PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

DANCE-MUSICKING:
NON-PRESCRIPTIVE DANCE, MUSIC, AND DANCE-MUSIC ENGAGEMENT IN CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This article explores dance-musicking as a non-prescriptive process of interdependent engagement with dance and music in their teaching and learning contexts. The author asks how this engagement challenges and disrupts uneven institutional hierarchies, and how it cultivates a more holistic understanding of, and access to the knowledge embedded in the dancing and dance-musicking processes. The discussion is informed by the author's dance, music, and dance-music practice oscillating between formal and non-formal settings, and continuous research on the same in East Africa. The article is premised on a critical observation that within the twentieth century, dance and music knowledge has continued to grow more into an institutionalized form than it has into a communal one. The article pivots the dance-musicking process as a cross-sectoral collaborative engagement for teaching and learning dance, music, and dance-music discussed on both micro and macro levels of artistic (co) existence. As such, it highlights core elements of 'communitarian' teaching and learning approaches, which have not favourably evolved alongside formal education. This situation is attributed to a lack in cross-sectoral complementarity between the formal and non-formal dance, and music knowledge bases —complementarity that works well in transforming higher education institutions into intellectual resources that positively influence, and that are influenced by their communities.

Keywords: Dance-musicking, formal and non-formal teaching and learning contexts, formal and non-formal educational contexts, 'communitarian' teaching and learning approaches.

AUTHOR BIO

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About the author and the premise of the article

I am a dance and music educator, practitioner, researcher, an African multi-instrumentalist, and instruments-craftsman. My research interests are in exploring formal and non-formal community pedagogical approaches for dance, music, and dance-music arts education and transmission; dance and music as interactive knowledge-bodies; and dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking as situated, and cultural-specific processes of knowing. In this article, I draw on a double orientation in dance and music practices oscillating in, between, and beyond the formal and non-formal pedagogical contexts. I also draw on my dance and musical life experiences as well as my recent doctoral, and continuous research among the dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking communities in Uganda, and in the wider East African community. This article is focused on the concept of dance-musicking as a cross-sectoral collaborative process lived and experienced in teaching and learning contexts. By dance-musicking, I refer to the free and non-prescriptive engagement with the music for dancing before and during the dancing. I also use this concept to refer to the process of making music with or through the enaction of dance movement (Kibirige, 2020a).

Dance-musicking embeds collaborative macro and micro rhythmic structuring, analytics, and sensations, as well as action-based rhythm, rhyme, and time complexities that open it to conceptualisation beyond just dance and music. For the purpose of this article, I will focus more on its pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings putting more emphasis on its cross-sectoral collaborative possibilities that enhance dance and dance-music teaching and learning processes in both formal and non-formal contexts.

The article begins with highlighting identified shortcomings hindering cross-sectoral collaborative dance and dance-music teaching and learning and their related past and current scholarly discussions. Then, I introduce dance-musicking and the theoretical and methodological framework that underpins it. Thereafter, I discuss the dance-musicking process in formal and non-formal cross-sectoral teaching and learning contexts, drawing on both micro and macro conceptualisations. While the discussion in this article is premised in Eastern Africa, dance-musicking is a phenomenon whose existence surpasses regional and continental borders. I apply its wide-ranging attributes in teaching and learning contexts in East Africa, Europe (Norway in particular), and beyond.

Shortcomings hindering cross-sectoral collaborative dance and dance-music teaching and learning processes

Cross-sectoral collaboration in teaching, learning, and unlearning processes is the larger premise of this article. In this premise, learning is understood as the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, life and professional experience, or association with others. Unlearning relates to rediscovery or reorientation of what was previously learned. It can also be a form of enhancement of a skill, or an adaptation of a whole new set of discovered skills, or a transfer from one level of artistic understanding to another, which sometimes necessitates one to unlearn previous knowledge. Such processes unfold at both micro and macro levels of daily artistic training, artistic activities, and encounters.

On a micro level of dance and dance-music action, reaction, and interaction, the

notions of rhythm, rhyme, and time (RRT), for example, can be seen as major structuring mechanisms for dance and dance-music practitioners, and in our daily life engagements. For instance, they can point one to *when* a dance or dance-music practitioner actually holds onto or let's go of a particular micro rhythmic action or reaction in time. This point in a given time of artistic action may seem obvious, especially in more formalised dance and dance-music learning contexts, where dance and dance-music action and their timing may be predetermined or prescribed and set to rhyme in a particular way and in/for a particular duration (time). It may be argued to depend on the nature and context of the enaction, performance, and (or) choreography. The *when* question may ultimately lead one to a *where* question about the same, whose answer may seem obvious as well if one is to deep oneself into the very detailed micro aspects of dance and dance-music action.

