TRIBAL STYLE AND FREE EXPRESSION

by

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THE music whic forms a basis for this article is recorded on Gallotone records GB 970, GB 969, and GB 964. It comes from two of the Northern Rhodesian tribes whose polyrhythmic technique has been extensively described and analysed by the Reverend A. M. Jones in numerous writings and lectures.[1]

The recorded songs are, however, less complex than such fully orchestrated group performances as the "Icila Dance" of A. M. Jones' book, and it is on account of their few parts that an attempted analysis from the recordings is here made of their purely acoustic features. Examination of these songs reveals something of the reflection which the overall group musical style, as far as it can be established, casts within the smaller details of more private music-making, and also how individual expression is achieved within the style.

Most space is taken up, here, in dealing with the two Tonga songs on the first recording, which are examples from amongst the several types of Tonga and Ila song whose function and composition A. M. Jones describes in *African Music*. The musical bow, which supplies their accompaniment, he mentions as one of several "private instruments for personal enjoyment."

"Canjaya Cibunga" is a love song and is sung by a group of boys.

"Kubulala kwa Mwaze" is a nostalgic solo sung by Daniel Kanoma to his own accompaniment. "At Mazwe's home where there are tall palm trees."

Mr. Hugh Tracey's notes, supplied with this recording, read as follows:

"The Tonga, whose music is played on this record, are one of five unrelated tribes sharing the same name. These Tonga are found in the southern part of Northern Rhodesia, near the Zambesi valley below the Victoria Falls.

"The two items are excellent examples of the clever use of the single string bow called 'Kalumbu'. The bow is held vertically in the left hand, and has an open gourd resonator attached near its centre. . . . The single string is divided into two segments, producing two fundamental notes while the player produces a third by stopping the string with the back of a finger. He strikes the string with a light stick. . . . Bows of this variety are widely distributed throughout the African continent."

MUSICAL BOW.

Professor Kirby has found mention of this type of instrument by a Jesuit priest, Bonanni, in the eighteenth century, and himself gives a detailed description of its varieties and use in South Africa.[2] Dr. Merriam refers to its wide distribution in eastern Congo.[3]

In its simpler form, without a gourd, it appears that the player's mouth is often used as a variable resonator to reinforce desired partials from the string's rich note or notes. With a gourd resonator the opening may be partially reduced by varying its proximity to the player's chest to alter its resonant frequency. In the recording it is the 2nd partials (an octave above the fundamentals) of the three basic notes which are reinforced, while higher partials are still distinctly audible, particularly the third, which is of course a perfect fifth higher than the strong 2nd partial.

The three fundamentals listed by Dr. Kirby as typical of Swazi tuning seem close in pitch to those in the recording, but numerous other tunings occur. In his transcription of a Swazi song with bow it is interesting to note the relationship between vocal and bow pitches. The vocal scale corresponds with the 2nd, 3rd and 5th partials of the two bow notes used. A similar relationship is noticeable in the two Tonga bow pieces, though evidence of a clear extension of this scale to other pieces without melodic accompaniment is inconclusive without a wider survey.

SCALES AND MODES.

The three basic bow-notes in the two recorded Tonga bow songs, being resonated 2nd partials of the three string-fundamentals, are 201, 223, and 239 cycles per second approximately. This places them closest to tenor G, A and B-flat of our own scale, but for comparison and to avoid sharps and flats they are dealt with in terms of C major in the transcription, as is commonly done, and referred to as D, E, and F.

The D–E interval is 180 cents, and E–F 120 cents, being, for comparison, close to a just minor tone and a just semitone, with an overall D–F interval of an equal-tempered minor third (300 cents). A. M. Jones states that an overall minor third is usual in Kalumbu tuning.

The fact that these basic notes fall within a minor third is interesting in view of Dr. Kolinski's comment[4] that this interval rather than the 5th often forms the primary unit in Suriname Negro music, and that this is also to be found in some of the music of East and West Africa.

Vocal parts use the following pitches in terms of C major, all bearing unison or perfect 4th relationship to the bow notes (the 4th being, incidentally, the harmonic series interval between 3rd and 4th partials).

"Canjaya Cibunga" (group song with bow): (C), D, E, F, G.

"Kubulala kwa Mwaze" (solo with bow): B, C, D, E, F, G (A).

Bracketed notes occur only once per repetition of the piece.

Notes used in the other four pieces, without bow, are:

"Ndatwa" (Tonga girls' pounding song, GB 969): G, A, B, C, D, F, G (C=actual E, roughly).

"Balombwana Atweende" (Tonga drinking song, GB 969): G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G (C=actual G, roughly).

"Wonse aba abaisa Mukulila" (Lala burial song, GB 964): E, F, G, A, B, C (C=actual E flat, roughly).

