

## CHAPTER 6

### MOI AND MUSIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES:

*The Case of Nairobi, Moi, Egerton, Kabarak, Kenyatta and Maseno Universities of Kenya*

#### Introduction

President Daniel T. Arap Moi was the Chancellor of all public universities including Nairobi, Kenyatta, Moi, Egerton, Maseno and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Currently he is the Chancellor of Kabarak University, a private university which he founded in the year 2000. Being at the helm of university administration for over 25 years, he was influential in the broaching of policies in the broad areas of management and curriculum development. This is because, as the Chancellor and President, he was the chief appointing authority of all Vice-Chancellors and their deputies. He gave policy and financial support for music activities in these universities. Universities introduced entertainment programmes during graduation ceremonies, which was hitherto unheard of in the previous government. In this chapter, the authors are taking a glimpse at the role of His Excellency D. T. Arap Moi in the development of music performance in selected universities namely Kenyatta, Nairobi, Moi, Kabarak, Maseno and Egerton.

#### The University of Nairobi Choir

*ATOH, Fred O. and Kemoli, Arthur M*

Dr. Arthur Mudogo Kemoli started the University of Nairobi choir in 1968 when he was a student. The choir was at this time limited to singing at the annual University carol services in Taifa Hall, with the Vice-chancellor as the chief guest. After a period of three years (1970-1973) in Britain, Dr. Kemoli returned, with a PhD, from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, to teach at Kenyatta College, which was a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. He continued with the University choir and their first patriotic song was 'Litongolo Munyanza' performed at the Inauguration of the Kenyatta college festival of arts in 1979. President Moi came to inaugurate this festival. *Litongolo Munyanza* is a patriotic song urging Kenyans to come together and retrieve Kenya (the pearl) from the ocean. Dr Kemoli continued to be active on the music front with the Kariokor Nyayo choir. When President Moi took over power from the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, he presented 'Wananchi Watukufu Kenya' as a song for the transition. Many other patriotic songs including



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'*Tunajivunia Kenya Nchi Yetu*', '*Mungu Ibariki Kenya*' and the well known '*Fimbo ya Nyayo*', were later written by Kemoli.

Dr. Kemoli rejoined the University of Nairobi in 1988, Kenyatta College having become a university. He directed the University of Nairobi choir from Kikuyu campus and only retired recently on health grounds. The University of Nairobi choir attended many state functions. At the launch of the pioneer car in Kasarani stadium, the University choir presented '*Motokaa ya Kenya*.' During national functions at state house, the university of Nairobi choir presented several songs including *Oh! Africa Nchi Yetu*. The university choir continued to be dominant at state functions during President Moi's regime.

During the period of the 90's to the present, Mr. Fred Atoh, Mr. Esmond Majanga, Mr. Evans Aswani and Mr. Chris Wekulo were recruited as assistant choirmasters of the University of Nairobi choir. The choir became very dynamic in its presentations both in state functions and at the Kenya Music festivals. The choir has travelled as far as; Iran, South Africa, Nigeria and South Korea to represent Kenya on cultural exchange programmes.

Christmas carols were the first performances that catapulted the choir into focus. This was, in fact, the launching pad for its growth and recognition. The carols would be done in Taifa Hall at the main campus with the Vice-Chancellor as the Chief-guest. Professor Mungai, the Vice-Chancellor, would mark this auspicious occasion by reading a passage from the Bible: John 1: 1 (i.e. "In the beginning..."). This became an annual event in the university calendar and the choir played a significant role in fanning its flames, as much as it did in making the choir grow. A few years later, it became necessary to involve the group in other ceremonies of the University having proved its worth. The first engagement was in the graduation ceremonies that took place annually at the Chancellor's Court at the main campus. The choir first sung a song called "*Safari Ya Bamba*." It was symbolic of the journey that education and scholarship is, and of the University as a path for this long journey. It was important that the choir was performing this at a graduation ceremony because while a graduation may seem the end of a long journey into scholarship, it is normally just the beginning of another and longer quest for knowledge though, sometimes, in a different environment.

When the then President Moi launched the "*Nyayo Pioneer Car*" project, the choir was invited to attend and perform. This marked the significant push into the national limelight for the choir. Professor Mbithi was then the Vice-Chancellor. He gave his approval for the choir to perform at the International Sports Centre Kasarani to celebrate this launch. This approval alone was important in the growth of this group because after that there was no looking

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back. The zeal and recognition shown by Professor Mbithi was taken over by Professor Francis Gichaga who as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and eventually Vice-Chancellor, demonstrated such profound admiration and support for the choir that he would occasionally make time to attend its rehearsals, ask for more songs to listen to and provide important and guiding suggestions to enhance the quality of the group's performances. It was during his tenure that the choir began to take part in the annual Kenya music festivals organized by the Ministry of Education and the Kenya music and cultural festivals organized by the then Ministry of Culture and Social Services.

