

# **Educational content in the performing arts: tradition and Christianity in Kenya**

by

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## Declaration

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Date.....

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## **Dedication**

To my husband, Gilbert H. Miya, who greatly supported me throughout my studies and loved me enough to let me pursue my goal;

To my mother, who was always there when I needed her support and prayers;

You have both demonstrated your great love, help and support for me and have let me see God's love through you.

To the Lord God Almighty for his provision, strength, wisdom and spiritual guidance

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## Abstract

The performing arts (a combination of music, dance and dramatisation) in the church in Kenya have not received much scholarly attention. These performing arts as adopted by Christian dance groups in Kenya have not been fully accepted into Christian circles because of the indigenous and popular music influences that govern them. This study therefore sets out to determine the educational role that the performing arts in the church in Nairobi play as demonstrated by a Nairobi Christian dance group, the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*.

The study involved extensive field research, which was conducted in Nairobi and Kakamega, Kenya, and included a literature review, data collection through participant observation and interviews, as well as data analysis using the following software packages: NVIVO (qualitative data analyses), *Benesh Editor* (dance notation) and *Sibelius* (music notation). Case studies were conducted on four different categories of performing arts groups: (i) the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*, which has greatly influenced churches in Kenya with their performing arts; (ii) the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro isukuti*, a neo-traditional Luhya group, and the Mukumu Girls High School *isukuti* dance group; (iii) Koffi Olomide's group, a Congolese popular music ensemble; and (iv) Kirk Franklin's Christian contemporary performing arts group from the United States of America. Video clips of the performing arts of these groups were recorded onto a VCD that forms part of this thesis.

The findings show that Christian dance groups in Kenya have adapted performing arts from North American contemporary Christian music, Congolese popular music and African indigenous and neo-traditional music. This influence is evident through their performances, ideologies and reference points. The Christian performing arts groups use songs informed by biblical texts, supported by dance styles and dramatisations as well as dance styles that do not interpret song texts, but are embedded in Congolese *soukous* and North American contemporary hip-hop. Conflicting ideas and messages are thus transmitted to the audience. The study has therefore developed a theoretical framework on how the performing arts can be used to educate viewers and participants on social, moral, spiritual and musical matters. It also indicates how the church can incorporate the performing arts in ways that are more meaningful.

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# Chapter One

## Purpose, research methodology and literature review

### Introduction

Question: *Nikhupa omwana wanje abandu basinanga* (When I beat my child, people dance).  
Answer: *Ing'oma* (a drum).<sup>1</sup>

This common riddle is found among the Luhya sub-ethnic groups in Kenya implying that, whenever a drumbeat is heard, people dance. This riddle not only demonstrates the important role that music plays in the life of the Luyhas and other indigenous<sup>2</sup> groups in Africa, but also how integrated music and dance are. Music is a powerful means of communication and it affects man intrinsically (biologically and emotionally) and socially (behaviour).<sup>3</sup> As indicated by scholars as early as Plato,<sup>4</sup> it may also play an important role in determining the character and direction of civilisation, as well as bringing well-balanced order to an individual and the state (society).

Apart from serving entertainment purposes, a combination of the performing arts (music, dance and drama) greatly enhances communication<sup>5</sup> and can be used to convey messages effectively. In indigenous African societies, for example, the arts inculcate cultural values and transmit culture-specific messages on a metaphysical and concrete level. Kongo and Robinson provide a very specific example of a concrete culture-specific message, where the slit drum has been used to

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<sup>1</sup> S. Khakayi, *The educational role of African traditional religion and customs among the Abanyole of Western Kenya*, unpublished PGDE project, Nairobi: Kenyatta University, 1984, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> The word 'indigenous' means "native or belonging naturally to a place." From Julia Elliot (ed), *Oxford Paperback Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 382. This dissertation uses the term 'indigenous' to refer to the practices of the Kenyans and/or African people who are natives of a given place and naturally belong to that place. For example, indigenous Luhya music refers to music that is performed by the native Luyha's devoid of foreign interference. The term 'tradition' refers to "expressing or transferring knowledge to others." From Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*, London: Fontana, 1988, pp. 318-319. According to Williams, "it only takes two generations to make anything traditional." This means that what may not necessarily be indigenous can become a tradition of a group of people with time. This study refrains from using this term except when issues pertaining to acculturation are referred to. For example, neo-traditional is used to refer to traditions acquired as a result of acculturation.

<sup>3</sup> David Tame, *The secret power of music*, Northamptonshire: Turnstone Press, 1984, p. 13

<sup>4</sup> Plato, "The Republic", Oliver Strunk (ed), *Source readings in music history: antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Vol. 1, London: Faber and Faber, 1950, pp. 3-12

<sup>5</sup> James Redmond (ed), *Drama, music, and dance*. London. Cambridge University Press, 1981

communicate a message to the nearby village, informing them that the 'father missionary' has arrived.<sup>6</sup> This example is one of many that alert the scholar of African music to the fact that the socio-cultural dimension of societies should form an integral part of music research.

Because the performing arts communicate verbal and non-verbal messages, they have always played major roles in religious ceremonies all over the world. Most religions such as Islam, African indigenous religion, Buddhism, and Christianity use music in their worship practices. In the Christian Bible, for example, reference to music is made 989 times,<sup>7</sup> signifying its importance in Christian worship. According to Boschman,<sup>8</sup> music is used in the church for various purposes such as praising God, communicating the message of the *Holy Bible*, spiritual warfare, prophesying and healing.

The performing arts also depict the changing trends of a culture. Africa has gone through a process of acculturation, generated by foreign religions, colonialism and European settlement. In this process Christianity has played a major role in propelling change in music styles in Africa.<sup>9</sup>

Along with the expansion of Christianity into Africa came much of the cultural baggage of the missionary. The early Christian missionary, whose highest goal was to preach the Word of God to the "heathen," was not originally trained to be sensitive to the communication channels inherent in the receptor culture. There was little or no attempt to understand customs that were foreign. Indeed, it was usually assumed that most African customs were foreign, pagan, and highly distasteful.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Zabana Kongo and Jeffrey Robinson, "Improvisation" in Herbst et al. (eds), *Musical arts in Africa: theory, practice and education*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003, p. 104.

<sup>7</sup> LaMar Boschman, *The rebirth of music*, Shippensburg: LaMar Boschman, 1980, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Paul Wamock, *Trends in African church music: a historical review*, unpublished M. A. thesis, Los Angeles: University of California, 1983; Jean Kidula, *Effects of syncretism and adaptation on Christian music of the Logoli*, unpublished M. A. thesis, Carolina: East Carolina University, 1986; Florence Musumba, *Effects of acculturation on church music: a case study of the Church of God in East Africa*, Nairobi, unpublished M. A. thesis, Nairobi: Kenyatta University, 1993

<sup>10</sup> Roberta King, *Pathways in Christian music communication: the case of the Senufo of Cote d'Ivoire*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Michigan: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989, pp. 5-6

The people from sub-Saharan Africa were therefore expected by the Western missionaries to consider indigenous African music practices as diabolical and repugnant, and they were hence to be discarded in favour of Western music practices.

Although the performing arts have gained importance in Western Christian circles since the early 1990s, they had not been an integral part of earlier worship practices. Charismatic churches allowed congregational music combined with dance, but the evangelical churches followed a more conservative approach.

Indigenous societies in sub-Saharan Africa have a different perspective on the role of the performing arts not only in worship, but also in general society. Nketia<sup>11</sup> affirms that in indigenous African societies, music, dance and drama were and still are inseparable. Music and dance are performed together in a social context. Every other action and activity that takes place is considered as drama that is not pre-rehearsed and performed as a separate entity for an audience, but as part of the integrated conception of the musical arts in the cultural setting. Nketia argues that music is one with the whole life of an African, demonstrating how it is displayed in an African's full life cycle. It is this contextualising of the performing arts that the missionaries also compelled the Africans to discard by condemning the "heathen" associations of these arts. According to Mugambi:

The establishment of Christianity in East Africa was also a process of acculturation in the sense that African Christians, through encounter and interaction with the new religion which was already expressed in terms of another culture, acquired and developed a new way of life which was distinct from, but also related to, both the old and the new cultural backgrounds.<sup>12</sup>

More recently, the way of life of the African Christian has also been strongly influenced by the growing use of electronic media in church environments. Electronic media are tremendously powerful in shaping people's views of reality and cultural practices,<sup>13</sup> being capable of reaching any place on the globe instantly.<sup>14</sup> Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, African church music started to adopt

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<sup>11</sup> J. N. Kwabena Nketia, *The music of Africa*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1992, p. 21

<sup>12</sup> J. N. K. Mugambi, *African heritage and contemporary Christianity*, Nairobi: Longman, 1989, pp. 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> S.J. Baran, *Introduction to mass communication, media literacy culture*, California: Mayfield, 1999, p. 299.

<sup>14</sup> Billie Wahlstrom, *Perspectives on human communication*, Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1992, p. 299.

Western music styles introduced through mass media. Consequently, new syncretic dance forms have emerged in Christian circles. Christian dance groups now use the performing arts in their worship services, crusades and other Christian gatherings. This has in turn led to rapid changes in church music in Africa and Kenya in particular.

## 1. Statement of the problem

In Kenya the Western Christian missionaries began their missionary work in the rural areas in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the headquarters of the mainline churches became rural-based. However, as urbanisation in Kenya expanded, most of the Christians formed fellowship groups that later grew to become big churches in the city of Nairobi. The rural-urban expansion of churches in Nairobi led to increasing acculturation,<sup>16</sup> because people from diverse ethnic groups converged to worship in a given church due to its convenient location. However, it should be noted that, like in other parts of the world,<sup>17</sup> the rural-urban migration was not the only growth in Nairobi; the migrants themselves bore children who were brought up in the city and who developed their own kind of urban lifestyle. These children added to the population growth of the city and churches and contributed to another dimension of urbanism in Africa.

Nairobi is a multicultural city consisting of people from diverse ethnic groups, races, social status and nationalities. Its population increases by five hundred people every day, with 50% being immigrants.<sup>18</sup> Seventy-three percent of Kenya's population claim

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<sup>15</sup> Bob Edwards, *Growth of Church of God through ushirika groups among the Luhya in Nairobi*, Kenya, unpublished PhD dissertation, Michigan: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1988; Barrett *et al.* (eds), *Kenya churches handbook: the development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973*, Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Acculturation here denotes "adoption of or adaptation to alien culture." From Lesley Brown, *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on historical principles*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 16. Musumba gives an account of how the intermingling of different cultural groups in a given church in Nairobi influence the music performance resulting to music change. See also Musumba, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Alan Gilbert and Josef Gugler, *Cities, poverty and development: urbanization in the third world*, second edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 7-12.

<sup>18</sup> Aylward Shorter and Edwin Onyancha, *Secularism in Africa: a case study*, Nairobi, Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1997, p. 32.

to be Christian, whereas in Nairobi the figure is around 80%.<sup>19</sup> Since Christians constitute a large population in Nairobi, a study of their music is essential.

Music is a cultural phenomenon and culture determines the particular way in which people interact and behave.<sup>20</sup> According to Ayisi:

Culture consists of ways, mores and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation, it may be generally shared by some population or a group of people – in other words, it should represent the collective conscience of a group of people.<sup>21</sup>

Just as culture represents a way of life, urbanisation in Nairobi has also become a new way of life. Different cultural groups have undergone cultural change as they encounter external forces such as urbanism. Such cultural dynamism has led to popular culture. *Wikipedia* defines popular culture as:

The vernacular (people's) culture that prevails in a modern society. The content of popular culture is determined in large part by industries that disseminate cultural material, for example the film, television, and publishing industries, as well as the news media. [...], it is the result of a continuing interaction between those industries and the people of the society who consume their products.<sup>22</sup>

Chambers<sup>23</sup> refers to popular culture as 'mass culture'. He argues that this culture is held by masses, usually the youth, and that it is characterised by activities and practices that are against the traditional norms of a given society. The churches in Nairobi have not been excluded in the process of change that has resulted in popular culture. A typical church in Nairobi has an amalgamation of members from different ethnic groups, social status, races and denominational backgrounds.<sup>24</sup> A large number of the church membership in Nairobi consists of young people who are the fastest growing segment of the population.<sup>25</sup> Gathu clearly demonstrates how American programmes aired in Kenya have influenced young people in areas such as music, taste and dress. By examining the effects of television on Kenyan culture, she concludes that American contemporary music aired in Kenya has influenced the

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<sup>19</sup> Daystar University College, *Summary of the Nairobi church survey*, Kijabe: Kijabe Printing Press, 1989, pp. 17-42.

<sup>20</sup> Wahlstrom, pp. 103-104.

<sup>21</sup> Eric O. Ayisi, *An introduction to the study of African culture*, second edition, London: Heinemann, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Wikipedia, *The free encyclopedia*, available from <[http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular\\_culture](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture)> [n.p.], [n.d.] accessed 26 July 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Iain Chambers, *Urban rhythms: pop music and popular culture*, London: Macmillan publishers, 1985, pp. 3-5.

<sup>24</sup> Musumba, p. 141.

<sup>25</sup> Mbutu, Chandran and Niemeyer, *Nairobi youth survey*, Nairobi: Daystar University, 1998, p. 10.

youth and helped to shape their culture.<sup>26</sup> Musumba<sup>27</sup> points out those churches with a large number of young people in their congregations have undergone greater changes in their music practices.

Because of globalisation through the media, young people in Nairobi have established Christian Dance Groups that perform choreographed dance and drama to pre-recorded music, a practice adopted from North American Dance Groups aired by Kenyan television networks. Since many of the young people expect church music to be “livelier,”<sup>28</sup> they find pleasure in creating new dances and dramatic movements within the groups. It is thus important to note that the American imports rekindled the cultural practice of adopting African music in religion that was initially condemned by Western Christian missionaries.

Evidently the performing arts embodied in the Christian dance groups are phenomena that the Christian youth can identify with, but which have left some churches in a dilemma about whether or not to accept the practice. According to Mugambi:

Throughout the history of the church there has been a tension between conservatism and change [...]. Thus the church will continue in its mission to face the great challenge of allowing culture syntheses to take place without losing its identity and fervour in syncretism.<sup>29</sup>

Although the Christian Bible mentions dance as one way of worshipping God, the nature of the dance has, however, not been exemplified. Oesterly, Boschman and Tullos cite diverse biblical sources that mention the words dance, dancers and dancing,<sup>30</sup> implying that dance as an act of worship should be incorporated into Christian worship. In addition, Read and Fry stress the effectiveness of drama as follows:

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<sup>26</sup> Faith Gathu, *Television and the shaping of culture in Kenya: a case study of Nairobi High School youth's use of foreign TV programming*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio: Green State University, 1995.

<sup>27</sup> Musumba, p. 208.

<sup>28</sup> Mbutu *et al.*, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Mugambi, pp. 68-69.

<sup>30</sup> W.O.E. Oesterly, *The sacred dance*, [n.p.], 1923; Boschman, *The rebirth of music*, 1980; Matt Tullos, “25 easy ideas for drama in worship”, *Lifeway Christian resources*, 1999 available from <<http://www.wordspring.com/ideas.html>>; pp. 1-5, accessed 29 October 2001.

In divorcing drama from church worship we run the danger of worship becoming too remote, too cerebral, and in doing so we find, to our dismay, that emotional lives have remained outside the reach of the church.<sup>31</sup>

As pointed out earlier, the three components of the performing arts (music, dance and drama) in Africa are inseparable and are intimately structured into indigenous religious practices. The youth thus try to use creative movements, stage choreography and styles that may be determined by psychological, historical, environmental or idiosyncratic factors,<sup>32</sup> since the nature of the dance to be incorporated in Christian worship is not exemplified in the Christian Bible. Therefore, if the church in Africa divorces dance and drama from worship, it will also run the risk of leaving out what would have been otherwise a great worship experience for its members. The youth also expect the church to offer them well-organised social and spiritual educational programmes. *The Nairobi Youth Survey* pointed out, however, that this is not the case.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the performing arts can be powerful means of education because images, shapes, colour and space are used to convey a multitude of ideas.<sup>34</sup>

The research problem therefore may be stated as follows:

The performing arts as used by the dance groups have not been fully accepted into the Christian circles in the churches in Nairobi because the indigenous knowledge that should govern the performance has not been clearly stipulated and accepted by many churches.

Hence the primary research question is:

***What is the role of the performing arts in the church in Nairobi as demonstrated by the Christian dance groups?***

<sup>31</sup> Sylvia Read and William Fry, *Christian theatre: a handbook for church groups*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1986, p.9.

<sup>32</sup> John Blacking and Joann W. Kealinohomoku (eds), *The performing arts: music and dance*, Bristol: Mouton Publishers, 1979, p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> Mbutu *et al.*, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Jordan Ayan, *Aha! 10 ways to free your spirit and find your great ideas*, New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997, p. 161.

The secondary research questions are:

- Why do the Christian dance groups and their performing arts exist in the church?
- What educational values are conveyed through the performing arts?
- What principles guide the dancers' choice of music, dance and drama?
- What is the relationship between the music, dance and drama?
- What types of movements and music are used in the performance?
- What extrinsic factors affect the dance groups' performances?
- How can the performing arts contribute to the full African contextualisation of the Christian faith?
- What indigenous and neo-traditional African music practices are reflected in the practices of church dance groups?

By establishing the role of the performing arts, this study aims to investigate whether these arts convey any social, moral and spiritual educational values. The following are the objectives of the study:

- i. To investigate the reasons for the existence of the performing arts and the dance groups in the church in Nairobi;
- ii. To determine the principles which guide the dancers' choice of music, dance and drama;
- iii. To analyse the relationship between the music, dance and drama performed by the dance groups;
- iv. To identify the type and significance of movements and music used in the performance;
- v. To establish the factors which affect the dance groups' performances;
- vi. To develop a theoretical framework for making recommendations as to how the performing arts can be used in multicultural African settings in educating the church on social, moral and spiritual issues.

Following the above objectives, in a nutshell, the aim of this research is to provide a critical account of the rise of Christian dance groups and their performance in churches in Nairobi. The study identifies the educational values that these groups propagate. It focuses mainly on the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* of Nairobi and therefore primarily examines the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* of Nairobi in relation to the development of church music in Nairobi. It also examines traditional modes of performance and dance with particular attention to the traditional and neo-traditional varieties of *Isukuti* as performed by *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* and *Mukumu Girls*

High School dance groups of Western Kenya respectively. In relation to popular culture, it examines the Congolese popular style of Koffi Olomide and the American Christian dance group of Kirk Franklin. The study endeavours to establish the relationship between the music, dance and drama and the indigenous and neo-traditional versus modern Christian and secular ideas and practices that these groups express in their art performance, musicality and dance. These groups are examined because they have influenced the performances of *Maximum Miracle Melodies* of Nairobi. It proceeds to develop a theoretical framework on how the performing arts can be utilised to educate viewers and participants on social, moral and spiritual matters regarding the use of music in the church in order to make it more relevant and effective in Christian ministry.

## **2. Significance of the study**

It is evident that urban Africa is being greatly affected by popular culture, especially through mass media. Since the performing arts form part of the indigenous as well as popular culture, it is essential to use these arts as media to convey messages to societies in Africa and, more specifically, Kenya. The findings of the research will thus be significant in the following areas:

Firstly, they will augment studies on the performing arts, church music and ethnomusicology, thereby rendering such findings useful for further analysis and comparisons by future scholars. The comparison may be methodological or interdisciplinary. For example, when conducting cultural anthropological studies, the findings can help to illustrate the behavioural patterns of people in multicultural settings. Therefore, cultural anthropologists can deduce the factors that influence these people. This research provides a detailed account of the *isukuti* music practices of the Isukha (Luhya, Kenya) both in indigenous and neo-traditional settings. There has been no such detailed account before this study. The Christian dance groups in Nairobi have been documented for the first time in their existence since the late 1990s.

Secondly, the church institutions in Africa can benefit directly from the findings, recommendations and the theoretical framework, which are useful to church leaders

and performing arts' participants in restructuring and/or re-focusing their performing arts programmes, making them more meaningful and appropriate in communicating Christian teachings. The framework can provide guidance as to the choice of appropriate music and movements, issues related to performance preparation, and on how the performing arts can be contextualised within sub-Saharan African cultures. In addition, more churches can incorporate the performing arts to educate their church members in general on musical, moral and spiritual values.

Thirdly, educators and educational planners of learning institutions can benefit from the findings, which will demonstrate how to organise performing arts programmes that can educate primary and secondary school learners on various subjects such as music, history, oral literature and religion. Such programmes will provide the opportunity for learners to become involved in educational yet entertaining activities, and to develop their talents and shape their careers. The findings of this study will therefore provide useful information for the implementation of institutional programmes by the Kenya Ministry of Education and Kenya Music Festivals.

Finally, African societies in general can use the findings of the study to develop performing arts groups that can transmit educational concepts and practices within given areas, such as topical or contemporary issues that are currently affecting Africa, like acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (AIDS), poverty, corruption, ethnic wars and diseases. A large population of Africa cannot read and will benefit from knowledge depicted in a humorous yet simple and understandable manner through the arts. Consequently, potential donors/sponsors may be attracted to using the performing arts for propagating specific, positive educational concepts in order to solve societal problems.

### **3. Demarcation of the study**

The field research for this study was conducted in Nairobi and Kakamega, Kenya. Although the study examined four performing arts groups, the focus was on one Christian dance group, *Maximum Miracle Melodies* (MMM).<sup>35</sup> The researcher chose

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<sup>35</sup> The abbreviation MMM will be used throughout the entire thesis to denote *Maximum Miracle Melodies*.

this local Christian dance group because its performances have been frequently broadcast in Kenya. Hence, it depicts the current trends of dance groups in Nairobi churches. The group also uses an amalgamation of Western and indigenous Kenyan music styles. In order to draw background information that will bring to light the various acculturated musical syncretic elements fused into the Christian dance group, three other dance groups were examined in the following categories: Kenyan indigenous dance groups, African popular dance groups and a North American Christian dance group.

The first group, *Maximum Miracle Melodies*, is a Christian dance group aired on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) channel in the programme *Kuna Nuru Gizani* (There is light in the darkness). This is a 30-minute programme aired by KBC every Sunday. The programme usually starts with teachings from the Christian Bible and ends with a performance of the MMM. The members of this group belong to the *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministry* in Nairobi, which is the church that runs the programme on television. It consists of approximately 20 young members: 10 girls and 10 boys ranging from the ages 10-19. They not only perform on television but also in the *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministry* during Sunday worship services. Therefore, besides observing the group's performances on television, the study also investigates their performances in worship services and other occasions in which they use the performing arts.

The second group is an indigenous Luhya dance group, the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* (Kakamega district, Western Kenya) and the neo-traditional Mukumu Girls High School *isukuti* dance groups to demonstrate the music characteristics and social context of the Luhya. This group was used to compare and illustrate the indigenous and neo-traditional performing arts that are reflected in the dance and music styles of the Christian dance group, the MMM.

The third group is an African popular music dance group, Koffi Olomide's group, which is an example of the secular popular performing arts groups found in Kenya since the end of the twentieth century. This group is studied to demonstrate the secular popular performing arts that have influenced many Christian dance groups in Kenya. The Congolese musician Koffi Olomide and his group, who perform

Congolese pop styles, have been the most influential on the MMM group as far as secular pop dances are concerned.

The fourth group that is included is a North American Christian dance group with Kirk Franklin as leader, which is frequently aired on Kenyan television networks. The focus is on an analysis of his video *Nu-Nation Tour*. This group exhibits the various North American performing arts styles that are often aired on Kenyan television and have influenced the Christian MMM dance group with their choreographed performances.

The second, third and fourth groups were chosen during the initial fieldwork stages, because the researcher had to first determine the indigenous, neo-traditional and North American influences that are reflected in the performances of the MMM. The following issues were considered when choosing the groups in the three categories:

- The availability of the groups during the field research;
- Outstanding groups that exemplify the characteristics of their categories;
- Groups that were able to perform in a social context during the duration of the field research.

Video recordings were chosen for the third and fourth categories, because the two groups are based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United States of America. It was also not feasible for the researcher to visit these countries for research due to lack of funds and time available for the field research.

