

**THE REPERTOIRE OF KAYAMBA AFRICA: CONTEMPORARY  
REWORKING OF TRADITIONAL MUSICS IN NAIROBI.**

by

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## **Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Signature

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Date

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated in loving memory of my late father, Mr. Obadiah Maina (1952-2008) and to my mother Mrs. Cecilia Maina. You have always been very proud of my achievements and have encouraged, supported and guided me to fulfill my potential.

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## Abstract

This research focuses on Kayamba Africa's repertoire of reworked traditional songs in Nairobi, where they are based. The study involved extensive literature and field research through library and online research, participant observation, interviews, data analysis and transcriptions. Three live performances of Kayamba Africa were analysed: a wedding reception and state function and an edited DVD recording. An analysis of Kayamba Africa's three recordings, namely 'Omutun', 'Wakarirũ' and 'Ngulũ', from the album *Kayamba Africa* was conducted. This analysis observed and compared different interpretations and translations of the songs' texts sourced from different research consultants, as well as Kayamba Africa's musical structure and recordings of Boniface Mganga's choral arrangement of Ngulũ and Hugh Tracey's recording of 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ'.

The findings show that Kayamba Africa is rooted in Kenyan choral music and is influenced by styles from other parts of Africa such as South Africa and Congo through the use of: Kenyan Music festival style of arrangement and adaptation of traditional and folk songs, *makwaya* style of singing, *seben* guitar style and *ndombolo* dancing. The idea of nationalism in Kenya especially during President Moi's era and the emergence of the Presidential Music Commission's aim to represent various ethnic groups have influenced Kayamba Africa's reworking of traditional music of different cultures. The findings show that this factor has also affected Kayamba Africa's music arrangements and presentation to their media and live audiences. Their repertoire includes sacred songs, secular cover songs, patriotic and traditional songs. Traditional songs make up the majority of Kayamba Africa's recordings. The study also shows Kayamba Africa's versatility during their performances, singing *a cappella* arrangements of Kenyan 1960s and 70s *zilizopendwa* music, traditional and patriotic songs. They also use backing tracks of their recorded repertoire especially at social and informal events. Kayamba Africa use syncretism to rework traditional songs. Their interpretation of the traditional songs' texts' is of a contemporary ideal. Their music structure is based on syncretism whereby they use digital synthesized sounds for instrumentation and three to four-part harmony maintaining the actual melody and in some cases meter of the traditional song.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.0 Background to the study

Kenyan popular music had its genesis in the time of British occupational rule. By the term popular music, I mean music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that came about as a result of cultural interaction and modernisation and its constituents. The period after the Second World War, and the late 1950s in particular, can be regarded as the most important originary period for Kenyan popular music. This was a time when the emancipation of Kenya's society seemed to have been at hand. Prior to this, Kenyan musics can be conceived of as indigenous and local—music that is known and performed for a small-scale bounded audience (Slobin 1993:18). These musics were regarded as serious cultural and social tools that were used in many ways, not least to distinguish one community from another. After the Second World War (1939-1945), Kenyan ethnic communities experienced more intensely the effects of Western cultures. Christianity and education brought by the missionaries affected the cultural practices, and some of these performances were banned because they were seen as evil and barbaric. This resulted in the abandonment of cultural beliefs and practices by many Western-educated indigenous Africans. After World War II, the war veterans, who had seen battle in places as distant as Burma, returned to Kenya exposed to various popular music styles and Western instruments that were used in international popular music and military bands.<sup>1</sup> This exposure to Western international popular music styles, especially those from Latin America, as well as the incorporation of Western instruments combined with the knowledge and experience of traditional music idioms, culminated in new popular music styles that came to be referred to as *zilizopendwa* (Swahili, 'those that were loved') (Ondieki 2010:21). Among the *zilizopendwa* music styles were: *omutibo*, guitar music that developed in the 1950s in Western Kenya; *twist*, a 1960s popular dance style that was influenced by South African *kwela* music;<sup>2</sup> *benga*, which developed in the late 1960s in the western regions of Kenya among the Luo people (Impey 2000:125); and the 1970s' *rumba*, which developed from the Congolese *rumba* from Zaïre which, in turn, was influenced by Latin American musics (Impey 2000:*ibid.*). These

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<sup>1</sup> The late Fundi Konde, known as one of the great musicians in the Kenyan industry, was posted to Burma during the war where he met European and black American musicians. One of them later gave him a guitar manual (Low 1982:18).

<sup>2</sup> Daudi (Kabaka) based his twist style on the South African kwela beat. In essence, it was a fast "wemoweh" rhythm (Patterson 2002 <<http://www.eastafricanmusic.com/daudi.htm>>, accessed 16 May 2011).

musical styles were adopted and performed for audiences living in urban centres, particularly the capital city, Nairobi.

In the period from the 1950s to 1980s, migration from rural areas to urban centres was a means by which African labour was gathered within the fast-growing metropolitan city of Nairobi. The building of the Kenya-Uganda railway (1896-1901) was one of the factors that enabled this migration (Blades 2000). According to Thornton (1948:10-11), Nairobi started as a railway town as it was made the railway headquarters in 1899. The Maasai name for this town was Enkare Nyirobi ('the place of cool waters'), a place where the Kikuyu, Maasai and Kamba people traded with the Swahili caravans coming from the coast and, later, with those of the Imperial British East African Company (De Lame 2006, Amutabi 2005). With the construction of the railway, the British and Arabs as well as Kenyan labourers, and traders settled there. The British settlers developed Nairobi, proclaiming it the capital of the British East Africa Protectorate in 1905, and later as a municipality in July 1919. As the main administration centre of British East Africa, Nairobi became the commercial nerve-centre of East Africa (Malm & Wallis 1984, 1992). This attracted investment by private companies from Britain and other parts of the world to set up music recording studios and the mass media following the Second World War (Kubik 1981). The first broadcasting station was set up by the British rule. Nairobi became Kenya's capital city after independence in 1963. Currently, Nairobi covers an area of 680 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 3.1 million according to the 2009 census results.<sup>3</sup> The parliament, executive government, Supreme Court and a majority of corporate headquarters, hotels, health and educational institutions and industries are located in the city. The Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which is the main airport in the country, is approximately 15 km from the city centre. Several musicians and music groups from countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Zaïre, and further afield, such as South Africa, Jamaica and Ivory Coast would record in Nairobi's studios (Low 1882, Graham 1989, Malm & Wallis 1992, Ondieki 2010). These factors contributed to making Nairobi the main centre of Kenyan popular music, which prompted me to limit the site of my enquiry to Nairobi.

The Voice of Kenya, popularly known as 'VOK', was the first national broadcaster in Kenya.<sup>4</sup> It is government-owned and has been a tremendous force in the development of Kenyan popular

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<sup>3</sup> This is according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2010) <<http://www.knbs.or.ke/Census%20Results/KNBS%20Brochure.pdf>> accessed 9 February 2012.

<sup>4</sup> The broadcasting station has gone through various name changes, from Kenya Broadcasting Service (KBS) to Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) in 1962 then later to the Voice of Kenya (VOK) in 1964. However, in 1989, VOK reverted to KBC and has maintained this name until today. KBS was established in 1959 by the colonial government and was designed to reach regional areas such as Mombasa, Nyeri and

music. Malm & Wallis (1992:81) claim that VOK relied on gifts from recording companies and distributors to provide phonogram records, which consequently led to the dominance of Euro-American music over Kenyan popular music. Kenyan citizens, in the 1980s, were displeased by this and protested by tuning to other countries' radio stations that played African music. Another response to this was seen during the 1982 coup attempt when Kenyan Air Force personnel took over the running of VOK from the radio disk jockeys and played Swahili pop music, thus promoting Kenyan popular music (Malm & Wallis 1992:93). Around the same time, several new music organizations such as the Kenyan Musicians' Union, Kenya Arts Co-operative Society, and other cooperative and copyright organizations were formed, leading to the Kenya National Music Organizations' Treaty in 1983 (Malm & Wallis 1984:142). This treaty dealt with studio fees, copyright, royalties and other concerns of phonogram producers, musicians and composers, giving the Music Copyright Society the right to collect and distribute copyright dues, which were previously handled by the Performing Rights Society of London during the colonial era (Malm & Wallis 1992).

Kenya's music industry still exists in a state of tension with Euro-American musics within Nairobi's music industry (Malm & Wallis 1984, 1992). On the other hand, the industry is currently going through some changes whereby regional music is more appreciated than in previous decades.<sup>5</sup> This number of television programmes that play popular and traditional Kenyan musics evidences this. Among these programmes are 'Tafrija' on Citizen Television, 'The Beat' on Nation Television, 'Club One' on KBC and 'Straight Up' on the Kenya Television Network (KTN) among other stations with nation-wide coverage. Regionally based radio stations play local music from contemporary African and Euro-American pop musics to Kenyan *zilizopendwa* from the 1950s to the 1980s, depending on their target market. However, these regionally based radio stations (especially those whose target market is the youth, such as Kiss 100 FM, 96.3 Easy FM, Homeboyz Radio and Capital FM among others) play mainstream music. This leaves those styles of music that do not borrow from the current Euro-American pop music trends for the vernacular radio stations and other stations whose listenership consists of a more mature population. These musical styles include: recordings and renditions of traditional musics, *zilizopendwa* and music that is mainly sang in vernacular languages by musicians who are largely based in the country's rural areas. It is mainly in these 'other' musics where various musicians are

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Kisumu. Currently KBC is a national wide and continental broadcasting station. (KBC's official website <<http://www.kbc.co.ke/section.asp?id=113>>, accessed 6 January 2012).

<sup>5</sup> By regional music I mean music performed by Kenyans, that covers a large area and is partly a result of broadcasting and recordings (Slobin 1993:18)

adopting traditional musical concepts and re-inventing them. The idea of borrowing and re-invention is becoming a common phenomenon, especially among Nairobi musicians who aim to develop an identity within Kenyan society and the international market. One musical group that is seen to be re-inventing music is the Nairobi-based Kayamba Africa. This phenomenon prompted me to study the reworking of traditional musics, restricting my area of study to Nairobi with a focus on Kayamba Africa.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Migration from rural to urban areas has brought about new cultural and social tastes. Popular culture is a broad concept covering a terrain that is flexible and ever changing, representing a loose collection of different cultural expressions (Barber 2004:350). Johannes Fabian, (quoted by Okumu 2004:155), regards popular music as a complex of distinctive expressions of life experiences pioneered by the urban masses and eventually accepted by the total population. Fabian adds that popular music is undoubtedly the most conspicuous carrier of popular culture. Popular music in Kenya is growing and changing rapidly, thereby creating more contemporary styles of music based on the people's cultural influences and musical preferences—which were largely influenced by American and other Western styles of music. Akuno (2008:145) sees cultural heritage, which she defines as the rich repertoire of expressions and materials, as forming the basis for contemporary thought, attitude and action. In relation to this, the Ministry of State for National Heritage & Culture and the Ministry of Education jointly came up with the annual cultural and music festivals, whose aim is to promote, preserve and maintain positive and diverse culture for national identity and pride with music and dance as its main media. The Permanent Presidential Music Commission (PPMC) also coordinates and supervises performances of music and dance by public and private organizations and professional groups during national days (Kavyu 1998). In my view, these performances increased exposure to traditional musics<sup>6</sup> in the urban centres and towns, especially Nairobi, which was seen to have abandoned this music.

State interventions such as the PPMC, televising of traditional music performances by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, and the presence of over fifteen vernacular radio stations<sup>7</sup> have led to growth in the music industry in which popular musicians sing in their vernacular languages and sometimes incorporate selected traditional idioms and concepts. Artists such as Ayub Ogada,

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<sup>6</sup> Traditional music is essentially oral in character, and is transmitted from one generation to the next through a process of performance. It involves different types of singing, dancing and instrumental music developed over a course of several centuries (<<http://princetonfestival.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/what-is-traditional-music1.pdf>> accessed September 12, 2012). I however, discuss the definition of traditional music in greater depth in the following chapter.

<sup>7</sup> These stations are owned by private broadcasting companies as well as the government owned KBC.

Makadem, Olith Ratego, Suzanna Owiyo, and Eric Wainaina, among others have become significant names in commercialized Kenyan music that combine international pop music elements with elements of Kenyan traditional music. This kind of music is currently termed Afro-fusion in Kenya, and the musicians who practice it have met with great acclamation from Kenyan youth and have been afforded opportunities to perform on international platforms. Some of these performances are: Ayub Ogada at the WOMAD<sup>8</sup> festival (Saint Austell, 1989, Coliseum, Cornwall), Eric Wainaina at the North Sea Jazz Festival (2006, Cape Town), and Suzanna Owiyo at the 46664 fund-raising concert honouring Nelson Mandela's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday (June 2008, Hyde Park, London), among others. Ayub Ogada has been featured on the soundtracks of international films such as *I Dreamed of Africa* (2000) and *The Constant Gardener* (2005), which are both set in Kenya. Kayamba Africa, the musicians at the centre of this enquiry, use the idea of fusion in similar ways to Afro-fusion. However, their repertoire mostly consists of traditional songs which they arrange for three to four-part harmony. In live performances they sing unaccompanied or with backing tracks.

There has been a discernible development and spread of traditional music from performances integral to village gatherings and occasions, to music and cultural festivals, to contemporary settings where musicians such as Kayamba Africa are paid to perform at weddings, other social events, corporate events, and national holiday celebrations. Observing these developments led me to pose the following set of questions: What motivates these musicians to turn to traditional musics for reworking? What approaches and strategies do the musicians use in this reworking? In what ways do audiences receive this new style of music? Who constitutes the audiences for this music? Is this the sole music these audiences listen to, or is it one in a range of musics? How is this music positioned in the media? In attempting to begin to answer these and other questions, this research will focus on the repertoire of Kayamba Africa with the intention of describing how, and accounting for why these changes have been implemented across social differentials with the focus on the spread and appreciation of Kayamba Africa's music in selected areas in Nairobi.

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<sup>8</sup> WOMAD stands for World of Music, Arts and Dance festival. It begun in 1982 at Stepton Mallet, United Kingdom and has held more than 160 festivals in different parts of the world. (<[womad.org/about/](http://womad.org/about/)> accessed 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012).

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this research will be to:

Track Kayamba Africa's trajectory leading to performing and recording this style of music.

Establish the group's criteria for making their selection of traditional songs.

Identify the sources of the traditional music material.

Describe the group's process of composing, arranging and recording their music.

Establish the means that the group uses to spread their music through broadcasting, distribution of music, the Internet and live performances in Kenya.

Establish the performer's interaction and presentation of their repertoire among audiences through live performances.

Analyze the use of traditional music elements in their repertoire.

## 1.3 Rationale and Significance

In an attempt to develop Kenyan contemporary music maintaining a form of local identity, Kenyan musicians are consciously fusing elements of traditional musics with music styles from other parts of the world. It could be argued that this mode of developing Kenyan popular music can be traced to the post-World War II period. Observing the patterns of change in music and the music industry, Malm & Wallis (1984:270) say that traditional music forms are subject to the demands of stage shows and, in the case of commercialization, through the music's performance in the market. This affects both the music and the musicians who play it. From this observation, I intend to look at the place of Kayamba Africa's new musical style within the Kenyan music industry. In this way I hope to attain an explicit understanding of how contemporary styles of music in Kenya have been and can yet be created. This may help to encourage scholars and musicians to study and develop Kenya's popular musics, and may act as a way of understanding the Kenyan music industry and the dynamics that influence its growth.

The commercial music industry and its concomitant technology have thoroughly penetrated the Kenyan market. In the early 1980s, Kubik (1981) and Malm & Wallis (1984) noted this phenomenon saying that its impact had affected oral tradition, thus causing a threat to traditional cultural heritage. This process continues. In response to this perceived threat, a few local artists and musicians assumed the responsibility to 'revive' the meaning of cultural heritage, in a novel way using developing technologies. For the past decade, Kayamba Africa have been—and remain—so well known that they have remained the preferred entertainers at private and public events, including corporate and state events and weddings in Nairobi. Their repertoire, described

by Nyairo (2005:30), is at once ethnic and laden with traditional practices and modern, bearing markers of influence from many other cultural practices. Akuno says that Kayamba Africa can be called a 'real' Kenyan group because of the representative nature of their repertoire and the performance practices they adapted, which reflect the cultural origin of their songs (2008:152). In view of this, I consider that their popularity and the diversity of their repertoire makes a study of this group and their reception in Nairobi a choice liable to yield an understanding of the ways in which contemporary reworking of traditional musics and its reception in Kenya's capital, and the national hub of broadcasting and the music industry.

It is my hope that this study will elucidate aspects of the music industry for Kenya's budding and established professional musicians from rural and urban centres. Furthermore, I hope that it may contribute to and encourage the study of Kenyan contemporary music and the development of an archive for preservation purposes as well as to show contemporary musical practices' history and development. I hope that by documenting this music, musicians and scholars- especially those based in Kenya- may in due course contribute to further styles of music that will be recognised as uniquely Kenyan, in the way that other African nations, especially in West and Southern Africa, seem to have established.

## **1.4 Chapter Outline**

I have presented this study in the following order:

Chapter One introduces the topic of study. Here I present background information that has led me to this particular interest of research. I state the problem that informs my study, as well as the objective I intend to attain. I also present my rationale for this study in this chapter.

In Chapter Two, I review the academic literature and theories that relate to my study and theoretical framework. In the literature review, I define and engage with the terms traditional and neo-traditional in the context of the invention of traditions, and as used by my reference sources. In the discussion on the theoretical framework, I discuss concepts concerned with the reworking of musics with the term neo-traditional in focus and those factors that have and are affecting popular music in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. I also take up theories that relate to my study.

Chapter Three begins by sketching a history of Kenyan popular music, the Kenya music festival, choral music and the recording industry in Kenya. It proceeds to document and describe the development of Kayamba Africa. Here, I trace the roots of their style of arrangement, singing, representation and choice of repertoire. Finally, I discuss the recordings on their albums in terms of genre, and also the process of selecting and recording their repertoire.

Chapter Four examines the group's performance practices and the ways they present themselves through analysis of their live performances. Two of the three live performances described are

ethnographic descriptions of events I attended during my fieldwork. The third performance is an unreleased DVD recording of a live performance.

Chapter Five explores the reworking of traditional musics through an analysis of song text and musical structure of Kayamba Africa's recordings: 'Omutun', 'Wakarirũ' and 'Ngulũ'. I provide text transcriptions according to the various interpretations I collected and musical transcriptions of sections of the works. I compare Kayamba Africa's style of arrangement of these songs to other previously recorded arrangements. These other arrangements include a traditional song recorded by Hugh Tracey, 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' and Boniface Mganga's choral arrangement of 'Ngulũ'. I compiled these recordings to the CD that accompanied my work.

Chapter Six is a summary of my findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review, Theoretical Framework and Methodology

#### 2.0 Literature Review

##### 2.0.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature reviewed as well as theories from various scholars and areas that I considered relevant to my study. The reviewed literature includes coming up with a definition of traditional music based on scholarly definitions and discourse. The review also discusses the invention of traditions, which leads to the discussion of neo-traditional music.

##### 2.0.2 Definition of Traditional Music

Tradition is an ambiguous, polysemic, and at times controversial term in its definition among scholars (Coplan 1991, Slobin 1993, Agawu, 2003). Other terms such as cultural, folk, indigenous, authentic, especially in ethnology, folklore, and ethnomusicology are used as an alternative to mean tradition (Coplan 1991). Slobin uses James Clifford's concept of "translation terms"<sup>9</sup> and warns that "all such translation terms used in global comparison—words like culture, art, society, peasant, modernity, ethnography, get us some distance and fall apart" (1990:26). Therefore, it is my goal to define traditional music through engaging with other scholarly writings and definitions on tradition for the purposes of my study.

A. L. Kroeber defines tradition as the "internal handing on through time" of culture traits (1948:441). This concept posits an internal process that is shared among people of a similar culture in communication with each other. Handler and Linnekin (1984:273) postulate that tradition refers to an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity. They continue to say that tradition fails when those who use it are unable to detach it from the implications of Western common sense, which presumes that an unchanging core of ideas and customs is always handed down to us from the past. Giddens (1990:37) adds that,

tradition is a means of handling time and space, which inserts any particular activity or experience within the continuity of past, present and future, there in turn being structure by recurrent social practices.

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<sup>9</sup> A translation term is "a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way" (Clifford 1993:12),

These “unchanging core of ideas and customs” and “recurrent social practices” are what Shils (quoted by Handler & Linnekin 1984:273) refers to as the essential elements for tradition, and adds that these elements are recognizable and persist in combination with other elements which change (1981:14). These essential elements, in my view, are the qualities mentioned in E.B. Tylor’s definition of culture.<sup>10</sup> Through the discourse of Nettl (1983) and Merriam (1964) on the concepts of ethnomusicology, music has been said to be culture as well as a part of culture.

With adopting the view of music as a culture and following the definitions of traditions discussed, it can be said that traditional music comprises ‘essential elements’. In addition to these elements being recognizable and ingrained, they are continuous. Merriam (1964:214) asserts that human behaviour produces music, and that the process is one of continuity; the behaviour is shaped to produce music sound, and thus the study of one flows into the other. These qualities given to traditional musics through its essential elements will be used in the analysis of repertoire on which I will focus on and from which I precede methodologically.

I therefore refer to the term traditional music as a medium of representation of a people’s culture, bearing its essential elements of belief, art, law, morals and customs and are handed down interpreted at a given time and space. These interpretations and re-interpretations determined by time and space leads me to discuss the invention of traditions.

### **2.0.3 The Invention of Traditions and Neo-traditional Musics**

Eric Hobsbawm (1983:1) in his introduction to *Inventing Traditions* says that

‘[t]raditions’ which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented... The term ‘invented tradition’ is used in a broad, but not imprecise sense. It includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period—a matter of a few years perhaps—and establishing themselves with great rapidity... ‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.

This concept of invented traditions displays the dynamic nature of society. In the case of musical traditions, with a focus on Africa, inventions and re-inventions are prone to occur because of the

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<sup>10</sup> Culture is the belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capacities or habits acquired by man as a member of society, E.B Tylor’s (1871:1) quoted by Nettl (1983:132).

strong presence of oral/aural method of transmission. In spite of this, the essential musical elements remain present and are what give it its identity. These inventions lead me to include the term 'neo-traditional' to my study.

According to Agawu (2003:123) neo-traditional can be used to symbolize a self-conscious renewal of tradition and not just invented tradition. It can thus be said that neo-traditional music is a conscious reworking of traditional musics. Similar to the invention of tradition, factors such as urbanization, globalisation, technology and the mass media play a major role in the development of neo-traditional musics. Blacking (1995:27) says that the conceptual differences between folk music and other musics have receded in the past few decades, especially since the rise of mass media. In modern technological societies, the trichotomy between folk, popular, and art music easily becomes somewhat blurred. This came about as the result of rural to urban migration and communication, as Coplan (1991:38) asserts:

[r]ural cultural practices depend for their survival, evolution, and functionality on the feedback from the cities, and in certain areas and during specific historical periods are even inseparably enmeshed with urban culture. Conversely, the city is more than a fixed social matrix to which individuals almost passively adjust... As the material and social conditions under which traditional musical genres or styles arose and crystallized change, so of course must this music and its meaning change for its creators.

This can be seen in how Kenyan migrant workers, who had both rural and urban homes, played a major role in the rapid spread of new musical forms between the urban centres and the countryside (Kavyu 1998, Amutabi 2005). Kavyu (626) describes that the marriage between the tonal organization of traditional music with that of churches and schools and the use of foreign traditional instruments developed new musics and the compositional themes, came from issues such as landholding, reduction of livestock, and the freedom of movement to urban centres. These new musics can be referred to as neo-traditional on the basis that they are inventions or a reworking of traditional music and still contain elements of traditional music. In my observation, neo-traditional musics in Kenya were common in the 1950s -1960s popular musics and current musicians seem to be reviving this concept. In fact, the group Kayamba Africa refers to their music as neo-traditional.

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study is the contemporary reworking of traditional music with focus on Kayamba Africa's repertoire. The focus is thus on the processes that have led to the development of this way of music creation.

Okumu (2004:160) states that the notion that Africans should revert or stick to their "cultural traditions" presupposes the assumption that culture is static, an argument that has long since been proved futile. African music while being traditional in practise and interrelating with the forces of dynamism, cannot escape the process of change. Two of the great dynamic forces in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have been globalization and the development of information and communications technology.

Globalization can be described as the process by which regional and international societies; economies and cultures integrate through a global network through communication and trade. Burnett (2001:27) discusses the term global in relation to music as

... imagined in terms of a series of very particular criteria, judgements that clearly depend upon a very particular experience of and perception of the world. These criteria become focussed on the assessment of music as international repertoire, a category which has gained increasing currency and usage in the organizational discourses of the recording industry since the middle of the 1980s. It is a term used regularly by personnel within the music business, reported in trade reports and corporate publications and frequently found employed in record stores in non-English speaking countries.

This globalization process has been greatly enabled and speeded up by the reach and use of the Internet, to which commercial enterprises have responded in inventive ways.

This 'assessment of music as international repertoire' has brought about ambiguity in the 'labelling' of genres in the global market. The genre known, as 'world music' is a common example and product of music branding where genres from non-English speaking countries are bracketed. Not only has this affected the musical image of genres in Africa from a global perspective but has affected how certain African countries view their own music. In the case of Kenya, the term *Afro-fusion* came as a need to market Kenyan music that contains fusion, thus causing difficulty in terms of identity. However, this ambiguity of genres is a result of interaction of different cultures through continental migration (during the Second World War), globalization, colonisation, post-colonisation and neo-colonisation, capitalism.