It was also at this time that the management of the choir began to recognize the talents of student-trainers in the preparation of the group for its functions. The students who showed abilities and knowledge of choir training were elected to positions of leadership by their colleagues in a bid to give a responsive structure to the choir and make its members more accountable and involved in the running of its day-to-day affairs. This trend saw Mr. Thomas Senaji lead the group as its Chairman and trainer, followed by Mr. Amos Ombayo and later Mr. Fred Atoh, (currently a lecturer in Linguistics and the director of the choir). This trend of involving students in the choir management has continued and enriched their roles and perception of music significantly. Many former members of the choir are out there as choir leaders or trainers owing to the opportunities they had to be part of the leadership of the choir at the University.

Professor Crispus Kiamba took over the support of the choir after Professor Gichaga with the same zeal and saw the group continue to shine in both internal and external functions organized by bodies outside the university such as the state sponsored events or ceremonies. His perception of the choir has been enriched by Professor George Magoha, the current Vice-Chancellor, during whose term the choir has not only retained management support but also become a part of the public relations approach to image-building and sustenance. The choir takes part in all university functions internally and externally as a way of projecting the institution's presence and image to the outer world. It does this with zeal and dedication especially because of the institutional stature that it has acquired as a students' club. Today, it would almost be impossible to arrange a ceremony in the University without giving space to the choir whose renditions would generate standing ovation. The external engagements include its trips to such foreign countries as Holland, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Iran and South Korea, among others. All these trips were a culmination of the much effort put into the growth of the choir by the directors, the university management and the government of Kenya.

The government's role in the growth of music in Kenya and particularly in the University of Nairobi cannot be gainsaid. It all significantly began with the then President Daniel Arap Moi. His contribution was both overt and covert. Moi was keen on music and was obviously always elated by the involvement of university students in music performances. It was not only, to him, a positive engagement for these young people but also a means to touch base with their feelings and aspirations. He was able to use this opportunity to reach out to them. This required a simple strategy of inviting the choir to perform to him either privately or during a public celebration, and afterwards he would walk to the group to talk to the singers. This rather simple gesture had great psychological impact upon the young minds; it was inspirational and therapeutic. Not many young people had the chance to not only see the head of state, but also have him speak to them so closely. This was an encounter they would live to remember many years later and talk about to their friends and, perhaps children. The University of Nairobi choir had many of these encounters with Moi and many members of the choir still remember these experiences with nostalgia.

When the choir rose to the national platform, it was due to the opportunities created by Moi. The choir would be invited to national celebrations so often that its members almost thought it was a basic right. The group would go for private and public functions, which would sometimes be aired live on national broadcast. This kind of exposure enhanced the national stature of the choir. The Moi era also initiated a trend where all university choirs combined into a mass choir to entertain the public. It was a very significant step in bonding university students and inculcating a sense of peaceful co-existence; a central concern of Moi then as head of state. The choir benefited from these experiences largely because the students were able to interact and share ideas and talents, and get peer-challenges. Such challenges helped to sharpen their performance and interpersonal skills as individuals and as groups. Furthermore, the students were able to enjoy competing during festivals not as rivals, but as friends owing to the experiences they were enabled to share during the mass choir moments. The practice of making music as mass later continued even in the years after Moi, a show of how it was appreciated by the choirs.

Moi would never let the students go away from his presence without a reward of some sort. He acted truly like an African elder; it is a known practice in many African communities that when children visit an elder's homestead, they do not go away hungry. He was very generous with monetary rewards especially after an interesting performance by the students. His usual way of putting it was '... *asanteni sana, nendeni mkale. Mambo yenu itaangaliwa baadaye...*' (Thank you very much, you can now go and have something to eat we shall look into your other issues later). This was considered a very meaningful expression and

many students always waited just for it! If it was not said, an argument would ensue among the singers as different people tried to find out if, perhaps, he said it differently this time round. The significance of this practice could only be appreciated if one considered that students really needed money to sustain themselves back on campus, and that this reward was motivational to them. It was something they looked forward to and more and more people showed interest in choir membership. In the process, music in the university grew. The University of Nairobi choir at some point recorded a membership turnout of over one hundred singers. The rewards may have generated the wrong motives for choir membership but the larger picture was the growth in the practice of music in an institution where it was not even offered as a degree course. Perhaps the continued interest in practicing music may someday give birth to a department of music at the University of Nairobi.