#### **4. Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues pertaining to field research were also considered. All the research informants were briefed on confidentiality before the field research commenced. Participants were requested to sign the form of consent attached in Appendix G.

The videotapes of Koffi Olomide and Kirk Franklin that the researcher used for analysis in this dissertation are in the public domain. This being the case, the researcher was free to use them and comment on their performances.

## 5. Research design

Qualitative methods are used to conduct this study. These methods give prime importance to the social contexts of activities in the understanding of the social world of a group of people. Publications by Scott, Hart, Neuman and Mouton are used to guide the research in methods related to fieldwork.<sup>36</sup> Since this study looks at a new phenomenon in the church in Kenya that has not been given prior scholarly attention, it is vital to adopt qualitative research data collection and analytical methods such as interviews and participant observation. The research is situated within the existing scholarly literature and involves extensive literature reviews.

### 5.1 Data collection

The researcher began the main fieldwork in December 2001 in Nairobi. The purpose was to survey the research area, the focus group MMM and its church/ministry, *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries*. The offices, meetings of *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries* and the MMM's practice venues, contacts and contact people were also established around this time. This was done as part of the preparation and planning for the research.

During the same period the researcher viewed the programme *Kuna Nuru Gizani* in order to determine the kinds of dances the MMM perform and any new changes that had taken place in the performances as compared to the last time the researcher had viewed the programme in early 2001. This viewing established the kinds of indigenous performing arts the MMM group had adopted in their performances. The exercise aided the researcher to ascertain the ethnic group(s) most appropriate for this research in order to establish the indigenous practices of the chosen group. Having been a Kenya National Music Festivals adjudicator of indigenous and neo-traditional dances for nine years, the researcher was able to establish the Kenyan indigenous and neo-traditional dances that the MMM had adopted and the ethnic

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<sup>36</sup> Grills Scott (ed), *Doing ethnographic research*, London: Sage Publications, 1998; Chris Hart, *Doing a literature review: releasing the social science research imagination*, London: Sage Publications, 1998; William L. Neuman, *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*, fourth edition, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000; Johann Mouton, *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral dissertation studies*, Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2001.

group from which the dances originate i.e. Luhya. The same observations were also verified later by the indigenous Luhya dance groups that viewed the videotapes and Luhya dance teachers and university lecturers, as shall be discussed in Chapter Three. This investigation enabled the researcher to prepare the questions to ask and to begin arranging the visits to the Luhya dancers in their homeland in Western Province of Kenya. The *isukuti* performing arts were seen to have influenced the MMM. The sub-ethnic group, Isukha, which performs this music, was thus chosen for research.

The researcher travelled to Kakamega district in Western Province during the Christmas season, because most indigenous music is performed around this time. The purpose of this visit was to find out a group that was ready and available to work with the researcher, one that is well known among the villagers and a practising group that incorporated *Luhyalisukuti* dances. The researcher had to use this time to plan the logistical aspects that had to be taken into consideration when returning for further field research, such as power access for video shooting, research equipment to carry and people to contact and interview.

From January to mid-March 2002 the main research area was Nairobi. The participant-observation approach was the methodology adopted throughout the whole investigation. The researcher attended the practice sessions of the MMM and took part in their dances and rehearsals. This participation was to determine the dancers' practice procedures, the attendance of the members, how the dancers learn their dance movements and choreographic pattern formations, to gain knowledge of their way of life, and to establish the influences the dancers have undergone. The researcher was also interested in the principles that guide these dancers' performances and how they choose music, dance and dramatisations for their performances. These practice sessions also raised more questions for interviews and clarified aspects of the arts and the artists.

The researcher attended the performance sessions and venues where the MMM practise and participate. These included meetings such as worship services, lunch-hour services and open-air crusades. The continual attendance of these meetings was intended to verify data collected from previous meetings, to select suitable

people for interviews, verify data collected through interviews, observe performances and get more information, to compare their performances, and to ascertain any similarities and disparities, and then to formulate more interview questions. The researcher recorded some of these performances on videocassettes in order to capture the contexts, dance movements and sound/music for further analysis. Since the MMM crusades involve people from a variety of denominations, the researcher also tried to find out which other denominations incorporate the performing arts in their church services and the opinion that other church leaders have on the genre.

Intensive interviews were carried out with church leaders, dance group members, church workers and musicians, as well as church leaders from other denominations. The interviews with the dancers and their leaders focused on their social, musical, spiritual and educational backgrounds. The questions were geared towards ascertaining the reason for the existence of the dance groups, the role the dance groups play and the reasons for their choice of movements and music. The educational role that the performing arts –play and the programmes and videotapes that have influenced the dancers were also established through the interviews. It is through these interviews that the researcher discovered that the MMM members have adopted music practices from the Family TV channel (a Christian broadcasting network). The director of music programmes for this station was thus interviewed to find out the reasons for the selection of their music and video clips, their target audience, and how they prepare their music, dance and drama programmes for airing. The researcher also viewed these programmes to establish what the MMM group has adopted in their performances. It was also necessary at this point to acquire information from Steadman Kenya, a company that conducts research and provides demographic data on television viewership in Kenya. The purpose for the collection of this data was three-fold:

- To verify the findings of the Steadman company with the MMM dance groups;
- To establish the urban lifestyle and music history in Nairobi;
- To establish the viewership of the programmes that have influenced the MMM (both Christian and non-Christian) such as *Kuna Nuru Gizani*, Channel 'O', and Congolese pop music programmes.

The interviews with the members of the MMM also revealed the kind of music videotapes that they enjoy watching and from which they adopt dance movements and ideas for their dramatisations. The researcher therefore collected these videotapes and their audiotapes for comparisons and analysis. It is through the interviews and observations that the researcher found out that North American, Congolese pop and *isukuti* indigenous and neo-traditional performing arts have influenced the MMM's performances.

The *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries'* leaders were interviewed in order to establish the historical background of the ministry and the MMM, their reasons for allowing the performing arts in church, their expectation of the dance groups, and the structure and beliefs of the Ministry and its activities. The leaders also revealed that there were a number of dance groups and other musicians in the church. These groups, such as *Glorious Kids and Glorious Teens*, were also interviewed in order to establish the similarities and differences with the MMM and the historical backgrounds. The researcher was also able to establish other meetings held by the MMCM for attendance and further analysis.

Since the interviews revealed that all the services are usually recorded on video, the researcher interviewed the television crew of MMCM. The interviews were conducted in order to find out more about the past recordings of the crew and to get more videotapes and data for comparisons. The interviews established why and what they record during all the services, to establish whether their recordings influenced the MMM's performance, stage scenery or costumes and how they select video clips and dance performances for their television programme *Kuna Nuru Gizani*.

The researcher re-visited the field (MMCM) in June 2002, January-February 2003 and August 2004. These visits were undertaken in order to re-confirm findings, find out any changes to and new developments in the genre, and to make comparisons of the MMM's performance with those of Congolese pop, North American and *isukuti* performing arts, which were investigated later.

Field research in the Western Province of Kenya among the Luhya was carried out in late December 2001, mid-March to June 2002, December 2002, April to May 2003

and August 2004. The various visits were follow-up meetings with the dance groups, verification of data, and to conduct more interviews on new discoveries and comparisons with the MMM, and previous *isukuti* dance performances. The researcher discovered that the existing *isukuti* groups perform what could be equated to neo-traditional dances. These groups have experienced a great deal of influence from the Kenya Music Festivals and the secular pop performing arts from Democratic Republic of Congo. Consequently, the old generation of Isukha society, where the research was done, were interviewed in order to establish the earlier indigenous *isukuti* performing arts practices that had prevailed in their time. Most of these interviewees were people who had been raised in Isukha indigenous settings and had themselves been part of the music making and dance in their societies. The interviews focused on the indigenous practices of the Isukha and their relationship to the *isukuti* music, the social, religious and musical backgrounds, and the philosophical underpinnings of the indigenous Isukha music and culture. The interviewees viewed the video clips of the neo-traditional dance group chosen for this category in order to illustrate the differences and similarities of the dance movements with the indigenous ones.

The researcher carried out the fieldwork using participant-observation methodology. Most of the performances of the dance group were recorded on video in venues where power was available. It was discovered that most of the *isukuti* performers have become very commercial and would only perform where they can be paid. This limited investigation of the indigenous context of their performances. Unlike in indigenous setting, families make a decision on whether or not they would like to have *isukuti* performers at their functions. Christianity has also played a major role in the decision making. Consequently, it was not easy to establish when and where the dancers would perform their dances in context. Therefore, the only performances that were recorded on video were their practice sessions and where they met specifically to perform for the researcher for the purpose of the research.

The researcher also interviewed the dancers, the chiefs of the village and dancers of other neo-traditional dance groups found in Kakamega. The interviews focused on the dances, dramatisations and songs of the Isukha, *isukuti* dance performances and instruments, verification of observations and data collected from other informants,

indigenous meanings associated with the performing arts and the historical, socio-cultural and philosophical background of these arts.

The researcher discovered from the interviews that the dancers are involved in teaching neo-traditional dances to schools in Kakamega to prepare them for the Kenya Music Festivals. They also took part in these festivals when they were in school. The Kenya Music Festivals' past videotapes of schools – available from the Kenya Institute of Education – were thus consulted. This exercise was done in order to compare the dance performances of *Amalemba Matemde Ngwaro isukuti* dance group and those of the MMM with the Kenya Music Festivals *isukuti* performing arts. The group chosen from the festivals was the Mukumu Girls High School *isukuti* dance group. This school has excelled in *isukuti* dance performance and emerged as one of the top schools in the neo-traditional dance category at these festivals, as discussed in Chapter Three.

The Congolese pop music and dances that have influenced the MMM were also collected. These were mainly Congolese pop performing arts videotapes. The researcher watched the television programmes in Kenya from which the MMM adopted their dances in order to establish which videotapes to buy and use for analysis. Since almost all the Congolese music currently performed in Kenyan television programmes have the same type of pop dances and dramatisations, the researcher chose the specific popular Congolese artists regularly shown and those that some of the research participants of the MMM agreed had been influential for them. The videotapes of performances by, among others, Koffi Olomide and Aurlus Mabele,<sup>37</sup> were viewed for comparison with the MMM dances. The videotape *Loi* by Koffi Olomide was chosen for analysis because it represents all the dance movements that the MMM have adopted from Congolese pop, and this artist's videotape has greatly influenced some of the MMM musicians. Since the performers live in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it was impossible to visit this country for interviews due to the limited research period and lack of sufficient research funds. The same also applied to the North American artist's music analysed in this work. However, Congolese popular musicians who live in Kenya were interviewed for

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<sup>37</sup> Koffi Olomide, *Les 12 titres de l'album en clips*, produced by Sonodisc, 1 hour, VHS, Videocassette, 1995; Aurlus Mabele, *Fiesta d'or*, produced by AJP Productions, 1 hour, VHS, videocassette, [n.d.]

clarification and translations of the songs, because not much literature is available on Congolese pop performing arts. The purpose of the video viewing was to analyse the dance movements, dramatisations and songs, and then to compare with the MMM performances. The North American hip-hop music that influenced the MMM is Kirk Franklin's videotape, *Nu Nation Tour*. This videotape is also featured frequently on Family Media (television channel and radio station). His music was therefore collected for analysis and comparison with the MMM's performances. For this analysis the researcher relied heavily on literature written on North American gospel and hip-hop music.

## 5.2 Data analysis

After the fieldwork all the data were collected and prepared for further qualitative analysis. A transcription of videotape performance, interviews and observations was done and computed. The music collected from the field was analysed under the elements: text, accompaniment styles, song type, musical instruments, form and improvisations. Where the texts were not in English, both the original language and English translations are given. The researcher transcribed all the notations.

The dances were notated using the *Benesh* notation system.<sup>38</sup> The researcher chose this notation because it was most appropriate for the specific descriptive elements needed for the analysis of the dances utilised. The software for this notation, *Benesh Editor*, was also readily available for use and easily affordable. It gives a very apt representation of even the slightest movements as compared to Laban notation and pulse notation.<sup>39</sup> Although other notations such as pulse notation have been used by different scholars<sup>40</sup> for African dance notation, the *Benesh* notation has also been tried with many African dances and has proved to be accurate, paying attention to very minute details. Books such as *Benesh Notation*<sup>41</sup> provide an African adaptation of the *Benesh* notation system. All the dance movements analysed were notated

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<sup>38</sup> Benesh Institute of Choreology, *Choreology: Benesh movement notation*, London: Institute of Choreology, 1969; Benesh Rudolf, *An introduction to Benesh notation*, London: Black, 1956. These books give detailed background of the theory and practice of Benesh Movement Notation.

<sup>39</sup> Rudolf von Laban, *Principles of dance and movement notation*, London: MacDonaldis and Evans, 1956.

<sup>40</sup> Minette Mans, "Using Namibian music/dance traditions as a basis for reforming arts education," in *International journal of education and the arts*, vol. 1 no. 3, September 2000, pp. 1-12.

<sup>41</sup> Eduard Greyling, *Benesh notation movement: African dance application*, part 1, unpublished document, 2000.

using this notation system. This was done mainly for comparative purposes (with the MMM dances and the text used for each song) and to give the reader an appropriate picture of the dances. A VCD that illustrates the notated dances was also prepared to accompany this dissertation.

To aid in the analysis process, the computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, Nvivo, was used. The reasons for the choice of this software package are as follows:

- It has unique qualities that help to better organise the data;
- It aids in coding process, searching and retrieving data when needed;
- It is easy to link discrete data for further analysis;
- One can write meaningful and reflective commentaries on some aspects of data as a basis for deeper or further analysis;
- It displays data in a condensed organised format, thereby aiding in interpretation, testing and confirming the data;
- It aids in theory building;
- It prepares reports on coding and many other processes;
- It gives the location of all specific words or phrases that have been coded, etc.

All the above features facilitate the analysis procedure and ensure accuracy. From the findings of the research, a theoretical framework was developed on how the performing arts can be used to aid in the social, moral, spiritual and musical education of their viewers and users. The theoretical framework drew from Western and African theories and practices that deal with movement, communication, socialisation and education, and offers suggestions for the implementation of the performing arts for educational purposes.

### **5.3 Literature review**

The literature review covers publications in the fields of music, dance, drama, Christianity in Africa and Kenya in particular, communication, culture and educational psychology. This review includes literature from electronic databases and websites, books, journals, theses and dissertations, seminar papers, newsletters, reports, conference proceedings and monographs. The findings of the literature search related to this research are presented under the following subheadings: Christian

dance groups, Christianity, and Church music in Kenya, the performing arts and education, and communication and education.

### 5.3.1 Christian dance groups

A survey of the available literature related to the main topic of this study reveals that no scholarly work on this research area has so far been completed in Kenya. *Maximum Miracle Times*, which gives the activities, meetings and information about the MMM, was consulted for information that shed light on the research areas. Sources on the performing arts in general, and Christian churches in the USA specifically, were consulted in order to find out what Christian dance groups in the USA are engaged in. Such literature helped to shed light on areas to look for in the MMM performances. Most of this literature was available in dissertations, journals and magazines. Scholars such as Cutler, Forman and Walker<sup>42</sup> have addressed the topic of hip-hop Christian dance groups. They deal with the music, dance movements, culture and performances of the hip-hop dance groups. It was vital for this study to examine these areas because hip-hop dance movements have been adapted by the MMM in their performances. Examining African American music culture that the hip-hop dances spring from facilitated the understanding of the dance movements and how they came into being. For example, Rose remarks:

At 35, Harris is recognized as a leading hip hop choreographer in the U.S., who performs and choreographs for his Philadelphia-based company Puremovement. He has also been credited with helping to create a vocabulary for hip hop. "Hip Hop is not about tricks," says Harris. "It is about using variations of style to tell a story or convey an idea. The movement is the easy part, getting the message out is harder." Its structure allows the dancer the freedom to improvise in the moment because hip hop embraces the philosophy of individuality in thought and expression."<sup>43</sup>

Such comments show that hip-hop is a culture which needs to be learned in order to fully appreciate and understand it.

Literature on hip-hop music also helps to explain the music video industry in the USA and its impact on the dancers and masses. Since the MMM group learned their hip-

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<sup>42</sup> Cecilia Anne Cutler, *Crossing over: white youth, hip hop and African American English*, unpublished PhD dissertation, New York: New York University, 2002; Murray Webster Forman, *The 'hood comes first': race, space, and place in rap music and hip hop, 1978-1996*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n.p.], McGill University, 1997; Tshombe R. Walker, *The hip hop worldview: an Afrocentric analysis*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n.p.]: Temple University, 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Patricia Lorraine Rose, *Black noise: rap music and black cultural resistance in contemporary American popular culture*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], Brown University, 1993, p. ii.

hop dance movements from these videotapes, exploring the process and purpose of developing them was essential.

### 5.3.2 Christianity and Church music in Kenya

It was vital to survey the literature on Christianity in Kenya because it lay the foundation of the current Christian music situation. A number of publications are available in this area. A variety of sources that give the Christian missionary history from its inception in Africa and Kenya in particular, were surveyed. Such literature includes Barrett *et al.*, Hastings and Baur among others.<sup>44</sup> The authors discuss how missionaries settled in Kenya and their impact on the cultural practices and worldviews of the indigenous Kenyans.

The adaptation of Christianity into the indigenous cultures was also an important aspect to survey. Such literature outlined the trends that have taken place in Kenya and Africa in general, before and after independence. The sources that shed light in this area include Shorter, Kato, Mudimbe and Mugambi.<sup>45</sup> Bujo<sup>46</sup> also shows how African theology was shaped because of adaptations of Christianity in Africa.

Besides looking at the historical development of Christianity in Africa, church music literature was also reviewed. Literature on Western church music such as Dickinson, Douglas and Liesch<sup>47</sup> gave background information of the existence of church music in the West before the missionaries brought it to Africa. Literature on church music in Kenya is also limited. Most of the literature available on this topic is in form of theses.

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<sup>44</sup> Barrett *et al.* (eds), *Kenya churches handbook: the development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973, 1973*; Adrian Hastings, *The church in Africa, 1450-1950*, paperback edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996; John Baur, *2000 years of Christianity in Africa: an African church history*, second edition, Nairobi: Paulines, 1998.

<sup>45</sup> Aylward Shorter, *African Christian theology – adaptation or incarnation?* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977; Byang Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa*, Achimota: African Christian Press, 1985; V. Y. Mudimbe, *The invention of Africa: gnosis, philosophy and the order of knowledge*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press London, 1988; Mugambi 1989.

<sup>46</sup> Benezet Bujo, *African theology in its social context*, translated from German by John O'Donohue, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications Africa, 1992.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Dickinson, *Music in the history of the Western church*, New York: Green Wood press, 1902; Winfred Douglas, *Church music in history and practice: studies in the praise of God*. London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937; Barry Liesch, *The new worship: straight talk on music and the church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996

These works by scholars such as Musumba, Kidula and Katuli<sup>48</sup> discuss church music in terms of choral and congregational performance. None of them addresses the dance genre that this dissertation is concerned with, but they provided important information on development of church music in Kenya among variety of ethnic groups such as Luhya, Kamba and Luo.

### 5.3.3 The performing arts and education

Much literature has been written about the performing arts generally in Africa. Since the MMM is an African group that has been influenced by Kenyan indigenous performing arts, literature in this area was also examined. The Luhya ethnic group from the Western Province of Kenya is the main social grouping that the MMM has adapted dances from. Literature on the history, cultural practices, performing arts, religion and oral traditions shed light on the background of this group. Publications by Were, Malusu, Mirimo and Nandwa<sup>49</sup> were instrumental in exploring the cultural and philosophical underpinnings of the Luhya. It was therefore important for the study to relate their discussions to the music of the Luhya. Kwakwa, for example, shows how indigenous music is intertwined with other areas of life:

Traditional African dancers do not occur in isolation [ ... ] Many have value as entertainment, but entertainment is not their most important function: dancers perform for sociocultural, historical, political, and religious purposes.<sup>50</sup>

These observations are also true of the Luhya. Literature on performing arts and African cultures from other indigenous groups in Kenya and the sub-Saharan Africa was also investigated for comparisons and for placing the Luhya community in perspective in Africa. For example, Orawo discusses the music of Luo, Luhya and Kilifi from Kenya.<sup>51</sup> He examines the dances, instruments, songs and cultural

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<sup>48</sup> Musumba; John K Katuli, *Ethnic music in Christian worship: a study of specific aspects of Akamba traditional music in the liturgy of the Catholic church in Mwingi deanery*, unpublished MA. Thesis, Nairobi: Kenyatta University, 1998; Jean Kidula, *Sing and shine: religious popular music in Kenya*, unpublished PhD dissertation, California: University of California, 1998.

<sup>49</sup> Gideon Were, *A history of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967; Jane Nandwa, *Oral literature among the Abaluyia*, unpublished M. A. Thesis, Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1976; Joseph Malusu, *The Luyia way of death based on the Isukha people of Kakamega District*, London: Oxford University Press, 1978; Abraham Mirimo, *Luyia sayings with English translation*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1988.

<sup>50</sup> Patience A. Kwaka, "Dance in communal life in Africa" in Ruth M. Stone (ed), *The Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music*, Vol. 1, New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1998, p. 285

<sup>51</sup> Charles Nyakiti Orawo, *Lwimbo: Busia-Luhya song dance traditions*, Kisumu: Lake Publishers, 2002; *Ibid.*, *Bul: The Luo drum*, Kisumu: Lake Publishers, 2002, *Ibid.*, *Miel: The Luo dance*, Kisumu: Lake Publishers, 2002; *Ibid.*, *Music of Kilifi: the Midzi Chenda and their music*, Kisumu: Lake Publishers, 2002.

practices of these groups. Others who do the same in different communities include Kavyu, Asante, and Merriam.<sup>52</sup> Although the works of all these authors were not directly related to this study, they provided an insight into areas to research among the Luhya.

It was necessary to survey literature on African popular music, especially from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya, which have influenced the MMM.

Roberts, Bergman and Ewens,<sup>53</sup> among others, furnish substantial information on Congolese and Kenyan popular music. They discuss the music, musicians, costumes, instrumental and vocal styles as well as the development of these performing arts. However, they do not pay much attention to the music videos of the performing arts and the specific dance movements and their execution. They do not provide the meanings and notations of these styles.

#### 5.3.4 Communication and education

This study adopts the definition of education from *The Oxford Dictionary*:

The process of 'bringing up' (young person), the manner in which a person has been 'brought up'; with reference to social station, kind of manners and habits acquired, calling or employment prepared for etc.<sup>54</sup>

Literature on how the performing arts transmit education was invaluable in this area. Abrokowaa and Herbst *et al.*<sup>55</sup> give substantial information on how education takes place in indigenous Africa. Educational aspects are defined as are the people to and by whom knowledge should be transmitted as well as the content of this knowledge. For example, Abrokowaa states that "the general aim of indigenous music education

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<sup>52</sup> Alan Merriam, *The anthropology of music*, Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1968; Paul Kavyu, *An introduction to Kamba music*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1977; Kariamu Welsch Asante, *African dance: an artistic, historical and philosophical inquiry* Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1996.

<sup>53</sup> John Storm Roberts, *Black music of two worlds*, New York: Original Music, 1972; Billy Bergman, *African pop: goodtime kings*, Poole: Blandford Press, 1985; Graeme Ewens, *Africa O-Ye! A celebration of African music*, London: Guinness, 1991.

<sup>54</sup> James A. H. Murray, Henry Bradley, W. A. Craigie and C. T. Onions (eds), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, Vol. V, 1989, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> Clemente K. Abrokowaa, "Indigenous music education in Africa" in Ladislaus M. Semali and Joe L. Kencheloe (eds), *What is indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*, New York: Falmer Press, 1999; Herbst *et al.* (eds), *Musical arts in Africa: theory, practice and education*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003.

is to impart socio-cultural knowledge and skills to the young of the community."<sup>56</sup> He highlights the specific kind of education that the performing arts convey and other methods of instruction.

For this education to be realised, effective communication needs to take place. Fiske, Hesselgrave and Wisely<sup>57</sup> provide communication models and processes of communication in their writings. These were useful in shedding light on how communication takes place and in comparing the models with the MMM's experiences.