This process of cultural interaction developed and affected African music through different patterns; cultural dominance, cultural exchange and cultural imperialism (Wallis & Malm 1984).

Cultural exchange, where two or more cultures and sub-cultures interact and exchange features on equal terms, was the common form of music interaction between Kenya, Congo, Southern Africa and the East African community at large (Wallis & Malm *ibid.*). This is where styles such as *twist*, *rumba* and *benga* developed. However, with the effects of post-colonization such as urbanization and industrialization at play, the Kenyan economy and music culture experienced cultural imperialism, which was augmented by the transfer of money and resources from developed countries. This encouraged globalization with introduction of the phonogram, radio, satellite television and most recently the Internet, which has affected the music industry and has threatened the place of traditional music, in my view. Communication between European, American and Caribbean culture has caused modernisation of cultural traditions in Kenyan popular music. Musicians in Kenya have adopted styles such as hip-hop, reggae, dancehall, jazz, and soul among others, though sung in KiSwahili and in some cases in vernacular. An example of this are various artists in the 1990s, namely, Hardstone, Ndarlin' P, Gidigidi Majimaji, Poxi Presha, Zanaziki among others. This was due to the exposure of music, through cassettes and music programmes from other African countries, such as URTNA<sup>11</sup>, who have developed neo-traditional styles such as *Mbalax*, *Highlife*, *Afro-beat*, *Maskanda*, *Kwaito* and *Chimurenga* among others. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> moving to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kenyan musicians continue to fuse Euro-American music and local cultural heritage categorizing them by adding the word *Afro* to the contemporary Western genre, for instance Afro-pop, Afro-jazz, Afro-soul among others. With the aim of getting their music into the international and local markets, musicians now consider their global image i.e. the representation of their music through branding and marketing for the global market. This global market is defined by mediatisation.

Wallis & Malm (1984:280) define mediatisation as the adaptation of music forms to the constraints of entertainment media, phonogram technology and phonogram markets. Gebesmair & Smudits (2001:55) postulate that the technologies of recording and distribution greatly influence the procedure and rules of how music is made and conceptualized, how music-making can be learned or taught, and how it can be listened to. The entertainment media has affected the way in which music and music videos are packaged and marketed (Ssewakiryanga 2004, Wallis & Malm 1984, Lunberg, Malm & Ronstrom 2003). This in turn affects the audience's perception of the musician at times even before watching a live performance. This dissemination is a common characteristic of contemporary music therefore the musician and producer are expected to be keen in order to market their music to their audience accordingly (Okumu 2004). It can thus be concluded that

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<sup>11</sup> Acronym for the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa.

mediatization portrays an element of ‘persistence and assimilation’<sup>12</sup> by the use of technology such as the radio and television where a song or music video can be repeatedly played and can eventually be seen to have caused an effect in the cultural element of a person or community.

Consequently, musicians over the past decade are back to performing live music. The public address (PA) system has made this possible as it helps to amplify the sound in the case of large auditoriums. This form of technology also has its effect on how traditional music is represented. Musicians turn to traditional music for rhythmic or melodic inspiration, popularizing it through their own treatment with electric instruments and amplification (Wallis & Malm *ibid.*). Currently, some Kenyan musicians such as Ayub Ogada, Suzanna Owiyo among others have adapted traditional instruments such as the *nyatiti* and *orutu* respectively,<sup>13</sup> to electronic technology by adding a microphone and connecting it to an amplifier. As much as this technology may seem helpful to the performer, it may compromise the authenticity of the performance. Wallis & Malm (1984:273) explain that groups that prefer to use microphones leave the responsibility of tonal impression to the engineer who mixes the sound. This may or may not work to the musicians’ favour and consequently affect the audience’s response to their ‘sound’. Kayamba Africa, a vocal group, uses the microphone as their source of amplification. This causes me to observe the significance of the PA system in their live performances as well as their deliverance of repertoire to audiences at different events through this medium as well through their use of backing tracks. This presentation of the music is what leads me to find out the place of Kayamba Africa’s music in the contemporary popular world through live performances and recorded material to their audiences.

In the view of musical analysis and understanding Kayamba Africa’s development of neo-traditional style, there are challenges that the composer may face in the reworking of traditional musics. Nketia (2005:342) discusses these using three different creative perspectives: the perspective of originality, authenticity or normative stability and that of identity. Nketia (*ibid*) explains that,

These perspectives have in turn led to the development of three sets of compositional techniques for creating contemporary idioms but out of traditional music, techniques that may, for

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<sup>12</sup> Kazadi wa Mukuna (2000:180) postulates that the continuity of a cultural element [in this case, music] is an assertion of its persistence and assimilation.

<sup>13</sup> *Nyatiti* is an eight-string lyre and the *orutu*, a one-string fiddle, both played by the Luo people of Kenya.

convenience of reference be designated as: Reversal Techniques, Syncretic Techniques and Techniques of Re-interpretation.

The syncretic and re-interpretation techniques will be used to explain the concept of neo-traditional music (Kubik 1981, Martin 1991, Stone 2000). These will be used to realize and raise questions on the process and approach that Kayamba Africa use in composing music and reworking of traditional musics. The theory of syncretic techniques as defined by Nketia (2005:347) involves the going to traditional music or music in oral or partly oral tradition for creative ideas, sources of sound, theme and procedures that may be used for expanding ones modes of expression. Syncretism according to Merriam (1964:314) is the process through which elements of two or more cultures are blended together; this involves changes of value and of form. Nketia (*ibid.*:351) adds that syncretism has meant the combination of African melodic and rhythmic techniques with adaptations of Western tonal harmony. Akuno (2008:154) postulates that the current art and popular music scenes in Kenya are marked by music that merges the familiar with new information.

On the other hand, the theory of re-interpretation according to Nketia (*ibid.*:356) enables the composer to stay within his culture and give contemporary relevance to its musical tradition. He adds that this is achieved by working on fresh integrations of musical elements, usages and forms within the culture that belongs to a previous and abandoned era.

Kubik (1981:87) in his study of neo-traditional music's influence on traditional music in East Africa says,

Many of the East African musical forms which are regarded today as traditional, show some influence of the diatonic scale, imported with church and school music, as well as that of the three- and four-voice part writing of nineteenth-century hymns and church songs. These influences were processed largely on the basis of local ideas. Similarly the popular neo-traditional dance music led to the rise of local adaptations played with traditional instruments. The musician Fabiano from northern Uganda (Phonogram Archive, Vienna, recorded by Kubik in 1961), for example, shows us a 'guitar style' on the *lukeme* lamellophone; and among the Wasangu of south-west Tanzania I found in 1976 that the traditional gourd-resonated bow (*ndonga*) was being used as an instrument which in the imagination of the musicians re-presented an electric bass guitar (Kubik 1978:100).

In the above illustration, the relationship and disparity between syncretism and re-interpretation are shown. In the first process, the musician initially adapts traditional music idioms from the *lukeme* onto the Western instrument (guitar), which may affect the form of the music, resulting in a syncretistic form. The second process is where the syncretic music is re-interpreted to the

musician's traditional instrument. This shows the interaction between syncretism and re-interpretation. It can therefore be deduced that neo-traditional music is a product of the interplay between syncretism and re-interpretation of traditional and contemporary cultures and its influences.

In my focus of interpretation of songs through song texts, I use Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Holquist who discusses Bakhtin's theory (1990:38) describes dialogue as

...a manifold phenomenon, but for schematic purposes it can be reduced to a minimum of 3 elements... a dialogue is composed of an utterance, a reply, and a relation between the two. It is the relation that is most important of the three, for without it the other two would have no meaning.

The relation is what I term as the interpretation of a song once between the musician and or composer and the audience or performers. In Macovski's (1997:6) view of dialogue through literature postulates that "the concept of dialogue encompasses not only direct vocal interchange but relations between the discrete voices of physically distant speakers". These 'distant speakers' in the case of song text may be viewed as the people who interact and relate with the text at its "point of origin or at any subsequent period" (McGann 1985). These relations or interpretations vary "in time and in space" (Bakhtin 2008). It is thus significant for me to look at the different interpretations and re-interpretations of song texts in Kayamba Africa's reworking of songs in performances and recordings through dialogism. Nyairo (2005:29) expresses Bakhtin's theory in popular music text as a "pluralistic discourse that communicates through the varied voices of the poet, the vocalist, the instrumentalist, and the sound engineer amongst others".

## **2.2 Research Methodology**

This section addresses the methodology used in this study. Here, I describe my research design, population and sampling, data collection and data processing and analysis.

### **2.2.1 Research Design**

I carried out an ethnographic design whereby my deductions were made through interpretation of the research data collected (Miller & Miller 2010). The approach I use is qualitative in nature.<sup>14</sup> My inquiries are based on: the multiple meanings of my own experiences, the musicians' experiences, the social meaning of the music to various audiences, the historical construction of

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<sup>14</sup> The qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding where the researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Ivankova, Creswell & Clark 2008:257).

the musicians and their repertoire, with intention of developing a theory. I used direct observation of the natural events in the field (Salkind 2010:884) and have described some of the data through text and music transcriptions and analyses. My research design lays an emphasis on reflexivity, which involves my critical self-awareness; hence, the deductions and conclusions made will represent one vantage point among many possible perspectives (Miller & Miller 2010:290).

### **2.2.2 Choice of Kayamba Africa**

My study will focus on Kayamba Africa's reworked traditional songs. I selected this group for the reasons that they are based in Nairobi, their music is seen to be well known in most parts of Kenya and their repertoire is adequate for me to make deductions regarding the contemporary reworking of traditional musics. I have studied their repertoire in various ways, taking into account the ethnic community from which they draw their traditional songs and their popularity, in terms of listenership, of a song among an audience. I selected music for analysis originating from a range of ethnic communities so as to represent the group's extensive repertoire and explore the musicians' disparity or consistency in creativity through each song (Marshall 1996).

### **2.2.3 Data Collection**

I used two short, intense periods of participant observation to gather data to enable a description of the interaction between Kayamba Africa's live performances. I conducted interviews in a semi-structured form whereby, I asked open-ended questions making it flexible for the musicians and audience members to give as much information as possible. I took detailed field notes from which certain observations and reflections were made that are included for the purpose of better description (Barz 1997). The data was collected in random order at first, sorted out later and arranged according to relevant themes.

To gather first-hand information, I used a still camera, video camera and a tape recorder during the live performances, and interviews respectively for purposes of transcription and analysis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Situating Kayamba Africa and Their Recordings

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to trace Kayamba Africa's development as a music group in the context of the history of Kenyan popular music. I achieve this by reflecting on Kenya's music festivals and socio-political history and their impact on choral music and consequently, Kayamba Africa's repertoire. I investigate the details of the sources and treatment of their repertoire, their activities as recording artists and as live musicians performing in a range of contexts.

#### 3.1 History of Kenyan popular music

Early forms of dance music namely, *beni ngoma* and *dansi* (Ranger 1975) existed as a result of interaction with European culture. This dates as far back as the late 1890 in Mombasa; however, the history of Kenyan popular music is accounted to have begun in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is because the first recordings in Kenya were made in 1902, shortly after the British colonial rule.<sup>15</sup> The market potential for African music was soon recognized, and by 1928 musicians would be sent to Bombay in India to record for the Indian Branch of the British HMV label. The first genre of music recorded was *taarab* (Impey 1994:124). Ian Eargleson (2002:213) explains the causes of growth in the Kenyan music industry from pre-colonial to post-colonial period;

...the radical shift that the Second world war had brought in terms of development of the mass media, electronic technology, the exposure of Kenyans to international strains of music during the war, and the general environment of increased investment on the part of European entrepreneurs in Kenya's music industry encouraged the emergence of new forms of song, new kinds of musical professionalism, and a new sense of a consuming public.

Among the new styles of music was *omutibo*, which was popular in the late 1950s and was played originally on one guitar accompanied by a bottle (particularly the ridged Fanta soda bottle) tapped with a stick (Tenaille 2002:255). *Omutibo* was acoustic in nature and was an imitation of Luhya traditional music, particularly the *litungu*, a seven stringed lyre. However, the electric guitar made its appearance around the same time and several musicians including Paul Mwachupa and Gabriel Omolo credit Fundi Konde and Fadhili William as the first Kenyans to use the electric guitar (Okumu 1998). This new guitar sound is what led to the style known as *rumba*, which Fadhili Williams—famously known for commercializing the song 'Malaika'—is claimed to be the

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<sup>15</sup> The first recording of African music is credited to the German Carl Meinhof in 1902 (Okumu 2000:146). British colonial rule in Kenya began in 1885, after the Berlin conference.

pioneer of. According to Ondieki (2010:25), around the same time, music boxes 'juke boxes' appeared in African bars in areas such as Pumwani, Bahati, Jerusalem and along River Road. This further catapulted popular music especially for those who could not afford gramophones and records for home entertainment. By 1958, about five music boxes had been installed and the figure rose to thirty-six scattered all over Nairobi (Harrev 1991, Ondieki 2010). In the 1960s, the acoustic-guitar styles i.e. *rumba* and *omutibo* began to lose ground to more complex electric-guitar music which incorporated newly introduced genres, like the South African *kwela* and Congo-Zaire *rumba* (Stone 2000:12). This style was called *twist*, which was popularly linked to Daudi Kabaka who adapted the word form listening to Chubby Checker's 'Twist Again' in 1961 (Patterson 2002). The 1970s was the period of transition in Kenya's music industry. Electric instruments had become widespread; the multi-channel recording equipment was generally available at lower prices, the sound cassette penetrated and was spread world-wide (Malm & Wallis 1984) and radio transistors became fairly available (Ondieki 2010). Consequently, rural electrification began; jukebox and disco music became a part of rural entertainment and the population was gradually changing from traditionally based to technologically based entertainment (Kavyu 1998:628).

Towards the end of the 1960s, a genre known as *benga* emerged. *Benga* can be seen as an example of Kenyan neo-traditional music as it is an invention of traditional music and contains certain traditional elements in it. *Wipo Magazine* (July 2007)<sup>16</sup> describes the genre as

.... a crossover of traditional rhythms and instruments, such as the *nyatiti* lyre, the *orutu* single stringed fiddle, the *ohangla* drums, and modern dance. *Benga* became so popular that ethnic groups from six out of Kenya's eight provinces have adapted it to their own style and flavour, while retaining the pulsing beat, high energy bass, interlocking guitar riffs and recurrent voice solos which characterize the *benga* genre. The complex rhythms include indigenous and imported rhythms, notably the Congolese beat. The Shirati jazz band, formed in 1967, was one of the first *benga* bands to make a major breakthrough. Others were George Ramogi, Victoria Jazz Band, DK and Joseph Kamaru, who received international exposure in the 70's.

Besides neo-traditional music, artists in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century, due to globalization and development of communication especially through the internet, are now adapting Euro- American

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<sup>16</sup> Wipo Magazine <[http://www.wipo.int/wipo\\_magazine/en/2007/04/article\\_0001.html](http://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2007/04/article_0001.html)>, accessed 19 April 2011.

styles of music and performing them in their ethnic language. Gidigidi Majimaji, Poxi Presha, Ndarling P and Hardstone are mentioned as the pioneers of this phenomenon in the 1990s especially in the hip-hop genre of music. Along with this trend is a new generation of talented artists setting the pace with the so called Afro-fusion style, a blend of traditional ethnic sounds fused with various musical influences from within and outside Africa. Others are creating new electric sounds while singing in English, Swahili and vernacular (artists such as Just-A-Band, Rock of Ages, Muthoni) and others who are reworking traditional musics.

In conclusion, Kenyan popular music has developed as neo-traditional styles of music that have been invented to produce other forms of ‘traditional-popular’ (Agawu 2003) music. Therefore, Kayamba Africa’s style is not unique to this trend.

### **3.1.1 The recording and broadcasting industries and music organizations in Nairobi**

The growth and development of popular music has been closely associated with both the recording and broadcasting industries. Musicians like Gabriel Omolo say that the idea of recording a song to be heard over the airwaves greatly influenced and motivated them to produce records (Okumu 1998). Harrev (1991) quoted by Okumu (2000:146) asserts that two British citizens: Guy Johnson and Eric Blackhart established the first recording studio in Kenya in 1947. Later on, companies such as Jambo, EMI, AIT, Polygram, CBS, Andrew Crawford (which were all European) set up shop in Nairobi around the early 1960s (Wolfgang 1991, Collins 1992, Osusa, Kelemba & Muhoro 2008). In the late 1960s, these European recording studios received competition from Indians who owned a large part of the recording industry, which included record selling shops and recording studios such as; Assanands and Melodica which were based in Nairobi CBD area and A.P. Chandarana’s studio based in Kericho (Osusa, Kelemba & Muhoro *ibid.*:6). Artists such as Ochieng’ Kabaselleh and D.O. Misiani—great *benga* musicians—were recorded in these studios. In the mid-1970s, EMI and CBS attracted artists from Zaire (Osusa, Kelemba & Muhoro 2008:7). By the 1980s, most European companies closed shop and more recording studios that were owned by indigenous Kenyan producers such as David Amunga, Oluoch Kanindo (talent scouts for EMI and AIT respectively) and Joseph Kamaru along River Road in down town Nairobi were recognized. These studios have now acquired the name “Riverwood” (Osusa, Kelemba & Muhoro 2008, Wa Mungai 2008) and still thrive with musicians from different parts of the country still recording here.

According to Malm & Wallis (1992:77) the music and media industries in East Africa are centred in Kenya. They have attracted investments from the international music industry due to their

market-economy policies. UNESCO,<sup>17</sup> a global organisation, has been consistently active in developing the media in Kenya on a more local level. Major media houses, both state and privately owned, are based in the country's capital, Nairobi. The first being the government owned VOK, now known as the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). Established in 1959 it broadcasts on both television and radio. The liberalisation of the media in 1990s saw The Standard Group and Nation Media Group, which specialised in newspapers, move into broadcasting as Royal Media Services was launched. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the media industry has developed tremendously with Nairobi having 46 radio stations in English, KiSwahili and vernacular languages (Kimutai 2011). Electrification of the rural areas continues apace, and the introduction of solar power in rural areas has provided impetus for localization. Televisions, radios, VCRs, DVDs and CD players are relatively cheap and available in the market allowing the media to reach a wide scope of the country as Malm & Wallis noted in 1992. On the other hand, the changes in the delivery of sound and video files via the Internet and social media stand as threats to the CD and DVD formats in Kenya.

These developments, especially with the media's penetration in rural areas, have influenced people's form of expression as they are exposed to international and local music. In the case of local artists, their music is able to reach Kenyans and connect with them thus promoting social cohesion and depending on the genre and message, build cultural solidarity. The presence of vernacular radio stations especially by privately owned media houses has taken precedence over the government media force, KBC, especially after the 2002 general election where President Daniel Arap Moi<sup>18</sup> ceased power. This promotes more Kenyan musical talent and allows for musical interaction between the city and the rural homes to produce new forms music.

Kayamba Africa reach audiences through visual broadcasting (through music videos and television wedding shows), print (via newspaper and magazine articles and reviews), radio and album sales. Besides these, they have included other forms of representation to increase their marketability. They have an official website and are also reachable through social networks, music blogs. These Internet sites, audiences are able to listen and buy their music (through iTunes<sup>®</sup> and Amazon among others) and watch the group's music videos through YouTube. The audience through their website can book the group for an event. Kayamba Africa also market themselves through word of mouth and business cards.

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<sup>17</sup> This is an acronym for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

<sup>18</sup> Kenya's second president who ruled the country for 24 years.

### 3.2 History of Kenyan Choral Music and the Music Festival

The Kenya Music Festival was started in 1926 in Nairobi.<sup>19</sup> Akuno (2007:13) states that the festival is “proudly presented as the one institution that survived two great wars; World War II (1939-1945) and the Mau Mau revolt (1952-1963)”. The music festival was initially created for the benefit of European students and was an adjunct of the British Festival,<sup>20</sup> but by 1952, it had incorporated Africans and African music Kidula (1996:65-6). There were three major festivals held each year in Lake Victoria region, Nairobi and at the coast whose programme consisted the European set piece and the African folksong (Hyslop 1955:53). With the incorporation of African folksongs, Hyslop (1955) prescribed a performance limit and criteria of what would be considered a folksong. He also advocated for the training of choirmasters in preparation for the festival in order to raise performance standards. They were taught to sing correctly, train choirs, and to conduct (Hyslop 1958). Kidula (1996:68) adds that they were taught Western music history and Western music appreciation and were shown films on the instruments of the orchestra, voice of a choir, and music in Europe or America. Hyslop (1958:38) explains that in 1958, during an Annual Choirmasters Course in Nyanza Province, it was suggested that choirmasters sit for the theory examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in Britain, of which many excelled. This acted as an incentive for more choirmasters to engage with the music training and simultaneously increased the number of singing festivals to other parts of the country such as the Taita Hills and Embu.

This musical training opened new avenues of developing Kenyan folksongs. Musungu (2010:3) describes in an interview with Anami on February 2006.<sup>21</sup>

The practice of adapting folk songs in Kenya for notation started early in 1960 when selected Kenyan/foreign musicians delved into folk song arrangements. The art composers comprised of the late Kibukosya (1926-1986) and Hyslop (1910-1977) who used folk songs as compositional themes. This practice intensified in the seventies and other composers like Kemoli (1945), and the late Zalo (1940-2007) contributed to the composition/arrangement phenomenon. They wanted to

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<sup>19</sup> The Kenya Music Festival was initially referred to as The Annual Colony Music Festival.

<sup>20</sup> The British Festival took place in the British summer which happens to be Kenya’s coldest month. This permitted the participants to go back to Britain for the summer holidays after the festival and to allow adjudicators to come to Kenya at a convenient time (Kidula 1996:66).

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Silverse Anami was the former director of culture in the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in Kenya (Musungu 2010 :218).

develop folk tunes to the standard of the Western music pieces that were being used as set pieces for the music festival.

Kemoli and Zalo's work has developed into a whole class of music that employs the adaptation and arrangement of folksongs and African pop music. This kind of music is now among the most popular with music festival audiences. Masasabi (*ibid.*:10) argues that the most outstanding musical form that is exhibited in the adaptation and arrangement of African songs is theme and variation. He explains that the melody is stated and varied using a number of compositional techniques, including tempo changes, key changes, augmentation, inversions, sequences and counterpoint. Akuno (2007:14), however, sees other qualities in this type of arrangement such as a dominant use of Western classical four-part harmony, the influence of Bach's chorales and 18<sup>th</sup> century homophonic textures, and call-and-response form. These arrangements were not always a success, especially for composers who would overlook the idiomatic features of the folksong. The Kenya Music Festival limited these arrangements and adaptations to a maximum of four minutes thus making it a challenging form, and one that has produced much competition among composers and choirs (Masasabi 2007).

Other greatly significant choirmasters and composers who have featured in the music festivals include: Prof. George Senoga-Zake, Darius Mbela, Thomas Wasonga, Prof. Washington Omondi, Peter Kibukosya, George Dinda, Khadambi Richard, Boniface Mganga, Sam Ochieng' MakOkeyo, Timona Makobi, Sammy Otieno, Wilson Shitandi and Sylvester Otieno among others. The compositions and arrangements of most of these composers played an integral part in the social and political cohesion and nationalism in Kenya particularly in President Moi's era.

After independence in 1963, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, encouraged the performances of traditional music at state functions (Mindoti & Agak 2004:158). According to a woman I interviewed who participated in one of these functions as a primary school student; the performers of this music were students from primary school, high school, university, as well as traditional singers and dancers who were gathered from their homes to perform (Jane interview<sup>22</sup> 2012). It is also in this year that the country's popular reworked folksong National Anthem was performed. The Kenyan National Anthem was an adaptation and arrangement of a lullaby of the Pokomo people. This was made possible by Graham Hyslop, Prof. Washington Omondi, Thomas

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<sup>22</sup> Jane is a 40-year-old lady whom I interviewed during the Simba Colt end-of-year fun day, on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2012, where Kayamba Africa performed. She identified herself thus, and didn't encourage the use of her full name, which I respect.

Kalume, Peter Kibukosya and George Senoga-Zake (Senoga-Zake 2000:214-215, Ngaira 2011 <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201107130380.html>>, accessed 26 May 2012).

When President Daniel Arap Moi took over leadership of the country in August 1978<sup>23</sup> following the death of Mzee Kenyatta, there was a remarkable rise in choral music. Kavyu (1995:x) reports:

private organisations and individuals made use of choirs not only to consolidate friendly working relations among the workers and employers but to enhance productivity. In addition, this provided a forum for entertainment, and promoted the feeling of nationhood and patriotism among Kenyans.

The Permanent Presidential Music Commission (PPMC)<sup>24</sup> officials together with Mr. Wasonga, the Officer in-charge of Presidential Music Entertainment, had to vet songs and dances to be presented. This influenced composers and choirs, as they had to conform to the requirements in order to be selected for state garden party performances. Patriotic song compositions had to incorporate song texts that conveyed the Nyayo Philosophy (Mindoti & Agak 2004:160).<sup>25</sup> Beautifully created pieces such as ‘Fimbo ya Nyayo’ by Dr. Arthur Kemoli, ‘Tawala Kenya Tawala’ by Thomas Wasonga amongst several others, combined the notion of nationalism with Moi as the leading patriot (Mbogo 2008 <<http://artmatters.info/?p=950>>, accessed 26 May 2012). The most famous choirs during President Moi’s era were the Muungano National Choir (where Kayamba Africa began), Prisons Staff Training Choir, Kenyatta University College Choir<sup>26</sup> and the students’ mass choir.

