of the region could embrace a new option upon which to focus career goals or gain additional artistic enrichment.

Another important achievement is that the CXC syllabus is organised around the subject profiles of performing, composing and listening and appraising. This means that, across the region, efforts are being made to include classroom composing in schools, which has been neglected in the past. It also means that there is well-sequenced articulation throughout eleven years of primary and secondary music education in Jamaica. Other countries in the region are now using the CXC syllabus as a guide for developing curricula for lower-secondary and primary music, and are therefore organising their curricula within these three profiles.

But despite the asset that CXC music has been, there are many challenges still to be faced. For example, it has been noted in Jamaica and other Caribbean territories that although music is supposed to be taught in primary and secondary schools, many principals fail to adhere to this requirement. It is typical, therefore, to find students entering secondary school without a basic background in the subject, to start music in their first year. In grade 8 (form 2), they may have to choose between music and other subjects

(sometimes unfairly twinned, such as French vs Music, or Biology vs Music), and so the subject is dropped. In grade 10 (form 4) they may discover that they wish to pursue music as a CXC option. An intensified course may be introduced at this time, or an opportunity missed. This leaves a hollow framework, in which the subject establishes a presence in the early years, disappears in the middle years, and re-emerges when principals discover that, like other subjects, it is an examinable option.

We conclude our discussion on secondary music by acknowledging the presence of two distinct orientations in Caribbean curriculum practice. The more frequent practice has links with music education in Britain. To different degrees, curricula within this orientation include listening, performing, the development of aural and theoretical skills, an elementary knowledge of European composers, and (in a few schools) classroom composing. Extra-curricular activities centre mainly on choirs and less frequently on bands comprising a mix of local and European instruments. The other orientation derives from an approach to music teaching usually associated with the United States of America, in which the main focus is on establishing wind bands. In timetabled classes the focus is on theoretical skills and only a selected group of students learn to play the band instruments, as an extra-curricular activity. It is yet to be seen whether the development of secondary school curricula that has begun in various Caribbean countries and the further establishment of the CXC music programme will help schools to go beyond the parameters of these two curriculum orientations.

### **3.0 Main Artistic Music Traditions in Jamaica**

For centuries Jamaicans have been a nation of singers, giving prominence to music in all aspects of life - church cantatas, wedding songs, wakes and nine-night observances, field (work) songs, ballads, seasonal festivals and regular anthems for church services. In the first half of the twentieth century, there were notable choral groups that drew audiences larger than

those that gathered for world-renowned recitalists from abroad. Below, we try to capture the main artistic traditions by addressing their key features.

### ***3.1 The Folk Music Heritage***

The earliest artistic traditions include African retentions manifested in the folk music that has penetrated, especially, the life of the rural people. Traditional folk forms include Gumbay, Gerreh, Dinki Mini, Set-Up or Ni-Night, Brukins, Ettu, Benta, Jonkunnu, Burru, Kumina, Maypole, Myal, Nago, Pocomina, Tambu, Shango, Revival and Quadrille. Many of these are related to death observances (Gerreh, Dinki Mini, Ni-Night, Ettu, Kumina), some to social festivities (Brukins, Tambu, Jonkunnu, Burru and Quadrille), and others to religious and ancestor worship (Kumina, Myal, Pocomina and Zionism).

### ***3.2 The Popular Music Heritage***

The impact of World War II, with the stationing of American troops in the island, left its influences in the big bands that flourished here in the late 1940s. Until today there is a tradition of jazz and through the years the big band is almost as well known as the smaller ensembles whose focus has been on the creation and performance of current pop music. Jamaican pop music has drawn on the compositional devices in some of the country's folk music and has also been strongly influenced by Rastafarian culture. Below a table outlines the four distinct eras of Jamaican popular music from the 1960s to the present time.