Moi supported music education from primary to the post-primary levels of education. Universities such as Kenyatta and Maseno found reason to intensify the offering of courses in music because of the atmosphere created by the support the head of state gave to music. Consequently, many young people were able to learn basic music skills and discover their talents. Some pursued this course later in life and are making a living out of it while others joined singing groups as a hobby. The University of Nairobi benefited (and still does) from this scenario by harvesting these talents and shaping them up. Every year students register in the choir bringing with them the raw talents and skills that they were able to form during their earlier education lives. The choir only provides them with the right environment to develop these pursuits. The only fact that is always forgotten is that this environment is a harvest from the seeds that Moi had planted in his time as head of state. A number of members of the University of Nairobi choir have, after leaving the university, ended up as choir directors or members of singing groups in the localities where they live and work. While some were employed courtesy of this talent, others engage in the actual practice of singing to earn a living. They make immense contributions to these groups and organizations based on the shaping up that they received from this choir.

Perhaps of greater significance in the development of music in this country and in the universities in particular was the establishment of the Permanent Presidential Music Commission (PPMC). Moi in doing this not only institutionalized music but also provided an oversight body to drive the genre to even greater and more lasting heights. The commission co-ordinates the performances of groups of musicians and ensures there is sufficient and quality entertainment during national celebrations and functions, especially those involving the head of state. This has provided an opportunity for continued

growth of music in the country and in the universities when they are invited, which is quite regularly done. The PPMC as it is normally called has remained the pivot of operation at the national level for music performances especially where state functions are concerned. On many occasions, this body has involved the University of Nairobi choir in some of these functions, providing opportunities for the choir to gain deeper experience and more exposure that is necessary for its growth and sustainability.

In conclusion, like the author of this chapter began by saying, the contributions of the former head of state in the furtherance of music performance and practice in Kenya cannot be gainsaid. It is projected right from primary to post-primary levels of education and the results are made manifest in the love of this art between both the young and the old alike. Paying attention to performers today after a national event, one does not fail to notice the nostalgia in the singers' tones when they talk about the times that were and how so fast things have changed. The spirit that Moi engineered in his time with regard to music as art may be all the nation needs to keep its engines oiled for greater sense of nationhood. A singing nation is a happy nation; and the University of Nairobi has embraced this thought in all its functions with positive results and a towering image above the rest.

### **Moi University Choir (1988-1998)**

*NGALA Fredrick B.J.A.*

The history of Moi University choir can be traced back to the year 1988. The choir was founded by Mr. Fredrick B.J.A. Ngala. He was the director of the group for ten years until Prof. Mabel Majanja took over. Currently, it is directed by Dr. Mellitus Wanyama. This development is owed to the support and concern shown by the University administration led by the Vice-Chancellors: Prof. S. O. Keya, Prof. J. Irina, Prof. D. Some, the Dean of students (David Mureithi) and a great deal of interest from the rest of the University community. These Vice-Chancellors together with their respective Deputy Vice-Chancellor were appointed by the then President of Kenya, H.E. Daniel T. Arap Moi. The Vice-Chancellors' support came in the form of logistical, administrative and financial decisions in favour of the choir.

Consequently, the choir was able to participate in various performances across the country during which it acquired many awards and recognition. Between 1989 and 1995, the choir took part in many functions within the University including performances in the annual graduation ceremonies, the official opening of both the Students' Centre Complex and the University's Ultra-modern library. All these functions were presided over by Moi who was the

Chancellor of the University. Moi University choir also performed at fund-raising functions both locally and nationally, and at Moi's private residences as well as State houses in Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa.

On all these occasions, the group held its audience captive with its lyrical renditions of hymns, arrangements of African tunes and compositions, which were performed acapella and occasionally accompanied with African drums and other types of percussion instruments. Moi personally invited the choir, more especially when these were held in his private residence. In 1990, for example, the choir performed during the consecration of the chapel at the then Moi High School, Kabarak. Similar visits were organized in April 1994 and 1995 during which the group presented Easter music concerts and a play before the President and the entire Kabarak community.