Mindoti & Agak typify the entertainment in all the functions presided over by President Moi as consisting of folk-songs, traditional cultural dances, newly composed pieces or adaptations and

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<sup>23</sup> He took over at this time as the interim president and was later elected and inaugurated in October 1978.

<sup>24</sup> PPMC was started in 1988 by the then President, Moi. Its function was to oversee the implementation of recommendations that were made by the National Music Commission in 1982 on the preservation and development of the country’s music and dance traditions (Presidential Permanent Music Commission 1995:ix).

<sup>25</sup> ‘Nyayo’ (KiSwahili n.pl., footsteps). The Nyayo Philosophy reflected President Moi’s promise to follow in the footsteps of the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta; its pillars are peace, love and unity, which were emphasized by Mzee Kenyatta (Ngaroga 2006:10).

<sup>26</sup> Kenyatta University College is now known as Kenyatta University.

arrangements of ‘old tunes’ [traditional songs] that represented ‘the 42 different cultures of Kenya’.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2.1 Muungano National Choir

The state funeral, for Mzee Jomo Kenyatta in August 1978 had a mass choir of about 1,250 male and female singers drawn from Christian church choirs (Barth 2011:4). This mass choir was first given the name Nairobi Quarter Mass Choir and had President Moi as its patron. The Nairobi Quarter Mass Choir continued to perform, though the number of choir members was trimmed over time to 450 and later to 250 singers. In 1979, the late Boniface Mganga was given the role of choir director and the name was changed to Muungano Choir. Muungano is a Swahili noun that can be translated as ‘union’. The patron, President Moi, then added ‘National’ to the choir’s name (Barth *ibid.*:4). Thus it became the Muungano National Choir. A majority of the members of this choir belonged to church choirs such as Our Lady of Visitation Catholic Church, St. Stephen’s ACK, Makadara Friends and St. Barnabas Catholic Choir.<sup>28</sup> Later, additional members from other religious denominations joined.

Muungano choir marked growth in composition and arrangements of secular, *zilizopendwa*, patriotic and sacred (Christian) music as well as arrangements and adaptations of folk songs (Kavyu 1995, Barth 2011). Most of the choral music was sung in KiSwahili, the country’s national language.<sup>29</sup>

Boniface Mganga, the choirmaster, composer and arranger, had a great passion for music that displayed Kenya’s diverse ethnicities and cultural folklore.<sup>30</sup> Muungano National Choir’s music was predominantly arranged for *a cappella* singing with light rhythmic accompaniment on a

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<sup>27</sup> The issue on the number of cultural communities in Kenya has brought much debate over the years, however the Kenya government recognizes 42 ethnic tribes (Report 114, <[http://www.chr.up.ac.za/chr\\_old/indigenous/country\\_reports/Country\\_reports\\_Kenya.pdf](http://www.chr.up.ac.za/chr_old/indigenous/country_reports/Country_reports_Kenya.pdf)>, Corrie <<http://www.pantribalconfederacy.com/confederacy/News/pdf/ogiek.pdf>>, accessed 1 February 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Ondieki reports that the Catholic choirs legitimized the use of African idioms in 1964 (2010:12). It can thus be assumed that these choirs were singing in a similar style as *makwaya*.

<sup>29</sup> See Harrie’s (1976) article, “The nationalization of Swahili in Kenya” and Wendo Nabea (2009) on a detailed history of the negotiation between English and KiSwahili in Kenya.

<sup>30</sup> Barth (2011:6) says “... [his] common hunting ground for these [folk] songs was the annual Kenya National Music Festivals... He would identify a song, polish its rough edges, spice it up and give it his signature flavour of fine, [and] often complex arrangement”.

drum, *kayamba*, triangle and wooden castanets (Barth 2011:6).<sup>31</sup> The choir's arrangements and repertoire had an impact on Kayamba Africa's musical style and their music shares some similarities. Kayamba Africa's music is mainly arranged for *a cappella* singing and its repertoire includes songs that were sung by the choir. These include songs such as 'Ngulo', 'Sikuta' from the album *Mateso* (2001:11,13), 'Mang'ondo Dora' in *Heko Jamuhuri* (2010:10), and 'Amalwa' in *Muungano Choir in Israel* (2010:3), which are arrangements of folk, secular and sacred songs by Boniface Mganga.

### 3.3 Kayamba Africa

Kayamba Africa was formed in 1998 by Juma Odemba (baritone, lead vocals and music director), Moses Ekirapa (tenor), Simon Ngigi (tenor) Peter Ngeru (alto, bass and former manager), Antony Ondeng' (bass) and Patrick Ondondo (bass), Walter Ominde and John Nduati. Their music careers began as members of their respective church choirs and the Muungano National Choir from which they later branched off to form an *a cappella* group Kayamba Africa (Mutua 1998, Nyaga 2002, Waithaka 2007). Kayamba Africa began its journey by taking part in the Malibu Star Search Competition, held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1998, in which they emerged first in the music category, and as the overall runner-up.

According to Mutua (1998:20) the group performed three folk songs: a Luhya wedding song, 'Makhwidubuli'; a Kikuyu song, 'Mbura'; and a Luo spiritual, 'Wuon Osimbo' all with the help of backing tracks. Mutua (*ibid.*) quotes Peter Ngeru: "...our group was the only one that made the judges put their pens down and come to the dance floor". Peter recalls that the group's sole idea then, was to promote folk music with a modern touch. Their success at the competition got them a recording contract with Samawati Productions and resulted in their 2002 debut album, *Kayamba Africa*. This recording company is now known as Sub-Sahara and is famous for its great impact on popular music in the 1990s. This album was a great success as the group was nominated in the internationally broadcast, pan-African Kora Awards for the song 'Kitikiti' in the Traditional Art in Africa category in 2002 and earned them national prominence, with appearances on prominent television stations, magazines and newspapers (Nyanga 2002, *Ndege News* 2010). Nyairo (2005:35) explains that

Kayamba see themselves as working in the vein of the celebrated West African artiste, Fela Kuti, to generate "Afro-traditional" music and popularise it both locally and abroad in the wake of the

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<sup>31</sup> See Masolo's mention of the adoption of traditional instruments in Kenyan churches (2000:351-352).

many competing influences that have been thrust to the fore by the technological advancements of our time.

A *kayamba* is a reed rattle<sup>32</sup> that owes its origin to the Mijikenda people of Kenya.<sup>33</sup> In an interview with Nyanga (2002:6), Juma Odemba says, “The name [Kayamba] stands for a traditional musical instrument that is used by most ethnic groups in Kenya —thus the specialisation on modernising traditional Kenyan music by fusing it with various instruments”.

According to Juma, the group’s main inspiration is the South African group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, who are known for their unique *isicathamiya* style (Juma interview 2011). There are certain similarities that the two groups seem to share. Juma Odemba is seen as the face of Kayamba Africa as he is one of the initiators of the group and so is Joseph Shabalala in Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Another similarity between the two groups is their style of costuming. Kayamba Africa wear Africa print shirts with black pants and shoes while Ladysmith Black Mambazo wear the same but with white sneakers. This is also seen as a common style of dressing in Kenyan choirs as well.

The versatility of the group Kayamba Africa owes to the diversity in culture among its members and their exposure to various styles of arrangement and performance, which I will examine and account for later in the chapter. They perform songs in at least 12 different Kenyan ethnic languages including Luhya, Kamba, Pokomo, Kikuyu, Kisii, Maasai, Luo and Kalenjin. This quality has won them recognition nationally and internationally by performing across most towns in Kenya and the world.<sup>34</sup> The group’s main performance days are Friday, Saturday and Sunday

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<sup>32</sup> Von HoR ‘n’ Bostel (1933:304) defines a rattle as a vessel filled with seeds, pebbles, or other small, hard objects where the non-sonorous bodies are struck against the sides or shaken. For a vivid description of the Kayamba and how it is played see Hyslop 1959 and Senoga Zake 2000.

<sup>33</sup> The *kayamba* is also found in other parts of East Africa including the Reunion and Mauritius referred to as *kayombe*.

<sup>34</sup> Some of their major performances include: the Commonwealth Law Conference in London at the Queen Elizabeth II Hall in September 2005, a gala dinner for the 17th Confederation of African Athletics Championships held in Nairobi, Africa Day celebrations at the Intercontinental Hotel, Muscat for the Sultanate of Oman in May 2007, a dinner at The Carnivore restaurant in honour of the visiting US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton in 2009, the Kenya Night Dinner held at Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg in November 2010, (Prokey 2010, Kayamba Africa’s website <<http://www.kayambaafrica.com/about-us/309-2>>, accessed 26 January 2011).

as well as weekday evenings at cocktails, receptions and dinners, major international conferences and national events held in Kenya (Juma interview 2011). They also perform in wedding receptions and corporate functions, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

The group has released four albums over a period of 12 years between 2002 and 2009: four CDs and a DVD, which I discuss below. The group has expanded, from a six-member group to a team of 45-50 members that includes a live band section, traditional dance and percussion section and about twenty vocalists (Juma interview 2011). They have the drive and ability to do this through partnership with various interested parties and sponsors. However the group is self-sustaining through its activities and savings. Juma Odemba, the group's director, was awarded a Head of State commendation for the group's distinguished role in the music industry from the President Mwai Kibaki (Mukei 2011).

### **3.3.2 Kayamba Africa's Recorded Repertoire**

*Kayamba Africa* have released four albums over a period of 12 years: *Kayamba Africa* released in 2002, *Sherehe* in 2004, *Simba* in 2006, and *Dhahabu* in 2009. Their first and only DVD to date is *Kayamba Africa Volume 1* released in 2007, a collection of their music videos.

In these albums, the group's repertoire consists of traditional songs, secular cover songs, patriotic songs, sacred songs and own compositions.

Table 1 below presents a breakdown of the group's repertoire by genre as found in their four albums. The genres I have assigned are my interpretation. The table indicates that the majority of *Kayamba Africa*'s repertoire comprises of traditional songs, 40 out of a total of 48 songs in four albums. It also shows that as the albums progressed, so did their range in repertoire content. The first album contained traditional songs, renditions of secular songs and one own composition, in 2002. This as well as the consecutive albums helped them break into the secular and sacred music market and industry as no group or artist had ever released this style and combination of music. The fourth album *Dhahabu* was released two years after the December 2007 post-election violence, which was a result of politics and tribalism in the country. In an interview with Juma (2011) he confirmed that the 2007 post-election violence influenced their repertoire as they recorded two patriotic songs, namely 'Habari Gani' and 'Nchi Moja', which can be translated from KiSwahili as 'How are you?' and 'One country', respectively. 'Habari Gani' begins with an electric guitar playing the first line of the Kenyan National anthem and it encourages Kenyans to stand together to stop tribalism, as the people belong to one 'tribe' which is Kenyan. 'Nchi Moja',

is a rendition of a song that was popularly sung during national holidays by choirs in President Moi's era. It talks about the unity of the country through love and peace.<sup>35</sup>

| Album Title and Publication Year | Traditional Songs | Patriotic Songs | Covers of Secular Songs | Sacred Songs | Own Compositions | Total Songs |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| <i>Kayamba Africa</i> (2002)     | 9                 | -               | 2                       | -            | 1                | 12          |
| <i>Sherehe</i> (2004)            | 7                 | -               | 3                       | 2            | -                | 12          |
| <i>Simba</i> (2006)              | 7                 | -               | 3                       | 1            | -                | 12          |
| <i>Dhahabu</i> (2009)            | 7                 | 2               | -                       | 3            | -                | 12          |
| <b>Totals by genre</b>           | <b>40</b>         | <b>2</b>        | <b>8</b>                | <b>6</b>     | <b>1</b>         | <b>48</b>   |

Table 1 *Kayamba Africa's recorded repertoire by genre*

In what follows in this chapter, I present an introduction to the recorded material of *Kayamba Africa* to establish some of the processes of the group's work with their musical sources. Juma (*ibid.*) described the sacred songs in their recordings as those that were sung in church and whose composers are anonymous. This music can be said to be traditional church music that was orally shared among congregations and choirs probably across denominations. Mr. Wanjohi (interview 2012)<sup>36</sup> was of a different opinion. He supposes that these songs had composers who may be alive but are probably somewhere in the village either without any knowledge that people are making money off their music or are content with the idea that their song is popular. Kidula (2010:64) reports that the commercialization of Christian choir music and gospel music in Kenya emerged in the 1970s with the help of the local gospel music programme *Sing and Shine*. Prior to this, churches in their various denominations performed Afrogenic hymns<sup>37</sup> as well as songs that were not acclaimed to belong to a specific composer- some were renditions of traditional and secular songs (Masasabi 2006, Kidula 2010). In sight of this, it can be said that tracing the composers of some sacred songs, especially those composed or arranged before the 1980s, may seem unfeasible as they were written for congregational and evangelical purposes, not necessarily with the aim of commercialization like today.

<sup>35</sup> These are a reflection of the impact of the *Nyayo* Philosophy.

<sup>36</sup> Mr. Wanjohi is an official at PPMC, music researcher, officer and arranger of choral music.

<sup>37</sup> Afrogenic hymns are those rooted in African aesthetics (Kidula 2010:67).

The recorded secular songs are Kayamba Africa's versions of songs in different styles of Kenyan and other African popular music. These songs include; 'Sweet Elizabeth' a version of the palmwine classic 'My Lovely Elizabeth' by the late S.E. Rogie of Sierra Leone (born in the 1940s and died in 1994); 'Mulunya' by the late George Mukabi (1936-1963; *omutibo*, Kenya); 'Asha' by the late Franco (Francois Lumba Makiadi; *rumba*, Democratic Republic of Congo), 'Julieta' by the late Isaiah Mwinamo (*rumba*, Kenya) and 'Macho' by Bi Shakila (*taarab*, Tanzania). The distinct feature of these renditions by Kayamba Africa is the use of various vernacular languages. For instance, the song 'Sweet Elizabeth' in its original version was in English, Kayamba Africa's rendition, in the album *Kayamba Africa*, is translated in the languages: Kikuyu, Dholuo and Kalenjin.<sup>38</sup> The song 'Macho' which was originally in KiSwahili incorporates KiSwahili and Hindi. The arrangement of the music in terms of instrumentation and style is similar to the original recordings to maintain the familiarity of the song. Nyairo (2005:32) explains that

...cover versions are never neutral repetitions, they actually entail a whole act of reinterpretation that constitutes a shift in textuality and meaning, since the contexts of production and reception are no longer the same as those that prevailed in the time of the original. Further, questions of timing, of the moment of re-release in the form of a cover version indicate the ideological considerations and intentions that underlie the decision to create a cover version.

Kayamba Africa's versions express their versatility and allows them to reach a greater demographic in terms of their audiences.

The only own composition recorded and released is 'Auma' by Juma Odemba.<sup>39</sup> It is a love song praising a lady by the name 'Auma' and is sung in Dholuo.

The traditional songs are from Kikuyu, Meru, Kamba, Kisii, Kalenjin, Samburu, Taita, Giriama, Luhya, Dholuo, Pokomo and Luganda languages. These songs are reworked versions with the use of Western band instruments, synthesizers and in a few songs, traditional instruments. These traditional instruments used were for the Luhya traditional songs 'Mwanamberi' which had the *ishiriri* (one-stringed fiddle) and 'Masambu' with the *sukuti* (drum) and *bisili* (metal rod and ring). In other cases the rhythmic and ostinato feeling that is provided by a traditional instrument is replaced by a Western instrument. An example is the song 'Entaburuta' where the Kisii

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<sup>38</sup> See Nyairo's (2005:40-45) detailed discussion of Kayamba Africa's "remix" of S.E Rogies's 'My Lovely Elizabeth'.

<sup>39</sup> Juma, presents himself as a composer with the name T.Juma (<<http://www.kayambafrica.com/media/kayamba-africa>>, accessed 27 January 2012).

traditional eight-string lyre *obokano* is replaced by the bass guitar which plays an ostinato throughout the music.

As was earlier contested, the term traditional can be quite relative as it is not given a strict period for when it is not regarded as traditional. In the case of the Kikuyu song ‘Mucii’ in the recording, it is a medley of three songs. The first song ‘Werokamu’ is an adaptation of the English word “welcome”. ‘Werokamu’ is a wedding song that welcomes the in-laws to collect their bride and the bride to her new family in traditional weddings. The song’s meaning is reflected on Kayamba Africa’s<sup>40</sup> website’s line notes and they add that it asks the guests to relax and feel at home. Although the words, *werokamu* and *siti dañni* meaning “sit down” are not originally Kikuyu words, they are accepted as part of the vocabulary. This shows that the song was either an adaptation of a traditional song of the pre-colonial period that was re-invented or it was invented in the post-colonial era. The second song, ‘Mũdũ na mũrata we’ is another song that is popular among the Kikuyu and is referred to as a traditional song but its text is an adaptation of the KiSwahili language. The song starts with the phrase “Wawiri kwa wawiri ĩ” this in KiSwahili is “Wawili kwa wawili” translated as two by two. This song is sung and danced in pairs at wedding receptions and they move around a field or hall, following the instructions of the leader. The third song, ‘Gũkũ nĩ kwaũ’ translated as “who’s place is this” is a traditional song that existed during the pre-colonial times. According to Mr. Wanjohi (interview 2012), it was performed during the traditional wedding when the groom and his family introduced themselves to a girl’s family as well as when collecting the bride. This medley gives a story of marriage and the practice of marriage in both a pre-colonial and modern setting. This method of combining of songs is not a new phenomenon as it has been used in music festivals (Hyslop 1955), church songs (Masasabi 2006) and Gospel music (Kidula 2010). Hyslop<sup>41</sup> (1955:53) in his article on the ‘Choice of Music for Festivals in Africa’ explains,

In the case where some “delightful” African songs are too short, very often it is possible to join two or three such songs together but there are certain important principles that must be borne in

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<sup>40</sup> From their website (<<http://www.kayambaafrica.com/media/simba>>, accessed 27 January 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Graham Hyslop had a great impact in music and choral industry in Kenya. He was one of the composers of the Kenyan National Anthem.

mind when this is done. The text of the various songs should deal with the same or kindred topics and it is best if the melodies show some contrast in colour.

Sylvester Otieno, choirmaster, composer and arranger in an interview on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011, explains this same concept by using the phrase ‘twin-sister arrangement’. This he describes as a medley of songs in which one or both seem challenging to develop in terms of arrangement but are related in context and meaning. “The twin-sister song can be used to develop the song to raise the dynamic of the song or to create a climax in a performance... In our Kenyan culture we have songs that never walk alone because one explains the other... The Kayamba people capitalise on the twin-sister arrangement” he explained. Based on this, it can be deduced that Kayamba Africa’s concept of arranging short songs into medleys has been an influence of a choral arrangement practice dating from at least the 1950s. Juma confirms this in an interview where he explained his encounters with traditional songs and style of arrangement (2011).

We all sang in choirs and participated in school festivals and in just the normal child activities of which music was involved. Much as we were growing up in the city, there was the influence of traditional music, most teachers would give us a singing game in English and they would also look for one that was traditional so that we grow up knowing that in as much as it is done in a Western format, it [the singing game] also exists in our own culture. In secondary schools, we had to participate in music festivals where our introduction was mostly through music that was set as a ‘set-piece’, which was a classical song, but on the other hand, the music that we were first exposed to were folk songs. As we graduated into secondary education, tertiary education, this [the learning of folk songs] was emphasized as we all had to participate in a cultural activity [in the context of performance]. At the teaching college, our educational setup was different whereby, we would pick a community by balloting<sup>42</sup> and whatever name was in the paper would be the community from which we would learn a traditional song... We all had to learn the songs, dances and their culture and we were our own best resource persons...

Juma’s different encounters and interaction with music from the English singing game, to the performance of traditional songs and dances at music festivals shows a clear pattern of the influences of the group’s music at large. This leads me to discuss their process of repertoire selection.

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<sup>42</sup> Juma explained that this was done by picking a name of a community written on a slip of paper from a box containing the names of a majority of Kenya’s ethnic groups.

### **3.3.3 Kayamba Africa's Criteria in their Selection of Repertoire**

The process described is based on information collected from interviews with the members of Kayamba Africa, *viz.* Juma Odemba, Martin Mururia, Richard 'Richie' Owino, Eric Wesonga and Jack Ouma.

Each member has the responsibility to look for and research repertoire and when one has a traditional tune that they can recall, they present it to the rest of the group in the presence of the director, Juma. The director consults resource persons who are usually village elders living within and without urban areas as well as other informants that seem to understand the culture and music of their community and reside in the village. Through this he gets to know whether the song is actually a traditional song, the context(s) in which it is or was performed, by whom it might be performed, as well as the meaning(s), pronunciation and intonation. This same process is also applied to songs from sacred and secular musics.

The group member collects each song by recording the song and writing down the words, either in its full version or in part, depending on what he finds. Some of the recordings are unaccompanied performances, while others have instrumental accompaniment. They have not performed any purely instrumental pieces that were subsequently given lyrics. In some cases, especially with the first album, Juma reports that the traditional songs were songs that he recalls performing or having watched in music festivals.

After assessing the collected material, Juma begins the process of arranging these songs in terms of form, structure and harmony. Wesonga (interview 2011) explains, "Juma goes and tries to rearrange the music to give it form; whether call and response, putting it to stanzas, or one that just flows". His musical ideas are all recorded in his home studio as he rarely notates the music.

Subsequently, Juma arranges for a session at Sub-Sahara studio<sup>43</sup> and discusses his new ideas with the producer. He selects and calls the singers from Kayamba Africa that he may need to record the songs. His criteria of selecting singers are based on: (i) the community from which the song belongs, (ii) vocal timbre, and (iii) vocal strength. He prefers to have a lead singer who is a native speaker of the language of the song. He also invites the research consultants that he initially contacted, during his fieldwork, for the recording.

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<sup>43</sup> Sub-Sahara studio was previously known as Samawati studio on Riara Road, Nairobi.

### 3.3.4 Kayamba Africa in the Recording Studio

On his first day at the studio, Juma works with the person he calls the ‘programmer’,<sup>44</sup> who in most cases is Gido Kibukosya, to work on laying down tracks. These tracks consist of the basic chords and progressions of the song, which he says is “a great challenge considering the melodic scale of the song as most are pentatonic and the keyboard is diatonic”. By this I believe he means that some of the notes that are sung in the field research recordings or the tunings found on a particular instrument may not be compatible with the tunings of a synthesizer keyboard.<sup>45</sup> These basic chord progressions are played on a synthesized pad; Kibukosya and Juma seem to prefer a choice of strings or a choral effect. Juma explained, “after chords have a proper musical arrangement, we proceed to deal with the dynamics, tempo change and up-tempo mood”. His mention of the up-tempo mood is an indication that a majority of their music is in an up-tempo dance beat, and pervades the repertoire of the albums.

Once Juma and the ‘programmer’ have produced the sketch of music, Juma takes it, listens keenly and deliberates on whether any corrections are required. He does this by singing along with the track. At the next appointment, Juma and Gido proceed to work on instrumentation and lay down instrumental tracks. Thereafter, the selected members of Kayamba Africa are called in to record the vocals.

“When recording the vocals, the resource person is always present in the studio to ensure that the song is sung well and words are pronounced well as the wrong pronunciation can use a change of meaning of the song” says Juma. He confesses that they find pronunciation to be a challenge as the members are from different communities and “one’s language can influence [the pronunciation of] the next song”.

Most of Kayamba Africa’s music is in three-to four-part harmony arranged as tenor one and two, bass one and two, and the soloist, who may be a baritone or a tenor.

Wesonga and Richie (interview 2011) explain “the tenor two sings the melody most of the time. Thus, he needs to belong to the ethnic community of which the song is from. The tenor one is usually the high tenor while the bass one sings the ‘alto’ line and the bass two the bass line”.

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<sup>44</sup> The ‘programmer’ seems to refer to the person who combines sound engineering and keyboard playing, as well as some arranging.

<sup>45</sup> With today’s technology and music software programmes, it is possible to set the scale of the keyboard to any tuning.

From this explanation, it can be deduced that they arrange their music in TTBB with reference to the SATB style of choral singing.

Juma at times creates certain harmonic parts on the spot or from memory. Rarely does he notate the music but has what his fellow members call “a good musical ear” which he uses to arrange the group’s music.

The two members continue with their description saying,

On arriving at the studio, we [the selected members] are taken through the song by first reading through the words and learning the pronunciations and the correct intonation. We then learn the melody and sing through the song. There are times when we all record the melodic line, although in most cases it is the tenor two who is conversant with the language to be sung. Other times, if the elder of the community is available for that studio session, his voice may be recorded as a guide to the tenor two.

During a group discussion with the members at a state function that I recorded (Muruiru 2011a), the members Martin, Richie and Jack stated that each member of Kayamba Africa is required to have a good vocal range to enable them to sing a minimum of two voice parts. Starting from the leader of the group, Wesonga explained that “Juma began as a bass two singer and was one day asked to consider singing tenor, of which he did and has never looked back. He realized his strength as a soloist and developed it”. As a result of his hard work and strong voice, he at times sings the high tenor and other harmonic parts besides being the soloist of the song(s).

Once the vocal parts are recorded and Juma has recorded the solo parts, Juma and the ‘programmer’ start to mix the vocal and instrumental tracks. Richie explains how Juma would at times vocalise melodic ideas that he would like the ‘producer’<sup>46</sup> to play on a particular instrument and the keyboard player would record tracks based on his singing. “At times the vocal part of a song can be completed in an hour or two”, he concluded.

