

ENNANGA MUSIC

by

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Ennanga (harp) music, *Amadinda* (xylophone) music, and the music of the royal twelve-drum instrument *Entenga* form one complex within the musical traditions of the kingdom of Buganda. The same songs are performed on these three instruments, but while harp playing is always basis and accompaniment of a voice part, *Amadinda* and *Entenga* are purely instrumental representations of the same songs. The "tune" (= the voice part, as sung in the harp version) can, however, be recognized in the instrumental settings.

Most authors and musicians in Buganda (Kyagambiddwa, Muyinda, Sempebwa, etc.) agree that music of the type heard on the *Amadinda* and *Entenga* was originally composed as harp music, and later transferred to these instruments. The harpist's pattern was ". . . broken up into two parts and each part is allocated to one of the (two) players of the *madinda*. The *madinda* players then produce the same song as played on the bow harp, and the idea is that that should be recognizable as the song which was produced in the first instance by the voice." . . . "The primary instrument is the voice". (Sempebwa in the discussion part of G. Kubik: "Xylophone Playing in Southern Uganda").

A Muganda listener can indeed "pick out" the hidden voice part from the total image of notes played on the xylophone or the drum chime. Since the vocal part according to the rule of unison and octave concord, valid throughout Kiganda music, cannot contain other notes than those already present in the instrumental basis, an important problem remains to be solved: "In what part of the structure . . . can you locate the hidden notes which go to form the 'melody'?" (see Mr. Sempebwa in the above-mentioned article.)

To this question about the origin of the voice part I should like to add two technical ones: (a) Is the vocal part in *Ennanga* music identical with "inherent rhythms"¹? (b) Is there any structural relation between the vocal part in the harp music and what appears in the *Amadinda* version as *Okukonerera*?

In summer 1962 I made a number of analytical recordings with my Muganda music teacher, Mr. Evaristo Muyinda. An analysis of these recordings and a comparison of the results with recordings of other famous harp players, for example Temusewo Mukasa (see Hugh Tracey's recordings published on the AMA "Sound of Africa" series TR-138) form the basis of background of this paper.

The *Ennanga* "is now practically extinct", writes Prof. Klaus P. Wachsmann in 1969. After the mental breakdown of the great harpist Temusewo Mukasa there is possibly only one player left, who belongs to the authentic harp tradition in Buganda, Evaristo Muyinda, who says that he has once been instructed by the legendary Manyanja, whose music was unfortunately never recorded.

The instrument has been exhaustively described by Prof. Wachsmann in "Tribal Crafts of Uganda". It has eight strings. The resonator corpus is an oval wooden bowl. It is covered by a membrane strained by means of leather cords which meet on the under side of the corpus and are there attached to a small rectangular skin. Between the pegs of the harp's neck there are small movable rings consisting of banana fibre sewn into lizard skin. A small wooden wedge is inserted between ring and neck to make the

¹ *Inherent rhythms* can be defined as independent melorhythmic phrases which only exist as an aural image and are not played as such by the performers. This is a secondary *gestalt*-psychological phenomenon caused by a certain structural arrangement of quick passages with wide intervals. The inherent rhythms can be traced back structurally in the total pattern of the notes of the musical piece. (See my article in *AFRICAN MUSIC*, 1960 and 1962).

fitting of the ring easier and to prevent undesired moving of the rings during the play. The rings are pushed very near to the vibrating strings of the harp. When the musician plays, the strings clash against the porous surface of the rings and the result is a crackling, buzzing sound. Less known is the fact, that this device like other devices for sound modification in the practice of African instrumental playing, amplifies tone volume and length of notes.

The eight strings of the *Ennanga* are tuned to a pentatonic tempered scale. The exact character of the Kiganda scale has been subject to discussions. (See Kyagambiddwa, Kubik, Wachsmann).

The musician holds the harp in his lap in horizontal position and plucks the strings with the thumbs and indices of both hands. Fig. 1 shows the fingering pattern in *Ennanga* music and the way in which the eight notes of the harp have been notated in the transcription of one harp song, found at the end of this article. The notation is a relative one, it is not intended to represent the absolute pitch of the notes on the harp. The note written as a D in this score (the lowest note of the harp) usually lies in the proximity of an F sharp.



Fig. 1

Ennanga music is performed by one singer, who accompanies himself on the harp. The music consists of three parts: *Okunaga*, *Okwawula* and *Okuyimba* ("to start striking", "to differentiate", "to sing")². *Okunaga* is the harpist's right hand part, identical with the one played by the Omunazi in the *Amadinda* versions. *Okwawula* is played by the harpist's left hand. These two parts are equi-spaced series of notes combined in the interlocking way. (See the score). *Okuyimba* means to sing, it is harpist's voice part.

The structure of *Ennanga* music and the exact relation between the three parts is shown in the score. My choice of an example has been "*Olutalo ol'we Nsinsi*" (The battle of Nsinsi) for two reasons: An exact transcription of the xylophone version was already published (see "Kiganda Xylophone Music", Kubik, "African Music", Vol. II, No. 3, 1960), thus comparison between the harp and the xylophone version is possible. And "*Olutalo ol'we Nsinsi*" is very suitable for a beginner on the harp to start with.