The pre-1998 Moi University choir also took part in the annual music festivals organized by the Kenya Music Festival Foundation under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the Kenya Music and Cultural Festival guided by the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. The universities would normally have their own categories in which to compete. Moi University choir over the years won several trophies and certificates in some of these categories. Their participation has not only improved the musical capabilities of the students, but also their relationship with students from the other universities. This was evident in 1994, when the group performed at a cultural events attended by Kenyatta University from Kenya and Makerere University from Uganda. The students also joined their colleagues from the other public and private universities in mass choir performances especially during national celebrations. All these functions were graced by Moi, then the Head of State.

These exposures made the choir formidable and highly competitive. The choir director, the author of this chapter, was also able to visit the Republic of South Africa to attend the International Composers' Workshops in 1996 in Johannesburg. This opened doors for international linkages for the choir. As a result, several important contacts were developed with many professors of music in universities of other parts of the world.

When the author left Moi University, Mabel Majanja who later handed over to Dr. Wanyama briefly took the directorship of the choir. The latter has directed the group since 1998. He has seen the choir scale newer heights of success and challenges.

## Moi University (1998 - 2002)

*WANYAMA Mellitus N.*

Mr Fredrick Ngala started Moi University choir in 1988, by then a student and later a lecturer at Moi University. He is known for having set high standards in choral performance especially in the Kenya music festival competitions and in the entertainment scene at public functions and national holidays. In 1998, Ngala transferred his services to Egerton University and his place was taken up by the author who is the current director of Moi University choir. Since 1998, the choir has continued to build on Ngala's success. Between 1998 and 2001, Wanyama trained the choir with Mabel Majanja who left for further studies in South Africa in the year 2001.

In the year 2000, this author composed the Moi University anthem for voice and later in collaboration with the Kenya administration police band; he composed the brass band version. The directors of the police band that closely worked with him were Charles Gitari Njoka and Jebel Munene Ngere. The anthem was approved by the university senate and later in 2004; it was officially launched by Professor Bethwell Allan Ogot the Moi University chancellor. The anthem is performed in all official university functions because it embodies the university's mission and vision.

In the year 2001, this author was one of the music educators who were awarded a certificate of exemplary music performance and promotion of music education in Kenya, by the then president of Kenya – Daniel T. Arap Moi. This award was instrumental in his pursuance of his music education to the highest level.

In 1999, this author composed the song: *Mimi Ni Mzalendo*, which expressed the fact that patriotism was a key factor in peace building and development. The song was performed by the universities mass choir in 1999, and Moi showed his personal appreciation for the fact that it embodied the Nyayo philosophy of peace, love and unity and thereby reflecting the true meaning of patriotism. Due to its immense appeal, the composer considers this particular song to be one of the success stories during the Nyayo era.

Between 1998 and 2003, the choir actively performed in the Kenya music festival, often winning in composition and arrangement classes. Since 2003, the choir has diverted its attention to performance in the local scene where it features in all official university functions. The Moi university choir has also embarked on recording its music in various forms such as: audio cassettes, CDs, and DVDs. The recording project is an income-generating project that is aimed to sustain other projects in which the choir may engage in the near future.

In 2006, the choir performed in a major joint concert organized by Strathmore University, Moi University and the University of Pretoria (South Africa), at the Kenya National Theatre in Nairobi. This author was involved in the organization of the concert partly because the University of Pretoria, his *alma mater* was involved. Moi University choir performed Christmas carols in a joint performance with Makerere University (Uganda) in mid November 2008 and later at Kabarak University on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The performance at Kabarak University was attended by His Excellency, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi.

During the Nyayo era, Moi University choir prospered largely because of Moi's personal moral and financial support. Quite often, he encouraged the choir by just keenly listening to the singers. He could advise the choir members to uphold high standards of choral performance, to excel in their academic work and be patriotic to Kenya. He would often offer the choir financial tokens in appreciation. It is on this account that the choir has rooted its choral tradition; which is now more of a movement than being simply a students' activity. The choir is involved almost in all official university activities and functions.

### **Egerton University Choir (1998-2006)**

*NGALA Fredrick B.J.A*

Egerton University began as a college of Agriculture in 1936 having been established by the early colonial settlers. Lord Egerton donated the land on which the University stands. Later, it became a constituent college of the University of Nairobi before attaining a full university status in 1986.

Prior to 1998, Egerton had a staff choir under different choirmasters. In 1998, the University appointed this author as the music director to recruit, train and handle all administrative issues related to the choir. His main brief was to start a serious students' choir. It is worth mentioning that other ad hoc student choirs existed prior to his appointment. These choirs were formed only for specific functions after which they were dissolved.