The work is then mixed then goes through mastering. Through the four released albums, Juma has worked with Gido Kibukosya (producer), Bruce Odhiambo (producer), Ambrose and Shaki Akwabi (engineers), R. Kay, Tim Rimbui (producer), Ulopa (producer& sound engineer) and Alex (sound engineer). Susan Gachukia<sup>47</sup> is executive producer and manager of the group.

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<sup>46</sup> This is Richie’s term, referring to the person whom Juma refers to as the ‘programmer’.

<sup>47</sup> Susan Gachukia was a member of the girl group Zanziki who were popular in the early 1990s and are known for their incorporation of traditional songs in their style of music. She was married to Gido Kibukosya and runs the Sub-Sahara studio.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Kayamba Africa was started in 1998 during a singing competition where they emerged as the runners-up and got a recording deal with what was then Samawati Studio, today it is called Sub-Saharan Studio. Their aim was to promote folk music with a modern touch however, their repertoire expanded to sacred and secular arrangements. Kayamba Africa's repertoire has been influenced by the existence of the Kenya music festivals, socio-political factors especially through nationalism of choirs, the concept of medley in traditional songs, gospel music and festival songs. The beginning of their carriers as singers is traced to choral music in church and national events. This impacted their view on arrangement as they use a TTBB style with reference to the SATB choir style. Another influence is the trend of the 'traditional-popular' styles of reworking that has shaped Kenya's popular music industry and genres. It is these styles which we term as *zilizopendwa* combined with the group's exposure to mildly accompanied arrangements in the choirs that has greatly influenced their sound.

The members of Kayamba Africa began their musical carriers as members of church choirs and the Muungano National. Their experiences in these choirs had a great impact on their style of singing, performance, harmonization and, to some extent, arrangement. They also engaged in music and cultural festivals where they were exposed to Kenyan traditional songs from various languages, the festival's styles of reworking and use of medley as well as the performance practice of traditional songs. They have released four albums on CD and one DVD album comprising their music videos. The recordings in these albums fall in the genres of: secular cover songs, sacred songs, patriotic songs, traditional songs (which are a majority) and one own composition.

The *isicathamiya* group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo from South Africa, inspires the development of the group. Their influence on Kayamba Africa can be seen in their style of dressing and their choice to have one person represent the group.

Kayamba Africa have marketed themselves and their recordings through visual, print and audio representations such as music videos, radio airplay, written articles and via the internet.

Kayamba Africa follow a procedure when selecting and recording songs for the album(s):

- They source and collect songs that they may find suitable for arrangement.
- In the case of traditional songs, they consult people who are well vast with the music and culture from which the song is from and record them singing or performing the music.

- Juma arranges a meeting with Gido, the programmer and co-producer, to discuss new ideas.
- Juma and the programmer lay down instrumental tracks, which comprise chord progressions played on a synthesizer pad.
- Juma goes with the track to deliberate on whether it requires any changes.
- Juma selects and calls in the suitable singers in the group for the song.
- Before they record, the singers go through the pronunciation of the words as they are taught the song. This is at times done in the presence of the research consultant who was previously approached.
- The ‘programmer’ in the presence and guidance of Juma, adds instrumental tracks then proceed to mix the song.
- It is then mastered and prepared for distribution.

Most of their music is in up-tempo beat and in three-to four part (TTBB) harmony. Kayamba Africa’s repertoire has opened performance opportunities for them in different events in Kenya and especially Nairobi. I thus will observe how their music is perceived amongst audiences through the description and analysis of Kayamba Africa’s performances in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Analysis of Kayamba Africa's Performance Practice

#### 4.0 Introduction

Kayamba Africa's entertainment quality has exposed and stretched their avenues of performance across Nairobi. They have created a niche for themselves in the local market, particularly as versatile performers in social events. Having discussed the development of the group and their recorded repertoire in the previous chapter, I turn to analyze the process of performance of Kayamba Africa's music with the aim of understanding the construction of their musical performances and its reception by different audiences. In order to achieve this, I will present an ethnographic description of two social events: a wedding and a state function, and also analyze a DVD recording of a live performance. All three of these events were held in Nairobi. I will describe and analyze Carol Wairimu and Gilbert Nderitu's wedding on January 21, 2011, to exemplify Kayamba Africa's performance practice at wedding receptions.<sup>48</sup> I participated at this wedding with two roles, as a family member (cousin of the bride) and secondly as a researcher. I selected this particular wedding over the many I attended in 2011 because of my relationship with the couple, which enabled me to watch the wedding DVD footage that they commissioned. This allowed me to review the details of the event and to conduct a feedback interview (Stone & Stone 1981). I will also compare Kayamba Africa's entertainment package with other cultural groups and deejays that also entertain at weddings. I attended the second event at the invitation of Kayamba Africa; this was a state function on June 16, 2011. The DVD I analyze is non-commercial, an edited recording of Kayamba Africa's "listening party" (Juma's term) for the album *Dhahabu* held at Club Galileo in Nairobi on November 20, 2009.

The performances at the wedding and state function were by a different group of five members, while the third recorded on DVD, was by all the group members with a live band and dancers.

An issue I will engage in is the lack of visual history of performances of Kenyan traditional songs in their cultural settings and by indigenous musicians for illustrative and comparative purposes with the reworked musics. I propose to deal with this by basing my analysis on the contemporary representation of traditional musics with the aim of understanding its place in contemporary society. I will study the interpretation of the song(s) by describing the reaction of the audience

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<sup>48</sup> Both Carol and Gilbert belong to the Kikuyu community.

and performers as well as the representation of the songs by the singers, band and deejay. I will also present my impressions of the group as a participant observer.

I will deploy different analytical classifications that I discern in these performances. These include age, ethnicity, gender and status. They are at play throughout the performances and I interpret the decisions and actions that constitute the musical experience in the light of these categories (Qureshi 2006). However, Kayamba Africa is responsible for the actualization of the music; thus the analysis will pay special attention to the singers.

#### **4.1 Preparation for a performance**

Before any Kayamba Africa performance, the client needs to book the event date with the group preferably two months in advance as they are on great demand, especially over weekends. Most clients deal directly with Juma as his contact details are posted on the group's website and album covers. It is also possible to book an event online through their website; this is especially for those who live out of Nairobi or the country.

Once the group's availability is confirmed, the client usually goes to their offices located in the central business district of Nairobi, to sign a contract. This contract requires the client's name, date, time and location of the venue, as well as an agreement on when the payment will be made. The client agrees with either Juma (director) or Martin (manager) on: what package of Kayamba Africa they would like at their event (a live band, traditional dance troupe or the group of singers), the time of the event, the time required for them to set up, and the time when the event should end. Kayamba Africa charge from 50,000 Kenyan shillings to 100,000—an equivalent of 604 to 1,208 US Dollars respectively.<sup>49</sup> These charges depend on the type of event, the entertainment package requested, the event location, which determines travel costs, and whether a Master of Ceremony is required.<sup>50</sup>

There is an interactive shaping of the wedding reception, within the bounds of the product that Kayamba Africa offer. They will be able to stretch these parameters to an extent, but will not compromise on their performance structure especially on, when to start and the flow of the repertoire.

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<sup>49</sup> The exchange rate of Kenya shillings to US Dollars is 1Ksh.= 0.01208 USD on 10 February 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Some members of the group play the role of Master of Ceremony at weddings and private functions. They may be requested to speak in the language from which the families of bridal party belong and English and/or KiSwahili.

## 4.2 The Wedding Reception

The wedding practice among Kenyans, especially in Nairobi, is that the bridal party goes to have professional photographs taken after the wedding ceremony. Meanwhile, the guests settle in the reception venue, which is usually located not too far from the church or other site of the wedding ceremony. Gilbert and Carol's wedding was held at St. John's Catholic Church and the reception at the Botanical Gardens located at Karengata, Nairobi, all within a walking distance of each other. The guests were welcomed by beautiful decor on green grounds with white-pitched tents, flowers and music. Kayamba Africa had arrived early and set up their PA system ready to entertain the guests. Kikuyu and Kiswahili popular gospel music played as the guests settled in. The choice of background music, as usual, had been discussed and agreed upon by the couple and Kayamba Africa prior to the event. The package selected for this event was for a PA system, singers and an MC.<sup>51</sup> The Master of Ceremony on the day was Martin Muruira, a member of Kayamba Africa. The MC at a Kayamba Africa event is not necessarily the soloist in the performance. He introduced himself and welcomed the guests in English and Kikuyu as they ate, awaiting the arrival of the bridal party. Forty-five minutes into the reception, Kayamba Africa took to the stage, entertaining the guests with unaccompanied arrangements of their *zilizopendwa* repertoire. They sung love songs like 'Malaika' (Kiswahili, 'my angel') and 'Chaupele' among others. Subsequently, Martin, the MC, engaged with the women in the audience, by requesting that they get up and rehearse how they would welcome the bride with song and dance once she arrives. At this point, Kayamba Africa engaged the audience in traditional songs from various communities drawn from their commercial recorded repertoire. This music was performed using backing tracks. Martin (2011b) explained in an interview that it was at this point of the function that the group determines the kind of music that the audience likes and the dominant ethnic community that the audience belongs. He also expressed that the focus of entertainment on the day was not only on the newlyweds, but also the audience, because they are potential clients.<sup>52</sup> However, where the MC is required to use an indigenous language (Kikuyu in this case), Kayamba Africa assumes that a majority of the audience belongs to that speech community.

Once the bridal party arrived, all the women, young and old, were urged to go "sing for the bride", ("*kũinĩra mũhiki*" in Kikuyu). In Kikuyu tradition, the women from the groom's family

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<sup>51</sup> Kayamba Africa singers often go as a team of about five to six singers. Among the singers is a sound engineer, soloist and Master of Ceremony.

<sup>52</sup> This highlights the performers' reaction to their perception of the audience's actions (Qureshi 2006).

sing songs of praise to the bride to welcome her to her new home. This was regarded as a sign of respect to the bride's family and an assurance that she will be well taken care of (Wanjohi interview 27 July 2011). In the contemporary setting, women from the bride's family as well as friends and colleagues are all welcome to join in the celebration.

The women and other guests surrounded the bride and groom's vehicle where they begun their celebratory songs. These songs did not have a fixed leader and were not rehearsed; therefore the participants followed the woman with the strongest and audible voice.<sup>53</sup> The soloist's role alternated in a random manner among the women. Some songs the women performed included: 'Werokamu', 'Mũthenya ũyũ nĩ mūnene', 'Gĩcae', 'O mūdũ na mūrata we' and 'Ngatho ici ndacitũma' (a popular sacred song) just to mention a few. This session of singing and dancing continued until the bridal party reached the flower arch.<sup>54</sup>

It is here that Kayamba Africa took over with the entertainment. Carol, Gilbert and Kayamba Africa, had discussed and agreed upon this arrangement before signing the contract. Though this might have been agreed upon, it always appears in most weddings that this information is not relayed to the women. As a result, the transition from the women's singing to Kayamba Africa's performance seldom appears organised. On the other hand, since there is no assigned soloist, it is difficult for the bride and groom to know who among the women will lead the songs. I observed that some women at weddings that I attended prior to my study of Kayamba Africa, would take offence, especially those from the village and might never before have attended a wedding where Kayamba Africa performed and provided an MC for the reception.

However with the group's great popularity at weddings and, their exposure through televised weddings shown on Citizen TV's programme 'The Wedding Show', Kayamba Africa's directing role in the wedding can now be known and this may presumably reduce the chances of unmentioned tension between the performers and the women.<sup>55</sup> In Carol and Gilbert's wedding,

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<sup>53</sup> At times the audibility of the woman's voice may refer to the lady whose voice is strong and high-pitched.

<sup>54</sup> In the case of no flower arch, they start to perform at the area where the furthest loudspeakers are placed.

<sup>55</sup> Citizen TV is privately owned by Dr. S.K Macharia. It first broadcast in July 1999, but was closed down due to political rivalry with the government but was re-launched in June 2006. The broadcasts are in English and Kiswahili. Its target is the middle-lower class of Nairobi and people situated in rural areas. It airs in most parts of Kenya and recently spread to Africa through DSTV. It has at least 2.2 million viewers and has its strong focus on local programming as it is currently rated as the best station on local production

the group interrupted the women but they seemed to have understood that it was part of the event's programme.

Another issue I observed is the difference between versions of traditional songs performed by Kayamba Africa and the women singers. The women, especially those who reside in the village, performed the songs in a unique and, for lack of a better term, authentic manner. This is with consideration of language dialect. For instance, Kikuyu have three main dialects which are endemic to the areas in which they belong, these are, Murang'a, Kiambu and Nyeri. As a result the performance of a song may differ in language, melody and at times tempo. However, Kayamba Africa, sing the Kikuyu songs in what appears to be the Nyeri dialect. The reason for this may be due to the fact that the Nyeri dialect is easier to pronounce and is commonly spoken amongst the Agikuyu living in the Rift Valley towns as well as in Nairobi.

Once the bridal party arrived at the flower arch, the deejay, who is a member of the group, plays the first song of the already selected repertoire. From the Kikuyu weddings that I have attended, Kayamba Africa seems to sequence their songs in a particular manner thus making their playlist quite predictable. At Carol's wedding 'Mūcii' (*Simba 2006*) which literally means 'home' was the first song played as it welcomes the bridal party to the reception. This was followed by 'Ngūkinyūkia O Kahora' (*Simba 2006*), "I will walk slowly as I head to heaven", 'Mūgithi' (*Sherehe 2004*), the train dance,<sup>56</sup> 'Nĩ nĩngwenda' (*Sherehe 2004*), "I would like to thank you", 'Ndambararia' (*Dhahabu 2009*), "I lift my hands" —the last two songs are sung in thanksgiving to God, (Kikuyu, proper noun, *Ngai*, God). The singing and dancing was performed within the space mapped out by the tents thus controlling the sound and range at which the PA system could pick up the microphones. To mark the finale of the entertainment session at the wedding, Richard Muo, the soloist, calls the men to join in the celebration and requested the ladies, the bride included, to sit as the deejay changed the music from Kikuyu celebratory songs to the popular

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(Moggi & Tessier 2001:10-11, quoted on Citizen TV official website <[http://www.citizentv.co.ke/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=54](http://www.citizentv.co.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54)>, accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>56</sup> The word *Mugithi* is derived from 'mixsi' a term used in the 1950s to refer to a particular train that ferried both passengers and cargo in the same compartments. This is probably the earlier version of the third class, and possibly the only train Africans were allowed to ride. The etymology of *Mugithi* is "mixed train" which Nairobi youth in the 1950s referred to as simply 'mixsi'. Ironically, *Mugithi* performance was adopted from the all-night religious *keshas* (charismatic prayer vigils) in Kenya, where the faithful come together "join the train to heaven" with Jesus as the driver of the train. (Kimani & Hervé 2007:157; 158)

song 'Sweet Elizabeth' (*Kayamba Africa 2002*). The men danced through the half of the song following Richard's instructions and dance movements. Richard led the men to do the 'chini kwa chini' dance as the deejay waits for a signal from Richard to stop the track.<sup>57</sup> Once the men got down to a squat, the music stopped. He then announced "... gentlemen, you cannot leave this position until a lady comes and picks you up". This was very entertaining to the ladies as in most functions the men rarely dance or participate in the entertainment session (interview Wairimu & Njeri 2011).<sup>58</sup> The ladies then picked their husbands, brothers, cousins and dates from the dance floor, leaving the groom, Gilbert on his own. The bride, Carol, had been instructed to be a bit hesitant so that the groom could 'sweet talk' her, as he did when they were dating. The audience found this to be entertaining. Once Carol was satisfied, she picked up her groom as they receive applause from the audience and the function then proceeded to speeches.

#### **4.2.1 'Cultural Groups' Performances at Weddings**

The performance role of Kayamba Africa at weddings is active and is shown by the guests' responses to their music as they danced around the field, following the soloist's instructions for dance movements. In several interviews with wedding guests (from Gilbert and Carol's wedding, and other weddings that I attended) and students and staff at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, I discovered that some people do not appreciate Kayamba Africa's music at weddings. Some find their performances redundant and monotonous and even prefer the women to sing throughout the welcoming session of the bridal party. Others prefer to hire cultural musicians and groups for weddings. Their reason is that they prefer "authentic" traditional music (including performances with traditional instruments) from performers belonging to the same community as the bride and or groom. Examples of such groups and musicians are Nyamũga dance troupe, Amaki Ngoma, Kenge Kenge, Obokano dancers, Nyasere *peke* dancers and Dudu dancers among others. In a telephone interview with a member of the group Amaki Ngoma, Blasto (2012) described their performance practice at weddings.<sup>59</sup> They begin by escorting the bride from her home to the church. Once the church ceremony is over, they sing for the bride until she leaves for the photo

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<sup>57</sup> The term 'chini kwa chini' is translated as "getting down" and is executed by the wriggling of the waist (Miya 2004) as they move downward to a squat.

<sup>58</sup> This interview was held as we watched through the DVD footage taken of the wedding. The lady referred to as Wairimu here is a relative of the bride and Njeri, a sister to the groom.

<sup>59</sup> Amaki Ngoma is a cultural group of ten members who entertain at social events. They are a group of ten members. Some members of staff at the Music Department at Kenyatta University are part of this group.

session. They then proceed to the reception area where they welcome the bride and groom with song and dance and entertain the guests and bridal party as they settle to their seats. Unlike Kayamba Africa, Amaki Ngoma led the song throughout the reception. They play traditional instruments such as *orutu*, a one-string fiddle, *kolo* horn, *ohangla* drums and *nyangile*, a metal ring that is struck on what he describes as a sound box.<sup>60</sup> Although the traditional instruments that they play belong to the Luo community, they perform songs that “cut-across Kenyan tribes” as the members of the group are Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo; this quality is important in heterogeneous weddings. They do not perform with a PA system, thus the bride and groom would have to out-source for sound equipment, an MC and deejay (if necessary). Amaki Ngoma charge from 25,000 to 60,000 Kenyan Shillings depending on transport costs (if the wedding is out of Nairobi, where the group is based), and the relationship between the clients and the performers. Comparing the performance practices of Kayamba Africa and Amaki Ngoma, they differ widely in terms of time and period of performance, style of performance (backing tracks versus live instrumental accompaniment), as well as the use of traditional instruments.

Kayamba Africa’s reliance on backing tracks limits their performance space to a radius in which they can comfortably hear the music from the monitor speakers and within which they can use the microphones without feedback. As for Amaki Ngoma, their choice of live performance gives them more liberty to move around with the audience, as most of their instruments are easy to manipulate.

Another factor is the time and period of performance. Kayamba Africa mostly perform at wedding receptions while Amaki Ngoma entertain the bride from the time she leaves her home all through to the end of the reception.

With the consideration of hiring a PA system, a necessity for the obligatory speeches, Kayamba Africa’s 50,000 shilling (604 US Dollars) fee for a performance, deejay, and sound system package seems cheaper than hiring Amaki Ngoma for 25,000 shillings (302 US Dollars) and also hiring sound equipment which costs “an average of 25,000 to 30,000 for companies that do not have a known brand that they trade with” says Arthur Wandera.<sup>61</sup> He adds that a package for a professional sound engineer, and deejay equipment would cost about 40,000 shillings; this is for

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<sup>60</sup> *Nyangile* is a set of semi-round metal rings and a wooden sound box played in combination to accompany an *orutu* performance (Omolo-Ongati 2006:155).

<sup>61</sup> A telephone interview held on 1 February 2012. Arthur Wandera is the CEO of MOB (acronym for Music Oriented Brothers) entertainment based in Nairobi.

the whole day, from morning to the evening party. However, comparing the service charge between the two groups in terms of the time of performance, as previously discussed, the cost of hiring Amaki Ngoma may cost about the same amount or slightly more (by about 15,000 shillings) than Kayamba Africa.

From the above discussion, it can be said that there is a lot of competition in the area of musical performances at social events, (within a fairly restricted margin) especially for wedding performances. As I have shown, Kayamba Africa offers an entertainment package at a competitive rate. People commonly say that ‘one can never miss a wedding to attend on a weekend in Nairobi’; adapting the same expression it can be said that Kayamba Africa rarely miss a wedding to perform in a weekend in Nairobi.

### **4.3 State Function at the Kenya International Conference Centre (KICC), Nairobi.**

Six months after Carol and Gilbert’s wedding, I was walking beside a long red carpet on a cloudy and dull Thursday morning, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011, at the KICC two hours before the state event begun. I wangled an invitation through Juma Odemba to attend this presidential event in order to observe Kayamba Africa’s performance practice, as I had never watched them in such a setting before.

I found my way to the Tsavo ballroom, which was decorated in Kenya’s national flag colours with a high podium where President Mwai Kibaki and other prominent guests would sit. The rest of the hall was arranged in a conference setting. The event was the launch of the Performance Evaluation results for Public Agencies for the year 2010.

Ushers welcomed the guests as they went through security check. A playlist of *zilizopendwa* and *rumba* music played as the guests settled in. To the immediate right of the podium were a sound engineer at a desk and public address system, and a group of seven men beside a separate sound system right next to them. At this stage I had never been properly introduced to the members of Kayamba Africa besides Juma. But, there was someone I took to be Martin, the manager, whom I had spoken to over the phone. Instead of calling him, I decided to approach the group of seven. As I looked on, I recalled having seen two of the men at Carol and Gilbert’s wedding, this confirmed that I was not lost. “Hallo, are you Christine? My name is Martin,” one of the gentlemen said as he stood to greet me, confirming my assumption. It was then that I recalled that Martin Muruira was the MC at my cousin’s wedding, although I did not know him as the group’s manager then. The men seated next to them with a separate sound system were with the President

Press Service. Their PA system was for the microphones at the podium where the speeches were to be made. The entertainment package selected for this event was singers, PA system and deejay.

Martin introduced me to his colleagues and explained why I was attending the function. They introduced themselves: Richard Muo, John Nduati, Moses Ekirapa, Jack Ouma (the soloist), and Richard Owino.

Kayamba Africa uses its own public address system which is usually in the care of Richard Owino, the group's sound engineer. 'Richie', as he is known, is a member of the St. Stevens Cathedral choir, Jogoo Road, where his talent as a bass singer was noticed and led to him joining Kayamba Africa in 2004. He sings bass and tenor two. His "love for electronics and musical sound" got him interested in sound engineering. Richie has no formal education in this technical field, but explains; "I understand my colleagues' voices and how they should sound and this has come as a matter of experience of working with the group for seven years" (interview 2011).

Kayamba Africa's responsibility as per the contract was to take care of music entertainment as soon as the function began and provide background music as the guests settle in.

The repertoire of the background music ranged from music as far back as the 1960s to the current *zilizopendwa*, *soukous*, *kwassa kwassa*, *lingala*, Congolese *rumba* music with musicians such as Fere Gola, Werrason, Kanda Bongoman and Beniko, and contemporary Kenyan Afro-fusion musician, Eric Wainaina. As the music played on, Richie changed the music to Eric Wainaina's 'Ritwa riaku', a Kikuyu popular song that talks about a man's endless search for a woman's love, hoping for a positive response. On the contrary, a member of the Presidential Press Service (PPS) approached the deejay's desk demanding that the song be changed. "Play only English or KiSwahili songs or play patriotic songs", he commanded Richie in a stern and upset tone. Richie, given the option of the three, immediately complied and played another set of *rumba* music. His fellow members discussed this reaction and realized that the PPS does not encourage music recorded in any of Kenya's indigenous languages at state functions ever since the 2007 post-election violence caused by political and tribal divide.<sup>62</sup> Kiswahili is an exception to the other languages as it is the country's national language.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> This was not the first time they had performed at a state function; however, it appeared to be the first time for them to receive such feedback. It could thus have been an error on Richie's part.

<sup>63</sup> President Kenyatta proclaimed KiSwahili as the national language of Kenya on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1974 (Harries 1976:153). It is also recognized as such under Chapter two, section 7 (2), of the recently amended Kenyan Constitution.

At 09h45, Moses Ekirapa, the group's coordinator, arrived with the performance clothes which they quickly changed before doing a brief sound check. There was an abrupt change in the programme as the President was running late; therefore Kayamba Africa was called upon to entertain the guests. They took the stage with an *a cappella* set comprising of arrangements and renditions of patriotic songs such as 'Harambee Harambee', *zilizopendwa*, traditional singing games, such as 'Nyuki We', Caribbean music, such as Harry Belafonte's 'Jamaican Farewell' and music from the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo 'Homeless' and 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'. In the song 'Homeless', they added a few verses such as "Tsunami/ AIDS destroy our homes, many are dead, tonight it could be you" as they raised their legs periodically to imitate the *isicathamiya* dance style that Ladysmith Black Mambazo's display in their performance of the song.

Because of the programme's late start, their special performance for the President had to be moved to the lunch reception in order to accommodate a comedic skit by the Vitimbi group, reportedly a favourite of the President. Kayamba Africa and I, following the instructions of Mr. Charles Muthini, the deputy director of the PPMC and coordinator of the music entertainment, proceeded to the reception venue immediately after the skit to set up and do a sound check.

At the reception, Kayamba Africa was the only entertainment. The singers and Charles Muthini sat to discuss the set of songs they would perform. Although it was not the first time that the government had worked with Kayamba Africa, Mr. Muthini found it crucial to vet the song list they had prepared. This included *zilizopendwa* and sacred music. They had been previously advised not to perform music that might urge people to dance, as this would prolong the luncheon and the day's programme was already running behind schedule. Moses and Martin then suggested that the members change into other shirts. This became a great debate as some members argued that the guests of honour had not seen how they were previously dressed. After much debate, they settled on changing their costume from linen shirts embroidered with the group's logo to gold and black shirts.

