

Editorial

When I was about four years old, my father put two bronze coins in front of me: 'Which one has the greatest value,' he asked, anticipating that I would say that the bigger 2-cent coin was worth more than the smaller 5-cent coin. On that day he taught me that size does not equal value, at least not necessarily so.

While the first issue of the *Journal of the Musical Arts* will always remain special, the second issue has also taken on a life of its own – a life that was difficult to determine at the outset. Of the 13 articles that we received, our peer reviewers recommended that four be published. The implication is that, as an editor, one never knows what the theme will be, or if a theme will indeed emerge; this process can be compared with the synergy that was generated between the composer, land artist and dancer at the opening of the University of Johannesburg Arts Centre in October 2005 (University of Johannesburg Arts Centre 2005). Strijdom van der Merwe explained to me that the composer Neil van der Watt, the choreographer Elton Fortune and he himself as land artist only had brief meetings to discuss some kind of synergy, but that all the art forms kept their autonomy to some extent (Van der Merwe 2006), an autonomy that has its origin in the 'ground':

In art as in life the ground is the beginning and end of existence. Whether in terms of canvas or clay or the fabric of the mind, the place you start from, the ground you stand on, where you make your first mark, there is always a starting point which affects the outcome of the undertaking. The ground gives balance and stability of focus, stops fragmentation of thought and has parallels in the need to be 'grounded' while meditating. Along the same lines it gets rid of inflated ideas and ego and puts the subject in a humble position in relation to the object of his intentions, allowing connection rather than confrontation. It offers a way of dealing directly with nature and all the forces which affect its rhythms and patterns. (Long 1991:16)

The contributions to the second issue of the *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* reflect some of the forces which affect nature's rhythms and patterns, starting with a model designed by Minette Mans in which she endeavours to demonstrate aesthetics and values as core determinants of musical identity formation as found in indigenous Namibian musical arts. Zelda Potgieter and Vuyani Mazomba focus on 'patterns' as they appear in the neo-traditional compositions of three Xhosa composers, while Bertha Spies uses the 'golden section', Fibonacci and Lucas series to explain Ligeti's Second String Quartet. Boudina Coetzer, the winner of the second *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* essay competition, presents an ethnographic study of the *Coysan* Langarm Band, showing clearly how acculturation has influenced ballroom dancing in South Africa. She shows how, similar to the photo of the land art by Strijdom van der Merwe on the back cover of this issue, new patterns are developed from and juxtaposed with older rhythms and patterns.

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to the composer Joshua Uzoigwe, one of

Africa's foremost neo-traditional composers. I will remember him as a humble man who chose to wash his clothes when we had a symposium rather than taking part in highfalutin musicological discussions; and yet he was a man whose name became synonymous with African pianism.

Our reviews section again reflects a wide variety of interesting sources, and I am particularly grateful to our reviewers who took the time to add so remarkably to the value of this journal. Every article that we receive is sent to three peer reviewers, who not only make recommendations for publication, but also for further development and improvement. Their contributions are invaluable and I would like to honour them for their willingness to comment in great detail, despite the fact that no remuneration is offered for their scholarly input.

Lastly, I would like to thank my late father, who taught me that less may be more, and that a slightly thinner journal could be as valuable as a multi-volume book.

Anri Herbst
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References

- Long, Richard (1991). *Walking circles*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- University of Johannesburg Art Centre (2005). Commemorative programme for the opening 5–8 and 10 October 2005.
- Van der Merwe, Strijdom (2006). Unpublished interview by Anri Herbst on 22 April.