

## A MODERN TRADITION: THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE ZIMBABWEAN MARIMBA

by

CLAIRE JONES

### Introduction

Zimbabwean pop superstar Oliver Mtukudzi surprised his fans with a new lineup in 2007, replacing his trademark keyboard and electric guitar with marimba and *mbira*. ‘Tuku’ declared: “This change will inspire the younger generation of artists and make them proud of our traditional instruments” (Mtukudzi n. d.). But the Zimbabwean marimba, widespread in urban schools and tourist venues, dates only from the early 1960s, when African xylophones of a modern design were introduced at the Kwanongoma College of African Music in Bulawayo. The white Rhodesian founders of the private college considered the marimba, then unassociated with the musical practices of the country’s major ethnic groups, an ideal instrument to “serve as a focal point for musical development of the new nation” (Tracey pers. comm. 1989). Today the Kwanongoma marimba is considered by many Zimbabweans to be “part of our culture.”



Figure 1. Oliver Mtukudzi and the Black Spirits in Seattle, 2008. Mtukudzi (in white) and marimba player Charles Chipanga (right). Photo by Mary Cairns.

In this paper I trace the trajectory and discursive context of this modern musical tradition, beginning with the top-down introduction of the Kwanongoma marimba as a potential national instrument.<sup>5</sup> Educators, missionaries and social welfare agencies sharing related modernist concepts of the “nation” and “development” helped to institutionalize the marimba and enable its spread beyond the schools. With the formation of the new nation-state of Zimbabwe in 1980, top-down incorporation of the marimba continued apace, as the instrument became a centerpiece in the indigenisation of music education and took a place alongside traditional drum/dance, choral and mbira groups in state cultural displays. By the 1990s, individuals and groups outside educational and other institutions were integrating the marimba—from the bottom up—according to their own visions.

I should note at the outset that this modern African marimba remains a marginal instrument in Zimbabwe’s musical landscape. Despite its growth in popularity and spread to other countries of Southern Africa, Europe and North America,<sup>6</sup> the marimba is rarely found outside urban areas and was still widely regarded as a “schoolboy instrument” in 2000. Marimba in Zimbabwe has neither the prestige nor popular appeal of the electric guitar, and lacks the cultural cachet of the Shona *mbira*. Nevertheless the history of the Kwanongoma marimba reflects a profound and ongoing transformation in expressive culture, spanning as it does the colonial and post-colonial eras in Zimbabwe.

### The trajectory’s the thing

“Instruments mean,” writes Regula Qureshi: “How they do so is cultural knowledge permeated with affect: embodied knowledge” (Qureshi 1997: 2). Together with the sound they produce, instruments as material objects play significant roles in the construction of ethnic or national identities (see Martin 1995), marking of social status (La Rue 1997), evocation of locality or place (Stokes 1997), and experiencing and knowing sense through sound (Feld 1996). But instruments can evoke different meanings than the music performed on them. In Zimbabwe, disparate audiences regard performances of traditional music differently depending on the instrumentation; for example, an electric guitar rendition of indigenous *mbira* music may be valued more highly than a marimba performance of the same piece.

Musical instruments may be considered “social ‘things’ with histories and ‘careers’” (Neuenfeldt 1998: 6). As they circulate among diverse individuals and groups they become something other in use (in what situations they are utilized) and function

<sup>5</sup> This article draws from my 2006 dissertation on the history and development of the Zimbabwean marimba. Both are inspired by and grounded in three decades of involvement with Zimbabwean music while living in Seattle and Zimbabwe (1985-1990), and 14 months of fieldwork in Harare from late 1999 through 2000. My field research was made possible with a grant from the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program, for which I am grateful.

<sup>6</sup> For general commentary on the spread of Kwanongoma-style marimbas beyond Zimbabwe, see Jones 2006: 134-139; for an ethnography of Zimbabwean music as performed in the United States, see Matiore 2008.

(why they are utilized; see Merriam 1964: 209ff) as well as meaning. Exploring the social history of instruments transported from one context to another is a useful approach for analyzing transformations in usage, meaning and form in relation to large-scale historical processes such as colonialism and the emergence of the nation-state, or between societies within the global cultural economy.<sup>7</sup> The historical arc of the marimba reflects the nature of Rhodesian colonial rule and the revealing inclusions and exclusions of the postcolonial Zimbabwean state. Tracking the changes in marimba practices brings to light the continuities and shifts in top-down discourses of national and musical development underlying the introduction, dissemination, deployment and reception of the instruments.

### **Kwanongoma and the marimba: developing a national music**

The impetus for the Kwanongoma College program came primarily from one man: Bulawayo City Electrical Engineer and composer Robert Sibson, who later became director of the Rhodesian Academy of Music (RAM). Sibson was concerned about the future of traditional music in the country and, according to Andrew Tracey, felt it was up to the RAM to intervene on behalf of indigenous Africans in order to facilitate the development of “a national musical culture” (Tracey 1999). In the late 1950s he began urging for the formation of a music college to train African teachers in what was then the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The discursive foundations of Sibson’s project for African musical development drew on widely circulating narratives of the decline and decay of indigenous musical practices under threat of foreign contagion (see for example H. Tracey 1954),<sup>8</sup> and assumed the need to protect and ‘improve’ indigenous forms. Sibson wrote, “There is much to be said for encouraging Africans to develop their music along purely indigenous lines... (but) if the situation is left to solve itself, it seems inevitable that the poorer and simpler elements of western music will gain the upper hand in the minds of Africans...” (1959: 58). The solution, he believed, lay in “evolving a composite culture in which the best elements of both survive in an essentially Rhodesian art form” (1959: 59). Indigenous Zimbabwean musical practices were to be developed or ‘evolved’ through European pedagogy and music theory. Sibson couched his proposal in terms of a musical “rapprochement between the races.” This is not surprising, since during the short-lived era of the Federation (1953-63), talk of racial partnership predominated and white liberals hoped for a peaceful progress towards majority rule (*cf.* also Turino 2000: 96-7).

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<sup>7</sup> See Hardin and Arnoldi 1996: 19 on this point; also related articles in the Arnoldi et. al. 1996 anthology.

