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**The Talking Drum • Newsletter Issue No. 33 • July 2010 • ISSN 2073-3968**

**Network for promoting Intercultural Education through Music (NETIEM)**

**Pan-African Society of Musical Arts Education (PasmaE)**

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Illustration for *The Talking Drum*: Dina Cormick

## Editorial

In addition to contributions from our most reliable source – Jaco Kruger and Hetta Potgieter from North-West University – are submissions from two writers beyond South African borders.

**Minette Mans** from Namibia, a frequent contributor to *The Talking Drum* (TTD), submits an article based on her current book, *Living in Worlds of Music*. Minette writes: “Actually, because my book is basically a combination of sociology, learning theory and philosophy, I have started my article by isolating the question that drove me initially (in simple terms) and then I try to show how this can be of value to teachers”.

Her publisher explains further: “...The book asserts that an understanding of our musical worlds can be a transformative educational tool that could have a significant role to play in multicultural music and arts education. She explores the way in which musical expression, with its myriad cultural variations, reveals much about identity and cultural norms, and shows how particular musical sounds are aesthetically related to these norms. The author goes further to suggest that similar systems can be detected across

cultures, while each world remains colored by a distinctive soundscape.

Mans also looks at the way each cultural soundscape is a symbolic manifestation of a society's collective cognition, sorting musical behavior and sounds into clusters and patterns that fulfill each society's requirements. She probes the fact that in today's globalized and mobile world, as people move from one society to another, cross-cultural acts and hybrids result in a number of new aesthetics.

Finally, in addition to three personal narratives by musicians from different continents, the author has invited scholars from diverse specializations and locations to comment on different sections of the book, opening up a critical dialogue with voices from different parts of the globe. Musical categorization, identity, values, aesthetic evaluation, creativity, curriculum, assessment and teacher education are some of the issues tackled in this manner”.

Subjects related to Mans' book are education and language, and the second article touches on both.

**Charles Aluede** and **Emmanuel Eregare** from Nigeria present “Music therapy and Language: an examination of the therapeutic

potency of selected Iyayi songs of the Esan, Edo State, Nigeria.” This enlightening study explores how certain songs from the Iyayi society have been used therapeutically for specific ailments.

**Jaco Kruger** and **Hetta Potgieter** continue to share their research through TTD and encourage other members of their staff and student body to do the same. Three articles appear in this issue. Jaco revisits a Tshivenda children's song, and he co-authors with a student, **Itumeleng Pooe**, a Setswana lullaby. The remaining article relative to multicultural groups is by **Hannes Taljaard** and **Janelize van der Merwe**, colleagues of Kruger and Potgieter. Our thanks to new and seasoned contributors to TTD and may your support continue.

TTD is the mouthpiece of the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PasmaE); thus, we welcome the new Executive Committee and share the “Clarion Call” from our President, **AdéOlúwa Okunadé** (Nigeria). PasmaE will go from strength to strength under his leadership.

  
Elizabeth Oehrle

# Music therapy and Language: An examination of the therapeutic potency of selected Iyayi songs of the Esan, Edo State, Nigeria

© CO Aluede and EA Eregare, Dept. of Theatre and Media Arts,  
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Through the ages, people have realised that music not only gives pleasure and enjoyment through listening, it has power to control our minds and bodies as well (Foster et al 1980). The music of Iyayi society of the Esan in Edo state is primarily vocal to the accompaniment of some indigenous instruments like the bell, gourd rattle, hand fan and mother drum. The peculiarity of their songs in terms of content and context of use in healing is occasioning the need for an in-depth study. Amazingly, the study of music and language is attracting an increasing amount of research interest. In contemporary times, scholars of different backgrounds are examining the valence between music and language and their collective attributes in healing. In this vein, McPherson (2003) opined that music and language are both important in helping humans form large social groups, and one can argue that they co-evolved on the back of this function. The most obvious connection between language and music is that music can be used to help us remember words. It has been convincingly shown that words are better recalled when they are learned as a song rather than speech – in particular conditions.

## Origin of Esan and the Iyayi Society in Esanland

The term Esan is applied to people in five local government areas in the Edo Central senatorial district of Edo state. Esan is located in the tropical zone of the northern part of the Nigerian forest

region (Okoduwa, 1997:45). Iyayi in Esan means “I believe” or “faith in God” – (Iyayi Osenebua). Iyayi society of the Esan is an outgrowth of Igbe Ubiesha religious movements of Kokori, Delta State. This is why the groups in Esan pay homage to Kokori during their annual meetings in Kokori (Nabofa 2003:238). In recent times, however, because of economic hardship and political restructuring, this homage has been de-emphasized and conventions are now held at Usugbenu, Agwa and other areas chosen by the head priests.

## Music and Language

There has been a growing debate on music-language relationship, biological connection of musical activities and neuro-biology of harmony in the field of musicology. This segment investigates specifically the collective effect of music and language in relation to healing. Sounds and words constitute music. The connection between language and music is much more profound. Language and music then, may well have developed together, not entirely independently. More evidence for this comes from recent neurological studies (McPherson 2003). Language is a very important and complex function in humans, and it involves a number of brain regions. Cromie (2001) remarks that:

A human brain is divided into two hemispheres, and the right hemisphere has been traditionally identified as the seat of music appreciation. However, no one has found a “music center” there, or

anywhere else. ... Brain scans of people taken while listening to tunes, reveal that music perception emerges from the interplay of activity in both sides of the brain (p.1).

Music and language have a lot in common. Both are a means of communication, and the entire brain is charged with the responsibility of interpreting the messages communicated. More precisely, the language of music is sound. A knowledge of those symbols, and indeed of musical clichés in general, is essential to musical understanding because they have significance, either musical or extra-musical (Dobrian, 1992). Dobrian is not alone in his view about the extra musical functions of music. Giving a clearer idea of the therapeutic potency of music and language, Adodo (2003) writes that music and poems are advanced forms of speech. Why are they so powerful? It is because they open us to a deeper level where healing can take place. He remarked further that:

African traditional religions generally believe in the presence of mysterious forces controlling activities in this world. These forces manifest in the form of spirits. Africans believe that it is through the manipulation of sound that they link up with this force and use it. Hence great emphasis is placed on speech, incantations, singing and music, which of course involves dance (p.50).

## Definition of Music Therapy

Alvin (1975:4) defines music therapy as the controlled use of music in the

treatment, education, training and rehabilitation of children and adults suffering from physical, mental or emotional disorders. Mereni (2004:9) indicates that the word therapy comes from the Greek word "therapeia" which means "healing", in the same sense as treatment of a disease: a curative intervention for the purpose of healing a sickness or restoring health.

### Texts of Iyayi Songs

To understand what Iyayi songs mean is to have a firm grip of not just its texts as poems, but their functions and/or relevance in healing. Content and context analysis of their songs give a more accurate idea of their use. Song texts are very important in understanding human behaviour (Inanga, 1987). Similarly, Frith (1996) remarked that,

...most people if asked what a song means refer to the literary objects which can be analyzed entirely separately from music, or as speech acts, words to be analyzed in performance (p.158).

In examining what the words do mean, we can follow two obvious strategies: treating songs either as poems or as words in a context. Based on his study in East Africa, Kubik (1994) remarks that:

Ganga alula is a historical song. Ganga was a great friend of Nasolo, first born daughter of Kabaka, the king of Buganda, with whom he fell in love. He was caught and his fingers cut off, i.e. he was castrated (p.66).

Without being grounded in the expressive patterns of a people, proper textual analysis may be impaired. In the quotation above, an uninformed researcher may simply regard fingers to mean the ordinary fingers on the human hand. In the same vein, Iyayi songs are laced with proverbs and indirect speeches which require a thorough analyses from the point of content and context more especially as Urhobo terminologies are often used in their songs. The texts of Iyayi songs are examined following on here:

### Iyayi Text and Healing

Music making is not restricted to organized sound only; it also includes a symbolic expression of a social and cultural organization, which reflects the values, the past and present ways of life of human beings. Our study of the text of Iyayi songs randomly collected from the field indicates that some of their songs, among other things, provide information on the history of Iyayi society. Just as in many churches, slogans like "Mend your ways or face the fire that torments for ever" or "Give your life to Christ before it is too late", or "Beware of the fire that burns for ever," adorn their pulpits and also form major phrases in their songs, so it is with the texts of Iyayi society songs. Some of the songs admonish. In Iyayi society, admonition is usually the precursor of confession before healing. Where an ailment is believed to be self induced, the patients are first admonished to make them remorseful of their acts. This idea is discernable in the song below:

**KPOLORALO**

Kpo lo ra lo na ha mie ja di a a bha kpo lo ra lo o a ha ko ko

de bhoa

#### Text in Esan

Kpo lo ralo oli yo suo tuon kpa  
Abha kpolo ralo -o  
Aha ko ko de bho -a

#### Translation

Sweep mob it is not for one person.  
Sweep mob it is not for one person.  
We will all stay in the dirt.

It is implied from the text that people could get entangled in ailment as a result of willful acts (deliberate act of deviance). When suddenly such persons fall sick they are reminded first that they have gone out of tune with themselves and the environment and that when such happens, they should expect to remain in the mess that is associated with irregular conduct.

