The struggle, global challenges and international strategies in the University of Fort Hare’s music department

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Globalisation has not reduced travel distances, but it has opened innumerable possibilities for cultural contact through the media, international exchange programmes, migration and multinational companies. Tertiary institutions worldwide are exposed to global challenges, such as international rankings systems and the international job market. Academics have to be flexible and mobile in furthering their careers, as they may never find employment in their home countries and may have to seek employment abroad. International networks are, thus, indispensable for the career development of individuals in a world that is increasingly ‘pluricultural’. In this context, given its history and its rural setting, the University of Fort Hare presents a unique case.

The university of Fort Hare is located in South Africa’s Eastern Cape Province. Its main campus is in the small town of Alice, and it has two other campuses, one in Bisho and one in East London. The Music Department is based in Alice and – since 2012 – in the Miriam Makeba House of Performing Arts in East London. Founded in the 1970s by Georg Gruber, a music professor who had previously taught at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, the University of Fort Hare’s music department had a promising start, but initially it was not really open to global participation. Indeed, its political circumstances (including being located in one of the apartheid state’s bantustans, and the academic boycott by many international academics that took place during the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1970s and 1980s), meant that the campus was relatively isolated.

In the late 1990s, after the demise of apartheid, Dave Dargie introduced a new African syllabus, and shifted the focus of the department away from
‘Western’ and towards ‘South African’ music. This brought a sense of balance to the curriculum and increased the relevance of the department to the life of the local community. But, even though the country’s political struggle against apartheid was over, the university’s struggle for survival has continued. A high percentage of students at the university come from rural areas, and are both socially and economically disadvantaged. In addition, because of its history, the Alice campus attracts predominantly black students and, in a certain sense, it occupies a world of its own, which, when compared with other universities, might appear a bit disconnected. This is unhelpful in an academic world based on international contacts and pluriculturality.

Since 2008, the university has officially stated that it aims to become ‘non-racial’, more academically rigorous, and to extend its networks and links with international universities. In this chapter, after sketching some background about the university and the music department, I outline three strategies employed by the department to achieve these goals, namely: (i) developing new degree programmes, based on national and international standards, to help us attract new students and obtain higher budget allocations; (ii) establishing links with local schools and communities, in an effort to raise intake standards and improve the preparedness of students to cope with university study; and (iii) enhancing our links with international universities via student exchanges and participating in international conferences, etc., to help prepare our students for the global job market.

The struggle, old and new
The term ‘struggle’ has a rather specific meaning at the University of Fort Hare, not only because the university is built on one of the battlefields of the frontier war of 1850 and 1851 – one could almost say it is standing on a graveyard – but also because many important and iconic leaders of the liberation movement, including Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, studied here. Through these leaders, the university itself became a sort of symbol of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle. Founded in 1916 as the South African Native College, it was renamed the University College of Fort Hare in the 1950s, and the University of Fort Hare at the beginning of the 1970s. In the 1980s, and in the context of the apartheid state’s bantustan policy, the institution was sometimes referred to pejoratively as a ‘bush college’. In fact, Fort Hare is an almost mythical place; buildings and roads on the Alice campus are named after anti-apartheid activists, making it seem like a vast memorial. The history of the struggle seems to be everywhere, and the institution holds a special place in the hearts of intellectuals all over Africa.
However, new histories of struggle are now being lived by some of the younger students who tend to feel lost in the realities of modern global networks where intense competition, innovation and efficiency seem to be the driving forces of daily life. For some of these students, the old struggle continues in a new form. Even though apartheid has been abolished and the new South Africa is a democratic country trying to live up to the vision of being a rainbow nation, many students struggle to obtain access, firstly to a university education, and secondly to the national and international networks that might offer them job opportunities in the future.