Guests began to stream into the dome-shaped tent decorated with lights and drapery themed in the Kenyan national colours on the ceiling and the tent poles as soft *rumba* music played in the background.<sup>64</sup> At 14h00, the President and government ministers walked in and as soon as they settled Jack Ouma, led the guests in singing the National Anthem. Popular songs started the performance: Swahili *rumba* music of the 1960s and 70s like 'Chaupele Mpenzi', 'Eing'ombe' (a

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<sup>64</sup> The Kenyan national colours are black, green, red and white.

traditional Luhya song), 'Jambo Bwana', and 'Malaika' by Fundi Konde.<sup>65</sup> Kiswahili sacred songs followed. I asked Mr. Muthini, who sat next to me through most of the entertainment session how it was that PPMC often invite Kayamba Africa to perform at state functions. He explained that he finds their music rich and the repertoire to have a sense of Kenyan identity. He added, "you will find most audience members [above the age of 40 years] if not all reminiscing as they listen to *zilizopendwa* music as well as their [Kayamba Africa's] renditions of folk music". Their performance was an hour long. The MC of the day, who is usually the head of the PPS, appreciated their "wonderful" performance, this sentiment evoked applause from the audience. The programme then proceeded to a brief speech by the Minister for Public Service, Hon. Dalmas Otieno, followed by a vote of thanks. Mr. Muthini appreciated the group and mentioned to me that he was satisfied with the performance.

#### 4.3.1 Observations

Kayamba Africa's performance role at the Tsavo ballroom combined entertainment and showmanship. They performed renditions of songs cutting across different genres of African music, Kenyan popular music and singing games. However, the audience's response to Kayamba Africa's performance at the Tsavo ballroom seemed passive. Subsequently at the reception, Kayamba Africa's role was to provide background entertainment as the guests ate. Here the audience was more responsive to the music.

These differences in relations between the audience and the music varied 'in time and space' as expressed by Bakhtin's theory of dialogue. The audience's passive role at the Tsavo ballroom was affected by the nature of the event. The members of the audience had to present themselves in a formal manner and some may have been anxious to receive the results of their company's performance appraisal from the Minister for Public Service (time). Secondly, the setting of the venue -which was in a conference style- also expressed the formality of the event (space). However, in the reception, the audience was in a relaxed setting. They were there to eat and interact. As a result, they were calm and comfortable enough to appreciate the musicians and enjoy the music.

Additionally, the unaccompanied renditions seemed to have a nostalgic effect on the audience members as some swayed in their seats, gave a nod of appreciation to the group or sung along to the music. Nyairo (2005:41) expresses this nostalgic feeling as a triggering of the listener's

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<sup>65</sup> I found it interesting that there was no objection to the luhya traditional song 'Eing'ombe'. This I found to run contrary to previous instructions.

private memories, which may very well be tied to public events in the past. It can thus be said that the audience's active response to the repertoire may also have been a result of an individual's triggered memory of the music in a different time and space.

As previously shown, Mr. Muthini's stated his reasons for inviting Kayamba Africa to perform at various states functions. I however have observed other factors to this i.e. the group's extensive repertoire, their ability to perform ethnically un-marked popular music which best suites the government and their *a cappella* style of repertoire arrangement. Kayamba Africa is one of the first groups to have earned recognition in the music industry because of this style of arrangement of traditional, sacred and secular songs.

#### **4.4 An Analysis of a Live Performance by Kayamba Africa in Nairobi on DVD**

This 53:42 min DVD is a recording of a live performance held at Club Galileo, Nairobi. This DVD was not released to the public as Juma said the video editing and sound did not satisfy him.<sup>66</sup> Despite these flaws, the DVD provides useful documentation of a nightclub performance as opposed to a music video made for television broadcast. I will give an overview of the recorded performance and highlight important qualities in the recorded performance, such as the group's interaction with the audience, interaction between the musicians, how the musicians present themselves, and the choice of songs performed.

##### **4.4.1 Playlist**

The complete playlist for the event is listed here in order of performance, noting the album on which they were recorded and the year the album was released: 'Asha' (*Sherehe* 2004), 'Jane Achieng' (not released), 'Ngukinyukia O Kahora' (*Simba* 2006), 'Hambi Khusieve' (not released), 'Kisumu 100' by Sussanna Owiyo and Suzzanne Gachukia,<sup>67</sup> 'Habari Gani' (*Dhahabu* 2009), 'Ndambararia' (*Dhahabu* 2009), 'Shombo' (*Sherehe* 2004), 'Sweet Elizabeth' (*Kayamba Africa* 2002), 'Omutun' (*Kayamba Africa* 2002), 'Amalwa' (*Kayamba Africa* 2002), 'Mugithi' (*Sherehe* 2004), 'Macho' (*Simba* 2006) and 'Kuthamba' (*Dhahabau* 2009).

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Juma Odemba, 14 June 2011.

<sup>67</sup> 'Kisumu 100' is a popular *benga* song composed by Suzanna Owiyo for the centenary celebration of Kisumu city.

#### 4.4.2 Stage line-up

At the forefront of the stage is the soloist, who in most of the footage is Juma Odemba. Four microphones are placed adjacently where the other vocalists cluster in groups standing according to their voice parts. The band behind the singers comprises lead guitarist (Johnnie Bitoto), rhythm guitar (Kombo), keyboard player (Caleb Muhati), bass guitarist (Mising' Rotich), *kayamba* (Kamau 'Kama'), wooden blocks (Simon Ngigi), drummer (Mathew Rabala), *and djembe* (Shadrack Ndeto) with trumpeter and guest musician (Geoff Ridden).<sup>68</sup> There are dancers whom Juma introduces as "Kayambaletts". Their names are, Nimũ, Esther, Shamira and Ivy.

#### 4.4.3 Costuming

The members of Kayamba Africa wear different shirts over black pants and black shoes. The shirts are in their customary colours: black, red, brown and green. The band members wear linen shirts embroidered with the Kayamba Africa's logo. The dancers change their costume to suit each song's genre. At first, they wear white tops (some have Kayamba Africa's logo) with red skirts fashioned of a length of cloth tied at the waist. In the second 'Jane Achieng', a cover of a secular pop song, they wear black pants with black and white blouses. For the song 'Macho' they have donned saris. Finally, for 'Mugithi', a medley of Kikuyu sacred songs, they wear brown clothes decorated with cowry shells, the traditional Kikuyu attire.

#### 4.4.4 Interaction between Kayamba Africa and Guest Artists.

In this recorded performance, Kayamba Africa incorporated guest musicians in their performance: a trumpeter, Geoff, and three female singers: Suzanna Owiyo, Suzanne Gachukia and Janet Akolo.<sup>69</sup>

When introducing Geoff, the trumpet player, Juma shared with him a moment of musical interaction through improvisation and imitation.<sup>70</sup> This was entertaining and also gave the trumpet player as well as Juma a moment to show off (00:44:37).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Johnnie Bitoto from Congo and plays the *seben* parts in the footage.

<sup>69</sup> Janet performs with different bands in Nairobi <<https://www.facebook.com/janet.ciru.akolo>>, accessed 28 January 2012.

<sup>70</sup> Geoff Ridden is an American based in Kakamega, Western Kenya (<[http://www.umojaentertainment.com/News/p2\\_articleid/608?s=f928318d4f4e13d5ac8d4f352d6ff04e](http://www.umojaentertainment.com/News/p2_articleid/608?s=f928318d4f4e13d5ac8d4f352d6ff04e)>, accessed 6 February 2011). He met with Juma at an event that Kayamba Africa were performing and he was relayed his interest of performing with them (Juma telephone interview 3 February 2012).

Suzanna Owiyo performed her popular *benga* song ‘Kisumu 100’, sung in Dholuo, alongside Suzanne Gachukia, Kayamba Africa’s executive producer and musician (00:09:44).<sup>72</sup> Janet Akolo sang a duet with Juma in the song ‘Macho’ which I describe and discuss later in the work.

#### 4.4.5 Interaction with the audience

Kayamba Africa’s energetic performance and careful selection of the order of repertoire kept the audience entertained as they danced and sang along to the music. In the first two songs, the audience was seated, watching the dancers and, I presume, warming up to the group. By the third song ‘Ngukinyokia O Kahora’ (00:04:52), the audience was more engaged and took to the dance floor. This could be because of the song’s popularity: it was the first animation music video that Kayamba Africa released. Juma asked the women in the audience to follow his lead in a ‘chini kwa chini’ dance step (00:06:12) and a side-to-side hand sway. What also kept people on their feet was the way the band performed songs that were related in style without a pause between them. An example is ‘Hambi Khusieve’ and ‘Mwanamberi’ (00:08:08) which are Luhya traditional songs.

In the patriotic song ‘Habari Gani’, Juma addressed the issue of tribalism and the promotion of unity amongst Kenyans in a spoken introduction. The footage shows the audience seated, holding each other shoulder-to-shoulder as they sang along (00:11:48, 00:12:40). Thereafter, the music returns to an up-tempo beat with a Kikuyu sacred song, ‘Ndambararia’, followed by ‘Shombo’, a Luhya traditional song accompanied by wooden blocks and the *djembe* as the only accompaniment (00:16:15). Here they got to show their vocal ability as an ensemble skilfully playing with dynamics. In the song ‘Amalwa’, Juma sang a children’s game song where someone is pulled from the crowd and asked to show off their ability to dance (00:29:27, 00:30:16 and 00:30:34).<sup>73</sup>

In ‘Macho’ Juma began on stage alone and is joined by singer Janet Akolo. They sang alternating verses and Juma joined in at the refrain of the third verse in harmony. The audience appreciated

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<sup>71</sup> This form of interaction seems to have originated in jazz, where two musicians interact in an improvised musical exchange. The vocalist might improvise by scat singing, which Juma does here.

<sup>72</sup> Dholuo is spoken by the Luo people of Kenya. It is the most widely spoken language in Kisumu, Kenya’s second largest city on Lake Victoria, an important locale in the development of the popular music form *benga*

<sup>73</sup> In my experience, this singing game was performed mainly by young girls between 4 to 12 years especially in the 1980s and 1990s.

this performance though I was not satisfied. I would have expected more interaction between the two performers so they may tell the story of the song rather than focusing the attention on the singing. In performing *taarab* music, the focus of the music is on communication among the audience members and the singers to the audience (Askew 2002).

A majority of the songs on the DVD develop to a climax referred to as *seben*.<sup>74</sup> *Seben* is a section of ‘instrumental improvisation’ played on the guitar in *rumba* music from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This climax is commonly adapted by Kenyan contemporary musicians such as Eric Wainaina, the Villagers Band, and in popular gospel music with groups like the Voices United Choir and the Mavuno Worship Project among several others.<sup>75</sup> The popularity of *seben* is a result of the influence of Congolese styles of music in Kenya during the 1970s and 1980s (Eyre 2004). Kayamba Africa are greatly influenced by *rumba* and *soukous* as can be seen in their performance style. A majority of the group’s members enjoy listening to this music in their spare time.

Most of the dancer’s movements were well choreographed while the vocalists would copy one of their fellow performer’s dance moves. However, during the *seben* section of every song, audience members, dancers and vocalists would outdo themselves in dance styles. Some of the dance movements were at times well synchronized with the band. For instance in ‘Omutun’ (00:25:10), Simon Ngigi, a vocalist, leads his colleagues in a choreographed dance movement, a side-to-side stomp of the left leg with the body slightly leaning to the right. Each stomp was in sync with the snare, which was followed by a drum roll.<sup>76</sup> This dance movement and style of synchronizing is borrowed from Congolese popular music *lingala* which is another name given for *soukous* and the *ndombolo* dance style. Men usually perform *ndombolo*. The dancers crouch and then make a slow, almost mechanical walk with body weight shifting from left to right. They take one step to the front then back (Miya 2004:127; 129). This was popularized in Kenya by Koffi Olomide’s

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<sup>74</sup> This can be seen in various sections in the footage such as (00:01:45, 00:03:25, and 00:22:20). “The name “*seben*” reportedly comes from the English “seven”. In the old days, listeners loved the dominant 7th chords introduced by the English-speaking, Ghanaian palm wine players. Shouting “Seven!” meant, “Pull out the stops!” (Eyre 2002:15).

<sup>75</sup> In my experience, *seben* is popularly played in church praise music as it gives the members an opportunity to dance.

<sup>76</sup> This dance movement and synchronization is borrowed from Congolese *lingala* music and *ndombolo* dance style.

song 'Loi' (*Loi* 1998) where the word is repeated as the dance is performed. Although the articulation of the dance may not be as precise as that of practiced Congolese dancers, the body movement is similar. In this performance, women, too, perform the dance.

#### 4.4.6 Observations

There are certain issues and concerns that arose in my observation of Kayamba Africa's performance practice from the footage.

With the exception of the *seben* section appearing at the end of most of the songs, the basic structure was maintained as in the music structure of the album recording. However, the melodic improvisations provided by the trumpet I found to be monotonous and overpowering. There seemed to be no sense of ensemble and order especially during the instrumental interludes and, as a result, the music at times seemed to be too busy and noisy. An example is seen in the *seben* section of the song 'Omutun', which the band members were trying to bring out though, in my view, was overpowered by the trumpeter's improvisation (00:24:14). I speculate that the trumpet player had not rehearsed with the band, perhaps even had listened to the band and he did not acknowledge the lead guitar as the main solo instrument. On the other hand, this may have been intentional; maybe Juma wanted Geoff to play in most interludes as happened.

Another issue I observed is a lack of balance between the voices and the instruments. Instruments such as the kayamba, the *djembe* in some instances, the rhythm guitar were not audible. The climax of the songs was mostly very noisy. This may have been the sound engineer's fault, who was not the group's sound engineer Richie. This may also be a result of the fact that Kayamba Africa do not perform their recorded songs with a live band, and may thus not have taken as much precaution and consideration during their preparation stages.<sup>77</sup>

My third concern is the choice of venue. Kayamba Africa has achieved a particular status by playing at high-end functions and state functions; I found the concept of them performing in a nightclub inappropriate. The group's intention was to perform to the average citizen, which they had never done before.<sup>78</sup> However, in as much as they enjoyed themselves together with the audience, factors such as the lighting and the size of the stage appeared to not have received much

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<sup>77</sup> This is an observation made in my fieldwork as I attended a corporate function on the 7 January 2012, a live band under Kayamba Africa as well as the vocalists were the entertainment. The band played cover songs from jazz to *zilizopendwa* but when it was Kayamba Africa's time to entertain, they used backing tracks music.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Martin Mururia on 27 July 2011.

attention in choosing the venue. The stage was too small to fit a group of about twenty-five vocalists and a band, and when a majority of the vocalists were on stage they appeared to be clustered and disorganised. The small stage also affected the dancers performance as they had to perform on the dance floor and this caused restraints in their movement as they shared the space with the audience.

#### 4.5 Photographs of Kayamba Africa at different events



**Figure 1** Kayamba Africa members at a State function at the KICC on 16 June 2011 at 10h30. They are dressed in linen shirts embroidered with the group's logo.



**Figure 2** Kayamba Africa at a lunch reception of the same state function as figure 1 at 14h21.

From the right: Richard Muo, Moses Ekirapa, Jack Ouma, Richie (back), John Nduati and Martin Muruira



**Figure 3** A separate group of Kayamba Africa at a wedding at the Karen Country Lodge on 2 July 2011.

From right: Junior (back), Wesonga, Simon Ngigi and Richie



**Figure 4** Mr. Juma Odemba and I at Kayamba Africa’s office at Uganda House, Nairobi

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Kayamba Africa’s role at the wedding and the state function was not just to provide the main entertainment in the music session but also to provide background music before the arrival of the guests of honour (the President at the state event and the bride and groom at the wedding). Kayamba Africa’s versatility to move to neutral material in state functions to gospel and traditional music that engage people belonging to different and similar ethnicities may be why they never lack events to perform every week. This also gives them the authority to quote for clients a minimum of 50,000 Kenyan shillings. According to Matheka’s (2010:23) research on searching a practical contract model for Kenyan live music performances, he reports that most of his “interviewees” believe that an artist’s level in the music career would determine the amount of performance fee to be paid because of the value an artist puts into the music business. Put another way, the artists will charge what the market can bear. This may also be attributed to Kayamba Africa’s marketing especially through the broadcasting media with footage of their performance delivery at wedding receptions on ‘The Wedding show’, their music videos shown on Citizen TV’s ‘Tafrija’, live broadcasts of national celebrations on KBC TV as well as brief appearances on news broadcast especially on special functions such as U.S.A’s Secretary of State, Hillary

Clinton's visit to Kenya in 2009 and important state events as the one discussed in this chapter. This at times gives them an upper hand from their competitors especially for wedding functions.

Kayamba Africa's repertoire is well known among a majority of people in Nairobi and this may be as a result of their use of backing tracks in their performances. Audiences seem to know what song will follow next especially in the medleys. This issue received different reactions from audiences. In the DVD performance, the members of the audience stand up and align themselves in anticipation of the song 'Mugithi' (00:30:70). On the other hand, some clients find this predictability monotonous and would prefer live performances from cultural groups at their weddings. I find the use of live performances i.e. singing with live instruments, most suitable in celebratory events such as weddings or parties, where flexibility, by this I mean the lengthening and shortening of songs, is demanded for by an audience. I thus suggest that Kayamba Africa alternate their styles of performance, especially between backing tracks and a live band for versatility as performing musicians.

Another reason as to why some audience members prefer cultural group's performances to Kayamba Africa is that of 'authenticity' provided by their use of traditional instruments. However, the question of the cultural group's authenticity is debatable as these groups, with Amaki Ngoma in focus, perform with a set of traditional instruments belonging to one community to represent and accompany traditional songs of other ethnic communities. This representation of traditional music at weddings is an interesting aspect of research that I think should be explored. In the following chapter, I will look at Kayamba Africa's representation of traditional songs in their recordings through an analysis of song text and music structure.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Analysis of Song Text and Musical Structure of Kayamba Africa's Recordings

#### 5.0 Introduction

With the aim of achieving my objective to understand Kayamba Africa's process of reworking, I analyze the song text and musical structure of 'Omutun', 'Wakarirũ' and 'Ngulũ', recordings from the album *Kayamba Africa* (2002). I will observe the various interpretations of song text and musical structure of these songs in the traditional context, choral setting and Kayamba Africa's recordings and website notes. I selected the following due to the availability of research material and informants on the song. However for the song 'Omutun' I will only analyse its song text due to lack of musical material on the traditional songs for me to compare with. I however, selected it for text analysis to show a different style of arrangement of combining two different traditional songs. Another unique quality in 'Omutun' is the inclusion of a song with religious text.

The data collected was attained through interviews via the telephone, email and face-to-face. The research consultants were selected based on their knowledge of the songs and respective languages. The song text analysis will focus on the meaning of the song in its different contexts as well as alterations of the text with regards to interpretation of the song. Musical analysis looks at Kayamba Africa's recordings as well as other recordings that I was able to collect in the categories of: key signature, time signature, tempo, form, melodic (this includes scale and pitch) and rhythmic structure, sound representation, instrumentation and vocal analysis. The songs' texts are written in the respective culture's way of writing which follows the pronunciation hence the use of diacritical marks. Each section of analysis, i.e. the song text and musical structure, will have its own introduction and conclusion.

The form of the songs will be displayed in the tables that discuss the song texts, however, I will discuss this in the musical analysis. The musical recordings of the songs analysed are presented in CD form and a published score of an arrangement of one song.

## 5.1 Analysis of Song Text

### 5.1.1 'Omutun'

(Kayamba Africa 2002:10)

Instrumentation: vocals, acoustic guitar, bass, synthesized instruments.

Note from Kayamba Africa's official website, 'A Kalenjin praise song for leaders and gives thanks to God for keeping them well! "kongo"' (<<http://www.kayambaafrica.com/media/kayamba-africa>>, accessed 16 July 2011).

This is a Kalenjin song sung in praise of a leader. It has four verses set to a medley of tunes from the traditional songs 'Keronginechi' and 'Lelo', which are the first, second and fourth verses respectively, and a sacred song as the third.

The two songs 'Keronginechi' and 'Lelo' have been represented in different ways in terms of interpretation of song text and context.

One of the contexts is a choral arrangement of 'Keronginechi' for soprano, alto, tenor and bass. In this case, the song is placed in a style known as Afro-classical music.<sup>79</sup> Various choirs have performed this arrangement by Sammy A. Otieno, a composer, choral director and arranger, for various occasions and music festivals.

Kayamba Africa's synopsis of their version of the song 'Omutun' raises questions of the context in which this music is performed; Is it performed at events to praise the leaders? Or might it be performed as a sacred song of thanksgiving to God? The questions of context and intention lead me to question who the performer of the song might be; should it be the musician(s) or the community which, in the case of performance, would be the audience? With the changes in music brought about by globalization and the commercialization of music, musicians are now the main performers of the music. It may, therefore, be a limitation for me to make deductions on the most suitable performer in relation to the meaning of the text. I shall attempt to bring out the meaning of the song in its different representations and contexts through textual analysis and synopses.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Akuno (2007:12) describes Afro-Classical as a new genre of Kenyan Art Music that focuses on experimentation with sound where indigenous Kenyan idioms interact with Western classical procedures through a catalyst of a musically literate composer.

<sup>80</sup> Linda Cheruto (email 2011) provided the song text and translation. Mr. Maritim (interview 2012) later verified this information.

The song is 0:04:22 minutes long.

| Time                          | Form                                      | Comments                       | Song Text   | Literal Translation   |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 0:00:40<br>0:01:08            | Verse 1<br>Part A<br>(repeated)           | All:                           | <i>Omutun lagok chok keropten<br/>tuk chok</i><br><br><i>Kibhoibhoi tugul en en<br/>kandoinde nyon<br/>Keronginechin lagok chok<br/>kigombok chegoo<br/>Keronginechin</i> | Bring our children, we<br>divide our cows<br><br>We are happy about our<br>leader<br>We pour milk to our<br>children's cups<br>We pour! |
| 0:01:34                       | Verse 2<br>Part B                         | All:                           | <i>Kongoi ngunon kimache<br/>chamiet ne tinyee chamiet</i>  | Thank you, now we want<br>love that has peace   |
| 0:01:38                       |   | Call:                          | <i>Bherurech</i>  | Bless us  |
| 0:01:39<br>0:01:43            |   | Response:                      | <i>Kongoi ngunon kimache<br/>chamiet ne tinyee chamiet</i>  | Thank you, now we want<br>love that has peace   |
| 0:01:42<br>0:01:47            |   | Call:                          | <i>Bherurech</i>  | Bless us  |
| 0:1:52                        | Short Interlude                           |                                |   |   |
| 0:02:10                       | Longer Interlude<br>in <i>seben</i> style |                                |   |   |
| 0:02:19<br>0:02:37<br>0:02:56 | Verse 3<br>Part B <sup>1</sup>            | Call:                          | <i>Kisae cheptalel nyon ibherur<br/>omet nyon</i>   | We are praying to our God,<br>bless our land  |
| 0:02:23<br>0:02:42<br>0:03:00 |   | Response:                      | <i>Kisae cheptalel nyon ibherur<br/>omet nyon</i>   | We are praying to our God,<br>bless our land  |
| 0:03:05                       | Short Interlude                           |                                |   |   |
| 0:03:09                       | Verse 4<br>Part C                         | Call:<br>Lelo<br>(n. Kipsigis) | <i>Lelo kigere raani<br/>Lelo, kigere raani Lelo</i>  | Today we will see Lelo  |
| 0:03:23                       |   | Response:                      | <i>Kapkimolwo Longisa kigere<br/>raani Lelo</i>   | Kapkimolwo in Longisa,<br>we'll see Lelo  |
| 0:03:37<br>0:04:00            |   | All:                           | <i>Olaleiyo oh! oh, Olaleiyoh!<br/>oh,<br/>Olaleiyo oh! oh, Olaleiyo<br/>oh! oh,</i>  | Vocables<br><br>Vocables  |
| 0:03:51<br>0:04:14            |   |                                | <i>Keronginechin,<br/>keronginechin</i>   | We pour, we pour.   |
| 0:04:22                       | The song ends.                            |                                |   |   |

**Table 2 Text transcription of Kayamba Africa's recording of the 'Omutun'**

### 5.1.2 'Keronginechi'

This song is a celebration of marriage whereby the community calls upon a man and his bride to receive blessings with the recognition of a leader or village elder. According to Kipsigis culture, cows are sacred animals used as a form of dowry to the bride's home and others given as a gift to the new couple by the community. A ritual of pouring or sprinkling of milk on the couple by the community and leader as a sign of blessings crowned the marriage ceremony. The village elders head this ritual. It was in this event that the song 'Keronginechi', meaning 'we pour', was performed (Cheruto 2012). This is still practiced today in traditional weddings in the rural homes but over time with the change of culture and the urban centre lifestyle, 'Keronginechi' has undergone some modifications that are partly affected by the concept of meaning through song text.

Kayamba Africa's version of the song is about "we", the society, thanking "our" leader and asking for blessings of peace and love. The entity referred to as "leader", is used contextually to suit the function that the song is performed though maintaining its relevance of praise and admiration (Juma interview 2011).

A song of thanksgiving to God then follows, praying that He may bless the land. Juma (*ibid.*) explained that the word "land" represents the people. Singing to a spiritual deity puts the music in a religious context. This makes the song suitable repertoire for religious and secular functions; by this I mean corporate, state or cultural events. This makes their music very accommodating, thus marketable.