## 6. Chapter outline

The information acquired from the research of this study is presented in the following manner.

Chapter One focuses on the purpose, research methodology and literature review, while a historical account of the development of church music in Nairobi appears in Chapter Two. This chapter illustrates how church music in Nairobi evolved from the missionary era to 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The *isukuti* performing arts of the Isukha are presented in Chapter Three, tracing the history of the Isukha of the Western Province of Kenya and their performing arts. It discusses their indigenous and neo-traditional performing arts in their relation to culture.

Chapter Four explores the development of popular music in Kenya and the Congolese music influences on Kenyan popular music. The chapter ends with a discussion of selected video clips of Koffi Olomide and his dance group, which has influenced the focus group of this study, the MMM,

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<sup>56</sup> Abrokwa, p. 198.

<sup>57</sup> John Fiske, *Introduction to communication studies*, second edition, London: Routledge, 1990; David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ cross-culturally: an introduction to missionary communication*, second edition, Michigan: Zondervan, 1991; Forest G. Wisely, "Communication models," in Moore *et al.* (eds), *Visual literacy: a spectrum of visual learning*, Englewood Cliffs: Education Technology Publications, 1994.

The performing arts of Kirk Franklin and his dance group are situated within the context of the church music development in the United States of America in Chapter Five. Chapter Six provides a detailed documentation and analysis of the performing arts in the Christian church as demonstrated and practised by the Nairobi dance group, the MMM. Cross-cultural influences and the educational role are being emphasised.

Based on the findings of the previous chapters, Chapter Seven proposes a theoretical framework for the effective use of the performing arts in the Christian church and other educational settings.

The findings of this study are summarised in Chapter Eight, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for practical implementation of the framework as well as for further research are made.

#### **7. Limitation of the study**

The main limitation that this study faced was lack of enough research funds and time to extend fieldwork documentation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United States of America; Koffi Olomide and Kirk Franklin and their dance groups live in these two countries respectively. This limited the kind of contact that the researcher could have and the field experiences in those areas. However, the videotapes of these artists have been analysed and the similarities and differences between them and the MMM are drawn.

# Chapter Two

## The development of church music in Nairobi: a historical account

### Introduction

The focus group of the study, the Christian dance group *Maximum Miracle Melodies*, is based in Nairobi. This chapter therefore traces the historical development of an aspect of church music in Nairobi. Apart from providing a brief history of Kenya and Nairobi in particular, this chapter also illustrates how church music developed in Kenya.

### 1. Historical background

#### 1.1 Kenya

Kenya is located on the eastern Coast of Africa, right on the equator.<sup>1</sup> It is bordered by Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan in the north, Tanzania in the South, Uganda in the West and the Indian Ocean in the east. Covering an area of 225,000 sq. miles (360 km),<sup>2</sup> Kenya has a wide variety of striking landscapes and beautiful scenery and is inhabited by more than 40 African ethnic groups, the five largest being Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kamba and Kalenjin. All ethnic groups can be divided into four linguistic groups, namely Bantu, Cushitic, Nilotic and Paranilotic, making Kenya one of the few African countries characterized by extreme ethnic diversity.<sup>3</sup> In pre-colonial times, these societies were largely ethnically homogeneous, small in number and regional.

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century European countries invaded Africa, which had a snowballing impact on the continent as a whole. This invasion culminated in the conquest of African countries, including Kenya, by Europe in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>4</sup> Britain colonised Kenya, declared it a protectorate in 1895, while derailing the autonomy and independence of the indigenous Kenyan societies. Kenyans were required to work on

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<sup>1</sup> A.E Afigbo et al. (eds), *The making of modern Africa: Vol. 1*, Eighth Impression, Longman: England, 1993, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan et al., *Area handbook of Kenya*, Washington: American University, 1976, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> A. E Afigbo et al. (eds), p. 317

the European-owned farms and were forced to abandon their traditions, causing a cultural division between indigenous community members.

The economy of the British grew at the expense of Kenya's. Lawyers, accountants, doctors, missionaries, teachers, hunters, electricians, and mechanics entered Kenya *en masse* and worked together with the colonial government to achieve their varied purposes.<sup>5</sup> Other European settlers such as Germans and Canadians<sup>6</sup> also came to Kenya to work in the above-named professions. Hence, the Kenyans could not tell the difference between Christian missionaries and the colonialists.

Besides colonisation, other forces such as trade contributed to the process of acculturation in Kenya. The main traders were from Arabia, Portugal and India, who traded in the trading ports on the Kenyan coast.<sup>7</sup> The common language of these traders and coastal Kenya was the Bantu language, Kiswahili. Due to the spread of trade within the country and the railroads<sup>8</sup> that the Asians constructed in collaboration with the British government, there was greater interaction even among African ethnic groups. Kiswahili became the main language of trade in Kenya. It should be noted, however, that there were cross-cultural influences between various Kenyan ethnic groups over the years before colonialism, Christianity and foreign trade in Kenya.

The British rule over Kenya resulted in a Western-style centralised administration and government. Kenyans fought for liberation, resulting in independence in 1963,<sup>9</sup> reforming the country into a modern state with African majority rule. Kenya in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has eight provinces, namely Nyanza, Western, Nairobi, Central, Eastern, Rift Valley, North Eastern and Coast (see Fig. 2.1). The national languages spoken are English and Kiswahili, and Kenya's population in 1999 was 28,808,658.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Robert Collins, *African history, text and readings*, New York: Random House, 1971, pp. 247-250.

<sup>6</sup> Donald R. Jacobs, "Kenya's cultural heritage and tradition," in David B. Barrett *et al.* (eds), *Kenya churches handbook: the development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973*, Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973, p. 41.

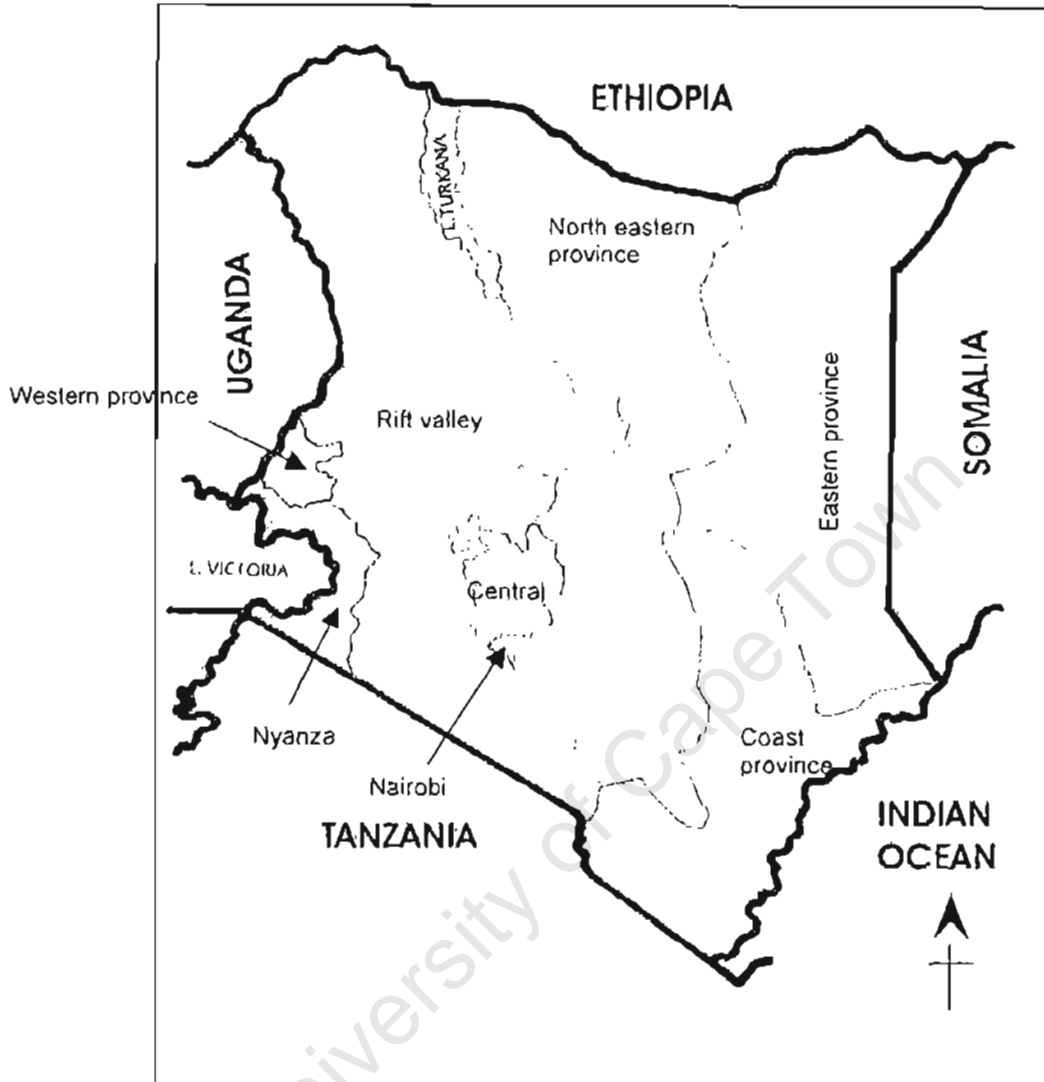
<sup>7</sup> Collins, p. 226; Jacobs, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> There are about 32,000 Indians who were transported as labourers to Kenya in order to construct the Kenya-Uganda railway in 1896. This railway was the foundation of East African development that facilitated interaction among the various groups of people. From George Delf, *Asians in Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Collins, p. 249.

<sup>10</sup> People, [n.p.], *Kenya web*, 1999, available from <<http://www.kenyaweb.com/people/index.html>>; accessed 10 March 2003.

Fig. 2.1 Provinces of Kenya<sup>11</sup>



Towns in Kenya have had a high population growth rate with Nairobi, the capital city, being the highest.<sup>12</sup> Nairobi had been the only city in Kenya until Kisumu and Mombasa were also declared cities in 2002.

## 1.2 Nairobi

Nairobi is a Maasai word that means "the place of sweet waters."<sup>13</sup> It is the smallest Province in Kenya, yet the fastest growing in terms of population. Situated near

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from W.R. Ochieng', *A history of Kenya*, London: Macmillan Publishers, 1985, p. 89. The researcher inserted the provinces.

<sup>12</sup> Shorter and Onyancha, pp. 32-33

<sup>13</sup> [No author] "Nairobi region," in Kenyaweab, 1999, available from <<http://www.kenyaweab.com/regions/nairobi/nairobi.html>> accessed 10 March 2003.

Central Kenya (see Fig. 2.1), it is also the financial and administrative capital of Kenya. Nairobi has a pleasant climate and a surface area of 264 sq. miles (422.4 km) and is at an elevation of about 5500 ft. (1.6764 km).

The British colonialists controlled Nairobi town during the colonial era (late 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1963). In terms of social status and privileges, the British were given first priority, then Asians, and lastly indigenous Kenyans.<sup>14</sup> Indigenous Kenyans were considered temporary and transient labourers who belonged to the rural areas. Nairobi's ethnic and racial character was established right from its inception. Declared a municipality in 1919, it became a city in 1950.

Shorter commented as follows about indigenous Kenyans:

The basic truth is that African town dwellers never really sever their ties with the rural homeland [...] To understand the urban migrant in Africa one must know his or her rural background [...] They [people] tend to return to the homeland in order to marry, give birth or retire. Usually, they maintain a rural family as well as an urban residence.<sup>15</sup>

The above observations indicate that, although the indigenous Kenyans lived in the city, they had close-knit ties with their rural homes.

The population of Nairobi City increased after independence. The growth may be attributed to the enormous expansion of public services, amenities, businesses, companies, and government that followed independence. At independence, Nairobi had a population of barely a quarter of a million. In 1969, the population was 400,000 and in 1999, the population was about 2 million.<sup>16</sup>

Nairobi is a centre of economic power, where the desirable residential areas and shopping centres are situated on the higher altitude locations. The low-income areas lie on the city outskirts in the swampy, lower altitude.

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<sup>14</sup>- Collins, pp. 243-250.

<sup>15</sup> Aylward Shorter, *The church in the African city*, England: Cassell Publishers 1991, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Shorter and Onyanacha, p. 33.

The city is an international business and tourist centre.<sup>17</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, it encompasses people of many multi-lingual and ethnically heterogeneous cultures, races and nationalities. The international character of Nairobi makes it a major trade and commercial centre for business such as music studios, the recording industry, and other activities. This international outlook has attracted tourists to the country, making tourism a major industrial commodity in Kenya.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the music industry started to cater for the non-Kenyans as a consequent of tourism. The two national languages of Kenya, English and Kiswahili, are used in the city of Nairobi in day-to-day communication.

Several religions are found in Nairobi due to the government's policy of freedom of worship. The two religions that have greatly influenced Kenyans in general and Nairobi in particular are Islam and Christianity. The arrival of the Arabs, who settled on the Kenyan Coast in 600 AD, marked the coming of Islam. Christian missionary activity began towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of this study, the development of Christianity will be discussed in detail.

## **2. Christianity in Kenya**

Distinct periods such as the pre-colonial, colonial, missionary, post-colonial, and/or national eras can be identified in the history of Kenya. This section looks at Christianity in the missionary era and national era.<sup>20</sup>

### **2.1 Missionary era**

The earliest missionary contact known in Kenya occurred in 1498, when Roman Catholic missionaries came to the country.<sup>21</sup> However, most of them were massacred in 1631, when they refused to renounce their Christian faith. Later Protestant missionaries began to come to Kenya for evangelistic purposes. The first Protestant missionary to Kenya was a German Anglican, Dr Johann Ludwig Krapf, who was

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<sup>17</sup> Jacobs, "Kenya's cultural heritage and tradition," in Barrett *et al.* (eds), p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Jean Kidula, *Sing and shine: religious popular music in Kenya*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Los Angeles: University of California, 1998, p. 32

<sup>19</sup> Kaplan *et al.*, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> The national era started with independence

<sup>21</sup> Barrett *et al.* (eds), p. 21

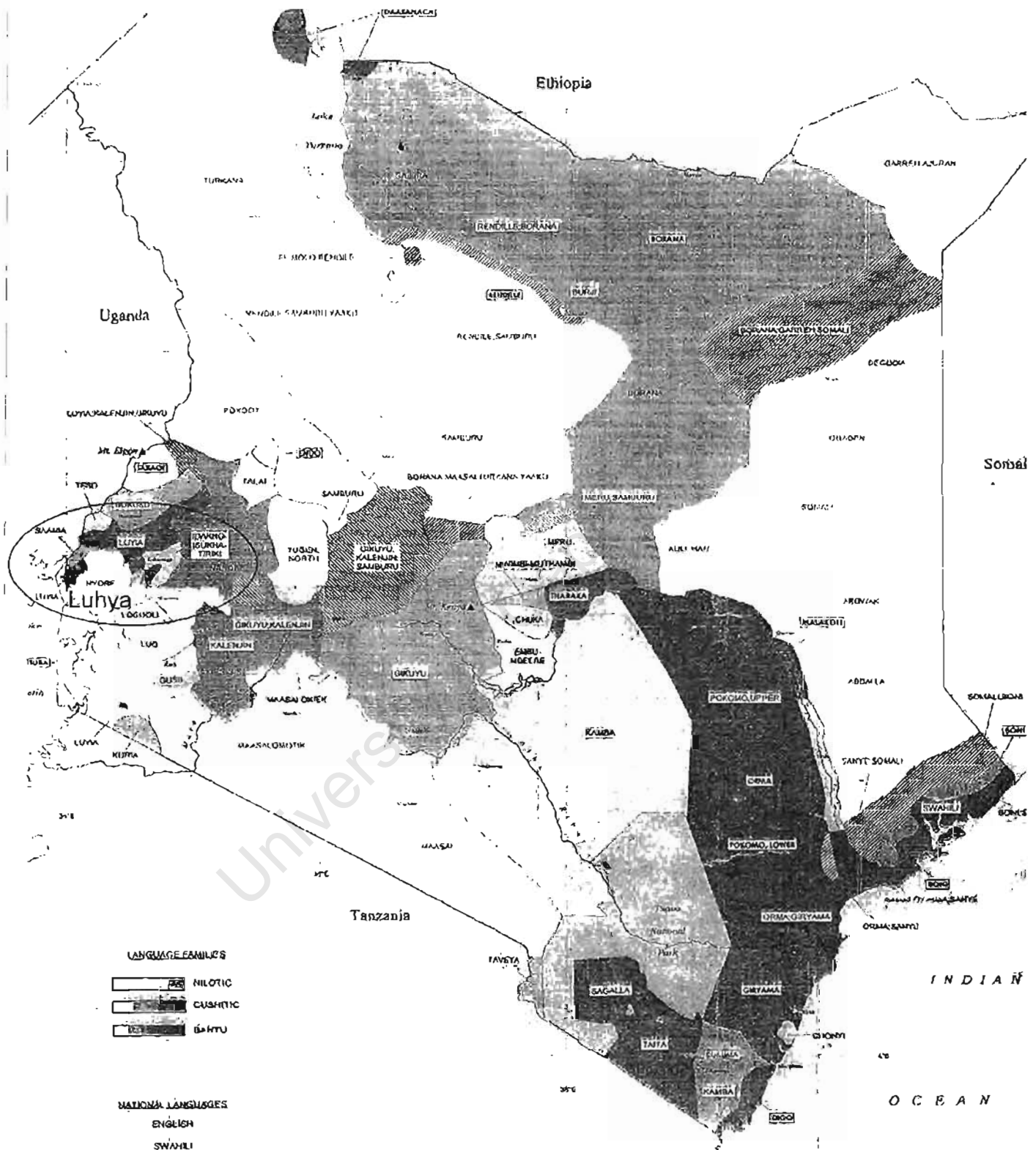
later joined by John Rebmann.<sup>22</sup> The two missionaries were sent to Kenya by the Church Mission Society (CMS) in 1844. They began their evangelistic mission work on the Kenyan Coast, despite the fact that this area was entirely Islamic. These two missionaries had very few converts and their evangelical work developed very slowly. At this time, there was no proper trade route across the country. Krapf developed a strategy whereby a chain of mission stations would be built across the country. Hence, the two missionaries conducted an exploratory tour of Kenya for which they became well known. Catholic and Methodist missionaries joined them to work in the coastal area to do evangelical work among the coastal people. (Fig. 2.2 illustrates the groups of people that live in the coastal area).

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<sup>22</sup> Kidula, p. 39

Fig. 2.2 Language groups of Kenya<sup>23</sup>



<sup>23</sup> Adapted from C. Chesaina, *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin*, Nairobi: East African Publishers, 1991, p. x by the organisation of Bible Translation Literacy, Nairobi. The researcher has inserted the circle to indicate the Luhya homeland.

When the Kenya-Uganda railway was built in 1896,<sup>24</sup> there was an influx of missions into the interior of Kenya from different denominations. In a span of eleven years, there were twelve different mission societies. Out of these, nine were Protestant, the leading one being the Anglican Church Mission Society. The British administrative government invited the missionaries in Kenya and allocated specific rural areas to them. These missionaries depended on local chiefs for permission to start their evangelism, and they built their earliest mission stations in the vicinity of the chief village of the rural areas.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, many of these mission societies had their first churches and headquarters based in the rural areas. For example, Cameron Scott started the African Inland Mission (later known as African Inland Church) in Ukambani (Eastern Province of Kenya); the United Methodist Mission began in Meru, the Presbyterian Mission in Central Province, and the Church of God, Friends, Seventh Day Adventist and Canadian Pentecostal Missions concentrated on the Western Province.<sup>26</sup>

These missionaries built schools and hospitals in the rural areas that were also used to attract the Kenyans to Christianity.<sup>27</sup> To many missionaries the schools were the most important institutions, because indigenous Kenyan children were converted and taught Christian principles. Missionaries generally considered the indigenous children as the future African Christian apostles of the Christian faith. Most of the schools in Kenya around this time were built by the mission societies and very few by the colonial government. However, to run the schools smoothly, the missionaries had to work closely with the colonial government. The missionaries assumed a position of colonial superiority of white civilisation and did not trust the indigenous Kenyans. Therefore, the missionaries did so much “for” them and very little “with” them. Their self-satisfaction with their civilising mission tended to rest on their ideals rather than their practice. Even the salvation of members was based upon satisfactory observance of the missionary rather than on personal conversion by faith of the African. The schools therefore were considered centres of ‘civilisation’ and Western Christian propaganda. In effect, the indigenous Kenyan Christians tended to be

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<sup>24</sup> Delf, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Musumba, p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> John Baur, *2000 years of Christianity in Africa: an African church history*, second edition, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, pp. 255-256.

<sup>27</sup> Kaplan *et al.*, p. 117.

'better' educated (in terms of Western schooling) than those of other religious affiliations.<sup>28</sup>

Missionaries regarded an indigenous Kenyan as intellectually inferior and a person whose customs were to be discarded for him/her to be 'civilised' and converted to Christianity.<sup>29</sup> Mbuga observes that:

[...] faced in the early stages with the difficulties of a strange land, people, language, culture, customs and music, most early missionaries did not have the time, capacity or patience to go into these matters sufficiently. Instead, they thought that by abandoning any attempt to unearth what was good in the African way of life they would cut off all pagan associations; and thus they were able to introduce their own familiar music as the church music of East Africa.<sup>30</sup>

Christianity in this sense came with Western education, reading and writing. The church hence became associated with the upper class, development, education, and power. Like other African countries, where Western Christian missionaries penetrated,<sup>31</sup> this led to the breakdown of African education systems without consideration of their relevant value. This is ultimately responsible for the demolition of African cultural values. It also led to the assumption that "African music is by nature inferior, primitive, crude, and useless in the church."<sup>32</sup> This is a mentality that the indigenous Kenyans believed and held too tenaciously. Indigenous dances and instruments were also discarded.

In replacing the Kenyan culture with European culture, the missionaries controlled the minds of the indigenous Kenyan people, taking full control over their lives. According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o:

Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relation to others.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Daniel S. Sifuna, *Short essays on education in Kenya*, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980, pp. 6-7

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Mbuga, "The new surge in indigenous Christian music in Kenya," in Barrett *et al.* (eds), p. 65.

<sup>31</sup> L. B. B. J. Machobade, 'Basotho religion and Western thought', in *Occasion papers no. 55*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1995, p. 1

<sup>32</sup> Mbuga, p. 66; Warnock, pp 61-62.

<sup>33</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1986, p. 16.

## 2.2 Christianity after independence

In the 1950s-1960s the fight for independence from the colonial government intensified in Kenya, culminating in full independence in 1963.<sup>34</sup> Indigenous Kenyans also sought liberation from Christian missionary domination and founded the first independent churches. Many of the independent churches emerged as splinter groups from the mission churches. For example, the Church of Christ in Africa split from the Anglican Church; *Maria Legio* Church from the Catholic Church, and *Dini ya Msambwa* from the Friends (Quakers).<sup>35</sup> These church splits were the most distinctive marks of the 1970s-1990s as compared to the years that followed.

Most of these splinter churches were based in the rural areas and had indigenous leaders who were seeking an authentic African Christianity that was intimately connected with the re-birth of African culture. Such churches have been despised because their leaders have not been as highly 'educated' as their counterparts in mission schools.<sup>36</sup> Despite this fact, they spread so fast throughout the country such that by 1970 Kenya had 150 independent churches with 1,600,000 affiliated members.<sup>37</sup>

The city scenario was a little different. Many indigenous Kenyan Christians moved to Nairobi from the rural areas in search of employment and 'better life'. Those who were not in the splinter groups attended the churches that they could find in their vicinity. Since these Africans had been Christianised by different Western mission churches, they did not have affiliated branches of the same denomination in the city. Some began meeting together in small groups (fellowships) as members of the same denomination. These fellowships became larger and the mission churches that the members belonged to in the rural homes allowed them to develop into affiliate congregations. The denominational leaders appointed pastors for these congregations. In some instances, the denominational leaders sent Western missionaries to the city to act as pastors for the new congregations. However, most

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<sup>34</sup> Kaplan *et al.*, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Baur, pp. 255-259, 490-493; Gideon Were, *Essays on African religion in Western Kenya*, East African Literature Bureau: Nairobi, 1977, p. 34.

