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Music and Peace

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Abstract
Kenya experienced a traumatic phase of Post Election Violence (PEV) in 2007/8. The looming elections of 2017 were therefore viewed apprehensively by the populace. Under these circumstances, it was, and still is, imperative to spread the message of peace. Music is a universal language that appeals to all people regardless of age, ethnicity, race or religion and people spend a lot of time each day engaging in music. Most importantly music is a practical subject and can be used to carry messages to the people. It is against this background that the author composed a short strophic song in two part harmony using primary chords to carry the message of peace. The author recommends use of selected art songs to spread the message of peace especially in schools and colleges.

Keywords: Post Election Violence, Music, Peace, Music and Peace.

Introduction
Following the announcement of the presidential election results on December 30, 2007, Kenya experienced the worst electoral violence since the inception of multiparty politics in 1992, leaving more than 1,100 people dead, 650,000 displaced, and the country deeply divided (Kriegler and Waki Reports on 2007 Elections). In a bid to address this scenario, the Kenyan government, in collaboration with civil society and with support from the international community, set out an ambitious peace agenda including large investments in new technology, early warning systems, and capacity-building programs for the country’s peace infrastructure (PW101-Elections-and-Violent-Conflict-in Kenya-Making-Prevention-Stick.pdf)
The new constitution, a new electoral commission and laws, a reformed judiciary and legislation to prohibit hate speech were all recognized as critical elements to avoiding a repeat of 2007–08. While necessary, both local and international peace building initiatives prioritized the short-term prevention of mass violence. Even peace initiatives in Nairobi targeted specific at-risk groups—especially the youth—with messages tailored to emphasize the cost of violence and intolerance. These measures were felt not to be enough. The author, guided by the maxim “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” (www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/history/constitution), rose to the
challenge, which was, and still remains, to reach the minds of the Kenyan populace with the message of peace.

Rationale
Since time immemorial, humanity has used music to communicate. Expressing sentiments and feelings in ways words often cannot, music is a way of reaching out and sharing our hearts. (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/isha/music-for-peace_b_5086026.html). Music is a form of communication different from words, though obviously there are many songs whose lyrics strengthen the message that the author wants to express, emphasizing the sense of the song. It is a means of communication which sensitizes people who are facing the challenges of the world (http://escolapau.uab.cat/img/programas/musica/music_and_peace.pdf)

Music can be used for many purposes: entertainment, setting an environment, inducing certain moods, giving instruction, healing, and so forth (http://www.kraigbrockschmidt.com/the-hidden-messages-of-music), because it fulfills a wide range of different functions for people in everyday life (Schramm, 2006; Sloboda, 1999). It is an art form that uses sound as its medium. The musical appeal lies basically on its universality and practicality, and as Gordon (1990) points out, musicality is normally distributed in the population, with most subjects falling somewhere in the middle of the bell curve. There are very few completely unmusical individuals, just as there are few completely musical individuals. In this regard, almost all individuals are music consumers in one way or another.

The author was guided by the tenets above and was of the opinion that the message of peace carried in song would have a more lasting impact than would a theoretical paper on the same topic. The listeners would be exposed to a musical experience, and though they may not understand the language, the arrangement of the chords would in itself be indicative of peace.

Methodology
The researcher composed a short strophic song in Kiswahili, repetitively bringing out the word “Amani” meaning peace. The lyrics were deliberately simplified so as to have a more significant impression on the performers or the audience. Due to its simplicity and strophic nature, the general audience is able to join in and sing along.

The Song
The researcher used a quadruple meter in the key of B major to accommodate most non-singers and therefore encourage them to join in the song. The song uses syncopated rhythm to give it an appealing and lively lilt. It is harmonized in two part harmony, the second voice a third below the melody. Harmony at the third gives an impression of tranquility and peace. Below is an excerpt of the song.

Twahitaji Amani
Amani, amani x 4
1. Haya ni maombi
   kwa mwenyezi Mungu
   Kina baba tuombe
   Tujaliwe amani
2. Haya ni maombi
   kwa mwenyezi Mungu
   Kina mama tuombe
   Tujaliwe amani
3. Haya ni maombi  
   kwa mwentyezi Mungu  
   Vijana tuombe  
   Tujaliwe amani  

   Twahitaji Amani  
   Tuombee amani  
   Tutangaze amani  
   Tuhubiri amani

Translation  
Peace, Peace x4
1. These are prayers to the almighty God,  
   Fathers, let us pray and be granted peace  
2. These are prayers to the almighty God,  
   Mothers, let us pray and be granted peace  
3. These are prayers to the almighty God,  
   The youth, let us pray and be granted peace  
4. These are prayers to the almighty God  
   Everybody let us pray and be granted peace  
   Peace X 4

   We need peace  
   We pray for peace  
   We tell others about peace  
   We preach peace

Recommendations
The author recommends use of music and dance and other art forms in spreading the message of peace. This is especially necessary whenever one deals with young adults or children in their formative years. Every available opportunity in schools and colleges should be utilized to spread this vital message.

References
Disclaimer: The composition was performed by the author at the International Conference on Peace, Security and Social Enterprise organized by Mount Kenya University at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi between May 16th and 19th, 2017.

Appendix: Peace song