<sup>8</sup> Sibson was inspired by the ongoing efforts of South African ethnomusicologist Hugh Tracey in recording, collecting and promoting African music (see Axelsson 1973: 59). In addition to Tracey’s writings, numerous articles in the *African Music Society Newsletter* during this period set forth and reinforced narratives of the loss of authentic African musical traditions and the deleterious effects of westernization. See Jones 2006: 96-100 for a close reading and discourse analysis of Sibson’s proposal.

While the nature of Sibson's intervention efforts was shaped by the prevailing racial politics, his agenda and strategies were typical of post-WWII international development projects. Based on Sibson's proposals, the Academy established an African Musical Development Fund to solicit financial support, and engaged foreign expertise (Jackson 1974: 76). The consultant hired to lay groundwork for the program was the 24 year-old Andrew Tracey, who had been working with his father Hugh Tracey at ILAM in South Africa. Andrew spent six months during 1960 collecting materials and locating teachers prior to the inception of the program (A. Tracey pers. comm. 1989). The first Kwanongoma director, music educator Leslie Williamson, was brought out from England in 1961.

Sibson's program for the development of Rhodesian/Zimbabwean music was successfully launched with an eleven-week music course for adult Africans offered in 1961 by the Rhodesian Academy of Music. The students on the introductory course chose the name "Kwanongoma College of African Music" to reflect a pan-tribal focus for the new school. The students considered the hybrid term "Kwanongoma," derived from the shared Bantu root *ngoma*, likely to be understood as "the place of music" by people of different ethno-linguistic origins (Sibson 1961: 120).<sup>9</sup> The following year the Kwanongoma College was officially established as an adjunct of the Rhodesian Academy of Music. The first of its kind in Africa, the college trained musicians as well as music teachers, and a two-year music specialist course qualified students for the equivalent of a Primary Teachers' Higher Certificate.

The introduction of a modern African marimba has proven to be one of the most significant achievements in the 20-year history of the Kwanongoma College. Although Sibson's writings do not reveal why the marimba was adopted for the program, Andrew Tracey shared with me his account of the origin of the "Zimarimba" (his term; pers. comm. 1989). Tracey related that during the time he worked as a consultant for the RAM, Sibson spoke often of his desire to identify "an instrument that could serve as a focal point for musical development and express something of the spirit of the new nation that was then in its birth pangs." Tracey's contribution was to suggest the xylophone; they agreed it was the obvious choice, an instrument "identifiably African but not played by any Zimbabwean peoples" and flexible enough to play both indigenous and western music.

To clarify, there were, and still are, extant xylophone traditions among many peoples of southeastern and central Africa, including some within the present-day borders of Zimbabwe. The term "marimba" is common to many Bantu languages, generally referring to an instrument with many "singing notes." Regional xylophones include the Venda *mbila muthondo* (rare, found primarily in South Africa), Lozi *silimba* (mostly in western Zambia and around Victoria Falls), Chopi *mbila* and Tswa *muhambi* (Mozambique) and Sena *valimba* (or *varimba*) in the Zambezi valley of Mozambique

<sup>9</sup> *Kwa* is a locative meaning "(the) place of." In both chiShona and siNdebele as well as many other Bantu languages, the semantic field of *ngoma* ranges from "drum" to "an event where drums are played" and is often glossed as "music."

and Malawi (see Tracey 1991) and into northeastern Zimbabwe. The majority Shona<sup>10</sup> and Ndebele peoples of then Southern Rhodesia, however, had no long-standing marimba traditions.

Sibson and Tracey sought teaching instruments that could be embraced by all peoples in the nation-to-be, rather than eliciting strong and potentially divisive ethnic identifications. Musical instruments have occupied a special status as icons of national culture since the rise of eighteenth century Romantic ideas of national character. Instruments such as the Swiss alphorn and Scottish bagpipes, long considered typical of their people, accrued additional meaning as shared symbols of nationhood. They were folk instruments through which integration and definition of the national character could take place, at once belonging to the entire nation's folk but distinctive from those of other nations. Not all national collectivities share such an easily identifiable instrument, however, and in fact culturally heterogeneous nation-states are likely to have more than one competing candidate with origins in diverse musical traditions. Such heterogeneity presents a dilemma for the cultural interventionist. In order to build a sense of solidarity within the emerging nation, ethnic differences must be erased or ameliorated. A Rhodesian liberal aware of colonial-era discourse about the dangers of African tribalism, Robert Sibson wished to avoid potential tensions between local and national identifications in Southern Rhodesia.

In the spirit of racial partnership, the Kwanongoma College offered musical instruction on two European instruments (piano and guitar) and two African ones in addition to voice.<sup>11</sup> For the African instruments, the founders chose marimba and a member of the *mbira* family, the *karimba*. This lamellaphone is distributed widely in the lower Zambezi valley of the neighboring countries, though it is not the most common mbira within Zimbabwe. *Karimba* variants with 8 to 25 metal keys mounted on a flat wooden soundboard are played in northeastern Zimbabwe, parts of central Mozambique and southern Zambia and Malawi (known there as *kalimba*; see Tracey 1972). A 15-note *karimba*, also called *nyungwe nyungwe* or *nyunga nyunga*,<sup>12</sup> was introduced at Kwanongoma by Jege Taperera, a Zezuru musician and virtuoso player from Murehwa (east of Harare) who had become acquainted with the instrument while visiting the Nyungwe region of Mozambique in the 1930s (Tracey 1961). Unlike the

<sup>10</sup> The peoples now referred to collectively as "the Shona" include several closely related ethnolinguistic groups, the largest of which are Zezuru, Kalanga, Karanga, Korekore, Manyika and Ndau.

<sup>11</sup> For further information on the Kwanongoma College syllabus, see Turino 2000:105-110; Jones 2006: 101-110; and Matiure 2008: 61-66.

<sup>12</sup> Indigenous players in the northeast of Zimbabwe generally call the instrument *karimba* (see Tracey 1972: 86-87; Jones 1992: 111), but some Zimbabwean music educators prefer *nyungwe nyungwe*, so-called by Jege Taperera (according to Matiure 2008: 85) because he had learned it from people in the Nyungwe region. The origin of the name *nyunga nyunga* is disputed; former Kwanongoma student Dumisani Maraire popularized the term in over 30 years of teaching in the US and Zimbabwe. The 15-key *karimba* produced in a standardized tuning at the college was often marketed as the "Kwanongoma *mbira*."

larger Shona *mbira*-s such as *mbira dzavadzimu* and *hera*, the *karimba* is not usually linked with indigenous practices of spirit possession, rendering it more acceptable to Christians. Sibson and his collaborators likely considered that the secular function and pan-tribal distribution of the *karimba*—not unlike the marimba in these respects—made it a good candidate for a national instrument.