<sup>36</sup> Kidula, 1998, p. 42.

<sup>37</sup> Baur, p. 493.

of the missionaries went to the city reluctantly because they had an anti-urban mentality. They considered urban areas as centres of a secular colonial power.<sup>38</sup>

These new congregations tried to enhance and develop the same worship practices as their affiliated denominations until after independence, when many Western missionaries left the country. They relinquished leadership to the African nationals, who tried to retain the practices of the missionaries, but had the autonomy to set their own priorities. The Catholic Church in Kenya seems to have begun relinquishing powers to the indigenous Kenyans slightly before independence.<sup>39</sup>

The fact that many Kenyans came to the city in search of employment meant that they became scattered all over the city meaning that they had to intermingle with members of different cultural groups. Those who were not churchgoers in their rural homes became Christians and joined churches of their choice. Hence, many urban churches became inter-ethnic in nature as well as interdenominational, which in effect resulted in changes in the practice of worship and music.

### **3. Church music development in Nairobi**

This section focuses on the development of music in the churches in Nairobi during the missionary era, after independence and the present situation in Kenya. It should be noted that most Western missionaries left the country after Kenya attained its independence.

#### **3.1 The missionary era: late nineteenth century to the mid-nineteen sixties**

During the inception of mission churches in Nairobi, the songs that were performed at church services were in Kiswahili and other African language translations of English

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<sup>38</sup> Shorter and Onyancha, pp. 63-64.

<sup>39</sup> Barrett *et al.* (eds), p. 26.

hymns<sup>40</sup> sung by the mission societies in their European countries. Since the growth of church membership was based on the transfer of members of the same denomination from the rural churches, most of the congregations sang the hymns in their ethnic languages.

The hymns had messages about the gospel and the Christian experiences of the composers, thus depicting the culture and environs of these musicians. Such texts posed a problem to the translators of the hymns, because it was difficult to get a text with an equivalent meaning in the ethnic languages that would fit the melodic line. The missionaries' focal point was the retention of the melodies and meaning of the original English text. Many of these translation efforts, however, distorted the semantic meaning of the texts by ignoring the tonal syllabic rules of indigenous languages, which resulted in the stresses of melodies falling on the wrong syllables.<sup>41</sup> The English language differs in grammatical structures and stresses from the indigenous languages used in Kenya. Most of these languages are tonal.<sup>42</sup>

In the translations the melodies were retained but not the tone of the indigenous languages, which guided the organisation of interval and melodic sequences. The pitches used were those found in Western major scales. The Kenyans were hence forced to use scales that were not found in their indigenous music repertoire.

Temperly<sup>43</sup> observes that the earliest Protestant hymns, which were translated into vernacular languages, were largely in metric strophic form, consisting of three to four

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<sup>40</sup> A hymn here is defined as "a song of praise or adoration to God or the deity of a saint" or "a poem sung to the praise of God." Michael Kennedy (ed), *The concise Oxford dictionary of music*, third edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 313; "J. A. Westrup and F. L. Harrison, *Collins Music Encyclopedia*, London: William Collins and sons, 1959, p. 329; Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, second edition, revised and enlarged, London: Heinemann educational books, 1971, p. 397; *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 6, fifteenth edition, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1994, p. 199. G. W. Stubbings goes further to define a 'hymn tune' "as a vocal melody, generally harmonized in four parts, for the congregational singing of metrical verse." *A Dictionary of Church Music*, London: The Epworth Press, 1949, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian music: from Gregorian chant to black gospel*, England: Lion publishing, 2003, p. 174-175.

<sup>42</sup> Henry Weman, *African music and the church in Africa*, translated by Eric J. Sharpe, Uppsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri AB, 1960, p. 55. According to: *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume XVIII, second edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 217, the word tonal is defined as "Of, pertaining, or relating to the tone or tunes. Of speech or a language; expressing difference of meaning by variation of tone."

<sup>43</sup> N. Temperly, *The music of the English Parish Church*, Vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 14.

lines. The poetic structures and melodic phrasing of the original hymns were in turn distorted, because in translations adjustments are made in the length of the verbal units in order to tally with the melody. Although the melody remains the same, the syllabic numbers change. The following is a hymn with this problem.

Fig. 2.3 *I surrender all*<sup>44</sup>

J.W. Van Deventer W.S. Weeden  
arr. R. Fudge

All to Je-sus I sur-ren-der, All to Him I free-ly give;  
 5 I will ev-er love and trust Him, In His pres-ence dai-ly live.  
 9 I sur-ren-der all, I sur-ren-der all,  
 13 All to Thee, my bless-ed Sav-iour, I sur-ren-der all

The metric form<sup>45</sup> of the verse of the song is 8.7.8.7 where the numbers represent the syllables per phrase. The metric form of the refrain is 5.5.8.5.

Fig. 2.4 *Yote kwa Yesu* (Kiswahili)

Yo - te na - m - to - le - a Ye - su. Na - m - pa mo - ya wa - ngu wo - te.  
 5 Ni - ta - m - pe - nda si - ku zo - te nu miwa - nda - ma Ki - la - sa  
 9 Yo - te kwa Ye - su, Yo - te kwa Ye - su,  
 13 Yo - te kwa - ko - ba Mwa - ki - zi na in - d - a - sa

<sup>44</sup> Church of God, *Hymnal of the Church of God*, no. 157, [n.d.], [n.p.].

<sup>45</sup> The metric forms that the hymns have are derived from the early Christian metered Psalms of the *Holy Bible* where each poetic line of music had a specific number of syllables. Temperly, (footnote 42) uses this term in his book.

The metric form of the verse is 9.9.9.7, where the numbers represent the syllables of each phrase. The metric form of the refrain is the same as the English version. The indigenous Kenyans learnt these hymns by rote from the missionaries.

Many churches had choirs that often sang their own compositions in a Western hymnal style. The choristers wore long robes to cover most parts of their bodies. These uniforms were different from the indigenous costumes that the Africans were used to.<sup>46</sup>

The songs were hence written in books because most 'indigenous' Kenyans who came to the city could read and write. The Kenyans had to learn to sing while holding a hymnbook. Most of these hymnbooks, such as *Nyimbo za Injili* (Gospel songs), *Nyimbo za Ibada* (Worship songs), and *Church of God Hymnal*,<sup>47</sup> were printed and used in various churches in the city of Nairobi. Some hymnbooks were still in English for the English-speaking Kenyans and for the churches that were predominantly for the white population. The Kenyan Christians came to like and appreciate the music performances in their churches not just because of the quality in the music *per se*, but because of what the music had come to mean to them as members of the specific denomination. The performances of the churches conformed to the norms of the missionaries who insisted on singing while standing still. They believed that the Africans would go back to their 'pagan' dances and practices if allowed to dance in church.<sup>48</sup> To ensure that this did not happen, they deliberately made the Kenyan Christians sing slowly in a tempo that would not prompt dance movements.

In 1927 radio broadcasting began in Kenya and later television was inaugurated. The early broadcasts were in English until World War II, when programs were aired in Kiswahili and Hindi for the benefit of indigenous Kenyans and Asians. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) enjoyed the monopoly of broadcasting on both radio

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<sup>46</sup> See more details of the choirs and their practice in Musumba, pp. 48-96.

<sup>47</sup> *Nyimbo za injili*, second edition, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1987; *Nyimbo za ibada*, [n.d.], [n.p.], *Church of God Hymnal*, [n.d.], [n.p.]

<sup>48</sup> Musumba, pp. 87-88.

<sup>49</sup> Kidula, 1998, p. 47

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51

and television<sup>50</sup>. The National Council of Churches in Kenya had several radio and television transmissions on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (formerly VOK-Voice of Kenya).<sup>51</sup> This body assigned different churches airtime on the national broadcasting network, where different denominations were able to hear, and view music performances by different denominations.

### 3.2 The post-independent era: 1963 to end of the twentieth century

The earliest Christian television programme in Kenya started in 1969 known as *Nyimbo za Dini*, which featured choirs and small music ensembles.<sup>52</sup> Then came *Sunday Music Parade*, a choral music programme that featured choirs from a wide variety of denominations; *Joy Bringers*, a family programme that featured solo and small music ensembles; and *Sing and Shine*, which began in 1985. According to Kidula,<sup>53</sup> *Sing and Shine* was the first programme that the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation made which featured various artists in diverse scenarios rather than the studio only. Kenyan Christian artists initiated this programme in order to influence the Kenyan population with gospel music.

The kind of music that was aired on Kenya's mass media influenced churches in Nairobi. Subsequently churches adapted songs, singing styles and musical instruments from the artists and this marked the beginning of change in music practice in the churches in Nairobi. Choristers such as Mary Atieno, Japheth Kassanga, Agnes Masika, and Mary Wambui,<sup>54</sup> who featured in these programmes, later launched solo careers and through their performances helped to shape the taste of their Christian audiences and churches. The famous choirs included International Fellowship Church Choir (IFC), African Inland Church Choirs (AIC) and St Barnabas Church Choir. The small singing group that greatly influenced Christian music in Kenya was Youth for Christ (YFC), which involved pre-university students and college students.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Moses Wesonga and John Ward, "Religious broadcasting in Kenya" in Barrett *et al.* (eds), pp. 85-89.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Musumba, p. 180.

The music of the Christian artists that were heard frequently on mass media sold very well.<sup>55</sup> *Sing and Shine* therefore provided an opportunity for marketing and promoting the artists and their music, thus leading to commercialisation and inaugurated the age of cassette production and buying in Kenya. Christian musicians began producing tapes for sale. These musicians also performed their music in open-air crusades, parks, outdoor rallies, and music concerts and church services, thereby enhancing their influence and making Christian music increasingly popular. Kariuki<sup>56</sup> also notes that gospel music was selling very well in Kenya and in turn attracted new gospel musicians who sang their own compositions.

Many interdenominational Christian gatherings were held throughout the city at different times. They included rallies, conventions, camps, crusades, and seminars. Examples include the Great Miracle Crusade by Reinhardt Bonnke and Pentecostal healing rallies by Oral Roberts.<sup>57</sup> Such meetings embraced people from different denominations and ethnic groups. In such meetings the well-known and new Christian artists would perform their music. New experiences, new choruses, songs and new ways of worship were acquired informally and learnt by the participants, the majority being young people. Usually the Christians who attend these meetings are very eager to share their new experiences and songs with the congregation. If the congregations accept the new songs, change in music practice occurs.

In the 1980s and 1990s most churches in Nairobi had become multicultural. The rise of African-initiated churches, which were also charismatic, attracted various ethnic groups to their congregations. Churches that had more young people had more changes in their music practices. This is because the youth were actively involved with interdenominational Christian gatherings; they easily interacted with people from other denominations and were eager to implement new music that they learnt from

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<sup>55</sup> Larry Niemeyer, *Christian music ministry in Kenya: a study of the impact of cassette ministries*, Nairobi: Daystar University, 1985, p. 30.

<sup>56</sup> John Kariuki, "The rise and rise of gospel music" in *Now magazine*, Nairobi: Nation Newspaper, 28 April 1991, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Barrett *et al.* (eds), p. 28.

<sup>58</sup> Musumba, pp. 178-180.

<sup>59</sup> Musumba, pp. 178-180; also see chapter five of this dissertation for more examples.

these meetings, the mass media and other denominations, since such songs appealed to them.

Musumba<sup>61</sup> also notes that those churches with a variety of denominations and ethnic groups represented in their congregations experienced more musical changes than those congregations comprised of predominantly one tribe or denomination. Sometimes changes in music due to conflicting ideas brought about by acculturation<sup>62</sup> caused schisms in the church and the formation of new churches, thereby illustrating the power of music. The change was mostly brought about through contact with other African ethnic groups, denominations, mass media and Western cultures. As the society changed due to inside or outside pressure and as changes of environment occurred, so also the music and musical expression changed. In a way, music helped the congregations to adapt to new social conditions.

Although change in the city has influenced many churches, some historical mission churches have not fully embraced the changes. This is due to the leaders who are more conservative and prefer to retain the music practices as taught to them by the missionaries. Such churches have also had to contend with more breakaway groups than those churches with more liberal leaders have had to.<sup>63</sup>

Musumba continues to explain that the consequence of these influences was musical changes in various ways such as in the text, rhythm, melody, instruments and instrumentation, type of musicians and performance. The text embodied in the new songs, mainly choruses, has become low text<sup>64</sup>, where the congregation became more involved in music because the songs were very repetitive with short response sections. The text was an amalgamation of biblical text with topical ideas found in the city and/or in indigenous settings or societies. The songs were sung in a variety of languages found across Africa. In this regard, each congregation was unique and had music peculiar to it, depending on the ethnic groups represented in a given

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-178.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>62</sup> Acculturation here denotes "adoption of or adaptation to an alien culture" Lesley Brown (ed), *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on historical principles*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 16.

<sup>63</sup> Musumba, 209.

<sup>64</sup> Musumba uses this term to mean songs with short, repetitive text.

church. Some songs also incorporated Sh-Eng language, a synthesis of Kiswahili and English, spoken especially by urban youths. Although new songs were added to the music repertoire, many churches still sang the old Western hymns. Sometimes texts were added and sometimes the refrains of the hymns were sung without the verses.

The Catholic Church and African Inland Church<sup>66</sup> (Protestant) incorporated Kenyan indigenous musical instruments from a variety of communities into their church worship services as early as the 1970s.<sup>67</sup> These churches began collecting indigenous folksong melodies and rewrote biblical texts to fit the tunes.<sup>68</sup> The new songs were strongly rhythmical with polyrhythms— typical African music characteristics. These in turn propelled dance movements. Other Kenyan indigenous music rhythms were added such as *chakacha*, *rumba* and *isukuti*. Such rhythms depicted the rise of African Church Music developing free of Western influence, meaning that African songs and rhythms became integrated into church music worship.

The form of the songs has also widened. They include verse and refrain, responsorial singing (call and response), songs with preludes (both vocal and instrumental), instrumental interludes with a climax or bridge (sometimes known as *sebene* – see chapter four) and instrumental postludes.

The performance of the music has also changed. More and more churches allowed dance movements in congregational singing. Free-style dances that reveal acculturation because of the amalgam of dances from different communities in Kenya and North America emerged. More use of African music characteristics such as word-interpolations, improvisations, speech-melody, participatory performance which was mainly enhanced by the use of choruses, hand clapping and jumping. Some of

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<sup>65</sup> This paragraph contains observations by Musumba, *ibid*.

<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that the African Inland Church used their students from Scott Theological College, which is their affiliate college, to introduce indigenous music instruments in the church. Other churches in Kenya adopted this practice through their exposure in media, open-air crusades, and evangelistic campaigns.

<sup>67</sup> John P. Kealy, "Catholic progress with traditional music," in Barrett *et al.* (eds), pp. 67-70; Eva Christian, "Protestant choirs of traditional instruments," in Barrett *et al.* (eds), pp. 70-84.

<sup>68</sup> Chapter Seven shows how this was also the case in the early Western Christian church.

the choruses sung were adapted from the compositions of the Christian artists who had produced cassettes.

New types of musicians emerged that brought a new dimension to music. They included small singing groups (as portrayed in the mass media), worship teams, chorus-song leaders and instrumentalists playing new instruments brought to church. Most of these musicians are from a wide range of ethnic and denominational backgrounds. They join the specific churches because of their proximity to residential area, way of worship, marital obligation, the language used in the service, church programmes, the type of music performed in the church or when they are asked to help in the music ministry of a given church. Some of the musicians were initially in secular pop bands and therefore they come with previously acquired music knowledge and skills from these bands.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, their style of music helps to shape the taste of music of the congregation. The instrumentalists are the ones that have influenced church music in Kenya immensely.

The instrumental performance of the Christian music aired on television and radio in Kenya developed a sound that came to be associated with the Christian solo or small ensemble music in Kenya. The initial instruments that were prevalent were lead, rhythm and bass guitars, trumpets, trombones and electric keyboard synthesisers. Such music attracted many Christians. Musumba observes that Christian instrumentalists who were initially in secular pop bands use their previously acquired playing techniques from secular pop bands in church music. The Christian music that has become popular in Kenya has similarities with African secular pop music. The major difference is in the text used.

Although the new practices have been incorporated in charismatic / African-initiated churches, there has been a concern about effective ways of utilising music in church. To alleviate problems that come with ignorance about the use of some of the new practices in the church in Nairobi and Kenya in general, a few trained Christian

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<sup>69</sup> Musumba, pp. 166-169.

musicians in Kenya have written books with the Kenyan and African context in mind to help in the training. Such authors include King, Scott and Miya.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.3 The beginning of the twenty-first century

The church in Nairobi has seen tremendous changes in its music. New practices have emerged and have brought misunderstandings, sometimes curiosity and even conflicts. One such area that currently represents a paradigm shift for some churches and a dilemma for others are Christian performing arts groups. Many churches are now forming Christian dance groups that perform pre-rehearsed dances to pre-recorded Christian music. The older generation in many churches is still trying to come to terms with this practice, but many of the young people enjoy it. These performing arts have now become very popular among the youth and the young pastors to the extent that these arts are performed in open-air crusades and interdenominational Christian gatherings – meetings that are used to propagate new ideologies and Christian practices. This is the focus of this study and is discussed in Chapter Six with specific reference to *Maximum Miracle Melodies*.

Isukha indigenous performing arts known as *isukuti* have apparently influenced the Christian dance group in question. The next chapter thus traces the indigenous music practices of the Isukha as they were performed in pre-colonial times and changes that the music has gone through in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This discussion traces the indigenous music history of Kenya and then shows how the indigenous music has come to influence the new genre of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century church in Kenya: Christian dance groups.

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<sup>70</sup> Roberta King, *A time to sing: a manual for the African church*, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1999; Joyce Scott, *Tuning in to a different song: using a music bridge to cross-cultural differences*, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2000; Florence Miya, *Building effective worship teams*, Nairobi: Uzima Press, 2002.

## Chapter Three

### The *isukuti* performing arts of the Isukha

#### Introduction

The cultural practices of Kenya, like many post-colonial African countries, have undergone many changes because of colonisation.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the indigenous practices performed in Kenya since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century differ from what was performed during the pre-colonial times.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter highlights the Luhya history, cultural practices, religious belief systems and musical performances, with specific reference to the *isukuti* performing arts<sup>3</sup> of the Isukha. It also traces the changes that have occurred in these performing arts since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. These changes are discussed because of their influence on the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* dance group, the focus of this thesis.<sup>4</sup>

Two Isukha neo-traditional dance groups that signify the changing indigenous practices in Kenya, the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* and Mukumu Girls High School *isukuti* dance groups from Isukha, are discussed. The chapter also summarises the educational roles that the performing arts of *isukuti* perform. These aspects are generally discussed in relation to other cultural groups in Kenya, illustrating some underlying music practices and philosophical underpinnings, commonalities and differences.

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<sup>1</sup> A brief history of colonisation in Kenya appears in Chapter Two.

<sup>2</sup> Abrokowaa, pp. 193-194

<sup>3</sup> The term *isukuti* performing arts refer to *isukuti* dance, music and drama. Sometimes the words are used independently to emphasise a given concept or specific area

<sup>4</sup> A lecturer in the School of Music at the Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Mr George Mwiruki, viewed all the videotapes and verified the observations by the researcher that Isukha performing arts with special reference to *isukuti* influenced the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* dance group. He is an *isukuti* performer and has been teaching *isukuti* performance practices at primary, secondary and various tertiary educational institutions in Kenya. He has also been an adjudicator of Kenya Music Festivals since 1979. The Director of Culture in Kenya, Mr Sylvere Anami; the Chief and Sub-chief of the Bukhulu Location in Isukha, Mr Fabian S. Lilumbi and Mr Maurice M. Mukhabali respectively, directed the researcher to the key *isukuti* performers and informants who are knowledgeable in *isukuti* performing arts as shall be discussed later in the chapter.

## 1. Historical background of the Luhya

Kenya has four major linguistic groups that encompass a variety of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups.<sup>6</sup> These distinct linguistic groups are Bantu, Nilotes, Cushites and formerly known as Paraniotics, now referred to as the Lake and River Nilots.<sup>7</sup> The Luhya are Bantu people whose main homeland is in the Western Province of Kenya (see Fig. 2.1 in Chapter 2). Historians such as Were have noted that the Bantu arrived in Kenya from Zaire in Central Africa during the first millennium.<sup>8</sup> These Bantu intermingled with those who arrived later from Egypt. They also mingled and intermarried with Cushites and the Nilotes from other parts of Africa. This fusion became an ongoing process, to the extent that contemporary Bantu groups have emerged as distinct groupings. Some of the immigrants such as the Kalenjin adopted the Bantu languages and cultures and lost their own, while in a few Kenyan districts some of the Bantu were themselves absorbed by the immigrants. The Bantu therefore became a hybrid community. The Luhya falls under the Bantu group.<sup>9</sup>

The neighbours of the Luhya include the Highland and Plain Nilotes, formerly known as Nilo-hamites; the Teso (west), the Kalenjins (north), the Nyang'ori-Teik (south-east) and the Lake and River Nilotic Luos (south).<sup>10</sup> Uganda also borders the Luhya to the west, where some of their sub-ethnic groups are found. The current Western Province homeland in Kenya incorporates four districts: Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega and Vihiga.

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<sup>5</sup> This section gives a very brief history of the Luhya. For detailed account of the history of the Luhya, please refer to J. Osogo, *A history of Abaluyia*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1966; Gideon Were, *Western Kenya historical texts: Abaluyia, Teso, and Elgon Kalenjin*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Gideon Were, *A history of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967, p. 29.

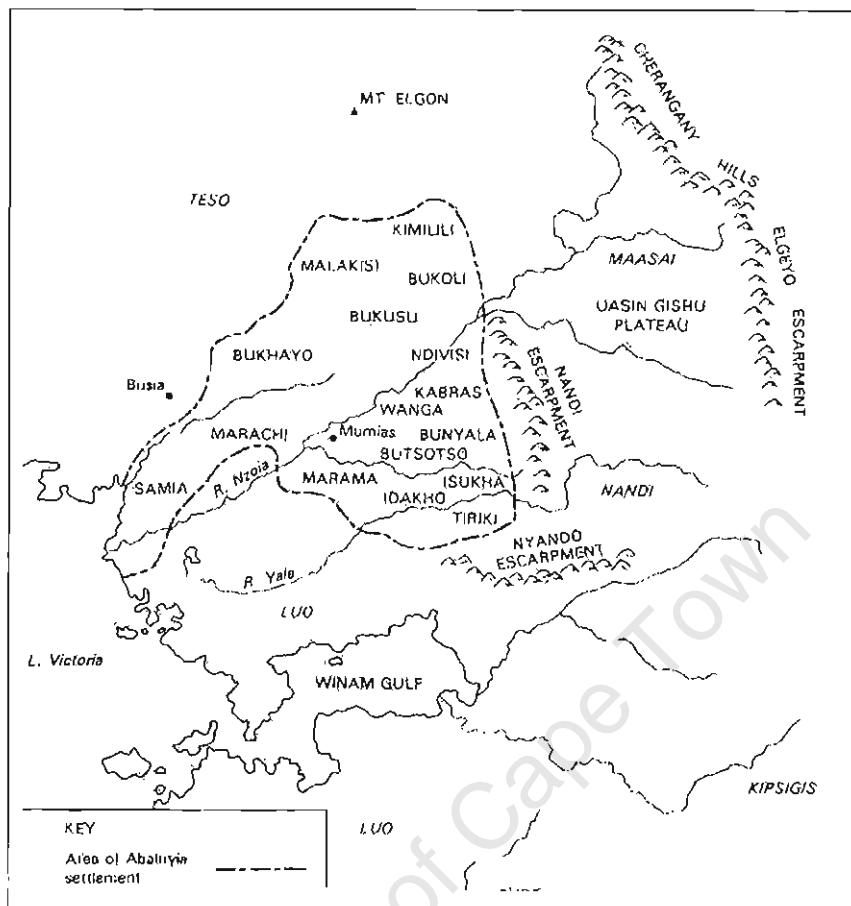
<sup>7</sup> Kaplan *et al.*, p. 101.