1960 to mid-1966	Late 1966 to late 1968	1969-1983	1983-
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<i>Ska</i>	<i>Rock Steady</i>	<i>Reggae</i>		<i>Dance Hall</i>
		1969 to 1974	1975 to 1983	
		<i>Early Reggae</i>	<i>Roots Reggae</i>	

### **3.3 Classical Music**

Jamaica has had a long classical tradition, which has centred on the performance of art music of the Western European tradition. It was strengthened by groups such as the Jamaica Philharmonic Orchestra, the Jamaica Musical Theatre Company, the National Chorale of Jamaica, the University Singers, the Methodist Chorale, and the Jamaica Orchestra for Youth; and institutions such as the Jamaica School of Music, the Little Theatre Movement and the Ward Theatre Foundation.

Private studios have educated young Jamaicans in the performing art of the classics, preparing candidates for the examinations of the Royal Schools of Music and the Trinity College of Music, London, while some public schools have entered students for the British GCE 'O' level music. The visiting classical artiste has remained a part of the musical landscape for decades, giving recitals of the most auspicious classical repertoire. Radio programmes, from as far back as the 1930s, have carried recorded highlights of classical music, under sponsorship from prominent corporate citizens.

### **3.4 Pedagogic Approaches to Jamaican Music**

There is growing consensus in many countries, that it is important for school music to provide learners with opportunities to experience music through composing, performing and audience-listening. It is also believed that these three domains are interactive and that underlying them are the different dimensions of 'musical understanding,' which is 'the quality of musical thinking or cognition that is manifested in the activity' (Swanwick and Franca, 1999:5). It is therefore toward the development of musical understanding

that school music is largely focused. A major aim of music education in primary and secondary schools is to familiarise students with the music of their own country and that of other countries, in ways that will promote and deepen musical understanding.

We have provided above a brief overview of the musics in Jamaican society. If we look at them in relation to the domains of performing, composing and audience-listening, we will see that each musical genre can be experienced through these three domains. Each genre lends itself to classroom music performance, perhaps not by performing on the instruments originally and customarily used in adult practice, but by substituting classroom instruments. All musics can be listened to as in an audience. This is 'responsive listening' (Swanwick, 1979), which is enhanced when there is an attempt to analyse the music. It can be done in many ways: for example, by encouraging students to recognise tone qualities, structural relationships, expressive qualities and the organisation of the materials of sound to produce mood, expressive character, and so on. Classroom composing opens the door to students developing a new kind of 'ownership' over their musical experiences, for they can select and sequence musical sounds within their technical capabilities, arriving at a 'product' that is likely to lie within their preferred genre.

Within this paper it is impossible to point to the subtle differences in pedagogic approaches that may exist in teaching the different musics of Jamaica society. But it would be naive not to acknowledge that such exist, because the music teacher takes on different roles in dealing with the range of activities that takes place in any class, irrespective of the musical genre. At different times the teacher may be choral director, facilitator, guide, musical model or enabler, but to mention a few. Some of these roles, such as facilitator and guide, may apply more in the composing class in which a reggae piece is being composed. Others, such as musical model and choral

director, may be required when teaching a classical song in which the teacher is in command of musical knowledge that includes stylistic nuances that are not commonly known and are being introduced to students. In seeking to find the common threads that should underlie the teaching of all Jamaican musics, one may consider the following suggestions:

- § All musics need to be acknowledged as having artistic merit for they represent the expressions of peoples and groups to whom respect is due. The cultural eclecticism of Caribbean society is one of our greatest assets, and teachers should encourage students to value it as it signifies the coming-together of peoples from many continents and ways of life to make up the countries of the Caribbean. Musical hierarchies that reside in Eurocentric or Afrocentric thinking have no place in today's classroom.
  
- § Caribbean folk and popular musics should be exposed to the same type of critical analysis that is commonly undertaken in the study of classical music. The tendency has been to 'analyse' folk and popular music only by an examination of sociological factors. It is an approach that at times leads to analysis only of lyrics and their capacity to provide information on time, place, event and socio-political issues. Research carried out in Jamaican schools has shown that there is little analysis of the structures of Caribbean folk music and an almost total absence of popular music in school curricula (Tucker, 2000). It has been argued that the neglect of popular music in classrooms comes mainly from the absence of a suitable model (Dunbar-Hall, 1993). Dunbar-Hall recommends a model for teaching popular music that provides opportunities for examining the social significance of the music as well as its musical structures. Jamaican teachers need such a model for teaching both pop and folk music.
  