The first marimba teacher at the Kwanongoma College was Josiah Siyembe Mathe, an accomplished *silimba* player of Lozi descent, and the early repertoire for the marimba was Lozi. Over time, Kwanongoma personnel wrote and arranged new material to create a corpus of shared songs. Longtime instructor Alport Mhlanga was a particularly prolific composer and arranger, drawing from a combination of indigenous Shona and Ndebele musical traditions as well as popular tunes and hymns in order to construct a truly national repertoire for the marimba. His composition *eKwanongoma* became a signature tune for the college marimba orchestra [CD track 1].

Alport Mhlanga was also centrally involved in the design and tuning of the marimba at Kwanongoma. In order to produce an updated marimba befitting the goals of the program, college personnel examined several different African xylophones. The physical design of upright, standing frames derived from the Lozi *silimba*, while the concept of xylophone ensembles with instruments in different pitch ranges was inspired by the Chopi *timbila* orchestra. After building a two-octave soprano marimba based on Mathe's *silimba*, Mhlanga and the college workshop eventually produced additional instruments in tenor, bass and baritone ranges—named in accordance with European concepts of voice and role in a homophonic structure—to cover a total compass of four octaves. The tuning for the new instruments was a matter of debate; Andrew Tracey had advocated the use of indigenous Zimbabwean scales such as those found on *mbira*. The western diatonic scale ultimately won out, however, and the Kwanongoma marimbas were made in the key of C major.<sup>13</sup> Not long thereafter, F#'s were added to enable playing in the key of G as well.<sup>14</sup> Thus the Kwanongoma marimba came to embody Sibson's founding discourse of "developing" a national music.

The marimba played a significant role in introducing a new type of modern and nationalized music in western-style settings. Not embedded in local participatory musical practices, marimba ensembles were well suited for the performer-audience separation of concert venues and did not require amplification. The Kwanongoma student performing orchestra had become a showpiece of the college and its work within two years of inception (Williamson 1964: 118). They performed a varied pan-tribal repertoire, desirable for music intended to represent the nation; such diversity was also an expectation of modern audiences wishing to be entertained (see Turino

<sup>13</sup> The C scale was later adjusted to a "Zimbabwean tonality" by Alport Mhlanga. He described his scale as close to a western tempered scale but having "a larger semitone than usual, a neutral 3rd and slightly flattened 7th" (pers. comm. 14 July 2004; see also Jones 2006: 123-4).

<sup>14</sup> An American marimba player (Steven Golovnin, a student of Dumisani Maraire in Seattle) has dubbed the F# "the white note." Ironically, however, it was a black Zimbabwean, Alport Mhlanga, who made the decision to include the F#.



2000: 109-110). The Kwanongoma orchestra served to popularize the marimba while helping to spread western values of variety and music as entertainment.



Figure 2. Early Kwanongoma soprano marimba (Photo by Garth Meske).

### **Spreading the marimba: shared agendas**

Thomas Turino characterizes the Kwanongoma College as a modernist-reformist project, “based on the idea that ‘a new culture’... should be forged as a synthesis of the ‘best’ or most valuable aspects of local traditional culture and ‘the best’ of foreign ‘modern’ lifeways and technologies” (2000: 16). Turino makes the case that reformist approaches to indigenous Zimbabwean music were paralleled not only by other Federation-era programs but also by African nationalists of the same period, and state and private cultural institutions following 1980. The same holds true for numerous agents who contributed, in direct and indirect ways, to the proliferation of the Kwanongoma marimba. Many of the institutions and individuals who adopted and helped spread the marimba shared modernist orientations and agendas similar to those of Kwanongoma founder Robert Sibson.

Graduates of Kwanongoma College quickly set to work furthering the goals of the program in the wider community. Although the number of teachers trained and placed in schools was small at first—six every other year—their influence in Bulawayo was considerable (Carruthers-Smith 1971: 87). Alumni soon began teaching and spreading marimba in schools elsewhere, including several in the townships of Harare (then known as Salisbury). Kwanongoma students and trained teachers continued to perform and teach marimba through the course of the liberation war in the 1970s, and the new instruments caught the eyes and ears of many outside of the Rhodesian educational system.

### *Missionaries*

In 1968 the Rhodesian Academy of Music turned the Kwanongoma College over to a primary Teachers Training College, the United College of Education (UCE), newly

established by a consortium of Christian missions.<sup>15</sup> Kwanongoma became the music department of the new teachers college. Swedish ethnomusicologist-cum-missionary Olof Axelsson, under the aegis of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rhodesia (ELCR, a member of the UCE consortium), was named Director of Kwanongoma in 1972, replacing Leslie Williamson.

The ELCR, through the work of musicologist Henry Weman of the Church of Sweden Mission, was the first major denomination in Rhodesia to set up a long-term program to indigenize music in their churches beginning in 1954 (Weman 1960). Many of the other western churches followed suit with Africanization programs of their own.<sup>16</sup> Although independent in origin, transformations in church attitudes and practices coincided with the Federation-era discourse of racial partnership in cultural programming. Both were rooted in modernist ideas, and it was fitting that the Kwanongoma College would come under missionary purview following the collapse of the Federation.

A popular head, Axelsson served at Kwanongoma until 1981. A number of innovations and modifications on the marimba instruments, being manufactured for purchase in a fully equipped workshop, were introduced under his watch. Axelsson, Alport Mhlanga and the Kwanongoma technicians devised ways of fashioning and treating marimba resonators made from unbreakable PVC pipes and fiberglass so that they closely resembled natural gourds in appearance and tonality (see Figure 3). During the 1970s another visiting missionary, the Swiss Jesuit Brother Kurt Huwiler, set up a recording studio, introduced electronic tuning equipment, and speeded up production with a machine that automated the tuning of the marimba notes. The development of the marimba at Kwanongoma was an ongoing process<sup>17</sup> that exemplified the modernist ideal of synthesizing “traditional” and “modern” elements.