"Nakua mauy aba-bemba" (Lala drinking song, GB 964): G, A, B, C, D (C=actual F, roughly).

E. M. von Hornbostel's hypothesis of a circle of flat-blown fifths[5] as scale-determinant being nowadays less widely accepted, a future practical scale-classification system for comparative study would seem to have to take into account such other theories as Miss Schlesinger's,[6] which ascribes derivation both to instrumental harmonic series and to instrumental equipartition. Harmonic series derivation is the theory advanced by Dr. Kirby for much of the South African music dealt with in his book.

In line with former practice, the application of von Hornbostel's classification, and its modal development used by Dr. Kolinski,[4] would list the modal scales of our six recorded pieces as follows:

"Canjaya" . . .	Hexa mi (with la omitted) . . .	Final tone: mi.
"Kubulala" . . .	Hepta mi	Final tone: si
"Ndatwa" . . .	Hepta do (with mi omitted) . .	Final tone: sol.
"Balombwana" . .	Hepta do	Final tone: sol.
"Wonse" . . .	Hepta la (with re omitted). . .	Final tone: mi.
"Naku"	Hexa la (mi and fa omitted) . .	Final tone: la.

All pieces are hemitonic, and from the first list of their notes it will be seen that a hepta/hexa division here is not a really valid one. It is interesting to note that in all cases the final tone is either the same as, or a 4th lower than the tonal centre. A fair degree of correspondence of scale is apparent in these pieces over and above a mere note count, whereas the modal use of these notes varies. It seems significant that in pieces with fewest pitches, and in bow parts, the basic equipment is the intervals of a tone, a semitone, and an overall minor 3rd.

EMBRYONIC HARMONY.

In certain of the repetitions of "Canjaya" and "Kubulala" a melodic sequence or a whole phrase is transposed exactly downward by 4ths or octaves for variation while no change from the normal is made in the accompanying bow part. In the group response part of "Canjaya" a "divisi" rendering sometimes occurs with parallel movement at these three pitch levels (normal, minus a 4th, and minus an octave), giving an organum effect. In "Kubulala," E and F are likewise varied to B and C in repetitions.

"Harmony" between voices and bow will be seen from the transcription to allow little more than unisons or 4ths. Fleeting minor thirds occur very occasionally, and a 5th and a 2nd once each. Use of these rare intervals is only after that voice-pitch has already asserted itself as basically a more legitimate relation to another bow note.

In the other four pieces nothing more than occasional parallel 4ths occur.

As stated by A. M. Jones of Tonga and Lala music generally, there is in these recorded pieces little evidence of "harmony" beyond 4ths, and no experimentation with major/minor 3rd progressions such as he found in Bemba tribal practice.

The 4th seems in these songs to be the most important interval both in scale-building and variation and in simultaneous harmonic enrichment.

Miss Brandel mentions the 4th as a "significant nucleus" in some Bahutu (Congo) music.[7]

MELODIC RESOLUTION.

In absence of any harmonic resolution in the recorded pieces, unless a final resolution from 4th-chord to unison between voice and bow in "Canjaya" and the reverse in "Kubulala" be taken as significant, the form of demarcating resolution must of course take place in terms of pure melody, if not solely through duration and intensity. A listener will sense a distinct form of resolution, however, by the association of certain established modal tones and progressions with finality, as well as final duration prominence.

In both bow pieces, besides a significant final tone, the final interval (between pre-final and final tones) of a falling minor 3rd seems reserved for demarcating function, like our own harmonic dominant-to-tonic perfect cadence. It is interesting to follow recurrences of final and pre-final tones and this "cadence" resolution within the songs.

Disregarding durations apart from making a division after long notes, the voice pitch sequence of "Canjaya" is:

Solo . . Response . . . . . .

E F C D E / G E F / G F E / F E F G E.

Final tone E occurs finally also in the first and third sub-group (*i.e.* corresponds with long duration), but does not here have the same pre-final tone. In function they thus possibly resemble our imperfect cadence. Falling minor third G–E recurs in sub-group 2 but resolves to F. F–E being an "imperfect cadence" in sub-group 3, F has claims to sub-dominant function (pitch analogy with our own system being irrelevant).

With (purely functional) roles of Tonic, (T), Dominant, (D), and Sub-Dominant (S), for E, G and F, we find this progression in the piece:

T S – – T / D T S / D S T / S T S D T.

The two omitted notes C and D we know as 4th-related variants of F and G. Does their use mean temporary "modulation" away from the E-tonal-centred "key"? Perhaps that is going too far, but melody does seem to play a part in phrase-division here. In pieces with larger structual intervals, of course, intermediate passing notes may come within the "final interval."

In "Kubulala" the more freely distributed pitch sequence is:

F E F G A G F E / F C E D B / G F E D C D B / C B C D B / E /
G F E F D E B C D E C D C B / G F E C B C D B.