<sup>8</sup> [Anonymous], "Regions" in *Kenyaweb*, available from <<http://www.kenyaweb.regions/kakamegaDistrict.html>> accessed 18 February 2003; Were, 1967, p. 64; Kaplan *et al.*, p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> W.H. Laughton, *The peoples of Kenya: The Bantu of Kavirondo*, Nairobi: Nindia Kuu Press, 1944, p. 8, indicates that the Bantu of Kavirondo (now Western Province), began calling themselves 'AwaLuhya'. According to Laughton, this name was inclusive of all the Luhya sub-ethnic groups. However, initially they didn't have a term for all the groups.

<sup>10</sup> Were, 1967, p. 30.

Fig. 3.1 The Western Province homeland in Kenya<sup>11</sup>



In the four mentioned districts there are seventeen different Luhya sub-ethnic groups. These sub-ethnic groups are the Tiriki, Idakho, Isukha, Wangwa, Kisa, Maragoli, Nyore, Marama, Marachi, Khayo, Nyala, Batsotso, Bukusu, Kabras, Masaba, Songa and Samia. Although each sub-ethnic group has its own distinct language and customs, they are culturally and linguistically related. They can understand and identify each other's language, despite the fact that they exhibit certain differences. According to Ochieng',<sup>12</sup> the period between 1200 and 1850 marks "the formative phase of the Abaluyia as a cultural and linguistic community." The people have thus come to be known as Abaluhya or Luhya, their land as Buluhya<sup>13</sup> and their ethnic

<sup>11</sup> Adopted from W. R. Ochieng, *A history of Kenya*, London: Macmillan Publishers, 1985, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Fedders and Cynthia Salvadori, *Peoples and cultures of Kenya*, Nairobi: Transafrica, 1998, p. 99.

group and/or language as Luhya or Oluluhya. Munday<sup>14</sup> asserts that the term 'Abaluhya' "came into general use in 1930s." However, several authors spell the name Luhya in different ways. For example, Whyte and Mirimo use the spelling Luyia; Currey, Mojola and Were use the spelling Abaluyia, whereas Munday, Shorter, and Collins use Luhya.<sup>15</sup> Malusu argues that even the Luhya seem to "agree to differ" about the spelling.<sup>16</sup> For the purpose of consistency, this dissertation will use the spelling of Luhya.

The total area of the Western Province region that the Luhya specifically occupy is about 4,886 kilometres (3,054 sq. miles).<sup>17</sup> The Western Province is well watered and has two distinct seasons: the dry season that falls between mid-December and mid-February, and the rainy season that lasts from March to December. The Western Province receives rain throughout the year and is therefore very fertile. It has rich highland soil and a large forest in Kakamega. The forest provides good wood for making musical instruments. From this forest the Isukha get the materials used in making their famous instruments, the *isukuti* drums.<sup>18</sup> The Isukha also render the dances that these drums accompany as *isukuti* dance. This dance has become very popular in Kenya<sup>19</sup> and is performed regularly at the Kenya Music Festivals, in television advertisements, national gatherings, the Bomas of Kenya Cultural Centre, church performances and football matches.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Munday, *Birth and death in between: children in Wanga society*, Nairobi: Nairobi University, Institute of African studies, 1980, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Michael A. Whyte, *Controlling comparison: a discussion of divergent paths taken by two Luyia-speaking groups*, Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1979; Abraham K. L. Mirimo, *Luyia sayings with English translations*, Nairobi University Press, 1988; James Currey, *African worlds: studies in the cosmological ideas and social values of African peoples*, Hamburg: Oxford, 1999; A. Osotsi Mojola, *Knowledge and social images: a study of the connexion between knowledge and social structure with special reference to the Abaluyia traditional society and Plato*, Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1980; Gideon Were, *Western Kenya historical texts: Abaluyia, Teso, and Elgon Kalenjin*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1967; Munday, 1980; Shorter, 1974, Collins, 1971.

<sup>16</sup> Malusu, p. vii.

<sup>17</sup> Were, 1967, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Elkana Machika, 6 June 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Interviews with the *Ngwaro isukuti dance group*. Elkana Machika, 26 December 2001, *isukuti* drummer and lecturer at Kenyatta University, Mr George Mwiruki, 28 July 2003 and the director of culture in Kenya, office of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Gender, Mr Sylvere Anami, 29 July 2003 indicated that *isukuti* music and dance began among the Isukha. Mr Anami has been performing *isukuti* drumming and dance since his childhood. He has also taught and adjudicated *isukuti* performing arts in a variety of schools and the Kenyan Music Festivals.

<sup>20</sup> Senoga-Zake, p. 31. According to Senoga-Zake, *isukuti* is nowadays performed during Christmas season and installation of a chief as well as at other public holidays. This information has been confirmed in interviews with Mrs Musolo, 2 June 2002, Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002, Mr George Mwiruki, 28 July 2003 and Mr Sylvere Anami, 29 July 2002.

## 2. The indigenous Isukha

This section examines the indigenous culture and music practices of the Isukha, a sub-ethnic group of the Luhya, as practised by some of the old members of the Isukha community. The researcher collected information on the indigenous Isukha (a) from existing literature, (b) old research participants<sup>21</sup> of the Isukha community, (c) research participants knowledgeable on the *isukuti* performing arts and culture, and (d) through observing and participating in selected *isukuti* performing arts ceremonies.<sup>22</sup> The *isukuti* performing arts rhythms and songs derive their name from the *isukuti* drums that are used in the execution of the performing arts.

### 2.1 Isukha background

The Isukha are also known as Abisukha and their language as Luisukha or Isukha. Isukhaland is found in Kakamega district. It lies about 11.2 kilometres (7 miles) from Kakamega town centre. The Kakamega District has eleven administrative divisions consisting of 33 locations and 128 sub-locations,<sup>23</sup> of which Isukhaland forms one.

The Isukha neighbours are the Idakho, Tiriki and Batsotso. Most of their practices and music have similarities with those of their neighbours. The Isukha, Idakho, and Tiriki originally performed the *isukuti* dance, music, and drama that were later adopted by the Maragoli, Banyore, and other Luhya ethnic groups.<sup>24</sup>

The main occupations of the Isukha include farming, livestock keeping, and hunting. They grow crops such as tea, sugarcane, maize, beans, bananas, vegetables, potatoes, millet, groundnuts, fruits, and cassava.<sup>25</sup> It is no wonder that such crops are frequently mentioned in their songs and stories. Some of the leaves of these crops as

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<sup>21</sup> The term 'research participant' is preferred to as 'informant' to convey the respect and importance of the knowledge added by the people who contributed to this study.

<sup>22</sup> A lecturer in music at University of Georgia, Prof. Jean Kidula also verified the information in this chapter. She is an ethnomusicologist from the Luhya ethnic group and has performed *isukuti* dances.

<sup>23</sup> [Anonymous], "Regions" in *KenyaWeb*, (n. d.), available from <<http://www.kenyawebsite.org/regions/kakamegaDistrict.html>>, accessed 18 February 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Interviews with Elkana Machika 6 June 2002; Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002; and George Mwiruki, 28 July 2003. Mrs Machika was an *isukuti* dancer between the ages of 12-18 before she got married. Her son Mr Machika leads the *Matende Ngwaro Isukuti dance group* that the researcher worked with during her fieldwork. George Mwiruki has been performing *isukuti* music since he was a teenager.

<sup>25</sup> Interviews with Peninah Musumba, 26 June 2002; W. H. Laughton, *The peoples of Kenya: the Bantu of North Kavirondo*, Nairobi: Ndia Kuu Press, 1944, p. 5.

well as the trees in the forest are also used to make musical instruments and costumes, as shall be discussed later (see plates 1 to 6 in Appendix C). The Isukha also use trees and leaves from the forest and bushes to build their indigenous houses made of mud from their fertile soil. Bushes and leaves are used for their thatched roofs, and cow dung to smoothen the floor.

The common livestock that the Isukha keep are cattle, goats, chicken and pigs. When they slaughter these livestock as well as other wild animals that they hunt, they use the animals' hides, feathers, and bones to make musical instruments. From the horns and hide of the cattle they make musical horns (*olwika*) and the membranes of drums, (*ingoma*) which are used in their dance performances. They also mention these animals in their music, folktales, riddles, proverbs, legends and myths.<sup>26</sup> They imitate the sounds of these animals in their music making. These animals also play a major role in their religious and music rituals as shall be discussed later.

From the wild animals such as monitor lizards, snakes, monkeys and leopards the Isukha make drum-membranes as well as artefacts and costumes for their cultural dances. Their songs, dances, dramas and stories also refer to these animals. This practice of relating songs and folktales to the environment, animals and occupation is also common among other cultural groups in Kenya such as the Gusii (Western Province), Borana (North Eastern Province), Midzi Chenda (Coast Province), Kikuyu (Central Province) and AKamba (Eastern Province).<sup>27</sup> Finnegan<sup>28</sup> (Southern Africa), Scheub<sup>29</sup> (North, West and East Africa), and Bascom<sup>30</sup> (Mozambique and East, West and Central Africa), among others, have noted the same practice in other African countries.

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<sup>26</sup> Interviews with Christina Musolo, and Penninah Musumba, 2 August 2003. They narrated stories commonly told to children among the Isukha. Other authors have noted the same about Luhya sub-ethnic groups. Such authors include Nandwa, pp. 100-206; Mirimo, 1988; and S. Khakai, *The educational role of African traditional religion and customs among the Abanyole of Western Kenya*, unpublished PGDE Project, Nairobi: Kenyatta University, 1984, pp. 24-42.

<sup>27</sup> William R. Ochieng', *Kenya's people: people of the South-Western highlands*, Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1986, pp. 32-34; Hussein A. Isaack, *People of the North Boran*, Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1986, 39-42, Charles Nyakiti Orawo, *Music of Kilifi: The Midzi Chenda and their music*, Kisumu: Lake Publishers & Enterprises, 2002, pp. 70-71; George Senoga-Zake, *Folk music of Kenya*, Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1986, pp. 13-28, 88-90.

<sup>28</sup> Ruth Finnegan, *Oral literature in Africa*, London: Oxford University, 1970, pp. 432-434.

<sup>29</sup> Harold Scheub, *The African storyteller: stories from African oral traditions*, Kendall: Hunt Publishing co., 1990.

<sup>30</sup> William Bascom, *African dilemma tales*, Paris: Mouton Publishers, 1975.

## 2.2 Isukha religious heritage

According to Gideon Were,<sup>31</sup> the Luhya believe in one Supreme Being known as *Nyasaye* or *Were* who created all living creatures and is involved in all their affairs.<sup>32</sup> All beings, including the invisible and the visible, are subject to him and they need to pay him homage since he is their ultimate object of worship. *Were* is all-powerful, protector of all creatures and giver of all prosperity (wealth, health, success, etc.). He brings good luck or blessing to the obedient, but disasters and curses to the disobedient.

The Isukha believe that *Were* is always at the centre of their life. Their daily lives, like those of other indigenous Kenyan groups,<sup>33</sup> are religious because whatever they do, in every occasion and stage of life, always has a religious connotation. Religion and culture were inseparable. The Isukha live a religious life rather than propagate it, since it is an integral part of their total way of living and culture.<sup>34</sup>

They believe that, since *Were* is invisible, he resides in the sky and nature. He is believed to particularly reside in a big rock found in Isukha known as *Ikhonga Murwi*.<sup>35</sup> Around this stone, there is some edible vegetation. The Isukha believe that this vegetation has the power to heal infertile women because *Were* is the source of life. He is involved in the begetting of children, who are considered his greatest gift to man.<sup>36</sup> The rock is therefore of great religious significance. Gunter has indicated the following prayer that the indigenous Luhya pray to *Were*:

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<sup>31</sup> Gideon S. Were, *Essays on African religion in Western Kenya*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1977, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> The name of the author, Were, should not to be confused with *Were*, the Supreme Being.

<sup>33</sup> Peter Bandena and John B. Gichuhi, *Prayer in an African context: with an anthology of African traditional prayers*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002, pp. 12-13.

<sup>34</sup> Mugambi discusses six dimensions of religion in Africa: mythological, doctrinal, social, ritual, ethical and experiential. He cites that these dimensions are always interrelated and intertwined with African cultures. Although the discussion of the indigenous Isukha is not organised according to Mugambi's six dimensions, it clearly refers to them. (J. N. K. Mugambi, *Religion and social construction of reality: Inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Nairobi on 26 September 1996*, Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1996, pp. 7-9).

<sup>35</sup> Interviews with Mark Mabiya and Joseph Liluma, 3 August 2003. *Khukhonga* means to create or shape. *Ikhonga* means something that creates/shapes itself. *Murwi* means head. *Ikhonga murwi* therefore means that the stone has a self-created head or it has shaped a head for itself. The stone is large and has a smaller stone at the top (which looks like the larger stone's head). This information was confirmed and verified by Job Rufus Miya, 26 December 2003 and Penninah Musumba, 26 December 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Munday, p. 5.

Pol! God, may the day dawn well; may you spit upon us the medicine so that we may walk well!<sup>37</sup>

The prayer illustrates that the Luhya acknowledge *Were* when they rise up in the morning before beginning their daily work.

Other beings that the Isukha believe in and who aid the community to communicate with the supernatural are their ancestors, diviners and witchdoctors.

### 2.2.1 Ancestors

The Isukha have a strong belief in communalism. The individual is not strong on his/her own and s/he therefore needs the rest of the community to survive. Their kinship system includes those who are dead, their living relatives and those who are about to be born. Having the desire to feel the presence of their ancestor, the living relatives normally give a new-born child an ancestral name. Like their Luo<sup>38</sup> neighbours, the Isukha view death not as the end of all life, but only the end of physical or visible existence.<sup>39</sup> When a person dies, his spirit, *omwoyo*, assumes new and active life and role in the invisible world. Such people are referred to as *abafwa* or *bandu bakhutsa* (the dead). If the *abafwa* were spirits of good men, the Isukha expect them to do good to the community. The spirits of bad people are referred to as *binanyenzo* (ghosts)<sup>40</sup> and are believed to be evil and harmful.

The ancestors sometimes appear to their living relatives in dreams and hallucinations. According to Mrs Christina Musolo:

When a child is about to be born, an ancestor may appear to the mother or father in a dream, demanding that the child be named after him or her. In such a case, the parents give the child that ancestor's name in order to appease the spirit [of the ancestor].<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Gunter Wagner, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*, Vol. I, London: International African Institute, 1949, p. 170-171.

<sup>38</sup> A. B. C. Ocholla-Ayayo, "Death and burial: an anthropological perspective" in J. B. Ojwang and J. N. K. Mugambi (eds), *The S.M. Otiemo case: death and burial in modern Kenya*, Nairobi Nairobi University Press, 1989, p. 31.

<sup>39</sup> Malusu, pp. 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Vitalis W. Sitati, *17-Abaluhya tongues in English and Kiswahili Dictionary*, Vol. 8, [n.p]. [n.d.], 1980, p. 104

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Christina Musolo, 2 August 2002.

The ancestors have a strong bond with the living and have the following roles:<sup>42</sup>

- (a) Ancestors bring good fortune to the living. They are capable of influencing the lives of the living. The living regard the ancestors as active and helpful;
- (b) Ancestors are capable of bringing prosperity as well as causing disaster, diseases, infertility and harm in the lives of their living relatives and their livestock. The living therefore pour libations to the ancestors before they eat a meal in order to appease the ancestors;
- (c) Ancestors are mediators between *Were* and the community. Sometimes the Isukha involve ancestral spirits in the worship of *Were*. They believe that the spirits act as mediators.

The above roles explain why funeral rites are very important to the Isukha. If a deceased man does not receive proper communal burial, his spirit will disturb the living. If he receives a proper burial, he will bring good luck to his people. The *isukuti* performing arts therefore play a major role in funerals and commemoration ceremonies to ensure that the living beings make peace with the deceased, bringing stability and balance in life as evidenced in many African cultures<sup>43</sup>

## 2.2.2 Diviners

Diviners only come from a specific family lineage and are highly respected among the Isukha, because they are mediators between the physical and the supernatural world. A father hands over his supernatural ability and powers to his son or daughter, who will carry on with the work. The community consults diviners during times of hardships and trouble or when families are looking for solutions or insight. The community regard such misfortunes as curses from *Were*. They consult diviners who diagnose the problem and offer solutions. Usually the diviner decides the kind of sacrifice the community should offer.

The diviners offer sacrifices to *Were* through ancestral spirits as effective mediators. Sacrifices are offered to rectify the 'sins' of the community and/or the family. For example, if there are unnatural disasters such as famine, sudden deaths, locust

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<sup>42</sup> Were, 1977, p. 7. All the old research participants that were interviewed had a vague memory of *Were* and his attributes. They can only remember what some of their grandfathers used to say about *Were*. It is apparent that they did not follow the same practice. The researcher has therefore adapted these beliefs and practices from the book by Gideon Were mentioned.

<sup>43</sup> John Mbiti, *Introduction to African religion*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, second edition, 2000, p. 119.

invasions, contagious and severe sickness, they are believed to be a result of the societal disobedience to *Were*. Sacrifices are thus offered to appease *Were* and the ancestral spirits so that the calamity can end.

Sometimes if an individual violates any of the regulations of *Were* and the community at large, s/he may be punished by the Isukha society. The Isukha believe that if such an individual is not punished, s/he can endanger not only his/her family, but also the community at large. Mrs Machika narrated incidents she witnessed when she was younger:

There are people who used to perform many shameful things. There were elderly people in the community who knew the rules and laws of the lands. If there were young people who were immoral and had sexual relations with other women in the homestead [incest], the village elders would come [to sort out the problem] in the homestead. Beer would be prepared at the occasion. During this occasion, they [the elders, the young people who were victims and the relatives] would all drink it, but they would not allow the victims to drink too much and lose their soberness. When the young people are then asked whether they committed the sin, they would easily admit the truth. The woman/women alleged to be involved would also drink from the same calabash; then they would give to others till the whole group would have taken from the same calabash. They would then be given arrows that they were meant to shoot on the *Mrembe* tree. They believed that when the arrow is shot towards the tree and the elders confess that 'whoever did the act and repeats it again, would die'; it would actually happen. If the people were guilty, they would die if they repeat the same. As each of the victims shot their arrow, they would repeat the words, 'I will not repeat the act again. If I do, let the curse be upon me.' For sure, those who used to repeat the sin would die.<sup>44</sup>

These are ritual dramas<sup>45</sup> that the clan elders and the people in question perform. The sacrifices that are commonly offered are chicken, goats, cattle, birds and crops such as millet. These animals are also used for oath binding and purification rites. The selection of the sacrificial animal, bird or crops partly depends on the nature of the occasion or the type of offence committed.

The places where sacrifices are offered, especially for the whole community, are sacrificial stones or altars. The sacrifices are slaughtered on this altar and some are burnt (as burnt offering) on them. The actual ceremony varies, depending on the nature of the situation. Mrs Machika narrated her experiences as follows:

Our god sometimes would come through the diviner to inform him [the diviner] of a particular family that needed to be purified because the owner of the homestead offended the ancestors. He would have to slaughter a hen and cock. They would also slaughter two goats as sacrifice

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002.

<sup>45</sup> The term ritual in this dissertation is defined as "Of, pertaining to, or used in a solemn rite or solemn rites," Lesley Brown, *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on historical principles*, Vol.2, Oxford: Clarendon, 1993, p. 2609. Ritual dramas are the dramatic actions that accompany the rituals.

to the ancestors. Many people come to the homestead. Then the diviner would begin calling unto the ancestors by name, one by one. An old woman would cook purely *wimbi ugali*.<sup>46</sup> If there were no old women available for this work then a young virgin girl would have to do it. I even cooked the *ugali* while I was still young

Then that night the chicken would be slaughtered outside and roasted on fire [altar]. The *ugali* would be kept on the plates without moulding it. The chicken would then be cut into small pieces and put on plates with the *ugali*. The plates would then be put outside in the open and then they [diviners] would begin calling on the ancestors. The elders and diviners would then take the food and throw it in the air and on the rocks for the ancestors to eat. The rest of the people [the living] would then eat roasted meat and *ugali* to their fill.<sup>47</sup>

All these actions were part of the ritual drama ceremony. Mbiti<sup>48</sup> observes that in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, and Uganda cultural groups built altars in their homestead, where they offer sacrifices to their ancestors and remember them in prayers to their gods. During certain times in the religious ceremonies among the Isukha, there is no music or dancing, but only ritual dramas. When music is performed, the diviners and at times the elders sing songs and play small drums and shakers. These songs aid in communicating with the people's maker and ancestors. In some religious ceremonies the members present sing and dance. When asked whether they sing and dance in these ceremonies, Mrs Machika says:

Yes, we used to sing when the ceremony begins, but when the people were roasting the meat and eating, there was no singing. There was also some singing after the rituals as the people drunk beer. We would also sing and really dance. The songs were about the one who died [ancestor] in that homestead. The parent of the deceased would sing songs with words that she just comes up with [improvised words]. The rest of the people join in the dance...we just danced any style good for old people.<sup>49</sup>

The songs and dances are meant for the elderly who execute dance movements of their choice. There is no prior rehearsal for the performances.

### 2.2.3 Witchdoctors

The Isukha community at large does not appreciate witchdoctors because they invoke evil spirits to torment and destroy people during secret rituals. Whenever a young person dies in the community, this is often attributed to witchdoctors. Mrs Machika sang the following lament that depicts this belief:

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<sup>46</sup> *Ugali* is a "a stiff porridge, made of maize, millet, or cassava flour" From Inter-territorial Language Committee to the East African Dependencies, *A Standard Swahili-English Dictionary*, London. Oxford University Press, 1939 *Wimbi ugali* is made from millet flour. It is also referred to as *bushuma bu bule*.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002

<sup>48</sup> Mbiti, 2000, p 119

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002.

*Nahukà muno* (I wonder)<sup>50</sup>

*Ha yeye haye aye ye* (Oh, oh, oh)  
*Mwana wanje ukhutsi* (My child is dead)  
*Nalira muno ko* (I'm crying so much)  
*Nahuka muno ko* (I am really wondering)  
*Mundu ukhalachiri mwana wanje* (Somebody has cut short the life of my child).

The deceased's parent sings this lament in a *parlando* style. Mrs Machika commented on the song as follows:

You know in the olden days, when a child died when she was young like you [meaning the writer], nobody thought that she died a natural death like sickness. *Aaa!* They would say that someone has cut short the life of her child [*Ukhalachiri mwana wanje*]. But if an old woman like me dies they will just believe that she died a natural death.

This 'someone' is believed to be a witchdoctor who caused the child's death.

Mrs Musolo reiterated that it was shameful to be seen in the homestead of a witchdoctor. Therefore, most people who wanted the witchdoctor's help would visit him at night. According to her:

There was no dancing; it was a secretive visit or experience. Other people were not supposed to know that you visited a witchdoctor. That is why the community could not sing and dance.<sup>51</sup>

It is seen as a shame to get married to a close relative of a witchdoctor. The next song is an example of what young married women sing as they do their work.

*Ng'ombe yambira* (The cow took me)

*Ng'ombe yambira, ng'ombe yambira* (the cow took me, the cow took me).  
*mubalochi, ng'ombe yambira ha, ha* (to the witchdoctor's, oh the cow took me)  
*ng'ombe yambira mubalochi.* (The cow took me to the witchdoctor's).

Usually the Isukha pay a dowry price for a bride before marriage. The bridegroom pays this price, usually cows, to the parents of the bride. In this song, therefore, the words 'the cow took me' are a metaphor that refers to the dowry price paid to the woman's parents as bride price. The woman laments and regrets this action because, if it were not for the cow, which her father paid as dowry price, she would not be married into this homestead of witches. Seemingly, she is blaming the dowry price for her marriage to the witch.

<sup>50</sup> Caleb I. Shivachi, *A case study in language. English, Kiswahili and Luhya people of Kenya*, unpublished PhD. dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1999, p. 33. He translates these words as "I was surprised."