The real struggle, as Abdullah Ibrahim explained during a visit to the university’s music department in March 2008, is (as I understood him) a mental one. Ibrahim seemed to be referring to a type of struggle related to the circumstances and challenges of modern life. He argued that these challenges can be overcome only through the (above all mental) liberation of the individual, a state that can only be successfully attained through the acquisition of knowledge and self-knowledge. And, to acquire this knowledge, individuals must have or develop a sense of discipline and responsibility. With reference to the students at the University of Fort Hare, the ongoing challenges relate to issues such as their economic situations, the high unemployment levels among their family members, the lack of quality schooling in the areas they live in, and diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

HIV infection rates are high in the Eastern Cape, and were estimated at 29% in 2007, while prevalence levels in the 15 to 49-year age group seem to have increased in the Eastern Cape between 2002 and 2008. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), the total unemployment rate in South Africa (using the expanded definition) in 2007 was 35.8%. This reflected a tiny improvement on the 2006 unemployment rate of 36.8% (SAIRR 2008). Unemployment in the Eastern Cape Province in 2007 was the third highest in the country (after Limpopo and the North West Province) at 42.9%. In 2006, the Eastern Cape’s unemployment rate was 36.9% and, in 2005 it was 43.6% (SAIRR 2008). According to the Amathole District Municipality Growth and Development Summit Socio-Economic Profile 2007, the Eastern Cape’s unemployment rate was as high as 53.5% in 2005 and 65.2% of households survived on an income of less than R1 500 a month (Amathole District Municipality 2008: 29).

By 2012, the unemployment rate in the Eastern Cape seemed to be declining slightly. Using the narrow definition of unemployment, the rate was estimated at 28.3% in the first quarter of 2012 and 28.6% for the second quarter 2012 (Stats SA 2012: vix and 7). Thus, one might talk of a slight
improvement but, according to an economic survey of South Africa carried out in July 2010 and published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), black youth remain particularly badly affected by unemployment:

South Africa has an extreme and persistent low employment problem, which interacts with other economic and social problems such as inadequate education, poor health outcomes and crime. While the unemployment rate fell steadily from 2002 through 2007, helped by the strong cyclical upswing, it never fell below 20% and by the first quarter of 2010 was back above 25%, near the levels of 2004. In addition to high open unemployment, South Africa’s very low labour force participation rate in part reflects a large number of discouraged job-seekers, so that on a broader measure, including such individuals, the unemployment rate is above 30%. As in other countries, vulnerable groups are most affected by unemployment, and in South Africa the problem is most extreme for black youth, for whom the unemployment rate exceeds 50%. (Barnard and Lysenko 2010: 9)

A high percentage of the University of Fort Hare’s students are drawn from this socio-economically disadvantaged region, and this may partly explain why, between 1991 and 2004, only 12% of them obtained their BA degrees in the minimum time. Another 37% of students finished their studies after two additional years of study, and 42% after three additional years (University of Fort Hare 2008: 20, 23).

Schooling in the Eastern Cape, often hits the news. Headlines such as, ‘Chaos! Schools disaster. Damning report: Education on brink of utter collapse’, which appeared in the *Weekend Post* on 2 October 2010, were common when school teachers went on strike for over a month. According to the *Weekend Post*, 80% of the schools involved were dysfunctional and 80% of the teachers were either underqualified or not qualified at all (Stander 2010a; see also Solomon 2010). Many schools in the region don’t have the facilities necessary for adequate teaching, and the Eastern Cape and Limpopo education departments ‘produced matric results that were among the country’s worst’ in 2010 (Mokone and Davids 2010). The problem of ‘ghost schools’ even occurred (Stander 2010b).7 In 2012, Jonathan Jansen, the vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State and president of SAIRR, argued that President Jacob Zuma must admit that South Africa’s education system is in crisis. Jansen also noted that taking population growth into account, proportionally fewer pupils were actually finishing school and the number of pupils writing matriculation exams had decreased since 2008 (Kimberly and De Jager 2012).
Students who wish to study music face an additional handicap: music is rarely offered as a subject in secondary schools in the Eastern Cape. Only a few schools in the area (Bulelani High School near Queenstown is one example) offer music as a subject. While the best of our students tend to come from such schools, among the students accepted by the music department in 2006, quite a number could hardly speak English, had no musical knowledge, and little understanding of what the study of music entails. Not surprisingly, a percentage of our intake expressed frustration after their first encounters with music theory and after their first few practical music lessons.

Admittedly, problems such as unemployment and poor schooling will not be solved by universities alone, but tertiary institutions do have to cope with their consequences. In other words, universities must respond to their students’ lack of schooling and poor socio-economic backgrounds as well as try to provide an education that meets (or comes close to meeting) international standards and enhances the employability of students in both the national and international job markets.