### *Youth centers*

The Youth Centers administered by the Bulawayo Municipal Housing and Amenities Department in the African townships were among the first organizations outside the educational system to embrace the marimba. Under the direction of South African sociologist Hugh Ashton, the Amenities Department became well known by the early 1950s for the liberalism of its programs and services based on the tenets of mid-century

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<sup>15</sup> The church groups involved were the principal Christian missions working in teacher education in Rhodesia: Methodist, Salvation Army, Roman Catholic, Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran, Anglican and United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Carruthers-Smith 1971: 87).

<sup>16</sup> Axelsson was involved simultaneously as a reformer and historian of the indigenization movement in the Southern African churches. He wrote of a gradual shift in twentieth century missionary approaches, from total rejection to acceptance of indigenous cultural practices, and attributed the transformation, at least in part, to the impact of contemporary anthropology and comparative musicology on the missionary enterprise (see Axelsson 1974).

<sup>17</sup> For more on the fascinating story of the development of the Kwanongoma marimbas, see Jones 2006; Minaar-Bailey 2007:15-20.



modernization ideology, and was said to have had the finest infrastructure for youth programs in Southern Africa (see Kaarsholm 1999: 234ff; Vambe 1976: 239). Ashton emphasized the provision of recreational facilities and public entertainment for African residents, in the words of a senior welfare officer, “to ease the transition to a Western way of life” (Gargett 1971: 1).

From the 1950s on, the African Administration Department constructed Youth Centers in a number of Bulawayo townships, and organized clubs to provide recreational opportunities. Initially catering only to boys, they operated under the assumption that sports, music, dance and drama activities would keep youths off the streets and combat juvenile delinquency.<sup>18</sup> Kaarsholm notes that some of the activities held during the Annual Youth Week initiated in 1964 were “directed at re-traditionalisation and the establishment of an ‘awareness of roots’ rather than modernization” (1999: 234). That same year Kwanongoma Director Leslie Williamson reported the first employment of a Kwanongoma graduate to teach marimba in the Bulawayo youth clubs (1964: 117).

The introduction of the Kwanongoma marimba was a timely match for the development agenda of the Housing and Amenities Department. The instrument quickly gained popularity and marimba music became a centerpiece of youth recreation in the clubs for the following two decades. The Council’s role in spreading the instruments was significant; by the 1970s all the youth clubs in Bulawayo had marimba ensembles (Matiure interview 12 December 1999). Players trained in Bulawayo have gone on to spread the instrument elsewhere in the country. For example, the late Afro jazz musician Dumisani Ngulube learned marimba at Nkulumani Youth Center in Bulawayo. He received a diploma in the Ethnomusicology Programme at the Zimbabwe College of Music (ZCM) in Harare and was their principal marimba instructor for several years from the late 1990s on.

### *Marimba spreads to Harare*

One of the first Youth Center marimba bands in the (then) Salisbury townships caught the attention of Jesuit priest and educator Anthony “Jeep” Davis, who had come to Southern Rhodesia from England in 1950. Intrigued with the instruments, he started a marimba band at a primary school in Kambuzuma Township in the late 1960s which relocated to Highfield in 1971, expanded into teacher training and was renamed St. Peter’s Kubatana (Shona: to hold together; unity) Secondary School. Fr. Davis knew nothing about marimba building, and asked Brother Kurt Huwiler to assist in setting up a workshop.<sup>19</sup> Gibber (Gilbert) Muza, a carpenter, was hired to head the St. Peter’s

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<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Turino (2000: 110-113) documented the role of the Housing and Amenities Department and other municipal organs such as the African Welfare Society in Harare in organizing adult music and dance activities in township beer gardens and performance halls, as a way of controlling and directing leisure-time recreation.

<sup>19</sup> This was the same Huwiler who had also worked at Kwanongoma. In 1979, Brother Kurt relocated to South Africa and set up the first marimba manufacturing facility in that country, at Mthatha.

Kubatana Marimba Workshop and started making instruments for the school and for sale—the first Harare facility to do so.

Under Father Davis's direction, the St. Peter's Kubatana Marimba Band became a fixture in Salisbury/Harare for nearly two decades. They emphasized variety in the repertoire and introduced innovations such as the staging of indigenous folk-tales in concert settings, and the use of amplification. Their popularity soared after the end of the war, when opportunities for state-sponsored and privately funded musical performance increased dramatically. The group was in demand for all manner of shows, at schools, hotels, foreign embassies, for company parties, etc., and recorded an album while on their first South African tour in 1980. In contrast to the student performers who comprise most school ensembles, the St. Peter's Kubatana marimba players were adults, employed by the institution and provided with accommodation. The band solidified the spread of the marimba to Harare and was, arguably, one of the first professional marimba ensembles in Zimbabwe.

### *Tourist bands*

A simultaneous convergence of shared modernist ideals helped to establish marimba bands at Victoria Falls, Southern Rhodesia's top tourist destination. The Rhodesian tourist industry began presenting indigenous music performances at least as early as the mid-1960s (Pashapa Interview 1 June 2000), and the Kwanongoma marimba orchestra, which had started performing almost as soon as the first class learned to play, regularly appeared in Victoria Falls. In 1971 David Hume of Victoria Falls Promotions came to Kwanongoma looking for a marimba group to perform for tourists. Hume was directed to the youth centers where he recruited six of the best marimba players. The group became known as the Zambezi Marimba Boys and performed in Victoria Falls for several years; they were said to be the first resident marimba band at the venerable Victoria Falls Hotel (Paul Kendo pers. comm. August 2000).

The Kwanongoma marimba was well suited for projecting an image of modern "African-ness" to international audiences, and rapidly became a fixture at tourist spots. Employment opportunities were created not only for performers, but also for arts promoters. Soft Sibanda, a Kwanongoma graduate, assumed Hume's management position in 1975 and went on to make his living in the tourist industry. Sibanda was scheduling entertainment for at least five hotels in 2000, training or hiring the players, managing all logistics and transport, and producing variety shows that complemented marimba music with performances of traditional dance from the surrounding regions.

### **Top-down institutionalization of a modern tradition**

The Kwanongoma marimba was not yet 20 years old when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. While the Kwanongoma College interfaced with the state in supplying trained teachers to government schools, the instruments had been spread outside the educational system largely through the activities of individuals, non-

governmental organizations and local municipalities sharing modernist agendas. Upon the birth of the new nation the marimba came under the direct influence of the emerging state cultural apparatus. The appearance of the instrument at state events such as cultural galas and ceremonial airport greetings signalled its acceptance—by government officials, at least—as part of a shared national culture.