The Iyayi society is a traditional religious organization; as such the thrust of their worship is seeking refuge under God's influence. From the songs, the high esteem they accord God could be discerned. The Iyayi society believes in confession as a necessary prelude to healing. The song, *Ihalu Ibhalenlen* is a confession song which says if I have sinned without knowing my Lord, my Father wash away my sins. The song gives background information on the belief of the society that mind-borne grief or sin could cause physiological or psychological pains or problems; hence, the supplication in songs for healing. Below is the song and its translation.

**IHALU IBHALENLEN**

I- ha lu i bha le len 'se na ra me gbe se kua meo

'se na ra me gbe se kua meo



### Text in Esan

lha lu bha lenlen  
Ose ne ramhen  
Gbe se kua mhen-o  
Ose ne ran mhen  
Gbe se kua meo

### Translation

If I have erred and I didn't know  
my lord my father  
forgive me  
my lord my father  
forgive me

One may ask: is there relevance between the texts of lyayi songs and healing? From available data, there is an absolute link between lyayi songs and healing. The texts of some lyayi songs address ailments directly; *Eran hi gbo bhiu 'ku men* is a good example.

### ERAN HIGBO 'BHIUKU



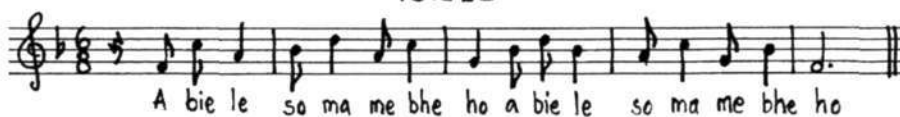
### Text in Esan

Erhan hi gbo bhiu 'ku men  
Amen ha se ranlen 'we le  
Erhan hi gbo bhiu 'ku men  
Amen ha se ranlen we le

### Translation

Fire will not kill my brother  
if water touches fire it quenches  
Fire will not kill my brother  
if water touches fire it quenches

### ABIELE



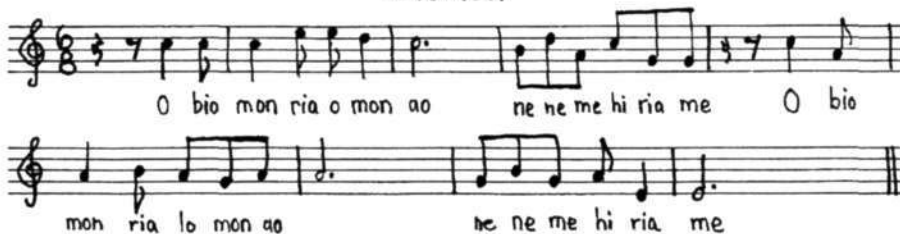
### Text in Esan

Abiele  
So ma me bhe ho  
Abiele  
So ma me bhe ho

### Translation

Delivery news  
Isn't it pleasant to the ears?  
Delivery news  
Isn't it pleasant to the ears?

### OBIOMON



### Text in Esan

Obio mon ria omon a  
nene men i ria men  
Obio mon ria omon a  
nene men i ria men

### Translation

Mother has spoilt a child.  
My mother did not spoil me.  
Mother has spoilt a child.  
My mother did not spoil me.



These texts speak to the patients and the ailments directly. In the song, Abiele, a pregnant woman is encouraged to be brave, manage pains and give birth because protracted labour could give rise to still birth. Thus the child will be spoilt. The patients are further encouraged through songs to imbibe positive thinking about their wellness. This idea is reflected in the song above when it is said that fire cannot burn my brother because if water contacts fire it quenches immediately. Fire in this context is symbolic of ailments and worldly troubles. Obhiuku is member of or child of Uku – this simply refers to the members of the lyayi fold or persons who have run to them for safety. Water, as used in the context, is the healing attribute inherent in lyayi society.

Another song that reflects the healing attribute of lyayi songs is *Egholemiamen*. The song addresses sellers of different kinds of ailments, that is, evil forces in the community, not to sell diseases to innocent members. To sell ailments as used in this context means in the actual sense, spreading of diseases. The song is indirectly saying that whoever devises evil against the innocent should be consumed by evil machinations.

## EGHOLEMIAMEN



Text in Esan  
Egholemia me  
I bha yu we  
gholo ji mede  
Egholemia me  
Ibha yu we  
gholon ji mede  
Eghole miame

Translation  
Sellers of illness  
I have not told you  
to sell for me  
Sellers of illness  
I have not told you  
to sell for me  
Sellers of illness



### Results of practical application of music in Iyayi society

Understanding the biology of music could allow people to use it better in medical and other areas, where evidence indicates music produces benefits beyond entertainment (Comie, 2001). The members of this society appear to have a good grasp of the use of music as medicine. To them, healing is achieved when a patient bathes continuously in the music being performed to the extent of dancing to it. This dance induces sweating and in this process the patient forgets pains he originally had. Through music, patients are afforded the opportunity of development of group feeling and socializing with peers, gain relief from self concern and discover avenues for exercise. Our study of the text of Iyayi songs randomly collected from the field indicates that some of their songs, among other things, are therapeutic. Their texts speak to the patients and the ailments directly.

Finally worthy of mention is the use of culturally familiar songs in healing. This practice brings out the oneness in the clients and patients; it closes the gap between them and convalescence is accelerated. Researchers have found activity in brain regions that control movement even when people just listen to music without moving any parts of their bodies. If you're just thinking about tapping out a rhythm, parts of the motor system in your brain light up. Before this segment closes, it should be registered that while texts speak, music also remains concomitant in the entire healing experience because instrumental music or unaccompanied vocal singing are not common in Esan. This is of course why Dewey (1958) remarked that:

If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the art of painting and music would not exist. There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately audible and visible qualities and to ask what they

mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence (p.74).

## Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed a relationship between music and language and its collective relevance to healing with particular reference to Iyayi society. In the course of investigation, it was discovered that the Iyayi society selected songs for specific ailments and that the text of their songs used for healing are psychotherapeutic. While it is yet to be ascertained whether these songs would yield similar therapeutic results should they be taken outside this culture for use, this paper is to tease the minds of scholars in ethnomusicology, music therapy and language studies for further investigation. However, music for healing needs proper documentation in order to concretize studies in music therapy. The bane so far is that music is solely for entertainment. Hence Cole (1998) observed that:

Perhaps the basic problem confronting the musicians today and hence the music he creates is the pleasure seeking thrill-oriented culture so pervasive throughout the west. There is a conscious lack of reference to the transcendent or to the ordering of music to the beautiful and an unabashed drive to create music solely for the sake of profit by doing the unusual and shocking for the purpose of generating sales (p.8).

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*The Talking Drum wishes to thank the Bartel Arts Trust for their generous support.*

# Worlds of Music

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How often have you sensed in your classroom that learners are not really fully engaged with the music you are presenting, that they don't share your 'taste' in music? Do you have to work hard to draw them into the music?

Something that has become of increasing concern to me in recent years is how rarely musical arts education is successful in schools. Further, the gap between musical traditions and what learners know and understand about music has widened greatly. For example, in any country or province you might find that all the children learn a few 'traditional' songs from different cultures, and they also learn something about those songs – at least this is the information the textbooks supply. But how much do they understand about purposes of music-making? Can they hear cultural differences in the music and do they have any inkling about why those differences exist? What links do African learners form between socio-cultural values and music? Do they have any insight into African metaphors as a means of understanding social values? Importantly, are traditional African values still pertinent or meaningful in contemporary multicultural, 'migratory' classrooms where learners use technology and confront global expectations?

These were the questions that drove me in writing *"Living in worlds of music: A view of education and values"* (2010). The book, which is aimed mainly at arts teachers and students, raises fundamental questions about human music-making. Across the world we make music for similar reasons. We think about and learn to understand music in humanly similar ways. Why then, have people ended up with so many different sound patterns and

combinations across the world? Each musical culture has unique qualities which make it identifiable and 'owned'. So, supposing each culture wanted its own identifiable sound:

- Why did some cultures choose to create and develop dense and ever changing music, while others chose simple, open, clean sounds?
- Why does some music bubble with energy, while others seem more passive?
- Why is the concept of consonant and dissonant so different in different cultures? In other words, what sounds good to some merely sounds boring or unpleasant to others.
- What creates the musical aesthetic, informs the experience of good music versus not good? This was the fundamental question I was facing. Not just why we 'like' something, but how certain sound groupings come to be good for certain cultures.

Following these lines of questioning, I began to explore the literature on different musical practices, to try to identify what lies at the core.

Think of a painting of a landscape. It may be of a desert, or mountains, or a city. Every musical practice exists in a landscape which has been drawn by

their own history, their life choices, social and political practices and beliefs. It is a cultural landscape and it is coloured by musical sound. Each landscape has its own colours and shapes. It is given life when people practice their music and dance. In this picture a child learns its specific musical colour and shapes. The child can learn other colours and shapes too, but will always hear other musics in relation to the first distinctive ones learnt.

