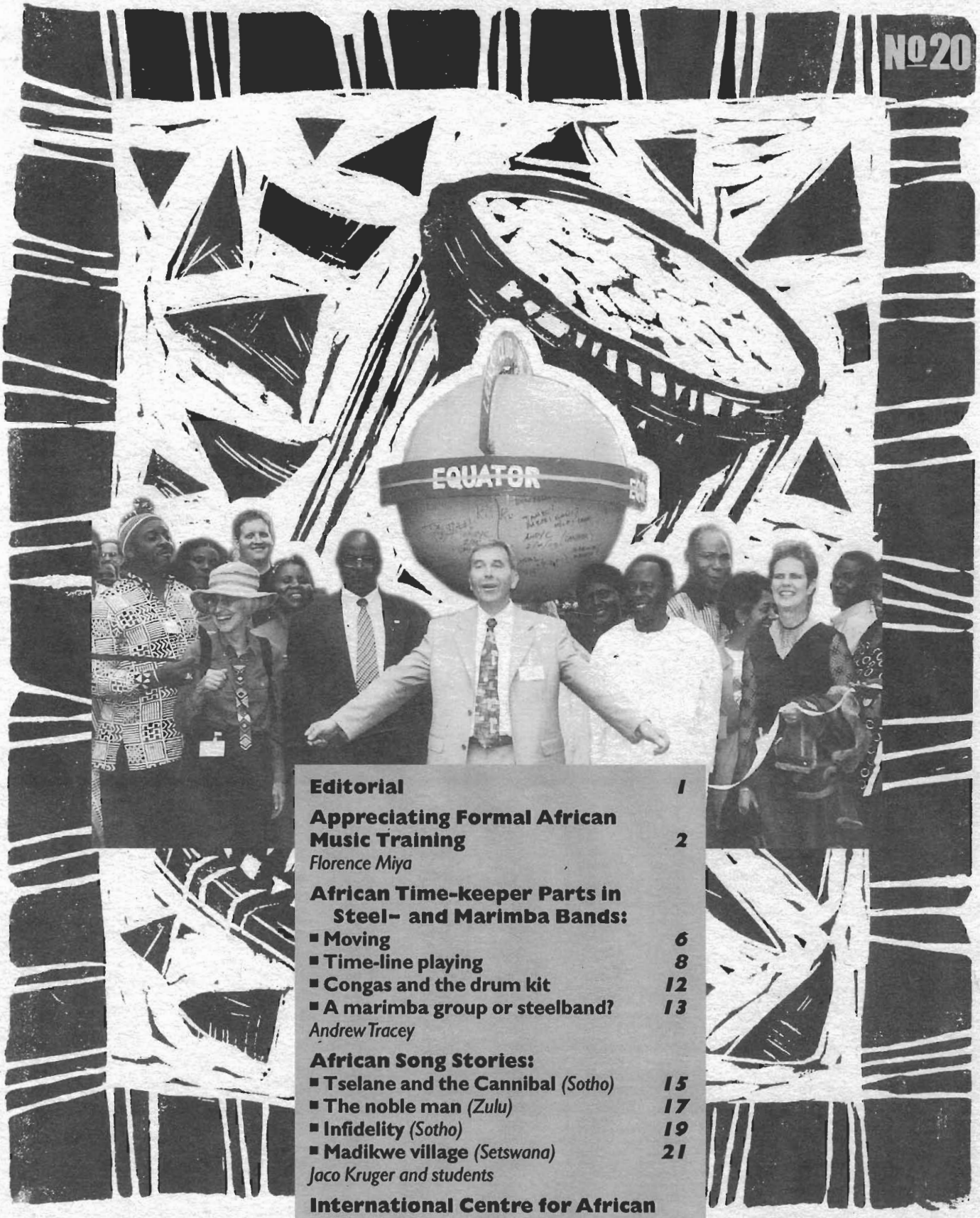
THE TALKING DRUM DECEMBER 2003

No 20



The Talking Drum • Newsletter Issue No. 20 • December 2003
Network for promoting Intercultural Education through Music (NETIEM)
Pan-African Society of Musical Arts Education (PASMAE)
Prof. E Oehrle, School of Music, University of Natal, Durban, 4041 South Africa
Fax: +27 (31) 260-1048 · E-mail: oehrle@nu.ac.za

Editor: Prof. Elizabeth Oehrle
Illustration for *The Talking Drum*: Dina Cormick
Design and production: Graphicos

Editorial

Rarely is it possible to share the sweet-smelling bouquet of positive remarks from such a highly respected teacher/musician who is widely published, continually sought after, and deeply loved by her colleagues in the field of world music. Patricia Shehan Campbell, University of Washington in Seattle, wrote:

"*The Talking Drum* #*19*, wow! It lives and is stronger than ever before, so clear to read, so full of clever activities for teachers to use. It is refreshing to see a publication continued for the sake of caring teachers, and *not* become just another talk-sheet for the small band of talking-heads (scholars) who enjoy the obscure and sometimes "disconnected" world of academia. With teachers using these music and cultural ideas, the songs and rhythms and movements and "other" experiences are transmitted to the young who become enlightened of the music and its makers, and who can make new meaning of these human expressions. Thank you for persevering all these years on a wonderful offering! Readers and users like me are truly grateful! If it was not so much African you were looking for (which I think you must continue), then I could/would contribute some ideas on Asia, the Americas. But alas, I am a student of all that *TTD* has been able to offer."

Thanks Patricia, a continuing source of inspiration and encouragement, for consenting to share these thoughts. If the general readership concurs with Patricia, then *The Talking Drum* is moving in the right direction, and the struggle to find relevant materials is worth the effort and will continue.

This issue features a substantial submission from Andrew Tracey, *African Time-Keeper Parts in Steel- and Marimba Bands*. His willingness to share his expertise with teachers in the field is of great value. Florence Miya, Lecturer at a liberal-arts university in Kenya, presents positive ideas for academics wishing to establish courses in African Music. In *Appreciating Formal African Music Training* she shares her mandatory core course for undergraduate students who major in Music; thus providing guidelines for colleagues who expressed the desire to do the same but do not know how or what to do. Finally four song stories are provided by students from Potchefstroom University in collaboration with their professor, Jaco Kruger.

A brief report of the Pan African Society of Musical Arts Education (PASMAE) Conference held in Kenya provides up to date information about this newly formed and dynamic society. A keynote speaker was Dr. Mogomme Masoga, manager of the National Research Foundation (NRF). One of NRF's focus areas is Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) which is of vital importance to the evolution of a philosophy of musical arts education in Africa. IKS have gone unrecognised and unused particularly by music educators. We must bring IKS into the mainstream of knowledge relative to musical arts education. To read further about the rationale of IKS go to: http://www.nrf.ac.za/focusareas/iks and read the NRF Newsletter of 2003/09/27.

Finally a reminder of the challenge thrown out to an enterprising staff member and his/her students in the previous issue of *The Talking Drum*. The challenge is to contribute articles and/or ideas for lessons which will compile most of one issue of *TTD*. Jaco Kruger's students have started the ball rolling. Hopefully others will respond.

Elizabeth Oehrle

Appreciating Formal African Music Training

© Florence Miya, Daystar University, Kenya

Teaching African music in a formal setting is not always easy. At Daystar University, a liberal-arts university in Kenya, we offer a course entitled: Music in Africa. It is a core course for undergraduate students. However, the course is mandatory for diploma and degree students who major in Music. Students are expected to choose either Music in Africa or Art in Africa. Often they opt for Music in Africa.

Since not all the students are either music majors or minors, it is not very easy to teach the course. Some students have a very negative attitude towards traditional African music. They often feel it is a "waste of time" to take such a course, especially at university level. Some hate the "idea" of sitting in class for two hours to listen to a lecture on African music.

In order to teach such a course, the lecturer must definitely be very creative and enthusiastic. It calls for a lot of hard work and planning. On the first day of the course I usually ask students to answer this question very candidly: "Is it necessary to offer a course on African music at Daystar University as a core course?" The majority usually answer "No". They give reasons such as "It is a waste of time" or "I never did music in school, so why should I do it now?" and "it has nothing to do with my major course."

I like it when they are open. I encourage them to feel free to express their feelings and ideas from the first lesson. After this I talk to them about why we offer the course at Daystar University.

In the pages that follow, I share my experiences on how I manage to change their attitudes about African music by the end of the semester, while helping them to appreciate African music cultures.

Many Daystar students come from urban centres. The bulk of them are in their late teens and early 20s. Through interaction with them, I have found that they have been influenced by Western cultures and as a result they prefer Western to African music. Ngugi (1986) discusses the West's long colonisation of Africa. He argues that, for the African to learn to appreciate their own culture they must first decolonise their minds. Teaching African music aids in the process of decolonising the African's mind.

I can not capture in a few pages all the techniques I use to help students appreciate African music. I have selected just a few examples in the hope that other music educators may be motivated to "keep up the good work" of educating students in African music.

1. ATTITUDE

I love music. In fact I love it so much that I want any student who attends my African music class to love it too. I have discovered that when I am very enthusiastic about music and I teach with passion my students enjoy it too. Of course it calls for much preparation.

I do most of the preparation before a new semester begins. The preparation includes the following:

a) Research

No one can claim to know everything about music in Africa. African cultures are so diverse and so is their music. In Kenya alone we have over 40 ethnic groups each with its own cultural practices and varied music. If there's so much to learn from each Kenyan ethnic group, how about the rest of Africa?

I research the various Kenyan cultural groups in Kenya and Africa in general. This includes materials written about the various cultural groups in Africa, video and audio tapes of music performances, interviews with people knowledgeable about their music cultures, and new findings by scholars, etc.

b) Preparation of learning materials

I find that when I prepare adequately, I feel more confident to handle the class. In preparation, I get materials from a variety of sources such as

- The Kenya Institute of Education: A resource for educational materials for schools and colleges in Kenya. Besides reading material, it has videotapes and audio tapes of documentaries on Kenyan cultural groups and Kenyan Music festivals held in the country every year. These festivals exemplify the various traditional dances found throughout Kenya. The videotapes are helpful resources for viewing dances, costumes, artifacts etc. found in these cultural groups.
- Performances: There are several places in Nairobi, Kenya where traditional dance groups schedule performances. I organise class trips around that period. In my experience I found that students love field trips. We usually discuss the trips and the students' learning experiences in class. However, there are times when field trips are too expensive for the class and only a few are able to attend and give feedback to the class.
- Television news and documentary programmes that feature African music and cultures like "Africa Journal": When I watch such programmes, the information I get often generates questions for class discussions. These programmes present current information and new research findings. I encourage my students to watch these programmes. We then discuss topical issues in class. They also come

across other programmes not mentioned in class and they bring their findings to class as new discoveries. This approach keeps students on the lookout for more information. Anything about African cultures begins to concern them too.

- Textbooks: Currently, since not many materials on African music are available in Kenya, I like compiling a reader for the students. The reader consists of materials from different sources on African music. The materials cover a wide range of the topics that are discussed in class including African traditional music, African pop music and African church music. Some useful examples are found in the works of Nketia (1992), Titon (1992), Ewens (1991), Graham (1988), Senoga-Zake (1986), Blacking (1974), and Bebey (1974). The samples include a few pages or a chapter from books, periodicals, journals and dissertations. In this way more students will have access to the work, and they can organise to buy the books mentioned/ cited in the Reader if and when available in the country.

c) Classroom

I try to teach with enthusiasm in order to make my classes lively and vibrant. I include the following in order to make the classes interesting.

- Showing videotapes of performing arts (Music, dance and drama) from different parts of Africa: We then discuss the video clips in light of the characteristics of African music, the cultural significance of the dances and the costumes, dances and context. The videotapes place the characteristics in context.
- Playing audio tapes: I like using audio tapes with songs from a variety of cultural groups especially when discussing the various characteristics of African music. We hear the way the characteristics are executed in various communities in Africa. We also try performing the same characteristics from the students' cultures. Following this, I play African pop music and African church music to find out whether the students can recognise these characteristics in their syncretised forms. Apparently, they do!
- Performance: I often demonstrate concepts by singing, clapping, dancing, or playing African instruments. The students are thrilled to see their own lecturer performing African music in class. They sometimes applaud and join in the performance often with jubilation and ululation.
- Artifacts: African music is closely intertwined with other arts such as costumes, dancing, drama, sculptures etc. (Herbst 2003: 237). Whenever possible I carry some beautiful artistic work such as wooden carvings, sisal skirts, music instruments etc. to class to demonstrate this point. I usually spread a *leso* (Kenyan traditional cloth) on the table and display all these arts. I do this before the class begins. I like watching the reaction on the students' faces when they come to class. They are often so excited about the arts, and they come round the table just to look at the beautiful display. In our discussions, I usually pass the objects around the classroom for each student to view and touch. I realised that students like such experiences regardless of their age. I remember a student standing up in class at the end of the semester to comment on behalf of the class, "We like the way that you have made the class interesting and you have gone out of your way to do so. We enjoyed the artifacts you brought to class and the patience you had with us. You made each one of us feel important." [paraphrased]

  They all applauded. When I heard these words I realised that the same students who did not like to learn African music have actually enjoyed the course and learnt something about their culture.
- Class participation: I encourage students to share their music and cultural experiences with the rest of the class. The students I teach usually come from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. So when discussing various topics in class, I give them opportunity to share with the class about their own culture. I have found that students tend to learn so much from each other. They also feel privileged to have something to contribute to the course. For example, when discussing the rites of passage such as marriage, some mature married students give their own experiences. They narrate what happened, stage by stage, in their cultural weddings. Then we relate the songs they sing in their cultures to these community practices. Those who have no idea of what happens in their traditional communities ask their parents and relatives so that they can have something to contribute in class.