Figure 3. Ingungu Marimba Band performing on modern Kwanongoma marimbas at Victoria Falls August 2000 with Soft Sibanda (far left) and original Zambezi Marimba Boys member Paul Kendo, (second from left). The instruments are (from left): baritone, soprano, bass, tenor. Photo by author.

### *State cultural policies and programs*

In common with other ex-colonies emerging into statehood, Zimbabwe's early cultural policies and programs were focused on building unity among its diverse peoples and cultures and establishing a distinctive national culture. Political rituals such as greetings and farewells at the airport, inaugurations, opening ceremonies and commemorative and performative activities during state-declared public holidays were explicitly concerned with representing the nation and connecting its (presumed) past to the present (see Hobsbawm 1983; Cheater 1993). On the national holidays Zimbabwean Independence Day (April 18) and Heroes' Day (August 12) the 1980s ZANU (PF) (Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front) regime organized mass celebrations with all-day entertainment at Rufaro Stadium in Highfield and, after its construction in the mid-1980s, the Chinese-built National Sports Stadium. Invitation-only cultural galas were held at the formerly all-white Seven Arts Theatre, and the five-star Harare Sheraton and Conference Centre. As a member of the *mbira* group Mhuri Yekwa Muchena from 1985 to 1990, this author performed at a large number of these government

celebrations and came to know many of the other traditional drum and dance groups who were regularly on the program. The best school performing groups were included, and Kudzanayi Primary School Marimba Ensemble from Highfield was one of the most popular. The inclusion of marimba groups in the same category as the *mbira* and indigenous dance ensembles at state-sponsored events suggests that the Kwanongoma marimba was viewed not only as a suitable representative of the nation, but also as a 'traditional' instrument.

Performance rituals are only one of a number of tools through which states legitimate their authority. Power, write Cohn and Dirks, is reiterated "through what have become accepted as natural (rational and normal) state functions, of certifying, counting, reporting, registering, classifying and identifying" (1988: 225). One of the ZANU (PF) government's first actions upon coming to power was to elevate culture to the status of a Ministry Division and create a "culture bureaucracy" (Turino 2000: 317), which in effect acted as the chief agent for state technologies of control of the performing arts: registering, classifying, standardizing, etc.

The centerpiece of Zimbabwean cultural programs in the first decade of independence was the National Dance Company (NDC), established in 1981. The full-time salaried troupe initially consisted of a group of expert dancers of several different regional dance styles, a *mbira* player and a choral director. The touring company took its place on the international stage to represent the newly-independent country's unique and diverse heritage, thus satisfying the nationalist imperative of demonstrating membership within the worldwide community of modern nations. The familiar narrative of cultural traditions in need of preservation and revival was implicit in the official aims of the National Dance Company: to "revive, develop and promote the traditional dance and music of Zimbabwe" (cited in Turino 2000: 321). The continuity of the discourse of music development in the post-independence era was clear as well; "developing" traditional dance in NDC practice entailed "shaping" and "structuring" spontaneous participatory dancing for the concert stage (see Welsh-Ashante 1993: 6). In addition to hiring a local arts specialist (Kwanongoma graduate Sheasby Matiure) as NDC manager, the Ministry called on foreign experts<sup>20</sup> to assist in training the dancers and producing professional dance programs with cosmopolitan variety.

Zimbabwe's National Dance Company helped to inculcate a consciousness among traditional dancers of representing a national, rather than local or ethnic, identity. The visibility of the state company and its work in schools led to the choreographed NDC style becoming a model for schoolchildren and adult dance groups (see Turino 2000: 326-328). Although the marimba was never a part of the NDC instrumentation (for reasons unknown: not "traditional" enough, or still a "schoolboy" instrument in the 1980s?), the state troupe nevertheless played a role in the marimba trajectory. When the NDC was disbanded in 1991, a casualty of structural adjustment cutbacks, a number

<sup>20</sup> African-American dancer and choreographer Kariamtu Welsh-Ashante served for two years as the first artistic director of the company with choreographic assistance from British dance scholar Peggy Harper.

of former members established their own professional groups based on the NDC style and repertoire. Several offshoot groups, including Mhembero (Shona: Celebration) Dance Troupe, led by Irene Chigamba, incorporated the marimba, embracing and promoting it as part of Zimbabwe's heritage. Mhembero featured marimba and *mbira* along with the *ngoma* and *hosho* typical of most Zimbabwean traditional drum/dance groups, and their marimba players were among the most accomplished performing in Harare during the 1990s.



Figure 4. Mhembero Dance Troupe in 2000. Photo by author.

### *Postcolonial music education and the marimba*

The importance of education in nation-building cannot be over-emphasized. The state apparatus of schools, schooling, textbooks and curricula constitutes a primary medium through which images of the nation and its collective past, present and future are instilled.

The expansion of the educational system in independent Zimbabwe led to an upsurge in the popularity of the marimba in urban centers, especially in Harare. The instruments had essentially been limited to the high density areas (townships) since Kwanongoma College graduates started teaching marimba in primary schools in the mid-1960s. After independence, many black upper and middle class families moved into the formerly white low-density suburbs and registered their children in the former Group A schools.<sup>21</sup> By 1990 most ex-Group A schools (primary and secondary) had marimba bands, as did many of the township schools. Nevertheless, sponsoring a performing marimba ensemble did not mean a school had a comprehensive program

<sup>21</sup> The Rhodesian educational infrastructure consisted of two separate (and unequal) school systems: Group "A" schools for whites, Asians and coloureds, and Group "B" schools for blacks. After independence the systems were merged and all government, private and mission-run educational institutions were placed under government jurisdiction.



of music instruction. In fact, afternoon marimba clubs were often the sole musical activity—perhaps in addition to all-school hymn-singing at daily or weekly assemblies—and frequently constituted the headmaster’s idea of a “traditional” music program.