It became clear that societies have ways of thinking about music and organizing their thinking about music. There are ways of memorizing certain music sound patterns as song patterns (templates), so that we know from early childhood on, that this is 'our' music and that is 'not ours'. It became ever more clear to me that the origins of musical difference lie in the social fabric of a society – their beliefs, their lifestyles and environment, their social structures and their value systems. Different cultures use their music differently – and there is a reason for this. But I will get back to this point further on.

As reader, you can imagine that these questions can become sensitive. So it seemed a good idea to contact international colleagues specialising in different fields, and ask them to comment on some of the answers I was reaching. The response was amazing – from Japan, Namibia, Sweden, Brazil, Canada, USA, UK, France, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Nigeria, South Africa, Hong Kong – people considered about their own experiences and argued their responses. Despite individual differences, the international responses brought arguments together showing that:

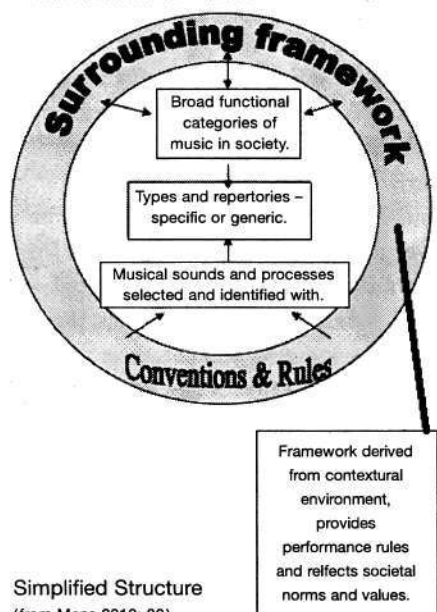
- people make music basically for social purposes (like rituals, sport, politics,





spiritual or commercial reasons and entertainment) – providing the broad functional categories;

- *people organize their musical repertoires* according to functional purposes as well as inner musical qualities that allow the music to 'fit' the occasion;
- *people select ways of putting together the sounds* according to their cultural systems (aesthetics) and purposes (efficacy), e.g. whether it needs to be slow and dignified, and by whom it needs to be performed – creating and defining the sound-patterns and processes;
- *people have (social) rules that bind their arts* according to their own norms and aesthetic values, and that these are not universally the same – the framework of 'rules'.



In any musical world there are people who inhabit their world their own way. Whatever social, political or economic system they have affects their music-making. Think, for example, of the well-known fact that African music is traditionally a collective practice, where music is created and performed as a collective, for communally important reasons and customs, bound by the community's aesthetic judgment of what is good or not. "It takes a village to educate one child." (See, e.g., Adedeji (2006), Agawu (2003), Tracey (1994), Tracey & Uzoigwe (2003), Nzewi (2003) and others)

But, what happens when people live in cities? The environment becomes much more complex. The people are from different cultural groupings, they are employed in diverse environments, the pressures of time and finance and the ways they are entertained are different. All this has an influence on the possibilities for community music. In turn, the value systems are affected. Community music often moves to the church. Others take private lessons and want

to break into the music industry, become stars. Some see music as a possibility for economic improvement, while others see it as a personal 'chill-out' medium.

Teachers, in particular, are faced with difficult choices in selecting content and educating learners in culturally diverse situations. How do you value and assess musical performances and practices? (See especially Regina Murphy's thoughts on this in Mans, 2010: 195-198).

Here follow a few ideas that may assist teachers to present value-added musical arts lessons.

- Firstly, one can *focus on different levels of musical worlds*. For example, knowing about the different purposes of music helps us to understand the meanings in the music. Some songs might exist to raise spiritual power or personal spiritual calm. One needs to know that it is not only a song, but that understanding the meaning helps you to get meaning from the music. Begin by simply asking: "When do people make/have music?" And then, when the answers start appearing, ask "Why do they have music then?"
- Secondly, *investigate repertoires* of types of songs. This helps to expand your own repertoire, and also to see that different repertoires have different musical qualities that help us to classify them into different types. How do soothing songs for babies sound different to playing songs for older children? Why do national anthems around the world have so many similar qualities? Listen to music. Sing different types of songs. List similarities and differences. Ask: "What kind of music is it?" "What tells you that?"
- This takes one to the *microlevel*, where we find all the different sound elements in music. We can speak about the tonal-spatial structures (melody, scale, harmony), the time structures (rhythm, tempo, beat, melorhythm, pulse), relations between the two, form structures, instrumental and vocal timbres, relation between sound and body, and other qualities of sound. By selecting from all the possibilities, each culture makes its own musical identity, and keeps this filed in its collective memory as templates. A common pop song that begins with a Tonic chord, uses mainly the primary and relative major/minor chords, and ends with a perfect cadence or fades away, is a typical pop template. Focus on this by asking: "How does it sound?" and demand details and descriptive musical terms.
- Most importantly, what we almost never address at schools is the *surrounding framework of social and aesthetic 'rules'* about when, where, by whom, and how a certain music should be performed. These questions involve all the qualitative criteria such as meaning, expressiveness, social structures, sweetness or spiciness, correctness, and so on. By teaching more about this integral aspect of music-making, we give music value, and we transfer important social values to the learners. If we don't – we are busy with value-less music education!

There is a saying, when a tree dies at its roots, its branches dry up also. If the fundamental norms and values in which societies are rooted are not taught through music in communities (because children are at school), where will children learn the lessons of African values and aesthetics?

Here are some of the important values and principles that music can teach.

- Think about 'arts in service to society' – how can we enhance this fundamental African ethos?

- Musical practice only has real value when it is guided by social norms and values, which will inform aesthetic values. This means the teacher has to make a choice at times, between communal or individualised performance and creative work, and between educating *through* music or educating *in* music.

- Think about how one can enhance a community of practice within the classroom. For example, seat learners in a circle so that they can face each other and have eye contact. If possible, leave some space for movements in the center. Encourage peer assistance.

- Encourage community by allowing learners to see that there should be space for each other within the performance itself – e.g., improvise collectively, but listen to each other and leave space 'in-between'.

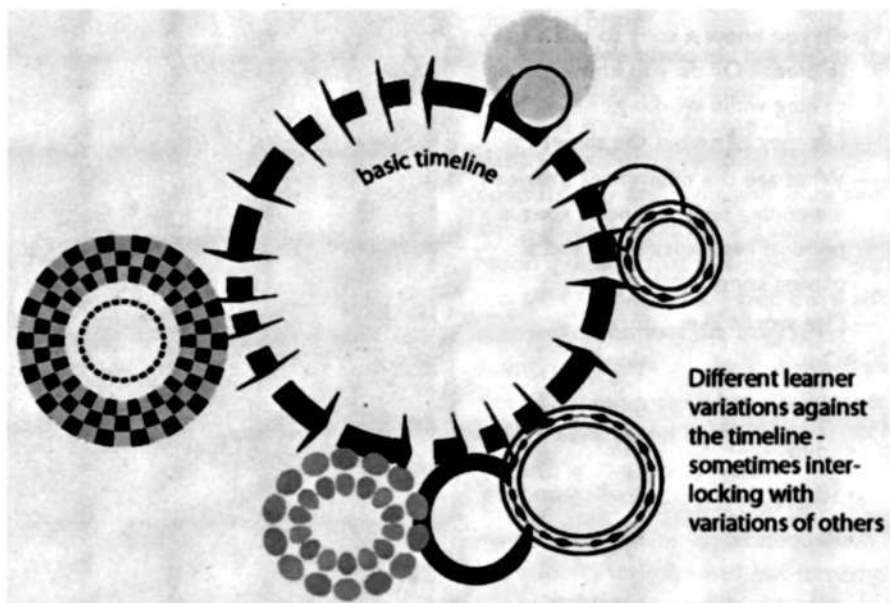
- Think about 'why' this music should be performed – what social purpose did it serve? Is this still pertinent? If it is, how do you perform to show respect for the music, or the purpose?

- Think about social values in a performance – how do you encourage participation? What value does (everyone's) participation add to the performance? How do you show appreciation for special inputs?

- Think about, and discuss, the idea that music should always have a human dimension. What does this mean and how is it practised?

- Think about circles. The cycle of creation can be practised as a never-ending process of creativity.

- Use a basic timeline to guide performance, improvisation or composition.
- Then, by using the principle of 'explore and exploit', learners can investigate the qualities of the basic timeline, and 'exploit' these qualities by doing variations or adding on pieces and returning, so that the process moves in a continuous circular form. This assists skills development, listening abilities, analytical skills, and creativity.
- Timeline rhythm, for example,



- Use known songs to explore and exploit for creative work.
- Use dance movements to explore and exploit musical patterns or flow.
- Ask questions about the (original) purpose of a song – what was it for? Why was that important enough to make a song? Who was allowed to sing it?

- Develop terminology for *aesthetic judgments* with questions such as:
  - How can we improve this performance?
  - How will making it louder/softer/ more/fewer/different instruments/ ... (etc) contribute to its quality?



