

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERCHURCH MUSIC COLLABORATIONS

ACK St. Paul's – Athi River

9<sup>th</sup> March 2024

<https://youtu.be/dpyWcMmytF8>

[https://youtu.be/roDbnK-4Q\\_s](https://youtu.be/roDbnK-4Q_s)

### **Definition of terms:**

**Church music:** written for church performance and edification (the moral or intellectual instruction or improvement of someone). It expresses propositions of a sacred nature.

**Music Collaborations:** Musicians (trainers, singers, composers, church officials or organizers) coming together to work on music issues expressing their uniqueness.

- Collaborations are for sharing resources, knowledge, techniques and experiences.
- Impartation of valuable insights in music areas

### **Seven Cs of Collaboration**

#### **Capability**

Recognizing and leveraging the unique strengths and talents within your team to tackle challenges innovatively and efficiently.

## **Cooperation**

Mutual support within a team ensuring that everyone works together harmoniously to navigate complex tasks more easily and achieve their goals with consistency and in shorter time frames.

## **Coordination**

It involves managing tasks, timelines, and resources to ensure that everything runs smoothly and the team remains on course.

## **Communication**

It is about conveying thoughts, ideas, and information effectively to promote free flow of information and fosters a sense of unity within the team.

## **Cognition**

Collective thinking that involves harnessing the combined intelligence and expertise of the team to solve complex problems enhancing confidence.

## **Coaching**

It is about nurturing talent, providing guidance, and setting the right course.

## **Conditions**

It includes aspects like the physical workspace, access to technology, and work-life balance.

## **IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC COLLABORATIONS**

Hinged on specific goals, objectives and strategies

- Healthy challenge for musicians (allows for experimentation)
- Opportunity for upskilling through innovation

- Expands opportunities
- Avenue to preach the gospel
- Enhance unity in the body of Christ

It is key for music collaborators to maintain to maintain a strong work ethic and efficiency for their creativity.

**Ethical Considerations:** A set of principles that guide people, actions, decisions organizations, churches etc

- These enhance trust, fairness, accountability, cooperation, collegiality
- Uphold dignity, rights and welfare for all

**Ethics:** in Greek means ‘moral philosophy’ - related to the word **ethos** meaning habitual character and disposition

- it involves rights, principles, values and virtues
- Concerned with choices about inter-human relationships that depend on considerations and deliberations of values such as **goodness, rightness, honesty** and **justice**. These inform actions and practices and considerations of what constitutes good or bad behavior.
- Moral values
- Policies
- Rules and regulations

“Traditions have inbuilt values and convictions, and religious communities have their own sets of ethical entailments, all of which are in a constant process of negotiation and contestation. Reflecting on these themes is important...but for communities themselves as they reflect upon their practices, challenges, and experiences in the contemporary world” (Porter & Myrick, p. 2, 2021)

## **ETHICAL FRAMEWORK**

Lines (2018) framework for critical questioning of the ethics of community music (What? When? Why? How? Who? Where?). Serves as a simple tool to help musicians, interchurches e.t.c to negotiate the way thorough complex decision making and creative practice.

### **WHAT Ethical Questions**

- Seek to understand and evaluate the kinds of values and virtues that underpin musical activities.
- Values include: participation, inclusion, justice, hospitality, diversity, care, love, sharing, social connectedness, difference, democracy, excellence.
- Virtues include: negotiability, confidence, respect, trust, responsiveness, listening, leadership, facilitation and encouragement.

### **WHEN Ethical Questions**

- Consider matters of process and timing
- Dependent on the changing situation of a group
- The mood, environment and collective musical place and time a group finds themselves in
- **What is good and right in one time, may not be good or right in another**
- A group will change, grow, and develop over time and exercise different kinds of ethical actions accordingly
- It could be timely e.g to change the leadership of a choir in the interest of sustainability of the group over a period of time
- This could require the decision to mentor and guide other group members into a place and space where they could take on more responsibility and care for the group

- When ethics, is always associated with ethical action, with the initiating of something in response to the call or need which should be addressed in a particular time