The activities of this choir were inspired by His Excellency Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi who at that time, was also the Chancellor of Egerton University. The choir performed in all annual graduation ceremonies and in some editions of the annual Kenya Music Festivals. It also performed jointly with other University choirs in different state functions in Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa State houses. On 20<sup>th</sup> October 1999, the choir gave a live performance to the entire nation before the head of state, which was televised live. Besides, the choir performed during the annual Rift Valley Agricultural Shows held in Nakuru

between 1998 and 2002. Other performances included concerts and weddings, which the President attended. Further, this choir worked in collaboration with other University choirs to present Christmas carol concerts at the president's home in Kabarak from 1998 to 2005.

Egerton university choir was supported by both the University administration and the Chancellor who not only gave personal attention to the group but also rewarded the choir members handsomely. Support to the choir came in the form of choir uniforms and financial assistance to needy students. Because of the choir activities, the Chancellor donated a bus to the University in 2002. This new bus helped to alleviate perennial transport problems in the University. This author later left to become a full time lecturer and Music director at the Kabarak University in 2006. Management of this choir was later assumed by Mrs. Sheila Simwa and Christopher Wafula.

His Excellency Daniel Arap Moi is a keen lover of music. All the Vice-Chancellors of Egerton university whom he appointed also supported music. These included Prof. Richard Musangi, Prof. Japheth Kiptoon and Prof. Ezra Maritim. Their deputies Prof. Kipng'eno, Prof. Alfred Mutema (currently Vice-Chancellor, Kenya Methodist University, Prof. James Tuitoek (the current Vice-Chancellor, Egerton University) and Prof. Richard Mwangi were also music enthusiasts. Choral traditions planted by the Moi administration are still enduring at Egerton University to date.

### **Maseno University Choir**

*ODWAR Helen A.*

Maseno University was started as a constituent College of Moi University in 1990. President Moi spearheaded the establishment of the University College and hence the creation of the Music Department, which eventually organized the University choir. The first student intake was in 1992 and in 1993. The university choir was formed under the chair of Prof. George Kakoma. The choir used to perform during Kenya Music festival. The choir participated in the festivals of 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 2001 and 2002.

Apart from Kenya Music festivals, the choir performed during graduation ceremonies of Maseno University presided over by the then President Daniel Arap Moi being the then chancellor of Maseno University. These were graduation ceremonies of March 2001, November 2001, and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2002. The choir performed for the head of state in 2000 when he paid a visit to the university. The choir also performed during presidential and national functions organized by Permanent Presidential Music Commission (PPMC). The PPMC

involved university student choirs in state and national celebrations/functions. Mr. Ngala the then chair of the commission spearheaded the formation of University mass choir performances during state and national functions. Maseno, and other public universities would send students to team up with fellow students from other Universities for rehearsals in preparation for performances during specific occasions.

In August 1995, the choir was invited by the Kenya Music festival committee to perform at State House as a representative of universities choral groups. In the same month of the same year, the choir was invited to perform at the Agricultural Society of Kenya, Kisumu. In October the same year, PPMC invited the choir to perform during Kenyatta Day Celebrations at State House Garden Party, Nairobi.

Rehearsals leading to performances at national state functions took place at University of Nairobi graduation square. Universities choirs performed as a mass choir bringing together students from different universities giving them an opportunity to learn and cooperate with one another. This, therefore, developed in them a spirit of teamwork. As students sang together, they remembered and honoured those who fought for Kenya's independence. While in these meetings, students did not only make friends but also discussed various political issues that affected them. Coming together in these forums instilled in them a sense of brotherhood, connections to the land and people. Performance of traditional cultural songs that were also popularized alongside patriotic songs, created in the students a love for their own and others' traditions, and so took pride in the country's cultural history, and devotion to the country's welfare.

After performances, the teams were given a token of appreciation and overtime, students associated music activities and events with being rewarded. Participation in such events motivated students and musicians in general to compose patriotic songs because they were accorded an opportunity to perform them. Traditional music was refocused too. This enriched people's cultures and fostered a spirit of patriotism to their country. Furthermore, students sang songs about the president and the country, which fostered unity amongst the citizenry and created positive attitudes towards fellow students.