The reality was that despite a ZANU (PF) mandate to re-embrace traditional culture, the government was slow to intervene in performing and visual arts education in the first decade of majority rule. Lack of coherence in cultural policy was also evident in the failure to support specialist training in music and the performing arts. At independence the government bought out the church-owned UCE with which the Kwanongoma College had been affiliated since 1968. The Ministry of Education and Culture terminated the music specialist diploma soon thereafter; the final intake for the three-year Kwanongoma course took place in 1980. Alport Mhlanga, “Mr. Marimba,” left Kwanongoma/UCE before the end of the decade.<sup>22</sup> The successful and lucrative Kwanongoma Musical Instrument Workshop, however, was retained and continued to operate as an independent entity until the mid-2000s. Despite cancellation of the program, Kwanongoma policies and personnel have had a major and lasting impact on the Zimbabwean musical and educational landscape. The marimba and (secondarily) the *karimba*, the two instruments chosen and developed for teaching at the College, remain the primary African instruments in Zimbabwean educational institutions.

### *NGOs and the marimba*

By the early 1990s, ZANU (PF) had forsworn socialism and committed to a capitalist path with the implementation of economic structural adjustment plans. Throughout the decade, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) became ever more important as providers of social services, as well as employment, compared to the state apparatus. The municipal youth centers which had been so instrumental in spreading the marimba continued to operate after independence under the updated rubric of “youth development,” but by 2000 were experiencing financial problems.

Since its establishment in 1989, the Children’s Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO) had grown into the largest and most visible non-government arts association working with Zimbabwean children in 2000. Their integrated “arts education for development” workshops feature the marimba as a core instrument, along with dance and drama. The organization established a Marimba Manufacturing Project early on in order to supply and maintain instruments for their centers. The CHIPAWO workshop became a significant supplier of quality instruments during the 1990s in Harare, enabling the continued spread of the marimba not only within schools but also to other NGOs and independent groups.

CHIPAWO was by no means the only contemporary Zimbabwean NGO featuring marimba music; in 2000 there were a striking number of development agencies that had incorporated the instruments into their programs. Tinotenda (Shona: We are

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<sup>22</sup> In 1987 Mr. Mhlanga moved to Gaborone to teach at the Maru A Pula School, and his work there has been central to the popularization of Kwanongoma-style marimba ensembles in Botswana.

thankful) Marimba Band was sponsored by the Streets Ahead NGO, which provides training and assistance for homeless youths and children in Harare. Ameliorating gender inequalities was the focus of the Chitungwiza-based Girl Child Network, which established a marimba band to empower abused girls and provide an alternative to prostitution. In contrast, the Savannah Arts community organization in Mbare was primarily concerned with promoting music and the performing arts; they taught marimba in an outreach program to engage young people and provide a vehicle for creative expression and community entertainment. The common denominator among these diverse programs and agendas was youth development. Robert Sibson's vision of "an instrument that could serve as a focal point for musical development" (*cf.* Tracey pers. comm. 1989) was more prescient than he realized. Well suited to 1960s discourse, the marimba also became instrumental to development efforts in the ensuing half-century.

### **Bottom up: multiple meanings**

The Kwanongoma marimba became a common feature in Zimbabwe's musical landscape in a single generation. The College founders chose well: a recognizably African instrument on which a variety of music can be played; one that can be heard without amplification, is easily built with local technology, conducive to communal music-making and accessible to all: a "people's instrument." Both Federation-era and postcolonial Zimbabwean policies and programs helped to institutionalize the marimba and facilitate the entry of marimba players into the professional arena. By 2000, marimba players were integrating the instrument into informal and non-commercial contexts as well as professional groups. Marimba bands had become a source of entertainment for private parties and social gatherings, and some Zimbabweans were also incorporating the instrument into ritual events such as funerals and possession ceremonies (Jones 2006: 245-247).

Performing marimba groups are as likely to play Jamaican reggae or American country and western hits as they are traditional Ndebele or Shona songs, and they position themselves very differently with respect to the relevance of "tradition." Audience attitudes towards the instrument differ as well, probably more so than the players. While some Zimbabweans embrace the marimba as part of a shared cultural heritage, others belittle it as a "schoolboy instrument." My aim in this final section of the paper is to bring out the multiplicity in meanings and values placed on the instrument, including notions of the marimba as a cultural revival and as a potential national instrument. I open with a discussion of professional marimba players and their approaches, and conclude with some of the diverse notions of the marimba among the broader population.

### *Marimba as a profession*

Around the time the marimba was being introduced to middle-class African students at the Kwanongoma College, township youths listening to western rock 'n' roll and

Congolese rumba were longing for electric guitars and seeking money and stature as professional musicians. The establishment of a local recording industry and the proliferation of township bars and nightclubs suggested a promising future in the music business, and the number of organized bands exploded in Rhodesia during the 1960s (Zindi 1985). It would be almost 30 years, however, before a new generation of marimba players would begin to express their own professional aspirations. Marimba players could only imagine seeking a living with their instrument following the growth of the commercial music industry in Zimbabwe and the opening up of professional opportunities for musicians (Jones 2006: 140-173). The 1990s marked the appearance of a small but appreciable number of urban musicians seeking to earn a living with the marimba, likely encouraged by Ministry of Culture programs promoting professionalization of traditional and folkloric performing groups (see Turino 2000: 332-333; Jones 2006: 210-212).

Two groups played significant pioneering roles in the professionalization of marimba in Harare: the St. Peter's Kubatana Marimba Band, and Stella Chiweshe and The Earthquake. Although the St. Peter's band was subsidized by an educational institution, the members earned their living through music, and several continued to work as musicians when the band was dissolved in 1989. Some found opportunities to perform with guitar and/or marimba bands while others sought employment teaching, tuning, building and repairing marimbas, using the skills learned in the St. Peter's marimba workshop. The individual and collective strategies they devised to sustain themselves have been reproduced and expanded on by a new generation of marimba players.

Equally influential in the marimba trajectory was the integration of the instrument into a professional performing ensemble by Shona *mbira* player Stella Chiweshe and her band The Earthquake,<sup>23</sup> the first prominent group to combine *mbira*, marimba and electric guitars (20 years before Oliver Mtukudzi). The formation of the band in 1986 thus marks the entry of the marimba into the popular music industry. Chiweshe's group initially received little attention in Zimbabwe, and she moved to Germany where she has been based for more than two decades. Zimbabweans became more receptive to her music once her band achieved popularity with Euro-American world music audiences (Jones 2008). By physically and sonically linking the marimba with the "deep Shona" cultural values embodied in the *mbira*, Stella Chiweshe helped to dislodge constraining views of the marimba as an instrument just for schoolboys.