New challenges
The University of Fort Hare aims to convert itself into an institution of international standing before 2016. Probably the most challenging obstacles it faces in this regard are mentioned in the institution’s mission statement:

The mission of the University is to provide high quality education of international standard contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant, and applying that knowledge to the scientific, technological and socio-economic development of our nation and the wider world. (University of Fort Hare 2008: 20)

In other words, the university is tending towards modernisation through academisation and internationalisation; it intends to gain knowledge and apply it in society. ‘Scientific, technological and socio-economic development’ clearly refers to the sciences and the economic growth they are believed to generate. University departments related to the sciences and technologies have been ordered by the government to expand. Much of our institution’s funding goes to these departments and their intake limits are significantly higher. This leaves little space for holistically educated human beings. Indeed, the humanities appear a bit disadvantaged by this mission, in which individuals are less relevant than the development of the nation and the wider world.
Trends in higher education, as outlined by Deane Neubauer and Victor Ordoñez (2008: 53) indicate that the University of Fort Hare’s goals are in accordance with global developments:

Inevitably, the globalized world involves the rapid forming, reforming and un-forming of knowledge societies. With knowledge as the dominant currency of future growth and development, universities have little choice but to recognize their ever-changing roles as creators, transmitters and preservers of knowledge at the service of society as a whole.

Thus, as Neubauer and Ordoñez explain: ‘The knowledge society is a society based entirely on lifelong learning’ (2008: 54) and universities have to engage with this reality. But, beyond their ‘function of catering to market-driven demands for professional updating’ (2008: 54), universities must also meaningfully contribute to the development of societies. Neubauer and Ordoñez do mention the importance of indigenous knowledge in the ‘field of the preservation and enhancement of cultural and national identities and heritages’ (2008: 52), yet their primary focus is on knowledge. Skills, attitudes and personalities come a bit short in the approach they propose. ‘Knowledge is the currency of future growth’, they argue.

However, this kind of knowledge, when linked primarily with economic ‘growth’, may well be too one sided. Most ‘societies’ and ‘nations’ are polyethnic. In the globalising world, with its ever-widening networks, cultural knowledge provides another crucial kind of ‘currency’. Cultural knowledge improves and strengthens our ability to understand others, their ways of thinking and their self-perceptions. It also helps one locate one’s own position on the map, and thus it has the potential to facilitate interaction across ethnic borders. Music is in a privileged position here, for it deals not only with knowledge, but also with skills and interaction. In other words, music is able to connect the local with the global.

In the next section, I discuss strategies adopted by the music department at the University of Fort Hare since 1995, in its attempt to address this challenge.

**Strategies adopted by the music department, 1995 to 2012**

As mentioned earlier, the introduction of an African music syllabus by Dave Dargie in 1995 was a response to the end of the political struggle against apartheid. Through this syllabus, African music became an integral part of the courses offered by the department, and the culture of the formerly politically oppressed ethnic groups began to be rehabilitated and recognised by both
staff and students. However, the new syllabus was not simply a symbolic step towards liberation. There were practical considerations too. African music is easier for the students to master, because many of them absorb a lot of knowledge through the exposure they have to this music throughout their childhood. It is interesting and affirming for them to experience this music as a recognised university-level subject, being taught in an appropriate way – that is, in a concretely African manner by playing and repeating pieces of music (Bleibinger 2008a, 2008b; Dargie 1988, 1996; ). Our courses were carefully shaped to build on the students’ existing knowledge, and this made obtaining degrees more achievable. Initially, students’ financial problems were partly addressed through donations that Dargie was able to organise via individuals and parishes in Germany, such as St Stephan’s Parish in Munich.

These solutions were effective in the late 1990s, but struggles define themselves through the circumstances in which they are embedded, and circumstances have since changed. As noted, South Africa’s transition – particularly with reference to its education system – is far from over. On the one hand, the universities are expected to meet global standards and prepare their students to participate in an increasingly globalised world after they complete their studies. On the other hand, as in the case of Fort Hare university, the majority of students come from rural areas, and tend to be unaware of what it means to live in a global community. The struggle now is partly a result of the tension that occurs when tradition is seen as a counterpoint to innovation. In this situation, polarising positions (‘us’ versus ‘them’) tend to be constructed. In fact, tradition and innovation are not contradictory at all. As illustrated in the three development strategies adopted by the music department and outlined below, innovation can take place within existing traditions or even establish new traditions.