### **WHY Ethical Question**

- Seek to inquire into the conditions and contexts of potential community happenings
- There may be pressing conditions for a music program to be established
- Why questions help us ascertain injustices, needs, changes, and historical circumstances that put a particular community circumstance into relief and highlight why interventions or programs are necessary.
- Music activity can result into dissension and division due to the diversity of needs in groups and the difficulty of processes that appear to favor some individuals over others
- In such circumstances the potential consequences of decisions and actions become the focus of questioning and considerations
- Particularly choirs and singing groups, for instance, value inclusivity regardless of the ability of individuals to sing in tune
- To some who can sing in tune, standing next to another singer who is singing out of tune can be musically unsatisfying experience
- However, the community's choir values of participation and inclusiveness may be thought to be more important than the musical inconvenience of out tuneness
- A why question seeks to explore and affirm the reasons behind the values a group wants to affirm over and above other issues

- It may be more important to accept the out of tune singer in the group the attend to the short-term musical needs of the more musically able choir members
- the values of participation and inclusion bring tolerance, sociality and acceptance...these are attribute that lead t human flowing and a greater sense of community ethos
- patience also leads to improved musicianship and over time the more musicals capable choir members can see the value the improvements made on the out of tune singers

### **HOW Ethical Questions**

- Music is a process art form careful attention needs to be placed on how music attention needs to be placed on how musical action takes place
- From an ethical point of view, musical actions of all kinds are valuable
- Performing and listening (which are inherent sharing activities)
- Listening together (sharing of listening experiences, and the recognition of different listening insights)
- Composing and performing (creative offerings of the composer and acts of service provided by the performers)
- Co-composing in groups (which involves negotiation and acceptance of difference)
- Improvisation of all kinds
- In terms of pedagogy a musician has a number of ethical choices to make in terms of how group will function, create and learn musical material

- It is important to note here that the traditional master-apprentice paradigm of musical transmission can be a deeply ethical experience for both master and apprentice
- Key to this experience is perhaps not the overuse or abuse of power and control on the part of the master musician (which does unfortunately occur), but the more dialogical, sharing experience that can arise through genuine mentoring relationships
- Leadership style- how a leader leads can also become an ethically important pedagogical feature

### **WHO Ethical Questions**

- Music is particularly attuned to offerings, concerns and becomings of others; particularly those in need and suffering
- The ethical nature of the care and concern for the other person expressed in terms of absolute hospitality and unconditional acceptance. This humanistic principle involves a promise of acceptance, and willingness to help and work with people
- Egotism and self interest are common attributes in today's society and there is widespread concern about the way in which neoliberalism affects the inner workings of education, culture and arts, and in treating people primarily as financial units in the global market.

### **WHERE Ethical Questions**

- focuses on the location of where ethical action can to be positioned and actioned
- on the one hand our ethical focus can be oriented conceptually, emotionally, aesthetically or spiritually in a place or cultural space

- On the other hand, our ethical focus can be oriented in a physical or geographical place or locality

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTER-CHURCHES MUSIC FESTIVAL TRAINERS, PERFORMERS, JUDGES, COMPOSERS AND ORGANIZERS**

Organizing an inter-church music festival involves various individuals, including trainers, performers, judges, composers, and organizers. Ensuring ethical considerations throughout the planning and execution of such an event is crucial. Here are some ethical considerations for each role:

### **1. Organizers:**

- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Ensure that the festival is open to a diverse range of churches and musical styles. Avoid favoritism or bias towards any specific denomination or musical genre.
- **Transparency:** Clearly communicate the criteria for participation, judging, and selection of performers. Transparency helps build trust among participants and the audience.
- **Fair Compensation:** If the event generates revenue, organizers should ensure fair compensation for all involved parties, including performers, judges, and trainers.



## 2. Trainers:

- **Equal Opportunities:** Provide equal training opportunities to participants, irrespective of their church affiliation or background. Avoid favoritism and ensure a level playing field for all performers.
- **Professionalism:** Maintain a professional demeanor, treating all participants with respect. Avoid any behavior that could be perceived as favoring one church or individual over another.

## 3. Performers:

- **Respectful Performances:** Ensure that performances are respectful of the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of the audience. Avoid content that may be offensive or divisive.
- **Fair Play:** Respect the rules and guidelines set by the organizers. Avoid any attempts to gain an unfair advantage over other performers.

## 4. Judges:

- **Impartiality:** Judges should remain impartial and objective throughout the competition. Any conflicts of interest should be disclosed and addressed transparently.
- **Constructive Feedback:** Provide constructive feedback that helps performers improve rather than focusing solely on criticism. Avoid favoritism or bias in scoring.