B is final tone to five sub-groups, with E (tonal centre and bow part final) elsewhere. Though transposed, the same final falling minor 3rd interval as in "Canjaya" occurs in

sub-groups 2, 3, 4 and 7, and nowhere else than at these points. Smaller and more common intervals effect imperfect resolution in sub-groups 1 and 6.

In "Ndatwa" the 5th, in addition to the 4th, seems structurally important within the piece, though close movement of a tone up and a semitone down around the tonal centre, adding up to a minor third, is frequent. Falling major 3rd B–G occurs finally only. All imperfect resolution at sentence endings is, by other intervals, to tonal centre C. "Balombwana" uses a structural 5th, C–G, within the piece, and close movement, as does "Ndatwa," and again a final falling major 3rd.

The progression throughout "Wonse" is basically a descending C–A–F/C–A–E with intermediate passing notes. The contrast between minor 3rd, major 3rd and final (interspaced) 4th seems important, rather than use of a structural 5th. "Naku" similarly gives little evidence of a structural 5th, and contrasts of minor 3rd and 4th are important. An overall minor 3rd gives final resolution.

EVIDENCE OF GROUP MELODIC STYLE.

All six recorded pieces use an overall downward melodic progression, as is common in all vocal folk music, and the call and response pattern (apart from the solo, where voice and bow alternate, however).

Evidence points to greater importance of 3rds and 4ths than of the 5th interval.

There is affinity between scales in these examples, but modes vary. The final tone is always the same as or a 4th below the tonal centre, however.

Harmony does not generally exceed occasional parallel 4ths, used rather for melodic enrichment than for any kind of resolution.

Use is made of demarcating "punctuation signs" within the pitch sequence, however, through (1) established final and semi-final modal tones, approached by (2) a particular interval progression.

The solo "Kubulala", though to the ear a freer piece, yet largely conforms to group style in ordering of pitches. Real evidence of its freedom will be found only in its rhythmic structure.

RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE AND FORM.

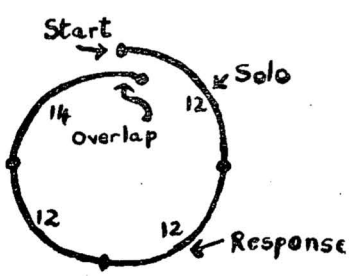
Examination of their rhythm reveals both difference and similarity in the schemes underlying: (1) the simpler group pieces, (2) the more complex group pieces, and (3) the solo performance, in the six recorded examples, which will be studied in that order here.

"*Canjaya . . .*"

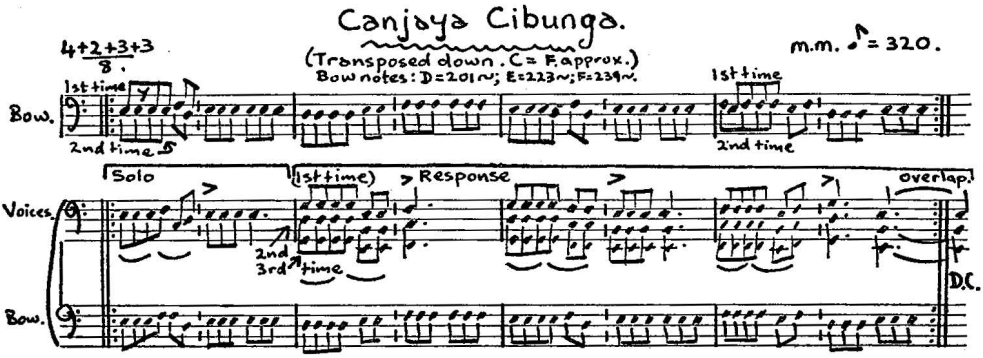
Throughout the piece, the bow supplies a very rapid regular pulsation at the rate of about 5 equally spaced beats per second, every beat being played.

The performance in the recording consists in the repetition (with slight melodic and parallel variation as mentioned earlier), of an antiphonal vocal cycle of 48 beats duration, corresponding exactly with the bow-part cycle in length. The bow plays its cycle twice before the vocal part commences, at a beat-rate of about M.M. 320.

Within the total cycle (or single repeated movement), the solo "call" part lasts 12 beats, and the response 36 plus a 2-beat prolongation of its final tone which overlaps the next solo entry to this extent.



In the transcription, the use of barlines indicates an apparent phrase structure within the cycle. Barring is here used as when first introduced for our own musical notation, *i.e.* the exact placing of accents is *not* determined by the bar line. I have marked the climax or responsive figure by an accent sign in each "bar".



The grouping of beats most obvious to the ear in this piece makes up two alternating patterns whose use might be described as "successive hemiola".