  Such discussions make them inquisitive about their own culture. Sometimes I set aside 5 – 7 minutes in a class session for students to teach the class a song from their communities. I assign students a given class for this exercise.

  I usually allow students to be free to express themselves and their ideas throughout the course. This becomes a learning experience for all of us. They feel important, appreciated and valuable. I guard against giving straight lectures throughout a class session. I like interspersing my lectures with class interaction, discussions, and performances.

2. GROUP WORK

Working in groups can be a great motivation for learning. Students learn from one another, challenge each other and even encourage each other to "move on" when the "going seems tough". I have observed that when the students are in a more relaxed and informal setting, they tend to be freer to express themselves. It is often a "give and take" experience. Among the group work that I give my students, I have found these to be the most effective.

a) Discussions and presentations

In this kind of work, each group chooses a topic, from a list, to research. They do research and discuss amongst themselves, for a month, then give a 30-minute presentation of their findings to the class. I encourage them to present their findings as creatively as they can. Their presentations take various forms such as dance- drama interspersed with lectures, video shows etc. I remember one very interesting presentation in particular.

A group presented the topic of the "role of music in African societies." They asked me to wait outside the lecture room as they prepared themselves. Meanwhile, they were decorating the classroom with beautiful African artwork to depict the scenario. They also wore traditional attire. When they were ready they sent a few members of their group to fetch me. As we approached the door, they began singing some African traditional praise songs. The group joined the procession in jubilation, singing and dancing.

They had organised a place for me to sit. It was as though I was in the drama as a participant. Then I realised that I was meant to be their village chief in the drama. The rest of the students who were not in the group were the villagers. This group's lecture on African music in society was intertwined with singing, demonstrations, artifacts (props) they brought to class, and dance. They presented a historical drama explaining community life and the role that music plays in Africa. It was a presentation worth remembering.

I like recording students' presentations on video. Later, they get a chance of viewing the tapes. They get motivated to do even better. In every new class I teach, I show the new students brief clips of what previous students did in their classes. Such viewing acts as a motivation to the new class and provides a challenge for them. Hence they strive to do better.

b) Performances

I normally divide students into groups of about 10 depending on the size of the class. The groups look for traditional dances of their choice to perform for the class. They also look for the songs, dances and instrumentalists. The department provides instruments and some costumes. Each group performs two different dances. Most of them also dramatise the dances' context.

For this assignment they do research on their songs/dances in the following areas:

- Meaning and translations of the song
- The traditional performers
- Reasons for the performance of the song in the traditional community
- When the song is performed
- The traditional costumes worn in the actual performance
- Cultural significance of the dance/ performance.

I grade both the written and practical assignments. When they perform in class I give them immediate feedback. Then they perfect their performances for a couple of weeks. Next I organise a concert at the end of the semester where all the groups from different classes perform for each other. We usually invite the whole university to attend the concert. This means that the students have to polish their dance-dramas to a high standard. This is usually the climax of the course. Both staff and students look forward to the concerts.

I particularly remember one semester when I was teaching the course to students taking degree courses in the evening program. One student, who is a parent, brought his children to watch him dance (usually we invite university students and staff only).

Through organising for such concerts, students learn

- to appreciate their music and culture,
- how to organise performing arts concerts
- to research African songs and their cultural significance.

c) Debates

Students like to share what they know. I sometimes give them topics to research and prepare before a debate in class. In such cases I divide the class into two groups: those for and those against a given motion.

On the day of the debate, each group will have one member to represent the views of the group. Then the opposing group asks questions and any member of the group can answer. Sometimes the debates get so "heated up" and interesting that the students do not want the class to end. They keep asking for more time. They may not even mind missing a few minutes of their next class. One only needs to hear them talk to realise how much research they have done and how their views and attitudes about African music change with time. Their comments and arguments help me monitor their knowledge and perceptions and to address or clarify pertinent issues.

I usually choose topics that will help them

- to relate African music to contemporary settings
- to provide solutions to existing problems in the African music education
- to look for ways of preserving and developing African music and cultures
- to identify problems facing African music in contemporary Africa.

Throughout the course, I try to encourage them to relate African music to other disciplines such as Psychology, Community Development, Communication, Education and Business Administration. This relational mapping gives them ideas of how they can integrate African music and cultures in their areas of study. They are normally spurred on to learn more when they realise that African music is more worthwhile than they thought.

3. JOURNAL

I usually encourage the students to keep a journal of Music in Africa. I require this mainly for students who are Music Majors. This journal should consist of:

- the student's classroom notes
- topics covered in the course
- student's research findings on each topic
- pictures collected from research
- songs collected and learnt in class, including their cultural significance
- interviews they carried out
- photocopies of any necessary information related to the topics
- the student's insights and observations.

By the end of the course, they usually have a huge file(s) with so much information on Music in Africa. Considering the scarcity of books written on various music cultures in Africa, these files provide resources for them after their graduation.

I normally grade their journals at the end of the semester. It helps to ensure that they do their work consistently and keep on researching. There are students who have graduated and then pursued further studies in other universities within and outside Africa. I am thrilled when they write to me after graduation to let me know how they are using the knowledge they acquired from the class and their journals. One diploma student who had an opportunity to go to USA to pursue a degree in Music wrote to me. He said that he worked so hard in his diploma course at Daystar that he felt his degree course was not as challenging as he expected. He was able to train other students in various African music topics. His journal proved helpful not just to him but also to his new lecturers. He finally thanked me for the training. However, while he was taking the diploma course with me, he always used to complain about the workload. Such students are usually very proud of themselves and their achievements after graduation.

They make me realise that we should never give up teaching African Music in Africa. It is well worth the effort.

At the end of a semester, I finally ask the students the same question asked at the beginning of the semester: "Is it worth offering African music as a core course in Daystar?" The answer, to my joy, has always been "YES." In fact some students insist that it should be a compulsory course for every student. They often reiterate that the course opened their eyes to their cultures and they feel challenged to do even more research. Despite the workload and some challenges such as making time continuously for their group meetings outside class, they definitely enjoy the course.

References:

Bebey, Francis 1975. *African Music: A People's Art*, London: Harrap.

Blacking, John 1974. *How Musical is Man?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Ewens, Graeme 1991. *Africa O-Ye! A Celebration of African Music.* London: Guinness.

Graham, Ronnie 1988. *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music.* New York: Da Capo Press.

Herbst, A. *et al* (eds.) 2003. *Musical Arts in Africa: Theory, Practice and Education*, Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Titon, Jeff (ed.) 1992. *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples.* New York: Schirmer Books.

Nketia, J.H.Kwabena 1992. *The Music of Africa* (Third edition). London: Victor Gollancz.

Senoga-Zake, G.W. 1986. *Folk Music of Kenya.* Nairobi: Uzima Press.

Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature.* Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Other useful sources:

Blacking, John 1995. *Music, Culture and Experience: Selected Papers of John Blacking.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chernoff, J M 1979. *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Collins, John 1992. *West African Pop Roots.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Graham, Ronnie 1989. *Stern's Guide to Contemporary African Music.* London: Pluto Press.

Gray, John 1991. *African Music: A Bibliographical Guide to the Traditional, Popular, Art, and Liturgical Musics of Sub-Saharan Africa.* Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press.

Kubik, Gerhard 1994. *Theory of African Music.* Vol. I. Wilhelmshaven: Noetzel.

Nettl, Bruno 1997. *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music.* New York: Garland.

Roberts, John S. 1998. *Black Music of Two Worlds: African, Carribean, Latin and African-American Traditions.* New York: Schirmer.

Stapleton, Chris 1990. *African Rock: The Pop Music of a Continent.* New York: Dutton.

Graham, Ronnie 1989. *Stern's Guide to Contemporary African Music.* London: Pluto Press.

Stone, Ruth (ed.) 2000. *The Garland Handbook of African Music.* New York: Garland.

African Time-keeper Parts in Steel- and Marimba Bands:

© Andrew Tracey, ILAM, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Moving

Listening to many of the new steelbands and marimba groups in South Africa I often see that the time-keeper instruments such as drums, maracas and other shakers, cowbells; scraper, claves and so on are seriously undervalued and underused. If you happen to play these in one of these groups, or in any other African polyrhythmic ensemble, you may think yourself fairly unimportant, a sort of background person that nobody pays much attention to. Well, it is true that these parts are literally in the background of the sound, in that they don't take solos; they don't draw attention to themselves. But being in the background also means that they are the foundation of the music, not a decoration. These instruments are not children's toys but one of the bases of the music itself.

Time-keeping players are found in all musics which have a hint of African in them, i.e. right through (black) Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, the USA and in American popular music. Their job is to lay down the basic rhythmic feel, or movement, out of which the other musicians build their parts – to provide an accurate rhythmic sieve or screen, as it were, through which you as a time-keeper filter raw, lumpy, universal, non-musical time into exactly measured units all of precisely the same size, the right size for the music you are playing. The others then take your perfectly filtered sound and use it as the material with which to build their own parts. I am talking about parts like the regular stream of quavers given by two maracas or other shaker instruments: ♪♪♪♪♪♪♪♪ , the |♪♪♪♪| part on a tambourine, or the |♪. ♪♪| part on a scraper. Your sound is one of the essential ingredients to allow people to get into that 'state of music' that is so recognisable and enjoyable in Afro-musics, and which is only possible when the music is ticking along with perfect accuracy. You are not passively following, helping or reinforcing someone else's beat, as often seems to be the case in the groups I see; you are actually *creating* the rhythm, making it possible for an African-type rhythmic ensemble to exist.

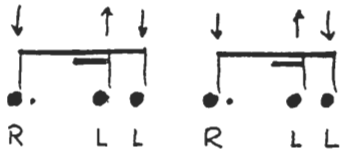
If you look at the people who play this kind of part in Afro musics you will often see that they are junior, or younger musicians. But this doesn't mean that the part is any less important because of that. Without it, the other parts can do little, and if it is played wrongly – if, shall we say, the filter lets through time particles of irregular size – then the player should very soon be kicked out, and someone else brought on. It has happened to me; it probably happens to every player when starting.

We do not have much of a tradition of group instrumental music in South Africa, except in the far north. The few indigenous instruments such as the bow or the flute are usually played solo. So we have little to draw on. In our group singing we use far slower tempos than further north in Africa, and we are able to keep together largely by using body movement (plus of course that keen sense of listening that characterises all Afro-musics). But the fast-moving group music of steelbands and marimbas needs time-keeper parts for without them it is very difficult to achieve the perfect rhythmic groove it should have. What is 'groove'? Something that a new group can take years to build up, until they know each other really well. In micro-analytical terms I believe that all it means is that the players have learned to iron out their idiosyncrasies and have begun to play precisely together. The time-keeper instruments are the base of that 'groove'.

As a time-keeper you need two sorts of talent: 1.) Moving the body, or parts of it, in the right way, and 2.) Being aware of the rhythmic relationships inside the group.

What is the right way to move your body?.... Whatever gives a perfectly regular beat. What do you think is the source of 'metronomicity' in Afro music, the standard against which it can be checked? We have become so used to referring the question of accuracy to mechanical devices that some people can actually believe that a mechanical metronome is more *musically* accurate than a person! Accurate metronomic playing comes from, and can be checked by, regular movements of the body. Every percussion instrument has a natural body movement to play it.

This is even more the case with sound patterns which are *not* supposed to be a regular series of equal sound, for instance:



Rattle pattern, Zimbabwe and many others, where the slight rhythmic irregularities required in a certain musical style arise from the body movement used to produce them. This fact is one of the explanations why the 'sound' of different musicians, especially between one culture-group and the next, also between one band and the next, or between Whites and Blacks and Browns, playing ostensibly the same music, can be so subtly different. It is a contributing reason why some players have such difficulty in playing certain

rhythms. They don't fully understand that the *body* controls all rhythm, not the ear alone, or counting 1, 2, 3, 4 out loud.

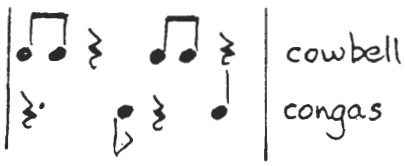
To go on about body movement, Afro music always uses body movements that are physically satisfying. For a sound pattern to satisfy a musician, it *must* be produced by a satisfying, comfortable movement. If it isn't it is not likely to be used, or accepted from another musical style. The Afro musician will work on putting a sound pattern into effect by looking for ways in which it can be translated into satisfactory movement. What 'satisfactory movement' means for every musician might be different, but the major principle is regularity (even if the sound that comes out is irregular). Not only regularity, but '*regular movement at different speeds*', a principle which applies to all African instruments and dancing, not only to time-keeper parts. As an example, the pattern often played on maracas:

How would you devise a way of playing this, using two maracas, one in each hand, where both hands move in an absolutely regular rhythms? There is only one way possible:

Another principle, which may conflict with this, but nevertheless remains a principle, is *alternation*, of hands, or feet, or fingers. James Blades, the well-known English percussionist and author, once said to me, when talking about the difference between Afro and Western rhythm, that one of the greatest frustrations of the orchestral percussionist, particularly in modern works, is that no sooner has he been able to establish a nice movement pattern in a particular section than the composer changes it and the body movement is continually being broken! Western composers compose mostly for sound alone; it doesn't matter what contortions the musicians have to go through to reproduce the sound! Much Afro composition, on the other hand, is done on the spot, at the instrument. The movement often precedes and helps in the invention of the sound. The instruments, correspondingly, and the musical systems, may be designed so they give you back sounds that do not quite match the feel of the physical movements you know you are putting into them. This leads to the conflict between body patterns and sound patterns that is so prevalent in Afro instrumental music, such as on the mbira or drum.