<sup>51</sup> Interviews with Christian Musolo, 2 August 2002

### 2.3 *Isukuti* performing arts

Several scholars<sup>52</sup> have discussed the role of music among the Luhya of the Western Province of Kenya. They have exemplified the social occasions where music is performed as well as the rites of passage of the Luhya. However, this section will not re-examine the social contexts of all the music the Luhya perform, but will concentrate on the *isukuti* performance. The *isukuti* performing arts initially formed part of indigenous funeral ceremonies. Although *isukuti* has become very popular in the twenty-first century and is used in a wide variety of settings, only its use in the funeral context will be discussed in detail. The focus will be placed on illustrating the relationship between the music, the cultural practices and beliefs, as well as the educational role it plays in the indigenous setting.

The Isukha, like other ethnic groups in Africa,<sup>53</sup> do not have an equivalent term for 'music' in Luisukha. They refer to other words that portray their concept of music such as *tsinyimbo* 'songs' and *khusieba* 'to dance'. *Tsingoma* or *muyumu* refer to music performances such as dancing or playing of instruments. When going for a performance, a person would often say 'I am going to *tsingoma* or *muyumu*'. It is tacit knowledge among the Isukha that musical instruments accompany singing and dancing.

The same concept is found among the Akamba of Kenya. Kavyu and Katuli<sup>54</sup> observe that, in the Akamba community of Eastern Kenya, the terms *wathi* and *kwina* are used, meaning 'to dance' and 'song'. When the Akamba say '*Kwina wathi*', it means 'sing a song' or 'dance a dance.'

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<sup>52</sup> Pius W Kakai, *Social contexts of the Initiation rites of the Abatachoni: a historical study*, unpublished MA Thesis, Nairobi: Kenyatta University, 1992, pp. 180-189; Nandwa, pp. 206-235; Khakayi, pp. 10-65;

<sup>53</sup> Leonardo D'Amico and Francesco Mizzau (eds), *Africa: folk music atlas*, Firenze, Italy CentroFLOG. Tradizioni Popolari, n.d., p.28; Gerhard Kubik, *The theory of African music*, Vol. 1, Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1994, p. 330.

<sup>54</sup> Paul N. Kavyu, *An introduction to Kamba music*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1977, p. 11; John Kilyungu Katuli, *Ethnic music in Christian worship: a study of specific aspects of Akamba traditional music in the liturgy of the Catholic Church in Mwingi deanary*, unpublished MA Thesis, Nairobi: Kenyatta university, 1998, p. 39.

### 2.3.1 Indigenous cultural context

The *isukuti* performing arts were indigenously performed during *shimambo* and *shiremba*.<sup>55</sup> *Shimambo* is a funeral ceremony carried out when a middle-aged man or woman dies. In such ceremonies the *isukuti* instrumentalists and dancers perform their music to console the bereaved family and the community mourners. *Shiremba* is performed in remembrance of someone who died, or in commemoration of prominent members of the Isukha society.<sup>56</sup> This performance takes place several days after the burial and sometimes once a year for two to three years around the period the deceased died. In this case the *isukuti* is performed as a tribute to the dead.

A ceremony known as *shinini* is performed several months after the burial. The Isukha believe that this ceremony brings the ancestral spirit to his/her homestead to live in peace in the next world, and to protect his/her living family members from evil spirits and bad omen. This ritual is also found among other ethnic groups across Africa such as the Yoruba and the Shona.<sup>57</sup>

The dancers and singers of *isukuti* performing arts are young unmarried women and men. The instrumentalists are both young and elderly men. Customarily, when a woman gets married, she has to stop performing *isukuti*, because the dance movements are not appropriate for married women.<sup>58</sup> However, whenever *isukuti* performing arts are performed as a procession, for example, in a ceremony, the community members, regardless of their age or gender, join in the dance, utilising their own free-style dances. The *isukuti* musicians lead them.

The young girls wear banana leaves around their waist,<sup>59</sup> whereas the men wear wild animal's hide. Both the men and women dance topless. The dancers paint their bodies with clay of various colours. The instrumentalists are dressed like male dancers, but with headgear made of animal hide and decorated with bird-feathers (see plates 1 to 6 in Appendix C).

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<sup>55</sup> Senoga-Zake, p. 31

<sup>56</sup> Interviews with Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002, Mr Mark Mabiya and Mr Joseph Liluma, 3 August 2003.

<sup>57</sup> S. A. Thorpe, *African traditional religions: an introduction*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992, pp. 65, 102-103.

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with Mrs Musolo, 2 June 2002 and Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mrs Musolo, 2 June 2002.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women wear sisal waist skirts and cotton-blouses (see plates 3, 4, and 6 in Appendix C). During Mrs Machika's era, the 1920s and 1930s, the *isukuti* dancers wore 'Amerikani' (American material or *jinja*, a cotton material that they used to get from Jinja in Uganda.)<sup>60</sup> They would cover their bodies with these pieces of cloth and tie them around their shoulders. This was considered as 'decent.' When the dance is performed as a procession in these ceremonies, the dancers who join do not require specified costumes.

There is usually much beer drinking during funeral times for the whole community. The instrumentalists take the local brew before performing. Wagner commented on the custom of beer drinking as follows:

One of the most humiliating experiences which a man can suffer is to be derided by his age-mates for having offered them 'beer of the women which is not of the husband's kind', i.e weak stuff that has not properly fermented, or to be despised 'because he drinks beer at other people's places, but does not know how to brew the right stuff himself.'<sup>61</sup>

#### (a) Songs

The songs analysed in this section are those that are considered to have the original purpose intended for *isukuti* music. The cultural context is also exemplified.

When someone dies among the Isukha, there is much sorrow and wailing. The wailing serves a dual purpose: first to mourn the departure of the deceased, and second, to announce the death. The mourning goes on for months and the community members are expected to cry. Christine Musolo remarked that "the people have to cry. If one doesn't cry, it will be assumed that you are happy about the person's death." Her remark indicates that the community expects certain behaviour from an individual when someone dies. This kind of unity is also reflected in some of their oral narratives. For example, the following Luhya proverb emphasises the fact that unity in the family and the clan is highly regarded:

*Bulala niko amani.* [Team work/unity is peace. To be united is to be strong].<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Conversations, Dr Jean Kidula, 5 March 2004

<sup>61</sup> Gunter Wagner, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*, Vol II: *economic life*, London. University Press, 1956, p. 68

<sup>62</sup> Mirimo, p. 7

Tracey, Blacking, Dargie, Setiloane, Hardesty and Mngoma<sup>63</sup> have observed the same belief among the Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and other African cultures. The Xhosa, for example, have the following saying:

*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* [A person is a person by (virtue of) other people].<sup>64</sup>

The mourning begins when the person dies and lasts until several weeks or months after his/her burial. The period of mourning depends on the age and status of the deceased. There is a shorter mourning period if the deceased is a child compared to a young man or woman. If the deceased is a prominent member of the society, such as a chief or an elder who had a high standing in the community, the mourning goes on for many months. If the deceased is an old man or woman, there are fewer mourning days than for the former, because the Isukha believe that the old man or woman had lived life to the full and had finished his/her work.<sup>65</sup> An older person is seen to fit comfortably into the next spiritual world/life in their ancestral place as described in section 2.2.

During the mourning period the Isukha gather together in the homestead of the bereaved family. They drink and eat as they mourn in the home. There are specific musicians that lead the community in a great deal of singing and dancing. These musicians perform music for consoling the bereaved family, to relieve their sorrow and pain related to the death of their beloved, for group solidarity, which is a product of the ontological relationships that result from communalism, and to appease the spirit of the departed. It is believed that if the rituals, songs and dances are not performed, the deceased will be unhappy and will haunt the living as a spirit or

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<sup>63</sup> Andrew Tracey, "African values in music" in Klaus P. Waschmann (ed), *Essay on music and history in Africa*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971, p. 272; John Blacking, "Trends in the black music of South Africa 1959-1969" in Elizabeth May (ed), *Musics of many cultures: an introduction*, California Press: Berkeley, 1980, p. 204; David Dargie, "The teaching of African music using techniques based on traditional learning methods" in Andrew Tracey (ed), *Papers presented at the sixth symposium on Ethnomusicology*, ILAM: Grahamstown, 1988, pp.118-119; Gabriel M. Setiloane, *African theology: an introduction*, Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986, pp. 13-16; Kay Hardesty, "Achieving *ubuntu* through chamber music: a lifelong learning perspective" in Tracey (ed), pp. 337-359; Khabi Mngoma, "Music and ubuntu" in Tracey (ed), 1998, pp. 427-433.

<sup>64</sup> Tracey, 1971, p. 272.

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with Mrs Musolo, 2 June 2002 and Mark Mabiya & Joseph Liluma, 3 August 2003.

ghost.<sup>66</sup> The Kipsigis, Luo, Kikuyu, Akan of Ghana, Chewa of Malawi and other African ethnic groups across the continent share a similar belief.<sup>67</sup>

After the funeral the Isukha organise a *shiremba* in memory of the deceased. This memorial dance is incorporated in bull fighting. An example of a song sung during *shiremba* is *Ing'ombe*.

Two *ing'ombe* songs (The cow)

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Solo: | <i>woi</i> (oh)  |
| All:  | <i>ing'ombe</i> (the cow)                                |
| Solo: | <i>woi</i> (oh)  |
| All:  | <i>ee mama ing'ombe</i> (oh mother, the cow)             |
| Solo  | <i>woi</i> (oh)  |
| All:  | <i>ing'ombe</i> (the cow)                                |
| Solo  | <i>woi</i> (oh)  |
| All:  | <i>ee mama ing'ombe</i> (oh mother, the cow)             |
| Solo  | <i>ing'ombe woi</i> (Oh the cow)                         |
|       | - <i>ibuluhya</i> ... (of Luhya land)                    |
|       | - <i>Woi</i> ... (oh)                                    |
|       | - <i>Makhuba</i> <sup>68</sup> (literally means 'words') |
|       | - <i>Kweinyama</i> . (of meat)                           |
|       | - <i>Yeha</i> ... (yeha)                                 |
|       | - <i>Ikhulimira</i> ... (it digs for us)                 |

(Word – interpolations: *shio, shio, ing'ombe-iyō, hee*) (there, there, the cow, *iyō, hee*)

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Solo: | <i>ing'ombe ikuri baba</i> (the cow did not get satisfied)             |
| All:  | <i>ilahumira</i> (it will moo!)  |
| Solo: | <i>wo ing'ombe ikuri baba</i> (the cow did not get satisfied)          |
| All:  | <i>ilahumira shimoli khulacherera</i> (the calf will moo! And go back) |

These two short songs are often sung sequentially. After the word-interpolations<sup>69</sup> the second *Ing'ombe* song begins. The song leader usually determines when to sing the next song and what song to sing. The choice of song normally depends on the

<sup>66</sup> Interviews with Mr Mabiya and Mr Liluma, 3 August 2003. Malusu (p. 5) has also noted this belief.

<sup>67</sup> Henry A. Mwanzi, *A history of the Kipsigis*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1977, pp. 120-123, Jude Ongong'a, *The Luo concept of death: a study of beliefs and ceremonies of death in the light of Christian message*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Pontificia University Urbaninana: Rome, 1978, pp. 3-4; Shorter, p 117; Robert B. Fisher, *West African religious traditions: focus on the Akan of Ghana*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998, p 23; James N. Amanze, *African traditional religion in Malawi: the case of the Birubi Cult*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 2002, pp. 141-142

<sup>68</sup> When the word *makhuba* is translated literally, it does not make much sense. The Isukha use this term as an exclamation when a person is shocked or amazed at something. It is equivalent to the English use of the words 'my goodness!' (Interviews with Penninah Musumba and Job Rufus Miya, 26 December 2003).

<sup>69</sup> Word interpolations are words and passages that are spoken within a song or while the music is performed.

occasion, rituals and sometimes the soloist's desire. The musicians know what kinds of songs to sing for each occasion, ritual and drama.

The text of the songs refers to cattle. The song leader's words also refer to Luhya land and the benefits of cattle. These songs are sung in praise of the bulls. There are usually two groups in the crowd, each cheering a bull. The bull that wins and its owner will receive more applause. The one that loses becomes a source of shame to its owner, who is usually ridiculed by the crowds.<sup>70</sup>

In the second song, after the word-interpolations, the singers refer to the emotional status of the cow. Prior to the bull-fighting ceremony, the bulls are given local Isukha brew to get them drunk. When the music begins and the bulls are released, they are 'charged up' with anger, ready to fight. The musicians sing that if one of the bulls is not satisfied, the satisfied bull will hurt it and the hungry one will go back home like a calf would. Each owner has to give its bull a name, which is used in the cheering and the songs. All the singing, bull fighting, cheering, and dancing are dramatic actions enacted as a tribute to the deceased.

It is mandatory for the living warriors to sing the following song if the deceased is a warrior. The warriors dance and dramatise in honour of the deceased. The *isukuti* drums are also played during the performance.

Fig. 3.2 *Nise ingoi*<sup>71</sup> (I am a leopard)

Ingoi Trad.

*Ni sei-ngo-i wa ni-sei-ngo-i. Ha ru-sei-ngo-i ho ho ni-sei-ngo-i ha*

*ha! Ni-sei-ngo-i wa-ba kha ya nga khu ma-kha yo ha ni-sei-ngo-i.*

<sup>70</sup> Interviews with Elkana Machika, 6 June 2002

<sup>71</sup> The *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* dance group and Mrs Machika who is an *isukuti* dancer sang this song text. However, it should be noted that several people use different words as they improvise. The researcher came across a different version of the same song (see Appendix A) as noted by Nobuhiro Nakabayashi, *Isukha traditional songs*, [n.p.], Kanazawa University, 1979, pp. 10-11.

Solo: *Nise ingoi wo nise ingoi* (I am a leopard, oh I am a leopard)  
 All: *ha nise ingoi* (Ha! I am a leopard)  
 Solo: *wo ho!* (Vocables)  
 All: *nise ingoi* (I am the leopard)  
 Solo: *ha ha!* (ha, ha)  
 All: *nise ingoi wa bakhayanga khu makhayo ha! Nise ingoi* (I am the leopard that repulses any aggression)

The warriors place spears next to the deathbed of the warrior. They then cover the body with a cowhide (in the 21<sup>st</sup> century they use a blanket). The elderly circumcised men in the clan dig the grave in front of the house of the wife to the deceased. If the deceased was polygamous, the grave is dug near his first wife's hut. As the digging goes on, the warriors sing the above warrior song while dancing around the compound. Elderly clan women give a spear to the widow that she holds as she dances throughout the performance as the women direct her. She mainly sings *Isukha dirges (tsinzikhulu)*.

On the burial day the deceased is buried as the sun is setting, signifying the end of his journey. An elderly clan member gives an account of the deceased's life history. At this point there is no crying or singing until the dead body is buried under the ground; only then do the singing and crying resume.

A day after the burial, the warriors organise for the bull-fighting ceremony. They wear leopard hides and leaves around their bodies. They sing and dance with spears in one hand and a slasher in the other. The warriors slash all plantations in the deceased's homestead to signify that all the living crops must die with him. As they do so, they make guttural sounds and threatening gestures to scare the women and children. Such actions symbolise their anger as well as demonstrate their fierceness that is equated to that of the leopard.

The war victors regard themselves as leopards, believing that a leopard is a very strong and fierce animal. This allusion is a result of victory and fierce fighting. Friends also refer to one another as *ingoi*, signifying some big deed by an individual or merely because of one's harsh or fierce character. The dances performed for such occasions imitate the movements of the leopard. Drums, jingles, ankle bells and *olwika*, animal horns, are usually played to accompany the dancers.

On the third day of mourning a fig tree is planted at the graveside of the deceased. A bull is slaughtered and its sacrificial blood is mixed with indigenous medicine. This mixture is then sprinkled on the people present and things around them. The close relatives of the deceased shave their hair. All the above are done as a sign of bereavement, a cleansing of the clan members and initiation of the deceased into the spirit world. The Luhya neighbours such as the Abasuba and the Luo also practise cleansing of the living through sacrifices.<sup>72</sup>

Some songs they sing after the above ceremony refer to the departed ancestors.

Fig. 3.3 *Lumbe*<sup>73</sup> (Death)

Lumbe Trad.

Ngwa-ro i - li - la - nga lu - mbe. Woi - ye lu - mbe

Ngwa-ro i - li - la - nga lu - mbe, woi - ye lu - mbe

*Solo:* *Ngwaro iliranga lumbe* (Ngwaro [dance group] is crying about the death [of the deceased]).

*All:* *woiye lumbe ngwaro iliranga lumbe woi lumbe* (Oh death, Ngwaro is crying. Oh death)

*Solo:* *Maina<sup>74</sup> yakorera muliloba* (Maina disappeared in the soil)

*All:* *woiye lumbe maina yakorera muliloba*, (Oh death, Maina disappeared in the soil)  
*woiye Lumbe* (oh death)

*Solo:* *Mbotswa yakolera mwiloba...* (brother disappeared in the soil)

*Flora<sup>75</sup> yaliranga lumbe.* (Flora cried death)

*Papa yakolera muliloba...* (Her father disappeared in the soil)

*Mutsatsa yakolera muliloba...* (The man disappeared in the soil)

(Word-interpolations: *Khali mwami weru wa Khuchaka akolera muliroba ... O pole, kalaha*)

(Even our first chief disappeared in the soil...oh sorry, sorry)

*Solo:* *Ye basatsa* (Oh men)

*All:* *Khuliranga* (we are crying)

*Solo:* *Ee basatsa* (Oh men)

*All:* *Khulilanga lukhutsu muliloba.* (we are crying for the death in the soil)

<sup>72</sup> Henry O. Ayot, *Historical texts of the Lake Region of East Africa*, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1977, pp. 290-306; Ongong'a, pp. 3-20.

<sup>73</sup> Although the Isukha people sing this song, they use a Lunyore word, *Lumbe*. This shows the intersub-ethnic borrowing (adaptation) of words. Death in Luisukha is referred to as *Lukhutsu*.

<sup>74</sup> This is not originally a Luhya name. It is commonly found among the Kikuyu of Central Kenya. However, Laughton, p. 16, contends that it is a name of Nandi origin. If the name 'Maina' is of Nandi origin, this fact verifies and explains the intercultural borrowing that existed between the two ethnic groups as discussed earlier in the chapter.

<sup>75</sup> The performers used the researcher's name in their performance. Prior to the performance, the group leader Mr. Machika, inquired from the researcher if she had lost a close relative. He thus decided to sing about her deceased father.

Solo: *Bakhaye...* (women)  
*Ni mbotswa papa* (It is my father's sister)  
*Lukutsu luchaki...* (death has began)  
*Yei basatsa ...* (Oh men)  
*Woi bashianje...* (Oh my fellow kinsmen)

The texts of the two songs refer to the deceased, Maina. The texts also reveal the sentiments of the community. The Isukha are sad and are crying for the physical loss of their departed. They use metaphors that can be understood by the community; for example, the deceased "disappeared in the soil." This means that the deceased died and was buried under the ground and covered with soil, to be seen no more, as though he disappeared from the world. Malusu<sup>76</sup> states that there are other terms that the Isukha use to refer to death such as *utsili* (he has gone), *ushindi* (he is cold), *ukhutsi* (he is dead), etc. Such words illuminate the concept of death among the Isukha.

A strong communal bond is also depicted in the song through the use of words such as "my fellow kinsmen". *Bashianje* refers to the way the Isukha refer to each other. This is a commonly used word amongst the Isukha men and women. It signifies the strong ontological relationship that exists among them.

The metaphoric texts in the songs illustrate that these are songs sung by adults and not children.

Some of the texts used are sometimes regarded as nonsense syllables or vocables. They may not make much sense to a non-Isukha / non-Luhya person, but they are very sensible, vital and sentimental to the Luhya. For example, in the above songs, words such as *woiye*, *ha*, *yeha*, *woi* and *ee mama*, are used. When the Isukha cry or are sad they exclaim *woiye*, *ha* or *woi*. When they are perplexed, they exclaim *ye ha* or *ee mama*. When they are happy, *ha a woiye ha* are used.<sup>77</sup>

These are words understood by the Isukha community and are used in their daily conversations sometimes to express their emotions. It is no wonder that they can sing the same vocables repeatedly. In such cases, their emotional attachment to the

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<sup>76</sup> Malusu, p. 1

<sup>77</sup> Interviews with Mrs Musolo, 2 June 2002 and Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002.

music is more important. The song thus acts as a vehicle for releasing their sorrow or emotions. In the funeral song, the singers lament as they sing, "oh men, we are crying... ." In the Isukha community a man is not allowed to shed tears in public. However, here they cry 'through the song'. There is a strong emotion of sadness released through the singing and that is why the same vocables are sung repeatedly. The song also helps to console them as they release their tension. In such songs, the words seem to take precedence over the melody that is sung repetitiously.

The songs reveal some of the cultural practices of the Isukha such as livestock keeping, chief rulership, communalism, burying their dead under the soil and funeral rites. Even though the texts are short and repetitive, they tell a story that reveals much about the Isukha. The soloist of a song sometimes creates his text on the spur of the moment through improvisations.<sup>78</sup> The extempore text is fitted to suit the melody, but sometimes the melody may have fluctuations because of the new words. The soloist repeats the melody, but keeps changing the text. The soloist therefore has to be well versed in the Isukha language, and have extensive knowledge of the people, their customs and cultural practices. This person also needs to be very musical to ensure that improvisations fit well within the musical boundaries and performance. Sometimes the soloist uses word-interpolations that further explain the message of the song as in the examples given, or he can use guttural sounds, which are commonly used and understood by the community. For example, in the bull-fighting song, the soloist uses the guttural sound: "Rrr" to imitate the sound made by cattle herders when directing their cattle as they graze. These sounds contribute to the whole music performance.

#### **(b) Music instruments**

*Isukuti* drums are named so because of the deep sounds they produce when played.<sup>79</sup> These drums come in sets of three. They are all the same shape except for the sizes.

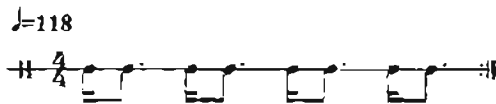
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<sup>78</sup> During the performance of the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* group, the researcher noted that the soloist kept changing his words every time he sang. Whenever he performed the songs, he sang the text differently as he added new text.

<sup>79</sup> Interviews with Mr Machika, 6 June 2002 and Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003

The smallest drum is called *isukuti mwana* or *mutiti*, which literally means 'child' or 'small'. The performer of the *mutiti* drum has to play a regulative constant melorhythm<sup>80</sup>, providing the regular basic pulse of the music (see Fig. 3.4). This constant rhythm enables the players of the other two drums to generate their own rhythms while keeping the basic pulse.

Fig. 3.4 The only melorhythmic pattern of *isukuti mwana/ngapa*



The *isukuti mwana* is also known as *isukuti ngapa*<sup>81</sup>, which also denotes its mnemonic sounds.

The middle drum is known as *isukuti mama* or *shiseti*, which means 'mother', symbolising the mother figure. It is not always played constantly throughout the performance but is often used especially during climaxes when the dancers need to intensify their movements (see Fig. 3.5).

The biggest drum is known as *isukuti papa* or *isatsa*, which means 'father' or 'man'. The melorhythms of this drum are very important for the dancers as they guide the dancers in their dance movements and pattern formations. It has the deepest sounds and has much more complicated and fast melorhythms that require more concentration and repeated practice to achieve the dexterity required (see Fig. 3.6).

<sup>80</sup> Meki Nzewi developed the term 'melorhythm' to describe the melodic mnemonic nature of drum music; Meki Nzewi, *African Music: theoretical content and creative continuum*. Oldhausen: Institut für populärer Musik, 1997, p. 34

<sup>81</sup> *Ngapa* is the mnemonic sound of the *isukuti mwana* melorhythmic pattern

Fig. 3.5 Examples of *isukuti mama* melorhythmic patterns

**Isukuti Mama** Trad.

$\text{♩} = 118$

The musical notation for *Isukuti Mama* is presented in three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 118. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, with two triplet markings over the first six notes. The second staff continues the melody with a single note. The third staff continues with another triplet marking over the first six notes.