Six beats grouped as 4+2 precede a pattern of six grouped as 3+3, the latter six-pattern serving as the climax within the total twelve-beat phrase. As this alternation of the two contrasted six-beat patterns is strictly regular, an additive time-signature of

$$\frac{4+2+3+3}{8}$$

would seem applicable.

(4+2) pattern+(3+3) pattern = 12-beat phrase.
Solo phrase+3 response phrases = 48-beat cycle (with 2-beat overlap).

This is perhaps one of the simplest examples of contrasted treatment in the grouping of beats within a larger unit or phrase.

Here, the unequal groups *follow* each other and are not super-imposed as in the more "orchestrated" polyrhythmic works dealt with by A. M. Jones. His findings from a deep study of actual performance techniques reveal clearly the underlying intention of unequal partnership. The successive non-superimposed use of unequally constituted patterns looks like a simpler realisation of the same intention. Miss Brandel has called such alternation "twin-topic" in discussing Congo drum patterns.[8]

This simple successive construction, within phrases of six or eight beats of their multiples, is to be detected in listening to a large number of the recordings issued by the African Music Transcription Library.

In "Canjaya," however, there is more to it than that. Electronic measurement unexpectedly blasts our theory that we have based our "obvious grouping" on accentuation by dynamic intensity prominence. (See table of "Kubulala" intensity distribution). Closer listening finds the real variation in grouping within these patterns to be based upon pitch sequence and duration, in the vocal part of "Canjaya". If we listen expressly for intensity accents we find that these tend to emphasize the very *opposite* pattern, *i.e.* a 3+3 pattern crossing the 4+2 pitch sequence, one in the first portion of each phrase. Here we seem to have an embryonic polyrhythm, in the form of real hemiola, the opponents being, not the rhythm patterns of different participants, but different "phrasings" of the same part, simultaneously: a polyrhythm of melody against accent, in fact, and a case of crossing one's own rhythm. Objections that this is merely a "paper" polyrhythm should not be made before actual listening, which establishes it as clearly intentional. A. M.

Jones' well-known personal lecture-demonstrations of simultaneously beating out a different ryhthm with each hand illustrate this idea in its non-melodic expression.

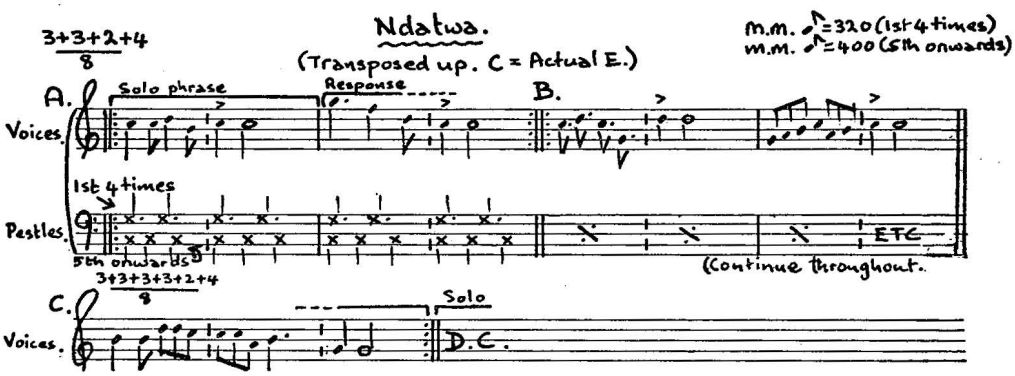
In the transcription of "Canjaya" the "obvious" melody/duration grouping is shown in the tail-grouping of notes, and the opposed intensity grouping by slur signs.

The bow is more impartial in its handling of the 6-beat patterns. Melody/duration grouping follows that of the vocal part, but where bow pitch is constant for all six beats, neither pattern is unduly favoured through intensity prominence, though there is a suggestion that the player is aware of them both. Varied legato/staccato detachment does not seem possible on this instrument as an added element for "phrasing".

"*Ndatwa.*"

In the Tonga girls' pounding-song, "Ndatwa," rhythmic unity is centred around the regular pounding of pestle and mortar.

From the transcription it will be seen that the performance consists in the repetition of a total cycle of 132 beats including internal repetitions. It seems more suitable here to treat the three major subdivisions as sub-cycles or sentences. Their order is: A A B C B C. The cycle, unlike that of "Canjaya," is the sum of unequal sentences, as sentence C has only 18 beats while A and B each have 24.



In sentence A:

(3+3) pattern+(2+4) pattern = 12-beat phrase.
Two 12-beat phrases = Sentence A.

In sentence B the same phrase construction is used but the first (3+3) pattern has its threes halved. (Talking of multiples of a smaller basic beat would be more helpful here, but more involved).

$(1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2})+(1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2})$ pattern+(2+4) pattern = phrase 1.
(3+3) pattern+(2+4) pattern = phrase 2.
Phrase 1+phrase 2 = Sentence B.