- § With regard to folk music, one school of thought is to 'preserve' our folk heritage and to caution anyone from 'meddling with' or manipulating the

structures for creative purposes. While it may be worthwhile to have an awareness of our culture as it has existed, change is dynamic and inevitable. Ethnomusicologists today acknowledge that transformation of our musical cultures should not be viewed negatively. And while it is important for our children to respect and appreciate cultural forms of the past, it is equally important for them to use those forms creatively today. Therefore, although we respect the musics of past generations we need to ensure that our musical experiences and the forms that result become an assimilation of the essence of all generations, not only those of the past.

§ A study of *world music* has become an important part of music education in many countries. This does not mean that students have to study all the musics of the world. It does mean, however, that in studying music one must make comparisons of different musics, and students are encouraged to examine the near-universal features of music - such as pitch, melody, rhythm, metre, scale, instrumentation, musical processes and the practices of musicians. Much of Caribbean music has originated in Africa, but some in Europe and India. There is a Chinese community in Jamaica; and the music of India and China has recently been included in the electronic media. Teachers should begin to draw on the wealth of Caribbean musical culture and not confine themselves only to teaching the music of the majority.

§ We live in a country in which little or no distinction is made between music for children and music for adults. For this reason parties for children may have the same type of music as that played at an adult party. There is a strong tendency to be insensitive to the particular ways in which children can and should be encouraged to *know* music. As songs frequently have vulgar lyrics, this becomes problematic. Teachers have to select carefully, being mindful of suitability. Music for the

classroom, despite the genre, should accord with values promoted by the Ministry of Education. Lyrics may reflect the romantic interests of adolescents but should conform to standards of decency and should convey wholesome ideas about relationships and life in general.

#### **4.0 Guidelines for Music Curricula**

These broad guidelines are not exhaustive, but they include some of the points made earlier and highlight other matters pertinent to music curricula. In some instances the recommendations made are common to primary and secondary curricula, but, where necessary, distinctions have been made between the two.

As an overall guiding principle, students of all ages should be given opportunities to listen to, explore, imitate and model musical sounds. Through this, they will experience music and convey their interpretation of its inherent meanings. The exposure should also contribute to the building of an expressive vocabulary from which they can draw structure and substance for their personal expressions. The progressive music curriculum is one that allows children to listen to music and to manipulate sound and sound sources as media to express their own thoughts and feelings.

##### ***4.1 Primary Education***

###### ***4.1.1 Listening Skills and Audience-Listening***

The importance of listening cannot be over-emphasized. Since we experience music through the ear, music curricula should provide a wealth of listening opportunities. In audience-listening, children's responses will be enhanced by their knowledge of biographical and historical information. But the focus should be on musical elements, as they constitute the building blocks of music. The major aim is to foster a development of the ability to understand and value different musics, rather than to amass information *about* music, which constitutes propositional knowledge. Starting from the

primary years, children should be encouraged to use musical vocabulary in describing the music to which they listen.

#### *4.1.2 Responding to Music and Subject Integration*

There are many ways in which young children can respond to music. In primary school, where subject boundaries may be blurred, different subjects can be drawn upon. An outcome from a listening experience, for example, may be to have learners respond physically (through drama or dance), verbally (through sung or spoken word), or graphically (through contours, shapes or colours). A subject like social studies will also provide a cultural context for the arts. In integrating music with different subjects, it is important that the development of particular musical skills and abilities remain focused and central to the activities.