On a macro level, one would build on such micro elements in order to develop a broader perspective and come to the meaning and intentions of the dance and dance-music action. On both levels, the answers to the *when* and *where* questions may depend on one's dance and music orientation or social, cultural, or social-cultural background.

However, these questions point to a rarely discussed notion in current dance and music research, performance, and practice —the practitioner's collaborative cross-sectoral artistic engagement onto which they depend for meaningful dance and dance-music action. Cross-sectoral artistic engagements articulate how, and by which logical bodily means in a given movement rhythmic action, practitioners effect meaningfully holistic artistic actions, reactions, and interactions. Detailed cross-sectoral collaboration of dance and music has for long been neglected in research. Yet, collaborative processes of dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking are key in explicating the functions inscribed in dance and music traditions in both formal and non-formal contexts (Kibirige, 2020a; Njoki, 2005). Dance and music have mostly been looked at as different sectors in formal teaching and learning, yet in their practice, they are intertwined and inseparable sectors. This cross-sectoral artistic engagement has been hindered by three major shortcomings:

Knowledge transfer systems

In many African nations, those in Eastern African in particular, there was a sharp shift in the knowledge transfer system emanating from the introduction of formal education, and the adoption of English as the official language, as well as forms of worship, in the second half of the nineteenth century (Muyanda-Mutebi, 1996). Prior to this shift, core elements of 'communitarian' dance and music teaching and learning approaches such as community mirroring and imitation, which depended more on one's natural faculties and intellect, were more in use. Children, for example, learnt to count, re/create, remember, and solve riddles through particular dance, music, and dance-music rhythmic interaction. Such multi-layered (micro) rhythmic intentionalities of the practitioners existed in the core community cultural fabric and knowledge (transfer) system. In this context, the processes of dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking activated this knowledge and knowing on both macro and micro levels of practitioner's sensibilities (also see Parviainen, 2003). To rhythm syncopatively, for example, related more to the core virtues of life, such as coexistence, patience, passion, compassion, among others,

which happened in a rather natural order of intuitive musical action, reaction, and interaction. Indeed, the formal and institutionalised knowledge system still bares many of these inherent virtues, but they are sometimes suppressed by its competitive and commercialistic confines, which affect their sustainability and self-regeneration.

Artificial separation between dance and music

The artificial separation between dance and music is a fundamental challenge that interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral dance, music, and dance-music studies continue to grapple with. A number of scholars have articulated this phenomenon, as current formal institutional frameworks continue to hinder it (Kaminsky, 2014; Keil, 1966). However, music and dance research continue to counteract its adverse effects (Blacking, 1965; Felföldi, 2001; Stepputat & Djebbari, 2020). Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2015), for example argues that "[B]ecause the physical act of drumming has a visual dimension, the communication between dancer and drummer is essential" (2015, p. 86). Joseph Kwabena Nketia (1974) argues in the same direction, when he states that "[M]usic for the dance thus performs two major functions: it must create the right atmosphere or mood or stimulate and maintain the initial urge for expressive movements, and it must provide the rhythmic basis to be articulated in movement" (p. 217). Dance anthropologist Georgiana Gore (2001) contends to the same when she argues that:

> Practices construed as "dance" in many European languages would, for the Nigerian Edo or Igbo for example, be termed respectively iku or egwu, practices which in many parts of West Africa are conceived as including music, singing, play, games as well as dance […] To dance is therefore to play (igba egwu) or 'to dance play' in response to the beating out of music (iku egwu). Dance play, I have deduced, is intrinsically rhythmic and sociable, that is, you never dance alone, and you never dance without music. (Gore, 2001, p. 29)

However, formal institutional frameworks seem to either present it in isolation, or one of the two are usually re/presented or given more focus than the other, thus hindering their cross-sectoral interdisciplinary nature.

Artistic and scholarly macro and micro engagement with dance and music

Earlier scholarly efforts have not engaged much with practitioners' cross-sectoral collaborative processes of dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking. A few scholarly works from some African musicologists and ethnomusicologists hint on this phenomenon (Nketia, 1954; 1974; Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2014). What is still striking is that detailed research on (micro) rhythm that are still visible in community dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking processes were and still are mostly neglected. Within Norway, the center for interdisciplinary studies of rhythm, motion, and time at the University of Oslo continues to conduct outstanding research on rhythm and its temporal dimensions (Danielsen, 2016). However, there is a general deficiency of detailed scholarly collaborative exploration of community dancing and musicking. This fuels unprecedented difficulty in perceiving, contemplating, as well as understanding African community contextualisation of bodily rhythmic engagement, that brings a dimension, approach, and synthesis beyond aesthetic value.

