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CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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AU	Africa University
BUSE	Bindura University of Science Education
CHIPAWO	Children's Performing Arts Workshop
CU	Catholic University
CUT	Chinhoyi University of Technology
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EU	European Union
GZU	Great Zimbabwe University
HIFA	Harare International Festival of the Arts
HIT	Harare Institute of Technology
LSU	Lupane State University
MSU	Midlands State University
MTC	Mutare Teachers College
NACZ	National Arts Council of Zimbabwe
NASH	National Association of Secondary School Heads
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
RIO-SET	Research and Intellectual Output, Science, Engineering and Technology
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TAMW	Transition Arts Music Workshop
TIFAZ	Tertiary Institutions Festival of Arts
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WUA	Women's University in Africa
ZAM	Zimbabwe Academy of Music
ZANU–PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZCM	Zimbabwe College of Music
ZIMURA	Zimbabwe Music Rights Association
ZOU	Zimbabwe Open University
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

CHAPTER 1
THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

1.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

For centuries, the nature of music and its function in human life have been explored by musicians and philosophers such as Plato (280BC), Suzanne Langer (1957) and Immanuel Kant (1987). In *The Republic*, Plato advocated for quality music for citizens. Langer viewed musical performance as a symbolic art form that is expressive of various emotions. Kant viewed the arts as cultural agencies and was concerned with the place of music and its contribution to intellectual progress. Aspects of these philosophers' ideas that relate to understanding musical performance are essential to my study of marimba music performance as they try to answer basic questions on the role of musical performance in human life.

Performing live music in Africa reveals inextricably intertwined relationships between composer, performer, and audience. In this study, I endeavoured to understand Zimbabwe marimba performance within a greater communal and cultural context, and to comprehend its meanings and messages. An African's life is accompanied by music from the cradle to the grave (Nketia 1974), which implies that musical performances happen in the context of a wide range of lived communal experiences. No strict boundary exists between performer and audience in African musicking, since music is communally owned and performed.

According to Sheasby Matiure (2008), music performance in the context of events is closely related to issues of meaning. To Christopher Small (1998), it seems self-evident that the place to start thinking about the meaning of music and its function in human life is within musical performance itself. Many Zimbabwean music studies have given attention to music that is ritualistic (Berliner 1978; Maraire 1990; Matiure 2008; Matiure 2011). In this study, I examined the way in which marimba music is performed at celebratory events for the specific purpose of entertaining audiences. Secular music performance has tended to be overshadowed

by concerns with music that creates a devotional framework in studies of African music and spirituality, and in this study, I intended to divert attention from that direction. In Zimbabwe, marimba music performance is a recent tradition that is practised in schools, music colleges, teachers' colleges, universities and urban community centres (Jones 2006). At all these institutions, marimba music performances are secular musical activities.

The Zimbabwe marimba is regarded as a contemporary school music instrument that is customarily confined to educational institutions (Jones 2006). Matiure (2008) notes that Zimbabwean marimba music performances encompass both traditional song arrangements accompanied by African drums and compositions in cosmopolitan contemporary styles. Because of the arrangement of the Zimbabwean marimba keys in typical keyboard fashion with the scales of C major and G major, it is possible to play any song that can be played in these keys as well as in their relative minor keys (A minor and E minor). I set out to study how traditional and contemporary songs fit into Zimbabwe marimba musicking. Through a systematic investigation, I also explored the survival of the indigenous knowledge system of traditional song modes for an understanding of the importance of these songs to people who have adapted them for performance on the marimba in a contemporary context. I further examined how they have been musically rearranged to be kept alive in marimba traditional song performances.

I have noticed that the performance of music on the Zimbabwean marimba is one aspect of Zimbabwean music that has spread widely to Europe (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom), Australia and the United States of America (Matiure 2008). The reasons vary from academic travel to the movement of marimba music performers to live in the diaspora. In the United States of America alone, more than 100 bands play the Zimbabwean marimba. Zimbabwean performers of marimba music have also been invited to teach marimba abroad. This scenario has left the performance practice of marimba music in Zimbabwe in a precarious position, owing to the departure of some of the country's virtuoso marimba performers. According to Nadia Kiwan and Ulrike Meinhof

(2011), migrant musicians' mobility is a result of difficult socio-economic or political problems in their country of origin, among other reasons. In Zimbabwe, there are fewer than fifteen community-based marimba bands, excluding school, college and university-based ensembles. Elsewhere, well-known Mexican and North American marimba ensembles and their leaders have been chronicled (Kaptain 1992; Matiure 2008), and the absence of a similar effort in Zimbabwe was the lacuna for this current study. While Zimbabwean music migration has received scholarly attention (Zorn 1996; Matiure 2008; Kiwan & Meinhof 2011), I strongly feel that the situation of marimba music performance that remains in the home country also deserves attention.

In this study, I explored the state of marimba music performance practice within Zimbabwe's borders to establish the state of the art against the background of what Richard Saunders (2008) refers to as a country shattered by an economic and political crisis at the turn of the millennium. I studied the ways in which Zimbabwean marimba music performances have continued to survive despite the imminent collapse of the social system due to political conflict that has brought the country's economy to its knees. As artists concerned with practising their art, Zimbabwe marimba music performers have to deal with challenges of accessing resources such as procuring or making marimbas, getting tutorials from virtuosos on how to play the instrument, and hiring venues for live performances. I examined the issues that performers encounter when playing marimba in a contemporary context. The study also focused on challenges faced by marimba makers. I set out to uncover the efficacy of performing marimba songs and to gain a deeper understanding of the songs' role in people's culture. Furthermore, I investigated how these songs are used in the Zimbabwean contemporary context and their present function in socialisation.

From information gathered in this thesis, I use the term marimba performance practices to refer to activities which are associated with the emerging tradition of musicking on the Zimbabwe marimba. The activities include playing and enjoying live music played on the Zimbabwe marimba during rehearsals and live

performances at festivals, gigs, competitions, and tourist resorts. The term also encompasses the act of composing and arranging traditional and contemporary music to be played on the Zimbabwe marimba. The organisation, management, promotion and broadcasting of Zimbabwe marimba music events are also implied, and term also covers the dissemination process though mentorship and curricula programs.

The Zimbabwe marimba tradition is a new tradition that is about 55 years old which, by musical and social usage agreements, is not considered as belonging to any particular cultural group. Zimbabwe marimbas are played by Zimbabwean nationals of various races and ethnicities which include the Ndebele, Venda, Sotho, Zezuru, Karanga, Korekore, Ndau, Manyika, Budya, Nambya, as well as foreigners who come in contact with the instrument. The Zimbabwe marimba is not used for cultural rituals by any particular 'culture' as it is purely meant for entertainment, having been born out of scholarly inputs at Kwanongoma College of African Music.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

My career in music education started in 1997 at Mutare Teachers College, where I studied Music as a main subject under the tutorship of Sheila Brown, Tendekai Kuture, Timothy Lunga and Evans Chinyama. During my years at the college, I was a leader of the Mutare Teachers' College Marimba Ensemble, which performed by invitation at weddings, parties, the Mutare Agricultural Show, corporate, and state functions in Mutare City. It also entertained student teachers at college during weekends. The other members of the Marimba Ensemble were Servious Furumele, Tapiwa Ndemera, Onard Viriri, James Chikodzi, Day Chikarango, and Chipo Mpambo. This was the time when I developed a passion for playing the Zimbabwe marimba. Upon graduating with a distinction in Music and being awarded the Bere Brothers Shield for the Best Music Student of the Year in 2000, I went on to introduce and teach music as a subject at Dotito and Wadzanai High Schools in Mashonaland Central Province. At Dotito High School, I pioneered the teaching of Music as a subject. At Wadzanai High School, I was a Coordinator for the

Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO) Centre for Disadvantaged Rural Children, where I taught marimba, dance, and *mbira*.

In 2003, I enrolled with the University of Zimbabwe's (UZ's) Department of Teacher Education as a Music Teacher Education major under the tutorship of Sheasby Matiure. During my UZ years I teamed up with Isaac Machafa, Tendai Muparutsa, Perminus Matiure, Locardia Mabikahama, and Sheron Masoka to form a marimba ensemble that provided entertainment on campus under the motivation of the then Deputy Dean of Students, Mr Chandauka. Sheasby Matiure later went to the USA for his doctoral studies. Upon his return, I enrolled for a Master's degree in Music Teacher Education in 2010. During the intervening years, I had taught music at Gresham Primary School and Mandava High School in the Midlands Province. In 2008 Tendekai Kuture, my former music lecturer at Mutare Teacher's College, was the Chairperson of the then Department of Music and Musicology when I was appointed as a Music Teaching Assistant at the Midlands State University (MSU). He had been appointed Chair after completing his master's degree in Music at Idaho University in the USA. Currently, I am a Music lecturer at MSU, where I am the Marimba Ensemble Coordinator.

The Marimba Ensemble has performed on various occasions in Gweru and Harare, at academic conferences, marimba festivals, embassy receptions, kindergarten, school and university graduation ceremonies, research and intellectual expos as well as corporate functions. I teach courses in Marimba, Transcription and Analysis of Music, and African Ethnography. From that perspective, I approached this study as an insider. One of the advantages of writing from such an emic[1] perspective is that it brings the voice of my lived experiences to the study of marimba music performance. This perspective is characterised by an understanding of the local marimba music performance culture, thus giving ethnographic insight based on insider views to reduce possible misrepresentation. According to Gregory Barz and

[1] *Emic* and *etic*, in anthropology and the social and behavioural sciences, refer to two kinds of field research done and viewpoints obtained; from within the social group (from the perspective of the subject) and from outside (from the perspective of the observer).

Timothy Cooley (1997:09), proposing an emic analysis seems particularly attractive to ethnomusicologists who fear that etic analysis might ignore, misunderstand, or even violate important principles within a culture. Allan Merriam (1964:06) underscores the importance of cultural context of music performance by referring to it as the study of music in culture. As a native of the Zimbabwe marimba music performance culture, I am positioned to reflect on marimba music performance practice based on experiential knowledge.

Interest in researching marimba music performance practice was evoked by my personal experiences in teaching marimba music lessons and leading marimba ensembles at primary and secondary schools, teachers' colleges, and at university level. The motivating factor is that in my teaching I have come across students who have a keen interest in studying the marimba at all levels of education but who encounter three problems. First, there is a scarcity of literature on the marimba instrument, and on marimba music performance in Zimbabwe. Second, there seems to be no implementation of the national curriculum to ensure advancement in learning the instrument from low to higher-order skills that should be used to ensure progressive learning steps for marimba within the schools and colleges. Third, there are only two marimba music performance festivals (the Tambarimba Festival, and the Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival) in Zimbabwe. In this study I intended to find the reasons behind these problems (with a view to providing ground-breaking literature on the state of marimba music performance in Zimbabwe through chronicling what is happening on the ground, and hopefully providing keen marimba players with the possible solutions. One of the recommendations I drew from my master's research was that there is a need to ensure the survival of local folk musical performance practices.

The motivation for carrying out this study is from the realisation that while our culture is rich in marimba music performance practice, its study by local intellectuals seems to be in its infancy. Therefore, it is necessary to uncover perspectives on marimba music performance practice in our copious traditional and contemporary repertoire to enrich the known stock of Zimbabwe marimba music

performances. The study may also add to existing information about the performance of traditional and contemporary songs on the marimba. The study's relevance lies in its potential capacity to lead to an understanding of musicking on the marimba through the production of detailed descriptions, still photos, audio tapes and films on the performance of traditional and contemporary marimba songs in the community.

1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is constructed from a post-colonial perspective to claim the space and identity of marimba music performance practice in contemporary Zimbabwean reality, which has experienced western acquisitiveness of local musical practices (Ter Ellingson 1992). I follow the views of Homi Bhabha (1994), who sees the survival of culture as hinging on self-consciousness, a means of cultural resurgence unashamed of the past. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998) identify nativism as one of the key principles of post-colonial theory in which emphasis is placed on indigenous customs and traditions. I was informed by post-colonial ideology as I analysed traditional and contemporary marimba song performances and examined their status in and relevance to contemporary society.

Christopher Small (1998) coined the verb "musicking" to show that music is an activity rather than a thing. He says that to 'music' is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, listening, rehearsing or practising, composing or dancing. To Small, music provides insight into relationships: between and among notes and chords and rhythms and meters, as well as amongst musicians, listeners, composers, conductors, producers and critics. His argument is that musicking is an efficient way to embody and sum up relatedness, which is the essence of human social life. Using these ideas, I examined the way performers interact amongst themselves, as well as with their audiences, as they play marimba music locally.

When music is performed, its role in human life leads people to be concerned with its nature and function as a performing art. The branch of philosophy that attempts to answer basic questions about judgements (including those about musical art) is aesthetics, and I think it aids our understanding of the importance of and reasons why musical performance exists. I find the aesthetic theory of Langer particularly applicable to explaining performance and it therefore informed this study. Langer (1957:5) defines musical art as "an expressive form created for our perception through sense or imagination, and what it expresses is human feeling". She views musical performing art as a symbolic activity that is expressive of a wide range of emotions and this view informed my analysis of the communal symbolism of musicking on the marimba.

Analysis in this thesis is also informed by Richard Schechner's (2005) categorisation of performance(s). The entertainment frame becomes useful as I discuss issues of marimba music performance practice on stage for recreation in Zimbabwean communities. According to Schechner, in the entertainment frame music is performed by an artist who is a virtuoso in his or her act and does it for fun as an audience watches and appreciates. There is room for individual creativity in a performance and criticism is encouraged. The performance is done only for those who are present at the time of the performance, as opposed to recording. Schechner adds that in the performance frame entertainment is an event that depends on its participants. I use the idea of performance for entertaining an appreciative audience when I analyse marimba performance practice in the context of musicking during community events such as weddings, graduation ceremonies, expos and festivals.

The broad field of performance studies has tended to exclude music as an object of study. Phillip Auslander (2008:261) argues that the fields of theatre and performance studies ought to abandon this reluctance to engage with musical performance. His work is quite exceptional in its handling of music performances in publications in both music and theatre journals. It is my view that scholars ought to be concerned with musical performance and analyse it from an interdisciplinary approach. Themes in ensemble performance such as audience communication,

meaning-making and improvisation resonate well in both theatre studies and musicology and to me it seems fitting to study them from a theoretical framework of performance studies. In addition, I notice that sometimes marimba music performances today are enactments of rehearsed music on a stage at festivals and competitions, and are no longer performed in their original traditional communal contexts; hence, they carry with them an element of performativity[2]. The immediate context of the work of marimba artists making live music is essential as a performance. Most Zimbabwe marimba ensembles are unrecorded and I can argue that they are not merely reliving what primarily exists in a record when they make music. I borrow the ideas of Auslander (2004:3), whose stance is unabashedly performer-centred when he analyses music performance:

> *I am interested primarily in finding ways of discussing what popular musicians do as performers – the meanings they create through their performances and the means they use to create them. Although I will not ignore the reception of these performances, I am less concerned with the audience than the performers themselves.*

Auslander argues that musical performances should be seen as legitimate objects of performance analysis.

Similarly, Small (1998) confronts traditional musicology with a performer-centred account of music. He argues that music works exist in order to give performers work to do, and that performance does not exist merely to present musical works. Small states that musical works are by nature actions that musicians do, and not merely works written by composers. Each component part of a musical performance contributes to the whole act and adds to its social meaning. Drawing on these scholars' ideas, I discuss marimba music in Zimbabwe as performance, in an approach modelled from an integration of musicology, cultural studies, and performance studies. I combine formal musicological analysis of the marimba compositions with ethnographic work on ideologies and social issues raised in these compositions, as well as ethnographic work on audiences' reception of marimba

[2] Consummating action, constructing a staged performance act to communicate messages.

music. This performance analysis is interpretive and descriptive; that is, looking at how the performance would be understood from the point of view of a spectator. This is an eclectic approach, which draws from reception theory, cultural studies, sociology, and phenomenology.

Auslander (2004) reflects on Richard Schechner's (2013) performance theory and explains that Schechner pointed out that performance is always a matter of the performer's dual identity in performance – both being him or herself, and at the same time also *not* being him or herself. Auslander explains various dimensions that a performer assumes: first, the performer as the human being (real person); second, the performer as the star personality (persona); and third, the performer as the song personality (character). These three dimensions may sometimes be intertwined as a marimba musician performs on stage, but the dimensions warrant a performance-oriented analysis of music performance. Furthermore, marimba music performances are sometimes choreographed acts that the musicians come to perform on stage, and not spontaneous events. The marimba performers' behaviour when they are off-stage also comes into the equation in a bid to understand the meaning of live music performance. The processes of production, performance and reception of marimba music take place in socio-cultural contexts and therefore this endeavour to study their ontology seems very worthwhile to me.

Erving Goffman's theory of hierarchy of performance purity, in which he categorises performances "according to the exclusiveness of the claim of the watchers on the activity they watch" (1986:125), also informed this study. In his theory, performance is a process through which an individual becomes a stage performer who can be looked at and looked to for engaging behaviour by an audience. There is separation between the performer and audience and the audience has no right or obligation to participate in the staged performance. The first category he mentions is one in which performances fully depend on the presence of an audience. In the second one, performance is competition for victory as spectators are entertained. The third category has performances at ceremonies witnessed by invited guests. Informative talks and educational lectures make the fourth category.

The fifth category encompasses work performances. Staging a marimba music performance before an audience places it in Goffman's first category of performance, since its reception depends on the audience's presence.

Richard Bauman's (1992) categories of performance frames also informed this thesis. According to Bauman, performers assume the responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence and the knowledge or ability to act in socially acceptable ways. He views cultural mediation as articulated through performance. He categorises performance in frames accomplished through the act of culturally determined interpretation of communicated information. In the performance event, the performer's role is to bridge the gap between the source and the audience. The imitative frame suggests that learners model themselves on another performer or teacher, and I find it particularly useful in this study when I discuss issues of learning, teaching and performance in marimba ensembles. His confirmation of the importance of studying performance as a means towards comprehending the uniqueness of particular performances within the context of performance as a generalised cultural system in a community was useful in this study.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1979) ideas are also useful in this study of human social musical interaction. I borrow, in particular, his concept of practice, which is centred on explaining the process by which social patterns of behaviour reproduce structures of domination, to explain the dynamics of interaction amongst marimba festival organisers, players and spectators. Bourdieu (1979:72) develops the notion of practice through the concept of habitus, which he defines as a system of

> *… durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way seeing the product of obedience to rules.*

Habitus is learnt unconsciously and informally in situations such as listening to music and other aspects of lifestyle. Significant determinants of behaviour are

hidden in specific social practices and implicit knowledge. Bourdieu uses the term "doxa" to refer to the taken-for-granted, unquestioned and unexamined ideas about life that seem commonsensical and natural to their possessor.

According to Bourdieu (1979), power relations and social class affect habitus. Social classes are about contrasts between different sets of dispositions that characterise them. Class dominance occurs covertly. Symbolic power is harnessed to maintain class distinctions. An example is the possession of money, which has symbolic exchange value that marks one as wealthy and upper class or poor and lower class. This means that financial capital establishes class structure and social inequality, as does cultural capital such as level of education. Different kinds of capital are connected to each other; a person who has financial capital more easily acquires cultural capital in the form of an elite university education.

Bourdieu (1979) also writes about taste as an ideological category that marks distinctions between levels of socio-economic status and of cultural refinement. Distinctions are part of the arsenal for differentiating social classes. Taste in the performing arts is one aspect of habitus and an indication of social standing, so I feel Bourdieu's work can be connected to musical performance. His perspectives are employable in a sociological examination of music performance. Musical instruments such as the marimba are expensive to purchase, so they become materialistic instruments and Bourdieu can be a lens through which to conduct sociological analysis of marimba performance practice. Schools and colleges that have marimba sets are those that can afford to buy them; that is, they have financial capital to purchase the cultural capital. They then stand distinct from those schools that cannot afford to purchase marimbas. There are also schools that have received donations of marimba instruments from well-wishers who possess financial capital to fund others (non-governmental organisations, business people, cultural organisations, and multi-lateral institutions) and can decide who fits into their class. I see in Bourdieu a heuristic for thinking about marimba performance as a social practice, since marimba players' daily experiences take them through the networks of social life. Their routine contact with marimba music lovers, festival organisers,

funders, tutors and fellow marimba players is an integral part of their associations; hence, performance practice is embedded in social practice. Here is an example to explain how a theoretical orientation grounded in Bourdieu's work can help me to understand and interpret the struggles of a marimba ensemble working hard to make an impact on the live marimba performance in an urban environment. Marimba music performers undergo the mentally and physically demanding experience of preparing for a live marimba performance that has to be staged before an audience, and what happens in such a scenario reflects the nexus between habitus, practice and capital. What the marimba ensemble decides to rehearse depends on the ensemble members' notion or concept of what constitutes an entertaining marimba music performance that can be appreciated by the audience before whom they are going to perform, and that would persuade funders to delve into their pockets to sponsor the ensemble. It also depends on the marimba music performance talents and/or capabilities of the members of the ensemble, as well as their capability to acquire additional performance skills within the timeframe prior to the date their live performance is slated to be staged. The urban community's set standards for what they deem to be the best entertainment and/or their musical taste preferences also determine what the ensemble has to showcase.

Musical performance standards are social constructions that are reinforced by ecstatic cheers from bumper crowds or forced out through jeers and poor numbers of the audience. A marimba ensemble rehearses for hours on end so that they master the best-selling popular song features of their society, all in a bid to meet the norms and expectations of those who consume their music, if their music is to be appreciated. They stretch themselves so that their act is polished enough to be symbolic cultural capital, and they even risk suffering from fatigue and/or strained muscles, which compromises their own health (bodily capital). Such a sacrifice might help the ensemble to rise to fame and fortune. It might also lead to an accumulation of both cultural capital, as they learn and master the art of marimba music performance, and financial capital, if their recorded music sales increase or they draw large crowds at live shows, or if rich people offer them lucrative

performance contracts either locally or abroad (which can be the usual case). This is the logic of practice explained from Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework.

People who can attend marimba festivals obviously can afford the associated festival fees, transport, and accommodation costs if they have to attend the marimba performances away from their home towns. That in itself is a habitus, which places them in some kind of a disposition that characterises them in society. Festival organisers to a certain extent are playing the agency role to ensure that marimba performers are motivated to ply their trade by the trophies, certificates, accolades, awards and cash prizes that they offer for the victors. However, it is notable that they remove agency from individual actors by institutionalising marimba performance. Consequently, I believe that marimba festival organisers mean oligarchy when they speak of organisation.

Auslander (2008) illustrates Bourdieu's habitus as a set of dispositions that generate and structure human actions and behaviour. It shapes all practice, yet it is not experienced as repressive or enforcing. Its effects on human social interaction go unnoticed. Social and cultural markers such as occupation, income, education, religion and taste are juxtaposed to bring a specific habitus into focus. An example is the disposition of a tertiary institution student with Grade Eight music theory whose level of appreciation of classical music might differ from that of someone who has not studied music theory at all. Bourdieu locates habitus where these dispositions correlate as traits common to a social class. Habitus shapes practice.

Bourdieu's (1979) concept of agency questions how individuals contribute to the reproduction of social restrictions and what it is possible and not possible to do in particular cultural contexts. Knowing a particular person's habitus does not empower someone to know what practices a person will engage in. Habitus is not fixed or static, because one person may exhibit multiple dispositions in different situations, such as at home versus at college. Dispositions are changeable over time, so one should not remove agency from individual actors. I embrace Bourdieu's ideas as I discuss issues that emerge in marimba music performance.

1.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Marimba music performances are part of Zimbabwe's musical cultural tradition that is now being practised in the community as well as in learning institutions where young musicians are socialised. Knowledge and skills about marimba song performances gathered through ethnographic methods need to be documented in academia. There is no literature on or research in marimba music performance practice within Zimbabwe, despite the presence of marimba music in teachers' colleges, polytechnics and at the university level, as well as in the community. This study therefore aims to bridge that gap.

The challenge for this study was to investigate the state of marimba music performance practice in Zimbabwe, and to portray marimba artists' experiences when they participate in marimba performance ensembles in a contemporary context. I have been watching performances on the Zimbabwe marimba in the United States of America and Europe with a keen eye and I was eager to uncover marimba music performance practice in Zimbabwe. The marimba music performers abroad include Zimbabweans. A few marimba bands exist in Zimbabwe outside those ensembles based at institutions of learning. These ensembles showcase marimba music performances at social functions. These are usually by invitation to entertain audiences at weddings, graduation ceremonies, and agricultural shows. The purpose was to discover the activities associated with marimba music performances in Zimbabwe at organised festivals, camps, and community arts centres. It is important to note that marimba performance practice at festivals and camps is thriving in Australia, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America, where Zimbabwean music festivals are now common (Matiure 2008), but in Zimbabwe the marimba performances are few and far between. In this study, I intended to uncover the reasons for this perceived decline in marimba activity locally. This entailed uncovering challenges that local marimba makers face as well, because the instrument is now being made abroad with notable keenness and refinement.

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

I set out to explore is the lived experiences of marimba players and makers in Zimbabwe. Another related issue that I wanted study is how community, college, and university-based marimba ensembles, which have notably continued to play Zimbabwe marimba music, arrange traditional and contemporary songs. The objectives of the study were:

- To examine the contemporary marimba performance practices in Zimbabwe.
- To find out how marimba players and instrument makers fit into the marimba musicking in contemporary Zimbabwe?
- To investigate the challenges and prospects that exist in the musicking of marimba musicians and instrument makers in contemporary Zimbabwe.
- To examine how traditional and contemporary marimba songs fit into the musicking of marimba performances.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that I raised in this study hinged on the experiences of marimba music performers and marimba makers within Zimbabwe. My primary research question was: "What are the contemporary marimba performance practices in Zimbabwe?" The related sub-questions which I explored in this study are:

- How do marimba players and instrument makers fit into the marimba musicking in contemporary Zimbabwe?
- What challenges and prospects exist in the musicking of marimba musicians and instrument makers in contemporary Zimbabwe?
- How do traditional Zimbabwean and contemporary songs fit into the musicking of marimba performances?

This study focused on Zimbabwe marimba music performance practice against the background of these questions.

1.7. LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The location for the study was Gweru, Harare, Bulawayo, Guruve, and Victoria Falls, where I identified the marimba performers in marimba ensembles and marimba session musicians with whom I intended to interact with the aim of uncovering their experiences. In Gweru there is one community-based marimba, Rimba Resonance Vibes, and artists' musical involvement is limited to electric band and *mbira* music performances, yet there are marimba music performers that I know. I also chose Gweru because this is where the Midlands State University where I teach is located; hence, it was a constantly accessible location to examine the situation in marimba music performances in that particular region. In Harare, there are eight community-based marimba bands: Blackspear, Dzorira Mbira and Marimba, Kutinya Marimba, Pamuzinda, Sailors Crew, Tambarimba, Tariro/Hope, Timbila Vibes, and Yotinhira Arts. Bulawayo has two: Rainbow Blaze, and Hloseni Arts, and in the resort town of Victoria Falls there are two marimba bands: Sinsiska, and The Big Five. In Guruve there is Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble. There are college-based marimba ensembles in Gweru, Harare, and Bulawayo, as well as in other towns such as Mutare, Masvingo, Gwanda, Mutoko, Lupane, Bindura, and Madziwa. Figure 1.1 below represents a distribution map for marimba ensembles in Zimbabwe.

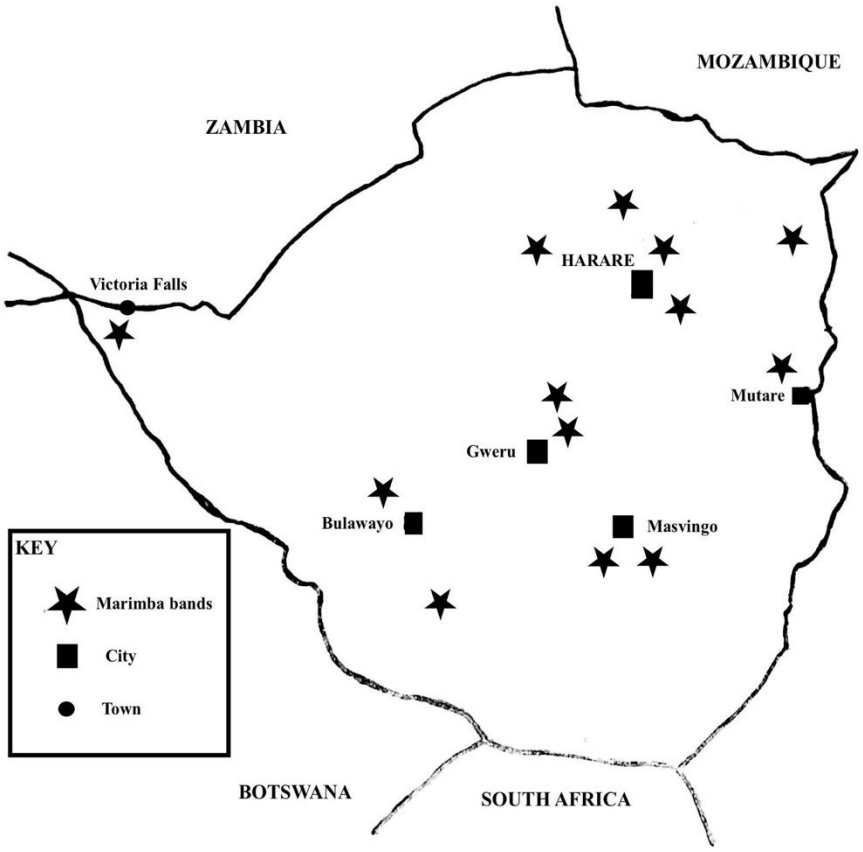

Figure 0.1 Distribution map for Zimbabwe marimba bands
(Wonder Maguraushe 2016)

1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1. Research design

According to Robert Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen (2003:04), qualitative research is naturalistic, descriptive, process-oriented, inductive, and about meaning-making. A qualitative research design was justifiable for this study for the following reasons: In the cities of Gweru, Harare, Victoria Falls and Bulawayo, marimba music performance practice was studied in its natural setting, and naturalism is one of the major strengths of inductive study. I used interview transcripts, field notes, still photos, videos clips, journal and diary entries for generating thick descriptions (Geertz 1995). The study was inductive, as I gathered information from various sources so that process informed theory. John Creswell (2008:57) explains the logic

of inductive research as an exercise in which the researcher first gathers information through observations and document analysis. Participants are asked open-ended questions and field notes are recorded. Data is analysed to look for themes or categories. The researcher then looks for patterns and generalisations from the emerging themes or categories, and poses theories and generalisations from past experience and literature. Barney Glaser (1992) notes that while theory is used as an a priori framework for analysis, categories of meaning emerge from data. Theory also provides guidelines on how to identify categories, make links, and establish relationships that might be refined and integrated during analysis.

I decided to embrace a qualitative research design because of its orientation towards discovery, description, and its high likelihood of providing a holistic perspective on marimba music performance practice. It was my aim to study the entire process of marimba music performance; for this reason, the qualitative design was eminently suitable for this research. According to Michael Patton (1990:51), "The advantages of qualitative portrayals of holistic settings are that greater attention can be given to nuance, setting, interdependences, complexities, idiosyncrasies, and context." Qualitative research incorporates an emergent design in which understanding is inductive, where each data collection and analysis activity informs the processes that follow. Since the goal of this study was to describe the status quo of marimba music performance practice in Zimbabwe, I opted for a qualitative research design because of its capacity to focus on giving a detailed account of a phenomenon, its context, the players, and the processes in which they participate.

In this phenomenological study, I asked "what" and "how" questions, hence the decision to choose a qualitative research design, because qualitative research focuses on the process, unearthing its complexities and dynamism. The qualitative design allowed me to be the direct mediator and collector of data through observing marimba music performances, interviewing people involved in marimba music performance activities, and analysing documentary evidence as well as material culture. Also, I was concerned with stakeholders' views and their interpretation of their own experiences, the challenges they face as people involved in marimba

music performance practice, and how they think these hurdles could be overcome. The strength of qualitative research is that it values the views of programme participants and aims to discover community funds of knowledge since it is exploratory research hinged on the inductive acquisition of knowledge (Genzuk 1999).

The research design was a case study grounded in a qualitative research paradigm. A case study blends well into a qualitative design because it allows for a detailed examination of a phenomenon (Stake 1994). As an empirical inquiry, a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its natural setting, and utilises triangulation of evidence (Yin 1989). Marimba music performance practice is a complex social phenomenon that encompasses rehearsals, live performances, interactions, and networking, so a case study design was warranted. I chose a case study since it is a research approach that aims to provide an in-depth description of a small number of cases (Mouton 2009) in order to understand the factors affecting, in this case, marimba music performance practice.

Studies in ethnomusicology employ ethnographic research methods characterised by varying levels of participation. Tracking strategies have emerged as studies move from single to multi-sited ethnography (Genzuk 1999) and this was suitable for this study, which covered three towns. Subject-centred musical ethnography (Rice 2003) is a move towards studying individuals' shared space; in this case, marimba music performance experiences. In this case study, I used ethnographic methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and analysis of material culture.

The combination of these data collection methods enhanced triangulation for validity and enabled me to uncover data on the current state of marimba music performance in Gweru, Harare and Bulawayo. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with marimba music performers and their audiences because this method allows a researcher to probe and interact with research participants (Nelleke Bak 2004; Eric Hofstee 2009; Johan Mouton 2009). I observed as well as took part in

marimba music performances. Audio and video recordings were made alongside the compilation of field notes on the observations that were made. Liora Bresler (1995) notes that qualitative data collection methods are adaptable to dealing with multiple realities such as I encountered during fieldwork. The strength of these qualitative data collection methods lies in the fact that they allow the researcher the flexibility to further probe initial participant responses for elaboration and engage them according to their individual personalities and styles (Natasha Mack, Cynthia Woodsong, Kathleen MacQueen, Greg Guest & Emily Namey 2005).

Data analysis entailed detailed descriptions of my experiences of the state of marimba music performance from the field. I identified emerging themes from the data that I collected and arranged the data presentation section into thematic frames for interpretation and analysis. The data was analysed qualitatively through still photographs and film, reflecting on the interviews and marimba music performance sessions encountered during fieldwork. This entailed transcribing the videotaped information from the interviews, and explanations and descriptions of what I observed. Analysis depended on the themes that emerged from the investigation, and arrangement of information followed the emergent themes.

1.8.2. Methodology

In this thesis, I used two approaches to collect data on marimba music performance practice in Zimbabwe. Firstly, I conducted an analysis of material culture in which I examined documents and materials that have to do with marimba music performance, as well as literature sources on marimba. Document analysis is an ethnographic method of data collection that can attain validity if triangulated with other data collection methods. I examined a variety of literature sources to solicit information on the origin of the marimba as a musical instrument in the world; how the Zimbabwe marimba came to be; marimba ensembles performing marimba music in Zimbabwe today; people making marimbas in Zimbabwe; local marimba festivals; and marimba musicians currently based in Zimbabwe. Journals provided me with information on the historiography of marimba music performance in

Zimbabwe, Africa and the world. These sources offered information on the marimba music performance events happening in Zimbabwe through show advertisements, reports on marimba festivals and other marimba music performance events, as well as reviews of the acts of marimba ensembles. I surveyed information on related performance studies that relate to marimba on the internet. On YouTube, I examined clips that Zimbabwe marimba ensembles post to let the world know about what they are doing as marimba musicians.

Secondly, I set out to conduct marimba music performance analysis, using the other ethnographic data collection methods, namely interviews and participant observation. I examined marimba music as a social performance event, and related it to the theoretical aspects of musical analysis. By studying marimba music performance as a performance study, I examined what these cultural manifestations *do*, and not merely what they *are*. According to Alejandro Madrid (2009), performance studies do not seek to describe actions so they could be faithfully reproduced later. Instead, they attempt to understand what these actions do in the cultural field where they happen, and what they allow people to do in their everyday life.

1.8.3. Population and sample

In this qualitative study, I was guided by basic methodological principles of ethnography as I chose key informants from whom to solicit information. In ethnographic research the search for information must be discovery-based (inductive), and human beings need to be understood as they go about their lives in a natural environment (Genzuk 1999). This means that I had to find places where marimba music performers play their music and study the state of their art without interfering in any way. Consequently, data collection involved going into the field to observe marimba music performances and sometimes participate in marimba festivals and competitions as scheduled by the organisers of such events. Ethnographic research equipment included a field notebook, a video recorder, and an audio recorder. These ethnographic tools enabled me to capture events of

marimba music performance for playback later. The population of the study included people in Zimbabwe who are involved in organising events for marimba music performance as part of their day-to-day lives, marimba players, marimba festival attenders (fans), and people who listen to marimba music.

From this population I purposively sampled research participants and institutions that served the purposes of my study and consented to participate in interviews, providing festival information and other documents, as well as being observed. The sample comprised marimba music performers, tutors, fans, makers, and personnel at cultural institutions. The purposive sampling technique allowed me to select informants who best suited the needs of my study. According to Kelly Devers and Richard Frankel (2000), purposive sampling is justified, given the goals of qualitative research, because its strategies are designed to enhance understandings of selected participants' experiences targeted typically for exhibiting the phenomena under study. I selected former Kwanongoma College of African Music pioneer students to source historical information on the Kwanongoma marimba. I interviewed Timothy Lunga, Evans Chinyama, Chris Timbe, David Chiwawa, and Tendekai Kuture, who are graduates of this college now teaching music in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe.

I interviewed these pioneer students in order to augment the information I obtained from literature on the history of the Zimbabwe marimba, as well as on the status quo of marimba music performance practice in contemporary Zimbabwe. In addition, I interviewed music lecturers who teach marimba in tertiary institutions on the state of marimba music performance in the contemporary Zimbabwe: Richard Muranda, Shadreck Dzingayi, Tendai Shoko, and Memory Masoja. So that the conversations would happen within the context of ongoing marimba music performances, I deliberately contacted these informants during scheduled marimba festivals and arranged my interviews so that I would conduct them on the side-lines of the festivals. Marimba players I also interviewed included Mopati Molosiwa, Tinomutenda Chihora, Patson Manyame, and Isheanesu Tachiona.

I visited five towns and cities during my fieldwork. In Masvingo, marimba music performers from Zimbabwean tertiary institutions played traditional and contemporary marimba songs in July at the annual Tertiary Institutions Festival of Arts (TIFAZ) 2015 edition. Bulawayo hosted the annual Research and Intellectual Output, Science and Technology (RIO-SET) Expo Marimba Music Performance Segment during the first week of September 2015; in addition, Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band and Hloseni Arts Ensemble are based there permanently. In Harare, the 2015 edition of the annual Tambarimba Festival was held during the last week of September, and the Zimbabwe College of Music's (ZCM) Timbila Vibes Ensemble is permanently based there. In Victoria Falls, The Big Five Marimba Ensemble and Sinsiska members entertain tourists who visit the resort town throughout the year, and in Gweru, the Midlands State University's (MSU) Rimba Resonance Vibes entertains guests at lunch hour concerts, public lectures, research conferences, graduation ceremonies, cultural week celebrations, and various other functions. At TIFAZ there were 15 marimba ensembles from teachers' colleges, polytechnics and agriculture colleges in Zimbabwe. At RIO-SET these 15 were joined by 12 more marimba ensembles from the country's local universities and each ensemble fielded 15 marimba players, drummers, *hosho* (shakers) players, dancers and singers.

At the Tambarimba Festival, each of the eight Zimbabwean community-based marimba ensembles fielded 10 musicians. In Harare, from May to mid-July, I also followed the ZCM Timbila Vibes Ensemble during their concerts aimed at raising funds for air tickets to attend the Marimba and Steelpan Festival held in Johannesburg at the end of July 2015. I personally worked with Rimba Resonance Vibes ensemble, which performed at an exchange programme between the then MSU Department of Music and Musicology and the Harare-based Music Crossroads organisation. Music Crossroads is a non-governmental organisation that identifies and develops musically talented Zimbabwean youths. These youths follow a year-long certificate course in music that they can use to enrol for university music education if they meet the academic entry requirements. At all these events, I interacted with festival organisers, marimba music tutors, marimba

music performers, and their audiences. At each of these festivals and performances, I took time to observe each group's act. In addition, I purposively selected and interviewed festival directors, stage managers, liaison staff, marimba ensemble coordinators, and marimba musicians. I also selected some of the ensembles at these events so that I would observe their last-minute rehearsals during which they polished their acts before staging them.

I observed the following community-based marimba ensembles: Guruve Marimba Arts; Sailors Marimba Crew Petero; Gokwe Rovarimba; Blackspear; Pamuzinda; Tambarimba Arts; Rimba Resonance Vibes; Timbila Vibes; Hloseni Arts; and Rainbow Blaze. The Teachers college-based marimba ensembles that I observed were from Belvedere; Bondolfi; Hillside; Madziwa; Marymount; Masvingo; Mkoba; Morgan ZINTEC; Morgenster; Mutare, Nyadire; Seke; and the United College of Education. The marimba ensembles from polytechnic colleges that I observed playing marimba music are Bulawayo, Gweru; Harare; Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo; Kwekwe; Masvingo; and Mutare. Marimba ensembles from universities were Africa University (AU); Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE); University of Zimbabwe (UZ); Catholic University (CU); Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT); Harare Institute of Technology (HIT); Great Zimbabwe University (GZU); Lupane State University (LSU); Midlands State University (MSU); the National University of Science and Technology (NUST); and the Women's University in Africa (WUA). I personally worked with the MSU Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble of Gweru in the Midlands Province during my data collection.