#### *4.1.3 Manipulative and Notational Skills*

The development of manipulative skills such as those required in musical performance, is essential. The shape, size, type and mechanism of instruments should accord with the physical and muscular development of the child, so that appropriate technical facility can be developed. In primary schools, emphasis should be on exploring the many uses of the voice and manipulating a number of classroom instruments as tools with which to make music, rather than on attempting to develop high levels of instrumental skill. Most schools provide only for group music making and ensemble work within timetabled classes. Where possible, schools should provide for individual instrumental lessons because there are students who will show the aptitude and motivation for the development of fairly sophisticated instrumental skills at an early age.

Notational skills should develop out of a need to facilitate and enhance music making. The adage is that 'sound should precede symbol.' Musical symbols

are the mechanism by which students can access, record, convey or retrieve information about sounds listened to, performed or created. The reading and writing of musical symbols is best introduced in conjunction with practical music making, and should not be approached as a disembodied theoretical pilgrimage, since the music is the sound itself, and not so the symbols. The young child may enhance his learning potential by experimenting with alternative (informal) notation for the purpose of composing music that highlights sound textures rather than melody and precise rhythmic patterns. Alternative symbols may also provide an understanding of the function of symbols, an understanding that can form the basis for developing knowledge of traditional notation.

#### *4.1.4 Performing*

Performing (vocal or instrumental) is an integral part of music education. We noted above that it is one of the three parameters through which students have a direct experience of music (Swanwick, 1979). Performing for an audience (formally and informally) is important in helping children learn to co-operate with and respect others, in terms of understanding audience-performer and performer-performer relationships. Singing should play a major part in the child's early musical experience. Repertoire should include a range of musical materials, e.g., game songs, suitable folk and popular songs, patriotic songs, religious songs and selections relating to the popular festivals (Christmas, Easter, birthdays, national observations). The playing of classroom instruments – including melodic and non-melodic percussion and recorders - should also feature prominently in children's early musical development.

When developing performing skills, students of all ages should be taught to set personal goals and to participate in the analysis of their performance at each step of the way. Teachers who resort to the use of repetitious drills without providing students with knowledge of the desired standard and the processes needed to achieve it are *training* rather than *educating* their

students. Although the development of certain musical skills may require repetitious practice, the aim should always be to educate. Among other things, this requires teachers and students to engage in frequent reflection, critical listening, interactive dialogue and on-going teacher and student assessment.

#### *4.1.5 Composing*

Composing, like audience-listening and performing, should be central to all curricula. It was noted earlier that it is now a part of curricula in Jamaica and other Commonwealth Caribbean countries, as well as one of the subject profiles in the CSEC Music syllabus. The Caribbean has proven to be a fertile environment for composing popular music, but it lags behind in the composing of classical music. Only through the inclusion of composing in school will the Caribbean develop its own repertoire of classical music that speaks to the lives and human experiences of the peoples of the region. It is therefore important that children have opportunities to compose their own music and to see themselves as worthy of contributing to a growing repertoire of Caribbean music at all stages of their lives. In the classroom, an exploration of sound may result in the broad use of textures and timbres, rhythmic/melodic ideas, tempo, duration, and other elements. Teachers have many roles to play here, for they have to be facilitators, models, critics and guides - a point made earlier, in another context.

#### *4.1.6 Assessment*

In the case of music, as for the other art forms, it is necessary to provide appropriate assessment. Principals and teachers who insist on theory-based written tests to the exclusion of other (and more suitable) forms of assessment have failed to understand the distinctive skills and abilities that result from music education. Musical products, such as a group or individual composition, a performance (individual or group) or the appraisal of a musical work listened to, should be graded and regarded as the most important areas of work. Theory, and written work that addresses

information *about* music, may also be assessed, but not as the major or sole indicators of learning. Theoretical and other skills as well as information about music merely act as facilitators of those musical behaviours - composing, performing and audience-listening - through which we experience music.