Sentence C is a compressed one with only three patterns. It will be seen that the compression results from the expression of its first phrase within one 6-beat pattern instead of two.

(3+3) pattern+(3+3) pattern+(2+4) pattern=Sentence C.

At first, pestles pound twice per pattern at equal intervals, coinciding with the twelve (3+3) voice patterns in the cycle, but being polyrhythmic to the other ten patterns.

Later they pound three times per voice pattern, emphasising 2+2+2, and the whole tempo is increased. Agreement now occurs between pestles and voice in ten patterns, and polyrhythm in 12, *i.e.* the opposite of the previous relationship. In the transcription

the upper and lower pestle parts are not simultaneous. The upper one is used for the first four total cycles and the lower one thereafter.

In "Ndatwa," "off-beat phrasing"[8] between voices and percussion occurs only within alternate 6-beat patterns and does not extend to the phrase, *i.e.* polyrhythmic opposition, where it is present, resolves into rhythmic concord or agreement on the 1st beat of the next 6-beat pattern.

"*Balombwana . . .*"

The voice part of this Tonga drinking song also uses successive contrasted patterns. 18-beat phrases made up from three 6-beat patterns occur.

(3+3) pattern+(2+2+2) pattern+(3+3) pattern=phrase.

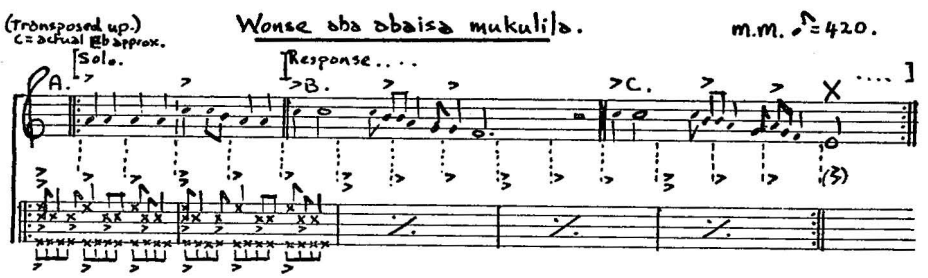
The accompanying percussion patterns are polyrhythmic to the voice part, and "off-beat phrasing" extends here beyond the pattern.

"*Wonse . . .*" *and* "*Naku . . .*"

These two pieces seem typical of the type of polyrhythmic music of the neighbouring Lala tribe about which A. M. Jones has given so much information. Despite their respective functions of after-burial wake song, and drinking song, these two are very similar in construction.

Both pieces are based upon a combined percussion phrase adding up to 12 beats, with sticks, rattles, and "Limba" one-note xylophone, emphasising patterns of 3 and 4 beats, variously grouped, to the phrase.

At the beginning of the recording it is interesting to trace the introduction of a simple rhythm followed by the separate entry of each of the other rhythm patterns, grouped in relation to it and to each other, until the full polyrhythmic phrase is built up and maintained and the voices begin. Full information of the nature of their combination would require A. M. Jones' performance-analysis method from the "live" work. Only a rough diagrammatic transcription of the total effect, which does not reveal the real nature of the separate unequal percussion patterns has here been attempted from the recording of "Wonse".



In "Wonse", the cycle of the antiphonal vocal part lasts 60 beats. The three major subdivisions or phrases are unequal but related in length, being of 16, 24 and 20 beats each. The patterns within them run between accent signs in the transcription.

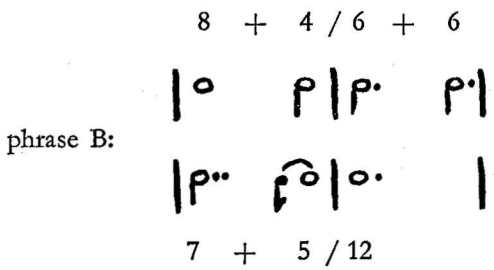
Two 8-beat patterns = phrase A.
7-beat pattern+5-beat pattern+12-beat pattern = phrase B.
7-beat pattern+5-beat pattern+ 8-beat pattern = phrase C.

Within the patterns, beat-grouping is even less constant than appears in the transcription, and varies somewhat in keeping with the structure of the words. Variation never runs beyond the pattern, however, though these fixed patterns are far more irregular than the simple 6-beat ones of previous pieces. The exact odd length of each is rigidly maintained within each repetition of the cycle however, *i.e.* the unequal spacing of pattern accents is fixed.

"Off-beat phrasing" between voices and percussion is therefore on a far larger scale than in the previous pieces. Full rhythmic concord occurs where the final resolution climax of the voice cycle (marked X) coincides with the strongest beat of one of the repetitions of the 12-beat percussion phrase. Some degree of concord continues throughout the next vocal solo "call". Elsewhere within the cycle, vocal pattern accents, and vocal phrase beginnings and climaxes generally disagree with percussion-phrase climaxes.