I further purposively selected marimba popular musicians, marimba makers, members of arts and cultural organisations. The marimba makers that I selected are Almon Moyo, who works at his own workshop in Gweru; Mazorodze Mherembi, who makes marimba at Yotinhira Arts Marimba Workshop in Harare; Wilson Tendai Machinga, who works at the United College of Education (UCE) and runs the Kwanongoma Music Workshop in Bulawayo; Farai Gezi, who makes marimba at CHIPAWO in Harare; John Rukweza of the Rukweza Marimba Construction

Project; and Chris Timbe, a former music lecturer at Seke Teachers College, who now makes marimba at his Mellow-Rhythm Marimba Workshop in Chitungwiza. The popular marimba musicians I selected are Blessing Chimanga, Charles Chipanga, Oliver Mtukudzi, and Jah Prayzah, who combine marimbas with other instruments when they make their music. From arts and cultural organisations, I selected Taurai Moyo, the Manicaland Music and Dance Festival Director in Mutare; Macdonald Chidavaenzi, the Festival Director at Tambarimba Arts in Harare; and Dennis Mutungi, the Festival Manager. Participants who are committed to performing marimba music were included in this study for their ability to exhibit the phenomena under study. Arts organisations and cultural institutions were chosen for their deliberate efforts to ensure the performance of Zimbabwe's traditional musical cultural practices, one of which is marimba music performance practice, hence the possibility that people in these institutions would exhibit knowledge about the state of marimba music performance in Zimbabwe. I hoped that the various informants chosen for this study would help the study in exploring various aspects of the marimba performance practice by making associations and connections amongst the chosen sites in order to achieve triangulation.

The snowball sampling technique, in which the initially chosen participants directed the researcher to communally well-known marimba musicians who might be likely to provide more information on marimba performance, was also adopted, and this further enriched this study. Participants with whom contact had already been made used their social networks to refer me to potential sites of the information about marimba music performance I did not know at the beginning of the study (Mack et al. 2005). This networking helped me to recruit even more useful informants.

1.8.4. Ethical considerations

Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead (2005) insist that ethical principles create a mutually acceptable outline for the research. I negotiated with marimba performers, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), Provincial Arts Managers in Gweru, Harare and Bulawayo, and Midlands State University to provide the space

and participants for the research. The success of the proposed research depended on adherence to ethics in relation to the participants (performers and their audiences), the NACZ personnel, and UNISA, where I was studying. Letters of consent and assent to conduct the research were sent to marimba ensemble directors and the leaders of institutions where respondents were identified (Slobin 1992). In the letters, I pledged to comply with their rules and regulations and maintain confidentiality, respect and safety for all research participants.

1.9. LITERATURE OVERVIEW

1.9.1. The concept of performance events

Performance theory is a framework of analysis to explain oral performance that draws on socio-linguistics, theatrical performance, musicology and cultural performance. Bauman (1992:09) argues that performance quality "… resides in the interplay between communicative resource, individual competence and the goals of the participant, within the context of particular situations". He focuses on a careful analysis of the creative abilities and strategies of performers during performance. I examine the concept of performance events from the performance theoretical orientation, which propounds a couple of assumptions. One is that performance enhances experience, bringing a greater intensity of communication between performer and audience (Bauman 1992). Another assumption is that research should aim to study performance as a series of strategies and devices that structure the performance. Bauman asserts that the formal properties of performance are of central interest to the analysis of performance. As performers imaginatively engage in their cultural self-definition, multiple layers of performance allow researchers to reflect on performance and indulge in their truth-uncovering activities.

Ruth Stone (2008:141) also explains how she utilises the performance-theoretical orientation to focus on situation analysis in a performance event. I think it is worthwhile undertaking a study of music events in their cultural context with a view to understanding meaning in musical communities, since music is a product of

social construction. Stone (2008) noted that the performance approach tends to move away from focus on the score or text as object and focuses on the actual cultural performance. I base my discussion on these views and go on to analyse several kinds of performance events in the Zimbabwean cultural context. Some of the cited examples are results of my own experiences with performance events through attending live shows and interacting with marimba artists in the quest to unveil deeper meanings from their performances.

Stone (2008) explains that performance enhances experience, bringing a greater intensity of communication between performer and audience. The performance occasion includes not only music but also the totality of associated behaviour and underlying concepts. It is a framework for analysis to explain performance based on its emergent quality. In the course of this study, there was concern with the context of performance and the way marimba players perform traditional songs with the passage of time, and arrange traditional and contemporary songs to play on the marimba.

Kay Kaufman Shelemay (2011) discusses how music performance can serve society through memorialising individuals in song, which serves to connect present-day music performers to their past. In addition, Bauman (1992:4) discusses performance events as an aspect of culture in the context of ethnographic description:

> *The ethnographic construction of the structured, conventionalized performance event standardizes and homogenises description, but all performances are not the same, and one wants to be able to comprehend and appreciate the individuality of each as well as the general structures common to all. Every performance will have a unique and emergent aspect, depending on the distinctive circumstances at play within it. Events in these terms are not frozen … but are themselves situated social accomplishments …*

*Performances at concert halls, community centres and nightclubs are usually done after contractual agreements in which the business owners are the contractors. There is an element of patronage and contractual obligation in such music events.

To study these events requires that a researcher seek information on the background and reasons for staging such performances. The performed songs could possibly be the patrons' requests or demands. In Harare, venues such as The Book Café, Gijima Sports Bar and the Sports Diner host artists under certain terms, hoping to cash in on the audiences that follow the performers. Usually artists with a recognisable (financial) following land such performance contracts that will empower the capitalist pub owners to exploit their talent for a pittance.

Kaemer (1993:37) says; "The entire musical culture of a society can best be understood by analysis of the various musical complexes." Otherwise, leaving out some of them could result in failure to correctly interpret and relate performance events to other aspects of culture. In Africa, I have noted that musical performance, which is part of our lives from gestation to the deathbed, has multi-faceted complexes. As researchers we ought to sift through our social fabric in order to untangle our musical fibre for fruitful analysis. Kaemer (1993:48) adds that, "Observing how people behave at a musical event is as important as analysis of how they sing and play their instruments." This underlines the importance of observing the performance in its natural context. Socio-cultural context is an integral part of the performance event.

Stone (2008:37) also studied performance events and observed that

> *The music event is a bounded sphere of interaction. That is, it is set off and made distinct from the natural world of everyday life by the participants. The event encompasses music sound production behaviour, music auditing behaviour, proxemics-kinesic behaviour, and perhaps other kinds of behaviour in a particular setting.*

For the researcher, the music performance event constitutes the unit of analysis. The sphere of interaction is there between the performers and their audience and it is unlike ordinary life actions. A behaviour oriented approach to studying music events becomes relevant so that ethnomusicologists can understand the cultural context of a performance, as opposed to merely dealing with the music sound and

the elements of music per se. Musical sound gains more meaning when it is studied in context, hence we ought to study the music behaviour as well.

I have observed that the musical event may be divided into two parts: the performance proper, and the activities leading to and away from it. The tuning of marimbas before a song is performed by an ensemble would be viewed as an activity leading up to the music event, as will the discussion on which songs to pick from the ensemble's repertoire and play at that particular event. I spent considerable time observing audience behaviour in musical performance events, cumulatively attending seven concerts. Almost all the time the performer and his/her music are the sole focus of ethnomusicological studies. The interrelationship of participants ought to be studied also by looking at the music event within its context as the units of analysis. I think this is critical because musicians very rarely perform where there is no audience.

1.9.2. Zimbabwean music performance events

There seems to be a yawning void in terms of scholarly ethnomusicological writings on Zimbabwe marimba musicians, and other musicians in general. Claire Jones (1992) concisely describes how various musical instruments of Zimbabwe, including the Zimbabwe marimba, are constructed. In addition, she chronicles in quite some details how these instruments are played at various levels of difficulty. She further provides a brief history of the local Zimbabwean musical traditions with special focus on historical influences on performance events. Her book enables children of all backgrounds to find a place for themselves in the music world. Jones attempts with some level of success to demystify both instrument construction and performing music on an instrument by drawing on the common everyday experiences of young children in simple, straightforward language. She suggests that children start with exposure to their own environmentally available instrument materials. Students are urged to first learn the African-American origins of the music under discussion, and then to explore ways in which they can adapt popular

songs to the instruments that they construct, adding variations and combinations that adapt elements of Zimbabwean musical traditions.

Paul Berliner's (1993) work is written from a performance perspective as it focuses on the processual aspects of playing the *mbira dzavadzimu*. It is a landmark study of the vast musical achievements by Zimbabwean *mbira* performers who play *mbira dzavadzimu* in its cultural context of *bira*[3]. The strength of the book in the performing arts lies in the fact that Berliner himself (an American) studied, practised, rehearsed and performed the *mbira dzavadzimu* with his research participants. It is a product of seven years of participant observation during which Berliner interviewed and recorded respondents. In my opinion, *The Soul of Mbira* remains largely unmatched in its thoroughness of engagement as an in-depth ethnographic study that chronicles the Shona *mbira dzavadzimu* in ritual performances by the Zezuru people of Hwedza. Berliner came to play the *mbira dzavadzimu* like a native, solicited emic views from the community, and lived with and lived like the Zezuru.

Where he notates the music, Berliner (1993) grounds notation in the actual performance practices and demonstrates that playing *mbira dzavadzimu* has certain structural constants around which performers regularly improvise and play variations from performance to performance. These variations and improvisations add to the *mbira dzavadzimu* performers' repertoires and contribute to the on-going development of the instrument. The immense complexity of this ancient and dynamic musical cultural tradition of Zimbabwe is masterfully captured in *The Soul of Mbira*. Berliner chronicles the complex process of performed negotiations that happen amongst the *mbira dzavadzimu* players, spirit mediums, singers, dancers, drummers, and the ordinary participants. Berliner (1993) reports that in one incident he came to know that at a certain level of performance, the *mbira* player begins to share ideas with the *mbira* itself. The book is an examination of the performance

[3] an all-night ritual, celebrated by Shona people from Zimbabwe in which members of an extended family call on ancestral spirits for guidance and intercession. The attendees at the ceremony participate in singing, dancing and hand clapping.

process that was made possible through immersion into the people's daily lives in an inductive process. Theories are products of analysis of a people's cultural practices expressed through musical performance events.

Joyce Jenje-Makwenda (2005) says that one concept of music performance is (and has always been) that it is a pastime. She chronicles performance events of the township music genre that took place at Musodzi Boys' Club in Harare's Mbare suburb, as well as at Boys' Club in Bulawayo's Makokoba Township. At these places, performance events were used to offer the much needed entertainment and social escape in an otherwise dull township environment. Township music can be traced to about 90 years back when early rural to urban migrants converged in the emerging urban centres, fused indigenous traditional styles with foreign rhythms, and composed songs for performance.

Matiure (2008) discusses music performance events in relation to meaning and spirituality in Africa. He notes that music performance in the context of events is closely linked to issues of meaning making. Meaning in performance events is articulated in terms of spirituality, since the music is performed in specific events for specific purposes. According to Matiure (2008:17), "Different events have different meaning in the fabric of African lives: for those that are celebratory, the central role of music is to entertain; for those that are prayerful, music plays the central role of creating that devotional frame …".

Mackenzie Pickard (2010) researched issues that performers encounter when traditional music is played in a contemporary context. His study focused on how the *mbira* has been removed from its original traditional context of being performed in the Zimbabwean village system to a variety of new settings, which include the concert-hall stage. Such is the dynamism of culture. The author aimed to suggest a pool of techniques that could provide the *mbira* player with suggestions on how the *mbira* performance event could be pieced together to create an ideal performance. Pickard (2010) unearthed what he refers to as Zimbabwean performance frames and these are ritual, educational and entertainment.

In contemporary Zimbabwe, many performance events happen, including *mapira*, galas, concerts, Christian worship music, carnivals and live shows by music groups and cultural ensembles. These provide a rich hunting ground for music scholars who can seize the opportunity to enrich their discipline by observing, describing, documenting and recording these performance events. Marimba performances in popular songs by artists contribute to our unique musical cultural heritage and ought to be chronicled in the scholarship. Popular artists who fuse marimba in their music include Blessing Chimanga, Oliver Mtukudzi, Charles Chipanga, and Mukudzei Mukombe (popularly known as Jah Prayzah). Zimboita, Tariro Arts Ensemble, Tambarimba Ensemble, Rimba Resonance Vibes, Hloseni Arts, and Rainbow Blaze Band are examples of popular community-based ensembles that play music on marimbas in Zimbabwe. There are also marimba ensembles based in academic institutions such as schools, music colleges, teachers' colleges, and universities.

1.10. SUMMARY

Making music on the Zimbabwe marimba has been a subject of attention for some ethnomusicology scholars over the years. The instrument, which originated in its present form at Kwanongoma College of African Music, has found its way to the diaspora, where hundreds of marimba ensembles have been formed to perform Zimbabwe marimba music. In this chapter, I have shown that this study highlights the situation of marimba performance practice that remains within Zimbabwe's borders, which has not received adequate attention. Against the background of a political crisis and economic problems, marimba performers in Zimbabwe have persevered and their experience is the focus of this thesis.

In addition, I have discussed the direction of this thesis, which is to uncover the state of the art of marimba performance practice in contemporary Zimbabwe. I study how marimba artists in contemporary Zimbabwe are coping with the situation they find themselves in as they endeavour to make music on the wood that sings. I also focus on the challenges and prospects that exist in marimba music performance practice and marimba instrument construction in contemporary Zimbabwe. I argue

that marimba performers have kept their art alive notwithstanding the presence of a plethora of vicissitudes. In Chapter 2, I review related literature on marimba performance and the origins of the marimba. In Chapter 3, I focus on the marimba ensembles that are plying their trade in Zimbabwe either as community-based marimba bands or college-based marimba ensembles. An examination of the traditional and contemporary music compositions marimba performers in Zimbabwe are playing follows in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I discuss the marimba performance techniques and methodology that marimba musicians are employing when they present their music to marimba music lovers. Finally, in Chapter 6 I explore the marimba construction business in Zimbabwe. Marimba makers are marimba players themselves and also work in collaboration with other marimba performers they supply with instruments.

CHAPTER 2
THE MAKING OF THE MARIMBA TRADITION IN ZIMBABWE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of music performance events (which include marimba performance practice) in Zimbabwe is tilted towards the explanation of the cultural context of performance based on the oral tradition in the dissemination process. Certain strategic devices created and used by marimba performers, such as paralinguistic features, special signals, stylistic devices and special formulas, shape the concept of performance events. This research on the state of marimba performance practice in Zimbabwe hinges on the participation in, and understanding of communal musical cultural performances. The major concern of this research was to analyse marimba performance as a series of strategic devices that the performers use to structure their performances. Studying Zimbabwe marimba performance techniques and methodologies would enhance my experience of marimba performance events and bring about an experiential understanding of the messages that are communicated between performers and their audiences. It is critical to understand the participants in a performance event, and the social involvement and level of significance of festivals. This calls for a correct and very informed deduction if, as a researcher, I am to uncover meaning with correct interpretation; hence, the challenge is to examine critically the nexus between performance context and the function of a performance event. What happens alongside the performance event can help to arrive at meaningful analysis of performance events as they unfold.

In this chapter I focus on how the new Zimbabwe marimba tradition, as a contemporary performance practice, was born out of existing traditions and became a tradition for a group of people during the last 55 years. I observe and analyse several factors that influenced and affected the experience of the musicking of the Zimbabwe marimba tradition. From a broad perspective of performance events, I critically discuss the various angles of performance theory articulated by scholars.

This is followed by a conceptualisation of performance events, with particular focus on music performance. I further relate performance events to ethnographic research work that has been carried out in Zimbabwe by different scholars. Additionally, I cite examples to establish the relationship between the performance events and the values of society by analysing the totality of behaviours that members of a musical culture express when they present their shows.

After this broad conceptualisation of music performance events, I narrow down the discussion to focus on marimba performance specifically, reviewing literature on the structure, anatomy, and acoustics of the marimba. In the last section of this chapter, I zero in specifically to focus on marimba performance practice. I turn to literature on the origins of the Zimbabwe marimba, and discuss the role played by academic institutions and marimba mentors in spreading the art of Zimbabwe marimba music performance tradition.

2.2. MARIMBA PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

Literature on marimba music performance practice in general, and specifically musicking on the Zimbabwe marimba in particular, is very scarce. According to Ruo-Ying Ke (2014), "Compared to general mallet keyboard technical studies the methods focused on the marimba alone are fewer in number." The first comprehensive book devoted to marimba techniques alone was *Method of Movement for Marimba* published by Leigh Howard Stevens in 1995. Stevens had found earlier grip methodologies inadequate for playing contemporary music. This current study intends to provide details to fill up this yawning gap by describing marimba performance practice in Zimbabwe.

In his study, Ruo-Ying Ke (2014) explored the difference in physical movement between the techniques used on the marimba and those used on the vibraphone. The two mallet instruments are performed in the orchestra. He concluded that although the two instruments share the same keyboard, players must adapt their physical movements to the variations in each instrument's design and bar materials. Ruo-

Ying Ke also discusses sound production, which results from three factors; the instrument, the mallets, and the motions of the performer. I notice that these points are applicable to performing the Zimbabwe marimba as well.

Laurence Kaptain (1992) notes that the survival of the marimba depends on the musicians' versatility; they should not limit themselves to their traditional song repertoires but improvise and demonstrate creativity. Marimba ensembles perform a wide variety of musical styles and genres and this has helped to ensure the viability of marimba by providing entertainment at numerous social gatherings. In this study, I examined the present situation of marimba performance practice in Zimbabwe in order to gain a deeper understanding of it. The project had the potential to describe marimba performance practice in the community.

According to Johannes Brusila (2002:43), "In the Shona performance context the music is not written down or played from a score." Marimba music performance is also transmitted from one musician to another by playing from memory, as part of the oral transmission of culture. The freedom to create improvised musical lines and how they are interpreted is a notable characteristic of the framework of marimba music composition. Andrew Tracey (2004) concurs when he notes that, in Africa, music composition is processual; that is, it is based on a collective musical process that creates structural opposition amongst several parts. In a marimba ensemble, the nature of the music is such that the soprano, tenor, baritone and bass parts are structural oppositions created together as the players improvise within the framework of the marimba's musical capacity.

Marimba can be used to play any type of music, depending on the dexterity of the artiste. The point of departure has been the reproducing of *mbira* music on the marimba, which has led to experiments with other genres. Nowadays marimba ensembles play jazz, gospel, classic, pop, and reggae music in their repertoires. This has led some popular Zimbabwean artistes to rope in marimba players to become part of their bands. Examples include Oliver Mtukudzi, Zimboita, Hope Masike, Jah Praizah, and Willom Tight.

In Zimbabwe when a child decides to choose a musical instrument to specialise in, parents tend to be biased towards the piano, guitar, flute or any other western musical instruments. This has left traditional African musical instruments such as the *mbira* and marimba suffering from misconceptions in society. They have sometimes been perceived as 'unclean'. Such perceptions tend to limit people's scope as to the diversity and range of musical instruments that show a great amount of musical richness. Yet the marimba instrument has transcended boundaries to make its mark in the international arena, where parents encourage their children to take marimba lessons.

Richard Kohola as quoted by Andrew Mamvura (*The Herald* April 28, 2011*)* says "Marimba has grown to become a passionate musical instrument in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands where it has been well received and appreciated." He added that if you heard a marimba ensemble playing in some communities in Norway you would think that you were in Mbare Township in Harare. Surprisingly, some of the teachers there have mastered marimba music performance practice so well that they can teach marimba players from Zimbabwe a few tricks. While this is the situation in Scandinavia and other parts of the western world, as the custodians of this rich, dynamic and exciting musical tradition we need to elevate our appreciation of marimba music and embrace it so that we can set the pace and standard in marimba music performance practice. Mamvura urged the Zimbabwean government, through its Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture, to help in promoting marimba music in schools, particularly in rural schools that are disadvantaged when it comes to implementing music education programmes. He added that marimba music is an art of sound and Zimbabweans should embrace it so that they realise the different elements of music that will create a better expression of who we are.

2.3. ORIGINS OF THE MARIMBA

The exact place in the world where the marimba originated has been a subject of scholarly debate over the years. The development of the marimba throughout

human history can be understood by studying the music cultures of the world that have made it a part of their tradition. The musical instrument is referred to by various names in different regions where it also has varying physical characteristics. Africa and South America are frontrunner continents in the debate on where exactly the marimba originated.

Hugh Tracey (1948:118) wrote as follows about the location of the marimba in parts of Africa:

> *The history of the distribution of the xylophone in Africa is fairly well known. It can be traced all the way from Chopi country in the southeast at Cape Corrientes across Africa in two steps, the southern ending in the Congo and the northern in West Africa. From the scanty evidence available at present it seems that, of all tribes using xylophones, only a minority have a heptatonic scale. The remainder use a hexatonic, pentatonic, or even smaller scale. So it seems permissible to suggest at this stage that the Chopi instrument is as good as, if not better than, the majority of its kind on this continent. It is excellently made by skilled craftsmen, though perhaps not quite so neat as the malimba xylophone to be found two hundred miles farther north on the coast near the great Sabi River, where they are played by the Shangana-Ndau people. These two, the timbila and the malimba, are the only xylophones found on the east coast of Africa, if we are to accept our present authorities, more particularly Olga Boone of the Musee du Congo Belge.*

Hugh Tracey (1948:118) says that Chopi marimba orchestras use a seven-note scale in which there are no semitones. He describes it as an artificial equitonal scale where each interval is just over three quarters of a whole tone, and as an astonishing scale for anyone to use. This is the same tuning used in Guinea. About the marimba's presence in America, Hugh Tracey (1948:119) says: "The appearance of the marimba in South America is therefore easily explained when we remember that the first of many boat-loads of African slaves was known to have been taken from this coast to Brazil about the year 1530."

Tracey (1948:145) quotes Father Andre Fernandes' letter written on 5 December 1562, which states:

> *These people (people of Tongue) are much given to the pleasures of singing and playing. Their instruments are many gourds bound*

> *together with cords, with a piece of wood bent like a bow, some large and some small, and to the openings in which they fasten trumpets with the wax of wild honey to improve the sound, and have their treble and bass instruments.*

There is evidence from Father Andre Fernandes' descriptions in his letters (as cited in Tracey 1948) that during the sixteenth century the Chopi people had five kinds of *timbila*: the treble (*cilanzane/malanzane*), the alto (*sange/sanje*), the tenor (*dole/mbingwe*), the bass (*debiinda*), and the double bass (*gulu/kulu*).
Hugh Tracey (1963:37) later wrote again about evidence of the presence of marimbas and other musical instruments in Africa in writings by Portuguese missionaries and explorers who came to Africa:

> *As far as Central and Southern Africa are concerned, the first authentic observations about African music appear in the journals of the mid-sixteenth-century Portuguese explorers and missionaries. Writing of the inhabitants of the south eastern seaboard, they remarked upon the bands of instruments that accompanied chiefs upon their journeys, the presence of numerous musicians in the royal households, and the continual jollifications of the populace with singing and dancing, which they compared with similar folk festivities in Europe. The three kinds of musical instruments most frequently mentioned were the drums, the xylophones, and the mbira.*

So, to remove the origins of the marimba from Africa to me amounts to erasing a whole page from the history of humankind.

Heinz Hirschland (1957:40) reports that in 1947 he composed a Bantu Suite for Piano, Marimba, Whistle and Voices. It was a four-movement suite. Hirschland says he included the marimba in that composition because he felt that the xylophone of the Venda and Chopi added to the character and colour of African music. His article provides evidence that marimba music was played by the Venda people, who are present on both sides of the Limpopo River, which to me is an artificial separation of the same people. The Venda on the north of the Limpopo, which is Zimbabwe, also played marimbas, and so attempts to refute the presence of marimbas there are inaccurate.

In a lecture on African music, Trevor Cope (1959:39) described the marimba, among other African musical instruments, thus:

> *The xylophone is a percussion instrument that is also capable of melody. Whereas the drum can only have two or three notes at the most, very close together in pitch, the xylophone may have a large number of notes spread out over more than an octave. Among the central African tribes, the xylophone is as highly developed as the drum, but it has not the same prestige, as the drum is both a ritual and musical instrument. The construction of the xylophone requires a high degree of musical craftsmanship, for not only has each slab of wood to be tuned to fit into the scale, but it also has to be resonated underneath a calabash of exactly the same frequency of vibrations. The xylophone is beaten by rubber-headed sticks.*

During the said lecture, Cope proceeded to play a piece of music performed by an ensemble of three conical drums, one friction drum, one marimba and rattles. The music was accompaniment to the *muzemu* dance, which Hugh Tracey (1948) describes as a popular entertainment in the Zambezi Valley. Trevor Cope also played a piece of music from the Luba tribe of Congo, in which two marimbas are played alongside two drums to produce polyphonic music. Cope's lecture provides evidence of the presence of marimbas as part of the popular entertainment in the Zambezi Valley, where present-day Zimbabwe borders with Zambia. I am sure that people of the Zambezi valley who played this instrument were, and still are, found on both sides of the Zambezi River. The construction of a damwall at Kariba between 1955 and 1959, as well as the establishment of colonial boundaries, must have contributed to the partial separation of these peoples.

Arthur Morris Jones (1964) found some intriguing similarities between Indonesian and African marimbas and hypothesised that Indonesians might have migrated to Africa no later than AD 750 and continued with their marimba tradition. He provides historical evidence that links the Uganda marimba to Indonesia, and relates some Indonesian song-text and language aspects to those of Africa. His argument is that to both Africa and Indonesia the marimba is a culture indicator, and he calls for more research to explore the links between the peoples of these two places.

Gerhard Kubik (1962) says that KP Wachsmann reported in 1951 on the Endara marimba of the Bukonjo in what is now Uganda, which had sixteen to eighteen keys. It was played by five men, each of them having a plain stick in his hand. He adds that by that time (1951) the Endara marimba was "very rare", and so Kubik says they were very lucky to have found the Endara marimba, an instrument with fourteen keys, in the early 1960s in Bwera, Uganda. In comparison, the *Amadimba* of Buganda has twelve keys, and the *Akadinda*, also of Buganda, has twenty-two keys. Kubik (1962) is the only author that I have read who found a marimba that is associated with religious connotations. This conflicts with what I have just quoted from Cope (1959) above. He says that *Bakonjo* music is related to religion and says this is true of marimba music. He reports how they found an old man who said that the spirits of the dead, *Abalimu*, had recommended that he keep a marimba in the house. The old man travelled to the Congo to buy one from a marimba maker. Before the old man and two boys played many compositions on the Endara marimba, Gerard Kubik says he was asked to put some money underneath the instrument, which was to be left there for the ancestors to take.

According to Thomas Johnston (1973:86), Tsonga *mohambi* are a brainchild of Chopi marimba makers. He says:

> *The Tsonga of Mozambique are located between the Venda in the northwest and the Chopi in the southeast. While the large Venda xylophones have all but disappeared in the last forty years, Chopi xylophone playing is widely practised and the Chopi orchestras are famous both in the homeland and in the Johannesburg gold mine compounds. It is on the Chopi timbila that the Tsonga model their mohambi xylophone, often obtaining the ready-made slats by barter and then assembling a copy of the rest of the instrument themselves. The construction of the mohambi is basically similar to that of the Chopi timbila or the Tswa muhambi, with some simplification and substitution of materials−commercial timber for hand-hewn, for example, metal parts for wooden, nails for palm-leaf ligaments, putty or chewing gum for beeswax, etc.*

Johnston (1973:87) notes, "Of particular interest is the fact that bars may be added or subtracted and that the findings may be slightly altered. Other specimens were also observed to incorporate an eighth slat within the octave." He compared and

found out that the Tsonga do not drastically retune the whole instrument and they do not appear to consider it necessary to tune certain of their musical instruments according to any one consistent system. In the case of the *mohambi*, it is the rhythmic, percussive quality that interests them most, rather than a particular, exact system of tuning. He notes, however, that to them vocal music remains an important exception to this laissez-faire attitude.

Johnston (1973:87) describes how the Tsonga perform on the *mohambi* as follows:

> *Often two individuals squat side by side on the ground facing the same side of the mohambi, each having a beater in both hands. The left hand player is normally at the bass end, and his "territory" encompasses the four left hand (bass) slats. However, one of the more interesting aspects of Tsonga mohambi playing is that the instrument may be reversed, the players remaining in the same position relative to the ground. In this reversal, the left hand player now plays the first four treble slats, often, but not always, executing the same motor patterns as previously. This is regarded as one way to produce variations … In mohambi playing, the two players appear to be engaged in producing 3-against 2, 6-against 4, or 12-against 8, although there is rarely a triplet style melody in either part. The Tsonga tend to think of the two rhythms together as one Tsonga rhythm possessing desired qualities of tension and musical interest.*

This is further evidence of the presence of the marimba in Africa.

According to Nancy Zeltsman (2014), marimba originated from early human instincts to strike wood, stones and some metal slabs that produced musical tones. These practices existed in various forms in the musical cultures of Africa, Latin America and Asia, and they are the forerunners of the modern marimba. She describes the early marimba as slabs of wood placed over a hole in the ground that served as a resonator. Some developments were made to the marimba, which saw the suspending of wood slabs over gourds or wooden boxes serving as resonators that enhanced the sound. She acknowledges that sources differ on the specific area of the world from where the marimba originated, with Africa and the highlands of Guatemala being the most probable roots. She adds that it is interesting to note that symbolic and functional uses of the African marimba are largely integrated,

mentioning that the marimba is the national instrument of Guatemala, where no party is complete without marimba music.

Marimbas have undergone continuous development that yielded the modern marimba we play in contemporary Zimbabwe. Nancy Zeltsman is a marimba music performer and teacher, who says that the five-octave concert grand marimba that she plays is different from the original folk marimbas, adding that the development of the modern marimba in the northern hemisphere can be traced to Central American marimba constructors. The chromatic marimba, which has bars laid out like the piano, was developed by Sebastian Hurtado in the 1890s. In 1880, John Calhoun Deagan started the first company to manufacture marimbas in the United States of America. The company built the modern marimba with metal resonators alongside other percussion instruments in the 1920s (Zeltsman 2014).

According to Theal as cited in Michael Williams (2000:01), "Ancestors of the modern marimba are found throughout Africa." He adds that a Portuguese priest called Father Joao Dos Santos visited present-day Mozambique in 1586 and described the *ambira*, a musical instrument played by Mozambicans:

> *The best and most musical of their instruments is called the ambira, which greatly resembles our organs; it is composed of long gourds, some very wide and some very narrow, held close together and arranged in order. The narrowest, which form the treble, are placed on the left, contrary to that of our organs, and after the treble come the other gourds with their different sounds of contralto, tenor, and bass, being eighteen gourds in all. Each gourd has a small opening at the side near the end, and at the bottom a small hole the size of a dollar, covered with a certain kind of spider's web, very fine, closely woven, and strong, which does not break. Upon all the mouths of these gourds, which are the same size and placed in a row, keys of thin wood are suspended by cords so that each key is held in the air above the hollow of its gourd, not reaching the edges of the mouth. The instrument being thus constructed, the Kaffirs play upon the keys with sticks after the fashion of drumsticks, at the points of which are buttons made of sinews rolled into a light ball the size of a nut, so that striking the notes with these two sticks, the blows resound in the mouths of the gourds, producing a sweet and rhythmical harmony, which can be heard as far as the sound of a harpsichord. There are many of these instruments, and many musicians who play upon them well* (Williams 2000:01).

Daniel Rager (2008) says that the marimba, in its simplest form, originated long ago among primitive men, adding that it was one of the earliest melodic instruments made by man and its earliest forms are evident in Africa. Rager (2008) admits that the marimba's origin is shrouded in uncertainty and controversy, with some scholars claiming that it originated in South-East Asia around the fourteenth century, and was later brought to South America in the early sixteenth century either by African slaves or by pre-Columbian African contact.

According to Hugh Tracey (1948:121), *mbila* is a single note on the marimba of the Chopi people of Mozambique. This instrument or an ensemble of instruments is referred to as *timbila*. Kubik (1964a:682) also explains the Bantu origins of the marimba when he says, "Marimba (or *malimba*) is derived from the cumulative prefix *ma* to the stem *rimba* (or *limba*, r and l being the same phoneme in many Bantu languages). Marimba is, therefore, the full instrument, consisting of many *rimba* (notes)." Moreover, Williams (2000) states that there is historical evidence of the presence of the marimba amongst the Bantu-speaking peoples of southern and eastern Africa, adding that the word marimba refers to a marimba on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, as well as on the coast of Tanzania, in southern Congo, and northern Angola. Marimba also refers to marimbas in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In Malawi, marimbas are known as *valimba* or *ulimba*.

Andrew Tracey (2004) explains that the name marimba is derived from Bantu languages of East, Central and Southern Africa. In the Bantu languages of central Africa, the word marimba means "wood that sings". This statement supports the assumption that marimba might have originated from Africa. The name marimba is said by some scholars to have been derived from a Zulu myth in which a goddess named Marimba made an instrument by hanging gourds underneath wooden bars. The word *rimba* suggests a flattish object sticking out, such as a note or a key, and *ma* is a cumulative prefix, thus marimba means many keys. This statement supports the assumption that marimba might have originated from Africa. Nadel, as cited in Rager (2008), concurs by stating that the word marimba is related to a number of words in Bantu languages that all refer to a marimba or to some other instrument,

namely *silimba*/*sirimba, timbila, mbira,* and *andamadimba*/*madimba*. The words marimba, *mbira,* and *likembe* are Bantu variants of a common word root. Nadel is also quoted as saying that the name marimba signifies the gourd marimba of Africa, and the gourd works as a resonator to create longer tones (Rager 2008). I notice that the linguistic evidence conclusively suggests that the word marimba is of African, specifically Bantu, origin.

The Vienna Symphonic Library (2012-2016) states that like the instrument itself the name marimba originated in Africa. The word *rimba* (single key) and *marimba* (more than one keys) are Bantu (spoken in Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique). In many African languages, the term marimba is therefore used to describe instruments with several bars. In a broader sense the name is also applied to another type of instrument typical of Africa, the *lamellophone* (instruments with metal prongs fixed on the outside of a sound box and plucked by the fingers). Technically, the marimba could also be described as a low-pitched marimba, which simply means "wood sounder". Marimbas are not found everywhere in Africa and the Vienna Symphonic Library traces the cultural background of the marimba to central and southern Africa. The instrument is particularly common to both the west and east coasts; that is, Angola and Mozambique respectively. The first evidence of historical marimbas in Africa seems to show that they originated in what is now Mali in the thirteenth century. It is generally accepted that marimbas with calabashes as resonators were first widespread in central African countries of Tanzania and the Congo. This adds to the evidence that the marimba originated in East, Central and Southern Africa but developed independently, gaining its own identity and significance (Vienna Symphonic Library 2012-2016).

The Vienna Symphonic Library adds that the name *marimba* accompanied the instrument from Africa via Latin America to Europe, where in many countries the suffix *phone* (Greek for sound) has been added. Africans sold as slaves to central and southern America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continued to make their native instruments there. The marimbas underwent further development on the

American continent, especially in Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil. In these countries, the calabash resonators were replaced with precisely-tuned wood resonator chambers. Mirlitons[4] were still fitted to the resonators, which gave the Central American marimbas their distinctive character. In Latin America, the name *marimba* refers to every kind of large xylophone with calabashes as resonators of the type originally introduced from Africa (Vienna Symphonic Library 2012-2016). In Mexico the marimba is still a very common folk instrument and a wide variety of different versions of it is made. Chromatic instruments with six and a half octaves (C3-F8) and an astonishing seventy-nine bars are the largest marimbas in the world and are found in Chiapas in Mexico, Guatemala and Costa Rica, where they are called marimba *grande*. The Chiapas marimba has the form of a table. There are two kinds, the diatonic marimba *sencilla* and the chromatic marimba *doble*. These large marimbas are usually played by several marimba players, with each player responsible for a particular register, within the confines of which he or she is obliged to stay. In addition to these, marimbas with three or four octaves are also used. The resonators are often made of bamboo. Marimba ensembles with several instruments are a notable tradition that is still followed, especially in Mexico City and Chiapas. A group of musicians plays on one marimba or several. In Europe, Japan and the USA marimbas are played almost exclusively by soloists (Vienna Symphonic Library 2012-2016).

Although the marimba was in constant use in dance bands and light music, it was some time before it was given important parts to play in the orchestra. It was not until 1947 that the marimba suddenly burst onto the scene as a serious instrument in the Concerto for Marimba and Vibraphone by French composer Darius Milhaud. A new playing technique had been introduced in which four mallets are used to play chords. This innovation received a correspondingly enthusiastic reception. In the second half of the twentieth century, the marimba's range of tasks in ensembles and the full orchestra was expanded more and more. Composers such as Leos Janacek

[4] a musical instrument with a nasal tone produced by a vibrating membrane, typically a toy instrument resembling a kazoo.

(*Jenufa*), Carl Orff (*Antigonae*), Karl Amadeus Hartmann in his symphonies, Hans Werner (*Elegie*) and Pierre Boulez (*Le marteau sans maître*) entrusted the marimba with new and extremely challenging tasks. The instrument's solo repertoire was growing at the same time (Vienna Symphonic Library 2012-2016).

There are scholars who have studied distribution patterns for the marimba and *mbira* in a bid to demonstrate that these two instruments have a brotherly relationship in which the *mbira* is viewed as a smaller and more portable version of the marimba. In different parts of the Bantu areas, the names marimba/*timbila* and *mbira*/*karimba* are used interchangeably to refer to either of these two instruments. Arthur Morris Jones' (1950) distribution map for marimbas places them across Africa's mid-section from Mozambique to Angola and from southern Uganda to South Africa. Robert Kauffman's (1970:75) and Gerard Kubik's (1964a:31) distribution maps for *lamellophones* reveal a nearly identical distribution. One is tempted to conclude that these two instruments are originally African from their close distribution on the continent.

According to Dictionary.com (2016), marimba is a musical instrument that originated in Africa and was later popularised in Central America. It adds that the word marimba itself is a Kimbundu word from Angola that is Bantu-related and akin to *kalimba*. The marimba is described as a percussion instrument. It consists of a set of graduated wooden bars with resonators beneath to reinforce the sound that is produced when the wooden bars are struck with two soft-headed mallets held in each hand.

Dictionary.com concurs with Robert Garfias (1983) when he notes that with the advent of the slave trade in which large numbers of Africans were taken to Central America, Mexico and the Pacific Coast during the sixteenth century, the marimba concept was brought to South America by African slaves through the human trafficking that was rife at that time. Knowledge about the marimba was transmitted to people of that region by the Africans. It spread to Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Chiapas, and greatly developed in Guatemala. There is historical evidence of the existence

of African slaves in this region, as well as the presence of marimbas with calabash resonators and a strip of wood used as a brace or handle. Garfias (1983) adds that the marimbas played in the highlands of Guatemala, as well as those found in southwestern Nicaragua still have the strongest structural similarities to the African marimba.

According to Aristel Skrbic (2011), information on the origin of marimba is fragmented and this presents a dilemma of locating exactly where the marimba originated. He adds that the common understanding is that the marimba has evolved from Africa, particularly Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where there is historical evidence of some marimba playing traditions. In Africa, marimbas were performed at rituals and ceremonies together with drums. They accompanied singing and dancing and marimba music was very rhythmical. However, Skrbic points out that it is notable that there are many references to instruments that look like marimba in many other parts of Africa, in Central America, as well as in ancient Greece, from where the word xylophone can be etymologically traced (Skrbic 2011).

Skrbic (2011) further says that the marimba was brought to Central America, where it became the national instrument of Guatemala and South Mexico. Natives in these countries started to adopt and play their own music on the new marimba instrument. Three to four players played on one very large marimba, together forming an ensemble. Such music is still being performed in restaurants and on the streets of Guatemala. Some scholars say that because of this area's proximity to the United States of America, westerners heard the marimba sound when the Hurtado Brothers Marimba Ensemble toured the US at the beginning of the twentieth century, and in no time started playing music on the marimba. After that, JC Deagan decided to start manufacturing marimbas for commercial purposes around 1918. That is when players of various genres of popular music started to try their music on the marimba (Skrbic 2011).

According to Lara Marcial Armas (1970), as the instrument migrated north to Central America in the late nineteenth century a Guatemalan, Sebastian Hurtado,

removed the gourds from the marimba and replaced them with wooden boxes that were environmentally available in the United States of America. The design Sebastian developed is referred to as a six and a half octave marimba, which has remained the national instrument of Guatemala, where the word *marimba* means "wood that sings" (Chenoweth 1964).

As stated by Encyclopaedia Britannica (2016), marimba is one of several African names that refer to any of several varieties of xylophone. It adds that because African instruments bearing the same name frequently have a tuned calabash resonator for each wooden bar, some ethnomusicologists use the name marimba to distinguish gourd-resonated ones from other types. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2016) explains that the marimba was taken to Latin America by African slaves or possibly originated through pre-Hispanic contact. There it became known as the marimba, and has remained a popular folk instrument in Central America. The wooden bars are affixed to a frame supported by legs or hung at the player's wrist. Encyclopaedia Britannica here adds to the numerous voices that trace the origin of the marimba back to the African continent.

The African roots of the marimba were revived in the United States in the 1980s when Dr Abraham Dumisani Maraire came to the Pacific North. According to Sheasby Matiure (2008), a United Methodist Church missionary and ethnomusicologist called Robert Kauffman visited Zimbabwe in the 1960s on a mission to study Shona music with the intention of Africanising church music. Kauffman met Maraire, who at that time was a primary school teacher. In 1968, Maraire became an artist in residence at the University of Washington in Seattle after Kauffman had recommended him for that position. Maraire taught *mbira* and Zimbabwe marimba music and this marked the beginning of the live teaching and performance of Zimbabwe marimba music in the Pacific Northwest from 1968 (Bears & Green 2006). Since 1980, Americans and Zimbabweans have been travelling to and from America on live show performances, exchange programmes, workshops and festivals, and this has increased marimba music migration.