- Is it better when everyone does the same thing or when there are different roles for performers? Why?
- Is it good to attract all the attention to yourself?
- Develop insight into the *cross-stimulation among expressive modalities*, such as interplay between a dancer's action and a musician's response, or the poet's melodic invention in song, or even the way instrumental music can be derived from vocal music.
- Develop insight into *types of songs and their repertoires*. Ask:
  - Do you know a wedding song, or do you know a song to put a baby to sleep? Or do you know a song to sing while working?
  - Do they all sound the same?
  - What are the differences between a wedding song, a funeral song, a political resistance song, and a playing song?
  - Use words like:
 

• Quick	slow
• Happy	quiet
• Loud	soft
• Strong/sharp	flowing/smooth
• Repetition	change (variation, contrast)
• Many singers	few or only one singer
• Many instruments	few or only one instrument
• All together	different things happening, like....
- Look at the dances and ask questions about the *music of the dance and the dance movements themselves*
  - about the speed; about the quality of the movement, e.g., sharp, edgy, smooth, soft, rounded, strong, heavy, gentle; about the way the music makes the dance live and the dance makes the music live; etc.



- Ask questions about the qualities of the dance and how they might be improved.
- Reflect on basic components in the dance – (small) repeated movements that characterise the dance. How does the music bring out these components?
- Look at the way a dancer's body is held, e.g., begin with:
  - the feet – are they flat on the ground? Are both feet on the ground or is one in the air?
  - Does the dancer place the ball of the foot or the heel down first? Which one looks best for this dance?

- Where are the arms, shoulders and head – what do they do?
- How does the dancer hold her/his body? Look especially at the curve of the back, the position of the upper body (forwards, straight up, or backwards), the actions of the lower body (hips, e.g.).
- How does this part of the body move – which directions/ not at all/ fast/ slow, etc.
- Where is the dancer's focus?

The above provides ideas for approaching musical education as a human-social activity, rather than an art form that belongs on stage only. Music and dance are ways that express how we live, feel, who we are and what we believe. These important factors should not become a value-less singing of a few cultural songs – ever.

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# Antuntulele — A Setswana lullaby

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## Lesson theme

Investigating lullabies by means of the Setswana song *Antuntulele*.

## Level

Foundation and Intermediate phase (grades R–6). The content of the lesson and its presentation is relative to the requirements for the respective grades.

## Critical outcomes

### Learners will

- cooperate in a convincing performance of *Antuntulele*;
- organise and manage themselves effectively in all work activities;
- reflect critical thinking commensurate with their grade;
- display basic understanding of the world as a set of related systems, especially in terms of links between musical and non-musical knowledge and behaviour.

## Learning outcomes

### Learners will

- perform the song *Antuntulele* individually and in groups;
- explain certain basic aspects of the Tswana rural economy and cosmology;
- explain the basic nature and function of lullabies;
- display rudimentary skills related to the interpretation of lyrics.

## Origin of the song

Theriso Tsambo, Mafikeng, North-West Province. Mrs Tsambo is a well-known singer, choral composer and author.



This is an adaptation of an old Setswana lullaby. The form in which it is presented here is an arrangement for unison voices of a three-part version (SAA) that was performed at the Mpumalanga Massed Choir Festival held on 17 August 2008.

## Lyrics and basic pronunciation

1. *Antuntulele, robala.*  
(Ahn-tooohn-too-leh-leh, roo-bah-lah.)  
Hush little one, sleep,
2. *Dudu nnana, robala.*  
(Dooh-dooh nah-nah, rooh-bah-lah.)  
Hush little one, sleep.
3. *Dudu nnana tthe, robala!*  
(Dooh-dooh nah-nah tleh, rooh-bah-lah.)  
Hush little one, please sleep!
4. *Bana ba robetse, k'eng o sa robale?*  
(Baa-naa baa roo-bea-tsea, kee-eeng oo sah roo-bah-leh?)  
Why are you not asleep like other children?
5. *Letsatsi le wetse, dinaledi di busitse matlho.*  
(Leh-tsah-tsee leh whee-tseh, dee-nah-leh-dee dee boo-see-tseh mah-tloh.)  
The sun has set, the stars have shut their eyes.
6. *Ngwedi o kganya bontle.*  
(Ngweh-dee ooh kgahn-yah boon-tleh.)<sup>1</sup>  
The moon is beautifully bright.
7. *Bomma go baile kae?*  
(Booh-mah gooh bah-eeh-leh kah-eeh?)<sup>2</sup>  
Where have the mothers gone?
8. *Ba ile masimong, robala.*  
(Bah ee-leh mah-see-moong, rooh-bah-lah.)  
They have gone to the fields, sleep.

1, 2. The g in *kganya* and *go* is pronounced ch, as in *loch*.

## The context and interpretation of the song

The way meaning is transmitted may be compared to objects composed of layers, like onions or the crust of the earth: what is obviously evident is not necessarily the entire message. Obvious meaning is evident on the surface level of objects and actions, like the outer skin of an onion.

*Antuntulele* obviously is a lullaby that describes the loving struggle of someone trying to soothe a baby to sleep (lines 1–3). The song also contrasts day and night, and work and sleep. A description of the stars and moon indicates that it is night, and that it is time to sleep. However, there also is an indication that the baby is very young, so young that she also needs to sleep during the day when her mother has to work in the fields.

And so the interpretation of *Antuntulele* peels off the first layer of meaning. The outer layer of an onion has a characteristic smell, but this smell is not as pungent as that of the second layer. Also, while the outer layer is dry, the inner layers are moist. As such these layers provide new (mostly unwelcome!) experience: that of irritated, teary eyes. When interpreting lyrics and other texts it is therefore necessary to assume that they may have a deeper, often concealed meaning. Revealing this meaning is dependent on knowledge of their context and linking the lyrics to wider cultural practices.

While the mother may be singing her baby to sleep at night, it is a female friend or relative who nurses the baby during the day when her mother is working. The second layer of meaning in the song therefore firstly reveals the presence of a horticultural economy in

which women are active as the primary cultivators. Women are responsible for tilling the soil, planting crops (maize, millet and vegetables) and weeding.

The second layer of meaning also reveals that raising children often is a communal concern, especially when mothers are engaged in domestic and other duties. Therefore the elderly and unemployed, as well as older siblings, often care for babies.

There is yet another, third layer of alluded meaning embedded in the song. This layer exposes a link between humans and their natural environment. This link is evident in personification, a pattern of thinking that imbues objects with human characteristics. Accordingly, the person lulling the baby seems to suggest that the baby should shut her eyes, not only because it is night, but also because the stars have gone to sleep (line 5).

This personification of the stars uncovers the deepest layer of meaning in the song, namely that which implies the presence of a basic cosmology. Cosmology may be defined as a model of the universe in which ideas about life and society are inseparably intertwined with knowledge about the natural environment. As an expression of an ancient human practice, references in the song to the sun, moon and stars implicitly suggest a spiritual world that is interdependent with and influences controls the actual world.

In Tswana cosmology, the spirit of creation accordingly is *Modimo*, who made the universe.<sup>1</sup> Popularised by Christianity, *Modimo* historically was a taboo word derived from the verb *go dimo*, “to be high up” or “to be above” (*Modimo* therefore is “the one up above”). Neither this spirit of creation nor the sun play any particularly important role in Tswana cosmology. However, the latter is perceived as male because it is stronger than the moon and because it is associated with heat and drought. The cycles of the sun are associated with eternal life and rebirth, and therefore the dead are buried facing east.

The moon in turn generally is considered benign, and it is associated with ritual life, immortality, death, and spiritual and material wealth. Accordingly, a ring around the moon is believed to indicate a gathering of spirits, while babies are presented to the moon to ensure health and prosperity. Also, certain animals are associated with the moon, and Tswana children therefore previously were forbidden to hunt and eat hares.<sup>2</sup>

Like the moon, the stars also had spiritual meaning. They were considered the souls of deceased people who had moved beyond the memory of their descendants. Venus indicated the shift between summer and winter. It was also thought to control rain and fertility. Appearing during early evening, it was regarded as the wife of the moon. It heralded the end of the day and that women should have their meals ready.

Almost all rituals related to the planets and stars were abandoned following the introduction of Christianity.

To summarise, all lyrics and other texts should be probed for connotations embedded below the surface. *Antuntulele* may appear as a simple lullaby merely aimed at pacifying babies. However, it also refers to the role of women as farmers and caregivers, and to aspects of cosmology.

1. This discussion is based on the following source: Breutz, P.-L. 1969. *Sotho-Tswana celestial concepts* (In: Ethnological and linguistic studies in honour of NJ van Warmelo. Ethnological Publication no 52. Pretoria: Government Printer, 199-210).
2. This belief is mirrored in a San hunter-gatherer narrative in which the hare is sent by the moon to inform people that they shall enjoy eternal life in the same way that the moon wanes and waxes. Getting his message wrong, the hare informed people that life was finite. The moon became so angry that it beat the hare on the mouth and split its lip (see Van der Post, L. *Heart of the hunter*; various editions).

## Teaching-learning resources

- A transparency and/or worksheets containing the lyrics and music of the song.
- Pictures and photographs of people at work, farming activities, planets and stars.

## LESSON PLAN

### INTRODUCTORY PHASE:

#### Content and Skills

On completion of this phase learners must have achieved such a level of knowledge and skills related to the lyrics and music of the song that the teacher is able to pursue the theoretical objectives of the lesson.

#### Activity 1

The purpose of this activity is to captivate learners and link with previous experience.