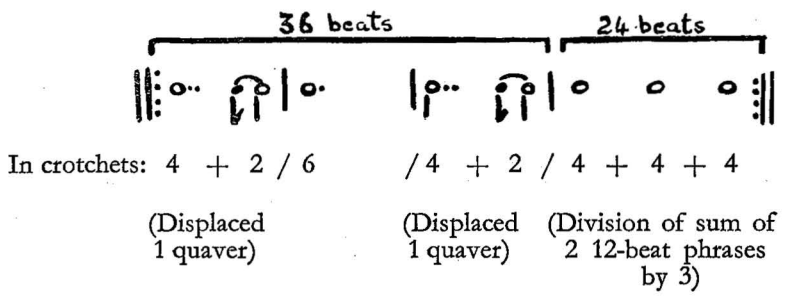
Phrase displacement.

A further glance at the lengths of vocal patterns in "Wonse" reveals an interesting similarity with the 4+2/3+3 contrast system of the simpler pieces. Expressed in double note values, a 4+2/3+3 scheme shows the following relationship to vocal phrase B:



A possible description of the relationship would be one of anticipatory displacement or syncopation, though this describes the result and not necessarily the intention and method by which the additive pattern is achieved.

In viewing the whole vocal cycle from this angle, and starting from the response instead of the call, we get:



Fully in terms of a *syncopated* relationship to a hypothetical 12-beat basic phrase, therefore: in the first three (barline divided) "phrases" above, we find internal 1-quaver anticipation within the phrase. In the last double phrase there is anticipation of one minim running across the division between two phrases.

Such a description here appears clumsy and artificial but is stated because it affords interesting comparison with established practice in jazz and other music which has been analysed both in terms of syncopation and polyrhythm by Mátyás Seiber in hisa rticles "Rhythmic Freedom in Jazz?"[9]

From A. M. Jones' weight of evidence it seems clear that the musical intention of Tonga and Lala performers is the ordered creation of rhythmic "discord" and its planned resolution into "concord", toward which end the use of unequal constituents is a means.

COMPARABLE RHYTHMIC FEATURES IN RECORDED GROUP PIECES.

Common to all these group pieces seems to be the use of rhythmic "discord" and "concord".

In the simplest pieces this has been realised in the successive alternation of short fixed patterns of equal length by unequal construction, *e.g.* 4+2 alternating with 3+3. There has been a mere subtle suggestion of polyrhythm in the "phrasing" of every second pattern.

In the pounding song the same fixed 6-beat patterns are used, but here polyrhythm between voices and percussion is definitely expressed, though still strictly within every second pattern.

e.g. voices: 3+3/2+4
pestles: 3+3/3+3

In the "orchestrated" recorded pieces full concord only occurs at the climax of the total cycle, with looser concord extending through the following "call" phrase. Polyrhythmic discord extends far beyond the limits of the single patterns, in the response, the patterns themselves being unequal. It is interesting to note that rhythmic concord coincides with the other characteristic "punctuation signs" of final or semi-final tone and interval, and long note-duration, to achieve climax in these pieces.

Throughout the vocal cycle of all the pieces the individual pattern, whether of 6 beats or alternately 5, 7 or 8, has been an accepted unit of fixed position within the cycle. In the simpler pieces the order and placing of the groups, of 2, 3 or 4 beats each, within the pattern has likewise been rigid.

In the larger works the order and placing of the groups seems freer and their varied construction tends to be dictated more by the words.

"POETIC LICENCE" IN SOLO PERFORMANCE.

A. M. Jones' detailed analysis of master-drumming technique in "The Icila Dance" gives an illuminating instance of individual expression within the larger limits of a group performance.

The solo song, "Kubulala", sung to the soloist's own bow accompaniment is an example of private music-making within the looser context of the musical style of his tribe.