This brings me to the second talent a time-keeper player needs. The conflict I have just mentioned in Afro music between sound and movement is not random. The elements in the conflict are in very definite and exact relationships with each other, as you need to be very aware of. If you're unaware of what your relationship should be with every other player in the group you *cannot* play your part correctly. This is probably the greatest weakness of South African beginner steel- and marimba bands: being unaware of how the parts fit *with each other*. We usually relate our parts to a regular on-beat, as a kit drummer often gives on the bass drum, and we get lost more or less immediately if that beat is not there. This of course comes from the players' background in Western music and is to be expected. But we should remember that it is not the way to get the most out of Afro musics.

In practical terms, when playing a time-keeper part, this means being aware of exactly which of your strokes fall with another part, which ones do not, and who is filling the gaps in your part. Someone will be, almost always. Then when you are totally aware of that, you will realise that you are actually playing a 'duet' with every single member of the group, not merely playing against a common on-beat, such as a conductor's baton or the drummers' foot on the bass drum. If any of these 'duets' start to get into a wrong relationship you will be instantly aware of it. For instance one of the rhythmic combinations often used in fast calypso tempo is this:
If you can hear this as a total pattern and play your part of it accordingly, it makes much more sense and – most importantly – it will be *tremendously* inspiring to the band!



Another aspect of the rhythmic foundation you give the band is the so-called 'time-line patterns' such as 'Clave' (to be discussed in the next article). Playing time-line patterns is a different responsibility to the 'rhythmic screen' I have been talking about. In fact you normally need one player for the 'screen' job and a separate player for the 'time-line' job. Here is where you, the time-keeper, and the kit drummer should work closely together. If for instance he is marking every single pulse on the high-hat, as drummers often do, then normally you should not double what he is doing on your high instruments, like maracas or tambourine, but play something with more of a pattern to it, to contrast with what he is doing. A cowbell, for instance, nearly always plays a time-line, or a strongly patterned part. Conversely, if *you* are making a time-screen sound, with every pulse present, then the kit drummer should take care not to waste your efforts by doing the same thing. He should play something more patterned, more irregular.

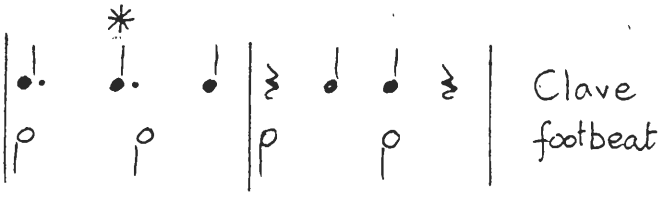
Why can't we play the same rhythm together? Why should all the parts be different from each other? It all depends if you are approaching the idea of rhythm from an African or a Western perspective. The more people are playing the same

rhythm together, the stronger it gets from a Western point of view, but the more boring it gets for Afro musicians! If you have ever taken part in one of the increasingly popular 'drum circles' around South Africa you may have experienced this for yourself. This difference probably goes back to fundamental differences in the way we move and dance. European folk dances use one rhythm only, and that is marked by stepping on the beat, putting your weight with your step (such as walking, or 'setting' in Scottish country dancing). African dancers, on the other hand, move around at least two movement centres of the body, such as shoulders, arms, pelvis, legs, feet. Most importantly, your weight shift does not always coincide with the foot step, but may follow it. Here's an easy observation test you can do for yourself .... if you go to any occasion where young people are dancing, and watch their heads, you will see that some heads are moving *down* on the beat, and others *up*. Those that move down are dancing in the ancient European way; those that move up are dancing African.

African Time-keeper Parts in Steel- and Marimba Bands: Time-line playing

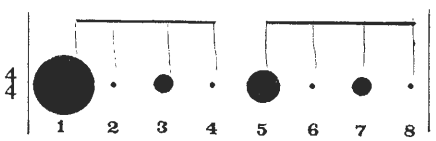
Time-lines are typical of much African instrumental music and of its descendants in Central and South America. They are irregular rhythm patterns usually played on a high-pitched instrument such as a cowbell, the side of a drum, by clapping, or on the little hardwood sticks called claves (which means keys in Spanish). The job of a time-line is to mark the shape of the rhythmic cycle, and to give a point of reference to all the players, so they know exactly where they are in the cycle at any moment. All Afro music recurs in rhythmic cycles, shorter and longer ones. You could say that the 'pulses', the recurring 'rhythmic particles' of your time-screen, usually written as quavers, might be the shortest (see my previous article). The longest would normally be the entire length of a particular song. But in between is what is usually meant by the African 'cycle'. These are the repeating patterns that give their rhythmic character to a piece, that define if the piece is to be a 'chacha', a 'calypso', 'bossa nova', 'highlife', or any of the myriad other Afro beats. A time-line in some way encapsulates in condensed form the essence of the rhythmic possibilities of that particular beat; it expresses its basic form in the simplest way, rather like the song which often features in an African folk story and expresses the core meaning of the story.

I remember how I first discovered 'Clave', the best-known of all the time-lines. It was all the more exciting because I found it myself. While at university in England I used to sing calypso's, and noticed that they were usually accompanied by the same irregular clicking pattern:



3-2 Clave

I bought myself a pair of claves. Then came a university Ball, and George Brown, the West Indian calypsonian was singing with his guitar in a side room. That moment, when I hesitantly joined in with him playing Clave and he looked round briefly and nodded, is one of those unforgettable moments of my life. Later I learned that there are many other Afro time-lines and ways of approaching them. So let's start with Clave, simply because it is the best-known, and can be applied to much Latin-American music. Some people grasp it immediately. When there is a difficulty with someone unfamiliar with Afro music, it is always because of the second stroke, marked * in the music above. The reason is, of course, that this stroke falls just before a foot beat. How much before? Exactly one pulse – or one quaver, as it is usually written. A problem with Western musicians approaching Afro music is that this quaver, in fact all the even-numbered quavers in 4/4 time, don't really exist *on their own account* in Western music, but are felt as off- beats, up-beats, after-beats to the more important on-beats, two- or four-in-a-bar.

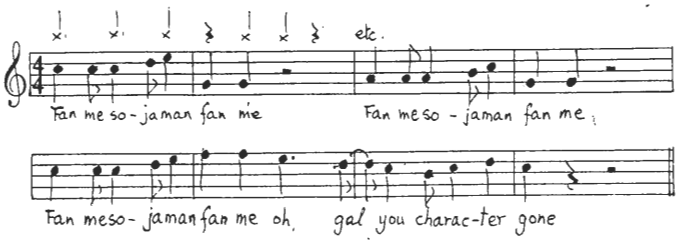


A western musician's awareness of the relative importance of each quaver in 4/4 time

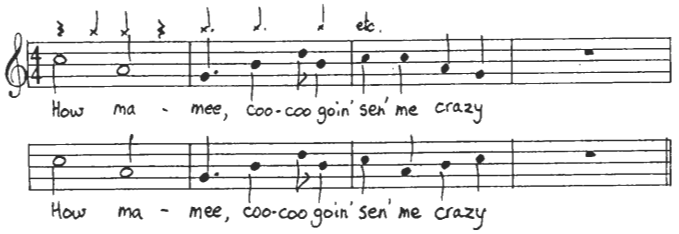
Once you can play this second stroke in the right place, it is pretty certain that you are already starting to move your attention from the large on-beats, and feeling, in the back of your musical sensibility, the particles of the 'time-screen' (the quavers) ticking by, all equal, all potentially usable, no one more important than another.

Here is a simple way to play Clave by using a two-hand rhythm pattern which will bring it out without your even knowing it! Play this pattern, always alternating right and left hand:

Hold a pencil in one hand, so it makes a different sound, and you'll hear that each hand is playing Clave. In fact one hand is playing '3-2 Clave' and the other '2-3 Clave'. The next step is to listen to almost any Latin-American music, as long as it is in duple, not triple time (4/4 or 2/4), and you should find that the music itself is phrased in a way that matches either 3-2 or 2-3 Clave. A simple example from Jamaica:



3-2: "Fan me soja man, fan me", Jamaica.



2-3: "Coocoo Soup" (chorus), Trinidad

Clave is the best-known representative of the 16-pulse family of time-lines, the other main one being the 12-pulse family. Most music which steel- and marimba bands play is duple, i.e. in 16- pulse cycles (= two bars of 4/4 time), although overall in Africa the 12-pulse is probably more common. 'Clave' is aptly named – it means 'key' in Spanish, and its rhythm is actually the key to understanding the shape of much Latin-American music. Latin musicians say that even if no one is playing Clave, they still feel it in the back of their minds, and know exactly where it falls.

Here is a description of some of the 16-pulse time-lines which you should know, perfectly, unconsciously, unself*c*onsciously, completely internalised, so you can switch instantly from one to the other if necessary, playing them at different tempos, starting at different points, and always spot-on accurately, which goes without saying!

Clave, at slow tempo, puts you in the frame of mind of slow calypso, mento, bolero, etc. If you start with the second bar (2-3 Clave) there is a subtle difference, which puts you into the more traditional or ritual Afro musics of the Caribbean. Change the tempo, you go into different rhythmic moods. When you change the position of individual strokes inside Clave, or add or subtract strokes, you jump all over the Afro world:

Normal Clave (called 3-2 clave)
Universal, especially Latin-America

Caribbean: Clave reversed (2-3 clave)
Deeper Afro musics, Caribbean, Cuba

You should be able to switch instantly from Clave back and forth to an on-beat part such as

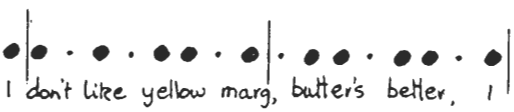
Cuban Clave, often fast

Bossa Nova Clave, Brazil, usually slow

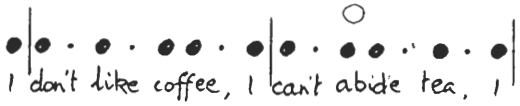
The Bossa Nova clave, as you can see, consists of four strokes of 3 pulses each, and one stroke of 4 pulses. Although this is the usual way is it played (because of its relationship with normal Clave), you can also start at any other point, giving the impression of an indefinite series of 3- pulse strokes with an occasional 4-pulse stroke almost at random. This is good on claves, wood block, and also on the Brazilian instruments *chocalho* (tube rattle) or *cabasa* (gourd rattle with a net of beads on the outside, played by twisting). On these however, you play *all* the pulses, with more emphasis on those you need for Clave. Sometimes Bossa Nova players even continue for long stretches playing only 3-pulse strokes, although this obviously means that they'll move in and out of sync with the first beat of the bar (three doesn't go into four).

'Highlife' Clave, West Africa. Usually starts at *

Now we come to time-lines more like the African ones, and you should be able to hear that the above Clave patterns are basically the same as the African ones.



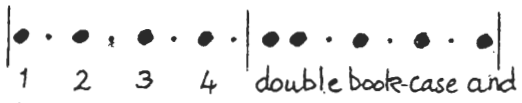
Slow: Bossa Nova; Fast: Cuban double tempo, samba, salsa, etc.



Usually very fast. Cuban double tempo, salsa

If you look carefully at the above two patterns you will see that they are very similar; the first bar in each case is identical. But the similarity goes further... they are actually completely identical overall; if there were no other part playing to give a reference point one could not tell which was which. If you start the second one at the circle you will see it is identical to the first.

Another point to note with these Afro-Latin patterns is that they consist of only two kinds of stroke: a single stroke, and a double stroke, always spaced apart by one pulse. Using this knowledge, and of course a general feel for the music, it is not hard to create one's own new versions of this kind of time-line.



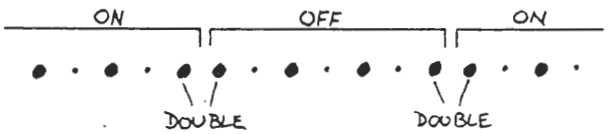
Central Africa, esp Angola, Zambia, S. Congo

This is probably the simplest form of this type of time-line. It is very accommodating as regards starting point. In different styles and regions you can probably find it starting on *any* of the above strokes, e.g. another one commonly used in Central Africa:

Starting on the 2nd stroke of the above

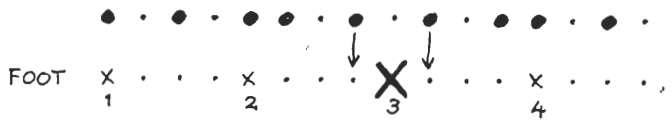
See if you recognise this one! (starting on the 3rd stroke of 'Double book-case')

This is the basic time-line for one form of Brazilian samba (not surprising in that most of the Africans taken to Brazil were from Angola). This kind of time-line, like the Cuban ones, also uses only two kinds of stroke, the single and the double, with the one-pulse spaces, but there is another essential structural rule which becomes clear here, and which it is useful to remember when building your own patterns: it consists of a series of single 'on-beats', a double stroke to get you onto the 'off-beat', then a series of single 'off-beats', and another double stroke to get you back onto the on-beat.



This principle can be applied to every Afro time-line, and is also an important structural principle in building Afro rhythmic solos.