Earlier academic discussions surrounding the shortcomings

There have been academic efforts towards understanding 'African' dance, music, dance-music, and their social, structural, as well as artistic processes that give meaning to their lived life manifestations (Agawu & Agawu, 1995; Anku, 1997; Jones, 1959; Kauffman,1980; Mabingo, 2020b; Welsh-Asante, 2010). For instance, Ruth Stone (1984) observed that a number of rhythmic phenomena come to the fore in a myriad of literature on African rhythm. These include, but are not limited to, being additive, being off beat, having both horizontal and vertical hemiola, being cross and inherent, maintaining particular motor patterns, as well as often existing in a polyphonic texture due to its interlocking or hocketing nature. One common realisation here is that there is tremendous emphasis on what is visible and audible to researchers. With the aid of innovative systems of analysis such as notation, wave forms, motion capture, among others today, we are continuously getting closer to understanding many technical aspects of dance and dance-musical rhythmic phenomena (Green, 2019; Himberg, 2014; Kibirige, 2020b). However, a large part of rhythmic action, reaction, and interaction remains implicit, tacit, and sometimes only felt by the enactors in that moment of enaction (Gore & Bakka, 2007; Molander, 1992; Gore et.al., 2020; Kibirige, 2023). Crucial aspects of practitioners' collaborative (micro) rhythmic retention, and anticipation that bring us to the understanding of (micro) rhythmic intentionality inherent to practitioners, remain immensely under researched. James Koetting & Roderic Knight (1986), for example, stated that:

> We often place too much emphasis in analysis on the sound material alone, spinning out theories about what we *hear* and what we see in our transcription, and we spend too little time digging beneath the surface to discover what African carriers of the traditions conceptualise and hear. At the other extreme, some of us devote our efforts to other cultural aspects rather than to music and musicians, hoping to find the answers elsewhere. (Koetting & Knight, 1986, p. 58)

Their observations are, to a large extent, still applicable today, as there continues to exist a general conception and 'bracketing' of the African rhythm or rhythmic sensation basing more on what is seen, felt at a performance, and heard in anthropological research contexts. Observing is not only with the eyes, and hearing is not only with the ears, but with all human collaborative bodily, sound, and mental perception. Questions of *what* is, and *how* it is rhythmically experienced, perceived, transformed, and transferred (taught) by such practitioners on a micro level, and in their communal (momentary) dancing, musicking, dance-musicking and mirroring processes continue to remain mostly unanswered (Small, 1998).

Research on European theatre dance presents a growing understanding of the interrelation between dance and music (Damsholt, 1999; Hodgins, 1992; Jordan, 2011). This relationship is also articulated by some African music and dance scholars (Kuwor, 2017; Nketia, 1974). However, less attention is paid to the sounds the body makes in the process of dancing. Yet, in many music and dance cultures in Africa, this collaborative body-sonic relation and process of interaction formulates the very essence of dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking. It is on this interactive 'sound of dancing' that unconscious rhythmic multiplications of movement patterns and (or) dance-melodic

patterns that both dancers and dance-musicians depend. Therefore, dance-musicking forefronts interdependence, coexistence, and cross-sectoral artistic collaboration. In this constellation, one has to multi-task and think not to separate, but to merge. It is this interplay of motivic-sonic gesticulations that foment a build-up of the energy and vibrations that effect the essences of dance, music, and dance-music.

Theoretical and methodological underpinnings of dance-musicking in teaching and learning contexts

The conceptual and theoretical basis of any dance-musicking phenomenon can be diversely embedded in broader fields such as dance and music pedagogy, dance studies, ethnochoreology, ethnomusicology, and musicology, focusing on both formal and non-formal music and dance engagements (Achieng'Akuno, 2019; Kaeppler, 2007; Nettl,1983; Beard & Gloag, 2004). All these fields have threads into performance studies and employ practical aspects of rhythm, rhyme, and time as dominantly explicit or implicit mechanisms for teaching, learning, researching, performing, and practicing dance, music, and dance-music. Its embedment of collaborative macro and micro rhythmic structuring and analytics, as well as time and action-based complexities opens it to conceptualisation beyond just music and dance. In this article, I focus more on its pedagogical theoretical underpinnings putting more emphasis on its cross-sectoral collaborative possibilities that enhance dance, music, and dance-music teaching and learning processes in both formal and non-formal contexts. Drawing on these processes in formal and non-formal teaching and learning, a triangulation of structualistic and phenomenological approaches with the theory of Ubuntu, which underscores humanistic coexistence underpins the conceptualisation of this phenomenon.