### **Kabarak University Choir**

*NGALA Fredrick B.J.A.*

Kabarak University is a private institution established in the year 2002 by the then Head of State, H.E. Daniel T. Arap Moi. Kabarak University choir was

formed later in 2002 after the chapel choir which began way back in 1991. One of the earliest trainers and founders of Kabarak Chapel choir was Mrs. Jenipher Okumu, an accomplished gospel and choral musician as well as a composer. The chapel choir was shepherded by Rev. Dr. Jones Kaleli, the founding provost of Kabarak University. This author became the director of chapel choir in 1998.

Since its inception, in 2002, Kabarak University choir has been trained and conducted by this author. He was asked by the then president to take charge of the choir having earlier on trained Moi University and Egerton University choirs. This group enjoys the personal support of Moi who is the founder, sponsor and chancellor of the Kabarak University. Moi interacts with the choir quite often giving the singers advise on various administrative, religious and technical aspects of singing whenever the choir performs in his presence. This takes place almost every Sunday whenever he attends service at the Chapel. He has provided funding for the choir to buy uniforms and different kinds of music instruments. The group has also been able to record some of its music using funds donated by Moi.

The unique proximity of Kabarak University choir to Moi's home has enabled it to share moments with the former Head of State even during its private rehearsals. Moi often join the choir in get-together ceremonies in which he encourages and rewards outstanding singers and choir members completing their studies at the university. As a tradition, Kabarak University rewards the best music performers among the graduating students during the annual graduation ceremonies. Furthermore, the choir has occasionally had the privilege of accompanying the former Head of State to many functions across the country. Some of the places include AIC Milimani Church in Nairobi, Makueni and Eldoret (2005), Kitale, Esageri and Mt. Elgon (2007), Ngata African Gospel church in Nakuru, Kapsowar and Kapsabet (2005-2008). In addition, the choir performed at a number of national functions including the launch of Vision 2030 in Nairobi in 2008, and the first graduation ceremony of Masinde Muliro University of Technology in 2008. Kabarak university choir was also sponsored by His Excellency D. T. Arap Moi to perform at the national music festival organized by Church of Christ in Africa in Kisumu in the same year.

Other notable trainers of this choir are Mr. Dominic Khaemba (2007 – 2009), Jenipher Okumu, and Mr. George Okoth (2007 – 2009). Kabarak Chapel choir and Kabarak University choir often perform jointly to achieve a mass-choir effect - which is Moi's preference.

## **Kenyatta University Choir**

*MWIRUKI George K.*

Kenyatta University has the oldest department of music among the institutions of higher learning in Kenya. It was established in 1965 to train teachers. In 1970, it became a constituent college of the University of Nairobi, and eventually attained a full university status in 1985; it was named Kenyatta University. The music department, then under the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts offered diploma and degree programmes both at Undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The Department of Music was run until 2000 when the University renamed it as the School of Music and later the Institute. Moi's presidency and chancellorship had laid the foundation that enabled the department to expand rapidly and start awarding degrees in various disciplines of music up to PhD level.

Music and dance serve as effective media of relaxation to sooth the mind and uplift the spirit. These are also effective media for storage and cultivation of cultural and traditional values of a society as well as powerful instruments of communication. The foregoing was captured within the terms of reference of the National Music Commission that was appointed in 1982 by Moi to review and make recommendations on ways and means of improving on the standards of music and dance in the country. Among other things, the commission was to study the nature and characteristics of Kenya's traditional music and dance and make recommendations on how research could most effectively be undertaken, and research results disseminated and preserved for prosperity. Three members out of the six appointed to the commission were academic members in the Department of Music at Kenyatta University and this shows Moi's close relationship with the department.

During the tenure of Moi as the Chancellor of Kenyatta University, music was elevated from just being a theoretical academic subject to a practical, proactive discipline and an educational tool for preserving Kenya's rich traditional cultural heritage. Since half of the membership of the National Music Commission popularly known as the Permanent Presidential Music Commission (PPMC) came from the Music Department of Kenyatta University, most of the recommendations of their report have been implemented at the University.

The common notion that the study of music, as a subject, is mere learning of how to train a choir and sing for entertainment has been disapproved by a majority of the graduates from the Music Department of Kenyatta University. Performance or participation in a singing group can be done by any interested party. This has been clearly demonstrated by the involvement of all students

in the Universities Mass Choir. Kenyatta University having the privilege of hosting a department of Music in the country played a significant role in the formation of the joint universities Mass Choir in 1998. At its inception, some music students from Kenyatta University facilitated in training the various voices. The students have had a long tradition of organizing various music activities, including choir training, music workshops and general classroom organization. Since a majority of the music students also trains to become teachers, they are well grounded in general leadership.