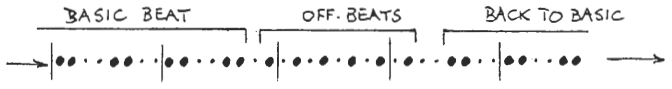
Just a point in passing – you'll notice that in every one of these time-lines there is always *at least one stroke* which does not coincide with a foot-beat. (The foot-beats in almost all this 16-pulse music are minims, i.e. 4 pulses each, 2 in a bar, 4 to the whole time-line pattern) e.g. in the above samba the stroke I mean is the first beat of Bar 2. You have to play on the pulse both immediately *before* and immediately *after* the foot-beat, 'framing' it, as I call it.



This is the point where most non-Afro musicians start to have trouble; the on-beat is so dominant in Western music that you may find it very hard not to play *with* it every time. It will need your conscious attention at first. Listen for instance to a good *congero* playing samba on the congas; when he has the beat perfectly, it drives the band along fantastically. And if you can play a complementary rhythm together with the congas, what a rhythm that will be! Your rhythm should not be *exactly* the same as his, but both of you would normally leave out that particular foot-beat. Because that beat is *not* played, it makes your foot beat all the stronger, if you can follow the African thinking behind that.

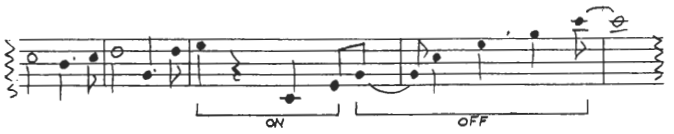
One thing that can help you find the exact position of these 'framing' off-beats is the sense of that constant stream of rhythmic particles which the time-screen player should be playing. Many hand percussion instruments are designed for this... *maracas*, tambourine, *chocalho*, *cabasa*.... If you happen to be playing a hand drum with the African technique of continuously alternating hands, L-R-L-R, it is more physically obvious, because your hands tell you by themselves where the beat is. You just keep them moving regularly, and all the on-beats are in the Right hand, and all the off-beats in the Left (if you are right-handed). You merely have to make an effort of body, not of brain, and make your Left-hand strokes sound out at one point, and your Right-hand strokes at another.

Once you can do this 'framing' accurately, you will be on track towards being able to play a series of strokes, all on the off-beat, while continuing to beat your foot in the usual way. This can be very useful, for instance, for a little solo break, say on a cowbell, e.g.:

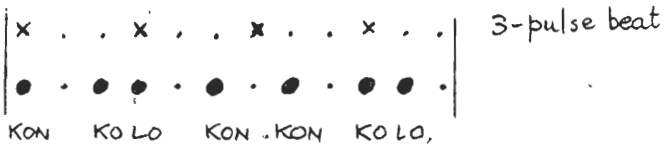


Or if you decide to do a double-length version of some pattern for a change, e.g. in samba:

or to play along in unison with a particular passage in the music, such as the 7th and 8th bars of my calypso arrangement of "Wedding March":



That's it basically for the 16-pulse time-lines. The 12-pulse ones are remarkably different in feel. Here the simplest forms are probably *not* the easiest. The 12-pulse time-line is best-known from Nigeria, where the Yoruba call it "*Kon kolo kon kon kolo*".



Do you see how similar it is, in principle, to the "1, 2, 3, 4, double book-case" type? ... single on-beats, a double-beat, single off-beats, a double-beat to bring you back to the start again. A significant difference from the 12-pulse time-lines is that the 'on-beat' may not be nearly so easy to locate as in the 16-pulse ones. With the figure **12**, African-style mathematics come strongly into play. The beat can be felt just as easily as three groups of 4 pulses (like 3/2 time) or as four groups of 3 pulses (like 12/8 time). The above Konkolo pattern, for instance, feels quite different when you relate it to a 4-pulse beat:

Try doing both and you'll see. In much African music this is an ambiguity that is deliberately encouraged. Notice that whichever way you feel it, there are *always* some strokes that have a foot-beat with them and some that do not.

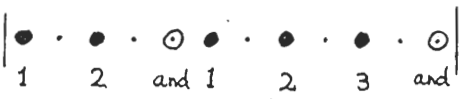
Other versions of the 12-pulse time-line:

Feels different but it's "Konkolo" starting on its last stroke. Esp. Ghana

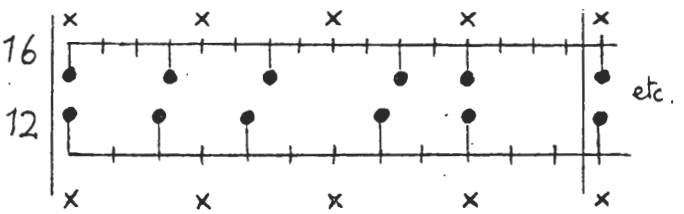
Starting on 6th stroke of 'Konkolo' Esp. Zimbabwe.

At high speeds one of each double-stroke pair is often left out in many parts of Africa:

Here's a way of playing the first one above on a cowbell, where you use your fingers of your left hand, the one holding the cowbell, to tap silently on it, filling the gaps in the pattern and making more physical sense of it. Tap as you say 'and'.



Look back briefly at 16-pulse Clave itself. It has five strokes, grouped into 3 and 2. Now look at the above 12-pulse time-line. It also has five strokes grouped into 3 and 2, always against four constant dance steps per cycle, but there is a subtle difference between the two, which this diagram demonstrates.



It is a good test of your awareness of rhythmic time-screens, and of the function of a time-line, if first you can hear the difference between these two, and then play them, shifting from one to the other, always feeling the constant foot beat.

Finally a version from the *mbakumba* dance of the Karanga in Zimbabwe that is clapped much more slowly than most time-lines to the north.

Whatever you do on any hand percussion instrument try to be aware of what the others are doing. Congas play patterns just like you do, which are designed to be different, and to complement your parts and the others. Then the drum kit – it's a natural tendency of a drum kit player to try to be a one-man band, so he usually tries to do everything, resulting in a style which is not as Afro as if the parts were played by separate people. You and he should try to avoid duplicating each other's rhythms. Then every other member of the band, especially the inside parts, normally has characteristic rhythmic patterns for every kind of music you play, all of which intermesh nicely with your parts. In fact many of their rhythms you can also learn and adapt on your own, and use them in the same or other numbers. And lastly look at someone who can play without looking at his instrument, and see how much more aware he is of what is happening in the band. That really proves the point that the more you are aware of what the others are doing, the more you can enjoy what you are doing yourself. Have fun!

African Time-keeper Parts in Steel- and Marimba Bands:
Congas and the drum kit

If you don't have these instruments in your Marimba- or Steelband, then you should certainly get them as soon as possible. Neither type of band is complete without them. This short article is not going to teach you what to play on congas and drum kit, impossible anyway in this written medium, but to give you an idea of what their respective functions are in a band, so you can make the most effective use of them.

It has to do with the personality of the two drummers inside a band and their relative jobs. Not their private personalities, that is, but their official personality *as* kit or conga drummer. Their functions are really quite different.

Firstly the **conga drummer**, the *congero*. As I see it, his job is to be, as it were, the "black man' of the band, in the sense that he provides the basic rhythmic beat that identifies the style of music being played. If it's Calypso, then practically every moment of the piece he is saying *"This is Calypso"*. He says it with an insistence, a power, an unflappability, a total reliability and — in contrast with this — an unpredictability, in the sense that his licks, on the occasions when he departs from the basic beat, cannot be predicted, neither in what he plays, nor in where he chooses to do it. The conga drummer, in principle, does not listen very much to the melodies that float around him. He is much more interested in creating and deepening that sense of 'Calypso', 'Samba', or whatever the beat may be. (Of course in practice he has to pay attention and at least make the starts and stops.)

He lives in the inevitability of his own world, which is to some extent separate from the melody instruments and the progress of the tune. If you took the melody instruments away you would still have 'Calypso' pulsing through. In particular the *congero* almost never 'fills' at the ends of melody phrases, which is the expected place for the kit drummer to fill, but he does it whenever *he* feels like it. His licks are a rhythmic 'call' to initiate something, they don't passively follow or answer. He works in rhythm like a lead soloist does in melody, stating ideas for others to pick up and comment on.

He is the 'black man'. He knows what the beat is. He is in touch with the source of that beat – however you may perceive that idea – he is strongly connected to the earth, often goes barefoot; he feels his responsibility to the world of people, especially those who share his approach to beat and life, through movement and the body and the ground, also through spirituality, even mysticism. He is a physical person, off-stage and on; he enjoys and is proud of his body and his strength. He has a special relationship with his drums, both for what he can do through them, and because of their deeper meaning and associations for him and others, especially those of African origin.

The **kit drummer,** on the other hand, has a different function, although he is very often called upon to fill more than one role at a time. I call him the 'white man' of the rhythm section, although he is not so plainly 'white' as the *congero* is 'black'. Basically the kit drummer has to listen to the progress of the melody, the development of its mood, tone, excitement, its subdivisions, and make all these obvious in the way he plays, whether he is following them or leading them. Simply put, he is aware of the melody and plays along with it, supporting, commenting, filling, signalling, pushing, calming, while the *congero* ignores the melody and plays the beat. The kit drummer may get excited, hot, sentimental, reflective, assertive and so on. In contrast the *congero* is always in command of himself; he is 'cool', both facially and physically, and in control of what he is doing. The kit drummer is totally present. The *congero* is connected with something wider and deeper than the here and now.

I know this does not tell you much about how to play congas or kit, but it may tell you something about where you are going if you want to take these important instruments seriously, which few of our present Marimba bands and Steelbands are doing. They need more dedication and work than the other band instruments; there is less room here for mistakes and inaccuracies. David Coplan wrote a good inside view of the *congero* and his job in an article in African Music, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1991, pp. 105–9. Just one quote from it: "A drummer who feels the Groove has no reason to ask himself why he's a musician, or for that matter why the good Lord put him on this earth."

Congas and drum kits are unfortunately expensive, which may be why so many Marimba and Steelbands do without them. In my opinion it is no saving, because they introduce the polyrhythmic element which is the *sine qua non* of Afro ensemble music. A range of African hand drums is made by African Musical Instruments Ltd in Grahamstown, which could serve as a cheaper start towards the Conga section of your band.* For a drum kit, it is not necessary to buy the whole kit at once; the most important parts to get first are the high-hat cymbals, the snare drum and the bass drum.

---

*African Musical Instruments Ltd,
Cr. Cloncore and Jarvis Streets, Grahamstown 6139,
Tel: 046 622-6252, Fax: 046 622-3501, E-mail: james@kalimba.co.za

A few closing words about two other important Latin-American instruments, the **bongos** and the **timbales**, not much seen in South Africa, but wonderfully effective in the right place. The **bongos** are like the one-man Latin percussion section. They are not used very much in full band work, but they are useful in lighter, quieter and slower numbers. Although they are more decorative, less fundamental to the basic beat, the bongo player must know the beats of all the percussionists and be able to play off them. For this reason he would normally be the most experienced among the percussionists.

The **timbales**, on the other hand, are thunder and lightning, quite a different approach from the congas. They are essentially Latin-American, a fusion of African and Spanish. Or you could say they are African with the body replaced by the mind. They play African time-line patterns combined with an intellectual brilliance and lightning shifts of pace and tone. They are brilliant, showy, laconic, and can also give the greatest backup to other instruments, to the congas for instance. They are exciting but can also be cold-bloodedly dispassionate, the cutting edge of steel rather than the warmth of wood. Just one succinct stroke in exactly the right place may say it all, may be all a whole number needs. The *timbalero* is brilliant, but looks bored most of the time.

African Time-keeper Parts in Steel- and Marimba Bands:

A marimba group or a steelband?

Do you want to keep up with the many other schools in South Africa experimenting with Africanising their music programmes, but you can't decide whether you should go for a MARIMBA GROUP or a STEELBAND for your school or club? First you should think carefully about who the players will be, and what their musical and physical needs and aptitudes are likely to be.

The new **Marimba bands**, which started in Zimbabwe in about 1960, and came to South Africa in the 1980s, are thoroughly African. To play the instruments you hit them hard, energetically. You work; the notes are large and easy to hit. You get hot. You move. You get the onlookers moving too. The music is built up to a great extent from physical movement patterns, which often dominate over subtlety of musical sound. The patterns are often repetitive, which is quite normal and expected in all African music, and once you get a brilliant player or players with the experience to be able to improvise over the top, or shift intelligently from pattern to pattern, you have a powerful African performance going.

The marimba is very easy to learn; the parts can usually be picked up quickly by ear. It is not necessary to use notation. On the contrary, learners often learn faster if you do *not* attempt to explain their parts with theoretical concepts like harmony, scales, etc. This sort of thing often comes later whether by self-revelation or instruction. There is room for audience participation; the group and the audience can all sing along, add other instruments, clap, dance, etc. The African groove will not be long in coming if you encourage, give the pupils their head, and do not enforce a rigid classroom style.

Marimbas can be used to rhythmicise otherwise rhythm-less pieces such as hymns etc; they can perform arrangements of virtually all South African traditional vocal music, as well as nearly all Afro-pop music from *Mbaqanga* to Soul, Gospel, *Isicathamiya*, *Maskanda* and other styles. They can also play a good amount of Western popular, folk and light classical music, particularly if it is diatonic. The scope can be widened with judicious use of the extra chromatic note in each octave and by choosing the right key/mode to use.