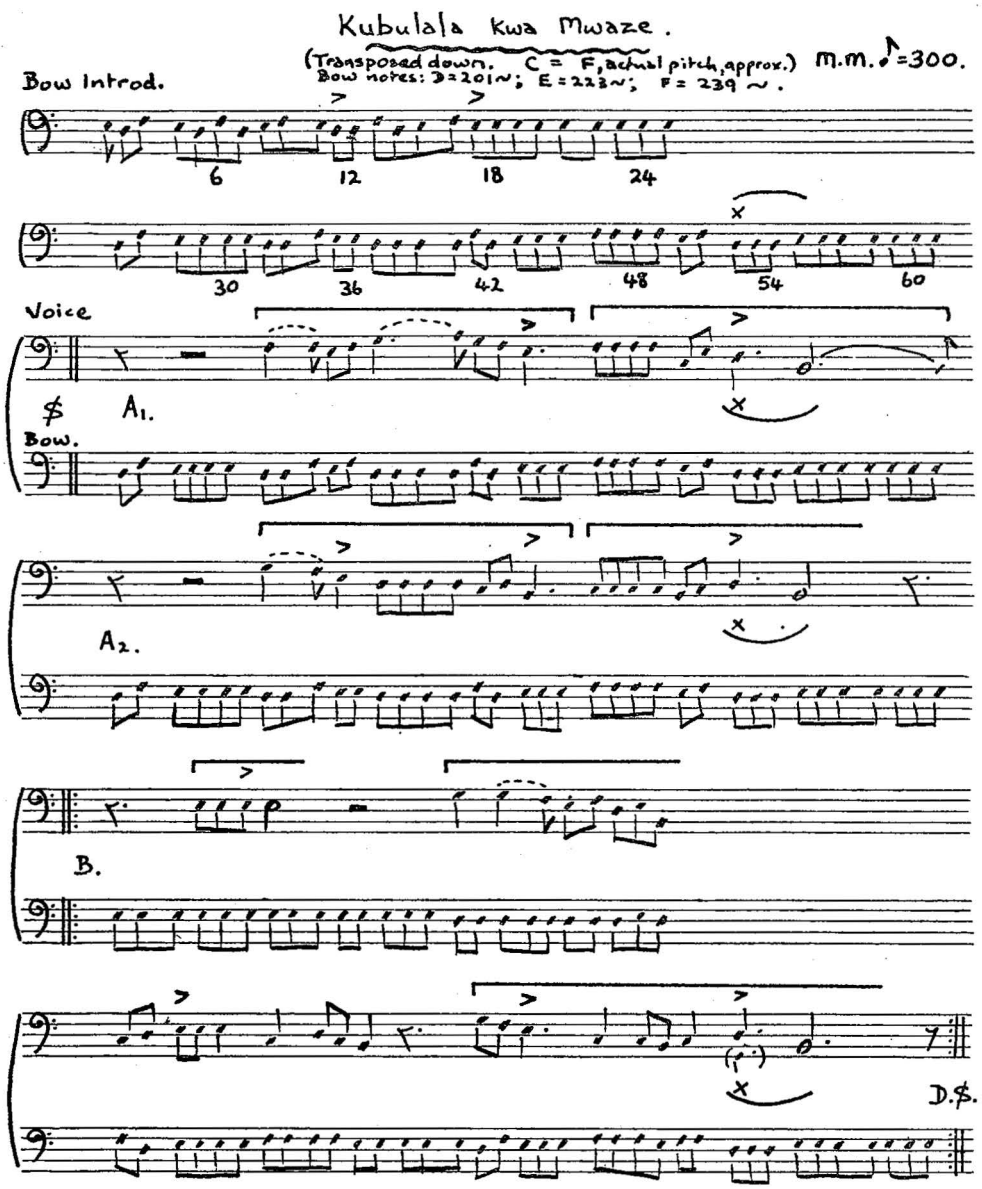
On first hearing, the piece seems to have great freedom and no recognisably fixed form. Attempting to count beats between successive strong bow notes in the introduction serves to confirm this impression when groups of 2, 3 and 4 beats each occur in no regularly recurrent order. In fact, on repeated listening, the groups seem to change places, and attempts at transcription become exercises in shifting the bar-line.

It is tempting at this stage to dismiss the piece as being a clear case of "free rhythm". Repeated attentive listening, however, establishes a definite though complex formal scheme within which unequal constituents are loosely but ingeniously blended.

As in the group bow-song, the bow again sounds every beat, this time at the slightly retarded tempo of M.M. 300.

In the recording, the bow first supplies an interesting solo cadenza until, from beat 19 it takes up an introductory solo statement of its first accompaniment sentence of 36 beats. The voice begins on the bow's 68th beat and the total cycle of the song is completed four times. The bow introduction then reappears as an interlude, followed finally by sentences A2 and B.

As in the larger pieces, the sentence resolution climaxes and the total cycle climax are the pivotal and most unvariable points. They are marked by an X in the transcription. Vocal phrases are marked by square brackets. The tail-grouping of notes shows one of the systems of grouping and is based mainly on melodic progression. Grouping by actual intensity accent is much freer, varies in different repetitions, and frequently

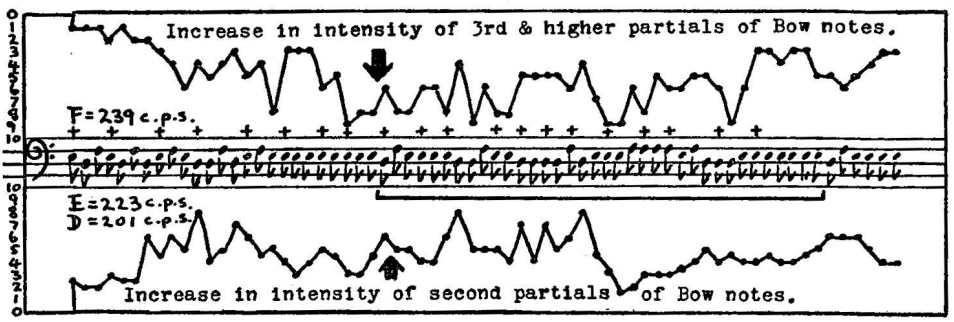


does not coincide with the melodic groups. (See table of prominence distribution, drawn from electronic instrument curves).