Research on, and search for underlying structural patterns in several forms of human activity has its roots in structuralism. Structuralism posits that a cultural phenomenon can be understood by way of its relationships to a larger structure, thus connoting its micro and macro confines. The '- ism' is rooted in ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and was promoted by anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (1981). Some earlier dance and music scholars are proponents of this theoretical approach, viewing rhythm as analytical tools that incorporate both constituent parameters and structures of a music and dance genre or tradition (Hanna & Hanna, 1968; Jones, 1954; Ranger, 1975). From a pedagogical viewpoint, the dance-musicking process contains structural frameworks that can analytically break down constituents of a rhythmic phenomenon to explicate its micro-rhythmic interactive and collaborative being from which its artistic and non-artistic functionalities unfold in time (also see Abel, 2014; Johansson, 2010; Polak, 2010; Temperley, 2000). However, the central elements of life interactions that underpin the notions of dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking are not only about explicit and institutionalised structures. They are also about the implicit, just felt, and intuitive humanistic impulses of the body and mind that are cultural-specific, and collaboratively inter-sectoral. Structural laws deal more with mechanical breakdown or existences of parts, such as the rhythmic points of entry and attack rather than with the quality (of) and life in them. They deal less with what the practitioner does naturally in the dance or dance-music enaction process. The mechanical decomposition can affect one's pedagogical understanding of the spirit, humanistic affection, and inherent

intentions of such moments of artistic action, reaction, and interaction as they do unfold in corporeal and sonic interactions in social and artistic encounters. Dance-musicking is about holistic exploration and understanding of a dance, music, and dance-music phenomenon. Indeed, structuralist approaches here can be engaged for analytical pedagogical purposes. However, there is need to go beyond structural flow and formal technicalities in order to explicate the life in the dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking processes. Dance-musicking brings us closer to the conceptualisation of the totality of a given dance phenomenon. From a phenomenological viewpoint, it draws on the practitioners' experiences (past and momentary) and their intentionalities in both action and outcome in contexts and conditions that propel learning in both formal and non-formal contexts. The dance-musicking process within a teaching and learning context is grounded in sustained *doing*, which is directly related to habitual learning. Habituation, as described by phenomenologist Edward Casey (1985), refers specifically to situations of being oriented in a given situation by having become familiar with its particular structure. Casey argues that "both skilled and unskilled actions, as well as routinised ones contribute to habituation as knowing-your-way-around-somewhere" (1985, p. 43). Consequently, dance, music, and dance-music knowledge is both experienced and embodied by the practitioners.

The dance-musicking process therefore explores individual practitioners' embodiments of lived interactive experiences and their surrounding phenomena that generate context and meaning. There is a large discourse on embodiment, as it spreads into many fields of study such as philosophy, phenomenology, and anthropology (Csordas, 1990; Csordas & Harwood, 1994; Lepecki, 2010; Lock, 1993; Warburton, 2011). I use embodiment relating to situatedness in the enlivenment of human bodily experiences, dance, music, and dance-music in particular. In dance pedagogical contexts, this enlivenment is key in bodily learning, as well as a point of reference for momentary and past bodily experiences that propel individual understanding of a given dance or dance-music phenomenon. Eeva Anttila (2013/2019) describes dance movement activity focusing on how it becomes a special form of learning. As Anttila contends, dance movement activity does not begin and stop at the body. It involves past and present experiences, and momentary sensations imbedded in and invoked by the dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking processes. This, in part, is what dance educationist Tone Pernille Østern (2013) refers to as the teacher's bodily-sensory experience and inner dialogue. I argue that cross-sectoral combination of sonic and motivic actions, reactions, and interactions imbedded in such processes enliven human corporeal experiences in pedagogical contexts. I therefore use embodiment in particular reference to the process of making explicit of the bodily (dance) and sound (music) expressions. These are not only realised through the practitioner's collaborative bodily actions, but also by the dance and music dialogue created by such actions.

The dance-musicking process furthers this dialogic process through its non-prescriptive adaption to contexts in which practical dance, music, and dance-music encounters, experiences, and their surrounding phenomena prevail. In non-formal communal settings, this process may erupt from a subtle sounding of a rhythmic or music phrase at a dance event. Such a phrase is put into a repetitive body movement pattern, and the repetition in the process creates a form of habituation and creative

body-sonic dialogue. Such an engagement in many communities in Sub-saharan Africa, for example, involves explicit and non-restrictive dance, music, and dance-music pedagogical tools such as free and situational bodily imitation, where one draws on, and adapts to the surrounding dance and music engagements among other members of the community. It also involves community mirroring as another form of dance and dance-music pedagogical tool, with practitioners (skilled or unskilled) learning from moments of interaction, in which learning is sometimes achieved unconsciously. Therefore, practitioners' corporeal experiences can be understood in their structural or phenomenological (co)existences explicated through motivic and sonic rhythm, rhyme, or time. Practitioners' rhythmic and motivic embodiments do not only depend on their understanding of and relationship with the surrounding phenomena, people, groups, communities, and associations, but also on their practical interactions, especially in multi-cultural contexts.