- Perform a lullaby that most learners are likely to know. Sing the song to a large doll cradled in your arms or placed in a baby carriage. Invite learners familiar with the lullaby to sing along.
- Present learners with the following questions:
  - What is the song used for?
  - What is the meaning of the lyrics?
  - What are the obvious musical characteristics of the song? (especially in terms of tempo and dynamics)

#### Activity 2

The purpose of this activity is to introduce the song *Antuntulele*, and to identify lullabies as a common form of human expression.

- Perform the song *Antuntulele*.
- Identify the language and origin of the song.
- Provide learners with the lyrics as well as their translation.
- Ask learners to
  - explain the text;
  - describe the tempo and dynamics of the song;

- compare *Antuntulele* with the lullaby from activity 1.

### Activity 3

The teacher helps learners to achieve a basic level of competence in performing *Antuntulele*. The song is rehearsed during subsequent lessons until an acceptable performance level has been reached.

### MIDDLE PHASE:

#### Concepts, Content and Analytical Skills

Working in groups, and responding to instructions and questions, learners must have a rudimentary understanding of the following on completion of this phase. As indicated previously, the level of skills required must be commensurate with the applicable grade.



♩ = 78 Doh is C

An-tun-tu-le-le. Nna-na ro-ba-la. An-tun-tu-le-le, ro-ba-la. Ba-na ba-ro-be-tse,

K'engo sa-ro-ba-le? Du-du-nna-na, ro-ba-la. An-tun-tu-le-le, an-tun-tu-le-le, an-tun-tu-le-le,

ngwa-na-ro-ba-la. Kebo-si-go, le-tsa-tsi le-we-tse, di-na-le-di di bu-si-tse ma-tho.

Ngwe-di o kga-nya bo-ntle. Du-dunna-na tle! Ro-ba-la. Tun-tu. An-tun-tu-le-le An-tun-tu-le-le,

ro-ba-la. Bo-mmego-ba-i-le-ka-e? Ro-ba-la. Ba-i-le-ma-si-mo-ng, ro-ba-la. An-tun-tu-

le-le, an-tun-tu-le-le, le-le. Ba-na ba-ro-be-tse. La-la-la-la-la. Hm-m-m-m-m.

1. 2.

An-tun-tu-le-le, ngwa-na-ro-ba-la. la. Hm-m-m-m-m.

### Lullabies as a universal form of human expression

- Why do lullabies tend to be performed slowly and softly?
- Give examples of music that has the opposite effect to that of lullabies.

### Embedded meaning in lyrics

- Learners bring song lyrics with embedded meaning to class and explain them.

### The difference between horticulture and agriculture

- What is the basic difference between horticulture and agriculture?
- Explain how people not living on farms also are able to practise horticulture.
- Why is horticulture and agriculture important to us?

### Male and female role allocation

- Describe the work done by mother and fathers, and women and men.
- Is it true to say that only mothers can take on certain kinds of responsibility? Explain your answer.

### Cosmology

- Give the names of planets and stars.
- Give examples of any expressions, stories and songs about the planets and the stars, and explain them.

### Cultural domination

- Explain the meaning of domination.
- Provide examples of cultural domination in terms of language and music (e.g. the dominating presence of English and electronically-generated rhythmic patterns).

### CONCLUDING PHASE:

#### Assessment and application of skills

#### Learners perform

- *Antuntulele* individually and in groups;
- Lullabies of their own finding and compare them in terms of lyrics, tempo and dynamics.



# A Foundation for Teaching Music Rudiments to Multicultural Groups using Folk Songs

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*The aim of this article is to suggest ways of reflecting about teaching music to multicultural groups. We believe that the material we are presenting is valuable and the techniques we describe are stimulating, but we hope in the first instance to share some principles concerning the ways in which we think about and evaluate our own teaching. It is our hope that other teachers will find that our ideas resonate with their experiences and that – through discussions of this kind – we may learn from each other and from our students.*

*Although we focus on the teaching of rudiments, these same ideas can also be applied to the teaching and learning of more advanced concepts.*

Using folk songs when teaching music is certainly not an original idea, but it definitely is a good one. At least since Zoltan Kodály's seminal work in music education, but most likely much earlier, the advantages of using familiar folk songs when teaching music have been established and accepted. But in a multicultural setting, educators cannot rely – as Kodály often could – on a repertoire of folk songs familiar to a mostly monocultural group of students.

Suppose we want to take the following two Tshivenda folk

as material for the teaching of music rudiments to a multicultural group. We will assume for the present discussion that the students do not know these specific songs.

Our first step is to teach *Vhonani Zwidenzhe* (of which only the first verse is given here) to our group of students who are unfamiliar with the words and the melodies of these songs, and probably even with the language. They have quick ears, good voices and are eager to learn. So we start by singing the song to them twice or three times in the original language, possibly

with the text displayed using any means at our disposal. One can, of course, also play a recording (even DVD) of a native speaker reciting the text and/or a group singing the song.

However, we do not want students to be merely passive observers. It is very important for a teacher to ensure that active listening is taking place, and not merely recreational hearing. Experience has certainly taught most teachers that students who are passively hearing take too much time to learn a song and are in most cases not very accurate when singing the song.

## Vhonani Zwidenzhe

Vho-na-ni zwi-de-nzhe, vho-na-ni zwa-nda. vho-na-ni zwi-de-nzhe, vho-na-ni zwa-nda  
zwa vha-na vha-tu-ku. Va tshi di gu-da. Zwa vha-na vha-tu-ku vha-tshi-di gu-da.  
U si-nda, u si-nda la vha-ya la-tsha. u si-nda, u si-nda la vha-ya la-tsha.

## Ihi

Hi-hi-hi-hi-hi! Hi-hi-hi-hi-hi! Mai-nda Mai-nda  
Na-ngwe ndo fu-ra ndi a-la. Ndi a la Ndi a la. Thu-mba ya tshi-xe-le mai-nda.  
Vho-mme vho ya fhi? Vho ya mu-la-mbo-ni. Zwi-ku-mbu zwi-nga-na? Zwi-ku-mbu zwi-ra-ru  
U li-le-la-ni? U li-le-la-ni? U li-le-la u la, U li-le-la u la.

One cannot realistically base group teaching of rudiments on new songs under such circumstances. How can a teacher ensure active listening? Since even a cursory reading of the many books on Dalcroze teaching will provide enough ideas, we will not suggest specific techniques here. Even inexperienced teachers will with some prompting be able to invent suitable techniques when they keep in mind that many techniques have in common the use of gestures of the body to ensure that students are listening actively.

After a short phase of active listening, students can further learn the song by performing it. But since we want to base the teaching of music rudiments already on their experiences of learning the song, we must ensure that they sing the song from the very beginning in a way that will count as an authentic musical experience in ensemble singing. Thus, no careless singing and as few mistakes as possible. Of course, some mistakes will be made, but we should not allow our students to learn these mistakes as if they were part of the song. We should give them phenomenological frames which will enable them to make progressively finer distinctions between different versions of the song. (See Koornhof, 1996: 172.) We must also ensure that the rudiments are correctly reflected in the performance. If they, for example, do not sing the rhythmic patterns correctly – with the result that they produce several versions of the patterns and are unaware or unsure about the differences between these versions – the teaching of rudiments using the songs will be problematical. We should therefore employ techniques that will ensure their full present-moment awareness as they learn the song correctly from the start. In the next part of this article we present one such technique which is aimed at providing a phenomenological frame for their musical experiences: the establishing of a clear meter.

### **Meter as a phenomenological frame for teaching and learning**

Since this is an ensemble experience, we want to ensure firstly that our learners are singing exactly together and that they produce the same rhythmic patterns. A first condition for this is that they need to entrain the same meter. We believe that it is important to focus in the first instance not on the rhythmic patterns, but on the sharing of a single common meter in the group. This is made easy by the fact that humans naturally coordinate their actions. This is called entrainment. Entrainment of the meter entails in Justin London's words "a synchronization of some aspect of our biological activity with regularly recurring events in the environment" (London, 2004:4). Since meter gives a familiar frame to our students, the presence of a clear meter enables them to capture the new rhythmic patterns of an unfamiliar song, to make the progressively finer distinctions needed for learning and to generate valid representations of the patterns. (See London, 2004:3–6 for an overview of his views on meter and rhythm and the value of such an understanding of meter for musicians.) For us it is very important that these patterns are captured as musical units (as phenomena) and not be broken up by being labelled (as concepts). Being inspired by Dalcroze teachers, we believe that the teaching of music rudiments should be based first and foremost on musical phenomena; that conceptualisation and notation should follow and be based upon a rich experience and understanding of real musical phenomena.

It would be almost futile to explain in the class to our students the need for entrainment and the ways of doing it in the group and then just hope for the best. Our students' present-moment awareness and their ability to sing correctly will be supported by sensible movements much more than by persuasive talk. Entrainment is

something that they *do* and not something that they only think about or discuss. Following the notation with their eyes will most likely be a hindrance more than a help! So we refrain from using any kind of music notation at this stage and we rely on their eager ears and minds and their moving bodies. This is made easy when we employ a simple technique that has certainly been part of singing in various cultures over many millennia: a basic dance step<sup>1</sup>. The basic dance step in quadruple time is a simple pattern involving four steps and the shifting of the weight of the body. The right foot moves forward on the first beat and takes some of the body's weight. Weight is shifted to the left foot on the second weaker beat and remains there, while the right foot moves backwards to take the weight on the third beat. The fourth beat again takes the weight on the left foot, enabling the right foot to be in front for the downbeat of the next measure. It is important to keep the ball of the left foot rooted to the ground, since this ensures that each bar is experienced as one meaningful musical unit.