The emergence of universities Mass Choir in the 1998 was the brainchild of the PPMC which was later led by Mr. Fredrick Ngala and supported by Moi. This idea brought a new meaning to how music and choir training was perceived by the public. People came to understand that music making is possible even by the academia of various disciplines. The Universities Mass Choir has open membership to all students who are currently registered in their institutions and have the interest and time for rehearsals in the various campuses. Participation in the mass choir has encouraged cooperation, exchange of ideas, both musical and academic, and collaboration among students and staff of the various co-operating universities.

Under the patronage of the then University Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Eshiwani, in 1992, Kenyatta University started what is now popularly known as Culture-Week. To date, it is in the University calendar as a major activity. Participation is not restricted to Kenyatta University alone; other universities both local and international also take part. Many talents have been identified and nurtured through the Culture-Week and many artists have become national heroes and heroines and suffice to say, a great number have also been members of the Kenyatta University Choir. In addition, Kenyatta University started the culture of the choral performance during graduation ceremonies. The university choir comprises students from various departments of the University but coordinated by the Department of Music and Dance, Graduation ceremonies would have been very boring were it not for the entertainment provided by the choir. This trend has continued and gained currency within the university as an indispensable tradition.

Music performance by the choir in general has played a major role in campus life of many students. Many potential members look forward to auditioning in order to be given a chance to be in the university choir. The members are able to travel more frequently and interact with their colleagues from other universities. In the course of interaction, many positive exchanges are made and strong institutional relationships established. As the students interact, they meet various challenges, which they subsequently learn to solve.

Kenyatta University has a tradition of having a Christmas Carols concert at the end of the year. This is a tradition that was started in the 1960s by the late Professor George Senoga Zake and was really perfected in the mid 1990s when it was encouraged and supported by the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor George Eshiwani, and Moi, then the University's Chancellor.

Why does Kenyatta University excel in music performance and choral singing? This is because within the Department of Music and Dance, all the members both students and staff have taken practical music very seriously and for one to excel in whatever field, one has to practice. The department has set aside one hour on the main timetable for Music recital, every Wednesday at 10.00 to 11.00 am when students of various cohorts perform, on various instruments, including voice. There is also an official workshop hour, Wednesday 11.00 am to 12.00 noon. During this hour, students and staff interact and discuss various ways of performing or playing different instruments. Out of this initiative, the university has produced a good number of reputable musicians who have featured at various forums including Project Fame and Pop Idols.

Why do the academic staff and students of Kenyatta University hold Moi so dear to their hearts? Moi showed exemplary appreciation of art in general and music in particular. He always rewarded good performances and, as a result, many students and staff have benefited both morally and financially through his direct assistance. Because of this gesture, many students joined the choir and have continued to perform well in order to maintain their membership. This trend has promoted music performance and choral singing in the university.

The choir performed patriotic songs because they believed in the *Nyayo* philosophy of Peace, Love and Unity that Moi preached to all Kenyans. He urged Kenyans to be mindful of other people's welfare. As the Chancellor of public universities and Kabarak University, Moi had many admirers among the students who looked forward to his advice

### References

Personal experiences as director's and trainer's of various university choirs



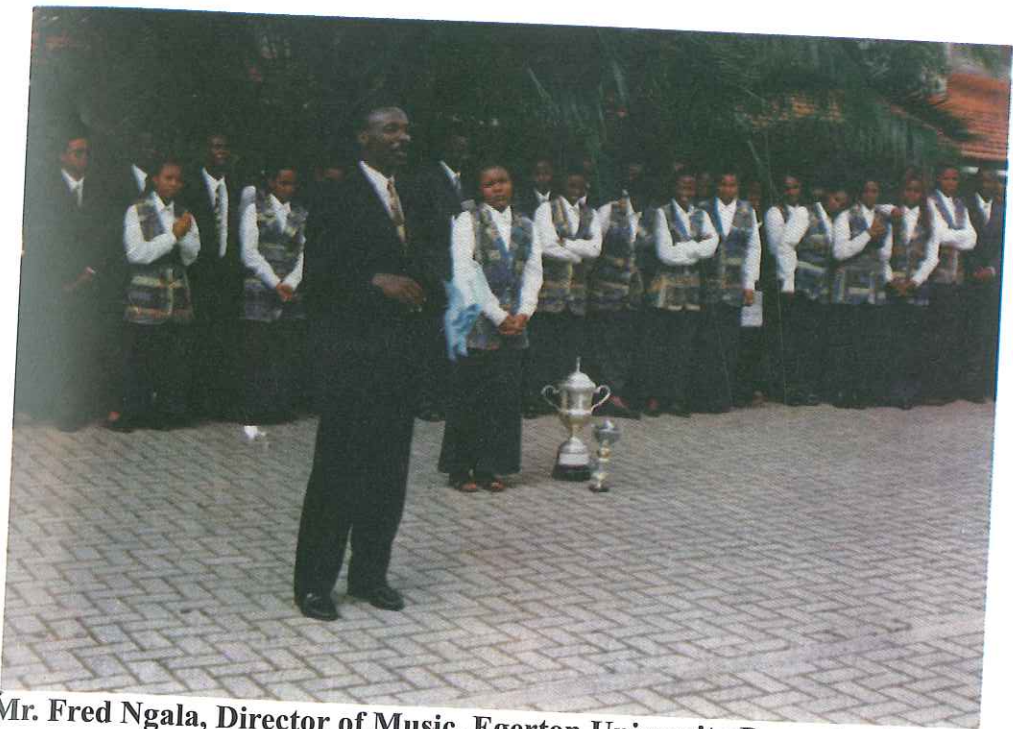
**H.E. President Daniel T. Arap Moi Poses with Public Universities Lecturer's choir at His Kabarak Home, October 2002**