#### *4.1.7 Learning Facilities*

Curricula cannot be separated from the environment or situation in which they are experienced. The physical situation impacts on the curriculum and how students respond to it. Many primary and secondary music teachers see their subject as being marginalized because of poor resources and impoverished working conditions. They have been expected to deliver a music programme against all the odds and are virtually expected to play the role of the *Pied Piper* (of Hamelin) without his pipe. The provision of an adequate supply of instruments and equipment situated in a quiet environment is required for music. The belief that music teachers can work in primary and secondary schools with only a chalkboard and some homemade instruments is incorrect. At present the lack of resources and suitable working environments constitute a major drawback to what teachers are able to achieve in music.

#### *4.2 Secondary Education*

The fundamental principles that apply to primary music education are applicable in a general way to secondary music, so that much of what was discussed above should be part of the learning experiences in secondary schools. Additionally, secondary music specialists must be responsive to the cultural needs of adolescent learners; and regardless of the students' levels of musical knowledge and skill, teachers should provide programmes that take into consideration the emotional and intellectual capacities of the adolescent, which differ to those of the primary age group. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to respond to all aspects of the programme within a more mature and intellectual framework.

Secondary students should be presented with a wide repertoire of music, central to which is the music of their own culture. Students should make the transition from alternative representation to traditional notation, if not done in primary schools (where it should be attempted). But alternative notation may also be used in secondary schools where certain musical ideas might not be amenable to being recorded by using traditional notation. The inclusion of computer technology for composing is a highly important aspect of music education in today's classroom - particularly in secondary school. Computers are provided for other school subjects and should also be part of the provisions made for music in Caribbean schools.

#### *4.2.1 Performing and the Adolescent*

Secondary students should be provided with instruments, or should procure their own, to increase opportunities for the development of individual or ensemble instrumental work. Some students may have entered secondary school with some specialisation on an instrument. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to perform for various audiences as a means to developing their musical capabilities and personal confidence. In secondary schools, performing may be merely a hobby, but it could also be an important part of pre-vocational education. With the opportunity to progress to a CXC music programme in grades 10 and 11, students should be encouraged to look at the possibilities of a career in music. Music has not been regarded as a career option in the past because the subject has lacked formal public assessment like that now offered by CXC. It is now necessary to change the entire approach to music education in secondary schools, and to examine and attend to the capacity of these institutions to lay foundations for professional study.

#### *4.2.2 Providing for Male Students*

One of the difficulties of the pre-adolescent and adolescent stages is the boys' changing voice. It is a two-pronged enigma that causes the 'victim' to feel isolated as he loses control over an instrument that was once stable, while causing the 'deprived' to feel that the arrival of his manhood is in question. There are many music educators today who advocate that vocal work need not be impeded if teachers are equipped with knowledge of how to handle the changing voice in addition to providing a suitable repertoire. But if there is no instrumental playing and the emphasis is solely on singing, male students are apt to lose interest and drop out of music classes. Conga drums and the electronic instruments used in pop bands have strong appeal for all students, particularly boys. These instruments should be included in the provisions made for music. Students are motivated to play them and schools can be enriched by embracing appropriate aspects of pop culture.

#### *4.2.3 Critical Thinking*

The secondary music teacher has to set realistic but more musically challenging goals. The continued development of critical thinking is of paramount importance, and students should strive to develop a musical vocabulary with which to examine the stylistic features of musical works, when making comparisons. It is at this period of students' lives that they should be encouraged to value particular works, displaying affinity to composers, genres and musical styles. This should be done with a growing understanding and appreciation of the many uses of musical elements and compositional devices.

### **5.0 Implications for Teacher Education**

Music teacher education in the region has shown some indications of change in recent years. Nevertheless, it is still emerging from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century choral tradition and has not fully defined its role in the textured environment of Caribbean musical culture. To provide teachers with a personal philosophy and the knowledge and skills needed to attend to the matters outlined above, a number of changes in teacher education programmes are essential.

The following recommendations address only a selected few of these:

- § Teacher educators across the Caribbean struggle to find published materials that support the teaching of the musics of the region. Teachers colleges need to increase their resources by importing scores and texts from outside of the region. With the study of world music and the interest in some Caribbean popular forms, there are more texts available in 'first world' countries, on the music that we call 'our own,' than are available in the Caribbean. Included in these texts are recommended methodologies for the teaching of aurally-derived musics that are relevant to music teaching here.
  