## 5. Composers:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Composers should be mindful of the cultural and religious sensitivities of the participating churches. Avoid compositions that could be perceived as disrespectful or offensive.
- **Originality:** Encourage original compositions that showcase the diversity of musical expression within the churches involved.

## 6. General Considerations:

- **Accessibility:** Ensure that the festival is accessible to all, considering factors such as venue accessibility, ticket pricing, and accommodation options.
- **Community Building:** Use the festival as an opportunity to foster positive relationships between different churches and their communities.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Establish a fair and transparent process for resolving disputes or concerns that may arise during the planning or execution of the festival.

By adhering to these ethical considerations, organizers and participants can contribute to the creation of a music festival that promotes unity, inclusivity, and mutual respect among churches and their members.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES IN INTER-CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVALS**

Inter-church music festivals, like any other event or initiative, may raise ethical considerations. Here are some potential ethical issues that organizers, participants, and attendees might need to navigate:

### **1. Inclusivity and Representation:**

- **Issue:** Ensuring fair representation of diverse denominations and religious traditions in the festival lineup.
- **Ethical Concern:** If certain denominations or traditions are consistently excluded, it may lead to feelings of exclusion and perpetuate biases.

### **2. Appropriation of Sacred Music:**

- **Issue:** Performing sacred music from various traditions without proper understanding or respect for its cultural and religious significance.
- **Ethical Concern:** Misappropriation can be offensive and disrespectful to the faith communities associated with the music.

### **3. Respect for Liturgical Practices:**

- **Issue:** Incorporating liturgical elements from different denominations without understanding or respecting their significance.
- **Ethical Concern:** Improper use of liturgical practices may be perceived as disrespectful or sacrilegious by some participants or attendees.

#### 4. **Commercialization and Profit Motive:**

- **Issue:** Organizing inter-church music festivals with a primary focus on profit rather than fostering spiritual or community connections.
- **Ethical Concern:** If the festival is seen as exploiting religious themes for financial gain, it could be considered unethical.

#### 5. **Sensitivity to Faith Traditions:**

- **Issue:** Lack of sensitivity to the beliefs and practices of different faith traditions represented in the festival.
- **Ethical Concern:** Insensitivity could lead to unintentional disrespect and strained relationships among participating communities.

#### 6. **Inclusivity of Non-Christian Traditions:**

- **Issue:** Exclusive focus on Christian denominations, neglecting the inclusion of other religious traditions.
- **Ethical Concern:** Failure to recognize and include diverse religious perspectives may be perceived as ethically problematic and exclusive.

#### 7. **Balancing Artistic Freedom and Religious Sensitivities:**

- **Issue:** Negotiating the fine line between artistic freedom and the need to respect religious sensitivities.
- **Ethical Concern:** Artists should have creative freedom, but it should be balanced with a responsibility to avoid offensive or inappropriate content.

## 8. **Transparent Selection Process:**

- **Issue:** Lack of transparency in the selection process for participating groups or performers.
- **Ethical Concern:** An opaque selection process may lead to suspicions of favoritism or discrimination.

## 9. **Environmental Impact:**

- **Issue:** Large-scale events can have significant environmental footprints.
- **Ethical Concern:** Organizers should consider sustainability and minimize the ecological impact of the festival.

## 10. **Community Benefit:**

- **Issue:** Assessing whether the festival provides tangible benefits to the local communities or only serves the interests of organizers.
- **Ethical Concern:** If the festival does not contribute positively to the communities involved, it might be ethically questionable.

To address these ethical concerns, organizers should prioritize transparency, cultural sensitivity, and inclusivity in the planning and execution of inter-church music festivals. Engaging with religious leaders, scholars, and communities from diverse traditions during the planning phase can help ensure a more ethical and respectful event.

## **CONCLUSION**

- Ethical considerations are important for the glory of God, mutual respect and collaboration, effectiveness and efficiency, productivity
- Ethical considerations should be critically informed and that a questioning approach can assist in a clearer vision of the possibilities interchurch music collaborations
- Ethics, the way we should act with one another is key
- We have a role in ensuring that ethics is part and parcel of our endeavors in music collaborations.