The St. Peter's Kubatana band and Stella Chiweshe's Earthquake established two basic models for instrumentation - the all-marimba orchestra, and the use of two or three marimbas in a band mixing acoustic and electric instruments - both of which are still common. Zimbabweans have assimilated the instruments into a number of other settings as well. Mhembero Dance Troupe and other drum/dance groups such

<sup>23</sup> Three of the first members of The Earthquake were musicians Chiweshe drew from the St. Peter's Kubatana Marimba Band: Deever Tafumaneyi, Charles Willie and Eric Makokora (see Jones 2006: 274-277).

as Boterekwa, led by mbira and dance specialist David Gweshe, popularized the use of marimba as accompaniment to traditional dances. Community theatre groups frequently integrate marimba music with drama, and some performers play the instrument solo or in groups of two or three.

One might assume that concerns with preserving cultural traditions or expressing identity would motivate the style and repertoire choices of marimba players who embrace an instrument considered by many to be “part of the culture.” For example, Mhembero leader Irene Chigamba, a former member of Zimbabwe’s National Dance Troupe, echoes government cultural policies in emphasizing the aims of the troupe to “preserve and promote Zimbabwean cultural identity” (Chigamba n. d.). Brothers Mataure and Garadziva Chigamba, former Mhembero marimba players, specialized in recreating Shona *mbira* music and other indigenous genres on the marimba [CD track 2].

Cultural activists of the Savannah Arts community arts collective performed in a different sort of group, using marimba along with *ngoma* in outreach music programs. They preferred styles that resonate with the global soundtrack to which township youths listen and relate: hip-hop, reggae and Jamaican *ragga*. In contrast, the repertoires of resident marimba ensembles at resort hotels in Victoria Falls feature both traditional songs and evergreen international pop tunes such as “Never on Sunday” from the 1960 movie of the same name is a staple of the repertoire [CD track 3], described to me as “what the tourists like to hear.” For these marimba players attempting to make a living through music, the avowed basis for choice of genre has little to do with preservation of tradition or assertion of cultural identity. Rather, they choose their repertoire in accordance with the perceived preference of the audience, in order to retain their listenership and their livelihood.<sup>24</sup>

The diverse backgrounds, performance contexts, styles and repertoires of these groups are typical of the contemporary marimba scene. While the majority of those aspiring to earn a living with the instrument are young black men, they are of diverse ethnicities and cultural orientations. The reality is that no single social, cultural or musical position underlies the practices of Zimbabwean marimba players.

### “Part of our culture”

Just what do Zimbabweans mean by claiming marimba as “part of our culture?” From the perspective of discourse analysis, it imparts to the marimba all that the term “culture” has come to mean, including the importance of culture as a signifier. It means that marimba is distinguished as something “we Africans do,” along with *ngoma*, dance, *mbira* and *imbube* singing. For many contemporary Zimbabweans, declaring that “marimba is part of our culture” is an expression of pride in tradition and cultural identity. Grouping the marimba with the traditional in the traditional/

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<sup>24</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the variety of music played on the Kwanongoma marimba, as well as associated issues of identity and musical preference, see Jones 2006, especially pp. 289-303.

modern dichotomy, however, also invokes the negative valuations persisting in the post-colonial world about all things not-modern. Placed in a different class than modern or imported instruments, it follows that the Zimbabwean marimba is rarely afforded the same treatment as, for example, western orchestral instruments.

In practice, being “part of our culture” means marimba ensembles are often relegated to settings for indigenous instruments rather than band rooms and the concert stage. In the few Harare-area schools with a substantive music curriculum, instruction on western instruments takes place indoors and is usually scheduled during regular class hours in the morning. Marimba classes or practices are often held after school in the afternoon; in many situations, marimbas are played outside, “like poor cousins” (Robert MacLaren pers. comm. Jan. 2000).

A further corollary to the traditional categorization of the marimba is a widespread lack of attention to tuning and maintenance. Many marimba instruments purchased by schools or other institutions gradually fall out of tune (or may not be in tune when new!) and become unplayable when they are not maintained. School officials are often unwilling or unable to pay for marimba upkeep once a set has been purchased; in some situations the individual in charge may know nothing about tuning marimbas. Whether the explanation is lack of time, money, resources or expertise to maintain the instruments, it is clear that not all Zimbabwean educators or musicians place importance on ensuring their marimbas are well tuned and in good playing condition.<sup>25</sup> Surely performing on out-of-tune instruments that are in need of repair reinforces the perception of marimba as a traditional instrument—“traditional” read as quaint, amateurish, and unprofessional.

### *Marimba as a revival*

Some Zimbabweans claim the Kwanongoma marimba to be the revival of an ancient tradition that had died out. The revival perspective appears in the writings of certain Kwanongoma College faculty and western ethnomusicologists (see Axelsson 1985: 26; Berliner 1978: 23). In 1984 Kwanongoma marimba instructor and head Alport Mhlanga stated:

The marimba actually was once the pride of Zimbabwe during the early dynasty of Munhumutapa... the marimbas did disappear from Zimbabwe, so it's not a totally new instrument; we are merely reviving it... After discovering that, we decided that it was, well, one instrument that we would really push (in Hallis 2000).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> I hasten to add that this is not true across the board. Both the Kwanongoma Instrument Manufacturing Workshop and the CHIPAWO workshop in Harare manufactured well-crafted, good-sounding marimbas. I know of many individual teachers and performers who take meticulous care of their instruments, but I probably know an equal number whose instruments are consistently out of tune or in need of repair.

<sup>26</sup> Mhlanga (and Axelsson 1985: 26) refers to a sixteenth century account by Portuguese missionary João dos Santos as written evidence that marimba was extant in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Fr. Dos Santos resided among Karanga people in the *Uteve* kingdom within the borders of present-day Mozambique, from 1586-1589. During that time the Munhumutapa Empire, based in the



Belying Mhlanga's claim, the notion of the Kwanongoma marimba as a revival emerged after the establishment of the college, not as an incentive for introducing the instruments. But rather than quibbling over whether "the marimba was here," i.e., attempting to establish whether the tradition is "genuine or spurious" (see Handler and Linnekin 1984), it is far more instructive to examine the **desire** for marimbas to be an ancient Zimbabwean tradition. Why, and to whom, should it make a difference whether the marimba was played 400 years ago in Zimbabwe? The concept of the marimba held by Robert Sibson and Andrew Tracey as an instrument **not** played by the majority peoples in Zimbabwe—an appropriate national instrument in their view—was fitting for the discourse of national musical development during the Federation era. Representation of the marimba as a revival is consistent with the emphasis on cultural renaissance that was a significant element of nationalist ideology from 1963 on (see Turino 2000). For the marimba to represent cultural revival, one has to demonstrate (or imagine) a past in need of reclamation. The more ancient and "proud" the tradition is—for example, the glorious past of the Munhumutapa Empire—the better it fits with the nationalist discourse of cultural decline and revival.