If one studies the bow part the basic cycle will be seen to be two 36-beat sentences followed by one of 60 beats and its repetition.

$$36+36+60+60=192 \text{ beats.}$$

The relationship between bow and voice is rather like that of call and response, with the bow giving the call before the voice joins in, and the odd placing of the vocal phrases in relation to the bow sentence of more fixed length might be interpreted as



large-scale "off-beat phrasing" from a hypothetical fixed phrase. The actual voice phrasing within the cycle adds up more irregularly:

14-beat phrase+22-beat phrase	=	36-beat sentence A_1
14-beat phrase+19-beat phrase	=	33-beat sentence A_2
11+25+24	=	60-beat sentence B_1
11+25+27	=	63-beat sentence B_2

This irregular construction is exactly maintained at each repetition of the cycle.

GROUP STYLE AND FREE EXPRESSION.

The artistic effect of these shifting phrases and the shifting grouping within them, in "Kubulala", can only be appreciated by listening to the piece. Uncannily, the player, although scattering his accents and groups seemingly at will, is in no way deterred from observing his over-riding formal scheme.

The grouping of beats into twos, three and fours within the phrases does follow some form of plan, but it is a loose one, *e.g.* in sentence A_1: 3+2+4+2+3/4+2+3+13 (bow splits 13 into 4+3+2+4 while voice rests).

This seems related to the simpler 4+2/3+3 scheme, but between sentence climaxes (where 4+2+3 invariably occurs), very mixed company is kept and each 3-group is separated from what we might suspect as its twin. An underlying 9-beat phrase is one suggestion arising from the figures: 3+2+4/2+3+4/2+3+4/3+2+4, but this does not make sense in sentence B.

The theory that the determinant lies entirely in natural speech length and stress is not consistently borne out. The singer's enunciation of "Willy, Willy" in sentence B gives one obvious exception. This rendering is neither Bantu nor English spoken form. The elongation of the final syllable is determined by *musical* style. Tonga and Lala being tone languages, however, a considerable check on melodic freedom is exerted by conformity to speech-tone patterns, and this might partly explain the greater use made of *rhythmic* variation and freedom in their music.

The balance kept between the demands of linguistic and of musical style seems to reflect the artist's skilful blending of free expression with "good taste" in "Kubulala".

Possibly an extension of A. M. Jones' "off-hand technique" by which drumming variations are synchronised might be found in the movements used in bow playing, but this lies outside the recorded performance and we must for the present allow the conjuror his sleight of hand.

Whatever disguised cues the performer may use for keeping his place within the larger scheme it would seem here that, so deeply within him lies the *over-riding numerical order scheme* that he finds it quite unnecessary to emphasise it by equally spaced intensities as is done in our own (pre-contemporary) music. Similarly one might instance our own

deep feeling for "key", which is so well established that we have no need of an incessant tonic or dominant drone as in some less harmony-based folk music, though we still take our cues where we find them and infer the key from the first few notes.

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NOTES ON AN IDIOPHONE USED IN *KABILE* INITIATION RITES BY THE MBAE

by

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IN October, 1953, I sent to the British Museum parts of a tripartite musical apparatus used by the Mbae (Bamanga) tribe during the initiation rites known as *Kabile*. These were obtained shortly before I left for furlough in Europe in 1950 and I hoped on my return a year later to visit the Mbae area and obtain records of the music used for dancing in which this apparatus played a part. In 1951, however, I had to take up work in another part of Congo and have not yet been able to visit the Mbae country. It may be worth while writing a short note on the interesting idiophone seen, for comparison with similar instruments used elsewhere in the hope that a fuller account, accompanied by musical data, may be published later.

Kabile initiation rites are known to be practised (or to have been practised in the past) in a number of tribes of the Stanleyville area in Belgian Congo. Until recent years they were confined to the riverine section of the Mbae people but in 1950 a forest village was initiated into the rites by a neighbouring riverine community after a suitable payment for the privilege had been handed over. Until that year the rites had been becoming more and more sporadic. The Christian Church in the area had from its inception taught that the deceitful practices associated with *Kabile* (especially the deliberate cheating and deceiving of women and other non-initiates) were incompatible with Christian teaching and it was probably a certain indignation on the part of Church