According to Skrbic (2011), the marimba was introduced to classical music in the second half of the twentieth century. A 5-octave marimba was developed in Japan at Yamaha where Keiko Abe, a virtuoso marimba player, played a critical visionary role. In 1968 Keiko Abe was the first person to play a full recital of 'serious' music composed by commissioned composers on the marimba. Two decades later a more refined five-octave marimba was made in 1988, which was physically user friendly and more expressive in tone quality. Thereafter, European and American manufacturers started to produce concert marimbas. In this day and age various genres of music can be played on the marimba, which is now very extensively used. In the twenty-first century, the marimba has become part of university music study programmes in which students specialise in marimba (Skrbic 2011).

2.4. HOW THE ZIMBABWE MARIMBA STARTED

According to Olof Axelsson (1981:60), the idea of making the Zimbabwe marimba was mooted at Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo in the 1960s. The need "to foster and encourage the immense artistic values in African music styles and instruments, preparing the way for the emergence of an African musicology in modern African nations, led to the formation of Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo in 1960". This is echoed elsewhere: "The Zimbabwe marimba is somewhat of a recent phenomenon. It was essentially created in the mid-twentieth century at a music college in Zimbabwe as a means to teach indigenous music on an instrument that would have no ethnic affiliations and be open to all. Thus the 'Zimarimba' was born" (Zhambai Trio [Sa]).

Andrew Tracey (2004) argues that there was no marimba tradition in Zimbabwe, and claims that the marimba's absence from Zimbabwe in the 1960s is the chief reason why they were developed as a new instrument with no ethnic affiliation. According to Tracey (2004), "The very absence of marimbas in Zimbabwe is the chief reason why this instrument was chosen, in Bulawayo in about 1960, to be developed as a new national instrument, because it had no ethnic affiliations which could lead to charges of favouritism; it could belong equally to everybody in the

country. Yet, of course, it was totally African at the same time, although not played in Zimbabwe itself". Arthur Morris Jones (1959:205-206) made similar observations, mentioning that while the marimba was played by some of the Bantu peoples of East, Central and Southern Africa, it was not used by all Bantu tribes.

I find that here Andrew Tracey tends to contradict himself because the development of the marimba in Zimbabwe at Kwanongoma College of African music in 1960 suggests some form of presence of the instrument in the country. It is a contradiction because the modern marimba was developed from instruments that were actually brought to Kwanongoma. He states in his account that the Tonga played a four-note leg marimba. There are Tonga people on the Zimbabwean side of the Zambezi Valley and some of them made way for Lake Kariba, so they are Zimbabweans. Andrew Tracey also says that the Venda in Southern Zimbabwe played the *mbila mutondo* marimba and tries desperately to connect them with the Chopi in Mozambique. I think the point here is the presence of the Tonga and Venda tribes in Zimbabwe (which in fact has many ethnic groups), which places the marimba in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the fact that the Shona and Ndebele did not (as Tracey claims) play marimba does not remove these instruments from the country's history; to say they were absent from the area north of the Limpopo and South of the Zambezi is fallacious. However, there is historical evidence that links the Karanga (one of the Shona ethnic groups) to the marimba instrument. "The nearest marimba traditions around Zimbabwe are the *Silimba* of the Lozi in Barotseland, western Zambia, the Venda *mbila mutondo*, and three in Mozambique, the *valimba* of the Sena, Manganja and others over the lower Zambezi, and the *muhambi* of the *Tswa* and *mbila* of the Chopi of the southern coastal plain" (Tracey 2004). He talks about the influence on the playing technique of some Lozi players who were present in Bulawayo and who left a mark in some of the standard Kwanongoma marimba pieces such as "*Siyamboka*" which were "Zimbabwefied", after claiming in the same paragraph that there was no Chopi influence in the construction nor playing technique. Again, the presence of the Lozi in Bulawayo points to the fact that they were present in Zimbabwe, and probably in places from which Andrew Tracey himself was absent.

Plate 2.1 The Venda Mbila mutondo (Hugh Tracey, 1948)

According to Robert Kauffman (1969:198),

> *The most dramatic and influential part of the Kwanongoma training includes the playing on specially constructed marimbas capable of playing Chopi, Lozi or Venda music. The marimba back then was not a part of Shona or Ndebele musical practice but graduates of Kwanongoma managed to introduce the instrument to Shona and Ndebele communities with tremendous success.*

The Kwanongoma marimba performance tradition became popular at community centres and schools as it fascinated children who took part in musicking on the wood that sings. Marimba ensembles became a source of entertainment at school occasions. In this study, I intended to add to the literature by extending the discussion to the contemporary experience of marimba performance practice within Zimbabwe's borders.

The ensembles in Zimbabwe play a wide range of musical styles, from traditional Shona vocal and *mbira* music to western popular music and Afro-pop tunes, reggae, and even European classical music. Claire Jones (1992:85) says that when traditional *mbira* tunes are arranged for marimba ensembles, the interlocking *kushaura* (lead) and *kutsinhira* (response) patterns are transferred to the alternating strokes of the mallets in the various voices. The result is a fuller ensemble version of the traditional *mbira* tune originally played by two musicians. The Kwanongoma

style marimba ensembles have become quite successful, spreading throughout Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries. Zimbabwe marimba ensembles have also become popular in Europe and the United States of America, where artists, travellers and scholars have introduced them.

There have also been conflicting claims pertaining to what tradition actually influenced the design of the Zimbabwe marimba at Kwanongoma College of African Music. Jones (1992:97-103) says that the Kwanongoma marimba ensemble, which consists of four different-sized instruments (soprano, tenor, baritone and bass) covering a four-octave range, is patterned after the Chopi *timbila* ensemble. Contrary to this assertion, Andrew Tracey (2004) disputes the presence of any Chopi influence when he says, "It is usually said that the new Zimbabwe marimbas (or Zimarimbas) drew on the Lozi and Chopi traditions, but as I was there at the time and play the Chopi marimba I can tell you that there was no Chopi influence at all, neither in construction nor in playing technique." If Andrew Tracey's position is what actually happened, then it is probably the Lozi *silimba* that influenced the construction of the Zimbabwe marimbas, largely because he was present at the time. I notice from an analysis of the still photos, however, that it is apparently the Chopi who are pictured playing in an ensemble, while the Lozi played the *silimba* together with an ensemble of drums. Presumably, what was Chopi is the concept of playing in an ensemble of four marimbas, while what was Lozi is the playing technique. There is need for further research to clarify this point.

Plate 2.2 The Chopi timbila ensemble (Hugh Tracey, 1948)

Andrew Tracey (2004) says that Robert Sibson, a Bulawayo City Electrical Engineer who later became the Director of the Rhodesia Music Academy, "… was concerned that the rich indigenous music of Zimbabwe was not being encouraged or taught anywhere in the country". Sibson was very committed to this idea and he asked Tracey to come from Johannesburg to scout the Bulawayo townships for traditional musicians and produce teachers and teaching materials for the newly proposed Kwanongoma School of African Music. They had lengthy deliberations on the curriculum to be implemented at Kwanongoma School of African Music. "Out of these discussions arose the idea of the marimba, in that it was not 'partisan', … it could be designed to play both traditional and modern music, it would play in groups in African communal style, it would not be expensive …" (Tracey 2004). This shows that the idea to come up with the Zimbabwe marimba was mooted in Zimbabwe, although scholars tend to differ on whether or not there was a marimba-playing tradition in Zimbabwe prior to that development.

According to Sheasby Matiure (2008:73), "There is an on-going debate regarding marimba." Literature on Zimbabwe marimba music is very limited, since it appears only on the margins of writings on Zimbabwean music in general and usually in the context of Kwanongoma College of African Music (Matiure 2008). Robert Sibson's idea to have an institution that would train African music teachers led to the creation of Kwanongoma College of African Music at the Rhodesia Academy of Music in Bulawayo in 1962, where he was the director. Kwanongoma means "the place of music". Hugh and Andrew Tracey helped to design the African music curriculum and the marimba was one of the first instruments that were taught there. This is where Zimbabwe marimbas were developed, based on traditional musical practices from in and around the former Rhodesia, which included Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia (Axelsson 1973).

The marimba music performance tradition was brought from the local community to Kwanongoma College of African Music. Continuity and change took place as the marimba was being created at Kwanongoma College of African Music when a local tradition came into contact with visiting artists. According to Matiure (2008),

the Zimbabwe marimba performance tradition resulted from internal music migration, the movement of music traditions from locations within and around the borders of Zimbabwe to Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo. Its roots are linked with the Tonga, Nkoyi and Lozi tribes of the Lozi Kingdom north of the Zambezi River. The Nkoyi played the *shilimba*, a twenty-two-key instrument with gourd resonators.

Plate 2.3 The Nkoyi shilimba (Sheasby Matiure, 2008)

According to Sheasby Matiure (2008), Robert Sibson and Leslie Williamson were the initiators who had an idea of developing a national instrument that would traverse ethnic boundaries. Together with Alport Mhlanga and Nelson Jones they made innovations to an eleven-key Lozi *silimba* brought by Josiah Siyembe Mate before 1965 to make the Zimbabwe marimba. He calls it a mixture of outside physical models and local musical aesthetics that entangled with western ideas with the intention of developing African music.

Plate 2.4 The Lozi silimba (Sheasby Matiure, 2008)

The Lozi played the *silimba*, a similar version with eleven keys. There is historical evidence in accounts by Portuguese travellers that the Karanga and Chopi also played marimba around 1901. Scholars describe the Tonga's four-note leg marimba, the Venda's *mbila mutondo*, a twenty-one-key marimba, and the Chopi *timbila* (Tracey 2004; Stone 2008).

Some scholars argue that there was a marimba-playing tradition in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. According to Axelsson (1981:61), the marimba existed in Zimbabwe during the time of the Mwenemutapa Kingdom (circa 14th-16th century). He adds that the instrument became extinct as an indigenous instrument due to colonialism and forced migrations. Berliner (1993) asserts that the marimba was at one time a popular instrument among certain Shona groups.

According to Sheasby Matiure (2008:74), suggesting that there was no marimba in Zimbabwe is debatable and may not be true, because "… history tells us that the Tonga were the first of the present ethnic groups in Zimbabwe to occupy the north-western part of the country, along the Zambezi River Valley". This historical evidence points to the presence of a marimba tradition in Zimbabwe, since the

Tonga played a four-note leg marimba. I notice that this shows that indeed marimbas existed in Zimbabwe, but not within the majority Shona (Karanga, Ndau, Zezuru, Korekore, Manyika, Kalanga, Tonga, and Nambia) and Ndebele traditions. Andrew Tracey's (2004) claim that there were no marimbas in Zimbabwe has been attacked as colonial historical discourse by Sheasby Matiure (2008:80), who says: "Transculturation discourse assumes that the dominant culture always subscribes to cultural transformation within a given environment. The scenario sees the dominant culture assuming ownership of creative work of suppressed cultures. Examples are the banjo, blues, jazz, and hip-hop traditions in the United States."

Figure 2.5 The Zambezi Valley (Sounds around the World 2014)

There is further evidence about how the Zimbabwe marimba tradition started from the *The Herald* (April 28 2011), which quotes Andrew Mamvura saying "The origins of the marimba are believed to be in Mozambique, then at some point they were modified to produce a Zimbabwean sound by adjusting the tuning system".

I also came across an article on the internet whose anonymous author writes that "Most African instruments have existed for so long that it is impossible to trace their history all the way back to their origins. However, the Zimbabwe marimba is

an exception. This instrument has only existed for about forty years" (Chaia Marimba Music 2014). It all started because of Robert Sibson, who was the Director of the Rhodesian Academy of Music in Bulawayo. He was a retired electrical engineer and classical flautist who appreciated the sweet, rich musical traditions of the Shona and Ndebele. He was worried that these musical traditions might be lost since they were not being taught formally in the school system, and there was rural to urban migration as people sought employment in towns. Sibson decided to solve this problem by establishing a college dedicated to the study of African music to produce music teachers who would be able to teach African music in primary schools.

The article goes on to chronicle the history of Kwanongoma College of African Music, which was founded in 1961 as a branch of the Rhodesian Music Academy. Kwanongoma means "The place where drums are played" or "The place of singing". Sibson proposed that African musical instruments be taught at Kwanongoma College of African Music. He consulted the former Director of the Rhodesian Music Academy, Hugh Fenn, South African ethnomusicologist Andrew Tracey, University of Rhodesia Vice-Chancellor Dr James McHarg, Rhodesian Railways General Manager Trevor Lea-Cox, and Bulawayo City Electrical Engineer Nelson James. Their deliberations led to the choice of the marimba, which was uniquely African, but not indigenous to Zimbabwe.

> *Nevertheless, marimba instruments could be found in neighbouring countries, such as Zambia and Mozambique. The Chopi people of Mozambique had the most highly developed marimba tradition, with large ensembles consisting of various instruments ranging in pitch from double bass to soprano. The idea for Kwanongoma was to create not just a marimba, but an entire marimba band, similar to the ensembles from Mozambique*. (Chaia Marimba Music 2014)

Leslie Williamson was Kwanongoma College of African Music's first Director from 1961 to 1971, followed by Olof Axelson from 1972 to 1981, and succeeded by Alport Mhlanga from 1982 to 1987.

Kwanongoma College of African Music's first three chromatic marimbas were built by Nelson Jones around 1962. He used imported California redwood for the keys and cardboard tubes for the resonators. These marimbas were not durable and consequently did not last very long because the wood was soft.

In 1963 Josiya Siyembe Mathe arrived at Kwanongoma College of African Music. He was a Lozi from south-western Zambia who was skilled in building the silimba. The development of the marimba got a big boost from this accomplished musician who shared his knowledge with the students. He modelled a thirteen-note soprano, a tenor and a bass with gourd resonators from his original eleven-note silimba, made from *mukwa* (Pterocarpus angolensis) which was locally available. PVC tubing cut to varying lengths for the different keys replaced the brittle gourd resonators, as well as bamboo tubes which had been experimented with at first.

Michael Bhule succeeded Josiya Siyembe Mathe in 1966 and built the first complete set of four marimba instruments, which became the model for Kwanongoma marimbas. He was helped by marimba instructor Alport Mhlanga. The marimba set had a soprano and tenor in diatonic C major scale with added F sharps, a nine-note baritone, and an eight-note bass. The F sharp brought some versatility as the marimba could now be played in the scales of C major and G major, and could also accompany singing.

Bhule trained James Jubane, who in turn trained Elliot Ndhlovu in 1968. Olof Axelson became the Kwanongoma College of African Music's Director in 1972 and worked extensively on improving the marimba designs. Elliot Ndhlovu worked as workshop manager until his retirement in 1997. Thereafter he teamed up with his sons and continued to make marimbas at their home in Luveve, Bulawayo until his death in 2006 (Chaia Marimba Music 2014). These are the people recorded in history as the key players in the coming into being of the making of the Zimbabwe marimba tradition.

2.5. THE GROWTH TO PROFESSIONAL MARIMBA PLAYING IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWE

Claire Jones (2006) studied the Kwanongoma marimba performance tradition in Zimbabwe prior to the turn of the millennium. She noted how marimba music is marginalised in Zimbabwean music literature: "You will not find mention of the modern marimbas in *Roots Rocking* in Zimbabwe, the populist book by University of Zimbabwe Professor Fred Zindi (1985) about the development of contemporary music in Zimbabwe" (Jones 2006:02). She notes the absence of marimba in ethnomusicological works on Zimbabwean popular music studies by Thomas Turino (2000) and Shona musical traditions by Paul Berliner (1978), who she says devote only a paragraph or two to the Zimbabwe marimba. A decade after Jones observed this marginalisation of Zimbabwe marimba music performance practice in the literature, not many studies have been devoted to this area despite the perceived growth of the modern tradition as a couple more ensembles brave the harsh economic climate to venture into marimba performance.

At the time when Claire Jones (2006:02) studied the Zimbabwe marimba tradition, she wrote a contradictory statement about its popularity when she said "Though widespread in schools and other institutions, the marimba has neither the popular appeal of the electric guitar nor the cultural cachet of the Shona mbira." I think an instrument cannot be widespread and unpopular at the same time. The marimba had already gained popularity with the youths in schools and colleges and when that age group likes a brand of music there can be no stopping its phenomenology. The limiting economic circumstances prevalent in Zimbabwe at the time of Jones's study are largely the reason why the development of marimba music performance practice was stunted. Another factor she notes is Zimbabweans' ambivalence towards traditional practices, which in this case even affected a 'modern' marimba performance tradition.

Jones cites frustration amongst marimba players over their instrument not being taken seriously by Zimbabweans. This lack of serious recognition, along with the

frustration it creates, has not improved. In contrast, Zimbabwe marimba music is flourishing in the United States, where we now have over one hundred marimba ensembles. Claire Jones is now the Zimfest Coordinator, and when I asked her she reported that there are many ensembles which take part in Zimfest alone. There are other festivals in the US and while they can be attributed to the strong US economy, back home in Zimbabwe where the instrument was started, there is still a notable lack of both seriousness about marimba music as well as lack of appreciation of the art. This is why ten years down the line a study of the Zimbabwe marimba is still a study on the margins. Zindi has still not written about marimba performance practice in the popular music domain in Zimbabwe, despite the fact that a couple of popular musicians now play the marimba together with electric guitars and other instruments.

Claire Jones discusses marimba music performance practice during a period in which she says that marimba musicians were experiencing a transition from schoolboy stuff to becoming professional marimba musicians. The marimba music performance tradition shifted from being a mere school/college phenomenon into the community, where a couple of players started making a living from being marimba musicians. During her data collection she interacted with fewer than ten marimba bands in Zimbabwe. Currently there are over twenty marimba bands and that is a modest increase in number. It might suggest that audiences' preferences have led to more players forming marimba bands, hence the number of professional marimba musicians has risen notably. Jones (2006:08) sums up this phenomenal rise in marimba performance practice within a short period when she writes:

> *The historical arc of the Kwanongoma marimba spans the colonial to the postcolonial eras in Zimbabwe, a period of profound and ongoing transformation in expressive culture… Introduced by a private colonial era institution to encourage national and musical development, the marimba spread first among educated middle class blacks…The activities of missionaries and municipal welfare agencies sharing similar notions of 'nation' and 'development' further enabled their dissemination. With the formation of the new nation-state of Zimbabwe (1980), the marimba was appropriated into performative displays of 'culture' at state functions and became a centerpiece of traditional music as inculcated within the educational system. By the 1990s, however, individuals and groups outside the educational and other*

> *institutions were incorporating the instrument according to their own visions; the modern marimba had, within a single generation, moved into the public domain as an available cultural resource*.

This rise in popularity is still evident today and there are also a couple of popular musicians who have come into the fray and are now forging their Zimbabwean identity through playing the Zimbabwe marimba in their electric bands.

2.6. SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have discussed the history of the marimba and presented evidence from scholarship on the two main arguments brought forward by scholars. I first reviewed literature on the exact place in the world where the marimba originated. The debate is ongoing and there is room for scholars to produce more information on the matter. One school of thought has traced the origins of the marimba to Indonesia. Despite this argument, there is overwhelming evidence that the word marimba itself is Bantu, and therefore a serious indication that the marimba instrument must have originated in Central and Southern Africa. The words of a concept are usually embedded in the language of the people who initiate that particular concept.

Another issue discussed in this chapter has been how the Zimbabwe marimba tradition came to be. While some scholars might doubt the African origins of the marimba instrument, there is no doubt that the idea to build the Zimbabwe marimba was mooted and implemented at Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo around 1961. Local marimba music traditions around the Zambezi Valley area were combined with aspects of music scales to form the Zimbabwe marimba. The traditional Lozi *silimba* was brought by Josia Siyembe Mathe and it was worked on by both western and Zimbabwean musicians to come up with a set of soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass marimbas. Finally, I highlighted the role played by academic institutions and marimba mentors in the dissemination of marimba music in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3
MARIMBA ENSEMBLES IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The ensembles musicking on the Zimbabwe marimba in contemporary Zimbabwe come under the spotlight in this chapter. There is currently considerable activity within Zimbabwe's borders and I interacted with many marimba bands during my fieldwork. All these ensembles in Zimbabwe performed marimba music purely for entertainment purposes. It is notable that the number of active marimba bands in Zimbabwe currently is smaller compared to the number of bands that are performing music on the Zimbabwe marimba in the United States of America alone. There are currently slightly more than forty marimba ensembles in Zimbabwe. There are various reasons for this situation and all of them hinge on the affordability of a set of six marimbas for the groups concerned.

In the first part of this chapter, I present the community-based marimba ensembles that I discovered scattered around the country, especially in the big cities and towns. These marimba ensembles operate in Harare (Tambarimba Ensemble, Timbila Vibes Ensemble, Tariro/Hope Ensemble, CHIPAWO, Blackspear, Sailors Crew, Pamuzinda, Dzorira Mbira & Marimba Band, Yotinhira Arts Ensemble, Kutinya Marimba Ensemble), Bulawayo (Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band, Hloseni Arts Ensemble), Victoria Falls (The Big Five Marimba Band, Sinsiska Marimba Band, Guruve (Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble), and Gokwe (Gokwe Rovarimba Ensemble). Of these ensembles, two perform live music shows at venues where marimba music lovers can pay to watch them (Tambarimba and Rainbow Blaze). The Victoria Falls-based Sinsiska and The Big Five marimba bands play music to entertain tourists who come to view one the Seven Wonders of the World. The tourists pay them of their own accord when they get enough amusement from the performances.

Some marimba bands are based in music colleges, teachers' colleges, polytechnic colleges, and universities. These I discuss in the second part of this chapter. Of these college-based marimba ensembles, three are doing extensive marimba performances even outside college premises. The MSU-based Rimba Resonance Vibes performs marimba music at academic conferences, seminars and community ceremonies. The ZCM-based Timbila Vibes has taken Zimbabwe marimba music across the borders to South Africa, where they have repeatedly won prizes at music competitions. In Harare, they share the stage with local artists such as Leonard Zhakata, and marimba music lovers pay to watch their live shows. The Mkoba Teachers College-based Marimba Ensemble also featured at the 2015 Tambarimba festival. There are also marimba bands at Mutare, Hillside, Gwanda, Madziwa, Nyadire, Marymount, Morgenster, Morgan ZINTEC, Masvingo, Bondolfi, Seke, Belvedere, and United College of Education Teachers colleges but I have only seen these at the TIFAZ and RIO-SET music competitions. The same goes for university-based marimba ensembles at UZ, HIT, ZOU, NUST, BUSE, WUA, AU, Lupane, Catholic University, and GZU, as well as polytechnic college-based ones at Masvingo, Mutare, Harare, Gweru, Kwekwe, and Bulawayo polytechnics.

Additionally, non-governmental organisations are working towards promoting Zimbabwean musical cultural traditions. I discuss these in the third section of this chapter. During my fieldwork, I interacted with two non-governmental organisations that are including marimba music performance practice as part of their community engagement programs. One of them is Tariro/Hope Trust, the brainchild of an American music scholar called Jennifer Kyker. The other one is the Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO), which was started by Dr Robert McLaren, Farai Gezi and Steven Chifunyise. Both are based in Harare and have a common mission to improve the lives of disadvantaged youth through participating in the performing arts.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I discuss marimba performers who play marimba in popular bands and mix them with electric guitars and percussion instruments. Charles Chipanga, who played marimba in Oliver Mutukudzi's Black

Spirits Band, is a marimba performer who now plays marimba in his own band, Charlenam Rhythms. Blessing Bled Chimanga also plays marimba music for Zimboita, a band that is made up of Zimbabweans and Italians who are mixing music from the two cultures to come up with their own unique blend of music.

In the final section, I discuss the challenges that marimba performers who are currently based in Zimbabwe face and present some of their views on how they think these challenges can be overcome. These challenges are mainly linked to economic factors such as the affordability of marimbas, lack of opportunities, and inaccessibility of resources.

3.2. COMMUNITY-BASED MARIMBA GROUPS

3.2.1. Blackspear

Blackspear is a seven-member traditional music band based in Harare's Mabvuku high-density suburb. The band's manager, Taurai Zhuwao (Personal communication, 11 March 2016), says that Blackspear incorporates marimba and *mbira* music, which they call "Marimbira music". Their promoters are Hanics Investments and the band's aim is to spread traditional Zimbabwean music to many people. Kabao Naison Mantimba is Blackspear's lead vocalist. The band was formed more than ten years ago and they blend marimba, *mbira*, drums and keyboards in their music.

Blackspear took part in the 2005 International Music Festival in Malawi, where they came third. They also entertain people at various functions such as weddings, live show performances and corporate functions. In 2015, the band featured at the Tambarimba Festival in Harare and came seventh out of seven bands. In 2016, the band started featuring at Gijima Sports Bar in Harare City, which hosts traditional music artists.

3.2.2. Dzorira Mbira and Marimba Band

Dzorira Mbira and Marimba Band started in 2014 when Peace Chinake and Theophilus Chinembiri left Tavarura Mbira Group, which only played *mbira* music, to form their own band that mixes *mbira* and marimba. They were encouraged by Admire Chinake, a marimba maker and Peace's brother, when they were exposed to the marimba instruments in his workshop. The two developed a passion for marimba music from a tender age and decided to team up with their schoolmates to start a marimba band in Highfield suburb. The other Dzorira Mbira and Marimba Band members are Paul Urayayi, who plays marimba, Easter Chimbodza and Thomas Mhizha, who are dancers, and vocalists Kuda and Stanley Nemangwe. Peace and Theophilus play the marimbas. Dzorira Mbira and Marimba Band plays contemporary reggae, Afro-jazz, jit, gospel, and *sungura* music.

Dzorira Mbira and Marimba Band perform mostly free shows at Mushandirapamwe Night Club, in beer halls in Highfield, and at the Harare Gardens. According to Peace Chinake (Personal communication, 15 March 2016), they conduct voluntary shows in a bid to popularise marimba music, and in a bid to market themselves to the public. He added that the band is now overwhelmed by demand from the public for their music. The band has recorded an album entitled "All genres in one", which has six songs (*Mwari mune hanya nesu, Nyasha dzenyu, Hello mum, Ndauya mutadzi mukuru, and Kuteerera*). They are working on a second album. The band has serious economic challenges and members currently operate with no form of remuneration.

3.2.3. Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble

Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble is a group based in the small town of Guruve in Mashonaland Central Province. The band has been active on the entertainment scene for quite some time now. Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble showcases folk and contemporary music and dance. It was established in 2006 with the aim of developing musical arts education and offering musical arts entertainment in the

community. One of the Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble's objectives is to preserve marimba music through cultural exchange programs. The group comprises 31 members who possess various skills in the musical arts. Some of their shows feature *ngoma* (drums) played together with the marimba. Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble has received a number of prizes, such as coming second in the Young Africa 2010 competition. They came first at the National Folk Dance competition in 2010 and 2013. They also took part in the 2015 International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts in Cairo, Egypt.

In 2010, they participated in the Buddies Annual Festival of Arts (BAFA) at the Harare Gardens and won both the Provincial and National Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Festival, which is sponsored by Delta Beverages. In 2012, they featured at the launch of Oliver Mtukudzi's musical "Masanga Bodo", which premiered at the Seven Arts Theatre in Avondale, Harare, alongside several other artists. In 2014, they featured as one of the groups providing entertainment at the Zimbabwe Music Festival Bira (Zimfebi) that was held at Chatiza Village in Guruve, where they thrilled music fans alongside international and local artists. In 2015, they competed in the Tambarimba Festival held at the Harare Gardens and came fourth. Guruve Marimba Arts Ensemble was one of the groups entertaining people at a ZANU (PF) rally in 2016 at Nzvimbo Growth Point in Chiweshe.

3.2.4. Hloseni Arts and Culture Marimba Ensemble

Hloseni Arts and Culture Marimba Ensemble was formed in 1998 at Vulindlela Youth Centre in Bulawayo's Mpopoma high-density suburb. The ensemble is made up of ten members who dance energetically. Hloseni Arts and Culture Marimba Ensemble is one of the marimba bands in contemporary Zimbabwe, with four national Arts Merit Awards. In 2012 they performed at the Durban Music Festival. They also perform regularly at the Plumtree Bakalanga Annual Cultural Festival. Kundai Hove is the person who organises events for Hloseni Arts and Culture Ensemble.

The group researches Zimbabwe's cultural music and dance and then rehearses it for showcasing at their Hloseni Arts and Culture Centre at Centenary Park. They perform the music and dance on scheduled dates at the centre to entertain music fans who have a taste for traditional music and dance. Hloseni Arts and Culture Marimba Ensemble perform traditional music and dance genres from Matabeleland such as *amabhiza, amajukwa, isithsikitsha, hosanna, amathsomane*, as well as *shangara, muchongoyo, mhande, dinhe, mbakumba, chinyambera, chokoto* and *mbende* dances from Mashonaland. Annually they celebrate "Culture Night" at their centre, where they serve traditional vibes as well as traditional dishes to patrons (Sibanda 2014).

Plate 3.1 Some members of Hloseni Arts Ensemble (Sibanda 2014)

3.2.5. Kutinya Marimba Band

Kutinya Marimba Ensemble is based in Borrowdale suburb in Harare. It was founded in 1999 by Nicholas Manomano, who is the Director of Kutinya Marimba Arts organisation. He works with Walter Omberai Chikukwa, Zvikomborero Rwodzi, Robin Goneso, Takudzwa Muronda, and Badge Tapembera. These are

former students of Dominican Convent, Gateway, Prince Edward, and Harare International schools who have a passion for playing marimba music. "The name 'Kutinya' developed from the fastidious and euphoric marimba playing art which lets the listeners jump up from their seats" (VirtualWOMEX 2015). Kutinya Marimba Band has released marimba songs "*Dzikamiso yerudo"*, "*Mutavara"*, and "*Pamagumo acho"*.

According to Nicholas Manomano (Personal communication, 15 March 2016), Kutinya Marimba Arts has a goal to have the marimba recognised as a national instrument in academia, to match its national status in cultural terms. They hope to use marimba music performance to develop confidence, patience, self-esteem, and spatial intelligence in students. He adds that playing in a marimba ensemble allows students to interact outside the classroom. Kutinya Marimba Arts also conducts workshops where teachers who intend to further their marimba teaching skills can learn more knowledge and skills.

Kutinya Marimba Arts holds private gigs and concerts, and embark on trips to resort towns such as Nyanga and Victoria Falls with the students they teach to play the marimba. The ensemble has toured Europe and performed marimba music in Berlin, Germany. Kutinya Marimba Arts has composed and recorded a song called "*Zvamaida*" (What you wanted) after Leonard Dembo's style in his song "*Kutinya marimba*". They have also produced a video entitled "Combined Schools Marimbas 2007", which is a product of one of their annual Combined Schools Marimba Concerts.

Plate 3.2 Kutinya Marimba Band members (Nicholas Manomano 2016)

3.2.6. Pamuzinda

Pamuzinda is a Harare-based contemporary marimba band comprising ten members. The band's music is a fusion of the unique wooden marimba sound, *mbira*, *ngoma*, *hosho* and the acoustic guitar. The band's artistic director and choreographer is Michael Kumunda, who spent more than ten years working with Stella Chiweshe's band. Pamuzinda also performs Zimbabwean traditional music and dance genres, including *chinyambera*, *muchongoyo*, *amabhiza*, and *mbende*, among others.

Pamuzinda has toured the world and raised Zimbabwe's flag. They have been to Asia three times, where they participated at the India Traditional Music Festival in the country's capital New Delhi. The festival is attended by more than 40 groups from across the globe. They performed in Germany, where they recorded a live musical album in 2009, and also in Belgium the same year. The group has four

musical albums to date. In 2015, Pamuzinda featured at the Tambarimba Festival in Harare, where they came sixth out of seven Zimbabwe marimba bands.

3.2.7. Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band

The leader and founder of Rainbow Blaze Marimba Ensemble is Paul Mpofu. He grew up in the same neighbourhood as one of the band members, Munyaradzi Chibuswa, who found time to grant me an interview on the band's activities. The ensemble is based at the Zimbabwe Academy of Music in Bulawayo and has been in existence since 2000. Rainbow Blaze Marimba Ensemble is registered with both the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and the Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA). It has 12 marimba performers who are sometimes divided if there are two places that require marimba entertainment at the same time. Rainbow Blaze Marimba Ensemble plays both traditional and contemporary songs on a standard marimba set with soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass. The contemporary music genres they play include house music, kwaito, *sungura*, reggae, RnB, and gospel music. According to Munyaradzi Chibuswa (Personal communication, 10 February 2016), "Rainbow Blaze Marimba Ensemble has staged over a thousand marimba performances to date but now there is a decrease because of current economic problems in Zimbabwe." The band has recorded one album, which was not yet available for purchase when I conducted the interview.

Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band is a premier marimba band playing ethnic modern music at various venues in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The band brings a new sound to the industry by playing renditions, covers, compositions and its own arrangements of music on the Zimbabwe marimba. The band performed at the official opening of Intwasa Arts Festival alongside Kenyan Bismillahi Gargar in 2011. On 22 June 2013, they performed alongside local Bulawayo artists to celebrate World Music Day. The concert was organised by Alliance Française de Bulawayo with the aim of promoting local talent and giving upcoming musicians an opportunity to perform before an audience and grow in their capabilities. World Music Day (Fête de la Musique) was launched in 1980 in France and is usually celebrated on 21 June

annually. In December 2013, Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band performed at the Amphitheatre in Bulawayo's Centenary Park to celebrate Christmas with the Bulawayo Schools Music project, which is funded by the British Council and the British Friends of the Zimbabwe Academy of Music. Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band is organising a 2016 marimba festival for primary schools with the aim of promoting and developing marimba music performance from the grassroots level.

3.2.8. Sailors Crew Marimba

Sailors Crew Marimba is a five-member ensemble based in Harare. The band's founder members are former Zimbabwe College of Music students who teamed up to form their own marimba ensemble. They have recorded an album of marimba music entitled "*Tipeiwo Dariro*" (please give us a forum). They are active on the marimba music performance scene in Zimbabwe and featured at the 2015 edition of the Tambarimba Festival, where they fared well, and came fifth out of seven groups.

3.2.9. Sinsika Marimba Band

Sinsika Marimba Band is a four-member conscious reggae marimba outfit that was formed in 1994 in Mosi-oa-Tunya ghetto with the aim of entertaining and educating society through reggae music. The idea to play marimba music began when they were still in school drama groups, with inspiration from local traditions and Rastafarianism. The band members are front man Mthabisi Watinaye, Goliath Phiri, and Victor Chindeza. The group plays roots rock marimba sounds in local languages and English after influences from Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer, Gregory Isaacs and Burning Spear.

Sinsika Marimba Band sings about social issues such as love, happiness, drug abuse, and prostitution. They sing for peace, unity, and cultural values. Their front man, Mthabisi Watinaye (Personal communication, 13 March 2016), associates modernisation with social ills and believes musical art as cultural capital can

influence positive social change. Sinsika Marimba Band have recorded a reggae musical album entitled "Back a Yard", which was produced in a backyard studio in the ghetto. They entertain locals and tourists at hotels and venues around Victoria Falls Town. The band has toured South Africa, South Korea, Namibia, Botswana and Zambia.

Plate 3.3 Sinsika Marimba Band playing together with a tourist (Source)

3.2.10. Tambarimba Arts Marimba Ensemble

Tambarimba Arts Marimba Ensemble is one of the few groups that make music on the wood that sings and record marimba music. This group was formed by Macdonald Chidavaenzi, Director of Tambarimba Arts, an organisation based in Harare. It combines different styles from jit-jive to deeply traditional hypnotic polyrhythms of marimba music. Their music is heavily influenced by Zimbabwean traditional styles, developed and popularised by the legendary *chimurenga* music guru Thomas "Tafirenyika" Mapfumo as well as Stella Chiweshe, Dumisani and Chiwoniso Maraire. Tambarimba Arts Marimba Ensemble's music is about social awareness and life issues from yesterday, today and tomorrow. Tambarimba Arts Marimba Ensemble also has the style, momentum and experience to show the way forward for contemporary Zimbabwean music and dance. This group conducts culture, music and dance festivals for musicians of all age groups from pre-school, primary school, and secondary school to community-based open groups.

Macdonald Chidavaenzi is the founder of Tambarimba Arts. He is a music and culture promoter of Zimbabwe's traditional music genres. He has made ground-breaking efforts in fostering the survival of Zimbabwean cultural musical traditions in an environment in which Zimbabwean Dancehall music has taken the country by storm and mesmerised many in the African music industry. Chidavaenzi strongly believes in preserving Zimbabwe's cultural heritage through performing marimba music. He is a respected marimba player and teacher and is available for inspiring lessons and master classes.

Tambarimba Ensemble debuted in 2013 with a performance at the Harare International Festival of the Arts held at the Harare Gardens in the capital city. It is made up of former Churchill High School and Prince Edward School students (Victor Chimusoro on baritone marimba, Martin Nyirenda on soprano marimba, Denzel Moses on tenor marimba, Nigel Simbanegavi on bass marimba, and Vincent Chanza on the drums) who play a variety of songs on the marimba. They use these four marimbas, as well as a western drum set to create a fresh and unique fusion of African and western music. They play traditional Zimbabwean music styles, jazz, rhumba, gospel, classical, and rock music. Some of their songs are fusions of African music styles with foreign genres. In 2014 Tambarimba Ensemble won two second prizes in Johannesburg, South Africa, at the International Marimba and Steelpan Festival in which nearly 80 groups from South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Nigeria and Zimbabwe took part (Mhetu 2015). They also competed against nine groups that play a variety of virtual musical instruments in the Delta Beverages-sponsored Chibuku Road to Fame Music Competition in 2014 and came third.

Tambarimba Ensemble is a subsidiary of Tambarimba Arts organisation, which has organised three Tambarimba Festivals in Harare. The inaugural Tambarimba Festival was hosted by the Zimbabwe College of Music (ZCM) in 2014; primary and secondary schools participated. In 2015, the Tambarimba Festival moved to the Harare Gardens and there was a new open bands category that featured eight community-based marimba ensembles (Guruve Marimba Arts, Sailors Marimba

Crew Petero, Gokwe Rovarimba, Blackspear, Pamuzinda, and Rimba Resonance Vibes), who competed for a prize; as well as Tambarimba Ensemble, who featured as the guest group. I interviewed Macdonald Chidavaenzi (Personal communication, 12 February 2016), who said that:

> *The aim of the Tambarimba Festival is to try and revive traditional music from the grassroots level. The festival aims to promote Zimbabwean culture through encouraging the performance of marimba music. This was prompted by the fact that there is now a rise in foreign music genres in Zimbabwe and I think this needs to be redressed. The festival includes pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, orphanages, and the disabled. It also aims to fight HIV/Aids, teach road safety, and child protection.*

The Tambarimba Festival is recognised by the Ministry of Sport, Arts and Culture in Zimbabwe, as well as by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ).

3.2.11. The Big Five Marimba Band

The Big Five Marimba Band is a Victoria Falls-based marimba ensemble dedicated to playing and performing marimba music, storytelling and dance from Africa and the African diaspora. Their repertoire includes dance tunes from classical, traditional and contemporary forms. This band plays marimba music mainly from Zimbabwe. The Big Five Marimba Band is one of the groups playing purely Zimbabwe marimba music in the tourist town of Victoria Falls in the western corner of Zimbabwe. Their audiences are mainly tourists who throng to one of the Seven Wonders of the World throughout the year.

The leader of the Big Five Marimba Band is Maibongwe Inkosi Ndebele, who plays baritone. His second in charge is Armstrong Mpofu, who found time to respond to my interview questions and provide information about their group. Mpofu plays tenor and does backing vocals for the group. The other band members are Chisola Ndlovu, who plays the soprano, Lensiska Chizema, the lead vocalist, and Forget Ncube and Sihle Mpofu, the backing vocalists. The Big Five Marimba Band is contracted to the Lolas Tapas Restaurant where they entertain patrons and are paid

a monthly token of appreciation. They have to date recorded a nine-track marimba music album entitled "*Sipuma eFolosi*" (We come from the Victoria Falls) that has two bonus tracks.

3.2.12. Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble

Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble was founded by seasoned musicians and music educators Fidelis Mherembi, Malvern Potwayo, and War Musambasi in 2005. Their vision is to keep Zimbabwean traditional music alive and for this reason they play a lot of traditional music in their live shows as possible. Their aim is to remind members of their audience about their culture through music. The other current band members are Prince and Tafadzwa Mherembi, and the band is based in Harare. They perform at corporate events and their usual venue is Cresta Oasis Hotel in Harare where they perform on Saturday afternoons.

Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble recorded a self-entitled album that features the songs "*Machena*", "*Chipembere*", "*Kuenda Mbire*", "*Bukatiende*", "*Shuramurove*", "*Chemutengure*", and "*Mavhuto*". This DVD was recorded in Norway. They are working on their second album, which they say will feature only traditional songs, in keeping with their vision to bring traditional music to the people. Fidelis Mherembi says while they also play their own compositions, they mostly play their own renditions of traditional Zimbabwean song modes. Their first album has two songs which they composed. The song "*Shuramurove*", which is about the rain bird which in Zimbabwe is regarded as a sign of a good rainy season, was composed by Fidelis Mherembi. The song "*Mavhuto*", which describes how challenges are part of life, was composed by Malvern Potwayo. The other songs ("*Machena*", "*Chipembere*", "*Kuenda Mbire*", "*Chemutengure*", and "*Bukatiende*" are renditions of traditional Zimbabwean songs.