The first part of *Vhonani Zwidenzhe* is metrically stable and can therefore be entrained with ease. The teacher should start with confidence by first hearing inwardly the first part of the song, and then play the beat on a drum (or other suitable producer of sound), ensuring that the meter is perfectly clear and stable from the start. When teaching in a group one of the assistant teachers may take over the drum beat so that the teacher can start the basic dance step. The drum beat can also be played by a student with a reliable sense of beat. Once the students feel comfortable they join in with the basic

1. We were made aware of the value in teaching of entraining meter through a basic dance step and other movements through workshops presented in South Africa by the Norwegian music educator, Prof. Gro Shetelig, whose ideas have contributed to a very large extent to the shaping of our own teaching. Her books (see references) are currently unfortunately only available in Norwegian.

dance step. It is very important that the students catch the meter with their ears first and then program it into their bodies. Experience has taught us that attempts to coordinate visually with the teachers movements (without a sounding meter) are not effective or meaningful<sup>2</sup>.

Once the meter is established through a few repetitions of the basic dance step, the song is learned in a call and response format. This is particularly suited in group teaching. It is important that the units are short enough for the learners to recall with ease. To develop internal hearing and to allow for time to reflect on responses it is important to allow one cycle for the learners to hear the unit internally before they respond. The technique will therefore be the following. With everybody doing the basic dance step, the teacher sings "Vhonani zwidenzhe" while the students take note of how the rhythm and contour are placed in relation to the basic dance step as it is produced by their own bodies. Then, starting *exactly* on the next down beat, the students sing inwardly "Vhonani zwidenzhe" once again while being aware of the movements of the body. On the next downbeat they sing "Vhonani zwidenzhe". It is wise for the teacher to then wait for one bar before proceeding to the next pattern, since a lot of awareness and observation is required of the teacher in order to keep the meter steady, and to sing the patterns in a musically pleasing way.

2. When a new song in a different meter is taught, special care should be taken so that the new meter, which may involve a new tempo, is also clearly established from the start. Since students have the first meter in their bodies, it takes some doing to erase the first meter and establish the next one, a fact attested to by skilled ensemble performers. When, for example, *Ihi* is to be performed right after *Vhonani Zwidenzhe* two aspects of the meter needs to be newly entrained, namely the new tempo and the triple division of the beat. Although both songs are in quadruple time, the difference between simple and compound meter and the differences in tempo should be carefully embodied in the ways suggested above.

Although the first part of the song does not contain metrical ambiguities, the second part may be interpreted in two different ways, especially when students are not doing the basic dance step or when they are not aware of the relation between the meter and the patterns. Different interpretations of the patterns are of course not a problem, but only a fascinating opportunity for the teacher to enhance the learning. Our own experiences in class have shown that certain students feel the second line of the song as starting on an anacrusis, as shown in the second of the two examples below.



When this interpretation is heard by the teacher the urge to describe it as wrong should be inhibited. Instead of judging the effort, the students are asked to perform the song in both ways and reflect (though embodied, inward hearing and then through performance) on the implications of each. In this way students are taught to make a musically valid distinction based upon phenomena and not upon concepts or symbols: with little discussion and without notation. Once the students have reflected on the differences the teacher need not explain the 'correct' version. In fact, experience has taught us that no verbal discussion is needed. We notice when we teach this song how students who have embodied the meter start making subtle expressive movements to 'explain' the difference between these two examples. It is clear that as musicians we do not need to verbalize everything that we learn! The enjoyment is in the doing, just as the proof is not in discussing the pudding, but in eating the pudding.

Since musical experiences designed to be the foundation of teaching music rudiments will not be complete if the students are merely reproducing what

they learn, opportunities for improvising different orders of the newly learnt patterns, or performing rhythmic patterns not found in the song but which rely on the same meter is the next teaching step. We will, however, not discuss possible techniques for guiding improvisation. Suffice to say that the entrained meter should be the frame for all attempts and that progressive finer distinctions and an opening up of a keen awareness of possibilities should be encouraged.

*Since this article aims to suggest ways to reflect about teaching music to groups, we conclude by providing tools for reflection in the form of three questions. Since teaching in the real world is complex, as teachers we need to find simple ways to think about our teaching. This way of thinking should address the most important aspects of our teaching, and lead us in the right directions when we reflect and discover, and especially when the waters are in turmoil. It should be an idea that expresses our personal passion in music. The following three questions certainly express our passions as teachers.*

#### 1.) *What is a musical experience?*

For us a musical experience is absorbed mainly through the ears, programmed into the body and executed through one of the three musical actions: active listening, performing, and improvising/composing. We believe with many other teachers that the three musical actions should be the core of teaching, learning and of evaluation.

#### 2.) *How do we ensure a musical experience when teaching music rudiments to groups using folk songs?* In short, by providing to our learners musical phenomena in phenomenological frames. We suggested only one way in this article: ensuring that all students are embodying the meter of each song and then help them to relate the





rhythms (and eventually rhythmic symbols) to the clearly established meter. If they are able to do this, they do not need to know the names of the rhythmic symbols, they do not have to work with notation when learning rudiments and they do not need to engage in pseudo-mathematics and schematics in order to work out the relations between durations that make up rhythmic patterns. Another way to ensure a musical experience – one that is not discussed in this article – involves specific salient relationships between pitches. Tonality can function as a frame similar to meter. Since almost all folk songs have a tonal centre, a teacher can help students to use the tonal centre as a reference point in all learning. The twin towers of metre/rhythm and tonality can form the scaffold for embodied understanding of other music rudiments.

**3.) What is embodiment?** For us, in short, it means that the whole integrated self is actively engaged in learning. That 'part' of the psychophysical whole referred to as 'the body' is given an important role in gathering, processing and storing experiences of music rudiments.

Using real world experiences as the basis of teaching can help us to move in this direction. When teaching music we should therefore encourage learners to interact with the stimuli rather than passing over directly into conceptualizations. Movement is one of the most effective ways of interacting with musical stimuli, since humans are creatures of movement: we never stop moving, always adjusting balance and using nuanced movement to react to the world around us. According to Larson (2004) humans interpret music through images of movement, using forces from the physical world, such as gravity, magnetism and inertia, to understand the principles upon which music is built. Writers such as Hasty (1997:vii), London (2004:3-6) and Epstein (1995:3-5) discuss the importance of movement and metaphors of movement in our perception of time (and therefore of music). Hatten (2004:93-96) attributes meaning in music to the way in which we understand physical gestures. All of the aforementioned writers agree that our primary way of understanding music can be traced to our existence in a world where we react towards our

environment through movement. Within this context absorbing sounds into the body is a natural way of understanding musical phenomena and thus processes. Such an understanding forms the foundation for teaching music rudiments to groups.

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# Thathatha

## A Tshivenda children's song revisited

© Jaco Kruger, School of Music, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

### Lesson theme

Investigating cultural variation by means of the Venda children's song *Thathatha*.



### Level

Intermediate phase (grades 4–6). The content of the lesson and its presentation is relative to the requirements for the respective grades.

### Critical outcomes

#### Learners will

- cooperate in a convincing performance of *Thathatha*;
- organise and manage themselves effectively in all work activities;
- reflect critical thinking commensurate with their grade;
- display basic understanding of the world as a set of related systems, especially in terms of links between musical and non-musical knowledge and behaviour.

### Learning outcomes

#### Learners will

- perform the song *Thathatha* individually and in groups;
- compare the lyrics and music of the two versions of the song;
- display a basic understanding of cultural variation;
- present to the class examples of songs showing variation.

### Origin of the song

The first version was documented by John Blacking during the late 1950s, and appears in his book *Venda children's songs* (Witwatersrand University Press, 1967, p. 118–19, 132–33.)

The second version was performed by Mrs Sanna Kwindi at Muswodi-Tshisimani on 29 September 2008. The transcription of the lyrics and their explanation was verified by Mr Johannes Mavhetha of Fholovhodwe and Mrs Tshifhiwa Mashau of Potchefstroom.