#### *Marimba as a national instrument? A Shona tradition?*

Far from being an outmoded Romantic notion, the symbolic significance of music and musical instruments as representative of nations and cultures has increased dramatically in the past twenty years, due to the world music market and an increasing "transnational consciousness" (Baumann 2000). Of instruments currently played in Zimbabwe, the marimba would seem to own the strongest claim to a national instrument status—one that is identifiably Zimbabwean while at the same time inclusive of all groups within. Yet despite the attempts to establish the marimba as such, few contemporary Zimbabweans regard it as a national instrument. Indeed, in Matabeleland, where siNdebele speakers outnumber Shona, I have occasionally heard marimba being referred to as Shona. This is curious, as the Kwanongoma College is located in Matabeleland's largest city, Bulawayo. The modern marimba became known there first, and marimba instruction and performance was centered in Bulawayo for nearly two decades.

The fact that the Kwanongoma marimba is often considered to be Shona suggests an ongoing Shona hegemony. Following the shift in the center of marimba activity from Bulawayo to Harare in the 1980s, most performers and groups who have become known nationally have been Shona. St. Peter's Kubatana Marimba Band and Stella Chiweshe and The Earthquake both fostered the association of the marimba with indigenous Shona music, and the Nheravuya Brothers, a marimba ensemble in Harare

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northern Zimbabwean region of Dande, was at its greatest extent. Andrew Tracey has rebutted such claims: "I discount this, because the Portuguese were on the coast, and the people with whom they came into contact there apparently called themselves "Karanga" only because they were under the influence of, or part of the empire... which was Karanga-ruled. These coastal people, now called Chopi, Tswa, and Ndau/Shanga, still play marimbas to this day. But this does not mean that the Shona themselves ever played marimba" (see Tracey 2004).

led by mbira player Newton Gwara, gained a small but enthusiastic following in the late 1980s. The success of a Harare band during the late 1990s, Hohodza Hot Band, likely furthered the marimba-Shona connection. Perhaps the recent popularity of the quartet Bongo Love (originally two marimbas, *mbira* and drums), winner of the 2006 Music Crossroads Festival, will help shift audience perceptions of the marimba. Bongo Love, from Bulawayo but now based in Harare, has members with both Shona and Ndebele roots and performs an eclectic repertoire of indigenous and popular songs and original compositions.

### *Schoolboy stuff*

A major reason for the Zimbabwean marimba's failure to achieve recognition as a national instrument is its general lack of status as a serious instrument for adults. Despite the instrument's growth in popularity and nascent incorporation into the professional arena, many Zimbabweans continue to dismiss the marimba as "just for schoolboys," implying that playing marimba is something that one grows out of on reaching adulthood. Nevertheless, representation of the Zimbabwean marimba as a schoolboy instrument is a fair description of the demographic. In 2000, most of the active marimba players in the country *were* school-age, and the great majority of them were male.

The discourse of the marimba as "schoolboy stuff" signifies on multiple levels, and unpacking it reveals a number of embedded assumptions. It entails inclusion and exclusion on the bases of gender and of generation; it also presumes a particular function for schools. Given the traditional categorization of the marimba, "just for schoolboys" relegates tradition in contemporary Zimbabwean society to the schools. Taken at face value, the perceptions of marimba as "part of our culture" and "schoolboy stuff" appear to be opposing points of view; they arise, however, from the same modernist discourse.

The institution of formal schooling played a key role in the inculcation of modern tastes and values during colonial times, and continues to do so in the postcolonial era. The spread of the marimba to schools in Zimbabwe is a move towards the modernist goal of indigenizing music education. But even with incorporation into adult bands and marimba players beginning to earn a living, the instrument has yet to be fully accepted outside the educational system.

### *But is it real music?*

In June 2000 Nicholas Manomano, then marimba teacher at Prince Edward School, recounted to me with great indignation a phone conversation he had had with the manager of a local hotel. Attempting to drum up gigs for his professional marimba ensemble Kutinya (Shona: to be tight; strength), Nicholas had phoned a black Zimbabwean hotel manager responsible for booking bands. Upon hearing the instrumentation of the group (six marimbas and a hosho player), the manager declared "Marimbas? No, we want *real* music." When asked what he meant by *real*, the answer

was “real music, like with amplifiers and electric guitars” (pers. comm. June 2000).

Many of the marimba players aspiring to support themselves through performing have encountered frustration and struggle to be taken seriously. A number of serious musicians who had been active marimba performers and/or composers before the period of this study were no longer playing the instrument.<sup>27</sup> For some, playing marimba was merely a stepping-stone towards finding work as guitarists or keyboard players. Others who would have preferred to continue performing marimba were unable to make a living at it because “marimba music doesn’t sell.” Their instrument rarely enjoys the same acceptance in the music industry as the electric guitar, and recording studios, radio deejays and club managers are often unwilling to give marimba bands a chance.

The stories of performers who have given up marimba reveal much about perceptions of the instrument within the society and how such attitudes constrain the activities of aspiring professionals. Oliver Mtukudzi’s adoption of the marimba resists the persistent devaluation of the traditional in postcolonial Zimbabwe, an ongoing legacy of colonial dichotomies: traditional/modern, indigenous/western, amateur/professional and symbolic value/economic value. Regarded as traditional instruments, marimbas are too often treated as quaint homegrown relics or tourist curios, not “real music.” Opportunities for professional marimba players thus have been limited not only by economic constraints, but also by ambivalent attitudes towards traditional practices that are inherent in modernist discourse. Such is the contradiction of modernity for marimba players: the same discourse that put the marimba into their hands and gave them hopes of establishing their careers in music relegates them to the margins of the music industry.

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<sup>27</sup> See Jones 2006: 293–299 contrasting the trajectories of Nheravauya Marimba Group and Hohodza Hot Band, neither of whom is still playing marimba. The two groups engaged in very different musical-professional strategies and followed divergent paths within the commercial Zimbabwean music industry.

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