In 2006 Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble embarked on a project funded by the Norwegian Embassy to teach marimba in Norwegian schools. This tour was a success and it has led to greater things such as Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble's

invitation to play at festivals around the world. They have performed at the Stockholm Folk Music Festival, and at the Timbila Festival. Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble is also exploring and experimenting further by fusing marimba with instruments such as the harp and the Chinese didgeridoo[5]. This has been phenomenal during their international shows in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.

3.3. COLLEGE-BASED MARIMBA ENSEMBLES

3.3.1. Mkoba Teachers College Marimba Ensemble

The Music Department of the Mkoba Teachers College has a vibrant marimba ensemble that is led by Memory Masoja, a Music lecturer at the college who has a passion for marimba. She coordinates the Marimba Ensemble's activities such as festival attendance, training sessions, and other marimba performance events to which the ensemble is invited to perform. The ensemble featured at the 2015 edition of the Tambarimba Festival at Harare Gardens. They took part in the Open Bands Competition and came third in the traditional music category. In the contemporary music category, they came second and won an accolade from the competition organisers. The ensemble's genres include traditional songs, jazz vibes, *sungura* and *marabi* music. They have featured prominently at the Tertiary Institutions Festival of Arts (TIFAZ) since its inaugural competition in 2012 in Harare. The band members include both music majors and other students who do not major in music as a subject but are good musicians with a passion for playing the marimba, singing and dancing. Annually, the membership changes, since students either go on internship or leave the college after completing their studies.

3.3.2. Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble

Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble is a marimba band comprising Midlands State University students that I founded in 2015 with the aim of channelling the youths

[5] A long wooden wind instrument played in China.

towards fruitful musical engagements to occupy them and sway them from criminal activities prevalent in ghettos. The band aims to further popularise Zimbabwe marimba music through performances that have a scholarly bearing. The band made its debut appearance at the 2015 edition of the Tambarimba Festival at the Harare Gardens. We competed in the traditional and contemporary music categories where there were seven bands, coming second and first respectively, automatically scooping the overall best performers' prize. Rimba Resonance Vibes play the soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass marimbas together with a western drum set. We also showcase traditional Zimbabwean and contemporary dances. The 12 members are Tafadzwa Chipendo, Tafadzwa Gapara, Ricardo Charumali, Takudzwa Matata, Witness Madzivanyika, Tariro Mazarura, Nyarai Gezi, Chenesai Mutunja, Progress Moyo, and Maxwell Muhenyeri.

Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble also featured at the 2016 Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival at St Dominic's High School in Mutare as the guest group with the aim of motivating high school students to appreciate music as a subject of study. The festival is organised by Taurai Moyo. Manicaland Secondary Schools Folk Dance and Music Festival is annually held in the City of Mutare, organised by Bembera Arts Ensemble in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Heads (NASH) in Manicaland Province, and supported and funded by Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust in partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the European Union (EU) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) (Taurai Moyo, personal communication, 27 February 2016).

The programme is the first of its kind in Zimbabwe at secondary school level, since traditional dances, *mbira* and marimba competitions are only common at primary school level and tertiary institutions. This programme advocates gap bridging and continuity of arts performances from primary schools to secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The programme aims to promote and preserve Zimbabwean culture through marketing, preserving and developing musical talent amongst secondary school students, thereby motivating them to pursue professional arts, and

above all to make secondary school pupils patriotic citizens able to maintain their Zimbabwean cultural identity through music.

The Manicaland Secondary Schools Folk Dance and Music Festival is attended by 14 Secondary schools every year. The secondary schools benefit from music training that is conducted by the festival organisers prior to the competition. They compete during the last week of the first school term. The schools compete for first prize in three categories (1) marimba music, (2) *mbira* music, and (3) traditional dance. In 2016, the dance set piece was *Isitshikitsha* Dance from Matebeleland. In marimba and *mbira*, the schools played the traditional song "*Nhemamusasa*". The festival's theme was "Investing in women in arts empowerment and enterprise: Rethinking the role of arts development in Zimbabwe and promoting gender equality".

The Manicaland Secondary Schools Folk Dance and Music Festival organisers invited Rimba Resonance Vibes from the MSU Music Business, Musicology and Technology Department to participate and perform in its third edition, which was held at St Dominic's High School in Mutare, Zimbabwe, from 26 to 27 February 2016. Rimba Resonance Vibes was the guest group invited to provide entertainment to guests during this marimba competition. The Festival Director, Taurai Moyo, aimed to build a mutual relationship with Rimba Resonance Arts. This was a glorious opportunity for Rimba Resonance Vibes ensemble to showcase to the secondary school children the virtues of musical performing arts. Their participation in this event provided encouragement, inspiration and motivation to both students and teachers who linger in the musical performing arts but do not take arts as life careers. Rimba Resonance Vibes served as a beacon of innovation in arts for the young people. Performing at this event not only helped to educate secondary school students but also to close the gap between primary and secondary school involvement in arts and cultural activities. Their performance created a zeal for arts in all participants at this festival since the ensemble was from an institution of higher learning and secondary school students were encouraged to study music degrees after A-Levels.

Plate 3.4 Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble (Wonder Maguraushe 2015)

3.3.3. Timbila Vibes Ensemble

Timbila Vibes Ensemble is based at the Zimbabwe College of Music and has been in existence since the college was established. The band comprises different members each year, since it recruits players from students enrolled at the music academy. They have performed at many gatherings around Zimbabwe and the group won a prize in an annual music and arts exhibition organised by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. The Zimbabwe College of Music Marimba Band has also performed in the SADC Region at UMOJA[6], which exposed them to most of the countries in the regional bloc. The band scooped three medals in the 2014 International Marimba and Steelpan Festival held in South Africa. Tendai Muparutsa led the Zimbabwe College of Music Marimba Band for the duration of his studies as a Certificate in Music student at the Zimbabwe College of Music. Charles Chipanga also played in the band when he was still a student. The current Director of the Zimbabwe College of Music is Rachel Chigwanda-Jera.

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[6] This is a KiSwahili word which means unity. There is a SADC music festival called by this name.

In 2014 Timbila Vibes came top out of 220 bands, and in 2015 they came first in the prestigious category out of 11 groups, and outshone 250 bands after winning two first prizes in three different categories (steel, marimba, and mixed bands) at the International Marimba and Steelpan Festival in South Africa. The festival, which is organised by Joan Lithgow, was launched by Education Africa with the aim of creating a worldwide awareness of the educational value of playing marimba, and to create an international platform for marimba and steel (Winstone, 2015).

Plate 3.5 Timbila Vibes Ensemble (Winstone Antonio 2015)

3.3.4. The Zimbabwe Republic Police Marimba Band

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) has a vibrant Music department where theory of music and instrument playing are done to international levels, hence its treatment here as a music school. The ZRP Marimba Band started as a subsidiary of the Military Band when marimbas were acquired through a bilateral relationship with the Japanese Embassy in 1996. When marimba music began to receive appreciation, the band was weaned in 2007 and it can now be hired independently for performances. The ZRP Marimba Band has modified traditional Zimbabwean songs such as "*Chemutengure*", "*Taireva*", "*VaMudhara*" and "*Nhemamusasa*" to support basic drill patterns and movements at police graduation parades. Marimba music is an important part of Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage. The function and

place of music in society has been modified in the course of time and social locations of individuals have a bearing on how they regard indigenous music (Turino 2000). The ZRP band is bridging a gap by arranging and transcribing Zimbabwean traditional songs for soprano, tenor and baritone marimba.

The ZRP Marimba Band also performs contemporary songs and folk songs that people sing in their day-to-day living. They are hired to perform at state functions and events such as the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair. The band gets an average of four performances each month and there is an increasing demand for their shows. The ZRP Marimba Band recorded two albums entitled *ZRP Band Marimba* Volume 1 and 2 in 2013 and 2014 respectively. To electrify their live performances, the band has dancers who dance to the marimba music.

3.4. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS PROMOTING MARIMBA MUSIC

3.4.1. Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO)

Established in 1989, CHIPAWO is an arts education for development and employment program that works with youths. The Harare-based organisation was co-founded by Julie Frederikse, Dr Robert McLaren, Steven Chifunyise, and Farai Gezi, who are its co-directors, and it has its headquarters in Mount Pleasant. CHIPAWO integrates dance and music performance into the Arts Education for Development programme. The approach used at CHIPAWO is eclectic, as it combines marimba, *mbira*, drama, dance and film. CHIPAWO's objective is to develop knowledge and appreciation of African traditional and modern performance skills, confidence, and enjoyment. Youths are exposed to elements of choreography and creativity with musical instruments. CHIPAWO's policy in teaching music and modern dance has been to encourage originality and to identify strongly with traditional African styles, alongside the popular culture idioms from the west.

Marimba features as one of the instruments played at CHIPAWO during their programs as well as at the annual end-of-year concert. These performances are filmed and televised in a programme called Dairibord Showcase. Farai Gezi teaches the CHIPAWO youths to play the marimba. In 2003 he conducted a marimba workshop where delegates were taught to play the song "*Simbimbino*", which was originally performed by the late popular Biggie Tembo and The Bhundu Boys. At that time, I was a Centre Coordinator for Wadzanai High School, then one of CHIPAWO'S Rural Disadvantaged Youths' Centres.

3.4.2. Tariro/Hope Marimba and Dance Ensemble

Tariro/Hope Marimba and Dance Ensemble was founded by Jennifer Kyker with the thrust to develop orphaned girls through participation in a musical ensemble. This was after she was intensely moved by the challenges that she faced when she tried to help Blantina, her best friend, to finish her high school education. Blantina had lost her parents and dropped out of school. Jennifer Kyker struggled to get Blantina back in school and see her through her secondary education. After this experience, Kyker started Tariro/Hope, a non-governmental organisation to assist young women whose families are affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS. She was determined to connect with orphaned and vulnerable girls early on and to provide support for them throughout their high school years. Kyker realised the importance of providing support services to empower and motivate girls to make positive choices for their own futures. Tariro provides a number of support services for the girls it sponsors, including an annual five-day empowerment camp. Tariro/Hope's mission is to ensure that vulnerable Zimbabwean girls are supported to finish their high school education. Support rose from six girls in 2003 to almost 60 in 2009. Some of the girls join income-generating projects sponsored by Tariro/Hope upon finishing their high school education. They are taught embroidery and sewing skills (Tariro [Sa]).

Tariro/Hope is officially registered with the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ). It aims to work toward gaining recognition and visibility within

Zimbabwe, as well as securing performance opportunities at cultural events. Tariro/Hope also wants to get a platform to share their wonderful work with other organisations and individuals in Zimbabwean civil society. Tariro/Hope's work is geared towards educating and empowering Zimbabwean orphaned girls as a meaningful step towards social justice and change.

Kyker and other friends of Tariro/Hope have fundraised for the marimba and dance ensemble in the United States of America through partnerships with marimba ensembles that are based in the US. Several US-based marimba groups have taken part in the fundraising campaigns and these include the Zimbabwe Music Festival (ZIMFEST), Kutandara Centre, Kutsinhira Cultural Arts Centre, Rubatano Marimba Centre, Pembera Youth Marimba, Anzanga Marimba, Low Flying Knobs, Sadza Marimba, Chiroto Marimba Ensemble, Kubatana Marimba, Kuzanga Marimba, Hokoyo Marimba, Kudana Marimba, Boka Marimba and Zuva Marimba. Tariro Marimba and Dance Ensemble have collaboratively released a fundraising CD entitled "*Maungira EZimbabwe*". The group staged a show at the Mannenberg and put on an amazing performance. Cosmas Magaya and Sheasby Matiure spoke about their pleasure to see the girls deliver such a fine performance. It was a good demonstration of the work that the Americans and Zimbabweans are doing together. In June 2014, Tariro/Hope Marimba and Dance Ensemble were the main entertainers at a Youth Expo in Hwange that was organised by a local non-governmental organisation called Yet Trust. They entertained delegates who included ministers, legislators, representatives from youth organisations, and members of the public.

In 2011 Tariro/Hope Marimba and Dance Ensemble students were filmed performing the *Jukwa* dance. The *Zimbabwean Mail* of 31 January 2014 posted an article entitled "Underprivileged dancers get a lifeline" in which the work of the NGO Tariro/Hope was highlighted. This *Zimbabwean Mail* report explains how young artists are taught basic skills in playing marimba and drums, as well as in dance in the hope that the orphaned girls would use that knowledge to launch their careers. The girls are grateful for the technical expertise. The *Zimbabwean Mail*

further reports that Tariro/Hope Executive Director Kenneth Magwada said the ensemble was a form of psychosocial support for the underprivileged girls. Every Saturday the girls meet for practice under the tutelage of Daniel Inasiyo. The fact that the girls have something to do reduces the risk of them engaging in harmful activities.

The *Zimbabwean Mail* article (*Zimbabwean Mail*, January 31, 2014) further summarises Tariro/Hope's as striving to empower the young girls to a future that is free from poverty and disease. Tariro/Hope enrolees have typically live with extended family members who serve as their guardians in line with traditional practices of caring for orphaned children in Zimbabwean communities. The girls are identified through consultation with community leaders who include school heads, church leaders, and traditional leaders. Tariro pays the students' fees, and buys them school uniforms and supplies. Tariro also provides textbooks through a lending library facility, and offers academic support services such as tutoring and extra-curricular activities. In addition, Tariro holds an annual conference on HIV/AIDS prevention.

3.5. POPULAR MUSICIANS PERFORMING MARIMBA MUSIC

3.5.1. Blessing Bled Chimanga

Blessing Bled Chimanga is a talented 25-year-old young man who plays three different musical instruments (drums, marimba and percussion) very well. He is also a music director, arranger and dancer. Blessing did his primary education at Haig Park Primary School, where he started his music career playing percussion and piano for the school band. He moved to Prince Edward High School in 2004 for his secondary education, where he furthered his music career. He joined the Prince Edward High School Jazz Band and was an active member and band leader during his high school days. Since finishing school, he has coached and mentored music at various schools in Zimbabwe.

Chimanga started his professional music career in 2006 when he played with the late Sam Mtukudzi's band. After that he featured as a session marimba musician for artists such as Watershed College Choir, ZINA Dance Troupe, Bob Nyabinde, Hope Masike, Josh Meck, Dudu Manhenga, Chiwoniso Maraire, Tariro Negitare, Pastor G and Chikwata 263, all from Zimbabwe. He also featured for Eric Wainaina from Kenya, Ray Phiri from South Africa, and The Kokos and Ary Morais, both from Norway. He has played on big stages and at festivals in Zimbabwe such as Hifa and the Winter Jazz Festival. Internationally he has featured at a festival in Botswana, and the Stubbetorpet Festival in Norway. He has also shared the stage with artists such as Oliver Mtukudzi and Victor Kunonga, both from Zimbabwe, Cocktail Slippers from Norway, Benjamin Dube and Hugh Masekela, both from South Africa, as well as Pastor Donnie McClurkin from the United States of America.

Chimanga is the founder and director of a very energetic and unique production called "Let the Drums Speak". In the production, Chimanga plays drums as a soloist at a concert. The production has taken him to countries such as Botswana, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The concert is an annual event that has been recorded live on DVD during the Italy edition.

Chimanga is also the founder of a charity programme named Big Smile. The mission and vision for the programme is to go to many children's and old people's homes to offer entertainment and bring Big Smiles on these special people's faces. The programme visits six organisations every year in September at which artists spend some time with the underprivileged. He also serves on the board of Celebrate the Child Sports Festival as the person in charge of entertainment and logistics (ReverbNation 2016).

Nowadays Chimanga performs in a four-member group that he co-founded with three other players. The group is called Zimboita, which means Zimbabwe-Italy collaboration. This group is made up of two talented young Zimbabweans and two young Italians. In Zimboita Chimanga is a drummer, vocalist and marimba player.

The other members of Zimboita are Max Covini (drums), Naphtali Chivangikwa (bass guitar), and Joseph Chinouriri (saxophone). The band plays Afrocentric music fusions, and also showcases contemporary dance. The project focuses on collaborating the two countries' music and culture as well as highlighting the power of friendship and passion for music. The group has toured Zimbabwe, Africa, Europe and America.

Plate 3.6 Blessing Bled Chimanga playing marimba (Blessing Chimanga 2014)

3.5.2. Charles Chipanga

Charles Chipanga is a young man who attended Chedonje Primary School in Kadoma. He started his music career at the Zimbabwe College of Music (ZCM), where he studied for a Certificate in Ethnomusicology between 2003 and 2004. Chipanga went on to enrol for a Bachelor of Ethnomusicology Degree as one of the pioneer students at the institution in 2006. I met him during his ZCM days in 2004 when he was studying for the Certificate in Ethnomusicology. During that time, I was studying for my bachelor's degree at the UZ. We held our keyboard lessons at the ZCM where Clayton Ndlovu had been appointed our tutor since there was no

keyboard specialist at the UZ. Chipanga was a very talented young man who was willing to learn everything that he could lay his hands on in terms of musical concepts and musical instruments. While at the ZCM he was one of the pioneers of UMOJA, a cultural exchange programme in which SADC countries shared their musical cultural traditions. This gave him an opportunity to tour several countries such as Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Malawi. This exposed him to master performers such as Oliver Mtukudzi, whose band, The Blacks Spirits, he later joined Oliver Mtukudzi between 2006 and 2011 as a marimba player when Mtukudzi decided to incorporate the instrument in his songs.

After parting ways with Mtukudzi and The Black Spirits, Chipanga co-founded the band Charlenam Rhythms with his wife Namatayi. Charle- is taken from Charles Chipanga's first name, and -nam is taken from his wife Namatayi Mubariki's first name, to make Charlenam Rhythms. Chipanga is the leader of Charlenam Rhythms. The band's music has the unique wooden percussive sound of the Zimbabwe marimba fused in a modern way with the rattling sound of the *hosho* (which is played by Namatayi). The band's gospel music has a jazzy feel and a very sturdy evangelical message. Charlenam Rhythms also use other musical instruments such as drums, keyboards, acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and Zimbabwean percussion. According to Chipanga (Personal communication, 12 January 2015), Charlenam Rhythms aim to add immensely to the intangible value which music contributes to the Zimbabwean society. For him, music is an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in different forms through elements such as melody, pitch, rhythm and timbre. He feels that music can have a positive impact on society's socio-cultural and economic experiences.

In Charlenam Rhythms band, Chipanga plays the Zimbabwe marimba in a contemporary way and is recognised as one of Zimbabwe's best marimba players, who plays the marimba instrument with verve and virtuosity. He can play several other musical instruments with ability, as well as sing both as a lead and backing vocalist. He is also a very agile dancer who can do both traditional and contemporary dances. Other band members of Charlenam Rhythms are Namatayi

(lead vocals and percussion), Jairos Hambahamba (keyboards), Patience (backing vocals), Never Mpo (guitar), and Simba Dembedza (drums). Charlenam Rhythms has released three albums to date: *Prayer Expose* (2013), *Grace Moments* (2014), and *Goodness* (2015).

Their music can be classified as ethnic jazz because it has the unique sound of the marimba instrument mingled with rattles and sometimes they have a session musician who blends in saxophone sounds. Namatayi, said "My music has percussive wooden sound with a touch of jazz and inspiring evangelistic message preparing the world for the second coming of Christ. We chose to have a marimba because it identifies with us as Zimbabweans, it's always good to present your music in a way that you don't struggle to express yourself" (Charlenam Rhythms 2014).

Plate 3.7 Namatayi and Charles Chipanga (Charles Chipanga 2015)

3.5.3. Jah Prayzah

Jah Prayzah's real name is Mukudzei Mukombe. His stage name, Jah Prayzah, is derived from his first name, Mukudzei, which means Praise Him (God). His love for reggae music influenced his reference to God using the Jamaican name Jah. He hails from a family of five boys and one girl in Uzumba-Maramba Pfungwe in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland East Province. He went to Musanhi Secondary School in Murehwa, and later transferred to Kuwadzana 1 High School when he moved to live in Harare's Budiriro Suburb. He is the son of a former school headmaster who has taken Zimbabwean music landscape by storm. He has churned out award-winning hits since he burst onto the music scene in 2010. His cousin and keyboard player, Simeon Mukombe, encouraged him to record his songs in the studio and they recorded an album called *I Love Reggae*, which was not popular.

He reckons that his major influence in music was Tichafa Matsika, who had a set of *mbira* which he never played. Jah Prayzah bought the *mbira* by swapping it with his swag cap and learned to play it. His geography teacher, Mr Musimbe, who was very passionate about playing the marimba, motivated him. Jah Prayzah admired Mr Musimbe's playing prowess and wished to emulate him. He had grown up wanting to become a soldier but at this stage in life critical events happened which saw him drifting away from his dream of joining the Zimbabwe National Army as his musical talent began to define itself. Jah Prayzah wears army regalia on stage and is passionately referred to as *Musoja* (Shona for soldier) by his band members and fans. He has publicly professed his admiration for the profession and even sings some lyrics about it (for example "*Soja rinosvika kure"* (a soldier who goes far) (*Jive Zimbabwe* 2012).

Jah Prayzah formed his third Generation Band in 2007 but he came into the spotlight after his 2012 album *Sungano*. Initially he composed Zimdancehall songs such as "*Gotchi-gotchi*" but recently he has gone into contemporary versions of traditional Zimbabwean song modes. He is a contemporary musician who has won eight categories of the National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA), as well as the Zimbabwe

Dream Online Award. To date Jah Prayzah has recorded seven albums: *Dura, Rudo Nerunyararo, Sungano, Ngwarira kuparara, Tsviriyo, Kumbumura Mhute,* and *Jerusarema*. His fame and popularity is affirmed by his being honoured as the Brand Ambassador for Population Services International Zimbabwe (PSI), Chicken Slice, Champions Insurance Company, and Savanna Tobacco. He is also the Cultural Ambassador for the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. In 2013 he took the top three spots with his songs "*Gotchi-gotchi*", "Maria", and "*Chirangano*" on Radio Zimbabwe's Top 100 Chart Show.

Jah Prayzah fuses marimba and *mbira* instruments into his music. His latest hit song "*Jerusarema*" features Charles Chipanga of Charlenam Rhythms playing the marimba. There are several other songs on his previous albums in which he has blended the unique wooden sound of the marimba with guitars and percussion instruments to define his own style. I observed Jah Prayzah himself also playing the marimba with a passion during his live performance at Musopero Night Club in Gweru on 25 August 2014. The song "*Machembere*", for example, is his own rendition of the marimba song "*Rugare*", which was arranged to be played on the marimba at Kwanongoma College of African Music in the 1960s by Alport Mhlanga and his students. On his latest album, *Jerusarema,* he sang the song "*Haiwa Ndoenda Mambo*" (I will go my Lord) in the same "*Rugare*" mode. Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble have arranged and play these songs by Jah Praizah's on the soprano, tenor, baritone and bass marimbas.

3.5.4. Oliver Mtukudzi

Oliver Mtukudzi started recording music in 1975 and 64 albums punctuate his career. He has become an international Superstar through hard work and unwavering commitment to entertain people though his very popular shows. The outstanding quality in his music is self-discipline, which he himself epitomises, and it has made him an icon in the Zimbabwean music fraternity. His music has evolved from the exclusive use of modern electrical instruments to the inclusion of African traditional instruments such as the marimba and *mbira* alongside his acoustic guitar,

which still carries the Tuku music trademark. According to *The Herald*, July 14, 2014, "His distinguished work has been acknowledged through countless awards in Zimbabwe and abroad. The Zimbabwe government honoured him as a Music Ambassador while the University of Zimbabwe and the Women's University in Africa conferred him with honorary degrees in the Arts" (Zindi 2014).

Mtukudzi at one stage decided to blend marimba in his music and this was done through incorporating Charles Chipanga to play the marimba as part of the Black Spirits Band. Their relationship lasted five fruitful years in which Chipanga brought the traditional African wooden sound of the marimba into Tuku Music. Charles Chipanga left in 2011 when the majority of the band members and Oliver Mtukudzi fell out over a pay dispute but Chipanga says they still have "A legend and marimba player relationship". In *The Herald*, July 23, 2012, Chipanga is quoted saying "I brought *marimba* into *Tuku Music* and I think I managed to do it well"(Tera, 2012). According to Jonathan Mbiriyamveka in *The Herald*, April 9, 2013,

> *Katekwe music took a different dimension ever since Tuku decided to replace keyboards with marimba and mbira...If you think I am wrong why don't you go back and listen to the albums 'Rudaviro' and 'Dairai'. On those two albums you will feel the seductive sound of the marimba played by Charles Chipanga. Up to now I still think that Tuku music had taken a new direction for the better and it was distinctively Zimbabwean.*

3.6. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF MARIMBA MUSICKING IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWE

A standard four-piece set of Zimbabwe marimbas costs around two thousand US dollars in Zimbabwe. If an ensemble wishes to use more sopranos and tenors, it means they have to fork out more than that amount. Additionally, some sets are extended with chromatic notes and are more expensive than the standard set. Many youths in Zimbabwe who harbour thoughts of forming a marimba band are unemployed and the cost of a set of marimbas is prohibitively unaffordable for them. This means that youths are forced out of marimba ensembles or have to affiliate to organisations and institutions that can purchase marimbas if their dream

of musicking on the wood that sings is to come to fruition. I interviewed a couple of marimba performers and trainers on the challenges that they face. Indications are that affordability of marimbas is difficult in a society that is facing economic challenges.

I asked Patson Manyame (Personal communication, 28 February 2016) of the Zimbabwe Republic Police Marimba Band about some of the challenges that marimba performers face in Zimbabwe and he mentioned the following:

> *Lack of resources, the instrument is very expensive to acquire for personal playing and learning. The use of virtual instruments on keyboards is posing a very big challenge since most people are opting to utilize these on live performance. The marimbas are very susceptible to weather changes – in very hot weather they produce flat sound and vice-versa in cold weather. Transportation problems – the instruments are fragile, hence need suitable transportation* (Patson Manyame, personal communication, 28 February 2016).

Tinomutenda Chihora is one Zimbabwean who has recorded a marimba music album with his ensemble, which operates in Gweru. I interviewed him to find out some of the challenges that they face as a marimba ensemble trying to practise their art in Zimbabwe. He cited "lack of transport, low payments for performances, inconsistence of some of our members since we are not full time and generally lack of finance to upgrade our work" (Personal communication, 12 February 2016).

The use of virtual instruments was cited by Mopati Molosiwa, a Gweru-based marimba player from Botswana (Personal communication, 14 February 2016), who said, "One of the major challenges is that people prefer western instruments over African instruments, so in terms of hiring or events, the first option would be bands which play western instruments."

Shadreck Dzingayi, a music lecturer who is also involved with a community-based performing arts group, said the following challenges bedevil marimba performance practice in contemporary Zimbabwe:

> *The market/industry itself is not welcoming, and also the idea that carrying a set of marimba from place to place itori hondo pachayo (is a burden on its own), its different with mbira or other instruments ... even amplifying the sound of the marimba instruments for audibility needs powerful microphones, that is why marimba performances are few and far apart, and done for small gatherings of people* (Shadreck Dzingayi, personal communication, 28 January 2016).

I also interviewed Richard Muranda (Personal communication, 13 February 2016), who has taught marimba in schools, at Mkoba Teachers College, and now lectures at Midlands State University, on some the challenges of marimba performers in Zimbabwe and he said the following:

> *They are not recognised by that community and the community leaders. They cannot earn a decent living out of their ensembles. They are too privy to pertinent information on how to run their entities as business. They are also not very well informed about music rights and law in Zimbabwe.*

Muranda (Personal communication, 13 February 2016) also cited challenges in Zimbabwe's music industry that are likely to hinder the popularity and performance practice of marimba, saying:

> *The economic crunch and the general lockdown upon music renders the instrument to be of not much value to the generality of the population whose economy leaves them with no substantial amounts of disposable income to offer room for paid entertainment. The entertainment industry has got no sponsors hence the few who do that tend to exploit the promising marimba ensemble.*

3.7. SUMMARY

During my fieldwork, I observed that marimba music performance practice is alive in Zimbabwe at festivals and venues where marimba players sense the possibility of earning money from such involvement. The role played by marimba festival organisers is crucial in terms of its advocacy and agency to promote marimba music performance practice. The Tambarimba Festival, which is organised by Tambarimba Arts under their Director Macdonald Chidavaenzi, has quite a big impact as it brings together over three hundred marimba performers. The festival is

all about marimba music making and it is a national event. It is funded and supported by twenty-eight sponsors and partners respectively. On 26 September 2015, eight open marimba bands were watched by more than five hundred marimba music fans at the Harare Gardens. The prospect of coming tops and landing the prize money is enough attraction for marimba performers to give it a go, and there is always the possibility of creating wider global networks that could lead the ensembles to international platforms where sponsors could fund them to showcase their talent.

The Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival, which is organised by Bembera Arts under their Director Taurai Moyo, is a smaller festival than Tambarimba that hopes to go national in its future editions. Currently it is held in Manicaland Province only and funded by Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust together with their partners, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), as well as WIMPY Mutare. The recent festival brought together about one hundred marimba players in seven marimba ensembles, and about three hundred music fans who thronged St Dominic's High School grounds. The festival included *mbira* and Zimbabwean traditional *Isitshikitsha* dance competitions.

Arts and culture centres are keeping the music performance practice of marimba alive in the City of Kings and Queens, as Bulawayo is popularly referred to in Zimbabwe. The City has Hloseni Arts and Culture Centre in the high-density suburb of Mpopoma. There is also the Rainbow Arts and Culture Centre at the Zimbabwe Academy of Music in the City. These two centres run traditional music entertainment programmes in various venues in the city where music fans can come to enjoy marimba music. Their marimba bands attract music fans to their live performances and corporate functions. Non-governmental organisations are also doing wonderful work in Harare, where CHIPAWO and Tariro/Hope are occupying youths through musical arts activities.

Furthermore, the tourism industry is playing a very significant role in keeping the performance practice of marimba music alive in the resort town of Victoria Falls on the north-west border of Zimbabwe. There are five marimba ensembles plying their trade at the Zimbabwe Falls, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, where the possibility of bagging foreign currency is very high because hundreds of tourists are flown into the resort town daily by the South African Airways and Fastjet. The marimba bands have various bases and venues in and around the Victoria Falls town where lovers of traditional music can enjoy the unique sound of the Zimbabwe marimba. Each of the ensembles chronicled in this chapter has kept the art of musicking on the wood that sings alive in Zimbabwe albeit with vicissitude staked against them.

CHAPTER 4
ZIMBABWE MARIMBA MUSIC COMPOSITIONS & ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, I present some of the songs that are commonly played locally on the Zimbabwe marimba. The songs are analysed musically. While prescriptive transcription using the staff or sol-fa notations provides the basis for analysing a great deal of musically relevant information in complex audio signals, there is a debate on representing African music using Western notational systems. When analysing, one can tap the rhythm, hum the melody, recognise vocal ranges, identify harmonic changes, and locate structural parts of the piece such as the chorus and the verse. However, the theoretical background of these signal analysis methods does not make them applicable purely to the analysis of music from other cultures. African rhythms and melodies, especially, have shown quality and creativity and it is very difficult to achieve accurate transcription and analysis of these aspects.

It is usually an almost impossible undertaking to transcribe most African music, considering the diverse ethnic contexts in which the music is composed. Though it is widely agreed that the bulk of the music is characterised by call-and-response (an expression of life) as well as that it is polyrhythmic, the traits are independently improvised as they are employed in various frameworks and do not normally occur in a standardised format. The Western notation system, which is a global system of transcription, manages so precisely to represent Western music but falls short in attempts to represent African music. However, it is employed due to its wide comprehensibility when authors want to lucidly articulate certain concepts to their readers. The Western notation system is reductionist, and has a highly altering effect on African music as arrangers grapple with the complexities posed by the rhythmic structure of the music during the transcription process (Agawu 2003).

Oral tradition plays an important role in the preservation of African musical cultural practices. The music is handed down from one generation to another in all its richness and significance. In oral tradition music learners undergo through practical

involvement in song and dance in natural contexts and gain practical knowledge which gives a true representation of cultural realities. Whereas in the literacy tradition theoretical knowledge shapes practice. Issues of continuity and change, globalisation and technology have brought a different dimension to African music due to enculturation, syncretism, and cultural diffusion. I strongly feel that oral transmission of African music tends to preserve authenticity better than automatic transcription. The reason for this is that the Western notations that are used to transcribe fail to portray the beauty of the performance which is a distinct feature of African music. In Africa music is performed in a natural communicative environment where everything is real and relevant; instrumentalists, dancers, singers, the situation, the purpose, the environment, the language, the context, and even the instruments used. Transcribing African music makes it prone to misinterpretation by people from different cultures. The only reason to transcribe African music is to enable concrete accessibility for scholarly illustrations and even performance. Once properly transcribed, music can be reproduced without losing any detail, and can be preserved over many years in the original state (Klapuri 2006).

4.2. TRADITIONAL MUSIC COMPOSITIONS & ARRANGEMENTS

The marimba is a musical instrument that originated among early men a long time ago. The Zimbabwe marimba has existed for about 55 years and its popularity has grown tremendously. Amongst the songs that are played on the Zimbabwe marimba are traditional song compositions and arrangements. The original composers are not documented but by nature the music was a result of spontaneous communal effort, so there can be several versions or arrangements of the same song. Traditional songs have continuously played an important role in shaping social relationships in Africa. Early oral society's song, dance and performance embodied the people's aspirations and expectations. They sang and danced for joy, grief, love, sorrow, hate and even during labour and work. Songs are therefore an expression of a people's whole experiences and not an individual's property (Dadirai Alice Kwaramba 1997). In this section, I analyse traditional songs "*Chamutengure*", "*Taireva*",

"*Nhema musasa*", "*VaMudhara*", "*Manhanga Kutapira*", and "*Chigwaya*". These originally mbira or traditional folk songs were arranged to be played on the Zimbabwe marimba by Kwanongoma students and have become part of the instrument's dormain.

4.2.1. "Chamutengure"

The song "*Chamutengure*" is performed by many marimba ensembles and is one of the traditional mbira songs that were arranged by Alport Mhlanga and his students at Kwanongoma College of African Music in the 1970s. The song's name comes from the Shona word "*kutengura*" (to carry above the head), which is derived from the word "*dengu*" (a carrying basket). Myth has it that when our ancestors saw the pioneer column passing by they were mesmerised by the wagons in which the settlers transported their goods as they moved from the southern parts of the country into the mainland. That is, when they sang that the driver's wife should not have trouble finding relish since she would just take grease from the wagon wheels and use it as soup. The song has been performed for over a century now and several lead singers add their own versions with varying text. This is largely because of the improvised nature of all Shona music. Here is a translation of the song's lyrics:

Chava chamutengure vhiri rengoro	Now it is like a ferrying wagon wheel
Wanditi mutyairi wandionei?	Why do you say I am a wagon driver?
Mukadzi wemutyairi haashayi dovi	A driver's wife has no trouble finding peanut butter
Anotora girizi okurungira	She uses grease to thicken the soup

4.2.2. "Taireva"

The song "*Taireva*" is originally a *mbira* song that has been adapted to be played on the marimba from the days when the marimba was designed at Kwanongoma College of African Music. The song is sung by a person blaming someone who has had a misfortune and telling them that they should have listened to advice to avoid mishaps. Lead singers have shown their artistry over the years by creating many

versions of this song but all of their additions hover around the same theme. An example is a *mbira* outfit called Mbira Dzenharira, who composed their own lyrics in the same *Taireva* mode and sang a song that says, "*Zirume riya rekuparika rakarara jongwe rikarira mai hwee ndaneta ini. Handidi kuparikwa, nhamo iri mumba mangu*." (A polygamous man slept until the cock crowed, mother I am tired. I don't want to be a second wife, in my house there is starvation).

Text	**Meaning**
Taireva taireva taireva taireva taireva mukoma bvunza iwe	We used to warn that you must ask first
Gore mwana gore mwana gore mwana gore mwana mangwana uchamupeiko?	One child every year, tomorrow what will they eat?
Mwana wenyu kutakura tsotso sedhongi ratakura huswa mhai	Your child carrying firewood like a donkey carrying grass
Tsotso kutakura tsotso	Transporting firewood

4.2.3. "Nhemamusasa"

"*Nhemamusasa*" is a traditional hunting song that was traditionally played with mbira accompaniment in which the hunters warn each other to prepare their shelter for the night before the sun sets because danger lurks in darkness. "*Nhemamusasa*" is another warning song meant to alert fellow hunters to cut trees, bushes and thatching grass to use for constructing a place to hide from the dangerous animals of the forest at night. Several lead singers have also come up with their own lyrics that are sung in *Nhemamusasa* mode. I transcribed the version below from a recorded performance by Madziva Teachers' College Marimba Ensemble at the September 2015 RIO-SET Competitions.

Text	**Meaning**
Iwe nhema musasa usaringe zuva nhamo ichauya	Cut poles for a shelter before trouble comes
Hanzvadzi yamai vako zvaisingarime	Your mother's brother is a lazy man
Kuroora roora mukaranga murume	Marry a second wife man
Hoo ha hoo musango mune nyama	In the forest there is meat
Roverera museve roverera museve	Throw the spear

4.2.4. "VaMudhara"

Lyrics of the song "*VaMudhara*"	**Literal translation**
VaMudhara mapfeka manyatera	Old man you have worn sandals
Mahuhwepi semune mari?	Where did you hear of a beer drink as if you have money?
Ndomutevera mambo	I follow you king
Haiwa Haruna	These are vocables usually used in most African music

The song is a communally owned idiomatic song originally played on the mbira which was also arranged for marimba, and passed on through oral tradition. It is a social song that was usually performed for fun at beer drinking and other social gatherings with a lead and response form. The main thrust of the song is to shape the relationships of individuals by urging each other to be responsible and not always be reliant on the efforts of others. The lyrics encourage individuals to be hard working and show that respect can be earned if you are financially sound.

Like most African songs, "*VaMudhara*" has both high-pitched voices sung from the head register and lower-pitched voices from the chest register. Many vocables like *He-ye-re*, *ha-ye-ha aa* and *ee* were used in the bass and tenor parts. This is synonymous with scat-singing, a jazz style that sets syllables without meaning (vocables) to an improvised vocal line. Usually singers use these vocal ornaments to imitate certain instruments that will not be present at the event of performance (Christine Forney, Andrew Dell'Antonio & Joseph Machlis 2013).

There is a tendency among scholars to equate rhythmic complexities with African love and disavow the same melodic organisation (Addo 1996). Melody is the element in music that appeals most directly to the listener, a universal concept shared by most musical cultures of the world. We know a good tune when we hear one, and we recognise its power to move us. A melody is a succession of single pitches that we perceive as a recognisable whole (Forney et al. 2013). We relate to the pitches of a melody in the same way that we hear the words of a sentence; that

is, not singly but as an entire cohesive thought. Components such as speech, intervals, phrases, range, contour and cadences are vital in melodic analysis.

Pitch is a perceptual attribute that allows the ordering of sounds on a frequency-related scale extending from low to high (Forney et al. 2013). The precise representation of pitch in most African songs is difficult due to the limitations of the Western notation in measuring pitch inflections and microtones. However, the song "*VaMudhara*" is sung with distinct pitch without making any brief microtonal dip or rise from the original pitch. It falls under tonal music, where perception of pitch is along musical scales and in relation to the musical key of the piece. All the eight pitches were utilised in this song and they revolve on the tonal centre C. The tonic note C is given more weight in the total rendition of the song. Pivotal and antecedent positioning of the tonic creates an illusion of its centrality. The song is usually sung by adults; hence it has a wider range (9-note span). It starts on the tonic note and ends on the supertonic a ninth degree above the tonic note (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do, re'). This range is not common in most children's songs; they usually go up to a five-note span. This shows that adults have the ability to execute a wider compass in terms of the vocal range.

The contour of a melody is its overall shape as it turns upward or downward or remains static (Forney et al. 2013). The "*VaMudhara*" melody is visualised in a line graph with a descending line in the second, third, sixth, seventh, 10th, 12th, 14th and 16th bars. A wave sign is visualised in the other bars of the melody.

The movement of the melody is principally by small intervals in a joint, collected manner and in a few instances larger leaps of a major sixth are witnessed. This makes the song easy to sing. The most common interval in the melodic movement is falling a major second but the tune's movement does not necessarily remain the same throughout. The intervals falling or rising a perfect fourth also feature in the middle of the section. This is contrary to Western music, where perfect fourths are usually answered by perfect fifths at the end (Addo 1996). Other melodic intervals

in the song include the minor thirds, minor seconds, perfect fifths, and perfect unisons.

A phrase in music is a unit of meaning with a larger structure. The phrase ends in a resting place, or cadence, which punctuates the music in the same way that a comma or period punctuates a sentence (Forney et al. 2013). The phrases of the song are symmetrical in terms of both rhythm and bars (two-bar structure). Within each major scale are certain relationships based on tension and resolution. Most of the phrases of the piece resolve with a perfect cadence; that is, when 're' moves to 'doh', giving the sense that the melody has reached the end and sounding final. The other phrases resolve by 'sol' moving to 'mi' (perfect cadence). Though not featured in the piece, the seventh pitch to the eighth ('ti' resolving to 'doh') is one of the most important cadences. Similarly, we feel resolution when 'fa' gravitates to 'mi'; and 'la' descends to 'sol'. Tonic going to dominant and returning to tonic is a basic progression of harmony in this song.