Marimba bands as found in South Africa and Zimbabwe usually number only about six people, possibly for financial reasons, i.e. smaller than many school Steelbands. There is no reason, however, why the four pitches of marimba, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone (and the optional Double Bass) cannot be doubled up, as is often done, for instance by Alport Mhlanga's well- known Marimba band at Maru-a-Pula School in Gaborone.

An advantage of marimbas is that although they do go out of tune after time, like any musical instrument, they are extremely easy to retune. A chip or two with a chisel, or a few strokes with a rasp, wielded by anyone with a musical ear and the basic knowledge of the technique, are enough to get them back into tune. If the frames are damaged, it is a straight piece of conventional carpentry to mend them. If notes break, you can make new ones yourself if you are confident, otherwise replacements can simply be sent by post.*

---

* New instruments, replacement notes and repairs are available from African Musical Instruments Ltd, Cnr. Cloncore and Jarvis Streets, Grahamstown 6139,
Tel: 046 622-6252; or Fax: 046 622-3501; E-mail: james@klimba.co.za

In all, I think you would consider a Marimba band

- if you are concerned to Africanise your music programme
- if you want to move towards increasing the African character of your institution
- if you want to tap into and release the inherent musicality of your African pupils
- if you want to find a first class common ground between racial groups in your school
- if you want to explore African polyrhythm
- if you want to get a group going quickly
- if you want something inexpensive and easy to mend

A Marimba band, if it is going to play 'away', will need some form of roomy transport. Most of the instruments dismantle to some extent. A smallish band will fit into a Kombi bus.

Steelband originated in African musicality because of its origin in Trinidad, but I find it appeals to a distinctly different class of musician and audience. In the first place it is completely chromatic, usually covering a range of about four and a half octaves. This allows it to play virtually any type of music that is normally played on Western instruments, from orchestral classics to calypso to you-name-it. It is extremely versatile.

The playing technique is very unlike that of the marimba. It is played much more delicately, even when playing loud. The tone can be coaxed out of it with the right touch, just like any sensitive musical instrument. It has a big dynamic range from whisper to roar, but if it is played with a heavy hand as most traditional African instruments are played, it will immediately go out of tune. The same thing happens if the instruments are mishandled, heavily knocked, or dropped. If they are played in the hot sun, they go flat instantly. (On the other hand, they *can* be played in the rain, unlike the marimba!) So the physical approach to the steeldrum is significantly different.

Steelband can play African pop styles well, best with a good percussion section. The big advantage, however, is that it can also play innumerable other world styles. Arrangements, usually being chromatic, may need longer to learn, especially if the players do not read music, and if this is so it can also limit the size of the repertoire. It takes longer to achieve proficiency on the steeldrum, but there is the potential, especially on the lead instrument (the Tenor), for a high degree of individual expertise. On marimbas on the other hand you can often get a simple performance grooving along in only one session. The smallest basic Steelband would consist of five people: two Tenors (single drums), one Double Second (with two drums), one Guitar (with three drums), one Bass (with six drums). This layout will match with most musical arrangements that are available. Steelbands can grow to any size by doubling up on these four basic parts, the larger the more impressive.

Steeldrums are very difficult to tune; in fact without experience one should not even try, but leave it to a pan-maker.* It is by no means obvious how to tune them. Under normal careful use they do not go out of tune easily. But they have to be looked after carefully, especially when loading, unloading, travelling. The catchiness of the sound, the versatility and the utter happiness which steelband seems to engender make up for this small inconvenience for thousands of pan-players around the world.

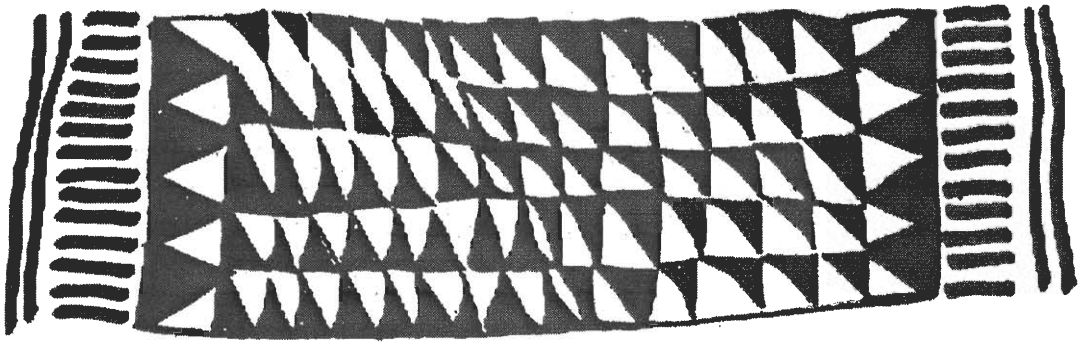
In all, I think you would consider a Steelband

- if you want its global versatility
- if you want to lift the image of your school music with something that can be a knockout when well rehearsed
- if you are interested in a variety of musical styles and are able to arrange in them
- if you expect to have dedicated pupils who are prepared to practise a lot
- if you have the budget to have the instruments professionally tuned from time to time.

A Steelband needs its own roomy transport, such as a trailer, for playing 'away'. The basses are large, full-size oil drums. Don't expect to load even a small band into a Kombi bus.

---

* There is one top-class pan maker in South Africa, David Parkin in Port Elizabeth. You can contact him either through African Musical Instruments Ltd, or directly at 59 Prince Alfred Rd, North End, Port Elizabeth, 6001. Tel: 041581-4804 or 082 369-0382. E-mail: pan_inc@hotmail.com



African Song Stories (Sotho)
Tselane and the Cannibal

© Nkagisang Nxumalo and Jaco Kruger, School of Music, Potchefstroom University

Aim

To teach learners

- a Sotho song story
- to be obedient to their parents
- to be vigilant of adults with bad intentions.

Level

Primary

Origin of song

Nkagisang Nxumalo, March 2003. Recorded, transcribed and retold by Jaco Kruger.

For the teacher

A cannibal with a predilection for children is a well-known character in Sotho and Venda oral narratives. These narratives teach children to be obedient to their parents. The narratives also show that the weak may defend themselves against the powerful by creative trickery.

Pronunciation

This is a basic guide to pronunciation only. Consult a Sotho speaker for accurate pronunciation.

ngwanake: sing with me

ngwanake/tsee/ke/tlhe/mme: neck

ngwanake/tla/utlwa: mother

dijo: deep

dijo: George

oje: octave

oje: genuine

utlwa/tlhe:
curl the tongue back into the mouth

Tselane and the cannibal

Tselane was the only child of her widowed mother. One day her mother said, 'I want to visit my sister who lives in the next village. Let us pack some clothes and lock the house.' Tselane answered, 'I do not want to go with you. I want to play at home with my friends.' Tselane's mother said, 'I will bring you food at the end of each day. Do not open the door unless you hear me singing: "Tselane my child! Come, take your food and eat!" When you hear these words, you must sing: "I hear you mother!" '

The cannibal **by Phatuma Seoka c. 1990**

Tselane's mother packed a small bag and departed for her sister's village. She returned home at the end of the first day, singing:

Tselane ngwanake!	Tselane my child!
Tla o tsee dijo oje!	Come, take your food and eat!

Tselane recognised her mother's voice, and opened the door:

Ke a utlwa tlhe mme! I hear you mother!

A cannibal, who was always spying on people to catch a child unawares, quickly noticed that Tselane was staying alone at home. He said, 'This child will be easy to catch.' Shortly before Tselane's mother was due to arrive on the second day, the cannibal went to Tselane house and sang:

Tselane ngwanake!	Tselane my child!
Tla o tsee dijo oje!	Come, take your food and eat!

Tselane thought, 'I hear my mother's song, but not her voice. Her voice is high and sweet. The voice I hear is low and hoarse.' She shouted, 'You are not my mother! Go away!' The cannibal muttered, 'Let me retreat before Tselane's shouting alerts the village.'

The cannibal thought very hard of a way to alter his voice so that Tselane would open the door for him. None of the many different kinds of concoctions he prepared from herbs and roots could change his voice. Eventually he went to a witchdoctor who said, 'You need to swallow a hot coal. It will not burn your throat. Your throat is tough from swallowing strange things.'

The cannibal went back to Tselane's house early the next evening, and sang in a sweet, high voice:

Tselane ngwanake! Tselane my child!
Tla o tsee dijo oje! Come take your food and eat!

Tselane thought, 'That is my mother's voice', and opened the door:

Ke a utlwa tlhe mme! I hear you mother!

When Tselane saw the ugly cannibal, she screamed with fright and tried to escape. However, the cannibal caught her and put her in his big black bag! He slung the bag over his shoulder and started to walk home. He soon became tired, and said, 'Let me stop at that bar to rest and get something to drink'. He put the bag down, and ordered a beer.

The cannibal drank a lot because it was a very hot day. He became so drunk that he fell asleep. When Tselane heard the cannibal snoring, she sang:

Ke autlwa tlhe mme! I hear you mother!

The patrons of the bar said, 'We hear someone singing from inside the bag. Let us see who it is!' They opened the bag and found Tselane inside. They were very angry and decided to punish the cannibal. The barman farmed with bees. He took one of his hives and put it into the cannibal's bag.

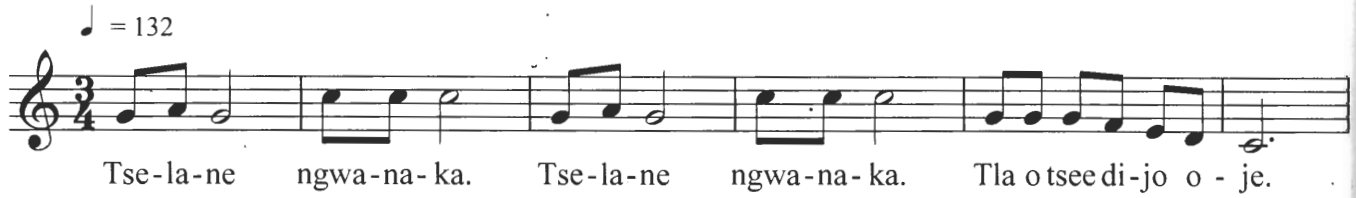
When the cannibal woke up, he said. 'I have a bad headache. Let me go home.' He took his bag and went home. When he arrived there, he put the bag in a cage. He closed all the holes in the cage so that Tselane would not be able to escape.

The cannibal made a fire and put a large three-legged pot on it. He put water in the pot, and added vegetables, herbs and spices. While he was waiting for the water to boil, he sang mockingly in his deep voice:

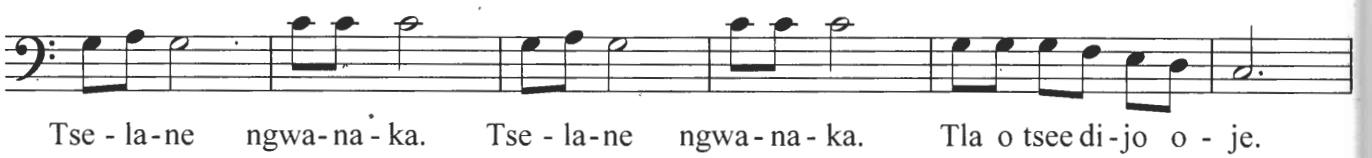
Tselane ngwanake! Tselane my child!
Tla o tsee dijo oje! Come take your food and eat!

When the water was boiling, the cannibal went into the cage, closed the door, and opened the bag. The bees were furious by this time, and they attacked him. The cannibal shouted, 'Help! Help!' Nobody wanted to help him. He ran to the river and jumped into the water. The bees stung him when he came up for air, and he drowned.