### 5.1.3 'Lelo'

The Kipsigis, a sub-group of the Kalenjin community, performed this song in preparation for war.<sup>81</sup> "Lelo kigere lani lelo", translated as 'today is a great day', is not only recognised as a war song but also had greater meaning in translation to the understanding of oral history of the Kipsigis. According to Cheruto (*ibid.*), Lelo (Kipsigis, n. today) is also the name of the song's protagonist. Lelo, an old woman, lived in a place called Kapkimolwo in Longisa district, Rift Valley Province, Kenya. Members of the community would travel to seek her advice and receive a blessing especially when going to war, as she was considered very wise among the Kipsigis people. She was so respected that a market place was formed near her home, although it no longer exists. Mr. Maritim (interview 2012) described Kapkimolwo as an area around the boundary

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<sup>81</sup> The Kalenjin comprise of the following dialects: Nandi, Terik, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Marakwet, Tugen, Sabaot, Pokot and Kony (Ogechi & Ruto 2002:38).

between the Maasai of Narok, and the Kipsigis from Bomet.<sup>82</sup> The Mara River also marks this boundary. He added that the Kipsigis were at war with the Maasai because of cattle and also as a recreational activity. According to Maritim, the Maasai and Kipsigis living in Transmara still practice this as a recreational activity.

Juma (interview 2011) explains this song in context of 'Omutun' saying, "the song simply says that today is the day that we will honour the leader". The simplicity in meaning of the song gives it the flexibility to be used in any occasion, and its short repetitive nature gives a suitable quality for audience participation.

#### **5.1.4 The use of song medley in 'Omutun'**

As previously discussed in chapter three on the style of arrangement and adaptation of traditional songs, it was established that the fusing of two or more songs into a medley was a common practise among Kenyan composers. However, the criteria followed, according to Hyslop (1955), Sylvester Otieno (interview 2011) and Kidula (2008), the songs considered suitable for a medley were short, seemingly challenging to develop but related in context and or meaning. Following this criteria of arrangement, it can be said that Kayamba Africa's medley of the songs 'Keronginechi' and 'Lelo' does not totally comply as one is a marriage song and the other, a war song respectively. Despite the disparity in context of these two songs, they have seemed to work together. This, in my view, is because of the musicians' interpretation of the songs 'Lelo' and 'Keronginechi'. The simplistic interpretation of 'Lelo' to mean 'today is a great day' makes it easy for it to fuse with a song that marks an important occasion such as the celebration of a leader which Kayamba Africa refer to as 'Keronginechi'.

#### **5.1.5 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ'**

'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' (Tracey 1973:4) is the title assigned to a recording Hugh Tracey made in 1950.

It is sung unaccompanied by women. Below is a text transcription of 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ'.

N/B; The Part B is only represented once in its full form at the beginning of the transcription.

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<sup>82</sup> Narok is situated to the west of Nairobi and Bomet in Bomet County is to the south-east of Narok. They are located in Rift Valley province.

| Time    | Form                | Comments                        | Song Text   | Literal Translation   |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 0:00:00 | Part A              | Call:                           | <i>Wakarirũ ndiuma muthii ngũ<br/>ĩ haĩ hũ</i>          | <i>Wakarirũ</i> I was not to collect firewood                         |
| 0:00:04 | Part B              | Response:<br>Call:<br>Response: | <i>ĩ haĩ hũ<br/>Ĩĩ haĩ hũĩ<br/>ĩ hũiyĩ</i>              | Vocables<br>Vocables<br>Vocables                                      |
| 0:00:09 | Part A <sup>1</sup> | Call:                           | <i>Ni mũkwa na ithanga cia<br/>rutire njaa ĩ haĩ hũ</i> | The leather strap and axe threw themselves at me                      |
| 0:00:13 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:00:17 | Part A <sup>2</sup> | Call:                           | <i>Wakarirũ cũa cũa tuthie ĩ<br/>haĩ hũ</i>             | <i>Wakarirũ</i> please hurry we go                                    |
| 0:00:21 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:00:26 | Part A <sup>3</sup> | Call:                           | <i>Tũgaikie ngũ na magũrũ ma<br/>riũa ĩ haĩ hũ</i>      | To collect firewood with the sunset                                   |
| 0:00:29 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:00:34 | Part A <sup>4</sup> | Call:                           | <i>Wakarirũ ndire mũthaġani ĩ<br/>haĩ hũ</i>            | <i>Wakarirũ</i> , I am not here to visit                              |
| 0:00:38 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:00:42 | Part A <sup>5</sup> | Solo:                           | <i>Mũthaġani itungi cia<br/>nyũmba ĩ haĩ hũ</i>         | The visitors are the posts inside the house                           |
| 0:00:46 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:00:51 | Part A <sup>6</sup> | Solo:                           | <i>Ngũtuaranira na<br/>rimũthagani ĩ haĩ hũ</i>         | I will go together with the visitors                                  |
| 0:00:55 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:00:59 | Part A <sup>6</sup> | Solo:                           | <i>Akĩrekie njaa ndekie<br/>makobeini ĩ haĩ hũ</i>      | He ordered me to leave the dry banana leaves that I was cooking with. |
| 0:01:03 | Part B              |                                 |   |   |
| 0:01:11 | Song ends           |                                 |   |   |

Table 3 Text Transcription of ‘Rũimbo rwa ngũ’ with the translation by Mũkũyũ<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Mũkũyũ is the author of the blog (<<http://mukuyu.wordpress.com/music/mosgi-trubadur-%E2%80%93-wakariru-cua-cua/>>, accessed 12 September 2011). Here, the person discusses the Kikuyu people, culture, language and music.

Hugh Tracey's 1950 recording of the song goes by the title, 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' literally meaning the song for firewood. In his field notes (Tracey 1973:358) explained that, young unmarried girls performed the song as they collected or carried back firewood. He explains that

[a] woman whose husband was away complains that she did not want to go out to collect firewood and would not have gone if she had not found the axe lying outside... "In any case, she [Rebecca Nyanyega, one of the soloists in the recording] says, "there is no one to meet me at home on my return, only the poles of the hut."

Another translation of the song by Mũkũyũ (*ibid.*) explains that a woman sings as she goes to the forest to collect firewood very late in the evening, as the sun sets. She elaborates that her husband had come into the hut in the evening and found the food in the pot being cooked with "ridiculous things" like dry banana stem leaves and in anger, he threw a leather strap for carrying the firewood and an axe out of the house ordering her to go into the forest for firewood. It is a lamentation song to her friend, Wakarirũ, urging to be accompanied into the forest.

Both interpretations of the song's text carry similar qualities as well as differences. In my view, Mũkũyũ's interpretation is based on the meaning of the song according to literal translation of the text. On the other hand, Tracey discusses the song in its performance context i.e. the context in which the song was performed during the recording process as well as the translation.

Although Tracey's interpretation is based on his actual field experience, his notes do not give as cultural insight of the Kikuyu people and the women, which would have provided a better understanding of the song. This was dependent on his aim and approach as a researcher. In his catalogue (1973:3), he explains that

the text was taken directly from field cards which were written in haste at the moment of recording. Each item was played back immediately to the performers over a loudspeaker but the few minutes this took never gave us [Tracey and his research assistants] enough time to write as much as we would have liked and as a result had to rely on local interpreters to establish the necessary facts on the spot.

Based on this, I assume that Tracey's aim in the field was to collect and document Kikuyu music and not understand the culture of the people. His approach was based on the collection of sound recordings and production as opposed to a deeper understanding of the song in its cultural setting. I can also assume that the performance was not presented in its actual context, this is because; i) he would play the music back to the performers and ii) the vocal projection of the women does not depict that they were actually collecting or carrying firewood. In conclusion, the synopsis

may not be accurate in relation to the song's context and cultural meaning. In addition, some information may have been lost in translation between the consultant and researcher.

The latter synopsis could be from an etic perspective, as Müküyū, the blog writer, may not have been present in the field when the song was recorded. However, the synopsis appears to be based on the literal translation of the song's text and through this, the blogger is able to present certain aspects of the Kikuyu culture. Some of the aspects revealed are, the place of a man and a woman in a Kikuyu home, their responsibilities and consequences faced when certain roles are not played. It also displays the social setting in terms of community life displayed by the woman's urge to be accompanied by her neighbour. This leads me to a song text analysis of Kayamba Africa's version.

### 5.1.6 'Wakariru'

Album: Kayamba Africa (2002:2)

Instrumentation: vocals, electronic generated instruments.

Format: Compact disk

Note from website: "a Kikuyu traditional song on the coming of rain. It told of its advent so the village should prepare by keeping await the crops and livestock because the rain will drop with sound like tu, tu, tu!" (<<http://www.kayambaafrica.com/media/kayamba-africa>>, accessed 16 July 2011).

| Time               | Form                | Comments                                | Song Text  | Literal Translation  |
|--------------------|---------------------|---|--|--|
| 0:00:37            | Part A              | Call:<br><i>Wakarirũ</i><br>(n. Kikuyu) | <i>Wakarirũ cūa cūa na rūa ĩ haĩ hũ</i><br><br><i>Ĩĩ haĩ hũ, ĩ hũiya</i>   | <i>Wakarirũ</i> , please hurry<br><br>Vocables   |
| 0:00:51            | Part A <sup>1</sup> | Call:<br><i>Wakaruci</i><br>(n. Kikuyu) | <i>Wakaruci ndire mũthagani ĩhaĩ hũ</i><br><br><i>Ĩĩ haĩ hũ, ĩ hũiya</i>   | <i>Wakaruci</i> , I am not here to visit<br><br>Vocables   |
| 0:01:10<br>0:01:21 | Part B              | Response:                               | <i>Mbūra niroira ĩ Wakaruci nĩ tutugiire tututu!</i><br><br><i>Nginyiti ġitanda ĩkiambĩrĩrĩa ũtugi wa mbura tututu</i> | The rain is pouring heavily,<br><i>Wakaruci</i><br>When I got to my bed, it [rain] began to pour |
| 0:01:37<br>0:01:49 | Part A <sup>2</sup> | Call:<br>This verse is repeated         | <i>Mũthagani nĩ ituġĩ cia nyumba ĩĩ haĩ hũ</i><br><br><i>Ĩĩ haĩ hũ ĩ hũiya</i>   | The visitors are the internal posts of the house<br><br>Vocables                                 |
| 0:02:10            | Part B              | Response:                               | <i>Mbura niroira ĩ Wakaruci nĩtutugiire tututu!</i>  | The rain is pouring heavily,<br><i>Wakaruci</i>  |

|  |           |                                      |   |   |
|--|-----------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 0:02:21<br>0:02:34<br>0:02:45<br>0:02:57 |           | This section is repeated four times. | <i>Nginyitiğitanda ikiambĩrĩra ii ũtugi wa mbura tututu</i> | When I got to my bed, it [rain] began to pour |
| 0:03:09                                  | Song ends |                                      |   |   |

**Table 4 Text transcription of ‘Wakarirũ’ following Kayamba Africa’s recording**

Kayamba Africa’s song is in call and response form and is performed live in this manner. This version includes a chorus that is possibly a later development of the song or another traditional version. I may not be able to get a concrete answer, as this is a limitation of oral tradition. The chorus however brings out the voice of the second person, Wakaruci. The dialogue between Wakarirũ and Wakaruci concerns the coming of rain according to Kayamba Africa’s liner notes from their website, which I will hereby discuss.

The two subjects, namely, Wakarirũ and Wakaruci, are replaced with the general term “village”. This omission of the subjects changes the interpretation in terms of context and presents ambiguity in the nature of composition of the music. Similarly, the mention of crops and livestock is not revealed in the text of the song and is thus an assumption to the question; why are they singing about the rain? There is no statement, in the notes, given to the mention of the posts of the house.

Traditional music is known to discuss the issues of the past as well as warn as about the future (Otieno interview 2011). Kayamba Africa’s interpretation may have been based on a speculation of warning. This theme of warning is also shown in Tracey and Mũkũyũ’s interpretation as Wakarirũ (the villagers) are asked to hurry before the sunset or rain. Dr. Njooa, a composer, arranger and music lecturer (2011), recalls Wakarirũ as an anonymous name referring to the person(s) addressed in the song and is asked to hurry up.<sup>84</sup> He speculates that the name Wakarirũ in the song may have originated from the Kikuyu word *ũrirũ* meaning ‘beauty’, as women and girls mainly sang the song. He recalls his encounter with the song in the late 1950s and 1960s in Nyandarua District, Nyandarua County, the area where grew up. He had this to say about ‘Wakarirũ’:

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<sup>84</sup> The anonymity of the name is confirmed by other sources I consulted namely, Wanjohi, Mrs. Maina and Kamaru.

the white man had his own large farm [in Nyandarua] which he allocated the workers- the indigenous Africans- a small *shamba* for their livelihood.<sup>85</sup> The African would work at the white man's farm all morning, then would farm for themselves in the afternoon from about 2 pm... To avoid being eaten by wild animals or getting lost in the dark [as the sun would set very early], the farmers would sing this song to hasten their fellow workers. This song would alert each other that they should begin their journey back home... Those [farmers] who were lost would follow the singing voices to find their way (Njoora interview 2011).

Joseph Kamaru from Murang'a district, Murang'a County (interview 2011), confirms this and adds that it was performed as women and girls harvested food crops, which in Kikuyu he called "*kūgetha*", and collecting firewood "*kuuna ngũ*".<sup>86</sup> To support his interpretation, he sang a phrase of the song "*panga na ithanua cia rutire na njaa ĩ haĩ hũ*" translated, "a machete and axe made me leave my house". The Kikuyu people harvest crops using a machete and the axe when harvesting firewood. Kamaru added that it was sung to motivate and hasten the women as they worked.

Njoora (2011) recalls listening to girls singing *Wakarirũ*, when he was young, as a game song. He explained that children's games in his time (around the early 1960s) would emulate adult behaviours. The late Jomo Kenyatta supports Njoora's experience in his ethnography on the Kikuyu culture in the book *Facing Mount Kenya* (1979). Kenyatta (*ibid.*:101) describes the system of education [and acculturation] from infancy to adulthood as imitative and experiential. He says, "Their games are, in fact, nothing more or less than a rehearsal prior to the performance of the activities which are serious business for all the members of the Gikuyu tribe".

Kenyatta also supports that catching and collecting firewood is one of the activities that mothers and daughters would engage in (1979:104). This means, that the song 'Ruimbo rwa ngũ' may have been taught to the girls at an early age but the words were relative to the women's activity being practiced at a given time. According to Mũkũyũ's interpretation of the text, 'Wakarirũ' in the 1950s may have been performed to educate the young women of their roles in the homestead as a wife and the consequences if not followed. On the other hand, according to Njoora and

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<sup>85</sup> The word '*shamba*' is KiSwahili for a plot of land that was used for farming.

<sup>86</sup> Joseph Kamaru is one of the pioneers of secular, commercial Gĩkũyũ popular music in the 1960 and 1970s and was once tagged 'king of Kikuyu pop'. (Mũtonya 2004, Wa Mungai 2008) He saw himself as a 'teacher, expressing the traditional values of his culture, as well as contemporary social comment' (Patterson 1999:514). I conducted this telephone interview on 27 December 2011 spontaneously at the instigation of Dr. S.K Macharia, CEO of Royal Media Services and a friend of Mr. Kamaru.

Kamaru, whose texts of the song slightly differ from Hugh Tracey's recording, 'Wakarirũ' is a work song that was performed by women to hasten each other as they harvested as well as a children's game song that was performed by girls.

In conclusion, these different contexts have led to the re-invention of the song consequently displaying the dynamism of culture. This applies to Kayamba Africa as their interpretation of the song is dependent on the context in which the members were introduced, also, their own re-invention of how they would like to represent it to a modern and inter-cultural society. This is not heard in Tracey's recording. From Tracey's recording of a group of young women singing in unison to one subject, Wakarirũ, to George Senoga-Zake transcription (2000:7) of one part singing with the inclusion of a chorus, to Kayamba Africa's version of four part harmony and instrumentation, it can be said that the traditional song has gone through re-invention. This re-invention is a result of the theory that culture is dynamic and is a result of internal and external influences. This may also bring about the concept of neo-traditional.

#### 5.1.7 'Ngulũ'

Mr. Katuli is a Kamba from Mwingi district; Eastern Province (email 16 September 2011) described 'Ngulũ' as a war song that was performed by Akamba warriors preparing to retrieve their livestock from the Maasai.<sup>87</sup> He explained that the Akamba battled with the Orma (referred to as the Akala) who neighbour them to the east and the Maasai (referred to as Ngulũ, as in the song) to the west (Tate 1904). The Maasai are nomadic pastoralists whose traditional belief is that all the cows in the land belong to them and it was therefore their right to raid the neighbouring communities, the Akamba and Agikuyu, for cattle and at times their women. The Akamba warriors sang 'Ngulũ' as they prepared to get back what was theirs. The community would gather and encourage the warriors for battle. The song is a warning to the Maasai that 'all what (sic) they destroyed they will pay' (Katuli 2011).

Katuli describes Kamba initiation ceremonies, saying that boys who pretended to be warriors also perform 'Ngulũ'. In the Akamba tradition, a boy goes through certain stages of his life before becoming a warrior. He is first an infant (*kavisi*) and later an uncircumcised young boy called *ivisi*. An *ivisi* goes through three stages of initiation of which the first two were considered compulsory. The first stage is *nzaiko ya kavyyu* (the circumcision proper), *nzaiko ila nene* (the great initiation) and *nzaiko ya aume* (the initiation for men). Once an *ivisi* completes the first two stages of initiation, he is considered ready to marry and is referred to as *mwanake*. The *anake* (pl)

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<sup>87</sup> Mr. Katuli is a music lecturer at Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

are traditionally the warriors who defend the community. ‘Ngulũ’ was performed in ‘the great initiation stage’ (*nzaiko ila nene*) where specialised military skills were taught to the *anake*.<sup>88</sup> In this context, the song’s function was to educate the warriors about their culture, their responsibility and purpose as warriors (email 2011).

According to Muthini, a Kamba from Machakos District, Eastern Province, Ngulũ is a name given to Akamba warriors (interview 2012).<sup>89</sup> It was sung in preparation for and after war. He said that ‘Ngulũ’ was performed to motivate and encourage the warriors as they went to war. It also prepared the warriors psychologically that some of them would not return. He explained “...this is to remind the warriors that whatever they did [here he mentioned stealing as an example] in the previous war, they will have to pay when at war”.<sup>90</sup> Muthini in a previous interview (June 2011), described

“... in preparation for war, a drum, would be played to convey a message of war across different villages. The warriors would then go down to the plains to fight as the women are taken up to the highlands to protect them from being kidnapped. One of the common areas are the hills known as Iveti. The word *iveti* is Kamba for women”.

The Iveti Hills that Muthini described had good forest cover at a height for the women to hide, allowing the villagers to spot the intruding Maasai.<sup>91</sup> Both warriors and elderly men performed ‘Ngulũ’. According to Muthini, the words *wangao* and *wakasimbili* are age-group names given during initiation. ‘Ngulũ’ was also performed to alert the villagers of the warriors’ return.

To compare the information from Katuli and Muthini, I decided to consult a third source, Julius Mutisya—who comes from another part of *Ukambani* (Kamba land)—on his understanding of ‘Ngulũ’. Mutisya is a forty-year-old Kamba businessperson from Nunguni in Eastern Kenya. He recalls ‘Ngulũ’ as a children’s song (phone interview, 2012). Ngulũ was the name of a lazy person known for stealing villager’s pumpkins during the dry season. Mutisya’s grandparents taught him this song, which he recalls singing as a 4 year-old. He explained that ‘Ngulũ’ was a singing game that encouraged children to work hard and make their own as stealing has its consequences. In his version of the song, the word *mwolohwa* is used instead of *mwelela* though

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<sup>88</sup> According to Tate (1904:136) the Akamba used to raid among them, a practice that was regarded as a favourite occupation. This may have been when the *anake* would hone their military skills.

<sup>89</sup> Mr. Muthini is mentioned in previous chapters and is the deputy director of the PPMC.

<sup>90</sup> Stealing of Maasai cows and women and vice versa was expected during war.

<sup>91</sup> The *Iveti* Hills are located near what is now Machakos town in Eastern Province, Kenya.

*mwaiwa* is maintained. These words are Ngulũ (the thief's) name. *Mwaiwa* is the name given to someone who is lacking or in need (Mutisya 2012). He reads 'wangao' as 'wa ngao' (of the shield) and 'wakasimbili' (a reluctant person) as nicknames given to Ngulũ to describe his defensive but lazy nature.

The tables below display the different translations and interpretations of 'Ngulũ' according to Katuli, Muthini and Mutisya, showing a range of different meanings ascribed to this one song.

| Form                                   | Comments  | Song text                               | Translation  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Part A<br>The response echo's the call | Call & Response:<br>Ngulũ (n. Kamba) refers to the Maasai                       | <i>Ngulũ (Maasai) ii, Ngulũ mwelela</i> | <i>Ngulũ</i> , I am telling you about the <i>Ngulũ</i> |
|  |   | <i>Ngulũ ii, Ngulũ mwaiwa</i>           | <i>Ngulũ</i> , I am telling you                        |
| Part B                                 | Call:   | <i>ĩ ndĩ Ngulũ</i>                      | <i>Ngulũ</i>   |
|  | Response:<br>Ngao (n. Kamba) refers to the name of a person as well as a shield | <i>Wangao</i>                           | Son of <i>Ngao</i> (the shield).                       |
|  | Call:   | <i>Ngulũ</i>                            | <i>Ngulũ</i>   |
|  | Response:<br><i>Simbili</i> (n. Kamba) the name of a person                     | <i>Wakasimbili</i>                      | Son of <i>Simbili</i>                                  |
| Part C                                 | All:<br>Pumpkins are used metaphorically  | <i>Malenge mene mwatemangie</i>         | The pumpkins that you once destroyed.                  |
|  |   | <i>Nomukaiva.</i>                       | You shall pay  |

**Table 5 Translation according to Katuli (email 2011)**

| Form   | Comments   | Song Text                               | Translation  |
|--------|--|---|--|
| Part A | Call & Response  | <i>Ngulũ (Maasai) ii, Ngulũ mwelela</i> | Warriors whoever you are   |
|        |  | <i>Ngulũ ii, Ngulũ mwaiwa</i>           | Warriors wherever you're from  |
| Part B | Call:  | <i>ĩ ndĩ Ngulũ</i>                      | Warriors   |
|        | Response<br><i>Ngao</i> (n. Kamba) name for age-group    | <i>Wangao</i>                           | [Warriors] of <i>Ngao</i>  |
|        | Call   | <i>ĩ ndĩ Ngulũ</i>                      | Warriors   |
|        | Response<br><i>Simbili</i> (n. Kamba) name for age-group | <i>Wakasimbili</i>                      | [Warriors] of <i>Simbili</i>   |
| Part C | All:   | <i>Malenge mene mwatemangie</i>         | The pumpkins you cut meaning the things you did in the previous war. |
|        |  | <i>Nomukaiva.</i>                       | You shall pay.   |

**Table 6 Translation according to Muthini (interview 2012)**

| Form   | Comments  | Song Text                                | Translation  |
|--------|---|--|--|
| Part A | Call:<br>Ngulū Mwolola (n. Kamba)<br>the name of the thief.   | <i>Ngulū ii Ngulū<br/>Mwolola</i>        | Ngulū Mwolola  |
|        | Response:<br>Ngulū Mwaiwa (n. Kamba)<br>the name of the thief.<br>Mwaiwa also means the one<br>in need. | <i>Ngulū ii Ngulū<br/>Mwaiwa</i>         | Ngulū Mwaiwa   |
| Part B | All:  | <i>Malenge mene mwaiye<br/>wina Ngao</i> | The pumpkins that you and<br>Ngao [his friend] stole |
|        | All:  | <i>Mumanye no mukaiva</i>                | You know that you will pay                           |
| Part C | Call:   | <i>Ii ndi Ngulū</i>                      | Ngulū  |
|        | Response:   | <i>Wangao, Wakasimbili</i>               | The shielded one, the reluctant<br>one.              |

**Table 7 Translation according to Mutisya, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

According to the text transcriptions displayed, ‘Ngulū’ has different interpretations that are influenced by the period the research consultants encountered the song. Katuli and Muthini were born around the early and mid 1950s while Mutisya is 40 years old.<sup>92</sup> Based on their ages, Katuli and Muthini’s childhood period was during the colonial period (1885-1962), while Mutisya’s was during the post-colonial times i.e. after 1963. From this, it can be said that Katuli and Muthini may have witnessed and gone through some of the cultural practices before they were discouraged with the establishment of Christianity in the Eastern Province.

Another factor affecting the different interpretations is location. All three people I consulted about this song are from the Eastern Province, which covers an area of 159,891 square km and has for its town centre Machakos. Katuli’s home in Mwingi is to the north east of the province, while Machakos, where Muthini resides, lies to the southwest close to Nairobi. In the south, very close to the Coastal Province, lies Nunguni, where Mutisya is from. The landscapes of these locations differ as shown by Muthini’s description of the Iveti Hills in Machakos. The distances between the locations might have influenced differences in their cultural practices, as they may have been influenced by their interaction with neighbouring communities. For instance, Mwingi, Katuli’s home, is neighbored by the Orma (Akala) territory to the east and the Maasai (Ngulū) to the west (Katuli 2011).

The meaning of the song ‘Ngulū’ in a modern context has changed, with urbanization and modernization, cattle rustling is no longer a common practice among the Akamba people.

<sup>92</sup> Katuli and Muthini were not comfortable give their exact ages but each mentioned that he is in his 60s.

Moreover, the value of livestock is not as culturally freighted as before. However, the song is still performed during initiation ceremonies and at music and cultural festivals.