For most African societies, rhythm is an inextricable part of their everyday existence (Kwaramba 1997). Music is propelled forward by rhythm; that is, the movement of music in time. Each individual note has a length, or duration, some long and some short. The value of the beat in this song is a crotchet or its equivalent and provides a regular pulse that divides time into equal segments. The first and third beats are stronger than the second and fourth beats. We perceive these as accented beats.

The metrical representation of the song is in quadruple time and the rhythms of the melody start with leading notes or anacrusis. The manner in which the notes are arranged into rhythmic patterns correlates with text and movement patterns. Dotted quavers beamed to semiquavers form the rhythmic motive of the piece and are the most used notes in the melody. Triplets of quavers have a representation in the whole song. Other groupings of notes and rests used in the passage include crotchets, quavers, dotted crotchets, beamed quavers tied to a quaver, tied semiquavers, semiquaver rests, quaver rests, crotchet rests and minim rests.

The song has simultaneous use of several rhythmic patterns that conflict with the underlying beat. It is polyrhythmic in nature. All the rhythms are built on notes that are equally divided. Divisive rhythms are those that articulate the regular division of time span and follow the scheme of pulse structure in grouping of notes (Nketia 1974). Generally, the music utilises simple rhythms but there is a deliberate upsetting of the normal pattern of accents in some instances. Instead of falling on the strong beat of the measure, the accent is shifted to an offbeat (in between the stronger beats). This syncopation is felt on beamed quavers tied to a quaver and also when tied semiquavers are preceded by a dotted quaver.

In all the arts, a balance is required between unity and variety, symmetry and asymmetry, activity and rest (Forney et al. 2013). This will help to determine a work's structure or shape. The song "*VaMudhara*" is in call-and-response format, or is responsorial music. This style of performance is predominantly found in music of African-American origin. The lead vocalist or *Mushauri* will sing the call and a chorus of followers or *Vabvumiri* will sing the response. This call-and-response form, AB form, has its variation at the beginning of the call phrase in bar seven of the melody. The song presents a many-voiced texture that is polyphonic. The soprano and baritone parts contrast each other, posing countermelody from the beginning.

Traditional music is a part of oral tradition that has been handed down from generation to generation. "*VaMudhara*" has a generational depth and carries within itself the seeds of history. It has been passed down through oral means; that is, it has been perceived orally and aurally. The song carries the general characteristics of African music. The rhythms are syncopated, polyrhythmic, and very difficult to represent accurately on the score. It has a narrow melodic range, which moves in steps and in a wavelike manner. Basic transcription and analysis offer some insights into the musical elements of our traditional songs.

4.2.5. "Manhanga Kutapira"

Another piece of music that is performed on the marimba is "*Manhanga Kutapira*", a Zimbabwean traditional folk song. I transcribed the version above from a recording of a performance by GZU Marimba Ensemble at RIO-SET 2015 Competitions. Folk songs are songs of unknown authorship passed orally from one generation to another, sung without accompaniment and often found in variance (of words and tunes) in different parts of a country. Folk songs used to be predominantly found among peasants or country dwellers, but have since spread to towns and urban areas where they chronicle the people's lives in terms of design, melody and rhythm; hence, they have become traditional. The baritone provides vocables and polyphonic texture to the music. It features as counter melody in the text. The tenor and the bass parts are homophonic. However, since the music is transcribed for marimba, there is no yodelling or ululation; there are neither nasal sounds nor glottal sounds in the transcription here but these are characteristic features of "*Manhanga Kutapira*" and other Shona traditional songs.

Lyrics are words that make up a song, usually consisting of verses and choruses. The song is traditional folk music and has often been handed down from one generation of the Shona people to the next. It is an activity song. Zimbabwean folk music is performed in specific contexts such as rites of passage, for example birth, marriage and weddings, death, house-warming activities, beer drinking, war, coronation, homage to a ruler, politics, hunting, harvesting and general work, vulgar play, boasting, herding, lullabies, children's play, and royal praises. The principle governing traditional artistic production is that its subject matter is drawn from the actual activities of people in their living surroundings. According to Alice Kwaramba (1997), the lyrical content of the songs plays an important role in shaping social relationships and encouraging people to do good things for the benefit of their lives. "*Huya uone kutapira kwoita manhanga*" (Come and taste the sweetness of our pumpkins), traditionally performed repeatedly in call-and-response style to "*Manhanga Kutapira*", can be analysed in its literal and contextual

meaning. Literal meaning is the direct translation of the meaning of the song, and contextual or underlying meaning relates to the hidden meaning behind the song.

Parts	Lyrics	Literal meaning
Soprano	*Huya uone kutapira kunoita manhanga*	Come and see the sweetness of pumpkins
Tenor	*Huya uone kutapira*	Come and see the sweetness
Baritone	*Haye haye haye haye ha*	These are vocables
Bass	*Huya uone kutapira*	Come and see the sweetness

"*Manhanga Kutapira*" is a folk song that depicts the agrarian life in Zimbabwe. The meaning of this song is to highlight the enjoyment of the fruits of hard work. The main aim is to encourage people within the communities to have a tendency of working hard, such that they will enjoy the end results of their activities. It was usually sung after bumper harvests. However, the song has experienced some modification to the text into different versions. Nowadays it is being used as a game song sung during competition, for example during score competitions and mostly for schools' games competitions.

Vocal range is the span from the lowest to the highest note sung in a particular melody. The vocal range of the notes of "*Manhanga Kutapira*" mostly remains in the middle range for the soprano, tenor and bass parts only. The baritone experiences middle range and reaches high on the first beat of each bar. The baritone part repeats the vocables *Haye haye haye haye ya* until the end of the music. Vocables are meaningful sounds uttered when singing, such as words or terms that are fixed by their language and culture. African folk songs usually use vocables.

Rhythm is the arrangement of sounds as they move through time. When sound is produced and perceived, it can be arranged rhythmically to create music. According to Godfried Toussaint (2010), traditional and contemporary music makes use of characteristic rhythms called timelines. A timeline is a distinguished rhythmic obstinate, a rhythm that repeats throughout a piece of music with no variation, that

gives the particular flavour of movement of the piece that incorporates it, and that acts as a time keeper and structuring device for the musicians (Toussaint 2010). Timelines may be played with the musical instrument; *kutapira kunoita manhanga* follows the timeline characteristics. The rhythm of the song repeats after every two bars as the music progresses until the end. The song starts with a solo played on the soprano, then the other parts (tenor, baritone and bass) join in later. The metrical representation of the songs is in simple quadruple time. The rhythm of every part of the music is repeated after every two bars of the music.

The melodic content of "*Manhanga Kutapira*" is quite simple. According to Forney et al. (2013), melody is the sound that changes and moves along in time or a series of notes that move along in time, one after another. It is a combination of pitch and rhythm, while more figuratively, the term can include successions of other musical elements such as tonal colour. Melodies may also be described by their melodic motion or the pitches or the intervals between pitches. It is impossible to write music that does not have a melody. In the transcribed song "*Manhanga Kutapira*", the intervallic content is in four parts of the song, which includes the soprano, tenor, baritone and bass. A complete transcription of marimba music requires proper notation of each instrument's pitch, timing, and sound, including range. This can be very hard or even theoretically impossible in some cases. The goal is usually re-defined as being to notate as many of the constituent sounds as possible. In the song "*Manhanga Kutapira*" there is a rhythm that is repeated throughout after every two bars.

The contour of the melody of *Manhanga kutapira* goes in a sinusoidal wave manner and there is a degree of similarity in the movement of contours from different melody parts. Melodically, the song uses a short range of notes occurring mainly in the chest register for most notes. It employs call-and-response techniques. Although African people traditionally but also at present perpetuate a wealthy oral tradition that ensures the passage of cultural practices from one generation to another, transcribing the music not only makes it easier to analyse, but also preserves the music in the same state and eliminates susceptibility to alteration due to loss of

memory or changing contexts. Many scholars argue that oral literature and music are intimately connected in most parts of Africa and are often impossible to separate (Drum Connection 1990-2015). An attempt to deal with one aspect of the music in isolation tends to cause loss of certain valid traits and attributes of the music, rendering it unoriginal and foreign.

4.2.6. "Chigwaya"

The word *chigwaya* refers to a bream/tilapia, a kind of freshwater fish. It should be noted that it is characteristic of many African songs, especially those by the Shona, that they occur with a hidden meaning. This is usually done to accommodate into acceptance situations where even offensive messages are intended for certain persons or groups of people. The song "*Chigwaya*", which I transcribed from a recording I made as Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble performed at the September 2016 Manicalnd Folk Music and Dance Festival performance in Mutare, is no exception to this phenomenon when performed in its traditional context. In its context as a game song, playing children adopt styles that imitate the bream as they dance; one at a time, inside a circle of children. Further interpretation of the scenario indicates that everyone is free to express their entire self and joy when they are in their own conventional comfort zone. A person is free to play around with, and do everything contentedly, with what is legitimately theirs, and within their usual context of life. Therefore, it can be inferred that it is a song of pomp, an expression of the pride of ownership and/or control over possessions or a territory.

The bream often dances in a more pronounced manner, usually immediately after rains; a celebration of abundance and increased luxury. The song is sung to signify living happily with freedom from fear (Mbira [Sa]). The song used to be played in "*mashave"* ceremonies to call "*njuzu"*, the spirit of the mermaid believed to bring with it health, wealth and prophetic powers. From this perspective, the bream is believed to symbolise the mermaid. It is in this context that the song is regarded as a ritual piece of music as opposed to it being a children's play song. Nevertheless, children that grow within a culture learn the culture mostly through their cultural

game songs. The short phrases and the repetitive nature of the music help enhance the concept of rhythm and its lucidity.

The rhythmic content of the song is dominated by quavers. The most frequently recurrent is the quaver tied to the quaver, followed by the quaver tied to a crotchet. The rhythm and the text repeat after every three bars, connoting the repetitious nature of the song. The interaction between rhythm and text dictates and creates a song's melodic contour, according to Akosuo Addo (1996).

Vocal range as observed from the soprano part of the piece is such that the interval of the highest note from the lowest is a ninth. The lowest note on the bass part is three octaves under the highest note of the soprano. This can be explained by the aspect that the music is subjected to some kind of transformation each time it is used in a foreign context. In this particular case, the song is transcribed for marimba, hence it differs from how it is sung in its traditional context. As mentioned before, marimba as used currently in this country was developed at Kwanongoma College of African Music and the way the percussive instrument is used bears numerous traits reflecting Western influence.

Originally, "*Chigwaya*" was sung in a monophonic style with very limited harmony notes and a shallow pitch range. The modified version incorporates a polyphonic style. Kwabena Nketia (1974) notes that music can come alive even if two pitches are used in the organisation of rhythms. As such, it is the overall product that encompasses dance, melodies, messages, and percussion that matters in most African songs, when considered in their cultural context.

Listening is an important ability that traditional oral practices have perfected and utilised effectively. A number of African musical songs and dances have remained in shape and use courtesy of this skill. They have subsequently been shared and have managed to serve a number of purposes in the various contexts and generations where they are used. As a result, some African scholars argue that the shift to writing down African music compromises the performance of the music (Drum

Connection 1990-2015). Music is often referred to as a composite undertaking that involves instrumentation and/or voices as well as dances. Except for a video presentation, it is difficult to fully represent the meaning of any dance by means of transcribed music. Although vocables, yodelling and ululations can be indicated at given positions in the transcribed piece, it can be quite overwhelming to precisely represent these activities with performance pitches, for instance. Others, who oppose the transcription of African songs, argue that songs tend to be forced to comply with Western musical idiom or stylistic writing. As can be seen from the marimba song above, the song is written in a four-part system, which is typically European and defiant of conventional African norms. There may be a need to develop new ways of transcribing African music and dance, as modern traditional transcriptions tend to fail to account for some melodic and rhythmic patterns. These methods must try to account for some rhythmic and melodic patterns that fall outside the boundaries of the present Western musical notational systems.

Some African scholars such as Ndlovu (1991) argue that the shift to writing down African music compromises the performance of African music and dance. Music and dance are explications of tacit knowledge and, according to Von Krogh, Ichinjo and Nonaka (2000), bodily movements accompanying music often communicate important messages and entertain audiences along with the music. It is therefore felt as a simplification when certain components of a piece of music are transcribed while other aspects of the same music are left unaccounted for. It consequently becomes more like an overview rather than a true representation of the music in its entirety.

4.3. CONTEMPORARY MUSIC COMPOSITIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS

4.3.1. Sungura music arrangements

Zimbabwe marimba performers' contemporary music arrangements include renditions of *sungura* songs by the country's renowned *sungura* artists such as

Alick Macheso, Simon Chimbetu and Leonard Zhakata. The marimba musicians' motivation is evidently their aim to popularise marimba music by participating in the country's most popular music genre, although it is notable that no original *sungura* composition has been recorded where marimbas are the instruments played. *Sungura* is also referred to as *museve* and is Zimbabwe's most popular music genre, based on music sales (Mhiripiri 2011). Historians and musicologists agree that *sungura* is a distinctively fast-paced rhythmic beat, which uses the finger-picking guitar technique (Eyre 2001; Mhiripiri 2011; Kwaramba 1997). Like all popular music the world over, mystery surrounds the origins of the genre as well as the meaning of its name. Notably, there seems to be no consensus on the roots of *sungura* music. I conducted a literature search and interviewed people with the aim of unearthing evidence of the roots of *sungura* music, which is a worthwhile cause as it contributes to the archiving of a people's past.

According to Charles Pfukwa (2010), *sungura* music's origin has been linked to Kenyan *benga* music. He says that Zimbabwean musicians have adapted, adopted and in some cases modified *benga* music to give it a Zimbabwean character. Pfukwa argues that *benga* has retained its original form with a new name; hence it has retained its character, while at the same time creating a strong Zimbabwean flavour as new generations of musicians continue to reshape and reproduce it. Simon Chimbetu, in collaboration with his brother Naison, captured the essence of *benga* rhythms and added Zimbabwean lyrics. They infused vocables, whistles, yodelling, laughter, exclamations and expressions of ecstasy that punctuate the guitar solos in *benga* music. He notes that a third generation of Zimbabwean musicians such as Sulumani and Tryson Chimbetu (Simon's and Naison's sons respectively) guarantee the future of *sungura*, and hence the future of *benga* as a genre enjoys a new lease of life in Zimbabwe. I observed that when this genre is arranged for marimba, its reach to the Zimbabwean population is enhanced.

A number of scholars concur on *sungura* music's East and Central African origin (Pfukwa 2010; Mhiripiri 2011; Kwaramba 1997). Sources also say that a well-known *benga* music producer called Oluoch Kanindo was influential in taking the

benga music genre to Southern Africa due to his distribution acumen. In Zimbabwe, the music is said to have become so popular that the locals named it Kanindo after the music producer. *Sungura* is Swahili for rabbit, and it was the name given to a faster variation of *benga* music from which Kanindo had spun. According to Richard Muranda and Wonder Maguraushe (2014), the complex fast *sungura* rhythms resemble the character of a rabbit, which is depicted in Shona folktales as a fast and cunning animal.

In Zimbabwe, virtuoso *sungura* music producer Bothwell Nyamhondera is largely credited by many *sungura* artists for shaping this genre into what it is today when he was a music engineer and producer at Gramma Records in the 1980s and 1990s. He has recently returned from a three-year stint in the United Kingdom and Zimbabwean musicians are excited about his return. Nyamhondera's expertise and creativity helped to brand *sungura* music into a highly marketable musical genre with a wide appeal. He played a key role in the rise to fame and prominence of Zimbabwe's popular artists. According to a manager at one of the local recording studios, Nyamhondera understands *sungura* very well and most of the local *sungura* artists trust him. The artists that I spoke to showed a lot of respect indeed for Nyamhondera and were unanimous that he is an excellent music engineer and producer.

Mura Nyakura travelled to Zaire and was influenced by the Kanindo-rhumba beat, which he then introduced to Zimbabwe. Ephraim Joe and the Sungura Boys band went on to pioneer and popularise the genre in the early 1980s. The band was made up of talented musicians who went on to form their own successful bands, namely John Chibadura, Simon Chimbetu, Naison Chimbetu, System Tazvida, Ronnie Chataika and Michel Jambo. When the Sungura Boys band broke up, the Khiama Boys band was formed, fronted by the left-handed[7] Nicholas Zackaria and

[7] Left-handedness in Zimbabwe for a long time was stigmatised and strongly discouraged by parents during childhood.

comprising System Tazvida, Silas Chakanyuka, Alick Macheso and Zacharia Zacharia (Jive Zimbabwe 2016).

Sub-genres later emerged from *sungura* music, such as Tendai Mupfurutsa's *barbed wire sungura* music, Simon and Naison Chimbetu's *dendera* music, and Leonard Zhakata's *zora sungura* music. The *dendera* music variation was Simon and Naison Chimbetu's innovation, characterised by a slightly slower and sturdy beat that they started as the Marxist Brothers in the early 1980s. The bass line in their *sungura* music resembles the sound of the wild *dendera* bird,[8] after which the genre was named by the Chimbetu brothers. They split later and Simon formed the Orchestra Dendera Kings, which flourished, while Naison struggled with his Great Seven Commandos band. A proliferation of *sungura* outfits emulated the *dendera* style. Leonard Zhakata coined his own *zora* type of *sungura* music and also churned out a number of hit songs in the 1990s. I notice that there are some *sungura* musicians who had their own unique brands of the same genre, such as Cephas Mashakada, Hosia Chipanga, Daiton and Josphat Somanje, and Admire Kasenga, who did not name their sub-genres. Of these artists, I have observed that Simon Chimbetu's and Leonard Zhakata's songs "*Tenda*" and "*Mugove*" respectively are popular with marimba bands.

Some of the sub-genres that emerged from *sungura* proved to be very popular with Zimbabweans. Simon Chimbetu became a household name in Zimbabwean music in the late 90s and after the turn of the millennium when he churned out hit songs such as "*Dendera Resango*", "*Boterekwa*", "*Samatenga*", "*Saina*", "*Vasiye*" and "*Tenda*". He is remembered for popularising the cell phone dance. He also invented the *hammerkop* and *dendera* dances at his own live music shows and now his son Sulumani has ably taken over the baton, with hits such as "*Kata*" and "*Batai Munhu*". This *dendera* brand of *sungura* music has also attracted the artistry of marimba ensembles that play the hit songs of the genre on the marimba and also

[8] *Bucorvus leadbeateri* (Southern Ground-Hornbill).

perform the *hammerkop* and *dendera* dances with acumen and industry. Leonard Zhakata's song Mugove is also quite popular with marimba bands.

Alick Macheso has established himself and his music through a dominating bass line that plays a key role in almost every song that he has done, which is quite an historic achievement. He has dominated the *sungura* music genre for over a decade now and this has influenced marimba troupes to play quite a number of his songs on the marimba, such as "*Madhawu*", "*Dudziro*", "*Shedia*" and "*Musha Wedu Washata*". The marimba groups have dancers who actually mimic his *borrowdale*, *razor wire*, *slomo*, *zorai butter* and *kochekera* dances, which he has popularised at his live shows where they have left *sungura* music lovers mesmerised. Notably, the *zorai butter* dance has even penetrated the football fraternity and soccer players perform the dance after scoring goals, a sign of the dance's phenomenal popularity in the country.

Richard Muranda and Wonder Maguraushe (2014:4) posit that *sungura* music's development is characterised by categories of trendsetters, emulators and copycats. The fact that *sungura* music as a genre has been encouraged by recording companies in Zimbabwe who own the means of production and obviously realise profits from selling it is quite significant. I notice that *sungura* music's marketability locally might have attracted the marimbists to perform that genre as well. They are interpellated by the producers who know that someone out there should consume *sungura* music records. I notice that the performance of *sungura* music is diffusing because the trait that originally used to be a preserve of electric guitarists has moved on to be embraced by marimba performers as well those who are emulating them.

Arranging *sungura* music to be played on a set of marimbas hinges on the marimba music arranger's ability to identify a *sungura* song's motifs, which are played on the guitars, and adopt them for the marimbas. A *sungura* song has motifs that identify it, which are sounded on the characteristically high-pitched lead guitar, rhythm, sub-rhythm and bass guitars with percussion on the drum set. When these

motifs are allocated by the marimba song arranger to be played on the marimbas, it is on the first soprano the lead guitar line is mimicked. The rhythm and sub-rhythm guitars' lines are emulated on the two tenor marimbas. The bass guitar line is played on the baritone marimba. The bass can either augment the bass guitar line sound or provide the basic pulse on the chords of the melody. Songs vary a lot and for an arrangement of Alick Macheso's songs, it is actually the bass guitar line that dominates the music.

The treatment of vocal lines for a *sungura* song arrangement to be played on the marimba varies, depending on the nature of the song being arranged. On the second soprano, the sung words of a song can be substituted. Since most *sungura* songs are in call-and-response form, the response line may be played on one of the tenor marimbas or the other soprano marimba, depending on the vocal range or register in which it is sung in the original song. Alternatively, the second soprano line can be a new creation to harmonise the lead line during the parts of a song that are not characterised by lead singer lines. I have observed some marimba groups that restrict the lead, rhythm, sub-rhythm and bass guitar lines to the soprano, tenor, baritone and bass marimbas and actually have performers who sing the vocal lines as they appear on the *sungura* song recording.

Some marimba groups that I observed play *sungura* music on the marimba without a drum set while other groups actually use it. Where there is no drum set, the aspects of signalling, beat and tempo are handled in three ways. Firstly, the signals to start a song, switch from one motif to another, change dynamic levels to allow singers to be heard, and to end a song are characterised by rolling on the dominant note. Secondly, the African drum can be used to provide the regular recurrent pulse of a song either on one or two *ngoma*, depending on the virtuosity of the group's drummer to play the instrument. Thirdly, marimba groups who play drums normally also use the *hosho* to mimic either the high-hats and snare drum sounds or just to provide a buzzing accompanying sound. The *hosho* player also maintains tempo in the performance, a role borrowed from Shona traditional music and dance performances.

Groups that use a drum set include MSU Music Business, Musicology and Technology Department's Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble. The drum kit plays a significant role in defining the *sungura* music style on the marimba. The kick drum maintains a specific and straight pulse. The pulse provides a constant throb for the song. The high hat fills in the gaps that are left by the kick drum. Sometimes there is use of a snare drum to fill these gaps. *Sungura* rolls are cues that pass information to the band members that the song is having a transition to the next movement. The variations of the *sungura* drumming revolve around the high hat and snare drum, and can also move to the mounted toms. The rolls of the *sungura* can either be done on the snare or the mounted toms to signal the entrance of next variation or segment of a song. The kick drum provides cues for the impending variations and dance movements. The drum can go hand in hand with the lead vocalist on variations, but it can also use the whole band in creating these variations. *Sungura* drumming mainly uses two techniques with the high hat and these are the 16th note and the 32nd note, which can also be termed the modern-day or simple/classic playing techniques. In the simple or 16^{th}-note technique there is the use of the ta-fa te-fe notes, whereas in the 32^{nd}-note technique there is the use of the press technique. Most *sungura* drummers use the 32^{nd}-note technique. The drummer in *sungura* music manages the rhythm and tempo of a song through the use of either the kick drum or the high-hat technique. The cymbal marks the end of the roll that signals change of movement within a song, or sometimes the end of a song. The high hat is usually congruent with the bass guitar rhythm.

I had the privilege of watching Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble showcasing a rendition of the song "*Dudziro*" that was originally done by Alick Macheso and the Orchestra Mberikwazvo Band. This ensemble used a full drum set to define the *sungura* beat of the song and also to play the rolls and give signals that mark the song's beginning and ending, to show the beginning and ending of the song's various movements or sections by signalling transitional points, as well as to master the jerks of the song. The high hats and the snare drum percussed in sympathy with the vibrating wooden bars, whose resonators gave the song a unique African flavour. The first soprano marimba player played the lead guitar line, while the

second soprano marimba player harmonised the lead line and filled in the gaps. The two tenor marimba players played the rhythm and sub-rhythm guitar lines. Alick Macheso's trademark bass line was sounded on the bass marimba, with the baritone marimba player playing some of the notes that are outside the bass marimba range, and this created a rich resultant harmony.

Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble had three singers who harmonised each other's lines. They remixed the original lyrics by Macheso "*Kana zano raramba, usaite hasha, gara pasi utarire pasi nekudenga. Wonamata wonamata wonamata eeh. Gumisire woti zvimwe wakashinhirirwa, iwe usinaba wazvifambira wega nekunemafeso*" (If your idea has flopped, don't get angry, sit down and look to the heavens and pray and pray and pray. You end up thinking you were wronged when actually it is you who walked the wrong path). They changed these words to become "*Huori hwanyanya, honaiwo hama, garai pasi mutarire, nyika yaparara. Yaparara yaparara yaparara eeh. Mhedzisiro toti zvimwe tinaho hurombo. Isu tichizviurayira tega nyika yedu nehuori*" (Corruption is rife, look people, sit and reflect, the country is finished. We end up thinking that we are poor when we are actually destroying our own economy through corruption).

The climax of the performance was punctuated by serious dancing. The ensemble's lead singer emulated Alick Macheso's *museve*[9] (borrowdale) dance. Their backing vocalist also played the role of a chanter, which used to be done by Jonas Kasamba before he left Orchestra Mberikazvo to co-found the Kwazvose Band. At the climax of the song, the duo performed the popular dances created by Alick Macheso: *razor wire, zorai butter, kochekere and slomo*, much to the amusement of the *sungura* music lovers who actually ended up joining them in dancing to the music. As the dances were being performed, the drummer played a critical role as he sounded the dance steps on the drum set and the way he coordinated with the dancers showed evidence of committed rehearsals and choreography. The bass marimba player articulated a dominant bass-line rhythm typical of Alick Macheso's style, in which

[9] A name that Zimbabweans give to fast-paced *sungura* music dance steps.

he uses the bass guitar to mark the climax of the song by showing his virtuosity on the instrument as he plays a solo line.

Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble also showcased a rendition of Simon "Chopa" Chimbetu's 2000 hit song entitled "*Tenda*". The allocation of lead, rhythm, sub-rhythm and bass guitar lines to the marimba was soprano, tenor 1, tenor 2, and bass respectively, with the second soprano helping to fill in gaps and also responding to the lead vocalist. At some point in their arrangement, the lead singer kept quiet as the lead marimba surrogated the lead vocal line "*Tenda tenda tenda, tenda gore rapera*". The second soprano, tenors and bass all surrogated the vocal response line "*Tenda tenda tenda, tenda wariona*". The marimba players also sang the response line as they played it on their instruments. This section clearly defined the song's identity and the fans sang along with the marimbas in ecstatic fashion. The beginning, transitions, jerks and ending were signalled by the drummer. The three vocalists danced the *cell phone*, *dendera* and "*hammerkop*"/*musoro-musoro* dances that were popularised by Simon Chimbetu and the response was overwhelming, with the fans dancing along on the dance floor.

Another group that I observed playing *sungura* music on the marimba is the Mkoba Teachers College Music Department's Marimba Ensemble. The group rearranged and performed the song "*Musha wedu washata"*, which was again originally done by Alick Macheso and Orchestra Mberikwazvo Band. The group used the *ngoma* (African drum) player to tap the regular recurrent pulse of the song in the manner of the kick drum, while the *hosho* (shakers) player percussed in sympathy with the singing wooden bars, with the aid of the in-built buzzers. The lead guitar line was played on the first soprano marimba. The second soprano marimba played the transitional signals to mark the beginnings and endings of the song or its phrases by rolling on the note g. The rhythm and sub-rhythm guitar lines were played on the two tenor marimbas. The baritone marimba was allocated the bass line, and it was complimented by the bass marimba.

The Mkoba Teachers College Marimba group had four singers who shared different vocal ranges and corrupted the original lyrics that were sung by Alick Macheso "*Baba namai musha wedu washata. Mamhepo awanda hatichaziva zvekuita. Kana paine akashinha akaromba chikwambo, ngaabude pachena chidzorerwe kumwene wacho*" (Father and mother our home is bad. Bad omens are now prevalent; we don't know what to do. If one member of our family is using a goblin, they must confess so that we can return it to whoever gave it to them). They changed these lyrics to sing "*Baba namai nyika yedu yashata. Huori hwawanda hatichaziva zvekuita. Kana paine akashinha arikuita huori, ngaabude pachena tidzokere muzvakanaka"* (Father and mother our country has deteriorated. Corruption is so rife that we don't know what to do. If there are those who are practising corrupt acts, they must confess so that we go back to our good times).

The Mkoba Teachers College Marimba group also treated the climax of the performance in typical Alick Macheso style, where the bass marimba played a solo line alongside the *ngoma* and *hosho*. The four singers did the *borrowdale* dance with a passion, and the appreciative crowd doubled up watching with dancing along to the *sungura* beat as well. The peak of their dance was marked by solo freestyle dance routines as they took turns to move slightly to the front and hog the limelight with mesmerising dance steps, which they emulate from Alick Macheso himself. This was quite a memorable performance for lovers of *sungura* marimba music who were visibly enjoying every moment of the show.

4.3.2. Marabi Music Compositions

"*Skokiaan*" is a popular tune originally written by Zimbabwean musician August Musarurwa with the Bulawayo Sweet Rhythms Band. It refers to an illegal alcoholic beverage typically brewed over one day. As mentioned before, marimba is a uniquely African instrument that was introduced at Kwanongoma College in Bulawayo as an African instrument for instruction by Robert Sibson in 1961. The marimba set of Kwanongoma College of African Music consisted of soprano, tenor, a nine-note baritone and an eight-note bass. The inclusion of F#s in a diatonic C-

scale meant that the tunes could be played in either the key of C major or G major, which made the instrument more versatile, especially as an accompaniment for singing. The repertoire of Kwanongoma Marimba Band expanded from the driving beat of township jive music to American Big Band tunes that exploited the chromatic marimba set. "*Skokiaan*" is one of the songs that went viral and was arranged to be played on the Zimbabwe marimba. Here I explore the lyrics and notes arranged by Tom Glazer in 1954, a version of "*Skokiaan*" released by Gallotone Records in Bulawayo and sub-published in America by Shapiro, Burnstein & Co. Inc.

Marimba is a suitable instrument for students of any ethnicity in Zimbabwe and, by extension, for students anywhere in the world. Marimba arrangements of the song "*Skokiaan*" are particularly popular among groups playing Zimbabwe music. The song has been recorded many times, initially as part of the wave of world music that swept across the globe in the 1950s. A prescriptive transcription by Tom Glazer is laid as an aid to analyse the contents of the song. To analyse any piece of music, seven features are reviewed to gather analytical information about a particular descriptive level of music, such as an analysis of the local range, lyrical content, melodic content, rhythmic content, the inventory, cantometric analysis and the form in music.

The song begins with a vocable, "Oh!" which draws the audience's attention to the music that is about to be heard. This feature appears at the beginning of every chorus. The words "hokey-pokey", and "sko-ki" are often used as a way of controlling the vocal tract's glottis. The use of assonance and consonance is noticed in the recurrence of "a-bing-a-bang-a-bingo, man, oh man, oh man" and in the repetition of the word *skokiaan*. The alliteration of "b" repetition causes a great impact on the harmony. The songwriter also engages the style of kinaesthetic analysis when he mentions the words drumming and strumming. A simile is used when he says, you live along "like" a king. "Ship", "trip" and also "drumming" and "strumming" are rhymes used for the song to flow smoothly. Hot drums and hot

strings are forms of tactile imagery, meaning that music is played without ceasing. The word "ball" symbolises a wonderful time.

People are influenced by song lyrics, which can be either pro-social (responsibility) or anti-social (breakdown in morals). The songwriter is praising the African continent, describing it as the happiest place ever to live in. In mentioning the words "drums" and "strings" the songwriter intimates that Africa was not a dark continent inhabited by barbarians and sub-humans before the coming of Europeans. This reveals that Africa had changeable cultural achievements before colonisation. The beer skokiaan is a unifying force in Africa as it is communally consumed. The lyrics of "*Skokiaan*" transcribed here say: "Take a trip to Africa, when you go to Africa you live like a king, happy, Africa right in the jungle bungalow sing-a-bing-a-bingo, they have a ball and really go, go, go in hokey-pokey skokiaan. Hot drums are drumming, the hot string are strumming and warm lips are blissful, their kissful of skokiaan, skokiaan, skokiaan". They mean: Have a pleasurable journey to Africa where there is much freedom and joy. Africa, the land with dense forests where traditional music with fast drumbeat is sounded people having good time and drinking their-brewed beer called skokiaan.

The beer is used for recreational purposes, brings people together entertaining themselves mostly during ritual ceremonies, and skokiaan, as a true African beer, suggests socialisation within the African context. By connotation, skokiaan suggests a connection between people living in the physical realm and those dwelling in the spiritual or ancestral world. Here beer is used to appease ancestral spirits. "Skokiaan" as a song helps celebrate the African culture, therefore safeguarding it from erosion, since it can be passed on from one generation to another. In Africa, beer promotes collectivism as opposed to individualism.

The head register of the soprano voice ranges from the D note above middle C up an octave to D note in the treble clef. The song "Skokiaan" is in the key of G major and the leading voice starts on D, the dominant note. The accompanying voices of bass and baritone move in parallel motion an octave apart, starting on the median,

B. The tenor voice is a third below the soprano and sings the same melody, with the leading voice moving in similar motion. In the chest register, the lowest note in the bass clef is D, the dominant note, and the highest is the middle C.

Nostalgia is the theme conveyed by the songwriter as he yearns for the past. A celebratory mood or atmosphere is painted. The ship is the mode of transport and reveals the setting of the song in time. Perhaps the songwriter is the victim of European slavery, hence he finds himself uprooted from his roots, or the African soil (take any ship to Africa). So, in a way the songwriter is casting a retrospective gaze into the past where Africa was still a virgin land (jungle) before it was raped by colonisers. The songwriter's audience are foreigners; he is thus forced to use English. The songwriter uses Africanised English. In other words, he makes English prey on African proverbs, myths, legends and experiences as a deliberate way of running away from the temptation of committing linguistic promiscuity. To that end, the songwriter uses words with African connotations, for instance *skokiaan*.

The melodic structure of a given piece has been considered to be the collection of the proximity relations between equal length melodies supported by the super segmented relationships. The bass simply creates a walking line of notes dwelling on major chords I and V with the possible addition of the sixth note E in chord V. The shape of the melody of the leading voice gently falls from the dominant note and such a line gives the contour or shape of the melodic line.

The soprano and tenor parts are moving in parallel and similar motion and major and minor 3rds and perfect 4ths. In harmonic analysis, this composition style is called counterpoint, which can be interpreted as note against note composition. The chorus is being reinforced by chord I and V7 in the leading voice. By involving two independent but harmonic parts in the leading voices, the melody, the texture of the song becomes polyphonic.

Grouping intervals and rhythmic content according to their kind is melodic content analysis. Klapuri (2006) asserts that in order to write down the music in a symbolic

form it is necessary to perform quantisation or perceptual categorisation: a track of pitch values is segmented into notes with discrete pitch labels, note timings and quantised by naming the sound involved.

According to Jonathan Foote (2000), anyone who taps a foot in time to music performs rhythm analysis. Beat spectrum is a new measurement for tempo analysis. Cantometric analysis arose out of the cultural study of expressive style, formed under the direction of Alan Lomax in 1961. The term refers to a system for the measurement of singing style. Firstly, style is significantly affected only by certain cultural elements such as subsistence type, political structure, sexual conventions, modes of social order and complexity of class structure. Individual cultures share features with their neighbours who merit their grouping into much larger regions: Eurasians, Africans, and North American Indians. The song "*Skokiaan*", despite its Zimbabwean origin, gained popularity outside Africa at the same time as the indigenous South African export *Mbube* (Wimoweh).

4.4. SUMMARY

In this chapter I examined how traditional and contemporary song compositions and arrangements fit into Zimbabwe marimba musicking. The chapter has revealed that songs that can be played in a major or minor key can be played on the Zimbabwe marimba. Performers in Zimbabwe play music by rote and this implies that when they re-arrange songs that were originally played on different instruments to be played on the marimba they do not transcribe the music, neither do they compose new songs on score. The music comes through the oral tradition. I analysed traditional Zimbabwean, *sungura*, and *marabi* songs that are played on the Zimbabwean marimba. One observation that I made is that there are no marimba composers who have documented their work on score but a couple of video recordings exist. Even descriptions by scholars is still a grey area which still has a lot that is yet to be explored. The Zimbabwe marimba musicians just enjoy musicking on the wood that sings through performing before their fans.

CHAPTER 5
MARIMBA PROGAMMES, MENTORS, AND PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUES

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The situation of marimba performance that we observe in contemporary Zimbabwe has been achieved due to a number of factors. These include the teaching and learning process in schools, teachers' colleges, polytechnics, music academies, universities, as well as non-formal encounters in community-based ensembles. In this chapter, I chronicle marimba teaching and learning programmes in academic institutions in Zimbabwe because through these school music programmmes, musicking on the Zimbabwe marimba has grown to reach many people in different areas. I go further to present some of Zimbabwe's notable marimba mentors who have played a part in disseminating marimba knowledge and playing skills to the younger generation in the schools.

Staging a live marimba performance is a result of coaching, practice, and commitment, which takes many hours from mentors' and players' schedules. In this chapter, I also discuss some of the teaching and learning methods that marimba mentors use to impart the knowledge and skills of playing the marimba in Zimbabwe. I further discuss performance techniques that local marimba ensembles exhibit during live shows and festivals as they musick on the wood that sings. These have evolved from the time when the Zimbabwe marimbas were designed at Kwanongoma College of African Music in the 1960s to what we see currently. Finally, I focus on mental, physical and technical aspects of Zimbabwe marimba music performance.

5.2. MARIMBA MUSIC EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

5.2.1. Marimba music performance programmes in academic institutions

Since the Zimbabwe marimba was designed at Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo in 1962, marimba music performance has spread within and outside Zimbabwe's borders like a veld fire. Marimba teachers have taught and popularised the instrument amongst music learners at schools, music academies, teachers' colleges, polytechnics and universities, as well as in community-based marimba bands. These marimba mentors deserve attention in this part of the thesis because of their critical role in the dissemination of knowledge and skills of marimba performance. It has been a case of mentors teaching their students, and then some of their students graduating and continuing with the dissemination of the knowledge and acquired skills to the next generation of learners. The teaching of marimba has gone beyond Zimbabwe's borders but I do not chronicle that as it is beyond the scope of this thesis. While some marimba mentors have migrated and gone on to teach marimba music performance abroad, I discuss only the work that they have done in Zimbabwe.

5.2.2. Teacher training colleges

The role played by Kwanongoma College of African Music, which was formed at the United College of Education in the 1960s, in the marimba music dissemination process was both pioneering and ground-breaking. The Zimbabwe marimbas were designed and made there in 1962. Many of Zimbabwe's pioneer marimba music educators have either trained at Kwanongoma College of African Music, or been taught by some of the former students of the college. The class of former Kwanongoma College of African Music students includes Sheasby Matiure, Tendekai Kuture, Evans Chinyama, Chiwawa, Chris Timbe. These graduates have gone on to enrol for degree programs in music with the aim of boosting their knowledge and skills to deliver music education packages. Sheasby Matiure and Tendekai Kuture are now lecturing at the University of Zimbabwe and Africa

University respectively after earning a doctorate and a master's degree respectively. The others, Evans Chinyama, Chris Timbe and Chiwawa, achieved bachelor's degrees and are now retired former music lecturers at Mutare Teachers College, Seke Teachers College, and Morgan ZINTEC College respectively.

Teachers training colleges also offer music education in which playing the marimba is one of the components. These colleges are certified by the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education, with which they are in a scheme of association. Under this scheme, Hillside, Belvedere and Mutare Teachers colleges train secondary school teachers. Students at Hillside and Mutare Teachers training college get a chance to specialise in music as a subject and are exposed to instrument playing, including playing marimba. Primary school teachers are trained at Morgan Zintec, Seke, Nyadire, Madziwa, Marymount, Masvingo, Morgenster, Bondolfi, Mkoba, United College of Education, and Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo teachers colleges. All primary teachers training colleges include music as a subject in their curriculums but their levels of specialisation need to be further improved since they produce general classroom practitioners who teach more than 10 subjects, including music. All teacher-training colleges have marimba ensembles that compete at the Tertiary Institutions Festival of Arts (TIFAZ), and at the Research and Intellectual Output – Science and Technology EXPO (RIO-SET) Marimba Music Performance Segment annually.

5.2.3. University music programmes in Zimbabwe

Universities have played a part in the dissemination of marimba music performance skills in Zimbabwe. Natalie Kreutzer designed a Bachelor of Education Degree in Music program, which was introduced at the University of Zimbabwe in 1990. Initially it was an in-service programme meant to bridge a gap for music lecturers in teachers' colleges lecturing without degree qualifications. The programme had components of the music curriculum, andragogy, foundations of music education, and professional studies. In this programme students learnt, among other music courses, how to play the marimba, applying theory of music to the teaching and

learning of marimba, tuning the marimba, transcribing marimba music, as well as marimba music performance techniques and methodology.

A number of Kwanongoma College of African Music graduates enrolled for the degree, including Sheasby Matiure, Tendekai Kuture, Evans Chinyama, Chiwawa, Jerry Rutsate, and Chris Timbe. The next class enrolled Claudio Chipendo, Tendai Shoko, Muchinga, Timothy Lunga, Mugandani, amongst others. After this class the authorities shifted their attention to enrol music teachers who wished to further their music education studies since most lecturers in teachers' colleges who previously had no degrees had attained them. In 2003 the enrolled class included Tendai Muparutsa, Martha Gwisai, Sheron Masoka, Locardia Sango, Daniel Wachenuka, Maxwell Rafomoyo, Munyarazi Chikonyora, Edward Nare, Perminus Matiure, Grace Muhenyeri, Sunungukai Murowe, Ruth Ndambakuwa, Isaac Machafa and me. Only Tendai Muparutsa was a college lecturer on enrolment for the programme in this class, but the majority found their way into lectureship at tertiary institutions after graduating.