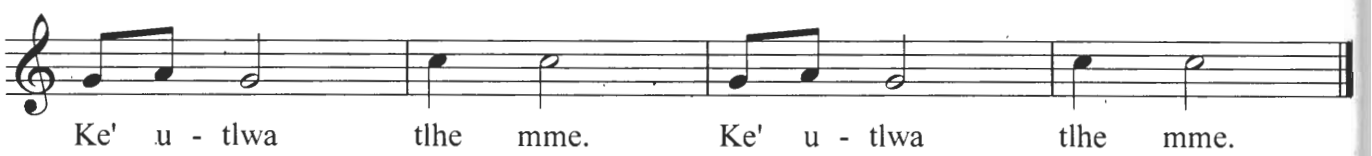
Voice of Tselane's mother; altered voice of the cannibal



Usual voice of the cannibal

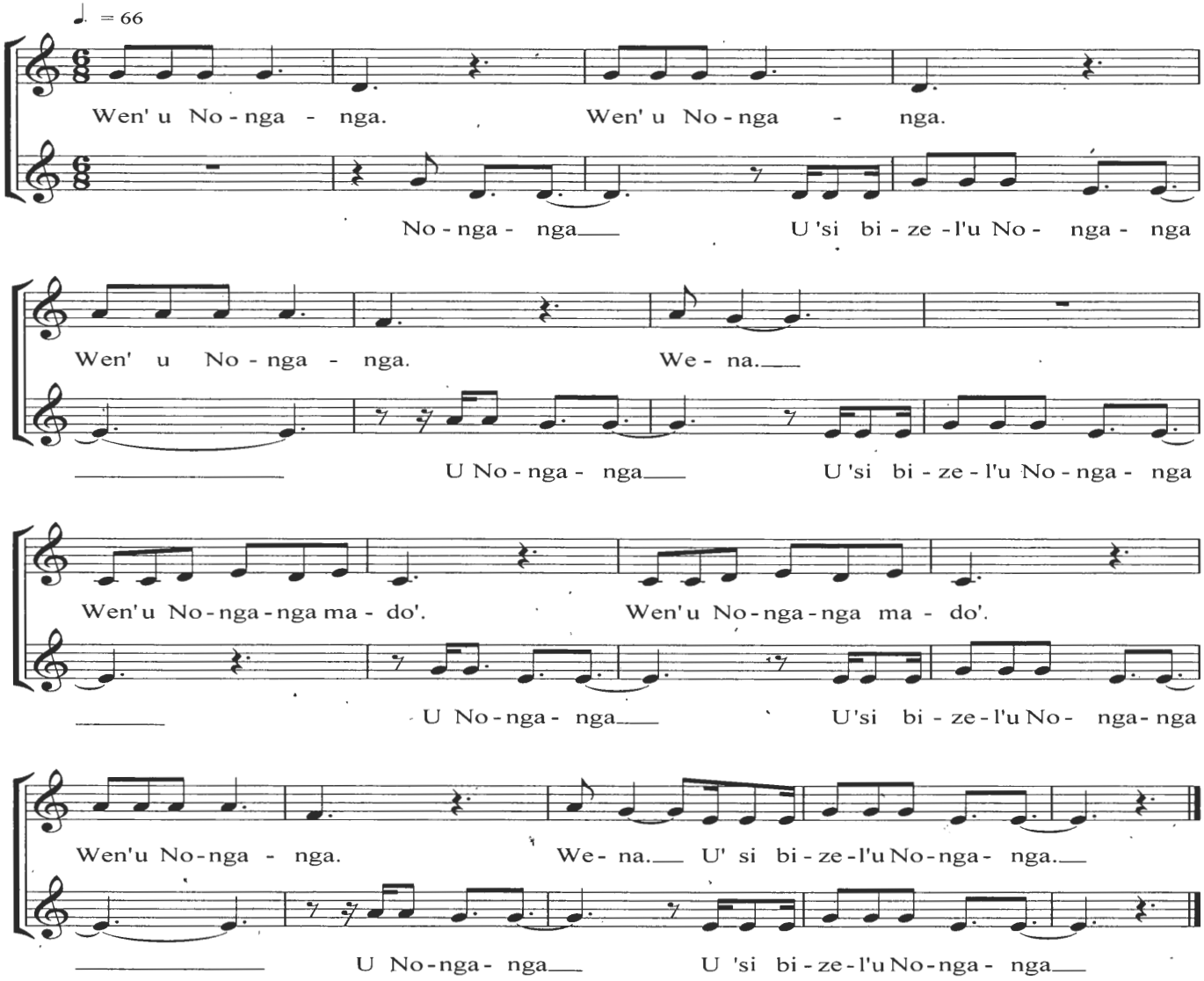


Tselane's voice



African Song Stories (Zulu)

The noble man



Aim

To teach learners

- a Zulu song story
- to exercise power in a moral way.

Level

Primary

Origin of song

From 'Stories from the fire', SABC Television. Retold with a new song by Esther Sebetlele, March 2003. Recorded, transcribed and edited by Jaco Kruger.

Pronunciation

This is a basic guide to pronunciation only. Consult a Zulu speaker for accurate pronunciation.

wen': neck

u: root

Nonganga/madoda: ought

Nonganga: ask

bizel'u: bee

bizel'u: pear

The noble man

There once lived a well-known healer who honoured his family, his people and his king. This man's name was Nonganga. The king heard about Nonganga's good reputation as a healer. He said, 'Let me send one of my messengers to bring Nonganga to me.' The messenger travelled to Nonganga's home and sang:

Wen'u Nonganga!	Hey Nonganga!
U'si bizel'u Nonganga.	He is calling Nonganga for us.
Wen'u Nonganga, madoda!	Gentlemen, I am saying: Hey Nonganga!

Nonganga became very afraid when he received the king's summons. He said, 'Important kings do not usually have any business with ordinary people. Have I done something wrong? Should I flee the country?' His wife answered, 'It is better to obey the king's command.' And so Nonganga left home in fear of his life.

When Nonganga reached the king's homestead, a court official said, 'Wait over there by the gate. The king is busy.' Nonganga waited for a whole day. He saw many important people arriving to have an audience with the king. When Nonganga's turn came to see the king, a messenger called him:

Wen'u Nonganga!
U'si bizel'u Nonganga.
Wen'u Nonganga, madoda!

Contrary to Nonganga's expectations, the king was very friendly. He said, 'I am looking for a wise man who is able to create a human being. Diviners like you know the spirit world where many wonderful things happen.' Nonganga thought, 'I have been given a task that is humanly impossible.'

Nonganga was in deep thought as he walked home. As he was crossing a river, a friendly spirit rose from the water. 'What is troubling you?' the spirit asked him in a deep voice. 'I have been instructed by the king to create a human being' Nonganga replied. The spirit laughed. 'The king may as well have asked you for a pot full of tears and human hair!' Nonganga exclaimed, 'Now I know what to do!'

Nonganga returned home where he spent a few days with his family. His wife prepared food for his return journey to the king. When Nonganga arrived back at the king's court, the king's councillors sang:

Wen'u Nonganga!
U'si bizel'u Nonganga.
Wen'u Nonganga, madoda!

Nonganga said to the king, 'My human being needs one more ingredient for completion. For this I need your help. Bring me a pot of tears and human hair. The king said to his messengers, 'Go and cut people's hair. Then beat them until they cry.' This was easier said than done! People fought back when the messengers wanted to cut their hair. When they were beaten, they wiped their tears. And so the king's mission failed.

When the king's mother heard about his foolishness, she said, 'This is not the way to rule.' The king said to himself, 'I persecuted my people. I must respect them as they respect me.' He summoned Nonganga and his other subjects to his court. He said, 'I made a mistake. Let us slaughter some oxen and have a party.'

African Song Stories (Sotho)

Infidelity

© Tlale Masiu and Jaco Kruger, School of Music, Potchefstroom University

Aim

To teach learners

- a Sotho song story
- about the negative effect of infidelity in marriage.

Level

Secondary.

Origin of song

Tlale Masiu, March 2003. Recorded, transcribed and edited by Jaco Kruger.

Pronunciation

This is a basic guide to pronunciation only. Consult a Sotho speaker for accurate pronunciation.

ke/ile/iketlile/re: neck

ile/ iketlile: eat

babona/ka: mother

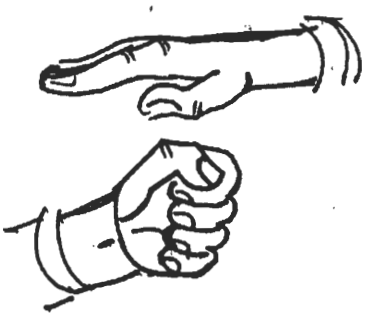
babona/ko: ought

maqakabetsi: click the tongue against the palate

monna: room

tsang: sing

mokgwa: Loch



Infidelity

Moleki was not faithful to his wife Kelebile. He was a travelling salesman. When he was away from home on business, he liked to visit bars and nightclubs where women came up to him and said. 'Hey sweety, do you want to be my friend?'

Moleki always stayed at the Sun City hotel and casino complex when he had business in Northwest Province. Moleki's girlfriend at Sun City was Seyantlo. Seyantlo was a divorced woman. She worked in the casino as a croupier. Her former husband Bakai worked at the hotel as assistant manager. Bakai had separated from his wife because she liked to be friends with wealthy businessmen who gambled at her table in the casino.

Bakai discovered that Seyantlo had started an affair with Moleki. He thought, 'Let me find Moleki's home address in the hotel register.' And so Bakai managed to trace Kelebile to the clothing store where she worked. He pretended to be a shopper, and hid inside a fitting room. When Kelebile passed by the fitting room, he sang:

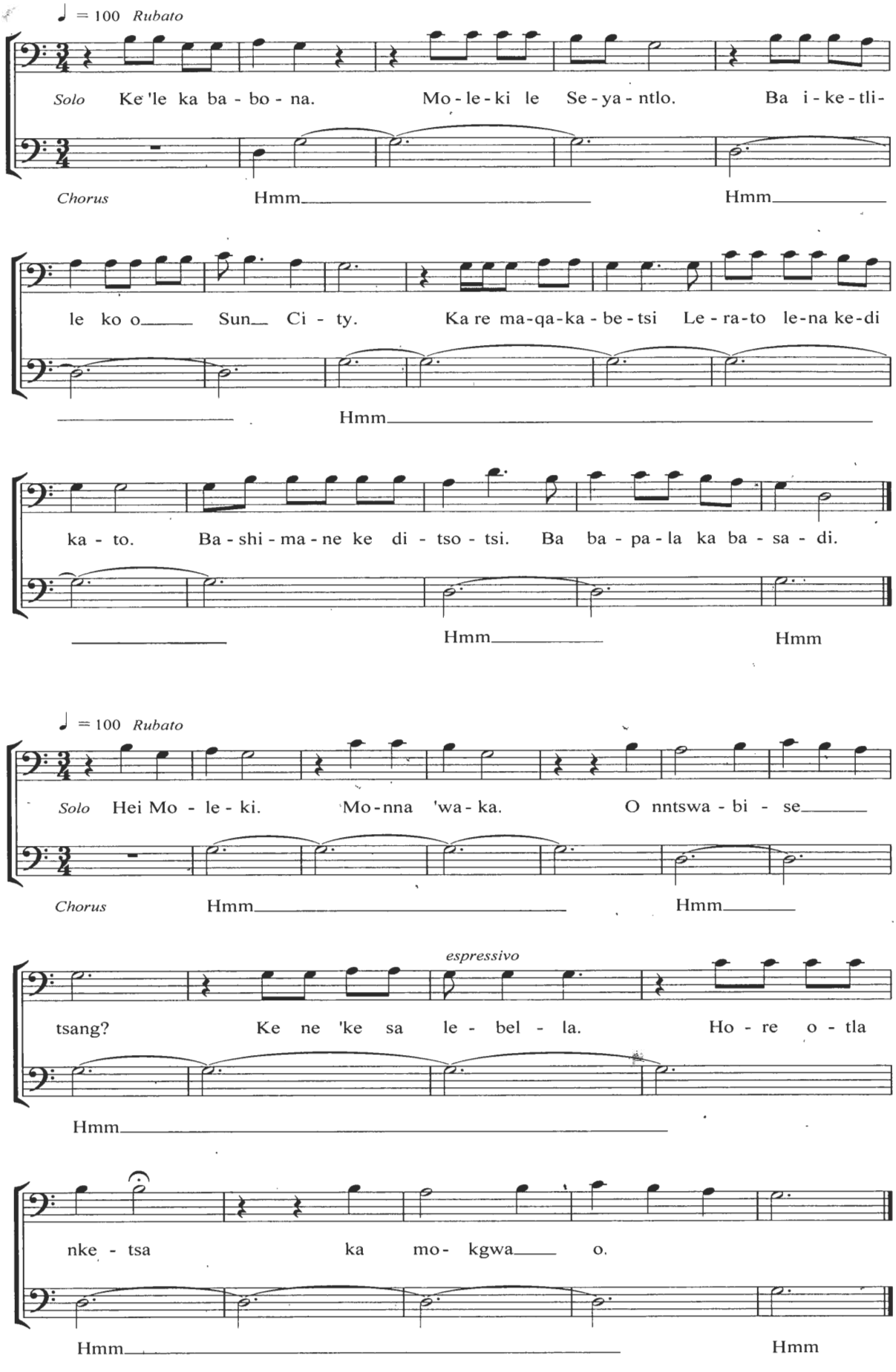
Ke ile ka babona:	I have seen them:
Moleki le Seyantlo.	Moleki and Seyantlo,
Ba iketlile ko o Sun City.	having fun at Sun City.
Ka re maqakabetsi.	I am talking about problems.
Lerato le na kediketo.	Love is a game.
Bashimane ke ditsotsi.	Boys are villains.
Ba bapala ka basadi.	They play with women.

Kelebile opened the door of the fitting room and found Bakai standing there. She asked, 'Do you always speak to people from a hiding place? And what is meaning of your song?' Bakai answered, 'I did not want to make you ashamed by giving you the news about your husband in public.' Kelebile cried. She decided to confront Moleki.

Moleki arrived in the hotel's nightclub where he had a dinner date with Seyantlo. He was very surprised to find his wife standing on the podium of the jazz band. When he approached her, she starting to sing so that all the guests could hear her:

Hei Moleki, monna wa waka.	*Hey Moleki, my husband.*
O nntswabise tsang?	*Why do you humiliate me?*
Ke ne ne ke sa lebella	*I did not expect you*
o re o tla nketsa ka mokgwao.	*to treat me this way.*

Moleki became extremely embarrassed by Kelebile' song. He thought, 'Everybody now knows that I am an unfaithful husband.' He left the nightclub in a hurry, and never returned to the hotel. Moleki's behaviour had caused Kelebile much heartbreak. She divorced him and became married happily to Bakai.


♩ = 100 Rubato
Solo Ke 'le ka ba - bo - na. Mo - le - ki le Se - ya - ntlo. Ba i - ke - tli -
Chorus Hmm Hmm
le ko o Sun Ci - ty. Ka re ma-qa-ka - be - tsi Le - ra-to le-na ke-di
Hmm
ka - to. Ba - shi - ma - ne ke di - tso - tsi. Ba ba - pa - la ka ba - sa - di.
Hmm Hmm
♩ = 100 Rubato
Solo Hei Mo - le - ki. Mo-nna 'wa - ka. O nntswa - bi - se
Chorus Hmm Hmm
espressivo
tsang? Ke ne 'ke sa le - bel - la. Ho - re o - tla
Hmm
nke - tsa ka mo - kgwa o.
Hmm Hmm

African Song Stories (Setswana)

Madikwe Village

© Taki Makhale and Jaco Kruger, School of Music, Potchefstroom University

Aim

- To teach learners a Setswana song story
- To stimulate debate on the social status of women.