### Lyrics and basic pronunciation (second version)

1. *Thathatha, dzanga dzi a swa.*  
(Tah-tah-tah, dzah-ngah dzee ah swah.)  
My roasting pumpkin pips are burning.<sup>1</sup>
2. *Nde, dzi a swa, dzi a swa.*  
(Nde, dzee ah swah, dzee ah swah.)  
I say, they are burning, they are burning.
3. *Na Vho-Mmadali na Vho-Nyunde.*  
(Nah Vhaugh-Mah-dah-lee nah Vhaugh-Nyoon-deh.)  
And Mr Mmadali and Mr Nyunde.<sup>2</sup>
4. *Vho-Nyunde vhe, ri afhi?*  
(Vhaugh-Nyoon-deh vhe ree aah-fee?)  
Mr Nyunde said, we are we going?
5. *Ri a shondoni.*  
(Ree ah shaun-daugh-nee.)  
We are going to the smithy.
6. *Shondoni hu na zwipulu, zwipulu.*  
(Shaun-daugh-nee hoo nah zwee-poo-hloo.)  
There are small oxen, oxen at the smithy.
7. *Nombe Nyamulima no mu sia fhi?*  
(Naughm-beh Nyah-moo-lee-maa no moo see-ah fee?)  
Where have you left the mother of the plough ox?
8. *Ngei govhani.*  
(Ngay go-vhah-nee.)  
There in the valley.
9. *A tshi fuma ludzi la Tshowe.*  
(Ah tshee foo-mah lah Tshaugh-weh.)  
She<sup>3</sup> is stripping off the bark from the Tshowe tree.
10. *Nde sitshowe<sup>4</sup> khaladzi.*  
(Nde, see-tsho-weh kah-lah-dzee.)  
I say, the sister is causing conflict.
11. *Ndi khaladzi dee nde o lamba?*  
(Ndeeh kah-lah-dzee dee nde augh lahm-bah.)  
Why is that sister refusing?
12. *A tshilila u dzhomba nne.*  
(Ah tshee-lee-lah ooh djoom-bah neh.)  
When she cries she wants to peck me.
13. *A dzhombolola musadzi wa ndevhe khulwane.*  
(Ah djoom-boo-loo-lah moo-sah-dzee wah ndeh-vheh cool-wha-ne.)  
She is pecking the woman with big ears.
14. *Mupinda ho tshe!*  
(Moo-peen-dah haugh tsheh.)  
Wandering all over and spying!

1. The sound of roasting and the smell of burning represent an argument.
2. Names for hairy oxen that can be grabbed by hand.
3. Perhaps the sister.
4. Lit. "the eye sees the sister"; *sitshowe*, eye.

### The context and interpretation of the song

As is often the case with children's songs, this song contains a number of unrelated and unexplained ideas. However, it is clear that the song essentially portrays sibling rivalry. In Blacking's translation of the song the offending sibling is male, and in the other version the person is a sister (*khaladzi* refers to a sibling of the opposite gender). Sibling rivalry is of course a universal phenomenon. However, such rivalry can be particularly intense in African communities in which seniority is an important basis of social organisation.

The title and first two lines of the song therefore are not to be taken literally. *Thathatha* is an onomatopoeia of roasting pumpkin pips that portrays an argument. The acrimonious nature of the argument is represented by the fact that the pips are burning.

The opening of the song is followed by a number of apparently unrelated lines, and references to the argument

return in lines 10–14. Big ears (line 13) is a metaphorical reference to gossip mongers who are treated with disdain.

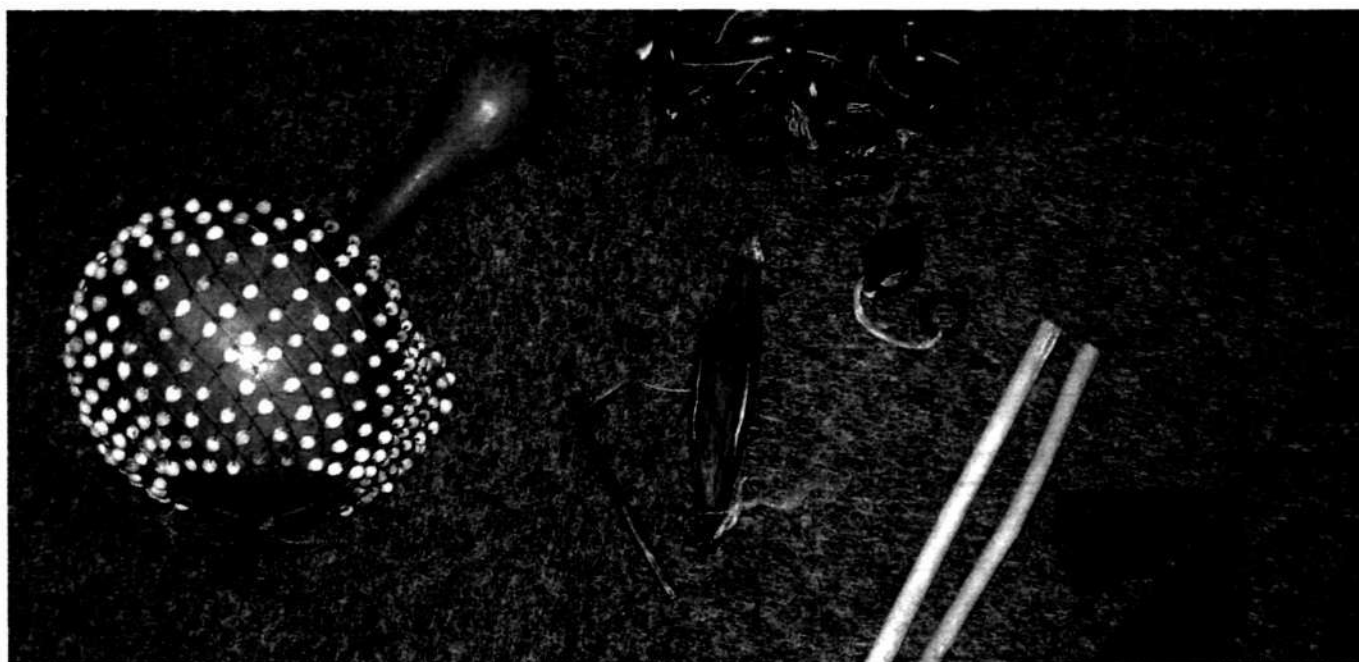
### Cultural variation

Blacking (1967:119) writes of *Thathatha* that it is a very well-known song but that many children did not know it. He adds that the song "clearly is not as popular as it used to be." This calls into question two familiar aspects of culture, namely that not all culture is shared and that cultural patterns and products change and even may disappear as time passes. Not only is not all culture shared, but even forms of what may be regarded as mutual knowledge often are marked by variation. This is particularly the case in oral cultures in which there often are many variations of songs and narratives. These variations obviously are generated by people living in differing circumstances. We therefore need to treat claims of originality and authority regarding the verbal arts with caution, and it therefore is not possible to say which of the two versions of *Thathatha* is "more authentic". Even the fact that the first version predates the second by some 50 years is irrelevant. Not only is the second version "authentic" in terms of the circumstances of its production, but the confidence with which it was performed

by Mrs Sanna Kwindia suggests that it has been retained in her memory without any significant variation or omission. Many elderly Venda people, when asked to sing children's songs, do so jointly and without any hesitation. Although musical knowledge of pre-colonial origin is decreasing, there still is a nucleus of children's songs in their memory.

A comparison of the lyrics of the two versions of *Thathatha* shows that the idea of sibling rivalry is at the centre of both. However, the singer in the song is female in the first version and male in the second version. Similarly, some lines are identical, while others show varying degrees of difference. Furthermore, the two versions are largely similar for the first 10 lines, after which the first version continues with lines not included in the second version. The two versions end with similar lines.

The transcriptions of the two versions have been superimposed, allowing for the additional lines in the first version. The two versions are for the most part identical, showing only minor melodic and rhythmic variations (e.g. bars 2, 5 and 6; bars 6–9). Of particular interest in bars 6–9 is the fact that different lyrics generate different rhythmic patterns.