Joseph Kyagambiddwa who attempted a transcription of this song in his book "*African Music from the Source of the Nile*" remarks about its history:

"King Junju reigned from about 1780 to about 1797. In warlikeness he surpassed all his Ganda predecessors. In bravery he was second only to Kintu. Partly hating to see the once unified Ganda empire now tattered, and partly loving to fight just for fighting's sake, he made war a national business and came to regard peace as mere idleness. His achievements reached a zenith when he won the wealthy district of Buddu from Bunyoro which several of his predecessors had fought or negotiated with in vain in order to annex it to the Buganda kingdom.

"The only war he ever lost was the one he did not declare. His own brother, Prince Semakokiro, revolted and marched against him with an army he had organized out of his followers.

"A decisive battle was fought at Nsinsi where, after very savage fighting the King's army was defeated and routed, and he himself killed, his victorious brother becoming king of Buganda. (Semakokiro reigned from about 1797 to about 1814). After the civil

² These are the translations given to me by Mr. Charles Sekintu from the Uganda Museum, Kampala.

war, musicians set to work to compose the *Battle of Nsinsi* in order that posterity might learn about and commemorate the bloodiest battle that turned a number of stubborn vanquished soldiers into wanderers who later emerged as a new tribe . . . the *Abakunta* people."

Listening to the recording of this song,³ the ear is at once attracted by a number of inherent melo-rhythmic lines emerging from the total complex of notes. They are transcribed in the score under "aural images". A comparison of the various phrases of the voice part with these inherent rhythms reveals that there is indeed an interrelation. The inherent rhythms in *Ennanga* music are very often suggestive of certain vocal phrases, and certain melodies in the voice part are clearly represented in the instrumental part by inherent rhythms.

In our score a particularly instructive example is the I.R. No. 2, first half. (See the aural images). Long before the respective text phrase is sung in the tape recording, this inherent rhythm seems to "speak" the following words: "Batulwanako ab'eddal" Evaristo Muyinda very often introduces a new text phrase by playing at first the corresponding inherent rhythm into the foreground through accentuation. It can be noticed in the recording that the notes representing this text phrase are accentuated at first in the harp part until the melody is firmly established as a *gestalt*. Then it appears in the voice part.

The same happens with the phrase "Bulungil!" which is melodically represented by the last four notes of I.R. No. 1. Shortly before singing this phrase, Muyinda accentuates in several repetitions the high note G in the harp part. As a consequence the ear becomes attracted by a melodic sequence of D, G, E and D which seems to "speak" the word: "Bulungil!"

The main theme of the tune with the words "Olutalo 'lwe Nsinsi lwatta 'bantu" is not so unequivocally represented by an inherent rhythm. Nevertheless one can hear it mysteriously looming up when one listens to the second half of I.R. No. 3. This inherent line strongly suggests the words of the main theme, although not all its notes are identical with it.

In this performance of Evaristo Muyinda there was no text phrase that would represent any of the five *Okukonera* melodies known in the xylophone transpositions. One

♩ = 300 M.M.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is labeled 'VOICE' and contains the lyrics: 'lwe Nsi-nsi 'lwa-tta 'ba-ntu. O-lu-ta-lo 'lwe Nsi-nsi 'lwa-tta 'ba-ntu. Si-twa-'. The second staff is labeled 'HARP: Right hand:' and the third 'Left hand:'. Below these are three staves labeled 'AURAL IMAGES:' with 'I.R. No. 1', 'I.R. No. 2', and 'I.R. No. 3'. Arrows point from the harp parts to these aural images, indicating their relationship to the main performance.

³ "Olutalo olw'e Nsinsi" (The battle of Nsinsi). Harp song performed by Evaristo Muyinda. Recording: Kubik/Tape No. 34/1 at Nakifuma near Kampala in summer 1962. Copy of the recording found in Phonographic Archives of the Austrian Academy of Science, Vienna.

The musical score consists of several staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "-lu-ba twa-li ba-to, twa-li ba-le-nzi. Bu-lu-ngi! Bu-lu-ngi na nta-le!". Below it are two staves of instrumental music. Further down, there is another vocal line with lyrics: "Ba-tu-twa-na-kog-be-dda!" followed by "etc.". Below that are two more staves of instrumental music, each followed by "etc.". The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with double bar lines indicating section breaks.

Fig. 2

Okukonera can, however, be clearly distinguished in the harp part as an inherent rhythm. (Compare I.R. No. 1). In other harp songs it often occurs that a text phrase is melodically identical with an *Okukonera*. Two-notes phrases are even very likely to be so.

Summing up, we can say that the various phrases of the voice part in *Ennangu* music are usually very similar to, or identical with inherent rhythms emerging from the structure of the instrumental part. This is also the main explanation for the fact that a Muganda listener can pick out the hidden voice part from purely instrumental representations of a tune.

NOTE: It can be observed that the *Okwawula* part in the harp version of "Olutalo olw'e Nainsi" as performed by E. Muyinda at this particular occasion is slightly different from the *Okwawula* in the xylophone version. (See KUBIK, 1960). Muyinda also varies this pattern in the course of his performance.

The score represents a *condensed* version of Muyinda's performance. To avoid repetitions I have omitted the long instrumental interludes between the text phrases.

The voice part in *Ennangu* music is always in unison with notes of the instrumental part, but some notes may occur rhythmically antipated or shifted, and there may also be a few passing notes, as can be seen from performances of various harp songs.

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