The late Boniface Mganga (1956-2011) arranged ‘Ngulū’ in four-part harmony for an SATB choir.<sup>93</sup> A note accompanies Mganga’s arrangement:

‘... the song was sung to while away tiredness during work or foot *safaris* (walking). Recurrent metaphorical phrases, “*malenge*” (pumpkin) and “*nomukaiva*” (and thou shall pay), are light-hearted warnings to “trespassers”’.

This interpretation, in my opinion, creates an impression of a post-colonial, contemporary setting by introducing ambiguities in phrases like ‘during work’ and ‘foot *safaris*.’ This synopsis removes Ngulū from the cultural setting and context of Kamba people. Another question is, what was the purpose of the ‘light-hearted warnings’ in the context of ‘foot *safaris*’? In fact, *safari* is a Swahili word for travel or journey and is currently used as a touristic word for travelling and tours. I thus question the use of this word and it makes me question whom this book was published for; could it have been published with foreigners in mind?

### 5.1.8 ‘Ngulo’ (sic)

‘Ngulo’, which is a Kamba name, written with a tilde over the second ‘u’ (Ngulū) has been written as pronounced in the liner notes to Kayamba Africa’s first, eponymous album.

*Kayamba Africa* (2002:10)

Instrumentation: vocals, electronic generated instruments.

| Time    | Form                                | Comments  | Song text  | Translation  |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 0:00:14 | Spoken riddle                       | A Kamba riddle and tongue twister said in a comedic way, with a nasal voice; <i>koo</i> is an onomatopaeic representation of the buzzing sound made by a fly. | <i>kaki kaa kokie kuu<br/>kioko kii kakuite<br/>kaki kangi<br/>kokekanga<br/>kooo...osa kana<br/>woswe</i> | This fly that came here this morning carrying another fly, and it was buzzing... take or be taken. |
| 0:00:33 | Part A<br>This section is repeated. | Call & Response:<br>Ngulū (n. Kamba) refers to the Maasai   | <i>Ngulū (Maasai) ii,<br/>Ngulū mwelela<br/><br/>Ngulū ii, Ngulū<br/>mwaiwa</i>                            | <i>Ngulū</i> , I am telling you about the <i>Ngulū</i>   |
| 0:01:36 | Part B                              | Call:   | <i>Ii ndi Ngulū</i>  |  |

<sup>93</sup> Mr. Mganga in the music scene was a composer, arranger, adjudicator and most importantly the founding choir director of the renowned Muungano choir in which a majority of the members of Kayamba Africa participated.

|         |   |  |   |  |
|---------|---|--|---|--|
|         |   | Response:<br>Ngao (n. Kamba) refers to the name of a person as well as a shield<br>Call:<br>Response:  | <i>Wangao</i><br><br><i>Ngulū</i><br><i>Wakasimbili</i>   | Son of <i>Ngao</i> (the shield).<br><br>Ngulū<br>Son of Simbili                    |
| 0:01:54 | Part C                                      | All:<br>Pumpkins are used metaphorically<br>Call:<br>The call and the response directly above form a cycle that and ends with the response.  | <i>Malenge mene</i><br><i>mwatemangie</i><br><br><i>Nomukaiva.</i>                                      | The pumpkins that you once destroyed<br><br>You shall pay                          |
| 0:02:32 | Spoken riddle <sup>1</sup>                  | <i>Munene</i> (n. Akamba) refers to the name of a person. It is also a description of a ‘big’ person who is regarded as not physically fit, as Akamba people’s body structure is taken to be predominantly petite. | <i>Ona mpaka ya</i><br><i>munene no nene...</i><br><i>Osa kana woswe...</i><br><i>maundu ti mathūku</i> | Even <i>Munene</i> ’s is still as big...Take or be taken.... Things are not as bad |
|         | Repetition of<br>Part A<br>Part B<br>Part C |  |   |  |
| 0:05:13 | Song ends                                   |  |   |  |

**Table 8 Transcription of the text of Kayamba Africa’s ‘Ngulo’<sup>94</sup>**

Liner notes: ‘A Kamba song that castigates the village villain for damaging pumpkins. He is asked to pay for the damage.’ (<<http://www.kayambaafrica.com/media/kayamba-africa>>, accessed 16 July 2011).

This note is an interpretation of the song within a contemporary context. This is displayed in two ways, i) the place of *ngulū*, the Maasai raider, has been replaced with the “village villain” providing a shift of focus from ethnicity and culture to one of character, ii) the word ‘castigates’ is a reprimand. It presents the notion of correction and forgiveness, which is far removed from the concept of war. In addition, two riddles are used within the song. The phrase ‘*osa kana woswe*’ recurs in the two riddles as it displays war or competition between two subjects (these may be

<sup>94</sup> Mercy Wavinya (email 2011) provided the translation of the riddles. The song text follows Katuli’s interpretation.

people or situations). The first riddle talks about a fly that carried another presenting a situation of triumph and defeat. The second is a warning that one should never underestimate another. These riddles appear to represent the idea of war, however, the war or competition may not be physical battle but an internal battle of one's principles.

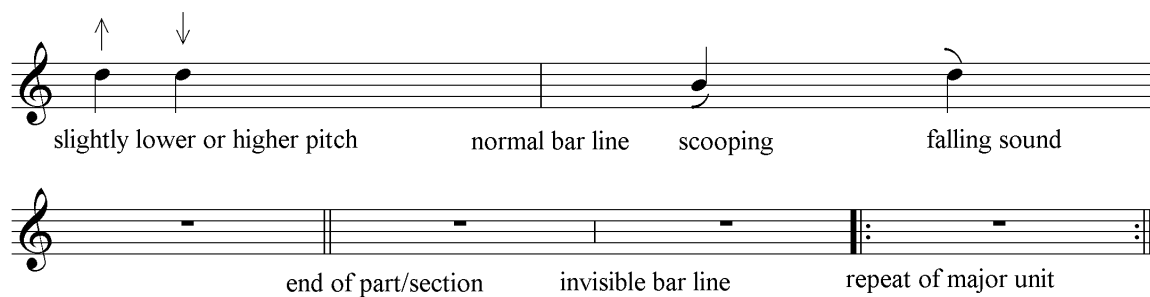
## 5.2 Musical Analysis

In this section, I analyze Kayamba Africa's recordings 'Wakarirũ and Ngulũ. I look at two related recordings for each of these songs: 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' collected on a field trip by Hugh Tracey (1973:4) in Nyeri District, Kenya in 1950 and 'Wakarirũ' a reworking of the same song recorded by Kayamba Africa. The second song 'Ngulũ' is a recording of Kayamba Africa's version and a choral arrangement of the same by the late Boniface Mganga. I chose this choral arrangement knowing that the initial members of Kayamba Africa were members of Muungano Choir. This may show the influence and difference of arrangement between Mganga and Kayamba Africa. I look at these recordings chronologically to display the developments presented in the traditional song over a period.

These analyses are organized according to pitch, scale, rhythmic structure, form, instrumentation and melodic line. I use comparison to display the development of the traditional songs in their various representations over time, the process of reworking as well as other influences at play.

The musical transcriptions presented are excerpts of sections of the songs that I selected for better understanding of the analysis.

Below is a representation of notational symbols used in the musical illustrations created to display the cases of unclear pitch and different bar lines.



**Figure 5 Representation of notational symbols used in the musical examples**

□ (major 2<sup>nd</sup>)

^ (minor 2<sup>nd</sup>)

## Figure 6 A representation of intervals used in the musical examples

### 5.2.1 'Rūimbo rwa ngũ'

#### 5.2.1.1 Form

'Rūimbo rwa ngũ' is structured in call-and-response pattern. It is performed by two groups of young women. The structure of the music is in two parts—which I refer to as part A and part B—and is influenced by the song text. In these parts are variations which are determined by: the song text, music and call-and-response. The music is strophic and in binary form. The song is unaccompanied.

#### 5.2.1.2 Rhythmic Structure

The music is in triple meter at a tempo of approximately 126 beats per minute. The tempo, however, is not consistent all through.

My approach to this analysis follows Kubik's concept of cycles. His premise is that musical form is organized into patterns and themes that cover recurring entities of elementary pulses i.e. equal pulse units repeating *ad infinitum* at a fast speed. These patterns and themes are referred to as cycle numbers. Cycle numbers can be divided or split in a way that allow for the simultaneous combination of contradictory metrical units (1994:42).

Based on this premise, 'Rūimbo rwa ngũ's' rhythmic structure comprises a cycle of 18 pulses. These 18 pulses are divided into two themes of 9 units each, part A and part B. These 9 units are the cycle numbers.

As previously shown in the analysis of the song's text, part B, comprises three sections. These sections make up 9 cycle units that are divided into 3 sub-units. These sub-units are alternations between the call and response.

Part A: Call (9 cycle units)

Part B: Response - Call - Response

(3 sub-units) - (3 sub-units) - (3 sub-units) = 9 cycle units

Pulse number per cycle= 18 pulse units.

|              |    |    |    |    |      |    |    |     |   |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|------|----|----|-----|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Part A:      | Wa | ka | ri | rū | ndiu | ma | mū | thi | i | ngū | ĩ  | ha | ĩ  | hū |    |    |    |    |
| Pulse units: | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5    | 6  | 7  | 8   | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Cycle units: | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5    | 6  | 7  | 8   | 9 |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

**Table 9 Representation of the rhythmic structure of part A of ‘Rūimbo rwa ngū.’**

|              |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Part B:      | ĩĩ | ha | ĩ | hū | ĩĩ | ha | ĩ | hū | ĩ | ĩĩ | hū | ĩ  | ye |    |    |    |    |    |
| Pulse units: | 1  | 2  | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7 | 8  | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Cycle units: | 1  | 2  | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7 | 8  | 9 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Sub-units:   |    | 1  |   |    |    |    |   | 2  |   |    |    |    | 3  |    |    |    |    |    |

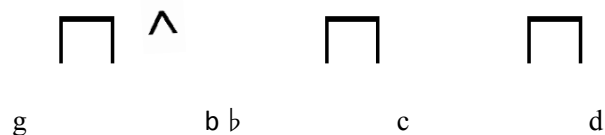
**Table 10 Representation of the rhythmic structure of Part B of ‘Rūimbo rwa ngū’**

### 5.2.1.3 Scale, Melody and Pitch

The song in Tracey's recording uses a tetratonic scale. Scales may be abstracted from their melodies by listing the tones used in order of pitch. A scale consists of all the notes used or usable in the music of a particular period, culture, or repertory, arranged schematically in ascending or descending order of pitch. The tonal centre in the music is approximately g in the Western scale. The scale degrees in relation to the Western tempered scale are g, b<sup>b</sup>, c and d. Kikuyu traditional music is known to use the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, which is mainly illustrated as d r m s l with the intervals of major 3rds and major 2nds.<sup>95</sup> This theory is overstated, as not every Kikuyu traditional song is pentatonic in nature, 'Rūimbo rwa ngũ' being one of these. It comprises four notes with a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> and two major 2<sup>nd</sup> intervals.

The singers' intonation is not easily represented using the Western tempered scale. There are microtonal differences relative to the tempered scale and there are instances where the singers sound 'out of tune'. It therefore proved difficult to measure the actual pitch of the music due to delicate nuances among the singers. These nuances are because of non-uniformity in vocal projection and timbre. These assumed causes that make the singing to be 'out of tune' to the Western-trained ear could possibly be an aesthetic of Kikuyu vocal music. With this in mind, my transcription will be to the nearest perfect pitch.

Below are illustrations of the tetratonic scale using Western notation.



**Figure 7 Representation of the intervallic ratio of the tetratonic scale of 'Rūimbo rwa ngũ'**



**Figure 8 The tetratonic scale of 'Rūimbo rwa ngũ'**

<sup>95</sup> Senoga-Zake 2000:2, ParrottSheffer & Promeet <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/450385/pentatonic-scale>>, accessed 25 October 2011.

The range of the melody of the song is narrow; the lowest note is g and the highest d, which are approximately a fifth apart. The call section of the song sounds bold and one singer can be heard to stand out as the leader while the response give a feeling of hesitation in their singing, this is given away by their soft singing. This raises the following questions; could the women singing the call have more experience in leading songs than those singing the response? Where was the microphone placed? Was the recording device facing the soloists? What was the performance setting during the recording? Which of the two groups had more attention? Is this a result of the performers' interpretation of the song?



**Figure 9 Illustration of the melodic line of the call-and-response**

#### 5.2.1.4 Sound Representation

‘Rũimbo rwa ngũ’ was initially recorded using analogue equipment and presented on long playing microgroove records, LPs for short. The footage was therefore raw in its form and also explains a continuous humming sound in the recording. This later was converted to digital format and marketed on a compact disk, which is the format in which I encountered this recording. Although there is no information that describes the space in which Tracey did this recording, there is an audible reverb quality. It may be assumed either that the recording was done in a small room or that a reverb effect was added.

### 5.2.2 ‘Wakariru’ (Kayamba Africa, 2002:12)

#### 5.2.2.1 Key Signature and Rhythmic Structure

The key signature of the music is E- flat major, which later transposes to E major (00:01:36). The tempo is 126 beats per minute similar to ‘Rũimbo rwa ngũ’. The music is in 3/4 time.

### 5.2.2.2 Instrumentation

The accompaniment is entirely digital synthesizer generated and produced on a keyboard and sampled loops.<sup>96</sup> The reference to instruments is thus to sampled and/or synthesized instrumental sounds. The music begins with wooden blocks defining the meter of the music by accenting the first and third beats. An introduction to the melodic line played on a bamboo flute followed by a crescendo on the reverse cymbal; this gives a feeling of growth in sound as the full orchestration begins. The orchestration consists of a drum-kit, tambourine, shaker, triangle, marimba, string pad, electronic piano and synth bass.<sup>97</sup>

The string pad plays chord progressions throughout the song, providing a sense of lushness in the music. The warm homophonic sound of the string pad gives a base for the piano to play an interlude. This melody is played in a gospel style with the use of chords that include the seventh note as the bass provides space for the piano by playing one note per bar. The drum-kit, triangle and shaker maintain their rhythmic patterns- this was most likely looped- throughout the song. The marimba plays a short sequential melodic line which cues part A.

The marimba continues to play through part A creating a polyphonic texture in the music. The triangle and the shaker play throughout the music. This rhythmic expression may have influences from the Kikuyu leg rattle (*kigamba*) which, if played in this context, would stress the last four quaver beats of each bar as the stamping of the foot would stress the first crotchet beat of the bar. Although in this case, the shaker stresses the last beat.

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<sup>96</sup> A synthesizer here is used to mean an electronic sound-producing device (Hosken 2001:198). I refer to sampled loops as a repeated segment of musical material from a segment of musical material. (Hosken 2001:238). Hosken (*ibid.*:198) describes the process of sampling as the making of separate recordings of an instrument being played at various pitches, dynamic levels, and articulations, these recordings are imported into a software or hardware sampler.

<sup>97</sup> The synthesized instrumental accompaniments, I discussed with Alistair Andrews, an experienced contemporary music practice lecturer, whose insights I am grateful for. I am using the 'instrument' names he used.

Figure 10 Illustration of the triangle and shaker lines

The keyboard and marimba play a short motif, which is found in Senoga-Zake’s transcription of the song. In his transcription, the singers sing ‘Wakaruci, Wakaruci’ as they move into part B which is similarly structured, although with the addition of a reverse cymbal. In this recording, the singers are silent as the marimba and keyboard play the two bars of ‘Wakaruci, Wakaruci’ extended by a further three bars of instrumental music. The singers start section B with ‘Mburã ñiroira...’ as in the Tracey recording. The effect is to introduce a transition.

Figure 11 An excerpt of Senoga-Zake’s transcription of ‘Wakarirũ’ (2007:7)

The song transposes a semi-tone upwards after an instrumental interlude. This transposition is cued by the reverse cymbal, led by the bass and marimba layered on the string pad into part A<sup>3</sup>. The keyboard plays phrases that are related to the melody but in a chordal style. Part B is repeated three times without the keyboard, with a cyclic vamp of the tonic and dominant chords respectively. The song ends with unaccompanied singing.

### 5.2.2.3 Form and Structure

The song is in three parts: interludes, verse and chorus. These parts each vary as the song develops. Although compared to Tracey's recording, there is no chorus. There is a new part that is introduced in Kayamba Africa's version which I choose to call the chorus. Based on this, the song is structured as;

verse 1 (A)- verse 2 (A<sup>1</sup>)- interlude- chorus- (key change)-verse 3 (A<sup>2</sup>)- verse 4 (A<sup>3</sup>)- interlude- chorus (repeated).

### 5.2.2.4 Vocal Analysis

Harmony is the main quality the voices use to create the dynamics in the song. It thus forms the basis of my analysis.

After the melodic introduction of the music by the bamboo flute and an instrumental prelude, the tenor call introduces the traditional song. This I refer to as part A or verse one. As the tenor sings, the marimba plays a sequence of ascending thirds above creating a sense of polyphony and continuity. The second section (A<sup>1</sup>) is a repetition of the previous verse although with different text sung by the tenor call accompanied by a bass harmony. Here, the marimba is not as prominent although it plays little interludes of descending thirds between phrases.

Marimba and keyboard play the interlude 'Wakaruci' leading to a homophonic response (part B) comprising of: tenor one (high harmony), tenor two (melodic line) and the bass (lower harmony) follows and is repeated.

An interlude dominated by the ascending sequence of the marimba leads the music to a transposition to E major. The singers immediately follow with the next verse (A<sup>3</sup>) this time without the marimba.

For purposes of variation in part A<sup>4</sup>, polyphony is introduced with each voice singing a counter melody from the other. In addition, the tenor one sings an imitation of descant singing. This creates a build up of the music.

In the chorus (B<sup>1</sup>), the song resumes to a homophonic texture although in four-part harmony with the addition of a second bass harmony. This effect is strongly felt on the third repetition of the song that ends the song.

### 5.2.3 Observations on the reworking of ‘Rūimbo rwa ngũ’.

There are notable transformations of the traditional song seen in Tracey’s and Kayamba Africa’s recordings;

- Time signature and tempo. Kikuyu music uses the triple meter as well as the 5/8 hemiola rhythm. In Tracey’s recording, the triple meter is strongly heard, as the singers seem to stress the strong beat. In Kayamba Africa’s recording, the imitation of the *kigamba*’s style of playing by the triangle and shakers may have been used as an idiomatic expression through which the listener is able to identify the community from which the music belongs. However, it is not established that the *kigamba* was used in the cultural performance context of ‘Rūimbo rwa ngũ’.
- Transposition. The music transposes from E-flat to E major.
- Call-and-response. This differs in the two recordings. In Tracey’s, the response comes in at “ĩĩ hāĩ hũ, ĩĩ hũiyĩ” while in Kayamba Africa’s version, it is heard in the chorus “mbura nĩroira...”. Polyphonic ideas, in Kayamba Africa’s recording, embellish the call thus breaking the monotony of the melodic line sung throughout by the tenor solo.
- Performance practice. Tracey’s aim for recording was for research purposes while Kayamba Africa’s is for commercial purposes. In both cases, these recordings give no implication of the activity that was accompanied by the traditional songs i.e. the harvesting of firewood or crops or as children play.
- Use of instrumentation and synthesized sounds and sample loops in Kayamba Africa’s recording. This changes the sound of style of the song as well as its form and structure.
- Homophony is used in Kayamba Africa’s version.
- 

### 5.2.4 ‘Ngulu’ (sic.) (Choral arrangement by Boniface Mganga)

I discuss two versions of ‘Ngulũ’: Kayamba Africa’s recording and Boniface Mganga’s arrangement performed by Muungano National Choir. Cf. the appendix for Maganga’s published arrangement (n.d.:35-42)

As there are no significant textual differences between the versions, I treat the text as the same, and follow the text from Kayamba Africa’s recording. However, I have amended the published version, which lacks the necessary diacritical marks.

#### *5.2.3.1 Key Signature*

The music is in G major all through.

#### *5.2.3.2 Time Signature*

The music is in 3/4 and 2/4 time.

#### *5.2.3.3 Form*

The song begins with a call-and-response pattern between the tenor and the choir.

The song text is repetitive, but by contrast, Mganga's arrangement contains variations in tempo, meter, rhythm and harmony.

#### *5.2.3.4 Rhythmic structure*

The rhythm of the piece is similar to the actual traditional song. The song begins on an offbeat. There are tempo variations throughout the music. It progresses from M.M. =108 to 69 and finally 80. These tempo changes correspond to structural developments in the music.

#### *5.2.3.5 Scale, Melody and pitch*

The music follows the Western tempered scale with certain rules of harmony and counterpoint of Western composition.

The tenor maintains the melodic line of the traditional song all through.

#### *5.2.3.6 Sound representation*

I provide a music score and sound recording acquired from the 'National Songs for Choir: Volume 1' book and cassette (1995). The sound recording is a conversion of a cassette recording to CD format.<sup>98</sup>

#### *5.2.3.7 Instrumentation*

The musical arrangement is for SATB although there is a section where it changes to TTBB.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Danson Simiyu, the chief film officer at PPMC, did the CD conversion.

<sup>99</sup> See bar 34-39 of Mganga's score.

It has a piano accompaniment used for rehearsal purposes only. This accompaniment is a guideline to the vocal parts as it plays each melodic line and expresses the harmonic quality required of the singers.

#### 5.3.1.8 Vocal Analysis

My analysis here will focus on their use of homophony and polyphony. I determine the musical form by the change in tempo and arrangement of the voices. I may refer to parts of the song using its text for better description.

#### Part A (bar 1-10)

The song begins with a call sung by the tenor and response from the choir in SATB. In the response, the soprano sings the melody. It is homophonic and repeated. The rhythm of the song is more expressive at bar nine as it introduces a new section.

#### Part B (bar 11-14)

The tempo and meter change to M.M.= 69 and 2/4 time, respectively. It is sung in a slightly flexible tempo (*tempo poco rubato*). The tenor calls 'ndi Ngulũ' and the choir responds homophonically 'wangao...'.<sup>100</sup>

#### Part C (bar 15-18)

This section is homophonic and sung loud and in a manner suggestive of speech (*quasi parlando*). This implies a great significance of the text in this section to the song.

#### Part D (bar 19-22)

This section marks the end of the introductory statement, singing "*nomukaiva*" i.e. "they shall pay".<sup>100</sup> The call is by the altos and the choir responds with the words in Part B. The style of singing is light and moderately loud for expressivity. Bar 22 is in 2/4 time.

#### Part A<sup>1</sup> (bar 23-32)

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<sup>100</sup> According to the translation of the song in the song text analysis, the message of the song is that the person who cut the pumpkins will have to pay, "nomukaiva", hence my description of this part as the end of the song's statement.

In this section, the music is similar to part A though polyphonic. The music returns to its initial tempo. In bar 23-27, the sopranos sing the melody Ngulū as the altos come in with a counter melody. In bar 28-31, the altos sing the melody as the other three voice parts harmonize polyphonically. Due to the high notes on the soprano line, they sing moderately loud while the rest of the choir sing loud.

#### Part B<sup>1</sup> (bar 33)

This section is similar to part B although it is one bar long. The choir sings the phrase homophonically and moderately soft.

#### Part E (bar 34-39)

This is sung in 2/4 time. The singing arrangement changes to TTBB.<sup>101</sup> Here the bass one sing in a manner suggestive of speech as the other voices sing lightly.

Repetition of parts B, C and D (bar 40- 51).

#### Part A<sup>2</sup> (bar 52-63)

The soprano and alto call homophonically with the soprano carrying the melodic line (bar 52-56). In bar 56/7, the tenors sing the melodic line as the choir joins in polyphonically (bar 57- 63).

Part A<sup>1</sup> is repeated (bar 63-73)

End (Bar 73-74)

The voices get broader (*allargando*), gradually louder and more expressive (*tenuto*). The song ends with in a perfect cadence in six-part harmony.

### **5.2.5 'Ngulo' (Kayamba Africa 2002:7)**

#### *5.2.4.1 Key Signature*

The recording is in G Major and transposes to A Major (00:03:29) then B-flat major (00:04:13). The music is in 4/4 time all through.

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<sup>101</sup> Acronym for Tenor one, Tenor two, Bass one and Bass two.

#### 5.2.4.3 Form

The song is in three parts which I refer to as part A, B and C. These parts may have some variations, which I analyze and represent with superscript numbers e.g. Part A<sup>1</sup>.

#### 5.2.4.4 Instrumentation

The accompaniment is entirely synthesizer generated and produced on a keyboard and sample loops. The music begins with a soft sound of the string pad, keyboard, percussions and moog type of flute sound that plays a monophonic motif of two notes. The marimba plays a repetitive melodic line that is maintained all through the song. A drum roll that cues the fretless bass and the drum-kit follows. The consistent rhythm on the hi-hat provides the pulse hence defining the meter of the music. This rhythm plays throughout the song.

There is an instrumental interlude before the introduction of the melodic line by the tenor. A sampled guitar sound, played probably on a keyboard, plays short and chordal ideas and interplays with the vocal line. The particular guitar and beat used is similar to the 1990's American pop and R&B music. This sound is heard in Zanziki and Hardstone's music, pioneers of Kenyan pop music who had their music produced in the same production house. Zanziki's music producer, Giddo Kibukosya, is Kayamba Africa's producer for this song and album.

This instrumentation is maintained throughout the recording, even through the transposition to A major and later B-flat major.

#### 5.2.4.5 Vocal analysis<sup>102</sup>

The vocal arrangement in this recording is based on three-part harmony of tenor one (high harmony), tenor two (the melody) and bass (lower harmony). There is also a tenor and baritone soloist.