Fig. 3.6 Examples of the *isukuti isatsa* melorhythmic patterns

**Isukuti Papa** Trad.

$\text{♩} = 118$

The musical notation for *Isukuti Papa* is presented in four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 118. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, with a 7-measure rest. The second staff continues with a 3-measure rest. The third staff continues with a 3-measure rest. The fourth staff continues with a 3-measure rest.

The drums are made of logs of wood chopped from the *mukumari* (*cordia abyssinica*) tree.<sup>62</sup> The drum makers dig a hollow in the log and shape it according to the desired shape, then they make the outside smooth. One end is wider than the other. The wider end is usually covered with the hide of a monitor lizard, *Shiseri*

Fig. 3.7 *Isukuti isatsa* and *mama*



Fig. 3.8 Metal rods and gongs (vikhuli)



The utilisation of this hide indicates that the Isukha are hunters. The men hunt for this monitor lizard in the surrounding forest. The hide is usually fastened with small wooden pegs on the wooden drum while it is still wet. Its elasticity in its wet state allows for more flexible stretching to produce the desired sounds once it has been dried in the sun. When the drying process is complete, the instrument makers tune the drums by sprinkling a little water on the membrane from the inside. The drum is again left in the sun to dry till the desired sound is achieved. A strap is usually fixed on one side of the drum to allow drummers to hang it on one shoulder during performances. The drum hangs under the armpit as the musicians play them in procession (see Plates 5 and 6 in Appendix C. Also see *isukuti* excerpts on accompanying VCD for demonstrations).

<sup>62</sup> Senoga-Zake, p. 172; R. Luziri Mulindi, *Music of the Logooli: a study of Logooli music with particular reference to children's songs*, unpublished MA. thesis, [n. p.], Queens University of Belfast, 1983, pp. 97-100.

The Isukha believe that the three drums represent the family: father, mother and child.<sup>83</sup> The three drums are always to be played together as a symbol of unity. The big drum, the father, plays melorhythmic patterns that direct the dancers' steps and movements. If the drummer plays melorhythms that have misplaced pulse or tempo variations, he<sup>84</sup> confuses the dancers. This is symbolic of the important role the father plays in the Isukha community. He is the one in charge of his family and he directs them in life. The rest of the family members have to follow his instructions.

Wagner<sup>85</sup> notes that:

Theoretically, [...], a father has almost absolute rights over his children which are not curtailed by any actions which might be taken either by his own clan or by that of his wife. Formerly he could sell his uncircumcised sons in exchange for cattle or goats, to another clan or tribe, [...]. Nowadays a father can still force his daughter to marry a man of his own choice, and he is also entitled to select a wife for his son without consulting the latter's opinion. If his son refuses to marry the girl he has assigned to him, he may disinherit him and drive him away.

The middle drum that represents the mother interjects its melorhythms sporadically. Such interjections illustrate that the mother 'adds' flavour to the family and that she is not always with them. Most of the time she is in the *Mumaika* (cooking area/kitchen) busy preparing food, working in the field, fetching firewood and water, etc. and only enters the *ibweru*<sup>86</sup> (living area in the house) at certain periods. However, what she does is vital in the family.<sup>87</sup> The mother is also considered to be inferior to the

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<sup>83</sup> Except for Mr Sylvere Anami, 29 July 2003, all the informants and the books the researcher read on Luhya music indicate that the *isukuti* drums are played in a set of three. According to Mr. Anami, the drums were originally four but today people use only three. These four included the big drum, which represents the father, the middle drum which represents the mother, and 2 small drums which represent the female and male children. He contends that his late father and grandfather, who were renowned *isukuti* drummers, gave him this information.

<sup>84</sup> Gender issues are discussed later in this section. It is important to note that in the indigenous setting women are not allowed to play the *isukuti* drums.

<sup>85</sup> Gunter Wagner, 1949, p. 46

<sup>86</sup> The Isukha indigenous houses had one big room that was divided into several portions. *Ibweru* was where the male adults used to sit, talk and have their meals. Girls and women were not allowed to sit with the men in this area. They could only come into this area to greet the male visitors or to bring food to the men. Sometimes the father of the home or male visitors may call the females to the *ibweru* for interrogations or serious discussions if need be. (Interview with Penninah Musumba, 26 December 2003)

<sup>87</sup> Interviews with Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003, and Mark Mabiya and Joseph Liluma, 3 August 2003. The *isukuti* instrumentalists could not answer questions regarding the meaning and representation of the *isukuti* drums. They seem to have inherited the *isukuti* drumming from their fathers and grandfathers without inquiring about the meaning and philosophical underpinnings of the drums and rhythms.

husband and if she misbehaves the husband can 'divorce'<sup>88</sup> her and marry another woman. Wagner also observes the following about the Luhya wife:

The low status of the wife with regard to property is paralleled by the fact that she has no rights over her children in her capacity as a mother. If the marriage is dissolved, even if entirely owing to the husband's fault, the wife can under no circumstance claim any of her children, in the sense that she would have a right to take them with her to her father's house or to her new husband and there bring them up.<sup>89</sup>

Compared to the *isatsa*, the middle drum has high-pitched sounds, representing the high-pitched voice of the mother. This sound also reflects that the woman is usually noisy and talks 'loud.'<sup>90</sup> Although the *shiseti* drum is played intermittently, its melorhythmic patterns are simple and varied, and it does not perform on its own, without the *isatsa*. When the *shiseti* player was asked by the interviewer to play his melorhythmic patterns alone, he tried but found it difficult. He replied:

I can't play properly without the big drum. I need to hear the sounds of the big drum in order to play mine.

Again the ideology of unity or communalism is depicted in the execution of the drum's poly-melorhythmic patterns.

The *isukuti mwana* melorhythmic pattern is short, but very essential (see Fig. 3.5). It acts as a time line from which the other two drums get their pattern and keep their pulse. This pattern is not meant to change or stop before the music is over. If this happens, the other instrumentalists lose their pulse and even the dancers may be confused. Although this pattern may appear simple on the surface, it provides the background for the other patterns to the extent that the players of the other two drums depend on the steadiness of the *isukuti mwana* player.

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<sup>88</sup> It should be noted that in the Isukha indigenous customs, if a husband is totally displeased with the wife's behaviour, he 'chases' her from his home and demands that she should return to her parents. In such a case the relatives of the woman are expected to return her to her husband. These relatives, mainly the father and uncles, have to go back to the homestead of the woman's husband for a serious discussion on the woman's behaviour. Depending on what the two parties agree on, a decision is made on whether the woman should remain in her husband's house or not. If the woman is totally displeased with the husband even after returning to him, she will decide her fate. Usually such women run away from their husbands without their father's consent and often choose to get remarried to another man even as a second or third wife. (Interviews with Mrs Penninah Musumba, 26 December 2003).

<sup>89</sup> Wagner, 1949, p. 46.

<sup>90</sup> Interviews with Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003.

The child is illustrated as a very important element in the nuclear family. It is therefore considered a curse or a bad omen if an Isukha woman is barren.<sup>91</sup> This means that she has to undergo some rituals through an ethnic healer as discussed in section 2.2.

If a woman is still not able to conceive, the husband will marry (*khutesia*) a second wife, who will carry on his lineage. Whereas the other two drums can have periods of silence in their drumming, the small one has to play constantly, meaning that children must always be present in a nuclear family. As indicated before, the *isukuti mama* comes in periodically, meaning that, although the wife gives birth to children and she is vital in the home, the husband can be free to marry a second wife.

Although the Isukha are considered polygamists, polygamy is not mandatory. A husband can choose to have only one wife and only remarries if his wife dies. A man is not allowed to remain single after his wife's death. The elders of the clan will give him a new wife who is suitable to take care of him and his children as well as provide a mother figure in their nuclear home. If the man dies first, the woman is free to remarry. In most cases, one of the brothers to her late husband inherits her so that her children can have a father and her sexual desires will be fulfilled as well. This is done in order to prevent promiscuity in the community.

Isukha women are not allowed to play or even touch the *isukuti* drums.<sup>93</sup> Ideally, they are not meant to play any musical instrument. Their participation in music is mainly in singing, dancing, through drama and clapping hands. The Isukha believe that women are meant to be busy with household chores and other family work so they do not have enough free time to learn and practice how to play the instruments. Playing instruments needs plenty of time for skill development and is therefore considered as

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<sup>91</sup> Interviews with Mrs Musolo, 26 June 2002, Mrs Machika, 2 August 2002, and Mr Mabiya and Mr Liluma, 3 August 2003.

<sup>92</sup> Interviews with Mrs Musolo, 26 June 2002 and Mrs Machika 2 August 2002. Verified by Mr Mabiya and Mr Liluma, 3 August 2003

<sup>93</sup> Interviews with Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003, Mr Elkanah Machika, 6 June 2002, Mr Mabiya, August 2003, and Mr. John Litwa Lumati 4 August 2003.

time consuming. Other Kenyan societies such as the Kalenjin, Kisii, and Luo also discourage their women from playing musical instruments.<sup>94</sup>

The Isukha also believe that the drums should never be played when crossing the river.<sup>95</sup> If this happens, the characteristic *isukuti* sound will 'disappear' and the drums will never sound the same again. The main reason for this belief is that the membrane of the drums is made out of monitor lizard's skin that lives near the river. Therefore if the *isukuti* drums are played while crossing the river, the lizards will get scared and disappear; so when one needs to make more *isukuti* drums or to repair them, there will be no lizards to provide the membranes.

Other instruments that accompany the drums include the *olwika* (cow horn) and a metal ring or gong. The *olwika* plays occasionally. Sometimes a calabash can be used to cover and uncover its open end. According to a horn player, Sylvester Muhongo, the *olwika* can produce three major different sounds that have the following meaning:<sup>96</sup>

- The first sound is played to set the bulls ready for fighting during a bull-fighting ceremony. It has a 'mooing' sound;
- The second sound is to help the bull to start fighting;
- The third sound is played when the bull wins.

Any of the sounds can be used in other performances and ceremonies. The horn sounds alert people in dance performances and acts as a cue for change of dance step and style or song.

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<sup>94</sup> Ministry of Education, *Music education in Kenya: music workshop held in December, 1977*, Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 1979, pp. 27-37; Helen A. O. Agak, *Gender difference and academic achievement in music Form Four students in Kenya 1991-1995*, unpublished DMus Dissertation, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1999, pp. 2-11; Graham Hyslop, *Musical instruments of East Africa: Kenya*, Nairobi: Nelson Africa, 1975, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003.

<sup>96</sup> Interviews with the horn player of the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* group, Sylvester Muhongo, 6 June 2002.

The metal rods and gongs (Fig. 3.8) are played as a time line and they have a consistent rhythmic pattern just like the *isukuti mwana*. In earlier times, metal rattles and a gong were used instead of a metal ring and a gong. The *vikhulis* play the same rhythmic pattern as the *ngapa*.

The instrumentalists use mnemonic sounds to teach their rhythms to others or to illustrate how specific rhythms need to be played. For example, the *isukuti mwana* has only two mnemonic sounds (*nga, pa*).

Fig. 3.9 Mnemonic sounds of the *isukuti mwana*

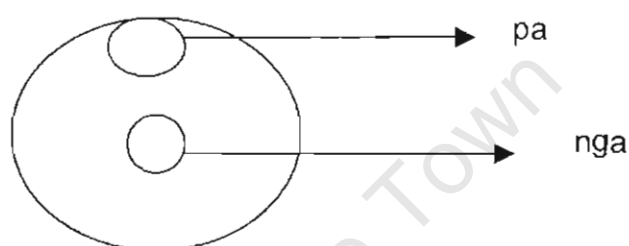


Fig. 3.9 indicates where the sounds are played on the drum membrane. The fingertips play and then mute the deeper sound 'nga'. The 'pa', which is high pitched, is played by the flat fingers of the other hand and is free. There are other mnemonic sounds such as *mmh* and *ti-ti* played by *isukuti isatsa* drummer.

Fig. 3.10 Mnemonic sounds of the *isukuti isatsa*

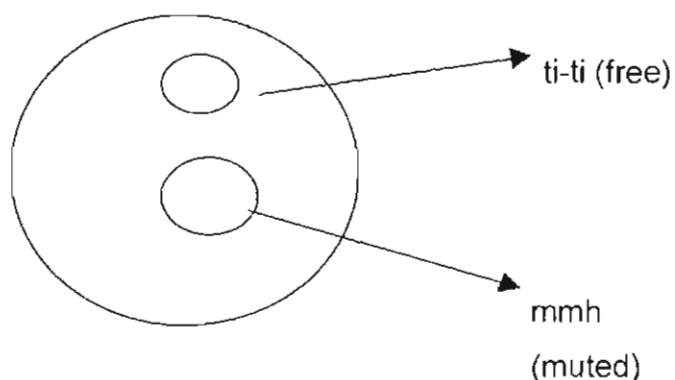


Fig. 3.10 shows where the deepest *isatsa* sounds are located: *mmh* (at the centre). The drummer mutes the sound either by the fingertips only or by the fingertips of one hand and the flat hand of the other arm. The rhythms may be accented or not. It is the combination of these sounds, playing techniques, syncopated rhythms, accents and poly-melorhythmic patterns that form the gestalt melorhythms, which attributed to the perceived complex sound. This poly-melorhythmic gestalt fascinates the

performers and propels them to intensify their dances. The instrumental rhythms therefore play vital roles in all *isukuti* dances.

The drummers improvise melorhythmic patterns within the *isukuti* framework easily distinguishable by the team and clan. Even when new songs are sung, the *isukuti* drum melorhythmic patterns remain the same, except for improvisations on the standard patterns.

### **2.3.2 Dance formations, movements, styles and drama**

The dance styles, movements and drama of indigenous Isukha *isukuti* are varied. Some of the formations and styles are still in use in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This section is therefore dealt with at length in section 3.3, illustrating similarities and differences of indigenous and neo-traditional practices.

## **3. The *isukuti* performances of the neo-traditional<sup>97</sup> Isukha**

Even though the indigenous occasions of the *isukuti* performance were funerals and memorial ceremonies, the Isukha have come to use the *isukuti* instruments and dances for a variety of occasions.<sup>98</sup> Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the *isukuti* performing arts have also been performed at wrestling matches, weddings, football matches, and the installation of a chief in the Isukha villages, circumcision ceremonies and other occasions of importance to the society.<sup>99</sup> It is this kind of usage that lends itself to the popularity and spread of *isukuti* performing arts, which in turn has influenced other groups such as the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*. In this section and those that follow the *isukuti* dances and their relationship to the culture are discussed, exemplifying two cases. The first, which is a group that calls itself the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group, is well known in the Isukha community for its performances of *isukuti* music in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The second, Mukumu Girls' High School dance group, exemplifies in an outstanding manner the kind of *isukuti*

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<sup>97</sup> The terms 'indigenous', 'traditional' and 'neo-traditional' have been discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>98</sup> Priscillah Machika recalls that when she was 10 years old in (1915), they used *isukuti* even for wedding ceremonies, competition and for entertainment, 26 June 2002. Her son, Elkana Machika, asserts that the dance group performs in football matches, weddings, fundraising ceremonies, entertainment venues, national public holidays and wherever invited.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Elkana Machika, 6 June 2002. Mr Mwiruki, 28/07/02, also confirmed the same.

performing arts executed in schools in 21<sup>st</sup> century Kenya during Kenya Music Festivals.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.1 The *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group

The *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro isukuti* is a dance group consisting of 16 dancers and singers mainly between the ages of 16 to 25.<sup>101</sup> The group chooses dancers according to their availability, interest in the performance and talent. The repertoire of songs, dances and dramatisations of this group are representative of the kind of neo-traditional performance style of the Isukha. The dancers have been influenced by the performances at the Kenya Music Festivals. Out of the 16 members, 10 were involved in these festivals while they were still at school (refer to Appendix D) and learnt many *isukuti* songs and dance styles because of this involvement.<sup>102</sup>

The researcher attended and video-recorded several performances during the periods December 2001 to January 2002, June 2002 and August 2003. The focus of the analysis was on performance practices, repertoire and acquiring of knowledge that Isukha performing arts convey through the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group.<sup>103</sup> Differences between indigenous and neo-traditional practices will be noted and explained. The discussion will be interspersed with information collected from group members during interviews.

#### 3.1.1 Performances

Music performances in the Isukha community take place at a variety of occasions, as seen earlier. However, the neo-traditional groups execute their performances when invited into people's homesteads and by community at large in major festivals, as in

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<sup>100</sup> The annually held Kenya Music Festivals started during the colonial period in 1927. Its main objective is to promote and foster an appreciation of Kenyan music cultures through performance. A more detailed discussion of the Kenya Music Festival and its relation to *isukuti* music appears in Appendix E.

<sup>101</sup> The *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro isukuti* group consists of 16 dancers and singers. Out of the 16, only two are above 30 years; the rest are between the ages of 16 and 25. Their chairman or group leader is 26 years old. A detailed analysis of the age groups appears in Appendix D.

<sup>102</sup> At the Kenya National Music Festivals, *isukuti* music and dances gained so much popularity that many schools all over Kenya perform and present *isukuti* dances at the festivals.

<sup>103</sup> The name will be shortened for reference purposes to the '*Ngwaro* dance group' in the remainder of this chapter.

the indigenous settings, at football matches, performing arts competitions, hotels, conferences and seminars, private parties, and just for entertainment in village squares, as well as at public political gatherings. At such occasions they perform according to the requirements of the occasion and duration given/instructed. The *Ngwaro* group receives such invitations and they perform some of their music out of context when invited to entertain people. In such cases they enact the ideal scenario of the would-be context.

The group leaders complained that not very many homes invite them for performances these days [21<sup>st</sup> century] because the majority of the people in Isukha have become Christians. The Christians do not invite them to perform in their functions, even funerals. On each field visit to Isukha the researcher noted that the *Ngwaro* group always used to complain of lack of practice and funds to purchase their dance costumes. The dancers engage in other businesses that generate income for them, because *isukuti* performance does not earn them enough money to take care of their families. As a result they do not get enough time to practice. Interviews with Mr Anami, 29 July 2003 and Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003, confirmed that *isukuti* dance groups now exist mainly for commercial purposes. The *isukuti* dancers have made *isukuti* performance their career in the modern sense. Because of these modern trends, *isukuti* music has undergone changes to adapt to and survive the changing society.

At several occasions the *Ngwaro* dance group performs *isukuti* out of its indigenous context wherever they are invited. According to their leader, they are invited to perform at hotels and football matches, among other places. At such occasions the group performs with the purpose of staging an entertaining performance. They also dramatise contexts in which songs are performed in indigenous context because of the need for monetary reward. Some of their comments reveal this need:

I am not employed. My main work is in the *isukuti* performance. We've made *isukuti* our job. (Elkana Machika)

My educational level... I will first say that this *isukuti* group educated me. This group is a good one because it can get you from a low status and lift you up. The group has helped me a lot. I can't complain. (Anthony Mmaisi)

This *Ngwaro isukuti* group paid for my school fees up to 'O' Level'. We would go to different places to perform and the money that came from our performances would sometimes be paid towards my school as fees. (Anthony Alusiola)

My grandparents asked me to be performing *isukuti* dance songs and dances because guitars were for wicked people. They even pronounced *isukuti* blessings on me. (Atanas Mabuyi)

Fig. 3.11 is a typical example of a song that is sung in a variety of contexts regardless of the fact that it was initially performed during the birth of a first born male child.

Fig. 3.11 *Mwana wa mberi*

**Mwana wa Mberi**

Trad.

Mwa - na 'mbe - ri ba - ya - ye mwa -

-na 'mbe - ri ba - ya - ye mwa - na 'mbe - ri ni - shi - kho - ye - ro.

The *Ngwaro* dance group includes two small boys aged 7 and 8, who act as cattle in their bull-fighting songs.

Before starting the performance, the performers finalise a few performing details. By this time all the men will have taken their local beer. When asked why they take this brew before a performance, the group leader responded:

We have to take the beer so that we can be bold, strong and courageous. We do not take a lot. We take just enough to help us in the performance. It makes us really wild and alert. Those of us who are shy will not be shy when we take the brew.

Before commencing on a given performance, the drummers tune their *isukuti* drums by drying them in the sun. One of the drummers said:

If the membrane is too dry, then you need to sprinkle water on it through the open-end of the drum. Then put this open-end on the ground so that the top membrane faces up towards the sun. Let it dry for a few minutes [...] During cold weather, we just prepare some fire for warming the membrane.

During the time that the drummers are tuning their instruments, the dancers get ready by wearing appropriate costumes. The men pluck leaves from a nearby fence to use as part of the costume. When asked why they choose the specific leaves for costumes, they replied:

[w]e have to get large leaves that we tie together all around the body to portray a *msitu* [bush] look. We need to look fierce.

The *Ngwaro* dance group does not wear specific indigenous attire for their performances. They attribute this to lack of funds to purchase and/or make the desired costumes. Some of the male dancers cover their bodies with leaves and some wear no shirts. They deliberately wear leaves and tattered clothes that resemble the kind of clothes the old members of their society wear. The girls wear T-shirts, loose skirts and/or dresses and frilled skirts that emphasise their hip movement as opposed to the sisal skirts and American materials discussed earlier in the indigenous setting (see Plates 1, 2 and 5 in Appendix C).

Contrary to tradition, most of the time the dancers do not sing. The instrumentalists, artistes, and a few singers sing the songs. It is also worth noting that the horn instrument used by the *Ngwaro* dance group is not made out of animal horn, but out of a water pipe and a 'Jik' container at one end. In the indigenous setting a cow horn, *olwika*, and a calabash were used.

### 3.1.2 Song repertoire and dance movements

The *Ngwaro* dance group includes newly composed songs in their indigenous Luisukha and Kiswahili repertoire. The group's main song leader, Elkana Machika, composed most of these, while others were composed by some of the elderly members of the team that are retired from the group performance or have since died. The inclusion of new songs emphasises that the Isukha culture is dynamic, reflecting current ideological, societal and musical issues. While the *isukuti* drums and associated melorhythmic *isukuti* patterns are maintained, the lyrics of the new songs focus on contemporary issues that affect especially the young people. The topical issues address *ukimwi* (acquired immune deficiency syndrome - AIDS), love and political issues. Political songs no longer address just the Isukha, but the whole nation of Kenya and the various ethnic groups therein.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Please refer to Appendix A for examples.

Indigenous *isukuti* music never includes love songs. However, the *Ngwaro* dance group has incorporated love songs because *isukuti* performing arts have been performed in a variety of contexts since the late twentieth century. When the *Ngwaro* group perform love songs, they name individuals by their English rather than *Isukha* names. These English names are, however, adapted to sound close to their language; for example, Rose becomes Rosi and Jane becomes Jeni.

The AIDS songs warn the community against indulging in behaviour that will lead to contracting this fatal disease. Some of the song texts express their sorrow concerning AIDS orphans. The text uses allusive language and metaphors to illustrate that there is no cure for AIDS; for example, "Oh girls be careful, the AIDS doctor is dead, it's only the malaria doctor that is alive." The texts display imagery and symbolism to structure social meaning since culture is dynamic. The new songs demonstrate the fact that such songs are central in understanding the dynamics of the society.

New dance movements have also been incorporated and have become part of *Isukha isukuti* dance repertoire. The *Ngwaro* dance group has amalgamated indigenous dances with African pop dances such as *Ndombolo*. *Ndombolo*<sup>105</sup> is a pop dance from the Democratic Republic of Congo that has influenced Kenyans, including the Christian dance group *Maximum Miracle Melodies*. An example is the pop dance style of the *Ngwaro* dance group's performance of the song on AIDS. During the climax of this song the girls execute pelvic movements to emphasise sexual behaviour that the youth should abstain from (Refer to Fig. 3.21 and 3.22). Also see example of *ndombolo* dance in the accompanying VCD). Such songs illustrate that neo-traditional *isukuti* singers are conscious of a wider audience and therefore incorporate, in addition to *Luisukha*, *Kiswahili* songs as well as African pop dance movements in their performances.