New staff
In 2007, the music department had four ‘active’ teachers (three full-time, one part-time). As a first strategy to meet new national and global challenges, and to provide sufficient and high-quality teaching, three more part-time lecturers were appointed in 2008 for choral studies, singing, piano and music theory. Our aim was to improve choral singing among our students and to improve academic standards. From then onwards, all modules were taught more intensely and solo lessons for singers were included. As a result of the new teachers, we not only obtained excellent singers, but the university choir won several awards, and one of our students won the 2011 Grahamstown Music Competition. The engagement of the part-time lecturers meant that
our courses became more oriented towards practice. For example, students are encouraged to participate in choral adjudication, and these opportunities are highly appreciated by students.

New degree programmes
The music department’s role within the university had long been limited by the fact that it was able to offer students only a plain Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. The music department forms part of the social sciences and humanities faculty and, like other departments in the faculty, the department is allocated an annual intake limit for first-year students by faculty management. At the same time, we often had to accept students who had been unable to secure a space in other faculties and we were given no say in the enrolment process. In other words, the majority of the students enrolled through the faculty’s regular application and registration processes, which meant that no musical requirements and no auditions were expected of them. And, in exceptional cases only, were we able to take any steps to get students accepted who met the academic intake requirements and had some musical background. In some cases, this meant that students who specifically wished to study music were excluded.

To address this situation, we began developing new degrees, namely, the BA in Music, for the Alice campus, and a BMus degree with specialisations in performance, musicology and ethnomusicology for the East London campus. The BA in Music and the BMus degrees were both accredited by the South African Council of Higher Education’s Higher Education Quality Committee in 2011 and were implemented from 2012. Both of these degree programmes aim to improve the knowledge and performance standards as well as the international connectedness and the employability of our students. We also applied for and received funding from the National Arts Council to cover the fees of students in need, thus improving the financial situation of our students.

The development of the new degree programmes occurred partly in response to the strategic considerations mentioned, but we also consulted with our own staff and students and engaged with teachers at secondary schools. Both groups informed us that there was need for practice-oriented studies and programmes that are more centred in music. In October 2009, after we had developed our first outline of the new BMus degree, we asked our students for their opinions. We received some comments orally and two written submissions. The written submissions reflected the opinion of several students for, as is common at this university, students talk about departmental issues and one of them writes down the outcome of their discussions. One
submission proposed that courses suited to the needs of the music industry, including music marketing and management be developed, and requested that classes in Western instruments be offered to establish more ‘balance’. Thus, to a certain extent, the students addressed global issues. Some former students who had gone on to study to become teachers indicated that it would be useful for us to re-introduce piano and recorder as instruments as these are useful for teaching music in secondary schools. They also recommended that the theory components relating to piano and secondary instruments should be strengthened. Overall, our attempts to improve standards were perceived positively and we were told that we should aim even higher.

The BMus programme has a stream for performers (focused on solo voice and instruments), and one for future academics and teachers (focused on musicology and ethnomusicology). Originally, we considered including music education as well, but were told by a member of the Teaching and Learning Centre that this might lead to complications with the education faculty.

The music department extended beyond the confines of the Alice campus in 2012, when we began operating from the Miriam Makeba Centre for Performing Arts in East London as well. First-year students began enrolling in the BMus programme from May 2012. Strategic considerations and global developments mean that we encourage our students to specialise early in order to make them competitive on the national and (even global) market. In approving the degree, the Council on Higher Education stipulated that we have to ensure that our students can read and write music. Thus, for the first time, we have to be involved in the intake process and we therefore introduced – as in European conservatories or Musikhochschulen – auditions and entrance requirements. But, being mindful of the circumstances of our students, we aim to include, rather than exclude, students from learning opportunities, and have thus ensured that entry requirements take the country’s educational situation into consideration. As soon as the BMus is fully functional and viable, we will continue to develop new streams, including music production, as well as courses in marketing and management related to the music industry.

Addressing intake standards and extending community outreach
The music department is in touch with people in rural villages in the Eastern Cape, and we support various schools by offering music training for possible future students. For example, our lecturers give recorder lessons, form marimba bands and give workshops to HIV-related community projects. Concerts and recitals, to which we invite school pupils, also form part of our community outreach programme.
We also got involved when a local school, which has the potential to become a feeder school for the music department, decided to develop a fully accredited music programme. The proposed programme is pitched at Levels 2 and 3 of South Africa’s National Qualifications Framework, and draws on materials used in our first year. Students from this school should, thus, be equipped with sufficient musical knowledge to embark on music studies at tertiary level, if they choose to do so. If extended to other schools and colleges in future, this project has the potential to create jobs, raise the standards and produce school leavers who are better prepared for university study.