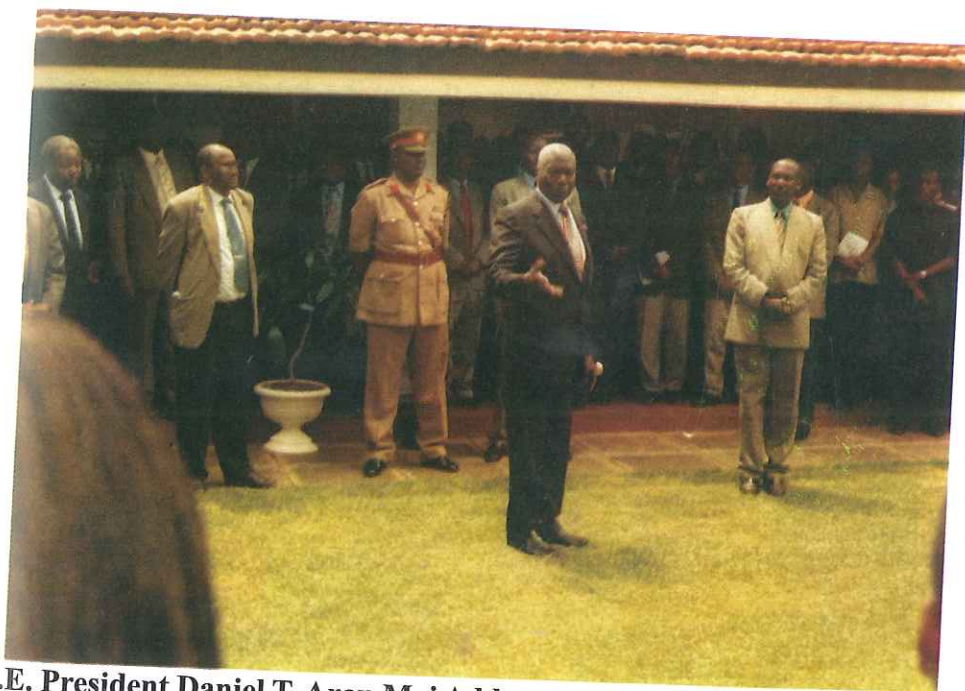
**H.E. President Daniel T. Arap Moi Listens to Moi University Choir Conducted by Dr. Wanyama (L), Music Director, Moi University, 2002**

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**Mr. Fred Ngala, Director of Music, Egerton University Presents a Trophy won at the Kenya Music Festival patronised by H.E. Daniel T. Arap Moi, 1998.**



**H.E. President Daniel T. Arap Moi Addresses Egerton University Choir in the Presence of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Ezra Maritim, 1998**



**H.E. Daniel T. Arap Moi Poses With Kabarak University and Chapel Choir together with the Vice Chancellor, Prof. D. Nassiuma (seated 2nd R), D.V.C, Prof. P. Kibas (2nd L), the Provost, Rev.Dr. Robert Lang' (3rd L), and the Principal Moi high School Kabarak, Henry Kiplagat (R**



**Dr. Arthur Kemoli Conducts Rift Valley National Chorale at the Kabara Chapel, 2001, attended by H.E. Daniel T. Arap Moi.**