Level

Senior primary and secondary

Origin of story

Taki Makhale, March 2003. Recorded, transcribed and edited by Jaco Kruger.

Pronunciation

This is a basic guide to pronunciation only. Consult a Setswana speaker for accurate pronunciation.

ga/go: Loch

jang: jingle

jang/mang: sing

jang: what

batho: a soft t

batho: you

tshela: tsi

rona: ought

Madikwe village

This is a story about a village called Madikwe in which only women and their young children lived. These women were widows who had been neglected by their married children. Others were married women who had been abused by their husband. The inhabitants of Madikwe not only did all the chores usually expected from women, but also those usually done by men, such as building houses and ploughing. Madikwe also had an effective village council which allocated land and settled all kinds of dispute.

The women from Madikwe were very proud of what they had accomplished. They said, 'We ignore outsiders who mock us for living without men.' When they were farming, cooking or fetching water, they sang:

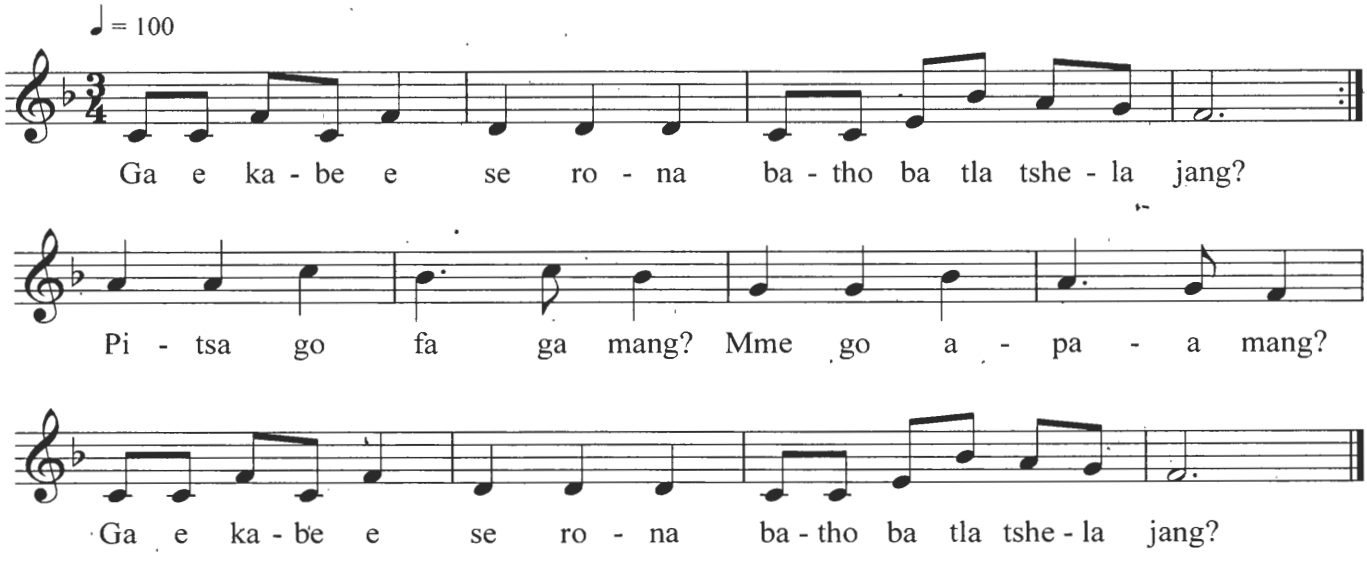
Ga e kabe e se rona batho	*How will people*
ba tla tshela jang?	*survive without us?*
Pitsa go fa ga mang?	*Who will cook?*
Mme go apaa mang?	Who will clean?

People said, 'Let us go and see this wonderful village in which no men are allowed to live.' One of these visitors was a kind bachelor. He fell in love with Mosidi, a widow from the village. He said to Mosidi, 'I long for a wife. Will you marry me?' Mosidi said, 'I have no relatives to negotiate this marriage. But I will go with you.' And so Mosidi moved to her new village where preparations for the wedding started.

Mosidi soon discovered that many men in her new village did not treat women as their equals. They took important decisions without consulting their wives and female relatives. Some of them worked in town and did not support their wives who took care of their home and children. Mosidi complained about this to the villagers. She said, 'Women have many important responsibilities. They are no less important than men.' She sang:

Ga e kabe e se rona batho
ba tla tshela jang?
Pitsa go fa ga mang?
Mme go apaa mang?

Men in the village became afraid. They muttered, 'This strange woman will undermine our authority.' They said to Mosidi's betrothed, 'There is no place here for a rebellious wife.' And so Mosidi returned to Madikwe.



International Centre for African Music & Dance (ICAMD) in South Africa

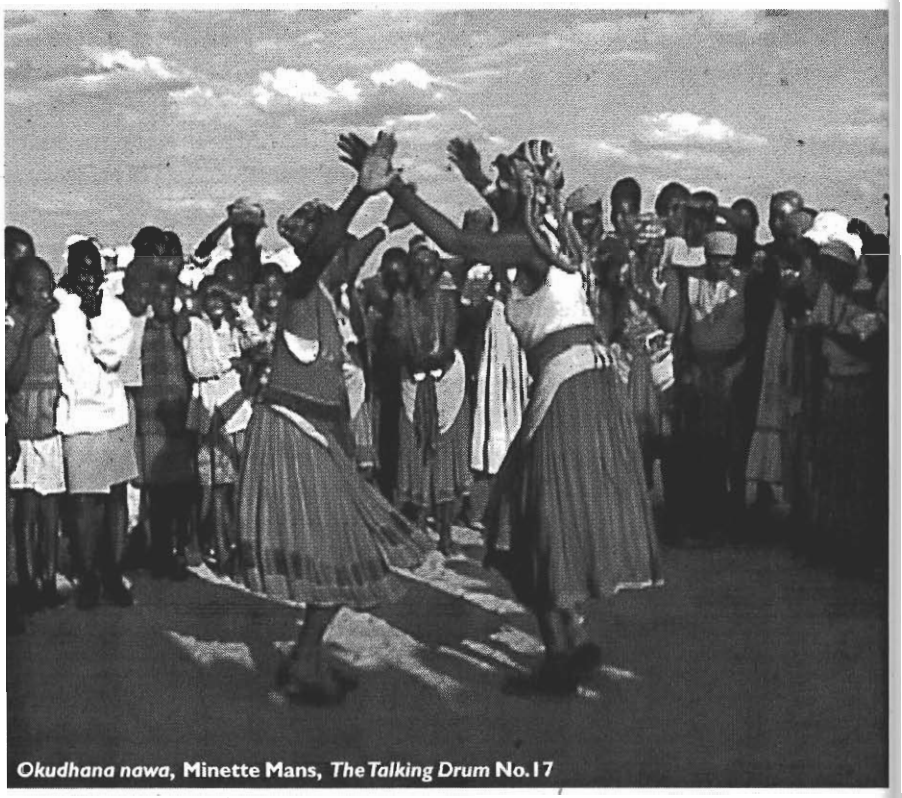
Dr. Eric Akrofi, Department of Music Education, University of Transkei

A South African International Centre for African Music & Dance (ICAMD) Secretariat has been founded at the University of the Transkei, South Africa, with Dr. Eric Akrofi as Coordinator. This secretariat has started creating a database of researchers of African music and dance, first, within South Africa and later in countries such as Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. This will enable them to provide information on their activities as well as organise researchers to take an active interest in their work.

Those interested, or who are aware of others who might wish to be included, should send their names, email addresses and areas of current research to:

Dr. Eric Akrofi,
Coordinator,
South African Secretariat of ICAMD,
Department of Music Education,
University of Transkei,
P Bag X1,
UMTATA 5117,
South Africa.
Tel: 047 502-2632 (office)
Cell: 082 202-1045
Fax: 047 502-2215
E-mail: akrofi@getafix.utr.ac.za

The ICAMD Secretariat at the University of Transkei (Unitra) seeks to implement the mission and objectives of ICAMD as well as the mission of Unitra – "a commitment to excellence by offering relevant and effective research and community outreach programmes with a specific emphasis on the promotion of sustainable rural development." In fact, the ICAMD Secretariat at Unitra serves as a centre for African music research and the development of indigenous and contemporary African music and dance especially of the communities in rural Transkei. It will, indeed, be a centre of excellence in the promotion of the musical traditions of the black people of South Africa and the southern Africa subregion.



Okudhana nawa, Minette Mans, *The Talking Drum* No.17

CONFERENCE REPORT
Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE)

PASMAE 2003 · Kisumu, Kenya · 5 – 11 July 2003

© Elizabeth Oehrle: School of Music, University of Natal, Durban

This conference follows two years after the PASME Conference held in Zambia when the name of our organisation was altered to reflect the holistic approach to the arts embedded in Africa. The society is now called the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education or PASMAE – thus this is the first PASMAE Conference. This memorable gathering in the heart of Africa was hosted in Kisumu on Lake Victoria, an idyllic setting. The organising committee was headed by Dr. Hellen Agak assisted by Chrispo Caleb Okumu of the Music Department at Maseno University located at Maseno township 25km from Kisumu on the equator. They were ably advised and assisted by the Secretary-General of PASMAE, Caroline van Niekerk.

Midway through the conference an unforgettable trip to Maseno was organised for the special event of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the International Society of Music Education (ISME) and the first regional African conference. Representing ISME was the past president from Norway, Einar Solbu. The unique happening was that delegates coming from the northern hemisphere stood on one side of the equator and delegates coming from the southern hemisphere stood on the other. At the centre stood ISME's past president, Einar Solbu and PASMAE's president, Meki Nzewi. (See cover picture)

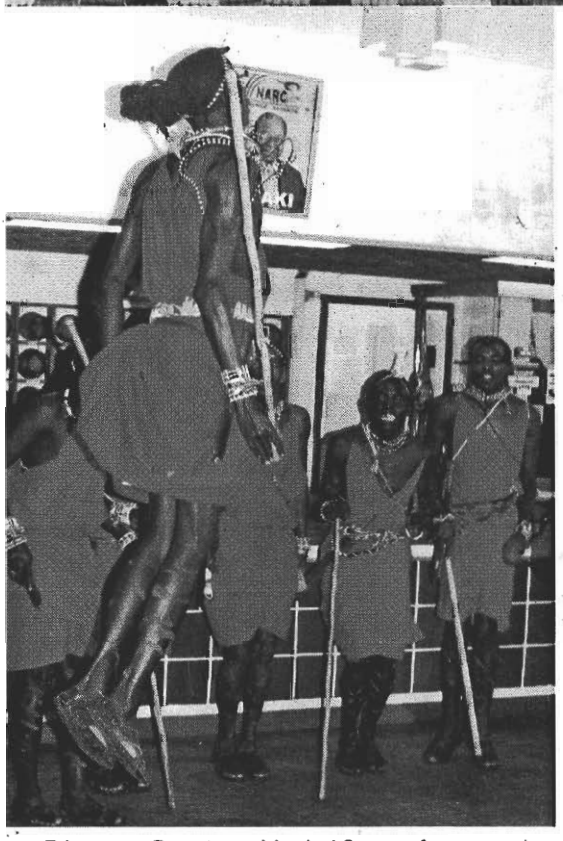
Delegates attended from these countries in Africa: Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Ethiopia. Others came from further afield: Italy, UK, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Australia, and the USA.

The theme of the conference was Solutions for Musical Arts Education in Africa. The major objective was "to provide workable solutions to the problems of music research, teaching and performance peculiar to the continent." The extent to which this was achieved will only be known when full reports from Michael Nixon, Mitchel Strumpf, and Richard Okafor, the gentlemen who kindly consented to record discussion sessions and the papers, become available.

The keynote address was given by Dr. M Masoga from the National Research Foundation. He challenged delegates to move towards greater openness and diversity, and to use indigenous languages and knowledge systems in music education. He also said, education must unleash people to think for themselves and solve their own problems.

The sessions included four areas:

1. **Theme I:**
   Music as science and arts:
   The Theory of African Music Translated into Musical Arts



Education Practice – Mitchel Strumpf reports that these sessions established that the performance of African music is an 'art'. When we consider the many theories that construct this art, we make the study of African Music also a 'science". It was suggested that "In Africa, people perform the theories of their music; they do not just talk about them". During the sessions, focus was placed on a number of areas including Pulse ("Once you have your pulse, you can do anything with African music"); Cadence ("Cadence is like 'breaking the music'; African music always ends properly, with a cadence, often led by the lead drum"); Music offers the elation of good health ('Music is healing all of the time. People make music and dance and express good health in so doing").

2. **Theme II:**
   Folklore & Games as Integrated Arts Education – Workshops
3. **Theme III:**
   African Philosophy of Music Arts Education – Panel discussions
4. **Theme IV:**
   The Use of Technology to Solve African Problems in Musical Arts Education; Seminars."