Africa University in 2004 also introduced a Bachelor of Music degree with Education taught first by Matsikenyeri and later on by Benon Kigozi. Tendekai Kuture is the current music lecturer and the university has a component of music instrument specialisation in which marimba is one of the instruments taught.

Midlands State University (MSU) started a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Music and Musicology in 2003 (It was rebranded to become the Bachelor of Science in Music Business, Musicology and Technology Honours Degree. The staff complement has since that time largely depended on music educators who had studied the Bachelor of Music Education Degree at the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education. These are Claudio Chipendo, Tendai Shoko, Tendai Muparutsa, Perminus Matiure, Isaac Machafa, and I. Midlands State University teaches a pure music degree that exposes students to six musical instruments. Initially students are introduced to Voice and Mbira in the module BMM 115 at Level 1.1, Marimba and Recorder in the module BMM 120 at Level

1.2, Guitar and Keyboard in the module BMM 204 at Level 2.1. Instrument performance specialisation then runs for the final three semesters during which students choose two instruments of major specialisation. At Level 2.2 they take BMM 208 Fundamental Performance Practice Specialisation. At Level 4.1 they take BMM 404 Intermediate Performance Practice Specialisation, while at Level 4.2 they take BMM 409 Advanced Performance Specialisation.

From this MSU music programme, students who choose to specialise in marimba get a chance to progress to levels of virtuosity on the instrument. Marimba music performance modules at MSU are taught by Tendai Shoko, who takes BMM120, where the students begin learning marimba, and then start BMM 208 Fundamental Performance Practice Specialisation. I take the Intermediate Performance Practice Specialisation and Advanced Performance Practice Specialisation modules BMM 404 and BMM 409 respectively. MSU marimba music performance has dominated the Research and Intellectual Output, Science and Technology Expo marimba Music Performance Competition since its inception in 2012. Rimba Resonance Vibes Ensemble is one band that I formed from MSU Marimba Ensemble students and which made a big impact by winning the inaugural Tambarimba Festival's Open Bands Category in 2015.

Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) is another institution that has played a part and teaches marimba as part of its music curriculum in Zimbabwe. GZU introduced a degree programme in 2012 in which marimba music performance is studied as a component. The music curriculum at GZU was designed by Dr Jerry Rutsate and it includes components such as ethno-choreology.

5.2.4. Music academies in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe College of Music (ZAM) was started in Harare at the Kopje in 1948 and moved to the city's Civic Centre in 1960. Initially the college taught purely Western music to whites. This changed after independence and in 1988 the college started offering ethnomusicology, music administration and performance. The

marimba is taught as part of the curriculum alongside other African and Western musical instruments. The ZCM now offers a Bachelor of Music Degree in either Ethnomusicology, Jazz, or Bandmaster-ship. The college offers an Adventures in Music Programme for schoolchildren who wish to explore musical instruments. In addition, they offer Saturday Short Courses and an individual tuition programme for people who wish to learn to play musical instruments. There is also a 10-week Saturday Pop Workshop for all instruments, including the marimba. The ZCM has produced many nationally and internationally acclaimed artists such as former Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) Director Manuel Bagorro, James Chimombe, Ephat Mujuru, Dumi Ngulube, Clayton Ndlovu, Simangaliso Tutani, Jethro Shasha, Joyce Jenje-Makwende and Louis Mhlanga. The ZCM also has a vibrant Timbila Vibes Ensemble, which has won international marimba festivals. One ZCM product who plays marimba music in his band is Charles Chipanga of Charlenam Rhythms. Some of ZCM's former students formed the Sailors Crew Marimba Band after graduating from the college.

The Zimbabwe Academy of Music (ZAM) in Fomona, Bulawayo is a non-profit-making trust that was formed in 1949. Its goal is to promote and teach music to internationally recognised levels. Initially it had a curriculum of Western music but now it also offers a variety of Western and African musical instruments including the marimba. The college has a renowned School of Rock. It has one of the best halls in Southern Africa in terms of acoustical finesse, the 400-seater Robert Sibson Hall. The Zimbabwe Academy of Music is a hive of activity for performing arts in Bulawayo. It hosts the biennial Bulawayo Music Festival, which started in 1997. The college also offers individual tuition in playing orchestral instruments and African instruments including the marimba. Rainbow Blaze is a marimba ensemble that is based at the ZAM and has gained recognition in marimba music performance at national and international festivals.

The Midlands Academy of Music in Gweru was formed to offer Certificate in Music qualifications to students. Its curriculum has both Western and African music components including marimba music performance. Some of its graduates include

Tinomutenda Chihora, a primary school music teacher who has recorded a marimba music album. The college has since faced viability challenges and is currently not enrolling students. The Manicaland Music Academy had a similar curriculum but has also stopped offering music classes due to a plethora of challenges.

5.2.5. Polytechnic colleges

Mutare Polytechnic has a Division of Applied Arts and Sciences which offers a National Certificate in Music. The music programme started in 2003 and at this juncture its work in music is characterised by quality as evidenced by the college's capacity to field a very competent Mutare Polytechnic Marimba Ensemble at the annual RIO-SET Expo's Music competitions, as well as *mbira*, electric band, dance and choir groups. Their current Head of Department is Hapison Mangezi, a former MSU Department of Music and Musicology student. Their students write HEXCO Examinations and marimba is part of their curriculum as well, hence the college has contributed to the dissemination of marimba music in the country.

5.3. MARIMBA MUSIC PERFORMANCE MENTORS

The late **Alport Mhlanga** (1945-2012) is one of the first Kwanongoma College of African Music graduates who have done extensive work in teaching marimba music performance in Zimbabwe and abroad. Alport was a music composer, educator, and marimba maker. He was both a master marimba musician and marimba teacher who inspired many young marimba musicians who interacted with him. He taught and performed marimba music from 1964 and earned himself the title "King of Marimba". He was a key figure at Kwanongoma College of African Music for 22 years before he left in 1987 for Maru-a-Pula School in Gaborone, Botswana. He conducted many seminars, workshops, and performances in the international arena in Africa, Europe and America.

Alport Mhlanga took over in 1966 from Josiya Siyembe Mathe as the marimba teacher at Kwanongoma College of African Music. He increased the repertoire of

the Kwanongoma Marimba Band at a time when the newly created Zimbabwean style Kwanongoma marimba instrument needed songs, otherwise it would have been just a piece of furniture. The Lozi marimba that had been left by Josiya Siyembe Mathe were *siyamboka* and *singonki*. Alport Mhlanga composed "*Rancherra*", "*Maimbo*", "*Rugare 1*", "*Rugare 2*", "*Amaxoxo*", and "*eKwanongoma*". Alport Mhlanga's students composed "*Chiradza 1*" and "*Chiradza 2*", which were named after their composers. Traditional songs such as "*Chamutengure*", "*Nhemamusasa*", "*Taireva*", "*Chipembere*", and "*Mahororo*" were also arranged to be played on the marimba. In addition, Mhlanga and his students arranged township jive beats "Skokiaan" and "Take it Easy", as well as American Big Band tunes "A Swinging Safari" and "In the Mood" in their work to expand the repertoire of the Zimbabwe marimba (Chaia Marimba 2014).

Abraham Dumisani Maraire (27 December 1944 – 25 November 1999) is also one of the key Kwanongoma College of African Music product from the early years. He was driven by a passion to preserve and expand traditional Zimbabwean music throughout his music career. By the age of 21 he had started composing and arranging music for the United Methodist Church Choir in Zimbabwe. This is the time when Dr Robert Kauffman saw him and encouraged him to pursue music studies in the United States of America. He was a guru of the marimba and *nyunga-nyunga mbira*, teacher, artist, composer and ambassador of Zimbabwean music in North America. He arranged scores of pieces for marimba ensembles, as well as recorded marimba and *mbira* albums. He went to the University of Washington in 1968 where he was artist-in-residence. He taught Peter Swing of the Polyphony Marimba Ensemble, and also created two marimba ensembles.

Maraire taught many aspects of music, which included playing the marimba, to quite a number of music students before he left for North America where he played a key role in spreading Zimbabwe marimba music. Between 1986 and 1990 he worked on designing a music curriculum for the University of Zimbabwe. He earned a doctorate in music at the University of Washington. Maraire returned to Zimbabwe in 1990 and lectured music at the University of Zimbabwe's Department

of Teacher Education. At the UZ he taught Kwanongoma College of African Music graduates Sheasby Matiure, Tendekai Kuture, Evans Chinyama, Chiwawa, and Chris Timbe, amongst others. His products would then go into teacher training colleges to continue with the dissemination process. Maraire passed on in 1999 after an illustrious music career during which he taught marimba music performance, among other aspects such as *mbira* playing and choral singing (Guchu [Sa]).

Sheasby Matiure (27 July 1956-10 November 2016) is another product of Kwanongoma College of African Music who graduated with a Music Instructor's Certificate. While studying there, he was introduced to the *nyunganyunga mbira,* the marimba and choral singing, all of which became his areas of expertise and excellence. He went on to introduce and teach marimba music at Marlborough High School in Harare. His grandfather played the mbira but unfortunately passed away before he could learn from him. In high school Sheasby played piano and guitar, and his favorite musical styles were *maskanda,* Palm Wine music, and Jimi Hendrix.

He lectured at Seke Teachers College in Chitungwiza from 1985 to 2000, where he taught marimba among other music courses for a number of years. Later he enrolled at the UZ for his bachelor's degree in music teacher education under the tutorship of Abraham Dumisani Maraire. He later joined the Department of Teacher Education at the same university from where he had graduated, now as a music lecturer. During his lectureship, he has mentored a number of marimba music lecturers, producing about three intakes totalling about 30 music teacher education graduates. He taught me marimba when I was doing my undergraduate degree at the UZ in 2003 and currently he is still lecturing there. Some of the notable marimba music teachers and lecturers he taught include Timothy Lunga, Gabriel Machinga, Tendai Shoko, Claudio Chipendo, Tendai Muparutsa, Locardia Sango, Maxwell Rafomoyo, and Isaac Machafa.

He performed across Europe, the United States, and Africa both as a solo artist and as Manager and Artistic Director of the Zimbabwe National Dance Company

(1980-1982). While directing the National Dance Company, Sheasby met Dumisani Maraire who had returned from the US and was working for the Ministry of Youth Sport and Recreation. Sheasby quickly became Dumi's right hand man and they performed *mbira* on international stages. Dumisani had taught and performed extensively in the US, and planted the seeds of the Zimbabwean music community, especially in the Pacific Northwest and Sheasby later carried on in the same role. Natalie Jones Kreutzer, a UZ Music lecturer in the Department of Teacher Education brought Sheasby to the United States to serve as an artist-in-residence for the International Vocal Ensemble at Indiana University in 1997. She and Mary Goetze served as Sheasby's mentors.

Sheasby finished a Master's Degree in Ethnomusicology in 1999. During his studies he taught at Zimfest and across the US. In 1998, he formed the Mutinhimira Marimba Ensemble, with the support of IU's Folklore & Ethnomusicology Department, which purchased the marimba set from Zimbabwe. In 2003 Sheasby taught me marimba and mbira music performance techniques at the UZ during my undergraduate studies. In 2004, Sheasby returned to Indiana University on a Fulbright Scholarship to study for a PhD on Mbira and Marimba Performance Practice in the United States which he completed in 2008. During this time, he continued to teach in the Zimbabwean music community, formed a second incarnation of Mutinhimira, and led the Mbira Queens, a *nyunganyunga mbira* ensemble featuring rich vocal harmonies. During both stints at IU, he taught undergraduate courses in African Music and Performance.

He was one of the Zimfest community's longtime teachers and friends, a great contributor to Zimbabwean music education. Sheasby was a musician, educator and scholar in both North America and Zimbabwe with a true passion for music, as well as for teaching. He was dedicatied to his students and family. He recorded two albums while at Indiana University, *Ngoma* (1998), a collection of mbira songs featuring back-up vocals by Monkey Puzzle, and *Sarura Wako* (2008), a combination of the Mbira Queens and Mutinhimira Marimba Band repertoire. Throughout his long career, Sheasby performed and conducted workshops in

African musical performance in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Great Britain. He performed for Queen Elizabeth II during a tour of Australia, and for Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during her visit to IU. During his graduate studies, he performed and conducted workshops across the United States, in a variety of contexts. Sheasby's talent was immense, and his ability to teach Zimbabwean music was a cherished gift for students and audiences across the world. He believed that the power of music was in sharing it. He was scheduled to teach and perform in the US together with his son Tafadzwa, a member of my band Rimba Resonance Vibes, in 2017.

Upon completion of his PhD in Ethnomusicology (minor in African Studies) in 2008, he returned to Zimbabwe and worked as Senior Lecturer of Music Education and Ethnomusicology and Chairman of the DTE at the UZ. In that role, he oversaw national education standards in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. He taught me again for my master's degree in 2010. He continued to passionately support the spread of Zimbabwean music through his ongoing connection to his mbira and marimba students in the US. His last teaching and performing tour was in the summer of 2014, and included Vermont, the Midwest, Boulder, Colorado, and the Pacific Northwest, including Zimfest and Nhemamusasa North.

Tendekai Kuture (8 April 1954-**)** is Head of the Music Department, and Choir Director at United Methodist-related Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe. He joined AU in 2008 after serving as Chair of MSU's Department of Music and Musicology between 2006 and 2008 but has since returned to the same position at AU in Mutare. One of his students at AU, Richard Muranda, went on to teach marimba at Mkoba Teachers College before joining Midlands State University's Music Business, Musicology and Technology Department, where he now specialises in music technology. Kuture's music career and experience spans over 45 years. His first assignment as a choir conductor was in 1971 at Nyamuzuhwe High School, a United Methodist Mission school in Zimbabwe's north-eastern district of Mutoko. Kuture also taught marimba among other practicals at primary

schools in Manicaland Province, and has a passion for choral music composition, choir training and conducting.

He continued to do choir training and conducting as he progressed to Nyadire Teachers' College. He specialized in music as a special study subject and attained a Diploma in Education. This position advanced Kuture's knowledge of music, particularly choral music. At Nyadire, he served as the college's Choir Director for three years. His outstanding accomplishment was developing the ability to teach and train choral music using either staff or tonic-sol-fa notation. This accounted for Kuture's profound choral growth. In 1984, Kuture enrolled for a Diploma in Music Teacher Education at Hillside Teachers' College. With this qualification he managed to join the Music Department at Mutare Teachers College in 1985 and produced many music teachers in a career spanning nearly two decades. He taught Music Theory, Appreciation, History and Practicals and conducted the Mutare Teachers' College Choir from 1985 to 2002. He holds a Bachelor of Education Degree in Music from the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education which he was awarded in 1995; and a Master of Music Degree from the University of Idaho.

He worked with the St. James United Methodist choir in Mutare, a choir he also directed from 1989 to 2000. It was during this period that the Zimbabwe Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church discovered Kuture's choral gifts, resulting in his appointment as conference director. He held this post from 1989 to 2002, and he was in charge of the Music Ministry of Zimbabwe Annual Conference, which at that time included Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Botswana. His task was to improve both congregational hymnal and choral singing in the United Methodist Church. He organized and ran choral workshops, coaching clinics, and he also composed and arranged competition set pieces.

Timothy Lunga (13 May 1963-15 December 2016) attended Kwanongoma College of African Music at the United College of Education in Bulawayo, where he learnt to play several musical instruments including the marimba. He went on to

teach music in schools before joining Mutare Teachers College as a lecturer in 1995, where he is the marimba lecturer in the Music Department, and has produced many teachers over the years. He taught me marimba in 1997 when I came into contact with marimbas for the first time during my teacher training at MTC. During my studies, I teamed up with Ornard Viriri, Chipo Mupambo, Tapiwa Ndemera, Misheck Baradza and Bothwell Moto to play in the Mutare Teachers College Marimba ensemble, which played at various functions in Mutare. Timothy Lunga's deft touches on the marimba inspired me to fall in love with the instrument and since then I have always been involved in performing marimba music. Lunga enrolled with the UZ and studied for a Bachelor of Education Degree in Music and did not complete the Master of Teacher Education Degree. He currently lectures at Mutare Teachers College.

Tendai Muparutsa (18 April 1967-) is one of the virtuoso marimba players to hail from a family of musicians in Mutare, Zimbabwe. He has a deft touch on the soprano marimba that mesmerises audiences when he plays music. He taught marimba music at elementary school in Manicaland Province. Later he joined Marymount Teachers College in Mutare as a music lecturer. In 2005, he joined the then Department of Music and Musicology at MSU where he taught marimba, dance, and ethnomusicology among other aspects. Muparutsa plays many melodic musical instruments, but is very good at percussion and dance as well. He is a student of Timothy Lunga, the late marimba virtuosos Pepukai Mudzingwa, Abraham Dumisani Maraire, and Sheasby Matiure. Muparutsa has played with several popular bands as percussionist that include Victor Kunonga, Tanga wekwaSando among others.

He is known for conducting choral music workshops in schools and choirs in and around Harare and Mutare. He was also involved in cultural exchange programmes between Zimbabwe and Norway where he taught marimba to the Norwegians. He has become a marimba player of international acclaim, a music educator, ethnomusicologist and bandleader. Between 1999-2000 he studied music at the ZCM in Harare, where he graduated with a National Certificate in Music. In 2004,

we were in the same Bachelor of Education in Music Degree class at the University of Zimbabwe under the tutorship of Sheasby Matiure. I had the privilege of playing baritone in the same UZ Marimba Ensemble with Muparutsa on soprano. In 2008, Muparutsa graduated from the University of Idaho with a Master's Degree in Music. He attained his PhD at the University of Alberta in 2013. During his studies in America he has made an impact as director of Zambezi Marimba Band, and co-director of Kusika dance company at Williams College where he is an Artist-In-Residence since 2012.

Farai Gezi (23 January 1949-) is a marimba builder, music mentor and musician in his own right who has taught music to both children and adults in schools and colleges in a career spanning over 30 years now. He studied music at Kwanongoma College of African Music and went on to acquire a degree at Africa University in 2007. He is a co-founder of CHIPAWO together with Dr Robert McLaren and playwright Steven Chifunyise in 1989. At CHIPAWO Gezi founded the musical instrument manufacturing project in which he and his students made marimbas and mbiras for sale. Gezi teaches marimba music performance during CHIPAWO workshops and camps, and also teaches marimba classes at the Zimbabwe College of Music. He has mentored the award-winning ZCM marimba outfit, Timbila Vibes Ensemble. Currently he runs his own Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop which he formed. They repair broken marimba frames, resonators and keys, and tune marimbas for schools and community-based marimba performers. Farai teaches the building and playing of marimbas, nyunganyunga mbira, and helps new marimba groups to take off. His backyard marimba workshop is very popular with visiting marimba players. He also plays a wide range of musical instruments. He is currently the Director of Music at Zimbabwe Academy of Arts Education for Development. He is an honest cultural activist who has dedicated his life to making music on the wood that sings.

Nicholas Manomano (12 January 1976-) attended Prince Edward High School and later started the Prince Edward High School Marimba Band, which has juniors and seniors. After leaving Prince Edward High School, Manomano went on to form

Kutinya Marimba Arts organisation as its Director, together with Walter Omberai Chikukwa, Zvikomborero Rwodzi, and Badge Tapembera. He has developed what he calls Manomano Methodology on Marimbas, a method he uses to train teachers and students to play the marimba.

Walter Omberai Chikukwa (28 January 1988-) is another former Prince Edward High School student who excelled in the Advanced Marimba Band during his school days. He has taught marimba music performance at Prince Edward High School, where the Junior Marimba Band and Advanced Marimba Band have made a big impact in Zimbabwe. He also taught marimba music performance at Gateway High School in Harare, and Peterhouse College in Marondera. He is a member of Kutinya Marimba Band, a subsidiary of Kutinya Marimba Arts organisation that teaches marimba to schoolchildren in Harare. The organisation has held national and international tours and camps for primary and secondary school students.

5.4. MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF MARIMBA PERFORMANCE

In order to reach an optimal performance level, it is important that performers fully understand the music being presented; be technically, physically and mentally ready to perform; and be content and satisfied with themselves (Tadokoro 2014: iii).

Marimbas are characteristically very large percussion instruments. Consequently, playing marimba music is a very physical exercise, hence appropriate mental preparation is required to help marimba players to advance the quality and efficiency of their performance, to develop their musicianship and confidence, and to achieve an optimal performance even when they are under pressure. Concerning technical and physical preparation, it is important to incorporate multiple senses when practising, with specific practice goals in mind. Practice also has a mental side, which includes developing trust, devising coping strategies for performance anxiety, and understanding the purpose of performing as an opportunity to share musical ideas with an audience rather than focusing on making no mistakes.

Marimba songs do challenge the performer's sensitivity to enunciate nuances in the music clearly, particularly due to the nature of the resonance on the marimba. The performer needs to have listening skills to hear the chord progressions and do a harmonic analysis and appreciation (Tadokoro 2014).

To provide confident, convincing, and stellar performances, marimba musicians continually prepare themselves. Anxiety comes with the imagination that one might miss notes and destroy the effect of the song. Missing notes is a sign of improper mental preparation. Marimba players need to work on their mental preparation so that they can present themselves confidently, and convey the meaning of their music convincingly. Mai Tadokoro (2014) says that marimba percussion players also require mental practice. Mental preparedness and anticipation of a performance event help the marimba players to develop conscious explicit memory, which in turn helps to retrieve the automated memory. The marimba performer needs to visualise the performance act that they are about to embark on, and make a mental road map.

According to Tadokoro (2014), marimba percussion players need to overcome nerves in the mental perspective. Playing marimbas before a crowd can bring anxiety, self-doubt, fear and even panic. Being asked to perform marimba music at short notice for impromptu gatherings is coupled with lack of sufficient time for mental preparation and practice. Nervousness can lead to loss of focus in marimba players and it manifests itself through physical symptoms such as shaking, rising heart rate, muscle tension, shortness of breath, perspiration, and nausea. These problems need to be handled properly so that marimba performers bear with anxiety.

The genres of music that are played on the marimba in Zimbabwe are quite wide-ranging. They include but are not limited to traditional Zimbabwean genres and styles, Afro-pop sounds, popular music, rhumba, *sungura*, *marabi*, reggae, Afro-jazz, other music genres from Africa, as well as Western classical and popular music. To perform each of these music genres involves a learning process in the

part of the marimba player, since under normal circumstances musicians specialise on specific genres, which they play on a full-time basis in non-marimba ensembles. Consequently, a marimba player has to play the "jack of all trades" role because proficiency in playing different music genres and styles is required of them. Having to learn many new music genres and styles all the time is quite challenging but crucial for a marimba ensemble in order for their performances to appeal to the musical tastes of diverse audiences.

Apart from the mental challenge that marimba performance presents to performers, there is the physical demand. According to Tadokoro (2014), in order to handle the physical demand of marimba performance, marimba percussion players require some systematic kinaesthetic-based practice, which is necessary to develop a refined muscle memory, and to enable their limbs to cope with two to three hours of continuous performance. I agree with the author here because without enough necessary physical preparation, some marimba players' veins swell during and soon after performing three to five marimba songs. In other players, fatigue is evident, and yet others tend to become slower than the tempo marked on a piece. I have observed marimba performers panting and struggling for breath with their hearts pounding in their chests in the manner of a hammer mill. If these marimba percussion players practise their muscle movement prior to a performance, these problems may not be encountered. It is necessary for marimba performers to add an exercise regimen to develop physical strength, control, endurance, and flexibility.

Performing before an audience implies that marimbas will have to be moved from one place to another, since the practice venue, storeroom, and performance venue are not always in the same place for different marimba ensembles. Manoeuvring marimbas around is itself a physically demanding exercise. Removing the instruments from the storeroom, loading and unloading marimbas onto a truck, setting them up on stage, and repeating the whole process after a performance is laborious and many players in bands who do not employ support staff loathe this aspect of their lives as marimba players. It requires physically fit personnel who should ideally do that on a full-time basis in order to let the marimba players use all

their energy for playing the music only. Most of the ensembles that I observed in Zimbabwe cannot afford to hire the services of marshals to handle the logistics of moving around six or more pieces of marimba prior to and after their performances. This leaves the marimba players with no option but to play the two roles, which consequently adds to their physical burden.

Tadokoro (2014) introduces general preparedness approaches that apply the practice strategies used by athletes in preparation for work that involves using muscles. She observes that these can be of great benefit to percussionists because percussion playing is similar to sport in physical demand and requirement of mental discipline. One of the marimba player's biggest challenges is to deal with diversity. They have to handle the nearly two metres wide note ranges of the treble, tenor, baritone and bass marimba keyboards. They also have to handle very large *gandira* drums that usually accompany marimba music. According to Tadokoro (2014), marimba players need to devise strategies, prior to and during performance, which will help free them from reliance on muscle memory, allow them to practise without the actual instruments, and enhance the players' musical intuition.

Marimbas are big, wide, and heavy, hence the physical demand. This means that marimba players ought to be physically in good shape and have control of all four limbs. Notes of the same chord can stretch over up to a metre apart so dexterity is required on the part of the marimba player, which will enhance their note articulation when they play chords, split notes of the same chord, play inversions of the chords, and surrogate melodies. The playing technique involves limbs stretching quickly from one point of the marimba keyboard to another, and back and forth, in rapid and repeated motions which come with different variations. I notice that the limbs require some kind of foresight to anticipate and locate notes even when the eyes are looking in the opposite direction, in order for the player to articulate the rhythms correctly.

According to Andy Harnsberger (2005), a percussionist must take time to stretch their hands, arms, and wrists before extended practice sessions to avoid injury in

the long run. Running one's hands under warm water while stretching will improve endurance through better blood circulation for players who might have poor blood circulation. The author provides a couple of warm-up exercises, as well as technical exercises that can benefit both beginners and advanced mallet players, regardless of their preferred grip. Warming up by doing very gentle stretches with the arms, hands and fingers is necessary to flex and extend the muscles, thumbs, forearm and fingers. Stretching is meant to get the blood flowing and can take five to 10 minutes, depending on an individual person's blood circulation.

Marimba players ought to make warming up before they play marimbas a ritual. When the muscles are warmed up, the player can begin doing the technical exercises or easy playing on the instrument. Marimba players are advised to continue stretching and taking 10-minute breaks every hour. Regular breaks should be taken as they give percussionists a chance to recuperate physically, as well as mentally. Proper warm-up begets longer practice hours without fatigue, and if one has reason to leave a practice session for an extended period, they are likely still to be warm when they return. Warming up properly and caring for one's own hands during practice sessions helps to prevent serious injuries such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome (Harnsberger 2005).

Many Zimbabwe marimba players simply walk straight into the practice room, pick up mallets and play scales or do other technical exercises for warm up, if they do not get straight down to learning a tune. Human muscles are very delicate and need to be warmed up before use. In the manner of athletes, marimba players must stretch their muscles as a warm-up routine before they start to play. Despite any highly possible time constraints, practice sessions must not be done with the prior aim to cram as many notes as possible into a short amount of time. This is detrimental to the hands and can be harmful to the overall performance (Harnsberger 2005).

Playing the marimba requires a lot of energy, forearm strength and endurance, so proper posture is vital so that the performer can finish his performance enjoyably. This articulation technique can be used on every percussion instrument that uses

mallets and or drumming sticks. Marimbas are manipulated like other instruments to perform commercial music nationally and internationally.

Playing marimba requires a lot of energy, forearm strength and endurance, so proper posture is essential so that the performer can finish the performance comfortably. Good posture is that sitting or standing position that allows one's body to play the marimba efficiently. When playing soprano marimba, one should find a central sitting posture that will enable access to all the notes of the instrument with ease. When playing the tenor, baritone and bass, the player should be standing because of the height these instruments are set to. In both postures, the player's feet should be about shoulder width apart, keeping the knees relaxed. To find the proper posture, the musician has to move his or her pelvis far in and far out so that s/he identifies the pelvic and spine centre position. This position maintains natural curves of the spine that makes breathing easy. It also allows muscular relaxation and strong arm movement that is needed for hitting marimba keys during the course of marimba music making.

To release any built-up tension in the body, proper embouchure is the required technique that calls for the shaking of the hands and the wrists. On the marimba instrument, quality sound is produced through hitting a key on the centre with a mallet. Proper embouchure can make the performer great, since it advocates for the placement of hands on an instrument in a natural position that improves the sound. It allows the musician to work with his or her body in the sound production and avoid conflict with their bodies, since the body works a great deal in sound production on an instrument. Proper embouchure encourages the shaking of hands and wrists before playing as a habit that removes the tension that could have built in the body and may affect hand and wrist movement in the playing.

5.5. MARIMBA PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUES

5.5.1. Positioning

Zimbabwe marimba players have to position themselves strategically on the marimba in order to reach the notes on the extreme ends of the marimba keyboard. On the soprano the player can either be sitting on a chair/stool or standing, depending on the type of frame that they use. The soprano marimba has 17 keys, which are laid out on a keyboard that stretches over two metres. In order to avoid having to move back and forth to find notes on the extreme ends of the keyboard, the marimba player has to position him or herself in the centre of the instrument, especially if the song they are performing uses notes on extreme ends of the keyboard. When a player uses only notes within one of the two octaves, then they can decide to sit in a position that is close to that particular octave, which means they will not be centrally positioned.

On the tenor, baritone, and bass marimba, the players in Zimbabwe play in a standing position. The tenor has 17, baritone has nine, and bass has eight keys, but each of these three will stretch over two metres because the bass and baritone keys are wider than those on the tenor. Tenor players, like soprano players, may sometimes play notes in one octave which can allow them to stand in a position close to the range of notes they will use. If they have to play all notes on the keyboard, then a central position will work out perfectly. When one moves from one position to another, this tends to affect their sense of the places where the notes are located, hence they might miss some of the notes. Baritone and bass players have to be centrally perched because for most songs they will use the full range of notes on their instruments.

5.5.2. Grip

The basic grip of mallets for playing marimba should be one that sets the mallets free for easy movement. The grip for handling marimba mallets should have wrists

that are extended 15 degrees up and tilted fifteen degrees towards the little finger. This facilitates the free finger movement and optimal action of the deep muscles that support the hand. The sticks should be placed in hands with proper fulcrum and keys should be struck at the centre correctly to spread the vibrations evenly on the key. The thumb and the index finger are opposed to the mallet shaft and the other fingers curl naturally around the mallet shaft. The little finger does not hold anything in this grip but comes along with other fingers naturally to give stability and support to the grip. The hands should be set palms down at a distance not higher than an inch from the keyboard that makes striking possible in a wink of a wrist. Some stroke heights must be kept to two or three inches of height, which produces a good quality and fairly audible sound. Mallets must start in the up position so that they are winked down to the key and make a sound on the key. Mallets should be flexible enough at a considerable height that you want to play each stroke of the exercise to produce the desired sound. The left hand should always lead when playing double notes.

5.5.3. Single stroke technique

A single stroke is when a marimba player hits a note once and moves on to another note. It is typically used when a player articulates a song's melody line, especially on the soprano, but there are other songs whose main melody may be sounded on another marimba and not necessarily on the soprano. Single strokes can be learnt using notes of a scale. They teach the learner to familiarise with the spacing of the wooden marimba keys. Single strokes can also be practised on short melodic lines which a marimba player can practise by repeating several times until they master it well. Many main melodies of different songs will require a marimba player to master and play various single stroke combinations for them to come out perfectly. Single strokes ought to be practised by marimba beginners since they teach them the basics of articulating song melodies. At this beginner stage stick control is very important to drill. The player must hit the centre of the wooden key which is directly above the hole of the resonator for the sound to come out clean. The mallet must be allowed to bounce off the key freely but not uncontrolled, and not be rigidly pressed

down unnecessarily. When playing the baritone and bass marimbas, however, care must be taken not to lag behind the other (soprano and tenor) marimba players' tempo. The baritone and bass keys tend to be heavier, hence there is need to be firm when controlling the mallets' rebound. Rhythm must be kept even at these initial stages. According to Duane Thamm (1966), "The power behind each stroke of the mallet is a combination of finger, wrist, and forearm, all working together taking advantage of the natural rebound of the mallet."

5.5.4. Dead stroke technique

If the mallet head remains lying on the bar, it is known as a *dead stroke*, which is used as a special effect. The mallets are held with the palm facing downward. The low notes require a stronger attack to set the larger bars vibrating. One mallet is held in each hand so that each player uses two mallets. The soprano and tenor marimba can be played by one or two people since there are two octaves of the C major scale, and one octave of the G major scale.

5.5.5. Rolling technique

A rolling technique is when a marimba player repeatedly plays on one note for two or more strokes, depending on the number of beats that the roll must occupy rhythmically, or its duration in time. Zimbabwe marimba players roll on a note that is supposed to be sounded for a prolonged, sustained duration, such as a dotted crotchet, minim, dotted minim, semi-breve or breve. A single stroke on a note to articulate such rhythms would fallaciously produce an undesired rest and distort the melody. One stroke does not suffice, so the player keeps on striking the same note for the required duration. Marimba players just have to roll on the long rhythms in order to produce the intended notes accurately. On other musical instruments such as the piano a performer can press the note once and sustain the sound through pedalling, or keep on pressing the note to get the intended prolonged duration. Marimba players roll to achieve the same effect when they are articulating a song's

main melody. Marimba tutor Andrew Mamvura is quoted by *The Herald* of April 28, 2011, saying:

> *The soprano marimba is compared to a lead singer because it carries the main melody of the song being performed. If there are two sopranos the other one will ornament the melody which means add some extra melodies that complement the main one, or harmonise at a lower octave. It is pointless to have two sopranos that are playing the same thing* (Kohola 2011).

5.5.6. Chordal technique

A chordal technique is when a marimba player hits two marimba keys of the same chord simultaneously, and moves on to play the next two keys of the next chord, and continues in the same manner throughout. Zimbabwe marimba performers use two mallets (one in each hand) when playing marimbas. Playing two notes at the same time produces different chord combinations. The player plays dyads, but can also move on to the different combinations or inversions of the same chord depending on the song's movement and number of beats spent on a particular chord. Most Zimbabwean traditional songs move from chord one, to chord four, back to chord one, to chord five, and back again to chord one, in the keys of C and G major in which the Zimbabwe marimbas are mostly made (a few workshops are now designing chromatic marimbas that can play songs in any key).

For example, the traditional song "*Rugare*" has four crotchet beats played on each chord. The tenor player plays chordal accompaniment on this song. The chordal technique would best be introduced after the single stroke and rolling techniques so that beginners can feel some kind of progression while still playing chordal accompaniment, which is simple to grasp for most marimba beginners.

5.5.7. Splitting technique

The splitting technique is when a marimba player strikes notes of the same chord one after the other in varying patterns. When students have mastered chord progressions, say in simple quadruple time, they can be introduced to the splitting

technique. One crotchet beat can be split into two strokes in which the notes of a chord are played as quavers one after another. Thereafter, players can go on to try more complex splitting combinations such as double-splitting the notes of a chord to be played as semi-quavers sounded during one crotchet beat. This all depends on the nature of the song being played.

Usually this technique is done by the tenor player who at most times articulates the rhythm of the song being played. Andrew Mamvura is quoted by *The Herald* of 28 April, 2011, saying:

> *The tenor marimba creates and maintains the rhythm of the song. This part of marimba playing must not be too stylish as this is the centre point that sustains the song. If you have two tenors it is advisable to have one playing the chords and the other playing the simple rhythm using the alternating technique or the rolling technique. Alternatively, the two tenors can play a rhythm that is complementary where the first tenor plays half of the rhythm and the other plays the other half* (Kohola 2011).

The chords can be played as arpeggios in their different inversions according to the wishes of the marimba player, who has room to improvise around the basic line to be played without straying out of the song's time and rhythm. The marimba player has to quickly visualise the dyads, triads, and chords for him or her to demonstrate virtuosity within the duration of the song's beat.

5.5.8. Alternating technique

The alternating technique is when the marimba player moves back and forth while playing notes of the same chord. This technique can be used on soprano, tenor, baritone or bass. On the baritone it is very effective.

> *The movement of the baritone also supports the soprano as this part is not rigid to the chord progression but can also play some kind of low range melodies. In music terms the baritone can actually follow the soprano and create a good counterpoint. The bass plays the fundamental or principle notes of the song's progression either C F G, or G C D* (Kohola 2011).

With experience, the bass player can colour his rhythm by alternating these basic notes with other notes of the same chords.

5.6. THE ROTE TRADITION IN MARIMBA SKILLS DISSEMINATION

In its five decade-old history, the playing of the Zimbabwe marimba has been passed on from generation to generation through the rote method in Zimbabwe. Rote learning happens when a marimba mentor demonstrates how to play the instrument to a learner. The learner watches, listens, and imitates what the mentor has demonstrated. This method has been used by many marimba tutors in Zimbabwe where most musicians do not perform music through sight reading.

A young marimba player needs to interact with seasoned, excellent marimba players so that he or she can develop marimba playing techniques at the top level. These virtuoso marimba players provide the greatest influence through a mentorship relationship that should lay a foundation for the learner to manage song compositions and arrangements alone in later life. With time the learner becomes a tutor in his or her own right and that is how teachers are developed through the oral tradition – they learn by doing. The novice usually starts by musicking on the wood that sings together with his or her mentor. When they find their feet, the next step is to build a wide repertoire of marimba songs.

Playing music by ear is a characteristic feature of rote learning used by Zimbabwe marimba musicians. A marimba player can listen to recordings or an ensemble playing and base his or her own practise on listening and playing. They proceed by experimenting with the sounds on the marimba until they can play the lines well. A number of traditional songs have been arranged to be played on the marimba in this way. Where there are *kushaura* and *kutsinhira* lines, the marimba player has to be artistic enough to bring out the different but complementary lines while playing by ear.

Improvisation is a key aspect of Zimbabwean marimba musicking. Zimbabwean music is similar to jazz music in the way in which it is improvised. Traditional song modes have been performed on the marimba for more than five decades now. Each song mode has room for improvisation within the style of its genre. When a tutor demonstrates a basic line and the learner masters it, the learner is later encouraged to play variations of that basic line. In Zimbabwean schools and colleges marimba teachers allocate more marks to learners who come up with variations to the basic line than to those who play only what they are taught. This is done with the aim of motivating the learners to experiment with lines, and to help develop their musicianship. Most distinctions are awarded to learners who can add value to what their mentor has taught them. This gives freshness, interest, and challenge to the performance of a known traditional song, hence playing it over and over again never becomes boring since it brings with it prospects of new inventions.

While improvisation on the marimba is encouraged, it must come out of a learner's creativity since it is not taught. The basic lines of a song are taught through rote memorisation; improvisation comes to a player's imagination when the player hears parallel lines to the basic melody which they must find on the marimba keyboard on their own. This comes with a lot of practise and experience, which guides the leaner on where and how to locate the imagined sounds on the instrument so as to be able to add these new sounds to the basic line gradually. Specific variations are inspired in the learner by sounds that are produced by experienced significant others. I have observed that some of the sounds are lifetime tunes heard from the period before one is born (yes! ancestral connections and genetic lineage!) which get enacted through present and future actions of the marimba performers.

Producing variations is an act of doubling or substituting notes of a basic melody with other notes which can be useful, either at higher or lower registers. Accomplished marimba players listen deeply to the music as they play in an ensemble. They get immersed in the music. When the sounds sink into their subconscious minds, they just start to improvise without thinking. The way one improvises derives from the way one hears the sounds associated with the resultant

harmony produced when one plays a song that has many lines in an ensemble. Resultant harmony comes from the interlocking lines that are characteristic of most traditional Zimbabwean songs and jazz compositions. Improvising during playing marimba is synonymous with weaving patterns into an existing fabric.

Some scholars have attempted to notate marimba songs. I have observed that some of my marimba students scribble down note combinations as I demonstrate new marimba lines to them. I have always urged them rather to record the new lines and play them over and over until they sink into their heads. I do so because of my belief that marimba music performance is an oral tradition and learning it should proceed within that tradition. To me, notating the marimba lines tends to divert the student's attention from memorising the sounds to be played, and experiencing the sounds hands on. After all, the beauty of the interlocking lines cannot be accurately represented in images scribbled on music scores. This reductionist process compromises some of the music's elements, which cannot be notated. It also ironically superimposes the literacy tradition over the oral tradition, consequently making marimba performance subservient because it comes in the oral tradition. When one subjugates a cultural practice, what they learn resultantly is something different from the intended concept. Notating marimba music lines immerses a learner in something different from the act of performing on them, therefore it is unnecessary.

5.7. SUMMARY

In this chapter I have focused on how musicking on the Zimbabwe marimba as a school music instrument has been made possible by academic institutions. I discussed academic institutions in Zimbabwe that have played a part in the history and development of marimba music in the country since the Zimbabwe marimba came into being in the mid-1960s at Kwanongoma College of African Music. Teachers colleges, music academies, polytechnic colleges, and universities have designed and implemented music certificate and degree programmes that have produced marimba performers and tutors, and consequently contributed to the state

of affairs in marimba music performance in Zimbabwe and abroad. Some community-based marimba ensembles are also non-formal institutions that have nurtured and developed marimba performers who have not passed through academic institutions to perform marimba at the highest level in the country and their efforts are quite useful to marimba performance practice. Other community-based marimba ensembles have been associated with graduates from the academic institutions.