An instrumental prelude introduces the music, followed by a riddle. The tenor solo introduces the melodic line of the song as a call which is responded to homophonically by the three voice parts (00:00:33-55).<sup>103</sup> This section is repeated and followed by a brief instrumental interlude with the marimba, keyboard and guitar taking precedence and to the second part (B) of the music.

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<sup>102</sup> I achieved this analysis with the guidance of Mr. Patrick Tikolo, a lecturer on Opera singing at the University of Cape Town, which I greatly appreciate. I am using the music terminologies he used.

<sup>103</sup> I refer to this section of the music as the introductory statement of part A.

Here, there is call-and-response between the tenor solo and the other voices as in part A. Following the text, the phrases are shorter and repetitive. The tenor solo handles this by using rhythmic and melodic variations such as triplets and subtle melisma. These qualities express his interpretation of the emphasis given to the subject “Ngulũ”. Additionally, on the third cycle of the call, the tenor sequentially builds up the music by taking the melody up to the dominant of the home note G. Meanwhile, the response is homophonic throughout this section.

**Figure 12 Illustration of the developments of the tenor call from the tonic to the dominant and the use of melisma and triplets.**

Hereafter is the statement that relays the message of the song “the pumpkins you once destroyed/cut/stole, you shall repay” (part C). This is expressed through homophony and in almost a speaking voice. This is similar to Mganga’s arrangement. Short rhythmic values are used to produce an expressive style of singing that is similar to the speech rhythm, as shown in figure 13. The call is lead by a baritone voice, sung by Juma Odemba, changing the texture of the music. The baritone or bass one in Kayamba Africa’s arrangements is usually what the members refer to as the alto harmony. Similarly, from my observation of Mganga’s arrangement, the alto line takes the lead from the tenor call in this same section of the music.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See bar 19 of Mganga’s choral arrangement (bar15-19) or listen at 00:00:40-00:00:46.

Tenor Solo  
Ma - le-nge-me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e. Ma

Baritone Solo  
No-mu-ka-i va\_\_\_

TENOR 1  
wa-ka-si-mbi li,\_\_\_ Ma - le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e. Ma

TENOR 2  
wa-ka-si-mbi li,\_\_\_ Ma - le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e. Ma

Bass  
wa-ka-si-mbi li,\_\_\_ Ma - le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e. Ma

le-nge-me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e.

le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e.

le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e.

le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi - e.

**Figure 13 Illustration of the baritone solo line and short rhythmic values in response**

The song resumes to its introductory statement (part A<sup>1</sup>) moving to an instrumental interlude where the riddle “Even Munene’s is still as big... take or be taken.... things are not as bad” is said. This riddle, in my view, is positioned here to stress the point of the song as explained in the text analysis. This is followed by a repetition of part B and an interlude that leads to transposition of the key from G to A major. This transposition is strongly expressed by the tenor’s immediate entry with the song’s statement (part A<sup>2</sup>). The next section (part D) introduces the use of voice tossings (00:03:51). Here, the voices enter almost in a canonic style creating a different kind of

polyphony. This is subsequently resolved with a *portamento* (a falling kind of slide) and harmonic melisma as it acts as a transition to a transposition to B-flat major.

The new key appears unexpected to the ears though gives the music some continuity. Similar to previous parts, the introductory statement is sung in the same form. This is followed by a polyphonic use of voice tossings by the singers. These voice tossings are an interpolation of previous melodies and thematic ideas. The soft dynamics heard in the voices create a sense of growth in the song as well as conclusion.

### **5.2.6 Observations on the reworking of 'Ngulũ'**

Here I look at the similarities and differences between Mganga and Kayamba Africa's recording. I also highlight the qualities of reworking that were applied in each of their arrangements.

Mganga and Kayamba Africa's arrangements of 'Ngulũ' share some similarities which I do not consider a coincidence. Actually, I believe that certain ideas in Kayamba Africa's version are borrowed from the choral arrangement. The similarities observed are;

- the use of the tenor and the baritone (alto) soloists.
- The use of homophonic structure in the introductory and conclusive statement i.e "Ngulũ ñ...mwelela..." and "Malenge mene..." respectively.
- Singing in a manner suggestive of speech is a common in both arrangements at similar sections.
- The use of polyphony to develop the song. Although Kayamba Africa used voice tossings while Mganga used counter melodies interweaving with the melodic line.

In both of these recordings, the traditional song has been transformed in different ways though following certain principles of Western choral harmony. Because it is short and repetitive, different compositional styles have been applied. These are;

- Change in tempo. This is seen in Mganga's arrangement as a style of his interpretation. I presume that the fast tempo was to stress on the melody and give a strong statement. This is seen in part A and C. Part B is sung in a more relaxed tempo. These themes were maintained in the same tempo throughout the music.
- Change of meter and rhythm. This is seen in Mganga's arrangement where he uses 3/4 and 2/4 time. In Kayamba Africa's recording, they use triplets within the strict duple meter maintained by the hi-hat.

- Use of tonal qualities or colour for expression. The tenor sings to introduce the melody and the song's subject while the alto/baritone are used to relay the point of the message i.e that they shall repay "nomukaiva".
- Transposition. Similar to Wakarirū, Kayamba Africa, begin 'Ngulū' in G major which later transposes to A major and eventually ends in B-flat Major.
- Polyphony is another style used by both Mganga and Kayamba Africa. They use counter melodies while Kayamba Africa also use voice-tossings.
- Homophony. This is a common and strong feature in both arrangements. Interestingly, homophony is applied in similar sections of the music in both arrangements. It could thus be assumed that Kayamba Africa borrowed this idea from Mganga's arrangement. Homophony in both works has been used to give a statement of the music. It has been used together with speech-like style of singing (*quasi parlando*) to give a strong statement on following the meaning of the text and thus stress the message of the song.
- Repetition has also been used to stress on the point/message of the song. It is also used to establish a different theme, section or part of the song.
- Instrumentation. Mganga's arrangement is *a cappella* with a piano accompaniment that is used during rehearsals only. Kayamba Africa use synthesized instruments and sample loops.

### 5.3 Conclusion

In the text analysis of 'Omutun', 'Rūimbo rwa ngū', 'Wakarirū' and 'Ngulū' it is shown that the interpretation of these songs vary among the people belonging to the songs' respective communities. I observed certain factors that cause these differences; they include social organisation and activity surrounding the people at a certain time, gender, location of the people and oral history.

The social organization and activity in Kamaru's time confirmed by Njooora's recollection of the performance context of the song was similar. They discussed it as a harvesting song that was sung to hasten the women labourers and as a singing game by girls. However, the titles of the song, as presented to them, differed. On the other hand, Mūkūyū's and Nyanyega's (in Tracey's field notes) interpretations were based on literal translation as well as their understanding of the song in the context of a Kikuyu woman probably in the pre-colonial and colonial times. This brings in the gender factor.

Location as a factor of interpretation is shown in Katuli, Muthini and Musyoka's translations of Ngulũ as well as the oral history. Katuli describes Ngulũ as a war song that was performed by warriors and young men *anake* training to be warriors who use the name Ngulũ to mean the Maasai. Muthini describes it as a war song performed by warriors and male elders referring to the warriors as Ngulũ. Muthini also mentions *Iveti* hills located in Machakos, his village, while Katuli does not. Musyoka's text, translation and form of the song differ from the other consultants. This also is because of location as he is from Mwingi, the social situation and activity and age when he encountered the song. He was taught the song as a singing game to warn him and other children against stealing.

Difference in oral history is also shown in Cheruto's translation of 'Lelo'. She describes it to mean "today" as well as the name of a woman as Maritim's understanding was only of the former.

These factors also apply in Kayamba Africa's interpretation. In 'Wakarirũ', they sing about the coming of rain and in the text, the subject in the song got to bed just before it rained. In Ngulũ, the song castigates the village villain. These interpretations, in terms of translation and language used in the website's notes, appear to be their contemporary views of the songs.

In view of disparities observed, these traditional songs have messages and meaning that are used as an avenue for cultural integration. These messages and meanings are as a result of the relation of the song text and the people in different time and space. This also reflects on the variations in musical representation of these songs.

In the musical analysis, following the recording, 'Rũimbo/Wakarirũ mix', the singers in 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' sing at a similar tempo as the instrumental prelude of 'Wakarirũ' (0:00:00 to 0:00:17) but it suddenly hastens though maintaining the triple meter.<sup>105</sup> The singers in 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' perform in a similar key to Kayamba Africa's instrumental prelude; however, there are moments when the female singers seem to be singing 'out of tune'. This is caused by the difference in aesthetics in music qualities between the Kikuyu scale and nuances and the Western trained ear.

The disparities noted in the recordings include: form, style of singing, instrumentation, vocal and instrumental arrangement. In 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' the recording is without instrumental

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<sup>105</sup> 'Rũimbo/Wakarirũ mix' is 36 seconds long comprising a section of Tracey's track, 'Rũimbo rwa ngũ' placed on Kayamba Africa's introductory section (prelude) of 'Wakarirũ'. This I did to highlight the recordings' similarities and differences for my analysis. This was made possible through Alistair's experience with music software and programming.

accompaniment while ‘Wakarirũ’ is orchestrated with digital synthesized sounds with singing. The style of singing by the women in ‘Rũimbo rwa ngũ’ is in an “open” quality while Kayamba Africa’s singing has a warm and less “open” quality.<sup>106</sup> The female singers sing in call-response pattern monophonically as Kayamba Africa explored different styles of vocal and instrumental arrangement. These different styles include the use of; homophony in three-part and later four-part, call-response, counter melodies, imitation of descant singing, transposition, instrumental interludes, the triangle throughout the music and the change to *a cappella* at the end. Each of these styles in Kayamba Africa’s recording contributed to the dynamics of the music. It can be seen that the songs’ text greatly influences that form and structure of both recordings.

In ‘Ngulũ’, I have observed that some vocal techniques used by Kayamba Africa are similar to Mganga’s arrangement, these include, *quasi parlando* and the light and sweet style of singing. Mganga’s arrangement is in SATB and TTBB style while Kayamba Africa’s is in TTBB guided by the SATB choral arrangement. An example is shown in part C of Kayamba Africa’s recording, where a baritone sings the call while part D (bar 19) of the choral version is led by altos.

Each recording applied different styles of arrangement due to the repetitive nature of ‘Ngulũ’. Kayamba Africa used voice tossing, counter melody, transposition for aesthetic purposes and dynamics in the music while Mganga used variations in tempo, rhythm and harmony. The singing in both recordings is mainly homophonic and following a call-and-response pattern. Kayamba Africa’s recording uses digitally synthesized sounds for instrumental accompaniment while the choral arrangement is unaccompanied.

From these observations, it can be said that, Kayamba Africa use the syncretic technique (Nketia 2005:347) of reworking. They use a four-part harmony and *a cappella* styles of singing together with digital synthesized sounds, while the traditional song’s melody and tempo and key—in the case of Wakarirũ—are maintained. The syncretic idea is also shown in their choice of songs for the medley ‘Omutun’ which include a marriage song, sacred song and a war song. However, I suggest that Kayamba Africa should use more re-interpretive techniques (Nketia 2005) to broaden their musical performance style. This may be done by including more indigenous instruments to their arrangements than digitized sounds and using more indigenously inclined harmonies in their *a cappella* arrangements in conjunction with their medley style.

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<sup>106</sup> The term “open” was the description used by Mr. Tikolo, a lecturer on vocal production. It is used to describe, the singer’s probable shaping of the mouth as they sang this song.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Conclusions**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

In this chapter I review the study including the problem, objectives, literature and theories. This section presents the findings of my research into Kayamba Africa's reworking of traditional musics in recordings and live performances. The chapter also presents recommendations generated from my findings as well as suggestions for further research.

## 6.1 Conclusions

Based on my objectives and the study of Kayamba Africa, certain themes have emerged and at times recurred. These themes have contributed to the creation of the group, their repertoire and style of reworking as well as representation in performances.

### 6.1.1 A Nationalistic Approach

Kayamba Africa's music is rooted in Kenya's choral music at the music festival and in the church. Most important for Kayamba Africa this choral music was given state recognition with the institution of a national choir in the 1980s during Daniel Arap Moi's presidency. In a related move, the Permanent Presidential Music Commission was formed in 1982. The commission's mission is to present and preserve Kenyan cultures through music. The PPMC has been in charge of entertainment at state functions and national holidays since its inception. Their vetting of different cultural groups and their programmes ensures that they represent Kenya's many ethnic groups through performance, largely by choosing performances of items in a range of Kenyan languages, or expressive of a particular music culture. This multicultural approach is designed to promote a sense of togetherness and nationalism. This nationalistic project has greatly influenced Kayamba Africa's approach to reworking traditional musics from different cultures, and to programming their material, in ways that have proved acceptable to public audiences and the state. However, a recent approach to nationalism—ever since the 2007 post-election violence—in some state functions is the use of ethically un-marked repertoire which Kayamba Africa have executed professionally with their renditions of KiSwahili popular songs and own compositions.

### 6.1.2 Kayamba Africa's Versatility

Kayamba Africa's versatility can be traced to their experiences with choral repertoire in music festivals and especially with the Muungano National choir. This state-sponsored choir began as a union of singers from various churches and religious denominations performing Africanized songs and adaptations of traditional songs. The Muungano choir also performed arrangements of traditional songs sometimes presenting them as a medley. Arrangements of *zilizopendwa* music were common in Muungano's performances. Patriotic songs were mainly performed in the country's national language KiSwahili. These factors, as well as the styles of arrangement, are clearly to be seen at play throughout Kayamba Africa's repertoire as is apparent from the analysis of the different genres they perform and which are reflected in their recordings.

Kayamba Africa's marketing of themselves as performing and recording artists, and their style of music have developed together. They have developed a well-judged ability to package and market

the group performances so as to achieve a fit with their clients' expectations and needs. As a group of musicians, they have accumulated vast experience in performing in various contexts within Kenya and elsewhere. To supplement their singing abilities and extend the range of depth of textures and arrangements, they added backing tracks to their performances, as well as dancers, and they recorded music videos. All this they did with a canny sense of the changes in the national and international music industry. To shine as performers at weddings and other functions, they adopted and developed the MC function. They responded to new challenges in marketing, by using the Internet to facilitate their bookings for performances and to market their music recordings via their website and iTunes<sup>®</sup>. They also upload videos on YouTube<sup>®</sup> and Vimeo<sup>®</sup>.

The ability to adapt and adopt is mirrored in the way they have drawn on several national and international resources in their performance style and repertoire.

### **6.1.3 Singing Style**

I found that Kayamba Africa's style of singing is influenced by *makwaya* and Euro-American pop style of singing. The *makwaya* singing is shown through their style of phrasing and an element of "sweet" singing that they use at times. The Euro-American pop singing style is illustrated by their open but controlled style, which is particularly used by the song leader.

### **6.1.4 Exposure to Popular Styles of Music from Africa and Beyond**

The idea of starting the group Kayamba Africa was inspired by Ladysmith Black Mambazo's style of *isicathamiya* music. This is seen in Kayamba Africa's *a cappella* style of performance, their dress code as well as the representation of the group i.e. Juma Odemba is seen as the face of the group just as Joseph Shabalala represents Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Another influence on the group's style of music is *Lingala* music from Congo. My research has shown that Kayamba Africa often use the *seben* style of guitar playing as a climax in their recordings as well as live performances. In their live performances, they also perform an imitation of *ndombolo* dance style. Kayamba Africa have also borrowed stylistic features from the 1990s Afro-American R 'n' B and pop music as shown in the analysis of the song 'Ngulũ'. This displays the effects of globalization and the broadcasting, recording and marketing of music in Kenya.

### **6.1.5 Performance Structure and Backing Tracks**

In my field research in chapter four, I observed that Kayamba Africa's performances especially at weddings are structured. This structure is based on the prior arrangements and negotiations made

between the bridal party and the group before signing a contract as well as their strategy to gauge the type of music suitable for an audience. I however, observed limitations to this structure, as some of the women I studied did not appreciate Kayamba Africa's 'interruption' as they sang for the bride. This 'interruption' is the actual entertainment of the reception and the purpose that they were invited to perform. Another limitation is the sense of monotony as their order of repertoire was the same because they performed with backing tracks. The issue of backing tracks has raised concerns among audiences and other brides have preferred to hire cultural groups for entertainment. I found out that they test their day's repertoire either by playing background music of different styles of music, this is seen in the state function where Richie played a contemporary ethnically-inclined song, or engaging the audience in a 'rehearsal' of their actual performance where they observe the audiences' response to the songs.

#### **6.1.6 Kayamba Africa's Interpretation of Traditional Songs**

Based on my findings in the analysis of music and song text, the interpretation of song greatly influenced the reworking Kayamba Africa's repertoire. In this I am following Bakhtin's idea that relations vary in time and space and McGann's mention of 'distant speakers'. The relations at play in the process of reworking are those between the texts of the traditional songs and Kayamba Africa's versions, as well as the relevance of the song to their audience. Kayamba Africa's relation with the song texts at the time that they encountered them varies from the research consultants', and thus there arise differences in interpretation and representation of these songs. As a result, the different forms of representation and reworking the group have used include the style of medley, remarked as far back as the early 1960s by Hyslop in the adaptation of folk songs, the choice of instrumentation and rhythmic structure as well as vocal representation. This is respectively shown in 'Omutun', 'Wakarirũ' and 'Ngulũ'.

Also, based on Nketia's (2005) theory of reworking, introduced in chapter two, as well as my interactions with other scholarly ideas, I use the term neo-traditional here to reference a product of syncretism<sup>107</sup> and/or re-interpretation<sup>108</sup> of traditional and contemporary cultures and its influences. Based on this premise and my findings through the analysis of song text and musical

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<sup>107</sup> This Nketia describes as the combination of African melodic and rhythmic techniques with adaptations of Western tonal harmony (2005:351).

<sup>108</sup> This Nketia (*ibid.*:356) defines as a technique enabling composers to stay within their culture and at the same time to give contemporary relevance to the culture's musical tradition through fresh integrations of musical elements, usages and forms within the culture that belongs to a previous and abandoned era.

structure, I term Kayamba Africa's style of reworking neo-traditional music through its use of syncretism displayed by their combination of elements of the traditional songs with Western digitized sounds and style of harmony.

## 6.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations of areas for further research presented as points.

- a) The re-invention of tradition and traditional songs in weddings. This is inspired by my field findings on the adaptation of KiSwahili and English words with a Kikuyu interpretation into what people term as traditional songs.<sup>109</sup> These songs may also have been adapted to suit this occasion.
- b) The use and impact of digital synthesizers in the Kenyan music industry. Here I suggest a study of its limitations and advantages, which would be a stylistic critique informed by a detailed knowledge of changing music technology, and an understanding of the realities of the recording industry.
- c) The impact of backing tracks versus live performance in social and state events in Nairobi and other parts of Kenya. Mark Lamont's (2010) study based on fieldwork he undertook in Meru briefly describes the impact of backing tracks in gospel music performance, points to the need for further investigation of a pervasive phenomenon.
- d) The effects of the 2007 post-election violence on the music industry and national representation of cultures.

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<sup>109</sup> See the songs 'Werokamu' and 'wawiri kwa wawiri i' discussed in Kayamba Africa's recorded repertoire in chapter three.

## Appendix

# Ngulu

Akamba Folk Song  
For Mixed Voices

Arr. Boniface Mganga.

*f* *2nd. time mf*  $\text{♩} = 108$

Ngul- lu ii, Ngul- lu mwe- le- la Ngul-  
 Ngul- lu ii, Ngul- lu mwe- le- la Ngul-  
*f* *2nd. time mf* *f* *2nd. time mf*  
 Ngul- lu ii, Ngul- lu mwe- le- la, Ngul- lu ii Ngul- lu mwa- i- wa Ngul- lu ii, Ngul- lu mwe- le- la Ngul-  
*f* *2nd. time mf*  
 Ngul- lu ii, Ngul- lu mwe- le- la Ngul-

*f* *2nd. time mf*  $\text{♩} = 108$

*Piano for rehearsal only* *f* *2nd. time mf* *f* *2nd. time mf*

*Ten.* *tempo poco rubato*  $\text{♩} = 69$  *mf*

lu ii, Ngul- lu mwa- i- wa lu mwa- i- wa. wa- nga- o,  
 lu ii, Ngul- lu mwa- i- wa lu mwa- i- wa. wa- nga- o,  
 lu ii, Ngul- lu mwa- i- wa Ngul- lu mwa- i- wa. I- ndi Ngul- lu, wa- nga- o, Ngul- lu  
 lu ii, Ngul- lu mwa- i- wa lu mwa- i- wa. wa- nga- o,  
*Ten.* *tempo poco rubato*  $\text{♩} = 69$  *mf*

13 *2nd. time cresc.* 1 *2 f* *Quasi parlando* 3

wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ma-le-nge-me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi-e

*2nd. time cresc.* *mf* *ff* *f*

wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ma-le-nge-me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi-e

*2nd. time cresc.* *mf* *ff* *f*

wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ma-le-nge-me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi-e

*2nd. time cresc.* *mf* *f* *3*

19 *Leggiero e cantabile* = 80 *mf* 1 2 *A tempo*

Ngu-lu; Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ng

*mf*

No-mu-ka-i-va Ngu-lu; wa-nga-o Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li.

*mf*

Ngu-lu; wa-nga-o Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li.

*mf*

Ngu-lu; wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li.

*Leggiero e cantabile* = 80 *mf* 1 *A tempo*

*mf* *f*

24 *mf*

lu ii, Ngu- lu mwe-le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu ii.

*f*

Ngu- lu Ngu- lu Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu ii, Ngu-

*f*

Ngu- lu Ngu-

*f*

Ngu- lu

*mf*

*f*

29

Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa.

lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu, mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa.

lu mwe- le- la, ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa.

Ngu- lu Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa.

*mp* *Tempo rubato*

TENOR 1  
No-mu-ka-i-va.

TENOR 2  
No-mu-ka-i-va.

BASS 1  
*Quasi parlando*  
No-mu-ka-i-va. le-nge me-ne mwa-te-ma-ngi-e.

BASS 2  
*cantabile*  
No-mu-ka-i-va. Ma-ii, Ngu-

*f* *Tempo primo (cantabile)*  
Ngu-lu-ii.

*mp* *Tempo rubato*

*mp* *Quasi parlando* *f* *cantabile*

37

*Rall.* *mf* *Tempo poco rubato* **SOPRANO**  
Ngu-lu, ii, mwa-i-wa-l-

*Cantabile* *Rall.* *mf* *Tempo poco rubato* **ALTO**  
lu mwe-le-la Ngu-lu. ii, Ngu-lu, mwa-i-wa-l-

*Cantabile* *Div.* *Rall.* **TENOR**  
Ngu-lu mwe-le-la Ngu-lu. Ngu-lu, Ngu-lu mwa-i-wa. ndi Ngu-lu

*Rall.* **BASS**  
lu mwe-le-la. Ngu-lu, Ngu-lu mwa-i-wa.

*Cantabile* *Rall.* *mf* *Tempo poco rubato*

41 *mf* *2nd. time cresc.* 1 2 *f* *Quasi parlando* 3

wa-nga-o, wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ma-le-ngeme-ne mwa-te ma-ngi-e,

*mf* wa-ngo, wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ma-le-ngeme-ne mwa-te ma-ngi-e,

*mf* wa-nga-o, Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. I-li. Ma-le-ngeme-ne mwa-te ma-ngi-e, *Div.*

*mf* wa-nga-o, wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ma-le-ngeme-ne mwa-te ma-ngi-e,

*mf* *2nd. time cresc.* 1 2 *f* *Quasi parlando* 3

48 *Leggiero e Cantabile* *mf* = 80 1 2 *f*

Ngu-lu Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ngu-

*mf* No-mu-ka-i-va. Ngu-lu wa-nga-o, Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li. Ngu-

*mf* Ngu-lu wa-nga-o, lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li.

*mf* Ngu-lu wa-ka-si-mpi-li. li.

= 80 *Leggiero e Cantabile* 1 2 *f*

*mf*

53

*mf*

lu ii, Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu ii.

lu ii, Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu Ngu-

*f*

Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwe- le- la Ngu-

ii, Ngu- lu

59

*f*

Ngu- lu Ngu- lu Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu-

lu Ngu- lu Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa.

lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa.

ii, Ngu- lu Ngu- lu mwe- le- la Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa.

64

*f*

lu ii, Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa.

Ngu- lu Ngu- lu Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu-

68

*mf*

Ngu- lu ii Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu- lu,

*f* lu ii Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, Ngu- lu ii, Ngu-

*f* Ngu- lu Ngu- lu mwe- le- la, ii,

*f* Ngu- lu Ngu- lu Ngu- lu Ngu-

71

1 2 *Tén.* *Allargando* *mp* *ff* *Div.*

Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. No- mu- ka- i- va, Ngu- lu.

lu mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa. No- mu- ka- i- va, Ngu- lu.

Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. Ngu- lu mwa- i- wa. No- mu- ka- i- va, Ngu- lu.

lu mwa- i- wa. lu mwa- i- wa. No- mu- ka- i- va, Ngu- lu.

*Allargando*

*Tén.* *mp* *ff*

Pronunciation of words:

Ngulu - lu: between 'lu' and 'lo'.  
 ii: almost as 'ee'

indi: almost as 'ende'

Synopsis:

This is a Kamba song sung to while away tiredness during work or foot safari (walking).

Recurrent metaphorical phrases, 'malenge' (pumpkin) and 'nomukaiva' (and thou shall pay), are high-hearted warnings to 'trespassers'.

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