   Mitchel Strumpf reports: these sessions explored ways of using documentary film, slides and computer programmes in the classroom. The benefits of using documentary films to allow students to see and hear music performances they otherwise would not have the chance to was clear. Participants discussed areas of film/video making, e.g., over-dubbing of voice commentary,

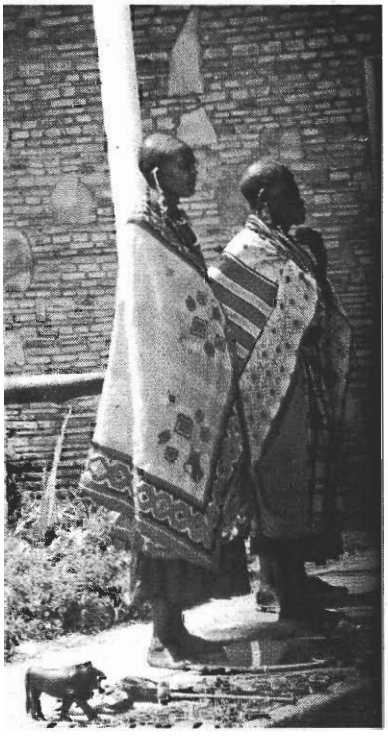
and found that the processes need not be economically prohibitive. Discussion related to the many new computer programmes for Music Education, and ways of procuring such programmes, frequently for free, took a major portion of the time.

Papers relevant to these themes were handed to the Secretary General for publication. We look forward to the Proceedings in the new year and perhaps an additional publication.

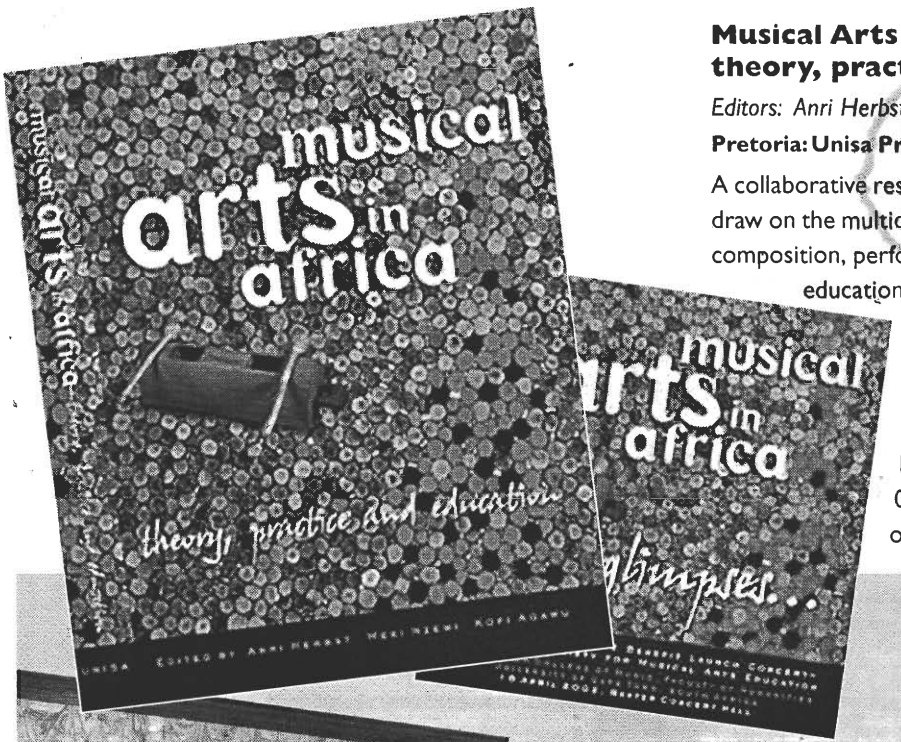
One of the most delightful and educational aspects of the conferences were the evening performances (see pictures) which introduced delegates to many kinds of music/dance particularly from Kenya.

Conference ended with the Annual General Meeting and the re-election of Meki Nzewi as President and Caroline van Niekerk as Secretary-General. Two new members of the executive come from Kenya: Chrispo Caleb Okumu as Vice President and Hellen Agak as Assistant Secretary-General. Two additional Vice Presidents are Minette Mans (Namibia) and Adepo Yapo (Cote d'Ivoire). Other appointments are: Anri Herbst (Educational Resources), Chris Klopper (MAT cells), Robert Kwami (Music Technology) and Michael Nixon (Databank Operator). Jesse McCarroll from New York is PASMAE's US National Representative responsible for linking with and harnessing the African diaspora in the United States.

In 2005 the PASMAE conference will be held in Maputo, Mozambique.



Publications



Musical Arts in Africa: theory, practice and education

Editors: Anri Herbst, Meki Nzewi, Kofi Agawu.

Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2003

A collaborative result of thirty-one African music scholars who draw on the multidisciplinary perspective of musicology, composition, performing practice, ethnomusicology and education to guide contemporary reflection on these and other issues. Along with the book is a double compact disc and video. To order, write:

Unisa Press
PO Box 392
0003 Unisa
or, phone +27 (12) 429-3449

ABOVE: The launch of *Musical Arts in Africa: theory, practice and education* by Einas Solbu (ISME) at PASME 2003 Conference in Kisumu, Kenya.

LEFT: Gathering of some Writers of *Musical Arts in Africa:*
From top, left to right:
- Theo Herbst, Meki Nzewi, William Anku, (two non-writers), Robert Kwami, Joseph Ng'anda
- Sean Adams, Mitchel Strumpf, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Joshua Uzoigwe, Jeffrey Robinson, Hetta Potgieter
- Caroline van Niekerk, Benon Kigozi, Lawrence Emeka, Ncebakazi Mnukwana, Hellen Agak, Ojo Bakare, Eric Akrofi, Florence Miya, Anri Herbst
- Richard Okafor, Zabana Kongo, Betsy Oehrle, Minette Mans, Mary Dzansi-McPalm, Christian Onyeji.

Representing African Music: Postcolonial notes, queries, positions

Kofi Agawu

New York: Routledge, 2003

People's Science voice Newsletter

Editor: Mogomme Masoga with
Skamie Mthemba Skamie and Claire Loveday.
National Research Foundation
PO Box 2600
0001 Pretoria

African Music from Southern Africa

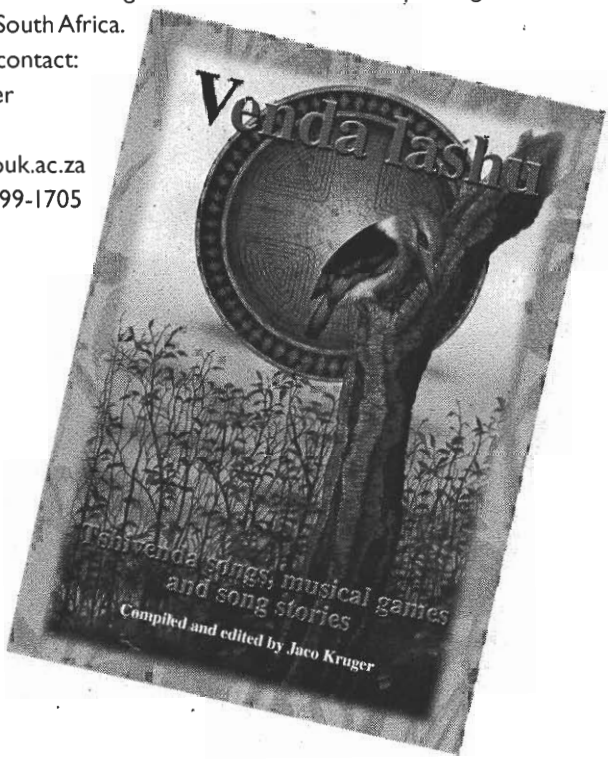
Dave Dargie
CD recordings and booklets available:
Prof. Dave Dargie
PO Box 4
Fort Hare
5701 South Africa
or,
Melusinenstr, 13
D-81671
Muenchen
Germany
Tel / Fax: +49 89 491692

Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa (JMAA)

A *new* journal to be launched in March 2004. It aims to combine ethnomusicological, musicological, music educational and performance-based research in a unique way to promote the Music Arts on the African continent.
For more information:
E-mail: aherbst@protem.uct.ac.za
or, write
Dr. Hetta Potgieter
Music Department
University of Pretoria
0002 South Africa

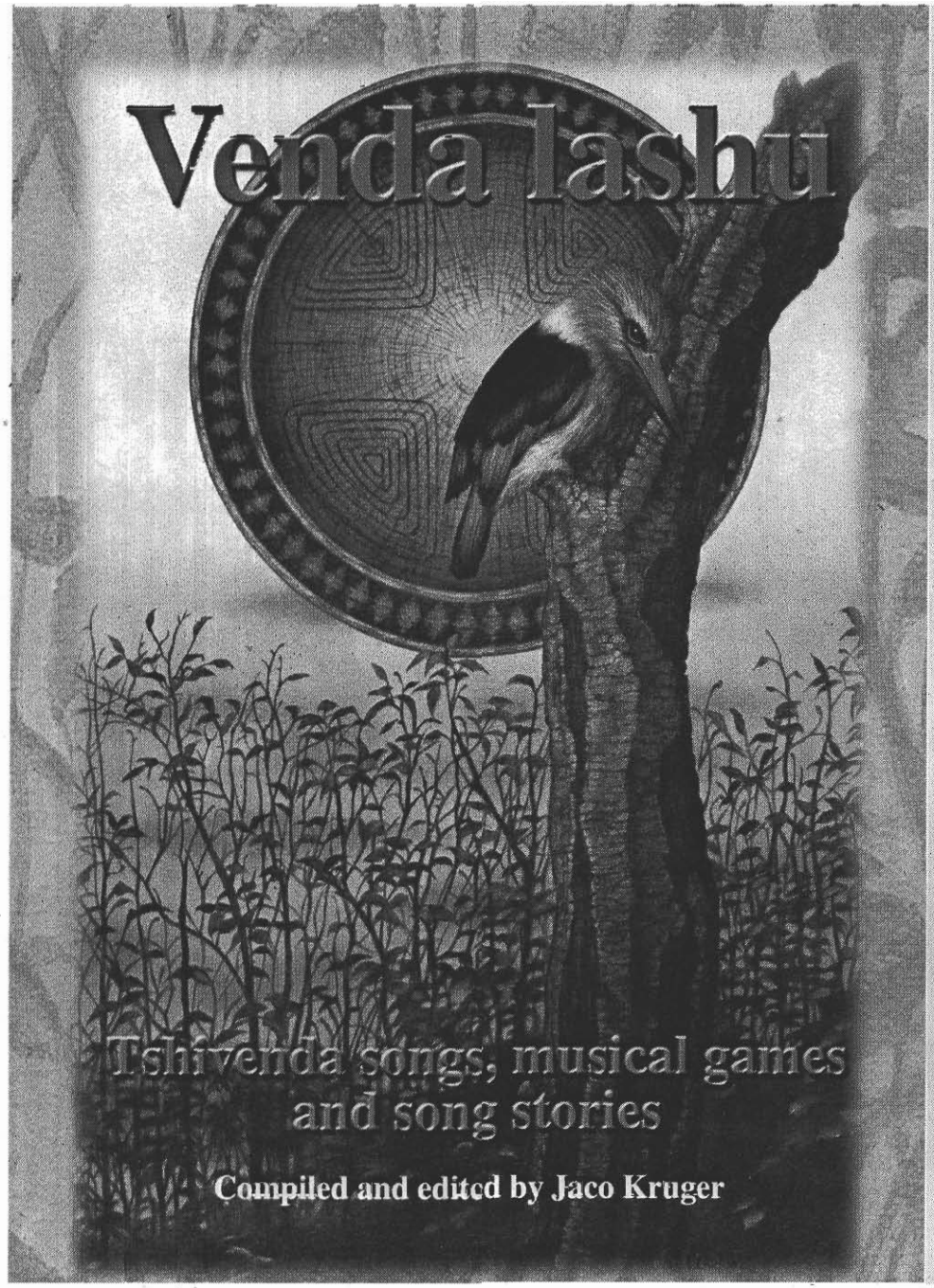
Venda Iashu

Compiled and edited by Jaco Kruger
Musical games and song stories of the Tshivenda-speaking people of South Africa.
To order, contact:
Jaco Kruger
E-mail:
musjhk@puk.ac.za
Tel: 018 299-1705



Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IAJIKS)

"The aim and thrust of IAJIKS is to bring together scholars and thinkers to promote, analyse, critique and preserve Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). The journal is devoted to the promotion of the research and scholarship of IKS. With the increasing enthusiasm of the African Renaissance, it could not be long before attention is turned to IKS to contribute to the development of Africa and the world."
Contact:
Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems
Private Bag X10
Isipingo
4110 South Africa
E-mail: nmkabela@pan.uzulu.ac.za
Fax: +27 (31) 907-3011



Venda lashu ('Our Venda') is a collection of 38 songs, musical games and song stories of the Tshivenda-speaking people of South Africa. These songs delve into the fascinating past and present worlds of Venda children. They include:

- Action songs
- Musical games
- Herding songs
- Story songs
- Drinking songs

They are accompanied by a pronunciation guide, English translations, text explanations, and performance instructions. Several songs feature original guitar accompaniments, while piano accompaniments have been composed for others. These songs teach moral imperatives as well as certain basic principles of African musical performance.

To place an order, contact:
Jaco Kruger
tel. (018) 299–1705
<musjhk@puk.ac.za>
<http://www.puk.ac.za/music/isam/songbook/>

Xerox-printed in South Africa using local recycled papers.