Community outreach is also an integral part of the Indigenous Music and Oral History Project at the University of Fort Hare. The project is led by the music department and has an academic component. The project involves collecting indigenous music through field research. We then preserve and promote the use of collected indigenous music knowledge in classes, workshops and concerts. For example, the Ngqoko Cultural Group were invited by the department to make recordings and give a concert. Since then, members of the group have assisted us as interpreters and consultants. Thus, its original bearers bring indigenous knowledge to us and we then use the material in classes on campus or during workshops held in communities, and, in this way, we take indigenous culture and knowledge back to communities. ‘Outreach’, as ethnomusicologists would call it in the classical sense, then becomes ‘inreach’.23

International exchanges
Indigenous musical knowledge has also been spread through publications and lectures given in Munich and Barcelona.24 Visiting lecturers and researchers are encouraged to give lectures – preferably on topics related to African music.25 However, these lectures are only the beginning of an internationalisation process, which we plan to intensify. Our postgraduate students already participate almost regularly in national and international conferences and colloquia, and in March 2009 a group of our students performed in a musical programme in Munich and Kempten in Germany. Our primary aim is to establish a student-exchange programme. An agreement between Fort Hare and the Ludwig-Maximilians University (LMU) in Munich was signed at faculty level in March 2008 and two other bridges between ourselves and Europe and the USA are under discussion. In 2012 the first two exchange students from the LMU visited our department for a semester.
To sum up
As reflected in its mission statement, the University of Fort Hare aims to contribute to South Africa’s intellectual, social and economic growth. However, the attitude of students, their socio-economic background and the financial situation of the university demands a unique approach to this project – especially if the institution wants to include, rather than exclude, students from the surrounding communities.

As discussed, the music department has developed a specialisation in music within the existing BA degree programme and established a new BMus degree; it has established direct links with local communities through teaching in schools and offering workshops to NGOs; it was also involved in the development of an accredited music programme for a potential feeder school. Through these initiatives, the department aims to improve student preparedness and access to music studies, as well as to offer courses of a standard that enhances the international employability of graduates.

Music occupies a special space in the nexus between global and local; it deals with skills and blurs boundaries. It has the potential to bring people from different ethnic backgrounds into contact and thus contribute to the cultural development of individuals in a global community.

As explained, we try to give students real options. However, the often-desperate socio-economic backgrounds of students and the poor state of education in the Eastern Cape have the potential to hamper real progress. The former problem can be partly solved through sourcing additional funding. Unfortunately, the latter problem is largely outside of our control, and will not be solved until students, parents and teachers develop a stronger sense of the value of education and of their own responsibilities in this regard. Without this, many South African children will have few real opportunities. Our new degrees and international linkages offer students a doorway to a wider world; it is the students who must decide whether or not to pass through.

Notes
1 To avoid any ideological implications I – like my colleague Josep Martí – use the term ‘pluricultural’ instead of ‘multicultural’.
2 Gruber dedicated a book on notation to the music department (see Gruber 1974). The history of the department is briefly described in Bleibinger (2008b). For further background on the general situation of music and musicology in South Africa until the 1980s, see Paxinos (1986).
3 Ibrahim lived not far from my hometown in Germany while he was in exile. I discovered this during a conversation with him on 4 March 2008 when I expressed surprise at his detailed knowledge of the Chiemgau area, and he then explained that he had lived in Aschau for some years.

4 See, for instance, data from Dr Norma Van Niekerk, cited in Bleibinger (2008a: 42).

5 With reference to the HIV prevalence in 2008, there is some uncertainty. The decline of HIV prevalence in South Africa for 2008 was questioned because the use of anti-retroviral therapies, and the longer lifespan connected with these, seems to have led to an increase in the number of HIV-positive people. Thus, Rehle and Shisana (2009: 634, Table 1) indicated an increase in the HIV prevalence in the Eastern Cape, in the 15 to 49-year age group, but see also Dorrington (2009a, 2009b).

6 R1 500 was equal to approximately US$210, in 2007.

7 I experienced the disaster of rural education in the Eastern Cape, when some colleagues and I visited schools during a fieldtrip around Hobeni in the Transkei area, in 2008. At one school, facilities were in bad shape, yet the teachers were motivated, while another brand new school was closed, because the teachers had ‘gone to collect their salaries’ that day. We were told by a chief in one of the villages that children often miss school because they ‘prefer to take care of the cattle’, following the ‘tradition of their fathers’. Thus, even if facilities and teachers are provided, children will have few real opportunities until parents and teachers take responsibility for ensuring that children receive the best education possible.