In collaboratively expanding the structuralist approaches needed in formal pedagogical confines, a holistic understanding of the dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking processes in both formal and non-formal pedagogical contexts requires an inclusive, and coexistential theoretical underpinning grounded in both community and scholarly contexts. It requires an understanding of human interactive relations (Østern, 2017). The practical 'actionisation' of the theory and philosophy of Ubuntu becomes crucial. Ubuntu activates harmonious coexistence through human agency and interaction — interactions that are, for the case of this discussion, through rhythmic bodily, sonic, and body-sonic action, and reaction (Murove, 2012; Nussbaum, 2003; Lefa, 2015). Ubuntu connotes coexistence, which has for long now been perceived mainly on macro human (or community) interaction rather than on a micro level of artistic interaction. Dance-musicking is a clear and succinct process of activating Ubuntu grounded at the core of micro-rhythmic interaction, onto which the manifestation of rhythmic coexistence unfolds in both formal and non-formal contexts. As such, the Ubuntu theory, in this case, brings together structure and form, the surrounding phenomenon in the moment of dancing and dance-musicking. Indeed, being a humanistic collaborative and cross-sectoral form of artistic interaction, dance-musicking finds its theoretical and methodological grounding in a number of pedagogical contextualisation that need a wider discussion. For the purpose of this article, I use a triangulation of the pedagogical structuralist approach, phenomenology, and the theory of Ubuntu to underpin the dance-musicking phenomenon. Further, the dance-musicking process deals with (micro) rhythmically complex phenomena involving sonic and body-sonic syncopation. To explore this multi-microrhythmic and multi-layered complexion, one does not only qualitatively observe the phenomenon, but also embodies it, lives in its moments of dance and dance-music action, and habitually enact/re-enact/perform such moments. This links to musical and bodily rhythmic imitation, repetition, and performance, in general, as pedagogical methodological approaches underpinning this process and form of knowing (Baily, 2001). I draw on these methods to explore its collaborative and cross-sectoral nature.

Dance-musicking in cross-sectoral collaborative teaching and learning of dance, music, and dance-music

Dance-musicking is itself a result of an interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral collaboration, which enhances the teaching interactions and expands both formal and non-formal dance and music knowledge dissemination systems. To explicate this, let me draw on its rhythmically collaborative nature on a micro level, and its convergency of dance and music in artistic and community-based dance and dance-music encounters on a macro level.

Community encounters, experiences, research, and other interactions – The macro aspects

For practicing dance and dance-music researchers and teachers, community encounters, experiences, and interactions (active or passive) play a large role in the conceptualization of dance and dance-music phenomena. In an ethnographic fieldwork, it is usual that we observe movement phenomena, but also learn (about) them by doing. The 'doing' is directly related to habitual learning through enaction and re-enaction of the dance and dance-music phenomena. I refer to habitual actions/ learning here in relation to their way of continuous and consistent enaction and re-enaction – doing and re-doing —embodying and living in the moments of this bodily and sonic rhythmic action, reaction, and interaction (Østern, 2013).

Within this premise, dance researchers experience moments during fieldwork in which we habitually learn movement patterns from practitioners. At many dance events in *Aler* community in Northern Uganda, for example, I experienced several moments when my position as a researcher who came to the community to study a dance tradition was laid bare in moments of dancing, musicking, and dance-musicking. In a moment of enacting the *Labala* dance and dance-music pattern of the Acholi people, for example, I found myself emersed in the doing, and in complete disregard of who I was, where I was coming from, what language dialects I spoke and didn't speak. All my movement abilities and disabilities did not matter in that moment of communal synch with the dance, music, dance-music phenomenon. All the so-called formal fieldwork gadgets, that is to say, camera, recorder, or notebook did not have any baring in that moment of emersion into the motivic and body-sonic vibe. At this particular moment, my existence dissolved and merged with that of the community practitioners and active members of the community irrespective of academic position or status. This experience also happens in many performance contexts where, for example, the would-be audience breaks loose and joins the dancing, breaking the artificial barrier between the performer and the audience or practitioner and non-practitioner. Speaking to this experience Noel Kaggwa, a Ugandan community dance and music practitioner enumerates that:

> In a communal setting, and probably in all music and dance learning contexts, the ultimate moment we are always looking for is that moment when we are able to lose ourselves into a groove, and we always do that at the time when all the prevailing movement and sound elements come together to intersect and evoke our sensibilities to respond in synch with all that is surrounding us. We can only transcend in the action of dancing or musicking – it is the collaborative interplay i.e. rhythmic, bodily, or sound that propel this transcendence. (Personal interaction with Noel Kaggwa, July 4, 2022)

Kaggwa refers to the moment in action when our body movement and sound are in complete collaborative synch. Such moments are not only experienced in performative or artistic engagements. We do experience them in our day-to-day activities too. For example, when we sing in the action of cutting something in the kitchen; when are picking coffee in the coffee farm, or when we are digging in the garden. For instance, the action of lifting up a hand hoe and plunging it in the ground while harming a melodic line effects the intended action of tilling the ground. However, melodic, rhythmic, or not, in addition to the melodic line sung in the process, the sound that is created in the process of plunging the hoe into the ground is directly related to the flection and extension of the arm and leg muscles even in a flash of a moment – it is a real-time cross-sectoral collaborative effort whether done consciously or unconsciously.