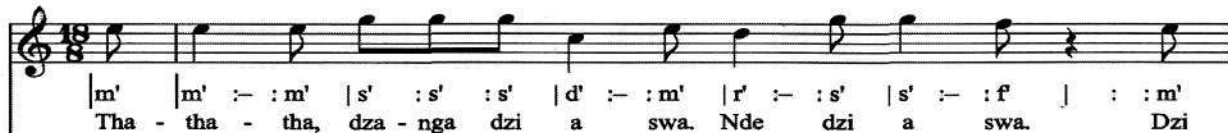




<b>Thathatha: first version</b> (John Blacking, late 1950s)	<b>Thathatha: second version</b> (Sanna Kwinda, 2008)
1. <i>Thathatha! Thanga dzi a swa.</i> Thathatha! The pumpkin pips are burning.	<i>Thathatha, dzanga dzi a swa.</i> My roasting pumpkin seeds are burning.
2. <i>Nde' dzi a swa,</i> I say, they are burning.	<i>Nde, dzi a swa, dzi a swa.</i> I say, they are burning, they are burning.
3. <i>Dzi a swa na Vho-Maramba na Vho-Nyundo.</i> They are burning with Mr Wild Custard Apple and Mr Hammer.	<i>Na Vho-Mmadali na Vho-Nyunde.</i> And Mr Mmadali and Mr Nyunde. <sup>2</sup>
4. <i>Vho-Nyundo vhe' Ri ya 'fhi?</i> Mr Hammer said, Where are we going?	<i>Vho-Nyunde vhe ri afhi?</i> Mr Nyunde said, we are we going?
5. <i>Ri ya shondoni.</i> We are going to the smithy.	<i>Ri a shondoni.</i> We are going to the smithy.
6. <i>Shondoni hu na zwipulu, zwipulu nombe.</i> At the smithy there are small oxen and cattle.	<i>Shondoni hu na zwipulu, zwipulu.</i> There are small oxen, oxen at the smithy.
7. <i>Neluheni no mu sia'fhi?</i> Where did you leave Neluheni?	<i>Nombe Nyamulima no mu sia fhi?</i> Where have you left the mother of the plough ox?
8. <i>Ngei govhani.</i> There in the valley.	<i>Ngei govhani.</i> There in the valley.
9. <i>A tshi pfuma ludzi lwa tshoya.</i> When he stripped off a string of tshoya.	<i>A tshi fuma ludzi la Tshowe.</i> She is stripping off the bark from the Tshowe tree.
10. <i>Nde' A si tshoya.</i> I said, It isn't tshoya.	<i>Nde, sitshowe khaladzi.</i> I said, the sister is causing conflict.
11. <i>Khaladzi yanga ndi khaladzi-de?</i> What kind of brother is my brother?	
12. <i>Nde' Khaladzi.</i> I said, A brother.	
13. <i>Ndi tshi bika vhuswa a si le.</i> When I cook for him he does not eat.	
14. <i>Nde' O lamba.</i> I say, He refused (my food).	
15. <i>O lamba a domba nne.</i> He refused and tried to bewitch me.	<i>Ndi khaladzi dee nde o lamba?</i> Why is that sister refusing?
16. <i>Nda dombolodza.</i> But I retaliated.	<i>A tshilila u dzhomba nne.</i> When she cries she wants to peck me.
17. <i>Mme anga ndi Nwamadali.</i> My mother is Nwamadali.	
18. <i>Nda dadamala.</i> And I walked along a narrow path.	
19. <i>Musadzi wa ndevhe khulwane.</i> A woman with big ears.	<i>A dzhombolola musadzi wa ndevhe khulwane.</i> She is pecking the woman with big ears.
20. <i>Mpinda ho tsha.</i> Passes me in the morning.	<i>Mupinda ho tshe.</i> Wandering all over and spying.

Doh is C ♩ = 94

Version 2



Version 1



2



3



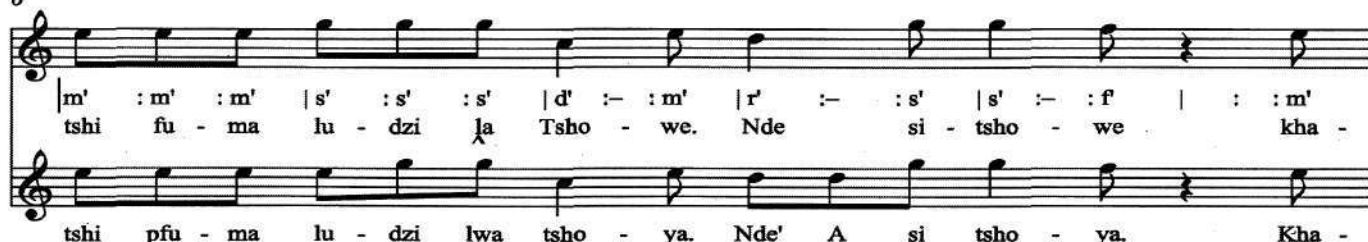
4



5



6



7



8

m' : m' : m' | s' : s' : s' | d' :- : s' | s' : s' : s' | :- : f' : | : : m' -  
tshi - li - la u dzho - mba nge. A dzho - mbo - lo - la mu -

tshi bi - ka vhu - swa a si je. Nde' O la - mba. Mu -

9

m' :- : m' | m' : s' : s' | s' : d' :- | m' : r' : r' | :- : r' : s' | :- : f' :-  
sa - dzi wa nge - vhe khu - lwa - ne. M - pi - nda ho - tsha!

sa - dzi wa nge - vhe khu - lwa - ne. M - pi - nda ho tsha!

### Teaching-learning resources

- A transparency and/or worksheets containing the lyrics and music of the song.
- Learners present their own examples of cultural variation.

## LESSON PLAN

### INTRODUCTORY PHASE:

#### Content and Skills

On completion of this phase learners must have achieved such a level of knowledge and skills related to the lyrics and music of the two versions of the song that the teacher is able to pursue the theoretical objectives of the lesson.

#### Activity

The teacher helps learners to achieve a basic level of competence in performance. The song is rehearsed during subsequent lessons until an acceptable performance level has been reached.

#### The teacher

- performs the song for learners;
- explains the origin of the song and its lyrics;

- helps learners to pronounce the lyrics, using any effective available media form;
- applies any preferred method to teach the song.

The ideal purpose of this activity is to teach both versions of the song to the learners. However, given that many non-Tshivenda speakers will find learning the lyrics and music of both versions challenging, it may be necessary to focus on one version, and select short examples of variations in the other version for purposes of comparison.

### MIDDLE PHASE:

#### Concepts, Content and Analytical Skills

Working in groups, and responding to instructions and questions, learners must carry out a comparison of the two versions of the song.

- Learners carry out a rudimentary comparison of the lyrics, melody and rhythm.
- Learners are guided to understand that
  - the two versions of the song show similarity as well as difference;
  - both versions of the song are equally valid;
  - variations are normal;

- variations are related to preference and differing social experience.

### CONCLUDING PHASE:

#### Assessment and Application of Skills

#### Assessment

##### Learners

- perform one of the versions of the song individually or in groups;
- illustrate briefly how variations in the lyrics and the music may be introduced.

#### Application of skills

Learners must display basic understanding of the fact that cultural variation is evident in both material and abstract domains. As such they firstly must bring to class and describe and explain variation in a range of objects. These objects may include toy cars and dolls, as well as clothing and food. Secondly, learners could present examples of variations that are concrete as well as abstract domain. A simple example of this is different forms of greeting that involve diverse verbal patterns and bodily actions. Finally, variation in the abstract domain could include jokes, stories and songs.



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**PAN AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR MUSICAL ARTS EDUCATION (PASMAE)**

c/o CIIMDA, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

Enhancing musical arts education in Africa

June 14, 2010

**CLARION CALL**

PASMAE greetings to all on behalf of all the Executive Committee members of our great society. From Harare- Zimbabwe, we headed to Kisumu in Kenya, to Maputo in Mozambique, straight to Lilongwe in Malawi, and moved to Lagos in Nigeria. All these took place in the last ten years. For those who started this journey and those who have come to join the progressive train, we all have some sort of stories to tell. The common denominator in all the stories is that there is need for us all to move Africa forward through musical arts education.

At the Lagos conference of October 2009, all the society officers exhibited strong will in discharging the responsibilities expected of them in making the society move forward in line with her vision. A lot of resources have gone into the 'survival' of the society. Founding fathers and partners laid a good foundation which has seen the society through the last ten years. The spirit and zeal these leaders put in is still there within the society's atmosphere, but these will not materialize if all of us (all PASMAE MEMBERS joining hands with the executive members) do not come together and make use of these 'facilities'.

Together, we can confront one another's artistic sensibilities and reach a compromise which can then be transferred into an authentic African pedagogical system. In a true musical spirit, the general assembly in Lagos approved and established four different commissions; PRACTICE (TEACHER TRAINING), PUBLICATION, POLICY, and RESEARCH. This is just part of the steps to move the society forward. Members are free to contribute to any of these commissions.

For all the past leaders of PASMAE, we salute you for laying the foundation and putting in resources with a lot of sacrifices. The likes of Meki Nzewi, Caroline van Niekerk, Anri Herbst, Helen Agak-Odwar, Hetta Potgieter, Minette Mans, Mmgomme Masoga, Betsy Oehrle, James Flolu and Robert Kwame of blessed memory, and a long list of worthy African music educators. As the train continues moving, your wealth of knowledge and experience are still valid. Africa still needs your full contributions to be rightly placed in the world music map.

The PASMAE-ISME relationship is equally germane to our growth, and this we shall continue to foster in good bi-cultural spirit. PASMAE maiden edition newsletter comes out in March. Members can send worthy news and information to the secretary ([pasmae.org@gmail.com](mailto:pasmae.org@gmail.com)).

God bless PASMAE, God bless PASMAE-ISME.

AdéOlúwa Okunadé  
President (2009–2011)

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## Recommended Readings

KEYNOTE from Research in Music Education (RIME) 2009  
**Researching children's musical culture: historical and contemporary perspectives** M. McCarthy, Department of Music Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA in Music Education Research Vol. 12, No.1, March 2010, 1–12.



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## DVDs



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2. **AFRICAN DRUM MUSIC** (1993)
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7. **SPOORNET GUM BOOT DANCERS** with Blanket Mkhize and Johnny Hadebe and introduction by Carol Muller (1994)
8. **WEST AFRICAN KORA MUSICIANS and MASTER DJEMBE DRUMMER:** Dembo Konte & Kausu Kuyathe from the Gambia and Adama Drame from Cote d'Ivoire (1994)
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10. **INTRODUCTION TO UHADI, ISANKUNI, UMRHUBHE, and ISITHOLOTHOLO** by Dr. Luvuyo Dontsa from the University of the Transkei and **CHIPENDANI MUSICIAN** (1994)
11. **MBIRA DZAVADZIMA PLAYERS: MUSEKIWA CHINGODZE and WILLIAM RUSERE** from Zimbabwe (1994)

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