8 In fact, in many rural and urban areas, music is taught only superficially as part of a subject called ‘Arts and Culture’. In some urban settings, however, some of the better-resourced schools have their own bands, choirs and even stage opera and other musical productions. Students from these schools generally experience a higher standard of education and are better prepared for music studies at university level. Unfortunately, these elite schools are not accessible to all – competition for places means that such schools tend to accept only the better performing students, and an inability to afford the school fees excludes the majority of others.

9 In meetings concerning the academic restructuring process that will be ongoing until 2016, one topic has been standards. Yet published output is seen as almost more important, as this generates income for the institution – each academic staff member at the university is expected to have at least 1.25 articles published in accredited journals each year.

10 Literature on Xhosa music was rare in the mid-1990s and Dargie had to research and write all the material for his lectures. See, for instance, Dargie (1988, 1993, and 1995).

11 For additional information on Dargie’s work, see Hawn (2002).
In his (1996) article, ‘African methods of music education: Some reflections’ Dargie describes his own negative experiences of learning piano in a Western way, and explains that he had to learn how people teach each other indigenous music skills in the villages and how he later applied these methods while teaching at Fort Hare university. We now use several ways of teaching and we try to encourage students to participate, as much as possible. In some honours courses, for example, the student-teacher role is partially blurred in musical-instrument-making workshops, where the students contribute knowledge learned in villages. The workshops are highly successful and popular with students.

Some of our students play a leading role in this choir and it is, to a great extent, their work that led to the awards.

As was done in 2009 by Mr Mkululi Milisi; the students appreciated this practical extra work very much, as their expertise as music students was acknowledged.

The social sciences and humanities faculty consists of two schools, namely the School of Social Sciences and the School of Humanities. The official intake limit in 2008, 2009 and 2010 was forty students per year for the whole School of Humanities (that is, students accepted by the departments of music, philosophy, history, African languages, English, etc.). Since 2010, the intake limits allocated to all departments in this school have been decreasing, leading to an unviable staff-student ratio. Some departments were under threat of being closed and were told that one way out of this would be to introduce a new degree, in addition to the general BA offered by the School of Humanities.

Further specialisations were under discussion as this chapter was being written (in late 2012).

I want to express my sincere thanks to the National Arts Council, especially Lindi Ngcobo. Many students would not have been able to study without financial support from this institution.

Comments on the proposed BMus degree, 6 October 2009 (copy in my possession).

African music remains a central part of our syllabus. The reintroduction of piano and – to a certain extent – recorder simply means that we again teach instruments were on the syllabus, but that had been neglected for some years. Thus, both 'local' and 'global' music are taught in a more holistic way.

Both streams contain compulsory African components.

I have run drum-making workshops with NGOs such as the HIV Hope Project in Hogsback. Members of the project subsequently made their own drums and sold them, partly to finance their anti-retroviral medication and food.

Recitals are organised by lecturers who have set up or lead ensembles, such as our piano teacher, Mariel Ilusorio from Grahamstown, and our voice teacher, Gwyneth Lloyd from Hogsback.
The term ‘inreach’ is used in applied ethnomusicology; for more background information see, for instance, Pettan (2008) and Sheehy (1992).

Dargie gave guest lectures in Munich and I have given lectures in Barcelona. But it is important to note that the music department’s research is closely linked to its relationships with the local communities. Thus, while Ordorika (2008: 15) laments the general state of research at universities as follows: ‘Research productivity is fundamental in establishing a university as a prominent institution at international and local levels. The networking and global interacting potential of institutions is strengthened if they adhere to the dominant productivity model. They therefore constantly reproduce it, purposefully or not. Their national prominence and influence on public policy have also become increasingly dependent on their research productivity. This often hampers the institution’s ability to commit to local problems and constituencies’; the music department at the University of Fort Hare is in little danger of losing its contacts with, or commitment to, local communities.

For example, in March and April 2009, Nepomuk Nitschke from Germany visited the department and gave lectures on tonic sol-fa and his research in Cameroon, and in September 2010, Dr Joseph Matare from Switzerland gave two lectures on improvisation and African-drum notation.

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