Reflecting further on this cross-sectoral merger, a formal practical dance class teaching and learning situation comes to mind. In combining the non-formal and formal pedagogical toolset, I have often times found myself drawn into dissolution between teacher and student when I unconsciously use the process of musicking (drumming) as a form of instruction for dancing (Mabingo, 2020a). It is often and usual for one of the drums in a set to sound the movement patterns in the dancing and dance-musicking process. With mnemonic rhythms, practical movement illustrations, imitations, and movement mirroring combined, we (learners and dance 'teachers') are able to effectively engage in this collaborative relationship of action, reaction, and inter/counteraction. But, how and when do we know that we have achieved the artistry to our satisfaction? How and when do we really know that a movement pattern with all its intended functionalities has sunk in? It is usually at the moment when we all move seamlessly in synch, within the same vibe both sound and body movement, including the invisible, and sometimes the non-audible but just felt actions and inter-actions such as personal breath marks, as well as micro gesticulations (in)between meaningful movement and sound phrases. If this moment comes when I am musicking (drumming for example) while the students are dancing, this synch is felt in the collaborative movement of the drumming hands with the motivic actions of those dancing. At this moment, it is not just the sound of the drum, neither is it only the motivic gesticulations of the dancer, but a collaborative combination of both. It is also what the dancer is able to observe, mirror, and imitate in order to embody the synch to achieve this ultimate moment. The Acholi people refer to this feeling as *Mite* —a sensational feeling that is a result of collaborative sonic and bodily sensibilities. Such sensibilities create an all-embracing positivity and a possessive force that causes a dancer to unconsciously do extra-ordinary, exciting, and out-of-the-usual conventional movements, movement-sounds, or just sounds —ones that one would not do again in the given dancing session. This bodily or body-sonic sensibility may be an explicit outburst or implicit for the practitioner in the moment of movement action. This moment also brings to play our previous dance and dance-music knowledge and experiences (communal or institutionalised) to achieve the synch. We, in the process, balance, reciprocate, and complement our previous and present knowledge, be it simple or complex. However, all this cannot be accessed in isolation, or in bits and pieces, but as a holistic cross-sectoral, and naturally proliferating phenomenon.

In teaching and learning contexts, we draw on practitioners' inherent implicit and explicit body and sound interactions. These can be accessed through outer bodily contractions, extensions, and flexions in action of, and reaction to a rhythmic pattern/ thought. We see this manifesting in the music styles (especially Jazz and Blues), that have over decades developed in, from, or as part of African diasporic communities (Perchard, 2015; Pressing, 2002). The rhythmic phenomenon in jazz, for instance, fronts imitation and practical practitioner-to-practitioner/student rhythmic interaction in time drawing on a natural rhythmic intellect, personal habituation, and interaction. In my early musical upbringing in my village in South Central Uganda, like in many local communities all over, experiential teaching and learning proliferate in the habitual process of doing —through imitative, bodily, sound, and inner perception manifesting in the communal process of mirroring and 'doing' (Mabingo et al., 2020). Dance-musicking as a cross-sectoral collaborative approach in both formal and non-formal learning contexts, allows the practitioners/students to put their own frames around the practical unfolding of a dance phenomenon wholistically, and in a non-prescriptive sense. It allows for a clearer and more succinct distinction between artistic perception, and the actual practical enaction (Hall, 1983).

This allows for adoption of multiple/interdisciplinary, and *community compliant* approaches to interpreting, and understanding such knowledge both in theory and practice (Hamilton, 2019; Kurath, 1957; Ungvary et al., 1992). Thus, all bits and pieces of the artistic puzzle in a given moment of artistic action are equitably conceptualised with practitioners' sensibilities and analysis through a *communitarian approach* — that in which the flow of motivic events exist within a web of communal micro and macro collaborative interactions through human agency (Also see Angelo, 2015).