- § Music teacher education needs to be focused more on the development of creative thinking and exploration. At present college programmes are largely made up of a body of knowledge and skills to be passed on to students. More emphasis needs to be placed on composing. In Jamaica, the improvements that have come in recent years in the teaching of listening and appraising have not been made in composing. The point was made earlier that composing is now included in primary and secondary music curricula in Jamaican schools as well as in the CXC music syllabus. Teacher education has to address the needs of schools, an immediate one being to equip teachers to respond to curricula by including composing in schools.
  
- § A fundamental change in teaching methodologies is needed in order to embrace a more child-centred approach in which teachers 'encourage' rather than 'instruct.' Related to this, changes are needed in classroom organisation, that include small-group work to provide greater opportunities for interaction and pupil decision-making. Composing or any activity that promotes divergent thinking, cannot become part of music in schools unless colleges give leadership in changing the learning environment in which music is taught.

§ Programmes for music teachers should offer greater opportunities for teachers to gain knowledge of and teach the music of the region. Generally, there is a narrow concentration only on the music of the Caribbean territory in which the institution is situated. Music teacher education does not currently reflect the cultural pluralism of the Caribbean. But CXC is now providing an opportunity for a broader approach to music, and teachers colleges need to respond to the challenge by opening their programmes to embrace the rich cultural capital of the region.

### ***5.1 Increasing Links with Society***

We now turn our attention to examining ways in which schools and their students can derive support from practising artists and arts institutions. Outside of the Caribbean there has been considerable interest in discovering ways in which students can benefit from the establishment of links between school and community arts institutions. Evaluation of some of the programmes developed within various institutions has shown that when students gain 'authentic' experiences of the arts through direct contact with such institutions, they derive motivational and other benefits. It is therefore becoming evident that schools should increase their links with artists and arts institutions, to provide students with a 'taste' of the arts in the 'real' world. Below are suggestions of ways in which schools can forge links with community arts institutions and practising artists in the Caribbean:

§ Barbados has led the way by inviting popular musicians to teach music in schools. This has come about because there is a shortage of teachers and a need to increase the number of instrumental teachers for the CSEC Music Syllabus. While we acknowledge the necessity for teachers of music to be educated in child and adolescent psychology, teaching methods and so on, we acknowledge that popular artists and other practising musicians may have a great deal to share with students. The

inclusion of these artists in school programmes might best take place in departments of music in which trained teachers co-ordinate and oversee the music programmes

- § Community instrumental and vocal ensembles as well as solo performers should be encouraged to provide informal concerts/discussions and master classes for schools. Because of transportation difficulties, many students lack access to concerts, and it is often more practical for the musicians themselves to visit schools. Many opera houses and orchestras in Britain have outreach programmes to stimulate interest in the arts and to support school teaching. These programs have numerous benefits, for apart from sharing the skills of music making, future audiences are being created. Many performers in the Caribbean are unable to make a living from their musical performances, because of poor concert attendance. Building an informed and critical audience is one of the primary aims of music education, and it is an aim that can be better achieved with the assistance of practising musicians.
  
- § The CSEC Music Syllabus requires that students undertake projects in which they are attached to community music groups to study their operations, rehearsal techniques and repertoire. This allows students opportunities to collect information that will inform them of how the art form is handled in certain sections of the society. These projects can provide invaluable help in bringing students into contact with many groups, including folk groups and church choirs. It is recommended that a less demanding version of this type of project be included at the lower-secondary level (grades 7–9 or forms 1-3) as classroom assignments.

## 6.0 Concluding Comment

In closing, we note that the general principle should be one of bringing school music and community music closer, so that the one can inform and, where possible, enrich the other. School music has tended to be a hybrid that is often removed from society and lacking in the emotional vibrancy that characterises Caribbean music. It is time to strive for better outcomes by combining the curriculum necessities outlined in this paper with the richness of the musical culture of the Caribbean.

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