From these formal and non-formal institutions, a number of marimba performance mentors have emerged who fit into the dissemination process through their critical role of providing instruction on how to musick on the Zimbabwe marimba. Some marimba music mentors have taught marimba music performance in the country as ensemble leaders of college-based marimba ensembles that compete at TIFAZ and RIO-SET. Other mentors have prepared marimba ensembles to compete at the Tambarimba Festival. There are yet other marimba ensembles that did not participate in these events but that perform marimba in their communities as a result of the teachings done by various mentors who are scattered around the country. Marimba music performance practice has managed to thrive under difficult economic conditions because of the commitment shown by these mentors to developing their art and this has been critical in taking marimba music to where it is today.

In this chapter I have also discussed the method used to teach marimba music, as well as the playing techniques used on the Zimbabwe marimba because this is how the ability to musick is passed on to the next generation. Marimba performance in Zimbabwe is largely taught using the rote method in which mentors demonstrate lines to their students who imitate them. Like many other cultural aspects, marimba music has been handed down from generation to generation through this oral tradition. Playing techniques begin with a proper posture and standing or sitting position. Marimba players articulate rhythms on the marimba by playing strokes with the mallets, rolling on the notes, playing chords, splitting chords or using the alternating technique.

CHAPTER 6
MARIMBA CONSTRUCTION IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWE

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, I discussed the marimba ensembles that are operational in Zimbabwean colleges and in the community presently. Chapter 4 presented traditional song modes and contemporary marimba song arrangements that are performed by these marimba ensembles. I discussed marimba performance techniques and some of the methodology used by mentors when teaching marimba. In Chapter 5, I examined how the art of performing music on the Zimbabwe marimba has been kept alive in various permutations through several ensembles' renditions of folk and classical songs. This phenomenon has survived in part because there are marimba construction workshops in Zimbabwe that are willing to meet the marimba bands' demands for suitable musical instruments by supplying them with marimbas when they need them, as well as through maintaining the marimbas when the need arises.

In this chapter, I present and discuss the anatomy and acoustics of the Zimbabwe marimba, and discuss construction workshops that are supporting marimba ensembles in the country. The workshops' role is critical in ensuring that the instruments on which to musick are readily available on the market.

Since the Zimbabwe marimba was designed and constructed in the 1960s in Bulawayo at the United College of Education's Kwanongoma College of African Music, a number of individuals have ventured into the marimba construction industry and a couple of marimba construction workshops have sprouted around the country. During my fieldwork I managed to interact with informants in eight marimba construction workshops. These are: Wilson Tendai Machinga, who works at the United College of Education's Kwanongoma Music Workshop; Almon Moyo, who is based in Gweru at his Transition Arts Music Workshop; Farai Gezi, at his Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop; Charles Kunzvi of CHIPAWO

Music Workshop; Fidelis Mherembi, who runs Yotinhira Arts Music Workshop; Christopher Timbe of Melo-Rhythm Music Workshop; Nicholas Manomano of Kutinya Marimba Arts Music Workshop; and John Rukweza at Rukweza Marimba Construction Project. These workshops are feeding school-based, college-based, and community-based marimba ensembles in Zimbabwe. They supply marimbas to keep marimba music performance practice in Zimbabwe alive and vibrant, albeit in an environment that is mired in an economic crisis. In this chapter, I discuss the experiences of these marimba makers in the country, highlighting their vision for the future of marimba music in Zimbabwe, and also reporting on their achievements, challenges, and prospects. I further discuss the anatomy and physiology of the marimbas that they make, with particular emphasis on appearance, tuning, and materials that they use to make marimbas.

6.2. ANATOMY AND ACOUSTICS OF THE ZIMBABWE MARIMBA

According to Aristel Skrbic (2011), the marimba is a percussion instrument; more specifically, a keyboard percussion instrument, because its sound is produced by striking the bars with mallets. It can be grouped together with the vibraphone (Skrbic 2011). Nancy Zeltsman concurs that the vibraphone is close to the marimba in terms of their anatomy and acoustics. The vibraphone has metal keys arranged the same way as the five-octave concert grand marimba in the manner of a piano keyboard. It has a pedal used to sustain notes like the piano pedal. It has motorised vibrato discs that open and close the resonators. The xylophone's range includes a full octave above the marimba's, which means it extends up to the top note of the piano (Zeltsman 2014).

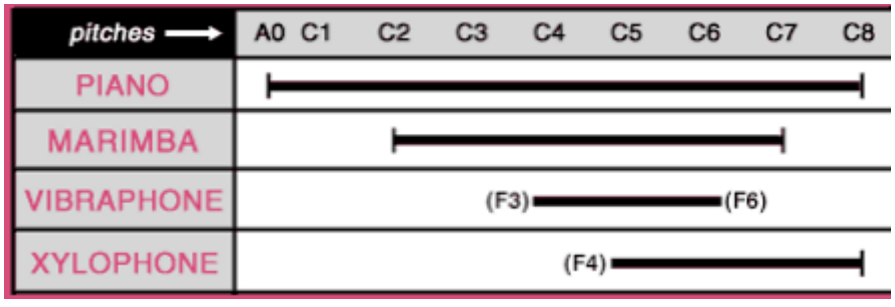

Figure 5.1 Pitch ranges (Nancy Zeltsman 2014)

According to Zeltsman (2014), the keys of the marimba can be made out of rosewood, which comes from Central America. The frame of the marimba can be made from various types of wood or even synthetics, since it does not affect the sound quality in any way. Resonator pipes can be made out of aluminium or brass, although brass can make the marimba very heavy and difficult to transport. Resonators amplify the resonance of the bar. Each resonator tube is capped off at a particular length, which provides the longest possible resonance. The high notes require only a short amount of tubing before they are capped off. The longer the bar and the corresponding resonator tube, the lower the sound that is produced when the bar is struck with a mallet. When the pitch of the resonator tube corresponds or matches that of the bar, the result is optimum resonance of the marimba bar. The low notes require longer resonator tubes. The tube essentially goes down and curves back up, all within a larger oval tube. The mallets (also known as sticks or hammers) are used to play the keys. Softer mallets are used to play the lower notes on the marimba, which are on the left side, while harder mallets are used to play the higher notes, which are on the right side. Players can achieve a wide range of different timbre by their choice of different mallets, in conjunction with the type of stroke they use to bring the mallet heads in contact with the keys (Zeltsman 2014).

In order to move the marimba around, a van or station wagon is needed for marimbas that cannot be folded. For marimbas that are collapsible into smaller parts, a sedan can be used to transport them. The keys are strung up together such that they can be lifted and rolled up. The long traces across the instrument can fold into half, and so can the banks of the resonators. The end pieces come off and go in about eight or nine separate cases. There are several thousand marimbas in the world and many players are deciding to specialise on the marimba in music study programmes, both as a solo instrument and as an ensemble instrument (Zeltsman 2014). Marimbas have a very unique wooden mellow sound. Marimba music today can be heard in some film music. It has won the hearts of many people due to its warm, deep, mellow wooden sound. In Zimbabwe I have noticed that a wide range of music can be played on the marimba, such as Shona traditional modes (*karigamombe*, *nhemamusasa*, *chemutengure*, *mahororo*, *taireva*, and *chipembere*),

gospel, *sungura*, Afro-jazz, Zimbabwean dancehall, hip-hop, and other world music genres. There are people who compose for the marimba either by rote or on score. According to Nadel, as cited in Rager (2008), the original wooden marimba had a leg comprising up to three rough slabs of wood taken from long straight branches of a tree. These were disconnected and had different pitches. A musician sat on the ground with the wood laid across his legs. The wooden slabs were used as braces for the instrument if the player played from a sitting position. They held the instrument from the waist if it was played from a standing position. The slabs also served as handles when carrying the instrument. The keys of early marimba were wooden bars or keys and the resonator were gourds suspended below. Gourds were tuned to the primary pitches of the corresponding keys. A natural membrane was fitted on the interior of the gourd, which created a buzzing or reverberating sound for which the marimba is uniquely known.

Rager (2008) says that the timbre of the instrument depends on the quality of the materials used to make the keys and resonators, their size, and the skilfulness of the marimba maker's touch. Sound quality and pitch are governed by the type of wood used, the length of the wooden bars, their width as well as their depth. If the wooden bar is thinned (or sanded down) in the centre in the shape of an arch, the pitch will become lower. Filing away more wood from the middle of the key continues to lower the pitch. Different cultural systems have their own tuning systems that are determined by the instrument constructors, though the instrument designs and keys are largely similar in many countries.

The Zimbabwe marimba is a four-piece set of percussion instruments made from wooden bars fitted over resonators that are struck with mallets to produce musical sound. According to Andrew Tracey (2004), marimbas are designed to play both modern and traditional music. Zimbabwe marimbas are tuned in four-part harmony just like the SATB choir. The set has two soprano pieces, two tenor pieces, one baritone piece, and a bass. The keys of marimba are tuned by removing wood from the bottom centre of the key or by chipping off the bottom ends of the keys until the fundamental note and overtones are correctly pitched. The basic scale for soprano

and tenor marimba is C-D-E-F-F#-G-A-B-C, which is repeated to form two octaves on a piece. The sopranos and tenors have key bars arranged similarly to those of a piano but do not have the accidentals, except for F#, which is put so that the instrument can play in two keys, C major and G major, which has an F# as its accidental. On the marimba set, the tenors perform the same task as alto parts of a choir, whilst the baritone performs the same task as the tenor of a choir.

The Zimbabwe marimbas produce sound through the vibrating key that is technically positioned and fitted on rubber runners just above the resonators. The keys are set to a vibrating motion by hitting, using the mallets, while they are set on a profiled bottom surface in the form of rubber runners so that the bars can produce the overtones in tune. The vibrations are then amplified to fairly audible sound by the resonators that come in different forms. The resonators can be found in the form of traditional gourds, fibreglass, PVC pipes or hardboard boxes. Marimba bars are fitted on a metal or wooden frame so that there can be an allowance to fit some resonators just below the keys to increase audibility. A traditional buzzing sound is achieved through fitting some plastic buzzers on the resonators at the bottom.

Marimba bars produce quality sound when the keys are struck in the centre using mallets, which are also called hammers. The mallets are constructed in such a way that they immediately spring back after the attack and so avoid damping the vibration of the bars. The marimba mallets can be made using hard or soft wood, depending on its availability to the marimba maker. The mallets are topped with heads of either rubber or plastic, usually wrapped in yarn or chord. A heavy mallet made from softer material results in longer contact or compression with the bar, consequently producing a louder sound that is quickly dampened. A light mallet made of rigid material rebounds quickly and produces a softer, fuller and longer tone.

The Vienna Symphonic Library (2014-2016) says that in Africa calabashes are still made out of the dried gourds of the calabash tree. They are the same size as a pumpkin. Suitable calabashes are rare and consequently valuable. The pitch of the

calabash must correspond exactly with that of the bar. Such marimbas feature a special means of amplification, a membrane called a mirliton. A hole is drilled in each gourd near its bottom, which is then covered by a mirliton. A mirliton can be made of plastic or a spider's nest. This membrane vibrates in sympathy when the corresponding bar is struck, and produces a buzzing sound that has the effect of amplifying the sound.

The Herald (Apr 28, 2011) quotes Andrew Mamvura describing the Zimbabwe marimba thus:

> *The Zimbabwe marimba is made up of a wooden keyboard, resonators and fitted on stands. The resonators come in different types, some are made from PVC pipes, others from fibreglass. The fibreglass type produces a richer sound especially for the low range instruments for instance, the baritone and bass. Normally, a marimba has two major keys which makes it easier to learn and master the techniques* (*Kohola* 2011).

6.3. CHILDREN'S PERFORMING ARTS MUSIC WORKSHOP

CHIPAWO ventured into making traditional instruments for sale due to lack of funds in 1989. Farai Gezi pioneered the musical instrument manufacturing project in CHIPAWO, which included the making of marimbas before he left to start his own marimba construction workshop. The CHIPAWO Musical Instruments Workshop provided marimbas and *mbira*s for all CHIPAWO centres countrywide and this went a long way towards promoting marimba music in Zimbabwean schools, especially those in rural areas that could not afford the somewhat expensive marimbas. This helped to achieve CHIPAWO's goal of developing the arts in children and young people in Zimbabwe. Yona Zhoya, Dingane Juma, and Sam are some of CHIPAWO's former instrument makers. CHIPAWO Musical Instruments Workshop still makes marimbas for sale and presently the marimba maker is Charles Kunzvi at CHIPAWO Workshop in Mount Pleasant.

In Harare, the Norwegian Embassy's capacity-building project provided funding to CHIPAWO and this was used to purchase most of the CHIPAWO Musical

Instruments Workshop's machinery and tools. Unfortunately, the workshop has had a perennial challenge of failing to secure a decent and permanent building in which they can house the equipment and all musical instrument construction works. Constant relocation leaves the machinery and tools vulnerable and their condition can easily deteriorate due to breakages during relocation. To date CHIPAWO has not found a permanent place and working in a proper workshop remains a pipe-dream for Charles and his team, who think they can work wonders if a place is found.

Charles Kunzvi is CHIPAWO's deaf marimba maker who learnt at Emerald School for the Deaf in Harare, where he studied woodwork as one of his subjects. CHIPAWO once ran an arts education for development and employment program at the school in which Charles participated fully. He also participated in CHIPAWO's End-of-year Concert and annual Christmas Show. He was privileged to play a part in the World Children's Theatre Festival in Lingen, Germany, where he acted in the play "Cry Thinking", which is about the experience of being born and growing up deaf.

Charles joined CHIPAWO in 2006 and worked in the instrument construction workshop where he was taught to make musical instruments by music teacher and musician Farai Gezi. Charles was also taught by Sam Chimusoro, one of CHIPAWO's graduates from the Mbare CHIPAWO Centre. Charles did not face problems learning the ropes in his new role because Sam was infinitely patient with the deaf Charles. He has mastered all the work: measuring, cutting, and welding the metal frames, making and varnishing the wooden keys, cutting and shaping the PVC pipe resonators, as well as making the mallets and perfecting the marimbas so well. He has also ventured into constructing a chromatic marimba which has two keyboards in the manner of a piano which features sharp and flat keys. Charles is also a *mbira* maker at CHIPAWO Musical Instruments Workshop (Kubatana.net 2016).

6.4. KWANONGOMA MUSIC WORKSHOP

Kwanongoma Music Workshop is the place where the Zimbabwe marimba was designed and first constructed in 1962 at the Kwanangoma College of African Music in Bulawayo. The Zimbabwe marimba is a modern invention whose tenor and soprano have two octaves of keys, diatonic plus F#. The soprano, tenor and baritone marimbas invented at Kwanangoma were augmented with a bass instrument that would take the part of the ensemble of five drums in the initial Lozi *silimba* setup. There have also been suggestions that the Chopi *timbila* ensembles and the Venda mbila mutondo marimba also influenced the design of the Kwanongoma marimba.[10] The marimba was created with a mix of both African and Western aesthetics.

Andrew Tracey (2004) explains that Robert Sibson's second in charge at the power station, another electrical engineer called Nelson Jones, was a practical man who had a passion for music. Jones was tasked to design a marimba set. He made two alto marimbas and one bass marimba from California redwood that had been imported for use in the power station's cooling towers. The marimbas he made were on metal frames and had cardboard tubes for resonators. California redwood was too soft for the marimba and therefore the resultant product was not impressive. Later he borrowed ideas from the Lozi *Silimba* and used *mukwa*/*mubvamaropa*/ kiaat/dolf (pterocarpus angolensis), and the product was much better. Alport Mhlanga and Josiya Siyembe Mathe were also part of the team that worked on the design of the Marimba at Kwanongoma Music Workshop.

Sheasby Matiure (2008: 83) says that Robert Sibson and Leslie Williamson were the initiators who had the idea of developing a national instrument that would traverse ethnic boundaries. Together with Alport Mhlanga and Nelson Jones, they made innovations to an 11-key Lozi *silimba* brought by Josiah Siyembe Mate before 1965 to make the Zimbabwe marimba. Matiure calls it a mixture of outside

[10] See chapter 2 on how the Zimbabwe marimba was designed.

physical models and local musical aesthetics, which entangled with Western ideas with the intention of developing African music. Robert Sibson hired Josiah Siyembe Mate to teach his 11-key *silimba* instrument to the first full-time music group at Kwanongoma College of African Music. It was played together with five drums of varying sizes and pitches. He was asked to make more instruments of the same type but with different pitch ranges. He was assisted by Alport Mhlanga, one of the first full-time students. The marimbas that they made were "Zimbabwefied" or "Kwanongomated" (Andrew Tracey 2004) by adding the Lozi *silimba* flavour and outlook. They made an eight-key bass, a nine-key baritone and 17-key tenor and soprano. The resonators were made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes. The soprano and tenor have F# so the instrument can be played in the scales of C major and G major. This shows that the Kwanongoma marimba is an innovation from an instrument that was already in existence.

At present, the Kwanongoma Music Workshop runs under the United College of Education's Music Department and Wilson Tendai Machinga makes *mbira*s and marimbas. He started making marimbas in 1991 under the mentorship of his uncle, who used to operate from his home, where Wilson helped him with the making of traditional musical instruments in an open-air workshop before they built some structures. Wilson Tendai Machinga later joined Kwanongoma Music Workshop to carry on the great work which was started in the 1960s by Robert Sibson, Nelson Jones, Josiya Siyembe Mathe, and Alport Mhlanga.

At Kwanongoma Music Workshop Wilson Tenda Machinga works together with Clifford Ngwenya and Gwatara. Although Wilson Tendai said the workshop is registered as a company, the Kwanongoma Music Workshop needs no separate company registration since it operates under the auspices of UCE, which is under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology. The workshop repairs broken marimba sets and still supplies new sets to prospective customers. One standard set of marimbas sells at USD 2 000 and they realise a profit from the business. According to Wilson Tendai Machinga (Personal communication, 7 May 2016) "Most schools in Zimbabwe which offer marimba

bought from Kwanongoma Music Workshop. We have sold over 600 marimba sets to date. The demand is increasing although there are more marimba construction workshops in the country now." Kwanongoma Music Workshop has supplied marimbas to Siyaya and Bongo Love, marimba bands which are now based in The United Kingdom and the United States of America respectively. The Bulawayo-based Hloseni Arts Ensemble and Rainbow Blaze Marimba Band have also purchased marimba sets from Kwanongoma Music Workshop, as well as Great Zimbabwe University, and Midlands State University in Masvingo and Gweru respectively.

The Kwanongoma Music Workshop still uses *mukwa* wood to make marimba keys. The *mukwa* wood that is used for making the keys is procured from timber wholesalers. The first Kwanongoma marimbas had wooden frames but nowadays they put metal frames made from square tubing, which is more durable. Square tubing is procured from Ziscosteel, Steelmakers, Steelbase or hardware shops in Bulawayo. The metal frames are painted black and white. For soprano and tenor resonators they use PVC piping, while the baritone and bass resonators are made from fibreglass and resin. Acholl Chemicals supplies fibreglass, while Proplastics and Treggers supply PVC pipes. The wooden keys rest on sponge rubber which is glued onto the frame to avoid cracking due to concussion when the keys are struck with mallets during music making. The sponge rubber is procured from Dunlop.

Machinga briefly explained to me how they make a marimba instrument at Kwanongoma Music Workshop. According to Machinga (Personal communication, 7 May 2016), firstly, the wooden keys are cut to their different sizes. The soprano marimba has the smallest keys, followed in size by tenor, baritone, then bass, which has the longest and widest keys. The keys are planed, shaped and then burnt with a hot metal bar to decorate them. Secondly, the PVC pipes are cut to their different sizes. The longer keys produce the lower-pitched notes. The bottoms of the PVC pipe resonators have to be covered so as to trap air inside. Thirdly, the metal frames are made by cutting the square tubes to size and

welding them together. Finally, the keys and resonators are assembled together on the metal frames and fastened using ropes and bolts.

Kwanongoma Music Workshop is facing some economic challenges. The cost of raw materials is very high, especially that of *mukwa* wood. Apart from being expensive, dry *mukwa* wood is not readily available on the market. To counter this challenge, Kwanongoma Music Workshop purchases wet *mukwa* wood and then they season it naturally by allowing it to dry in the weather. This means that they have to purchase *mukwa* wood in large quantities, so they make large orders at different times to allow for drying time. One large order can bring in enough *mukwa* wood for about 20 marimba sets. Fibreglass and PVC pipes are also very expensive. They are left with no option but to pass on the cost to their customers. Machinga said they usually ask a customer to pay a deposit amount which they in turn use to procure the raw materials, then the balance can be cleared on delivery.

Another challenge that Kwanongoma Music Workshop faces is competition from other players who are entering the marimba construction industry. Machinga mentioned Kutinya Marimba Arts Music Workshop, Nengoma Arts Music Workshop, and Transition Arts Music Workshop as some of the companies that are also making and selling marimba sets. However, he added that this competition does not drive Kwanongoma Music Workshop out of business. What Machinga is worried about is "The economic situation in Zimbabwe today in which people can hardly afford to purchase the marimbas. We have resorted to payment plans so that they can spread the instalments over a period of time." He encourages their customers to take good care of their marimba sets so that they can last long.

6.5. KUTINYA MARIMBA ARTS MUSIC WORKSHOP

Kutinya Marimba Arts has grown into a very big marimba institution under the leadership of Nicholas Manomano. Manomano is a multi-talented marimba person who plays the instrument with virtuosity in Kutinya Marimba Band. He introduced and taught marimba music at Prince Edward School where there was a culture of

playing Western musical instruments only before he worked. At Prince Edward School he inspired many youngsters who now play marimba using the Manomano Methodology. He conducts marimba workshops with teachers in Zimbabwe. He also conducts summer workshops with interested individuals and bands in Europe (England, France, Germany, and Netherlands) where members of Kutinya Marimba Band teach marimba in schools, universities, and associations (VirtualWOMEX 2015). Apart from all this work, Manomano also runs a marimba construction workshop in Zimbabwe.

Marimba is part of the membraphone instruments and has wooden keys which can be made following the chromatic scale. Manomano makes both the Kwanongoma style, and chromatic marimbas at Kutinya Marimba Music Workshop. The Herald (Apr 28, 2011) quotes Andrew Mamvura acknowledging the presence of chromatic marimbas in Zimbabwe:

> *Due to advancement of technology, we now have chromatic marimba which means that one can play a song in any major key, and play any type of music. On a piano there are black and white keys that are positioned to provide working material for music players. The movement of keys from the C key without skipping any black or white key to the next C gives the chromatic scale and similarly there are marimbas that are made in that fashion* (Kohola 2011).

Generally, the marimbas that are found in Zimbabwean schools, teachers' colleges, polytechnic colleges, universities, and community-based ensembles are played in the keys of C major and G major. A basic marimba set consists of soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass. Depending on the style preferences of different marimba ensembles, the combinations can be varied to suit the desired sound, with some using up 10 marimbas during a performance.

6.6. MELLOW-RHYTHM MUSIC WORKSHOP

Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop was founded by Christopher Timbe in 1980. Timbe is a musician who has worked as a music teacher, lecturer, and Zimbabwe College of Music Director. He is one of the graduates from Kwanongoma College

of African Music, where he did a Music Instructor's course. He went on to study for a Bachelor of Music Education Degree at the University of Zimbabwe. He was inspired to join the trade of constructing marimbas by Elliot Ndhlovu, one of the seasoned marimba makers at Kwanongoma College of African Music. He has since retired from employment and is now a full-time marimba builder. According to Timbe (Personal communication, 27 May 2016), "The idea to make marimbas came to my mind due to my experience in music education. When I started, marimba was not very well-known, so I decided to fill the gap."

Timbe's Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop operates from his backyard at Number 20571 Unit B, Seke, Chitungwiza. He is the Director of the workshop and his firm is registered under the Companies Act in Zimbabwe. The workshop does not have full-time workers because of the current economic crunch that the country is suffering. Timbe has resorted to hiring labourers when there is a marimba order to be made and supplied to customers. His part-time workers are David, Joey, and Arthur.

Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop is realising some quite notable business. To date they have made 61 marimba sets, and all of them have been sold, since they build to order. Each set sells for USD2 400 and Timbe said that they realise a profit from selling a marimba set. He added that there is usually a fairly high demand for marimba sets during periods just before festivals when many marimba ensembles want to compete on new instruments. When there are no marimba festivals, the purchases tend to drop. Timbe mentioned Shingai and Seke 6 Primary Schools, as well as Chinembiri Marimba Ensemble as some of the many groups that have purchased marimbas from Melo-Rhythm Music Workshop.

The materials for making marimbas were explained to me at Mellow-Rhytm Music Workshop. According to Timbe, marimba keys are made from *mukwa* wood. Resonators are made from PVC pipes; 60mm pipe for the soprano resonators, 75mm pipe for the tenor resonators, 110mm pipe for the baritone resonators, and 160mm pipe for the bass resonators. Resonators' hangers are made from steel rods.

Metal frames are made from 20mm and 25mm square tubes. Where the wooden keys rest on the metal frames they put a buffer tape which acts as a shock absorber so that the keys do not break easily. Materials for the fittings are rubber balls for mallet heads, rubber washers placed between the wooden keys to avoid concussion, ropes that tie the wooden keys together, sticky stuff that fixes buzzers onto the resonators, nuts to join the metal frame joints, and rubber spacers.

Procurement of the necessary materials in place is quite a hectic task for Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop personnel. Timbe (Personal communication 27 May 2016) told me that sometimes he actually goes to the forest himself to fetch *mukwa* wood, and at other times he goes to Forestry Commission forests. He hires trucks to ferry the timber to the workshop in Chitungwiza. The PVC pipes and fittings (nuts, rubber washers, rubber balls, rubber spacers, sticky stuff, glue buffer tape, welding rods, ropes, and square tubes) are bought from hardware shops in Chitungwiza and Harare. Timbe added that all materials are chosen for their durability, and they choose wood which can produce a sonorous sound.

The construction process at Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop begins with the making of the metal frames by cutting the square tubes to their different sizes and then welding them together. The next step is the making of the wooden keys by cutting the notes to their different sizes and shapes. The notes are tuned to their different keys, and tied onto the frames on top of the buffer tape. After that they measure and cut the PVC pipes to make resonators of different sizes according to their notes. The resonators are sealed at their bases and are fitted to the frames by hanging them onto the steel rods. Holes the size of a coin are drilled on the sides of the resonators near their bottoms. Plastic buzzers are fastened onto these holes using sticky stuff.

Timbe (Personal communication 27 May 2016) said that they encounter challenges at their workshop. Funding for marimba-making projects is difficult to come by in Zimbabwe. Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop is facing various challenges, which include the high cost of raw materials used to make marimbas. Machinery and tools

are quite expensive, yet at times some of these may not last long because they are of poor quality. *Mukwa* wood is not always readily available, and when they find it is not seasoned enough to be used to make the marimba keys. This can delay the construction process and lead to loss of business when prospective customers look elsewhere for supplies. Timbe mentioned Yotinhira Arts Music Workshop, St Peters Kubatana Music Workshop, and Kutinya Marimba Music Workshop as some of the competitors in his trade.

These challenges can be overcome in a number of ways. Because of lack of funding, Mellow-Rhythm Music Workshop staff ask their clients to pay a deposit when they place their order. To cover the high costs of raw materials, the workshop passes on the bulk of the costs to their customers. The unavailability of *mukwa* is solved by using substitute saligna wood, and machinery is fixed by experts. Timbe (Personal communication 27 May 2016) added that he supplements his income by making percussion instruments to buttress funds. He also does consultancy work with UNESCO and the British Council, and teaches at the British Embassy.

In spite of these challenges, Timbe (Personal communication 27 May 2016) thinks that there is a future for the marimba construction industry, provided the materials get cheaper and readily available. He thinks that if teaching marimba is made mandatory in schools, their dilemmas could be drastically reduced. He said through marimba there can be discipline and orderliness in the school. Marimbas can be used to improve students understanding of mathematics and other subjects. Students who learn to play marimbas have a readily available career option, since they can become either musicians or marimba makers when they finish school. In turn, this will provide a livelihood for all people involved in the marimba circle.

I also discussed the popularity of marimba music with Timbe during the interview. He believes that marimbas have actually gained in popularity, particularly in primary and secondary schools, as well as in teacher training colleges, polytechnics and universities. He referred to popular musicians who play marimbas alongside electric guitars and percussion instruments, mentioning Oliver Mtukudzi, Charles

Chipanga, and Diva Mafunga and Friends as some Zimbabwean popular musicians who fuse marimbas with other musical instruments. According to Timbe, there is still a need for marimba music to be marketed through the print and electronic media to make it more popular than it is at the present moment. The country needs more marimba festivals and competitions, road shows, and the training of teachers who are competent to teach marimba in the schools.

6.7. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FOR AFRICA WORKSHOP

Founded by Farai Gezi in 1989, Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop is one of the companies that are making marimbas in Zimbabwe. Gezi underwent the Music Instructors' Course at Kwanongoma College of African Music in 1976. During this period, he was inspired by Alport Mhlanga, the late marimba tutor who is one of Kwanongoma's fountains of knowledge, as well as the Swede Olof Axelson. Gezi currently works as a marimba teacher at the Zimbabwe College of Music in Harare, as well as at the Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO), also in Harare, which he co-founded with Steven Chifunyise. He is a seasoned marimba teacher who has plied this trade in Zimbabwe for a period spanning over four decades now, and has produced a number of marimba performers in the process. I personally interacted with him in marimba playing in 2006 when I was one of CHIPAWO's Rural Disadvantaged Children Programme Centre Coordinators based at Wadzanai High School in Shamva, in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland Central Province where he taught me a couple of marimba songs during workshops.

According to Farai Gezi (Personal communication 27 May 2016), Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop was started after noticing a huge demand for marimbas in Zimbabwean society. Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop has two full-time workers, Philip Gezi and Adon Kachenje, as well as two part-timers, Gibson Sibanda and Andrew Ncube. It is registered under the Companies Act in Zimbabwe, and is located at Farai Gezi's residence in Harare's Greencroft suburb. Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop sells a set of marimbas at between

USD900 and USD1250, depending on the number of marimbas that individual buyers require for their bands. He added that the workshop is realising brisk business. To date, they have sold 324 marimba sets and there is still a demand for marimbas. Harare Marimba Ensemble, CHIPAWO Marimba Ensemble, and SOS Children's Village are some of the clients who have purchased marimbas from Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop.

The workshop makes marimbas from wood which is procured from Plate Glass Industries in Mbare or from rural areas that still have vast forests. Metal square tubes, fibreglass, PVC pipes, and fittings (ropes, glue, rubber, paint and accessories) are purchased from hardware shops in Harare. During construction the marimba frames are made first by cutting to sizes and welding the square tubes together. Then the wooden keys are prepared by cutting to size, planing, drilling and assembling them. The keys are tuned and mounted onto the metal frames. Resonators are cut to sizes and tuned to their different notes.

Musical Instruments for Africa Workshop faces challenges because all the materials they use to make marimbas are costly (Farai Gezi, Personal communication 27 May 2016). The quality of timber that they are getting continues to deteriorate, and this has led them to sometimes improvise, or import materials from South Africa, and this further increases the cost of marimbas because imports attract customs duty from the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA). There is no funding for players in the marimba construction industry. Sometimes they cannot meet the demand for marimbas, which are usually required simultaneously by ensembles when they are about to compete at marimba festivals. Also, the design of the Kwanongoma marimba is very large and hence difficult to transport to performance venues: ensembles have to source spacious vehicles to solve this challenge.

In spite of all these challenges, Gezi said that the future of the marimba construction industry is very bright. Despite the economic challenges being faced currently, people still love to play and listen to marimba music. Marimba has become very popular as a musical instrument in and outside Zimbabwe. Gezi urged stakeholders

to form a marimba association to represent members and source assistance when there is a need. According to Farai Gezi, marimba virtuoso musicians who have left the country include Yona Zhoya, who is now based in the United States of America, Silas Mujuru, who went to Japan, and Tedd Wright, who is now playing marimba in Canada. Although some marimba virtuoso players are now based outside the country, there is still abundant talent around and the instrument has grown in popularity over the years. In Zimbabwean schools there is a thrust towards traditional Zimbabwean musical instruments and this has exposed students to marimba music.

6.8. RUKWEZA MARIMBA CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Rukweza Marimba Construction Project was started in 2006 by John Rukweza, who started making marimbas in 1974 when he was inspired by Gilbert Muzanenhamo, under whom he worked as an apprentice for some time. In 1987 he worked at St Peters Kubatana Music Workshop where they made marimbas until he decided to start his own workshop. His knowledge has been acquired solely through hands-on experience and he has not had formal training in music. Now he operates as a full-time marimba maker. Rukweza Marimba Construction Project is housed at John Kukweza's Harare residence in Zororo, Highfield. It is a registered company and Rukweza employs three workers, David Tapfumaneyi, Norbert Muzanenhamo, and Muchaneta Pikani.

I asked about the business at Rukweza Marimba Construction Project since its inception. According to John Rukweza (Personal communication 26 May 2016) about 200 sets of marimba have been constructed at the project to date. Many ensembles, schools and colleges have bought marimbas from their workshop and these include Mbuya Madhuve's and Mbuya Stella Chiweshe's groups. Kenny Rusere, who is now based in Canada, also once purchased marimba from the workshop. A set of six marimbas (two sopranos, two tenors, one baritone, and one bass) costs USD2 100 at Rukweza Marimba Construction Project. There is a

decrease in the demand for marimbas because the schools, which are the main clients, are facing financial problems.

Their marimba-making process is basically the same as that of makers in other workshops in Zimbabwe. Rukweza added that one needs to have carpentry skills and be able to distinguish musical sounds in order to make marimbas. The materials they use are the same as those used by the other marimba construction workshops, with *mukwa* wood giving them the same challenge of not being readily available in its mature form. Financial problems and falling demand were also reported by Rukweza, who mentioned Vheremu in Borrowdale, and Robert Candle at SOS Children's Village in Waterfalls as the other companies that make marimbas in competition with them.

According to Rukweza (Personal communication 26 May 2016), the marimba construction industry in Zimbabwe has a bright future because people love traditional music. Rukweza urged Zimbabweans to buy marimbas so that the younger generation can learn Zimbabwean culture through music. He added that marimba music is very popular amongst children of school-going age, and this is the level at which authorities should make great efforts to develop marimba music performance.

The other challenges cited by Rukweza include the fact that marimbas are difficult to transport to performance venues, and can be damaged during transportation. The cost of constructing marimbas is very high because materials are expensive. Marimba makers need to find donors who can cushion them financially. Clients have to be sought from outside Zimbabwe's borders to bring in foreign currency to a country that has cash-flow problems, and has no currency of its own at the moment. He urged those in the marimba construction industry to create a repayable revolving fund from which individual workshops could borrow money to purchase materials and make the instruments.

6.9. TRANSITION ARTS MUSIC WORKSHOP

Transition Arts Music Workshop (TAMW) was founded in 2008 by Almon Moyo with a mission to construct and repair marimba sets in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province. Moyo holds a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Music and Musicology from MSU. He always had a passion to make traditional instruments and when he was due to go on a work-related learning internship during the third year of his studies, he chose to be attached to a marimba workshop. He got a place at the United College of Education, where he worked under the mentorship of Machinga. He learned how to make marimbas and *mbira*s during this apprenticeship period. The attachment gave him an opportunity to put into practice the theory he had learnt in a course on instrument construction at college. Transition Arts Music Workshop started as an arts workshop and later diversified to venture into marimba construction. After completing his university studies, Moyo got funding from Culture Fund of Zimbabwe to start his own marimba construction workshop.

Moyo makes marimba sets and *mbira*s on a full-time basis. Transition Arts Music Workshop is located at number 99 9th street in Gweru close to the National Railways of Zimbabwe premises. The workshop has one full-time employee and two part-timers. Recently it has tended to concentrate more on making marimbas than musical arts entertainment. The company is not registered owing to the way in which it came into being, as well as other economic factors to be described later in this section. The company has made 10 sets of marimba to date. TAMW also repairs dilapidated marimba sets from primary and secondary schools in the Midlands Province, MSU and Mkoba Teachers College. They further regularly supply mallets because these often tend to wear out and break. TAMW sells a standard set of six marimbas (two sopranos, two tenors, baritone and bass) at USD2 000. The price varies, depending on the different needs of different marimba bands. Some bands buy a set of four marimbas (soprano, tenor baritone and bass) at USD1 400, while others buy a set of eight marimbas (three sopranos, three tenors, baritone and bass)

at USD2 600. Almon Moyo reported that TAMW realises a profit from selling a marimba set.

TAMW makes marimbas using some natural raw materials and other processed ones. *Mukwa* wood is used to make the wooden keys. *Mukwa* is procured from the forest areas of Nkayi and Binga in Matabeleland North Province, as well as from Gokwe in the Midlands Province. In these areas there are contact persons who keep readily seasoned *mukwa* wood for sale to TAMW. Almon Moyo hires trucks to ferry *mukwa* wood from these areas to his workshop in Gweru. Square tubes, which are used to make the frames, are purchased from hardware shops in Gweru. Apart from *mukwa* wood and 20 mm, 30 mm, and 40 mm square tubes, they need 65 mm 75 mm PVC pipes: 4x5 kg resin glue: 10 kg fibre, catalysts, and mould release which are the basic materials one needs to make marimbas and are also purchased from hardware shops.

I asked Almon Moyo to briefly explain how a marimba instrument is made, and took time to observe him making a set for a customer. He reported that the frame is the first part that is made. The frame is made from square tubes that are put together using a welding machine and rods. There is an upper part of the frame which is about 7 cm and a lower part which is 30-35 cm. This is the distance between the two tubes, which suspend the keys. The legs of the marimba are about 40-45 cm in height. After completing the frame, one cuts and shapes the wooden keys, which are 6,5 cm wide. The longest key is 30-35 cm long and the shortest is 10-15 cm long. Next one has to cut the PVC pipes and the shortest pipe is 4,5 cm long and the longest is 12 inches long (about 30 cm). After shaping the keys (17 for soprano, 17 for tenor, 9 for baritone, and 8 for bass), one assembles the marimba keys and fastens them onto the frame, held together by a thin rope made of fibre. The keys are spaced using rubber washers to avoid concussion when they vibrate during playing. The last stage is when one tunes the keys and the PVC pipes.

According to Moyo (Personal communication 12 February 2016), they are facing a couple of challenges in the marimba construction industry in contemporary

Zimbabwe. TAMW has no vehicle of their own to transport *mukwa* wood over the 200km distance from where they procure it to their workshop in Gweru. The business has not grown enough for them to acquire a truck, so they have to either hire or hitch hike. Transport charges vary, depending on the transporter but most of the hired vehicles charge at least USD200 per truckload. Hitch hiking tends to be cheaper, but they have to bear with being stuck on the roadside for hours on end until a driver willing to bargain stops to negotiate a fare. Some drivers will be hurrying to meet certain targets and may not be patient to engage in the bargaining exercise. Consequently, it can be a day or two before they leave the place and costs of subsistence inevitably come into the equation.

Another major challenge that Moyo's workshop faces is that of lack of financial capital to invest in their business. TAMW needs money to purchase materials for use in their job in large quantities but the money is difficult to find. The workshop also needs to purchase heavy-duty machinery since they work on hard wood. They have not benefitted from the indigenisation ministry finances, which Moyo says are not easily accessible although a lot has been said about empowering blacks and small to medium enterprises by the government of Zimbabwe in recent times. The capital woes are compounded by a general low uptake of marimbas on the market. I have observed that an ensemble buys one marimba set which can last for about four to five years before they need to buy another one. This means that during this period the marimba maker will only be occasionally called to either repair or tune the same set of marimbas, and have to look elsewhere for new buyers. Yet there are very few Zimbabweans who think about forming marimba ensembles in the prevailing harsh economic environment.

There is very stiff competition amongst marimba construction workshops to get tenders for supplying marimbas to potential clients. Moyo (Personal communication, 12 February 2016) indicated that "Sometimes we meet them when we are submitting quotations to clients." He mentioned Kwanongoma Music Workshop, Yotinhira Arts Workshop, and Kutinya Marimba Arts Workshop as some of the companies that also supply sets to marimba ensembles in Zimbabwe.

In the face of such stiff competition there inevitably arises a need for a strategic plan; Moyo said: "I offer personalised customer service by manufacturing according to the requirements of the customer." Apparently, traditional instrument making is an area that still has wide avenues to explore for people who want to research and improve the quality of marimba instruments.

6.10. YOTINHIRA ARTS MUSIC WORKSHOP

Fidelis Mherembi founded Yotinhira Arts Music Workshop in 2008. Mherembi, who was born on 12 January 1975, is the Artistic Director of Yotinhira Arts. He graduated from the School of African and Oriental Studies (University of London) with a Master's Degree in Music Performance. He is a professional player and teacher of Zimbabwean traditional *mbira*, marimba and dance. He has taught and performed in Zimbabwe, Norway, France and England. He spent a great deal of time teaching music in Zimbabwean secondary schools and tertiary institutions, which include Nyadire Teachers College, and the Zimbabwe College of Music. Fidelis has a deep interest in Zimbabwean traditional music. He says that Mazorodze is his name, although it is not on any official document (Personal communication, 15 February 2016).

Mherembi specialises in manufacturing marimba and *mbira* instruments for schools, and he does this on a full-time basis. He has worked in collaboration with Solon Foundation, Calben Trust, The Pierian Centre and Plan International, among other organisations. Fidelis initiated the "Music for All Zimbabwe (www.m4az.org)" project with the aim of raising money to buy musical instruments to help needy schools and musicians in Zimbabwe. He believes that music should be accessible to all Zimbabwean children and those beyond the borders.

Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble came up with the idea of setting up a marimba manufacturing project in 2008 when they noticed the type of marimba that was being played in Norway which, according to Mherembi (Personal communication,

15 February 2016) distorted the natural Africanist sound of the Zimbabwean traditional songs. He said:

> *In 2007 I had a one-year contract to teach music in Norway on an exchange programme, and one of my tasks was to service the schools' marimba sets dotted in and around Fredrikstad. When I did the repairing of their marimbas I was left with no doubt that I could start the manufacturing of the marimba in Zimbabwe. After all I had been taking care of my band's marimba instruments since 1999 so the combination of passion and experience saw me starting the construction of marimba. On returning to Zimbabwe I vowed to start the manufacturing project which quickly took off the ground and grew well* (Mherembi 2016).

Yotinhira Arts Music Workshop's marimba construction project has become a huge success and they are amongst the country's biggest marimba suppliers. The workshop is a registered private company in Zimbabwe known as Yotinhira Arts (Pvt Ltd). It is located at stand number 8053 Cold Comfort, Tynwald South, in Harare. Mherembi employs five workers in his workshop: Senzeni Mherembi, who is responsible for marketing musical instruments, Nyasha Machingauta, a wood technician, Abraham Chidzenga, a driver, Innocent Mherembi, a fibreglass technician, and Peter Gudo, who is a welder.

Yotinhira Arts Marimba Workshop realises profits from selling marimba sets. One set from this workshop costs USD2 400. They have sold marimba sets to community-based Gwarimba Arts Ensemble, Tambarimba Arts Ensemble, Tama Arts Ensemble, Yotinhira Arts Marimba Ensemble, and Guruve Arts Marimba Ensemble. Schools, colleges, and universities have also bought marimbas from Yotinhira Arts Marimba Workshop. In addition, the workshop supplies marimbas abroad to groups in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland. Hohodza Marimba band, now based in the United Kingdom, has also bought marimbas from the workshop. To date they have sold round 60 marimba sets and Fidelis Mherembi says there is definitely an increase in demand. Yotinhira Arts Workshop members offer a free special 15-day intensive coaching workshop to those who purchase their marimbas to promote their product.

When I asked Fidelis Mherembi whether he knew any popular contemporary artists who blend marimbas with other musical instruments, he mentioned Charles Chipanga, who is based in Harare, and Kudaushe Matimba, who is now based in the UK. Mherembi added that:

> *Generally speaking, Zimbabwean music fans enjoy listening to marimba music as evidenced by their response to the music through dance and the inquisitive nature of audience. The instrument is well respected, especially amongst music academics. However, there are some religious denominations where the instrument is associated with the African spiritual world hence they are not enthusiastic to play it in such churches* (Mherembi 2016).

Marimba music performance in Zimbabwe has not remained unscathed by the advent of technology in this contemporary world. There has been a great threat from music technology since nowadays music is being generated from computers rather than live musical instruments. Live marimba performers in Zimbabwe are at risk of being overshadowed by musical styles such as Zimbabwean Dancehall Music (popularly known in Zimbabwe as ZimDancehall). Mherembi said that marimba players should try to play musical styles that tally with current trends in showbiz. Another challenge is the economy of Zimbabwe, which is facing serious challenges, leaving people to focus on buying basic needs rather than music records, which they regard as a luxury. To a large extent, the cost of purchasing a set of marimbas is very prohibitive; hence it is accessed and played mostly by well-established institutions. Outside schools and tertiary institutions very few individuals can access the instruments (Fidelis Mherembi, Personal communication, 15 February 2016).

Violation of copyright law is another thorn in the flesh for marimba musicians in Zimbabwe. With piracy rocking the nation, marimba artists are not motivated to record and publish their music. Mherembi thinks that stakeholders in marimba music can unite and overcome these challenges and realise the profits from the popularity of marimba. He said there is a need for marimba performers to undertake antipiracy campaigns, and for perpetrators to be brought to book, so that music artists can be encouraged to pursue marimba music performance careers. He added

that more airplay of traditional music can promote marimba music on radio, so far there is no radio station in Zimbabwe that reserves a slot to play marimba music and such a move that would help to popularise it.

I asked Mherembi to mention the materials that one needs to make a set of treble, tenor, baritone and bass marimbas. He said that one needs one tenth of a *mukwa* cube, 15km resin, 5kg fibreglass mate, 1kg welding rods, square tube metal, sponge rubber, one length of 63mm PVC class 4, two lengths of 75mm PVC, one litre paint, one litre varnish, ropes, 1160cm of 30x30 metal square tube for bass, 1000cm of 30x30 metal square tube for baritone, 2x 965cm of 25x25 metal square tube for tenor, and 2 x764cm of 20x20 metal square tube for soprano. They procure these materials from Lupane, where they usually buy *mukwa* in large volumes. There are certain instances when they buy timber from the Forestry Commission in Harare. At other times, they buy *mukwa* from their Bulawayo agent, one Mr Masuku. Metal is purchased from hardware dealers Africa Steel and Gifurn Steel. All fibreglass related material is purchased from Astra Chemicals. PVC pipes are purchased from Culbit Pipes.

I asked Fidelis Mherembi about the construction of a marimba instrument and he explained thus:

> *The question is broad but in a nutshell the marimba can be summarized into three elements: The wood, the frames and the resonators. The wood is processed from mukwa tree, ripped into various lengths and widths. It is cut to specific lengths which are tuned to specific tones. The metal frames are fabricated in such a way that you can fold them. The legs should be high enough to accommodate the resonators underneath. Between the frames and keys a soft rubber is applied. The resonators for sopranos are made out of 63 millimetre PVC pipes which are sealed on the bottom and tuned to correspond to the pitch of the wooden key. The tenor resonators are made out of 75mm PVC pipes which are also tuned. However, for the bass and baritone the resonators are made out of fibreglass which is processed in moulds. Seventeen moulds are available to manufacture the 17 resonators for baritone and bass which are also tuned to correspond to the sound of the mukwa keys* (Mherembi 2016).

Marimba makers in Zimbabwe are facing a number of challenges. Mherembi said that the economic challenges in Zimbabwe have strained academic institutions, who are their main clients, and this in turn has directly affected the cash flow of capital. The current trends are not the best for the tourism sector, so marimba exports have declined significantly. Also, he said the costs of exporting marimba are very high, hence there are very few international customers. Mherembi said that the economic problem is a national one and can only be resolved when the Zimbabwean economy improves. He added that:

> *Export laws need to be attractive if we are to export profitably. There are now a considerable number of marimba makers and this also means increased competition. In the face of competition from other marimba makers we at Yotinhira Arts Music Workshop thrive to make top notch products.*

He mentioned Kwanongoma College of African Music, Chris Timbe, and Nicholas Manomano as the other marimba makers. Although there are many players in the industry, some of whom were around before Yotinhira Arts Marimba Workshop was formed, Mherembi believes that competition is healthy as it brings the best out of the marimba manufacturers. In his opinion, there is a future for the marimba construction industry in Zimbabwe. He said: "I strongly believe that the manufacturing of marimba can get even better. The new Zimbabwean curriculum is supporting vocational and technical subjects. It is in that thrust that we expect that music teachers would be inclined to teach marimba."

Plate 6.1 A standard Zimbabwe marimba set

with soprano, tenor, baritone and bass

(Fidelis Mherembi 2016)

6.11. THE TUNING SYSTEM OF THE ZIMBABWE MARIMBA

Hugh Tracey (1969:75) described how the Chopi tune their marimbas as follows:

> *The Chopi xylophonists from Mozambique almost invariably tune their slats in regular ascending order, attempting, they say, to achieve even intervals throughout the central octave starting from the hombe, the tone centre. The remaining notes are then tuned in true octaves from the already established heptatonic scale. What is here remarkable is that several Chopi instrumentalists are able to tune their xylophones entirely by ear without reference to another instrument or musician and*

> *find their sense of "perfect pitch" for this instrument coincides exactly with that of their fellow musicians. Here again is an indication of the integrity of local modalities which cannot be lightly dismissed, or attributed solely to memory.*

All the marimba makers based in Zimbabwe whom I interacted with indicated that they tune the Zimbabwe marimba in the manner of an electronic keyboard. This is done so that the marimba can be played in the same band with guitars, keyboards and *mbira*s when musicians want it to happen that way. They use tuning devices that give them accuracy. One of them is Charles Kunzvi, Children's Performing Arts Marimba Workshop's deaf marimba builder, who uses a tuning device to tune the marimba keys and resonators and it is not a challenge at all since he just checks to see the correct position of the green light on the tuner.

According to Wilson Tendai Machinga (Personal communication 7 May 2016), both the resonators and the wooden keys are tuned to their different pitches according to the notes which they must produce. To attain the correct pitch levels for the keys and resonators, they use tuning devices: a Strobbo Tuner, a Korg Chromatic Tuner, a TU 121 chromatic Tuner, and the Korg CA Tuner, which is the latest device available in Zimbabwe. To correct the pitches of the wooden keys, they chip off wood from the centre of a key to flatten it, or from its edges to sharpen it. The PVC pipe pitches are adjusted by reducing the length of the pipe until it reaches the desired pitch.

I asked Almon Moyo how he tunes the marimba set that he manufactures in his Transition Arts Music Workshop, and he said:

> *Most African musical instruments are tuned using songs or phrases, for example dhongi mombe mbudzi [is] popular in mbira tuning. However, with the type of marimba that I make, I use a chromatic tuner. The tuner does not emphasise on definite pitch but rather on the range of the pitch of a note and this accommodates overtones. However, when I was trained to make instruments I realised that there are different types of marimbas, some of which are tuned using speech-inflated tones* (Moyo 2016).

The tuning system that Yotinhira Arts Marimba Workshop uses for the Zimbabwe marimbas that they make was explained by Fidelis Mherembi (2016) thus:

> *On soprano and tenor we add an additional F sharp, otherwise it is just a major scale of C laid out in two octaves. On baritone the notes are G..A..C..D..E..F..G..A..C. However, some clients request extended versions of baritone which have Bs and an F sharp. The bass has C..D..E..F..G..A..C..D. However, sometimes an F sharp is also added if a client asks for it.*

Christopher Timbe of Melo-Rhythm Music Workshop also uses a chromatic tuner for tuning the marimba keys. He said, "I also use the A440 standard on pitching." A *mbezo* (adze) is used by marimba makers to adjust the key of a *rimba* (note). Wood is chipped off the bottom of the key's centre to lower the note, or off its bottom edges to raise the note. Farai Gezi of musical Instruments for Africa Workshop echoed the same sentiments as Timbe on how the marimba keys are tuned.

6.12. SUMMARY

In this chapter I discussed the anatomy of the Zimbabwe marimba. Most marimba workshops in Zimbabwe are still following the original design that was developed at Kwanongoma College of African Music in the mid-1960s. The marimba keys are made of *mukwa* wood and mounted on metal frames. Some workshops make marimbas that can be folded for easy transportation, but the majority are making marimbas that cannot be folded. The metal frames are usually painted in black and white to portray some cultural inclination. Baritone and bass resonators are made from fibreglass, while soprano and tenor resonators are made from PVC pipes. The workshops make sets with soprano, tenor, baritone and bass. It is up to different ensembles to decide how many marimbas they play, ranging from four to eight.

I further looked at the acoustics of the Zimbabwe marimba. Music played on the Zimbabwe marimbas is either in the key of C major or G major. Some marimba builders are making chromatic marimbas, which can be played in any key. Marimbas produce a unique mellow wooden sound that has endeared them to many

music lovers. The marimbas are tuned by means of electronic tuners in just intonation and can be played together with other electric instruments such as the guitar and keyboards. The wooden keys and resonator are both tuned to their different corresponding keys during the construction process, and when they go off tune as they are played they can be tuned again by chipping off wood from underneath them. Keys are raised by chipping off wood from the centre bottom of a key using an adze, and lowered by chipping off wood from their bottom edges.

This chapter has also presented information collected from the field on the marimba building industry in Zimbabwe. I managed to interact with people from eight workshops specialising in making African musical instruments (*mbira* and marimba). Of these eight instrument construction workshops; six (CHIPAWO, Kutinya Marimba, Melo-Ryhthm, Musical Instruments for Africa, Rukweza, and Yotinhira Arts) are operating from the capital; one is operating from Gweru (Transition Arts Music Workshop); and one is operating from Bulawayo, where the Zimbabwe marimba was designed at Kwanongoma Music Workshop. These workshops are staffed by people who have received training in marimba music performance, and also on how to make marimbas. The influence and impact of Kwanongoma College of African Music has grown phenomenally when one examines the number of musical instrument making workshops that have originated out of the first graduates from this college.

Marimba makers have played a significant role in the popularisation of the Zimbabwe marimba in the country in its short history of five decades. They have provided material and technical support to marimba musicians whom they have supplied with the instruments so that they can musick on the wood that sings. Marimba bands have sprouted countrywide in schools, teachers' colleges, polytechnics, universities, and in society, where there are dozens of community-based marimba ensembles. Even though a number of marimba performers have relocated to the Diaspora, those still based in Zimbabwe have continued to get support from marimba builders locally.

Challenges faced by the Zimbabwean economy have cascaded down to the marimba construction industry as well. Clients are facing cash-flow shortages, especially after the envisaged introduction of the bond notes, which has led to panic as people make very large withdrawals in fear of losing their money. Marimba makers have to consider the use of plastic money now because prospective marimba buyers may not access cash when they want to purchase marimbas. In Zimbabwe, the cost of everything is generally high, including that of materials used in marimba construction. Some of these marimba builders have resorted to making marimbas for export to the West, where they get hard currency, and this has ensured their survival in a country mired in an economic crisis for over two decades now.

The construction of the marimba is basically the same in almost all the workshops that I visited. CHIPAWO, Yotinhira Arts and Kutinya Marimba are the only two workshops that have ventured into making chromatic marimbas with sharps and flats so that songs can be played in any major key. All the workshops use metal to make the frames, and some of them make marimbas that can be folded for easy transportation. Most of the workshops use *mukwa* wood to make the wooden keys, although here and there substitute wood types have been used when *mukwa* is not readily available. The tuning system is the same as all of them tune the Zimbabwe marimbas in just intonation.

I also discussed the marimba makers' role in marimba music performance practice, as well as their experiences and how they fit into marimba musicking in contemporary Zimbabwe. All the marimba makers in Zimbabwe I interacted with are musicians in their own right. The marimba construction industry in Zimbabwe has more than 10 workshops, although in this thesis I only managed to include eight of them who consented to take part in the study. The majority are based in Harare, the Capital City of Zimbabwe, where the majority of business happens in the country. They are facing numerous challenges due to the tough economic situation stretching over two decades. The marimba makers have devised a couple of survival tactics and are hustling and jostling to make ends meet as they hope for a brighter future. These marimba makers have contributed immensely to keeping marimba

performance practice alive by providing the necessary instruments played by the marimba performers.

CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. SUMMARY

This thesis focused on the making of the marimba tradition in Zimbabwe, focusing on how this new tradition was born and became a tradition. In this study I reviewed literature on the marimba instrument in Africa as well as in the rest of the world. Marimba instruments are widespread in all parts of the world. There are marimba playing activities and traditions in Africa, Asia, America, Australia and Europe. African countries where marimbas are played include Mozambique, Uganda, South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Congo, West Africa, and Zimbabwe. The marimbas exist in these places in various shapes and designs, and these variations are augmented by those of marimbas outside Africa, which add more variety. The tuning systems are different from place to place as well, with some people even playing chromatic marimbas. To me this is overwhelming evidence that the marimba is a class of musical instruments and organologists ought to start treating it as such.

I focused on marimba music performance practice in contemporary Zimbabwean society, tracking the community-based marimba ensembles that are performing marimba music in Zimbabwe in Harare, Bulawayo, Guruve, Gweru, and Victoria Falls. Some of these ensembles took part in the Tambarimba Festival at Harare Gardens in September 2015, and one of them participated in the Manicaland Folk Music and Dance Festival at St Dominic's High School in Mutare in February 2016. I managed to interact with members of twelve community-based marimba bands. The majority of these marimba ensembles are based in Harare, where there are great chances of making it onto the big stage because live performances tend to attract large crowds. It is also easier to be spotted by promoters and even foreigners, hence Harare-based marimba ensembles have a better chance than those based outside the capital city of concluding lucrative performance deals both locally and abroad. Victoria Falls has about four marimba ensembles, but I only managed to interact with two of them. In the resort town there are prospects of getting foreign currency

from tourists who come to view the spectacular waterfalls. Ensembles there also harbour dreams of creating synergies with visitors from abroad. The diaspora is viewed by most marimba artists as a great chance either to escape from the local economic woes by relocating or to earn forex to boost their income. Several Zimbabwe marimba ensembles are now based abroad.

I also observed marimba ensembles from teachers' colleges and polytechnic colleges that performed marimba music at the annual Tertiary Institutions Festival of Arts (TIFAZ) in July 2015 in Masvingo City, and in July 2016 in Mutare City. In this category I observed about thirteen marimba ensembles from teachers' colleges, while polytechnics provided seven marimba ensembles to make a total of twenty marimba ensembles. At the Research and Intellectual Output-Science and Technology Expo (RIO-SET) in September 2015 and September 2016 I observed marimba ensembles from the country's tertiary institutions in Bulawayo. University-based marimba bands joined those from teachers and polytechnic colleges to showcase performances and research in different aspects of marimba music. There were eleven marimba bands from universities. These college-based marimba ensembles differ from community-based ensembles because survival is not part of their agenda. They perform marimba music because it is an institutional requirement. Their membership lacks continuity because students come and go when they complete their studies, so what is permanent are the lecturers who coordinate these marimba ensembles.

Festival organisers who either have the money or can access donor aid to run marimba festivals have benefited from the economic situation. They arrange marimba festivals where marimba ensembles compete annually with the hope of winning the first prizes that bring them cash. The period before a festival is characterised by brisk business for marimba builders as ensembles prepare to impress at the competitions by buying new sets or having the old sets repaired. Dispositions such as the finances of the festival funders, marimba performers' knowledge, marimba music fans' tastes, and the festival judges' education correlate to shape marimba performance practice in Zimbabwe. These factors form a class

made up of people with common traits. The festival organisers' agency entails restrictions through festival rules of what should be done and how it should be done. I also chronicled four popular artists who mix marimba with other musical instruments in their contemporary bands in Zimbabwe. There are three other artists in this category I did not manage to interact with because of their tight performance schedules. The fact that the Zimbabwe marimba has the scales of C major and G major makes it possible for it to be played together with other tuned and percussion instruments. Zimbabwean popular artists are now recognising the Zimbabwe marimba as a national instrument which can be used to foster their Zimbabwean identity both locally and abroad, where they embark on international performance tours.

The lived experiences of marimba musicians came under the spotlight in this study. Zimbabwe marimba performers grapple with challenges that basically hinge on the state of the country's economy. Research participants reported that the economic problems that are being faced in Zimbabwe today are their main challenges. Community-based marimba ensembles are the worst hit since they find it difficult to purchase marimba sets, which are very expensive in the country, with the average cost of one marimba set being about two thousand US dollars. Schools and tertiary institutions are better placed to accumulate financial resources to buy marimbas for their ensembles, since they have a constant source of income on a regular termly basis. This explains why there are more school-based than community-based marimba ensembles in the country now. At community centres there are youths who are largely unemployed in Zimbabwe and those who might have the idea and skills to form marimba bands are unable to purchase a set of marimbas. They need donations from corporate institutions or well-wishers for them to acquire marimbas on which to musick.

The Zimbabwe marimba has been played for over five decades since it was designed at Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo in the 1960s. In this study I have discovered that marimba music is performed in the entertainment frame in Zimbabwe. Because of its presence in the entertainment domain, the

Zimbabwe marimba has been found handy in both academic institutions and community centres since it is not associated with any ritual. It is a situation of contemporary marimba musicians and their audience musicking on the wood that sings, all in a quest to entertain and be entertained. The wooden sonority of the instrument makes it unique and popular with Zimbabweans of different age groups. Those who hear the wooden mellow sound of marimba music being performed for the first time show some level of perplexity about how the wood sings melodies. The Zimbabwe marimba's just intonation tuning as well as its capability of playing music in soprano, tenor, baritone and bass registers makes most music from many cultures of Zimbabwe and other parts of the world adaptable to be played on this instrument. This has given the marimba a slot in some contemporary bands, who mix it with other electric musical instruments in Zimbabwe.

The prevailing situation is that Zimbabwe marimba music has grown in popularity in the country. A considerable number of schools have purchased Zimbabwe marimbas from the local marimba makers and have marimba ensembles on their premises. In terms of popularity, marimba music is on the rise in Zimbabwe. According to Fidelis Mherembi (personal communication, 15 February 2016), marimba music is gradually gaining the respect it deserves, as evidenced by the increased interest in the number of schools that are now playing marimba music. Since 2015 there has been an increase in the number of festivals where marimba took centre stage, such as the Tambarimba Festival, which attracted close to 50 primary and secondary schools and seven community-based ensembles to compete at the Harare Gardens.

According to Wilson Tendai Machinga (Personal communication, 23 April 2016), marimba is the most popular musical instrument in Zimbabwe, judging by the community-based, school-based, college-based, and university-based ensembles that participate in marimba competitions. Almon Moyo (Personal communication, 12 January 2016) said that marimba music is especially popular with children of school-going age in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe marimba has been around since the 1960s and during this time its popularity has grown tremendously. Today,

Zimbabwe-style marimba bands can be heard not only in Zimbabwe and its neighbouring countries, such as Botswana and South Africa, but also in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Australia, Canada, and the United States of America. For an instrument with such a short history, it has certainly travelled far (Chaia Marimba 2014). However, Nicholas Manomano (Personal communication, 20 June 2016) believes that marimba music is not as popular in community centres as it is in schools and tertiary learning institutions.

I managed to interact with marimba builders in eight workshops operating in Harare, Gweru, and Bulawayo. All the marimba makers are marimba performers in their own right who have ventured into the marimba construction industry because of its prospects. Some of them are trained musicians, others are university graduates and music educators who have developed a passion for the marimba. They have noticed the instrument's popularity and seized the chance to cash in on the sales to schools, colleges, polytechnics, universities, community centres, and popular artists who play the Zimbabwe marimba. The eight workshops that I included in this study all reported brisk business despite there being such a large number of competitors plying the same trade in the country. One notable factor is that the wooden keys of the marimba tend to wear out and break within a few years and the workshops get return jobs to repair marimba sets, or new jobs to supply new sets of marimbas to their clients. The amount of activity in the Zimbabwe marimba construction industry is further evidence of the popularity of the Zimbabwe marimba in the country. Evidently, the state of the art of marimba performance practice in Zimbabwe is that it has grown in popularity since the instrument came into being over five decades ago.

Zimbabwe marimba makers also bemoaned the country's cash-flow problems as a major setback in their business. Costs of procuring materials are prohibitive and marimba builders are left with no option but to pass the high costs onto their customers. *Mukwa* wood, square tubes, PVC pipes, fibreglass, and accessories are sold at exorbitant prices by wood processors and hardware shops and this is the main reason why a set of soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass marimbas is very

expensive in Zimbabwe. Respondents said that the economy could only recover with political change and stability in the country. The economy deteriorated after sanctions were imposed on the ZANU (PF) government at the turn of the millennium and the impasse seems to be far from over. Marimba builders have not been spared the economic challenges associated with the economic sanctions; most of them have looked to foreign markets where there are prospects of getting hard currency to cushion themselves from collapsing.

Marimba music in Zimbabwe has bright prospects when one analyses the current situation with hope for a brighter future. The country's economy is down at the moment and people are desperate to see it improve, though it is possible that things might also get worse before they get better. The fact that marimba music performance has weathered the storm and survived despite an unfriendly economic environment is enough testimony that it will fare much better in an improved economic environment. An improved economic environment will depend on a lasting solution to the current political impasse, the end of which has the potential to usher in an era of prosperity.

In this study I also focused on Zimbabwe marimba song arrangements. There are traditional song modes that have been arranged to be played on the marimba from the days of Alport Mhlanga five decades ago. A number of the songs are mbira tunes while others are based on traditional styles and genres. Marimba performers have also adapted contemporary songs and arranged them to be played on the Zimbabwe marimbas. This is possible because the Zimbabwe marimba was designed with two major scales (C major and G major), hence the notes for songs can be articulated in these keys without any problem. The fact that some marimba builders are now making chromatic marimbas means that any song can be played on the marimba.

In this study I also focused on music education in the country, which has propelled marimba music performance practice forward. Zimbabwe marimba music dissemination has been quite a success owing to the work done in academic

institutions where music programmes have been designed and implemented. From the days when it was designed at Kwanongoma College of African Music, the Zimbabwe marimba has spread like a veld fire. Teachers' colleges around the country run music education programmes that include the teaching and learning of marimba performance practice. Furthermore, polytechnic colleges have started offering music as a subject of study, while degree programmes have also been introduced in universities, with five universities offering music programmes.

In these academic institutions, sterling work has been done by marimba music educators. Marimba music teachers have played an important role in the dissemination process that has brought the state of marimba music performance practice to what it is today. Some Kwanongoma graduates have taught marimba music in primary and secondary schools around the country. Trained teachers in the music fraternity have advanced their qualifications in music by studying for degrees in music education, music technology, musicology and ethnomusicology. Currently there are a few lecturers with doctoral degrees in music in the country and the number looks set to increase in future.

Marimba playing techniques are unique because of the use of two mallets, one in each hand. A great deal of energy is required by a marimba player and this physical activity makes warming up an essential precursor of a successful performance. There are several techniques of striking the marimba keys depending on the type of effect that a player wants to achieve, and this study also chronicled some of the techniques used by Zimbabwe marimba players. These are coupled with performance techniques because audiences will appreciate more when the bands bring in some of those that enhance their performances.

7.2. CONCLUSIONS

The current marimba performance practices in Zimbabwe entail marimba festivals, tourist recreational performances, and community-based shows. Meaning in Zimbabwean marimba musicking is secular: performances in stadia, concert halls,

open spaces, gardens, streets, and festival arenas are done purely for entertainment purposes. I argue from this discovery that leisure Zimbabwe marimba musicking activities are important because social life is laced with more secular than sacred music. I denounce the stereotype that all music of 'foreign lands' is 'exotic and imbued with deep spiritual meaning' because that is not true.

Another conclusion which I arrived at is that marimba performers, makers, mentors, composers, and arrangers fit in an ecosystem of musicking on the Zimbabwe marimba, where festival funders, organisers, and fans share diverse significant roles that contribute to the growth of the art. While it is the marimba performers that are immediately visible in the musicking matrix, it is the festival organisers and funders who make make the functions possible. Performers gain knowledge on how to make music from the mentors, and marimba instruments from the builders. Composers and arrangers are crucial for the musicking to be of high standard, and the marimba music fans grace the performances. I also noticed that there are individuals in this ecosystem who play more than a single role; some builders are players or mentors, some players are composers or arrangers, and some funders and organisers are marimba music lovers. Each one of them fits in their own unique way into marimba musicking in contemporary Zimbabwe.

7.3. MY EPPD MARIMBA PERFORMANCE THEORY

Pertaining to the challenges and prospects that exist in the country's marimba musicking landscape, I argue that Zimbabwe marimba music performance practice can grow in popularity despite a harsh economic climate. I propose my Educate, Practice, Promote, and Disseminate (EPPD) Marimba Performance Theory Model which provides some notes on how musicking on the wood that sings can be popularised in Zimbabwe. This theory emanated from my personal experiences in the field as I endeavoured to help Zimbabwe marimba practitioners who, in my view, are bedevilled by numerous challenges as they play their instruments.

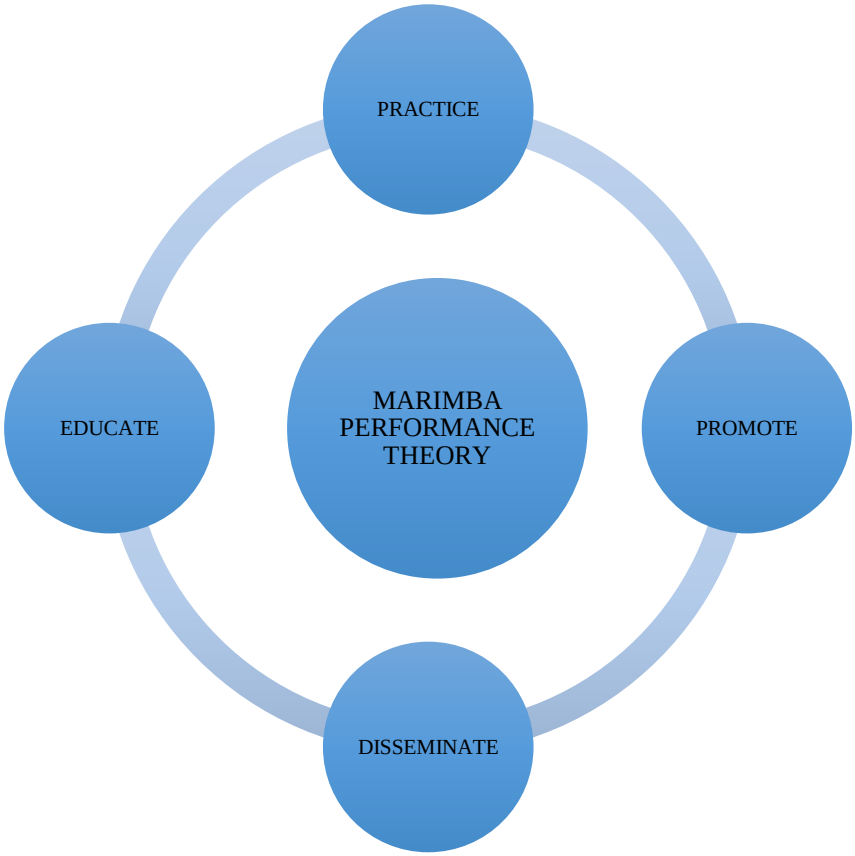

Figure 7.1 Marimba Performance Theory Model

EDUCATE

Education is a key factor in marimba music dissemination amongst people of all age groups. It happens in both formal and non-formal institutions, primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions. Children and young adults receive lessons from mentors on several key aspects of the marimba such as anatomy, acoustics, scales, chord progressions, playing techniques, and live performance. Mentors undergo pre-service tutelage, and also continue to receive further in-service training on emerging trends in marimba music performance practice.

PRACTICE

Practice is essential because what is learnt can be retained by being put into regular exercise. Rehearsals are a key component of practice so that the skills learnt can be reinforced and polished. All skills and performance techniques ought to be rehearsed and mastered first before they are presented to an audience. Mentors ensure this by assessing their individual marimba players to check if they have mastered the skills required.

PROMOTE

Motivation is a critical element in marimba performance practice. Players themselves need to have intrinsic motivation so that they keep their performances at the highest level. Extrinsic motivation is also necessary to encourage players through rewards such as prizes for outstanding achievements, and funding for upkeep. Marimba performance practice has to be promoted through mediatisation so that the general populace is aware of education programs, practice opportunities, and performance schedules. A deliberate effort ought to be made to market marimba music amongst Zimbabweans so that it becomes a common instrument.

DISSEMINATE

The dissemination process is the one that transmits live marimba performances across the country. A marimba research institute can champion the dissemination process by spearheading new knowledge on various aspects of Zimbabwe marimba music. A key task is to set up information on how marimba instruments can be made locally available and cheaply accessible. The institute can also generate knowledge on how to produce marimba CDs because this is a key setback in the dissemination process. Marimba music can be popularised through various avenues such as street shows, community outreach programs, competitions, festivals and galas.

7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

One avenue for future studies on how to overcome the challenge of high costs of marimba sets could be for universities offering music studies to embark on marimba construction lectures in which students and any interested musicians from the community are taught how to build marimbas. Such an undertaking might lead to the availability of more people who run marimba construction workshops. This situation would create competition amongst marimba makers and might effectively lead to a reduction in the cost of marimba sets. Consequently, community-based marimba ensembles would find it affordable to purchase marimba sets on which to make music. This would increase the popularity of the instrument, which presently carries a very big price tag in the few workshops that are in the marimba construction business. If each of the five universities teaching music in Zimbabwe were to start making marimbas, the number of marimba construction workshops in

the country would increase to more than ten. Since universities themselves are presently some of the customers who buy marimbas, the existing workshops would feel the decline in demand. Hopefully those who will have been taught to make marimbas would then proceed to running their own marimba construction workshops and at least double the present number of marimba makers. This would lead to healthy competition, so improving the quality of products while lowering the price of a set of marimbas.

Marimba performers in Zimbabwe should by now be playing improved versions of the Kwanongoma marimba in terms of quality of product. Marimba construction has not evolved much since the Kwanongoma initiative, and there is a need for more research in this regard, but this was outside the scope of this study. The materials used for making marimbas should be improved with the aim of producing more durable marimbas. This will cushion marimba bands from recurrent costs of repairing marimbas, which they are currently facing on a regular basis. The mallets that Zimbabwe marimba players use last barely three months before they are broken, and scientific research on such materials could help to overcome this obstacle. The level of refinement of the *mukwa* wooden keys should be improved so that their sonority and timbre becomes superb. The quality of marimbas that are made and played in Zimbabwe seems to have remained in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The marimbas that are made in Zimbabwe are quite big, with each instrument spanning about two metres in length. There are several problems associated with this large size. Performers sometimes have to shift positions when they play them, especially short and young people. The instruments are very difficult to manoeuvre around when there is a performance away from the practice venue; loading them onto vans, offloading and mounting them onto the stage is physically challenging indeed. I have noticed that after a performance some band members tend to disappear in a bid to avoid having to carry the instruments after another physically demanding task of playing them for an hour or so. Getting a suitable van to transport the marimbas requires a great deal of money because they can only be loaded onto

trucks that are expensive to hire. Moving marimbas around also causes damage to the keys, resonators or frames.

Zimbabwe is facing dire financial constraints, with government workers frequently going unpaid for several months. The majority of industries are either closed or operating below their full capacity. Civil strife has been characterised by anti-government protests after a ban on imports, and an anti-Bond Notes campaign, and this has brought further instability to an already struggling marimba music industry. The implications for marimba construction and performance practice are serious. Shortages of materials in hardware shops are looming and this will impact negatively on existing instrument repairs and new instrument construction. Consequently, marimba music performance will also be affected and performers will have to continue to find survival strategies in a harsh economic climate, or in a country where there is no economy to talk about. The solution to economic woes lies in the political playing field, where the government is facing economic sanctions from the United States and the European Union.

Marimba ensembles need to take it upon themselves to organise marimba festivals at grassroots level, even when there is no funding at all. Waiting for one or two festivals in Harare and Mutare does not help their cause in any way. Some of the ensembles cannot even afford the travel and subsistence costs associated with a trip to the capital city. Festivals held in townships in the districts would reach out to more people locally. Harare festivals remain an impossibility for the greater percentage of the country's population. Even some of Harare residents cannot afford the transport to go and enjoy marimba music at the Harare Gardens in a dwindling economy. Synergies could be created by marimba ensembles based in the country to organise local/regional festivals. Without such efforts, marimba music will remain uncommon for a significant percentage of the Zimbabwean population.

Individual marimba bands could go a step further and arrange free live road show performances in the streets in and around where they are based. Such a humble

move would introduce marimba music to passers-by who might not be aware of the mellow wooden sound of the instrument. All ensembles should not wait for chances to perform in Harare or abroad, which for some ensembles might never happen after all. Not all marimba music fans can attend festivals where most of the marimba performances are held. Marimba event organisers need to consider taking marimba music to the grassroots by holding marimba music road shows in the streets from where the marimba players hail. This would help to inspire more local people to focus on marimba music performance, in-as-much as it would inform locals of a tradition that has grown fast abroad and remained its shell back home where the idea of the Zimbabwe marimba was mooted in the mid-1960s. It is at the grassroots level that marimba music ought to make a huge impact first before band members' dream of making it big.

Marimba ensembles have stamped their authority on the Zimbabwean showbiz scene to make their presence felt. I noticed that marimba bands rarely arrange live shows to entertain their fans. Live shows are one way of popularising their brand of music in Zimbabwe, where music lovers are mostly exposed to *sungura*, jazz, gospel, and Zimdancehall music shows during weekends. A clever way to begin might be by courting the big names in Zimbabwean showbiz such as Oliver Mtukudzi, Winky D, Sulumani Chimbetu, Alick Macheso and Leonard Zhakata and featuring at their shows when they take a break. This would introduce marimba music to the big crowds and help to disseminate it fast on the showbiz scene. If the marimba bands could make an impact at these joint shows, then they might end up advertising their own shows if their music is well received by music fans.

More marimba ensembles ought to record their music on CDs for marketing purposes. This would help to make the music available on the market, where it is presently very scarce since only a handful of them have made records. Not recording their own music is tantamount to marimba ensembles marginalising themselves on the Zimbabwean music market. When records are available, people can play them at home, in their cars, and at the workplace. When a person hears a record for a number of times, it is likely that they may end up understanding and

appreciating the music. Currently this is not happening for marimba music in Zimbabwe. There is a section of the Zimbabwean population that is not outgoing and will not attend marimba festivals and live shows. These people are missing out due to lack of marimba music records.

Another avenue that needs to be explored by marimba ensembles is marketing themselves through both the print and electronic media. Magazines, newspapers, cell phones, the internet, and television are all means that are available. The internet can disseminate information on marimba groups' itineraries, profiles, membership, repertoire, and location, so that even audiences that are not in close proximity to the bands can still access both the marimba music and information. People far away can actually get in contact with any marimba ensembles and work out synergies.

Marimba CDs or live performance acts could be posted via the internet on YouTube, but currently only a few marimba ensembles based in Zimbabwe have utilised the internet to market themselves. I have visited YouTube myself and watched music from numerous ensembles based in the United States who play the Zimbabwe marimba, but very few marimba bands based in Zimbabwe post their performances on this platform. YouTube is one platform for local ensembles to explore and reach out to more marimba music fans both in Zimbabwe and in the world. Although not all Zimbabweans now have access to the internet, those who are able to download marimba videos could share with others and disseminate information.

The WhatsApp platform is another way of spreading information in a positive way. It could be used to send marimba records and videos to individuals who could share them within short periods of time, and play the music over and over again. Personally, I witnessed a significant growth in people who interact with Rimba Resonance Vibes on the WhatsApp platform. This is so because most urban and rural Zimbabweans are now using WhatsApp and so it is a fast way of getting information to individuals who may not access posters, flyers, or newspaper adverts used to market live marimba music events. It is one avenue where marimba bands

could actually capitalise and get posters to individuals on a very personal and accessible level.

Marimba ensembles in Zimbabwe could also use the internet by opening Facebook pages to keep their friends updated about the goings-on in the group's performances. Those who cannot attend live shows for various reasons could revel in watching the events that are posted on marimba ensembles' Facebook pages. Fans could actually post their frank reviews, such as the videos, or even book the bands to perform at their future events, or recommend the bands to influential people who organise music shows in public and private places. The bands' profiles would also be readily available for fans who visit these sites and this would enhance the groups' publicity.

The print media is one avenue where marimba ensembles need to make headway and market their bands to the nation and the world. In Zimbabwe, newspapers reach a significant percentage of the elite population and the literacy rate is very high in the country. This makes the print media vital for encouraging the readership to focus on marimba performances. Newspapers are now available online as well and can be accessed by many people locally and abroad. Marimba ensembles should make deliberate efforts to get newspaper reporters to publish their events so that many people become aware of their existence. Remaining unknown is not an option for marimba bands in this global environment where such diverse means of gaining publicity are at people's disposal.

The Zimbabwe marimba has risen to become one the country's national instruments. For this reason, I think the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture through the National Arts Council should ensure that there are marimba music programmes on national radio stations. Giving marimba music airtime would also help to popularise it in the country. This is how it could reach out to the majority of people in the country, otherwise it would remain an art for Harare festivals only. About eighty percent of Zimbabweans belong to a rural population who are being marginalised from enjoying marimba music. Radio tends to be more

accessible to outlying remote areas in Zimbabwe than television, and programs should be introduced where marimba music is featured. While Radio Zimbabwe has a program where *mbira* music is played, it has yet to have a platform where marimba music is featured. On all other radio stations marimba songs are featured very rarely; it does not have full radio slots such as those allocated to ZimDancehall, *sungura*, gospel, *mbira*, jazz, rock rhythm and blues and other music genres.

Zimbabwe has two national television stations operated under the auspices of ZIMPAPERS Holdings. Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) is accessible to most urban and peri-urban centres in the country and could be a way of marketing marimba music through this national broadcaster. There are programs where music videos are played and again marimba music practitioners in the country are challenged to influence the playing of marimba music videos on ZTV through both advocacy and improving their own marketing efforts. Most bands that are resident in Zimbabwe rarely produce videos so that the stations can play them for the public to consume. If videos were produced and played on national and global television, Zimbabweans who love marimba music could purchase them to play in their own homes and this way marimba music would penetrate more local and international spaces. Only then could Zimbabwe marimba ensembles cease to operate on the margins as is currently the case.

The Ministry of Education needs to work on the music curriculum in both primary and secondary schools so as to ensure that students are taught marimba. There is evidence that playing marimbas has many benefits, which include improving children's psycho-motor skills, improving their abilities in maths, enhancing left and right hemisphere coordination, and enhancing children's morale, amongst other benefits. Presently some schools, especially those in rural areas, are not teaching marimba music due to several reasons, chief among them being the unaffordability of the instruments. A policy position could make it mandatory for marimbas to be taught in schools and could help disadvantaged rural children to get exposed to marimba music performance.

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