Dance-musicking and the build-up of the collaborative elements of rhythm, rhyme, and time (RRT) – The micro aspects

Exploration of the processes of dancing and dance-musicking as collaborative cross-sectoral artistic engagements, be them in performance, communal enactments, or conceptual research, has often been more performed and communally enacted than it is verbally, intellectually articulated, argued, or even questioned. Many young artistes such as hip-hop and break-dancers, and community practitioners, have always understood their artistic craft mainly through a 'watch-embody-and-appreciate-judge' approach. They mainly depend on their 'perceptual intuition', and what one would refer to as discretionary judgement. This continues to foment comprehension dynamics in teaching and learning contexts, artistic evaluations at competitions, as well as artistic examinations in schools. Such is the same with artistic (sonic and bodily) comprehension for or by music producers, and other agents that literally depend on artistic RRT.

There has been less than enough research focused on in-depth exploration of the RRT of such community-based dance and dance-music phenomena, especially relating to the often perceived-to-be complex musical and bodily RRT of and from Africa. Dance-musicking centers on the understanding of people's dancing and musicking cultures through their core (micro) elements such RRT that build up to bring to the fore cohesive, collaborative, and inclusive moments in dance and music interactions through human agency.

Studying and learning from people's ordinary collaborative practices offers another point of departure for developing synergies, strategies, and tools for detailed communal interventions drawing on interdisciplinary approaches, and developing cohesive aspects common to teachers, researchers, practitioners, and students for dance and music as artistic engagements. This is a gateway to understanding human relations, and micro and macro co/existences that give meaning to the daily social and artistic life of music and dance teachers, practitioners, and non-practitioners. Such synergies can be investigated on a micro level to understand the core of their manifestations.

In the video excerpt, which the QR-code in Figure 1 below leads to, five student practitioners[1], one girl and four boys, are engaging with *Yenge* and *Labala* dance movement patterns of the *Lamokowang* tradition in a teaching and learning context in the dance studio at the Department of Performing Arts and Film of Makerere University. The video is a short excerpt of a longer organised dance session I conducted on October 21, 2022. I found it an important example for analysis and discussion of the dance-musicking process unfolding in a formal teaching and learning context.

Figure 1

QR-Code – A Yenge and Labala dance movement and dance-music video excerpt of the Lamokowang dance and dance-music tradition.

Recorded by Author on October 21, 2022

Lamokowang is one of the many dance and dance-music traditions from the Northern region of Uganda. In this moment of the class, I am instructing with/through dance-musicking. While the boys were playing the *Awal* (calabash) and dancing with/to it and other related sounds, the girl was enacting the *Labala* movement pattern while musicking with the *Gara* (ankle bells) on her leg. In this rhythmic constellation, there is evident collaborative rhythmic interplay rhyming in a particular rhythmic time, particular to the different bodily confines of this tradition. To explicate this collaborative rhythmic interplay in this discussion, I have, in figure 2, notated out four measures of this dance-musicking interaction of the boys' *Awal*, and the girl's *Gara* rhythm. Indeed, this notation does not cater for all the nuanced details of this interaction and dialogue, but it more or less captures the basic interactive nature of this dance-music phenomenon. In the notated dance-music rhythmic excerpt (Figure 2), *R* and *L* stand for the right and left foot respectively.
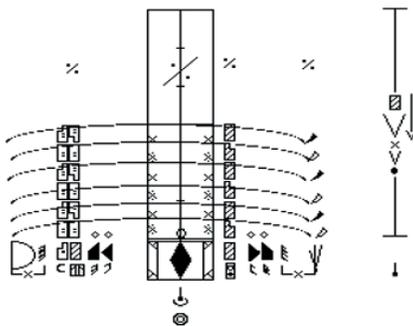
Figure 2

(Notated) Dance-music rhythmic pattern excerpt of the Awal (Calabash - Male) and the Gara (Ankle Bells – Female).

Note: Dance and dance-music notation by Ronald Kibirige.

Figure 3

(Notated) Excerpt of the Yenge boy's dance movement pattern.

Note: Dance and dance-music notation by Ronald Kibirige.

Figures 2 and 3 are short rhythmic and bodily dance-music extracts from the video that the QR-code leads to. Both extracts should be read concurrently as the dance-music action they represent happens in the same moment for both the female and male practitioners as seen in the video (Figure 1). One can also follow, verify, or analyse the notations while looking at the video in figure 1. While the Laban notation extract represents the collaborative bodily actions when the music practitioners are musicking, the music notation extract represents the collaborative sonic actions enacted when the dance practitioners are dancing. I have used the Laban notation system (Fügedi, 2016; Hutchinson, 2005), to represent the concurrently executed repetitive *Yenge* body-sonic movement pattern of the boys (see Figure 3). In the notation, we see a representation of the body-sonic movement of a calabash held in the left hand, and a spoke in the right hand, enacted collaboratively with a pulsating whole body offset by the knee joint. This offset enables all other body parts to execute particular pulsations and creates rhythmic and time-based collaborative bodily mechanism that grounds the totality of the whole body-movement pattern.

In the artistic moment represented in the video in figure 1, drumming is not represented as I was using the calabash music to instruct. However, the drum patterns

add yet another layer of rhythmic action, reaction, and interaction that feeds into the dance-music patterns of the *Awal*, the *Gara* as well as dancers' bodily pulsative movements. To elaborate the entire *Lamokowang* phenomenon requires a platform beyond the confines of this article. I therefore focus on the extracts in figures 1, 2 and 3.

As seen in the action of playing the *Awal* (calabash), the dancing is the musicking and the musicking is the dancing. As illustrated in the *Awal* section of the notation (Figure 3), some micro-rhythmic manipulations are usually done in the second half of the third beat in a bar, considering a 3/4 temporal meter. It is exactly at this point that the female's foot stamp is muted. However, this mute is amplified in other body parts, and still sounded by the *Awal*. As one can observe further in the notation, it is the absorbed/muted rhythmic foot stamp (for the females) and the downward pulsation (visible in the males' *Yenge* movements) that propels the silent (in the females) but accentuated (in the males' *Awal*) second half of the beat in each measure. Since the female dancers usually enact this dance with ankle bells tied at the ankle joints, the silence, and accentuation in the female and male parts respectively, alternatingly facilitate and supports each part, creating a rhythmically calculated dialogic interplay. The rhythmic pattern of the *Awal* that the males provide in a continuum does not only facilitate the absorption of the females' first-half of their third beat, but also amplifies their second-half of the same third beat, by accenting it both in the *Awal* rhythm, and in their own body as part of their continuous and successive wave-like motion visible in their upper torso (noted with unique and continuous wave-like motion symbols on the right side of the boys' *Yenge* labanotation excerpt). It is therefore clear that for the females to make their *Labala* artistic statement complete, they do not only need the sound of the males' *Awal*, but also need the males' *Yenge* movement pattern – a form of interdependence that anchors the dancing and dance-musicking process.

As such, the dance-musicking process as illustrated and observed in this excerpt, is a culmination of many collaborative body parts, movement patterns, and gesticulations, as well as rhythmic interplay in and between the distributed rhythmic patterns in the dancing body, and the music the body makes in the process. In its unfolding, this crucial coexistence is not only explicit in body movement patterns of an individual practitioner, but also between practitioners in particular movement executions.

Within this body-sonic constellation, the notion of coexistence cannot be conceptualised only in what we see and hear, especially in performative contexts. It builds up from the very micro rhythmic level of existence. It is enhanced by the surrounding environment of multi-rhythmic action, reaction, and interaction. Within a teaching and learning contexts therefore, it is important for pedagogues to be aware of such dualities, interdependence, and the understanding that as one practitioner exists among other practitioners, so does one (micro) rhythmic pattern with another, a phrase with another, all building into what we are able to see and hear. As such, music and dance isolations in and beyond pedagogical analysis should be engaged with understanding that is not devoid of the existence of a life force that is in the processes of 'doing'. This life force, in the case of music and dance, is activated and lived in the practical understanding and artistic intersection between bodily and sonic interaction and artistic dialogue.

Conclusion

The cross-sectoral collaborative nature of the notion of dance-musicking broadens the epistemological base for understanding dance, music, and dance-music phenomena. It hinges on the core and cultural-specific use of the elements of RRT as dominant structuring mechanisms in processes of teaching and learning dance and music. Dance-musicking counteracts the current institutionalised separation between music and dance by viewing it as a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach that gives meaning to dance and music as social and cultural-specific phenomena. The article has identified three hinderances to cross-sectoral engagement with dance and music, and pivots dance-musicking and its cross-sectoral nature as a holistic approach in dance, music, and dance-music teaching and learning. As a cross-sectoral engagement, I have argued that dance-musicking cuts across many study fields and taps into both practical and theoretical underpinnings such as structural analysis to interrogate its constituent parameters, phenomenology through the lived experiences of its practitioners, as well as the theory of Ubuntu that explicates the notion of coexistence with the complex elements of rhythm, rhyme, and time that work to constitute any music and dance phenomenon. The practical and theoretical conceptualisations of dance-musicking open it to a wider exploration of individual and community dance and dance-music experiences. It is a holistic approach and understanding that attempts to narrow the gap between formal and non-formal dance and dance-music knowledge. Further, it widens the potential for exploration and understanding of what dance and music always have in common – rhythm, rhyme, and time. Approaching dance and music in their commonality provides for a more nuanced, holistic, and accessible avenue for understanding their essences crucial in teaching and learning contexts.

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NOTES

[1] Participants: Alimo Phiona, Agaba Mathias Bob, Kalule Jesse Jonathan, Otim Francis, and Odong David Lakuc. All participants in this video excerpt have given consent for its use for academic (non-commercial) purposes.