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<sup>105</sup> This dance style includes pelvic movements (see Chapter Four for an explanation of *ndombolo* Congolese dance that incorporates pelvic movements. The *Maximum Miracle Melodies* has also adapted this dance). According to Mrs Musolo, 6 June 2002 and Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002, *ndombolo* is not a 'decent' dance. The two women claim that in 'real' (indigenous) *isukuti* dance, which is what they performed when they were growing up, girls are not meant to move their pelvis, as this was seen as disgraceful for a woman. See Fig. 3.21 and Fig. 3.22 for the dance transcription.

When asked about the indigenous meaning of the dance movements that the *Ngwaro* dance group use, the dancers could not explain the meaning attached to each movement; they may have inherited these styles without understanding the contextual meanings.

### **3.1.3 Learning of music and dance movements**

The dance group learns the dances from the dance leader, the older members of the group and from each other. Each dancer has been performing *isukuti* performing arts since they were teenagers in a variety of groups. They therefore teach each other styles that they learnt from their previous groups. The song leader, Elkana Machika who is the oldest member of the group (40), has been passing on the dance movements that he learnt when he was a teenager. He began dancing at the age of 15 years. The older Isukha community members taught the instrumentalists how to play their instruments.

The dance group learns new dances in a very short time.<sup>106</sup> The teacher of a given dance-style first performs the dance as the group sings for him/her. The instrumentalists then join in and the dancers follow. They continue on the same procedure till they master the style. Once the style has been mastered, the group discusses how they can incorporate the dance style into their pattern formations or choreography of a whole performance. When this is done, they are ready to give a performance after a few more rehearsals. Usually, the leader has the final say about the dance movements and formations to use.

## **3.2 The Mukumu Girls High School *isukuti* dance group**

The Mukumu Girls' High School is famous for *isukuti* performing arts. It is a boarding school for girls located in Isukha, Kakamega District. This school usually performs *isukuti* performing arts at the annual Kenya Music Festivals<sup>107</sup> and has influenced other schools in Kenya. Aspects such as the group's costumes, dance movements

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<sup>106</sup> Based on field observations, 5 June 2002. Also interview with Elkana Machika, 5 June 2002, revealed the same.

<sup>107</sup> See history and background of performances of Kenya Music Festivals in Appendix E.

and stage choreography during performances as videotaped by the Kenya Institute of Education in 1991 form the basis of this analysis.<sup>108</sup>

Mr Mwiruki and Mrs Machika viewed the performance of the videotape to verify the styles observed by the researcher and to take part in discussions on the acculturation of the *isukuti* performances. Some of the *Ngwaro* dance group members also assist with the training of *isukuti* drumming and dance movements at schools. It is furthermore important to note that most members of the *Ngwaro* dance group followed the same Western schooling system as the Mukumu Girls dance group. Some *Ngwaro* group members also took part in the Kenya Music Festival while still at school and it is clear that their performances have been influenced by the Western schooling system and the Kenya Music Festivals.

The following observations have been made about the Mukumu Girls' videotaped performance:

- (a) The dance movements of the Mukumu Girls dance group vary greatly. Many of the dance movements performed were not found in indigenous *isukuti* dance styles and some dance movements from the Banyala sub-ethnic group from Western province of Kenya have been incorporated. This trend is typical of many of the *isukuti* dances performed in Kenya Music Festivals where the performers incorporate dance movements from other Luhya sub-ethnic groups that are not found in indigenous *isukuti* styles;<sup>109</sup>
- (b) Compared to the *Ngwaro* dance group and indigenous Isukha dances, the Mukumu Girls dance group incorporates more dance movements and variations. Because of the influence and expectations of the Kenya Music Festivals, their stage choreography is highly modified and varied. At the Kenya Music Festival higher marks are awarded for more varied stage choreographic

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<sup>108</sup> Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), "Mukumu Girls High School" in *Kenya Music Festivals 1991*, produced by KIE, 15 min., VHS, videocassette, 2003.

<sup>109</sup> Interviews with George Mwiruki, 28 July 2003 and Sylvere Anami, 29 July 2003. The two gentlemen stated that the dancers are 'too fast' i.e they have very vigorous movements and that the tempo of the music and dance is fast. The dancers have also incorporated movements from other Luhya sub-ethnic groups that were not originally considered *isukuti* dances.

pattern formations and designs as well as dance movements.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the dance movements that are indigenously performed in contexts other than *isukuti* have also been incorporated. Due to the competitive spirit, the Mukumu Girls High School dance group adds much vigour to their performance and dances through the inclusion of a variety of Luhya sub-ethnic group dances;

- (c) To alert the dancers about change of style, the instrumentalists use either a horn or whistle. The indigenous Isukha do not use whistles for any of their music performances.<sup>111</sup> The instrumentalists of Mukumu Girls high school use the whistle to aid the dancers in making calculated, swift and apt transitions.
- (d) Mukumu is a girls' school and does not allow boys to perform with them. One of the requirements of the Kenya Music Festival is that the participants should strictly come from the student body of a specific school. Therefore, girls play all the music instruments, a practice that is not allowed in the indigenous Isukha customs as seen earlier (see Plate 6 in Appendix C);
- (e) The musicians of Mukumu Girls High School are grouped into five categories:
  - i. Dancers who only dance;
  - ii. Instrumentalists who only play instruments such as the *isukuti* drums, the horn, the whistle and the metal rings;
  - iii. The soloist of the group who leads the songs;
  - iv. The chorus-response group who sings antiphonally with the soloist;
  - v. The actors who enact the ceremony in which the music is performed. Unlike indigenous performances, the Mukumu Girls performers are not organised as performers and participants, but as performers and audience. In this case the audience are the spectators;
- (f) At the Kenya Music Festivals, the performing arts take place out of indigenous context and in front of an audience. The drama is both spoken and mimed. The actors pretend to be who they are not: some girls act as men, as village elders, pretending to drink beer. They use the Luisukha language and demonstrate

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<sup>110</sup> Interviews with Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003 and Mr Anami, 29 July 2003 revealed that part of the assessment of dances at the Kenya Music Festivals involves creativity of choreographic patterns.

<sup>111</sup> Interviews with Mr Machika, 2 June 2002, Mr Mwiruki 28 July 2003 and Mr Anami, 29 July 2003 and Mr Mabiya, 3 August 2003.

what usually happens in such ceremonies in the indigenous cultural setting (see accompanying VCD "*isukuti* dramatisation 2 (Mukumu)");

- (g) The various groups within the Mukumu Girls performance have their own costumes made out of cotton material with different designs. The 'female' dancers wear sisal skirts. These costumes are more modern in material used, design and colours as opposed to the leaves and animal hides of their ancestors and the *Ngwaro* group. Their types of costumes are now used widely in Kenya and are considered traditional<sup>112</sup> (see Appendix C, Plates 3, 4 and for examples of costumes);
- (h) The songs they sing are a collection from a variety of occasions, such as *Nise ingoi* usually sung during war, *Bunyanzi* sung at happy occasions, *Matuma* sung during harvest and *Bayayi bacherera*, sung when warriors have come back from a successful war (see Appendix A for these examples);
- (i) The dancers and actresses are chosen according to their talents and abilities;
- (j) The following educational concepts are embedded in the performances of the Mukumu Girls group:<sup>113</sup>
  - i. The students get to learn and appreciate their Isukha culture;
  - ii. The performing arts develop the personalities, creativity and talents of the students;
  - iii. The performing arts are stored in videotapes and kept at Kenya Institute of Education archives for classroom learning such as African music, Art, Oral Literature, History, and other cultural studies. As a result, these video recordings are important in documenting the aspects of acculturation in Kenya;
  - iv. The learners in schools ascertain changes that have taken place in African societies and are therefore able to relate them to other studies or disciplines.

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<sup>112</sup> Mr Mwiruki alleges that the former president of Kenya, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, banned the use of animal hide costumes and topless performances in the neo-traditional dance performance of the schools in Kenya Music Festivals. Since then the schools have been improvising different kinds of costumes closely related to the indigenous ones.

<sup>113</sup> Interviews with Mr S. Anami, 29 July 2003.

<sup>114</sup> It should be noted that at Kenya Music Festivals, students are also given the option of performing music from cultural groups in other African countries under the class: 'Dances from the rest of Africa'.

### 3.3. Dance formations, styles, movements and drama

This section describes *isukuti* dramatisations, dance formations and styles as they are manifested in the performances of the *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro and Mukumu Girls High School isukuti* dance groups. The old research participants of Isukhaland, who were renowned *isukuti* dancers in their youth, were also consulted to determine similarities and differences between the indigenous and neo-traditional practices of the *isukuti* performing arts.

In indigenous *isukuti* performing arts, four dance formations have been commonly used: circle, two parallel vertical lines, two horizontal lines and cluster. Other dance formations that were not originally used in *isukuti* dances will be noted and explained.

#### 3.3.1 Dance formations

Dancing in a circle is very common in *isukuti* performing arts as well as other African cultures.<sup>115</sup> Usually the dancers form a circle as they engage a variety of dance movements. They dance facing the inner circle, while the instrumentalists play their instruments outside the circle. The song leader "seemingly" has the freedom to do a solo while in the centre of the circle, on the circle or outside the circle. None of the participants interviewed knew whether this pattern is symbolic or not. They reiterated that it might be a way of showing group solidarity and unity as they performed.

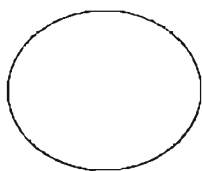
In indigenous cultural setting, when performances are meant for the dancers alone, the rest of the society observes outside the circle as they sing. However, at some occasions the audience joins in the dance performance as well. In this case they dance around the group. The dancers of the group remain in the centre. The other members imitate dance-styles of the group, but others employ their own free dance-styles for as long as they are 'in rhythm'.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ojo Rasaki Bakari and Minette Mans, "Dance philosophies and vocabulary, in Herbst *et al.*, *Musical arts in Africa. theory, practice and education*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003, pp. 219-220.

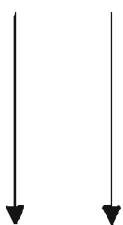
<sup>116</sup> Observations made during 26-27 December 2001 and 3-5 June 2002. During the researcher's second visit to the field, the *Ngwaro* group had a procession of *isukuti* dance as they approached the dance arena. Many people followed the procession and joined in the dance. When they reached the arena, they formed a circle and as they continued dancing. The villagers performed outside the circle.

Fig. 3.12 Circle



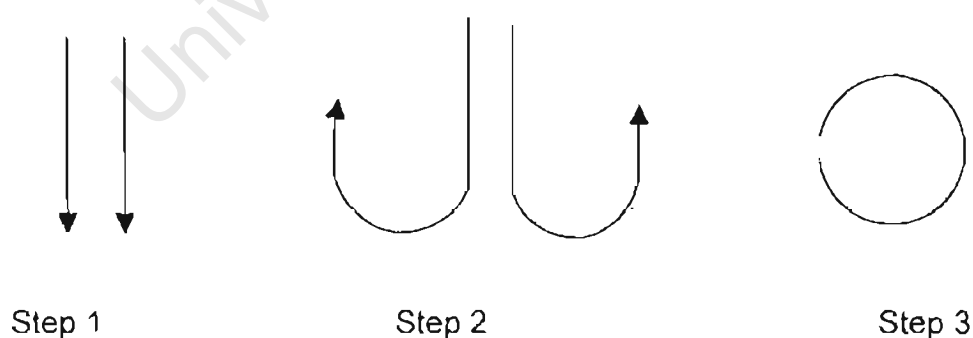
There are occasions where the dancers dance as though in procession, forming two lines in pairs. The dancers use this choreographic pattern when entering or exiting the dance arena, or when performing in procession from one venue to the required site, which may be as far as five kilometres away. In such cases, the community joins in the procession as they enjoy the music and "escort" them to their destination. The sound of the *isukuti* drums attracts people from afar. As a result many people come to inquire about the occasion and join in, if it suits them.

Fig. 3.13 Vertical lines



The neo-traditional dancers usually alter this formation. When they arrive at their destination, they can change this choreography to circular as shown below.

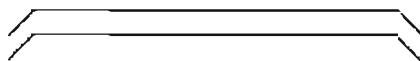
Fig. 3.14 Vertical line variation



The use of horizontal lines is applicable to both indigenous and neo-traditional performers. In this pattern the dancers form two horizontal lines and they all face the

community. All of them will be facing the same direction at the same time and will be visible to all. Unlike the former pattern where only the first two dancers on the line are easily visible to the rest of the community, all dancers face front:

Fig. 3.15 Horizontal lines

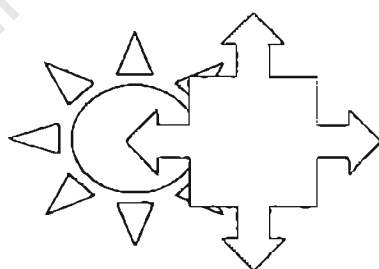


This pattern is often used when the dancers are already at the arena. As they dance while facing the people, the rest of the community can join them. In this case, the community and the dancers face each other. The instrumentalists are normally either at the back of the dancers or at their side. As the dancers move and change their patterns, so do the instrumentalists in order to be placed in a comfortable position that will not distract the dancers' performance.

From this pattern the dancers either go back to the circle, or may move into the cluster pattern discussed below.

In the cluster pattern the dancers execute their own dance movements and are free to move in the whole arena. They also communicate with the community and motivate them to dance. Some soloists select a community member and take him/her by the hand into the dance arena to join in the dance and perform free-style dances.

Fig. 3.16 Cluster



The *Ngwara* dance group uses free-style patterns to encourage audience-participation through singing and dancing. During this performance the soloist will be preparing for the next pattern by observing the dancers. If s/he feels that the dancers need a change of style, s/he will change into a different song that will enable the dancers to change their styles.

The Mukumu *isukuti* dance group uses more dance formations than the *Ngwaro* dance group. They make use of a combination of the formations discussed above. Since those formations have not influenced the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*, they will not be discussed here. However, refer to Appendix B for examples of the Mukumu Girls High School dance formations.

### 3.3.2 Dance styles<sup>117</sup>

Within the choreographic patterns, the dancers employ a variety of dance styles. Sometimes the pattern formation may change, but the dance movements may remain the same. The dancers can also use a variety of styles and movements in one dance choreographic pattern formation compared to another. Although the case study dance groups, *Ngwaro* and Mukumu, use a variety of dance movements, only those that the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* have borrowed will be analysed. Apart from the dance styles *amabeka*, *lipala*, and *khumkongo*,<sup>118</sup> the rest of the names given to the dances are the researcher's own inventions. Reasons for the choice of names are given in each case.

With the exception of the *ndombolo*<sup>119</sup> variations a and b (Fig. 3.21 and Fig. 3.22), *whirl*<sup>120</sup> and free styles, all other movements notated are also found in indigenous *isukuti* performance. In execution of free styles, the dancers employ a variety of indigenous *isukuti* dances; however, in neo-traditional performances, the dancers use more modern dance movements adapted from African pop styles and other indigenous ethnic groups in the execution of dances in the free-style section.

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<sup>117</sup> Please note that all the dance movements discussed in this section are also found in the accompanying VCD. They demonstrate the dance transcriptions found in this chapter.

<sup>118</sup> The term *khumkongo* is a Luhya word that literally means 'on the back'. The *Ngwaro* group uses this term to refer to the dance. However, they do not know the real name of the dance. All the elderly interviewees speculated that this dance might have been derived from the movement of the birds and chicken as they flap their wings. The researcher thus adapted this name because it depicts the back contractions of the dancers.

<sup>119</sup> It should be noted that although the *Ngwaro* group refers to this style as *ndombolo*, the real *ndombolo* dance is not performed in this manner (See the dance transcription of *ndombolo* dance in Chapter Four, Fig. 4.9.) The researcher adapted the term *ndombolo* for the style adopted by the *Ngwaro* group and named it a "variation of *ndombolo*" As mentioned in Chapter Four, many Kenyans refer to Congolese *soukous* dances as *ndombolo*.

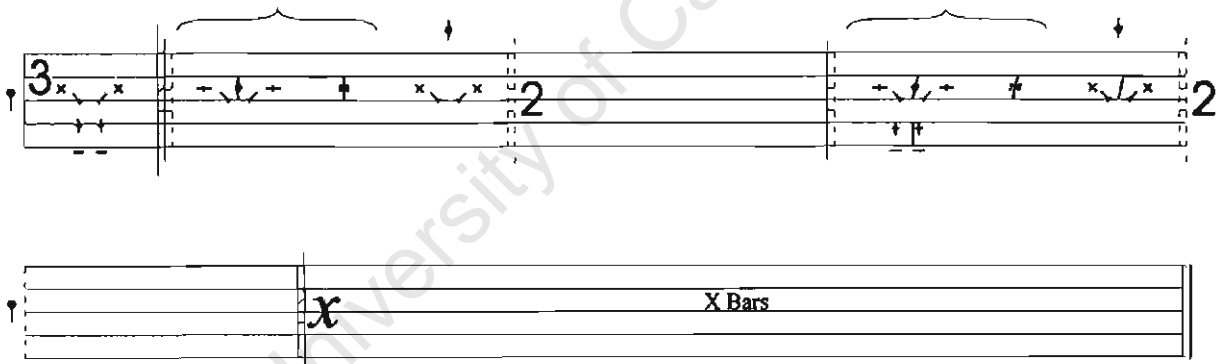
<sup>120</sup> The *Ngwaro* group that incorporated this dance style does not have a name for it. The researcher noted that only two people executed this dance style in the free-style section. They turned round in a circular motion hence the name 'whirl'.

From the dance movements, it is evident that a variety of them are imitation of animals. For example, the *ingoi* (leopard) dance is an imitation of a leopard's movement; *khumkongo* is an imitation of birds' movements as they fly and/or chicken movements as they flap their wings. *Lipala* represents the movement of a duck and *amabeka* represents the flapping of chicken's wings. The dance notations clearly indicate the difference between the *amabeka* and *khumkongo*: in *amabeka*, the shoulders are emphasised and in *khumkongo*, the arms and the back contractions are more emphasised.

Fig. 3.17 Ingoi<sup>121</sup>



Fig. 3.18 Khumkongo



<sup>121</sup> Please see Appendix B for an explanation and illustration of how to read *Benesh* notation.

Fig. 3.19

Lipala<sup>122</sup>

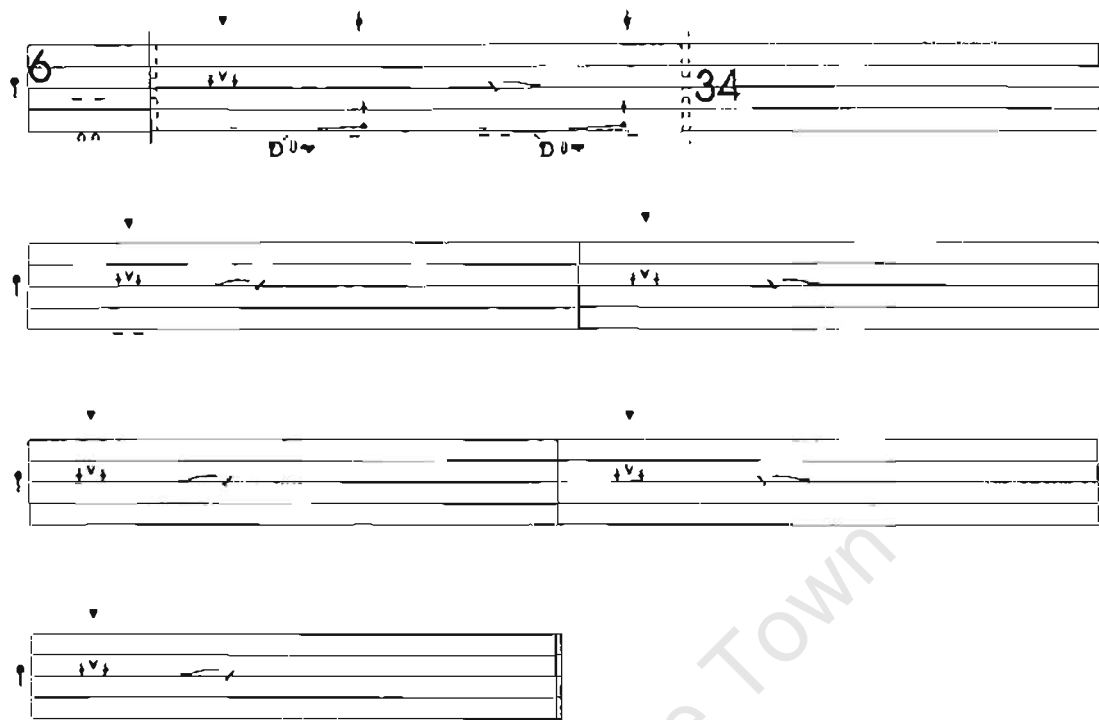
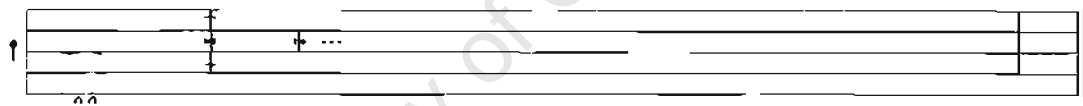


Fig. 3.20

Amabeka



Animal-movement imitation in African indigenous dances is a common practice in many cultures. Minette *et al.* have observed that:

The dances of people from cattle and hunting cultures (in Africa) also demonstrate certain qualities that are derived from lives that are intimately interwoven with cattle [...]. In hunting cultures in Namibia and Botswana, certain characteristics of animals might be emulated in the dance or the name of the song repertoire, such as the eland, giraffe and elephant repertoires of the Ju/'hoansi [...]. In the Kxoe *kui icai* dance, people imitate movements of the jackal, vulture, squirrel, ostrich or an insect.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Interviews with Mr Mwiruki, 28 July 2003, revealed this information.

<sup>123</sup> Bakare and Mans, "Dance philosophies and vocabularies" in Herbst *et al.*, (eds), p. 223.

Other authors such as Addo *et al.* and Green<sup>124</sup> have also noted African dances that imitate animals, environment and occupation. They have observed that African dancers select postures, facial expressions and eurhythmic motifs to express their everyday activities, experiences and their environment.

The *Ngwaro* dance group female dancers use *ndombolo* variations. In reality, as mentioned earlier, the female dancers perform the 'wriggle' dance just like the Congolese female dancers (see Chapter Four, Fig. 4.9 for this example). The difference between the 'wriggle' dance movement performed by the Congolese dancers (see Chapter Four, Fig. 4.9 and accompanying VCD) and the *Ngwaro* dancers lies in the pelvic movement. The *Ngwaro* group female dancers utilise the forward-backward pelvic movements, while the Congolese female dancers use a circular motion of the pelvis. The new dance movements in neo-traditional contexts illustrate how societal attitudes and worldview change as a consequence of societal changes.<sup>125</sup> Bakari and Mans also contend that African indigenous societies use certain pelvic movements to denote sexual behaviour.

Fig. 3.21 Variation a of *ndombolo*

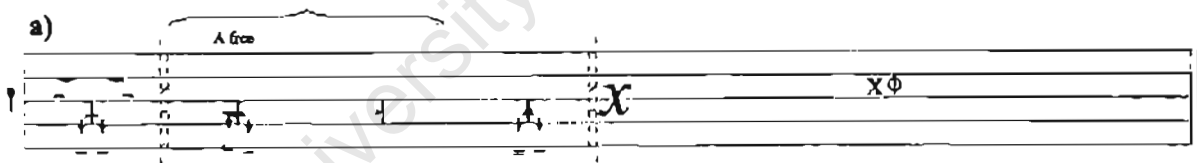
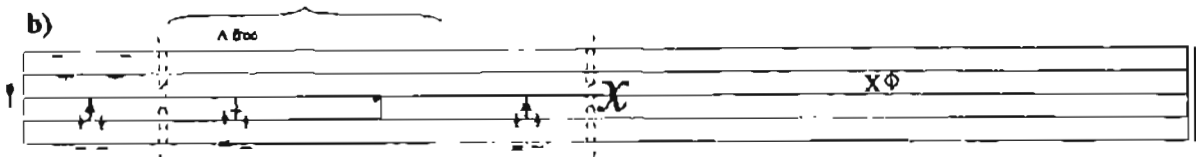


Fig. 3.22 Variation b of *ndombolo*

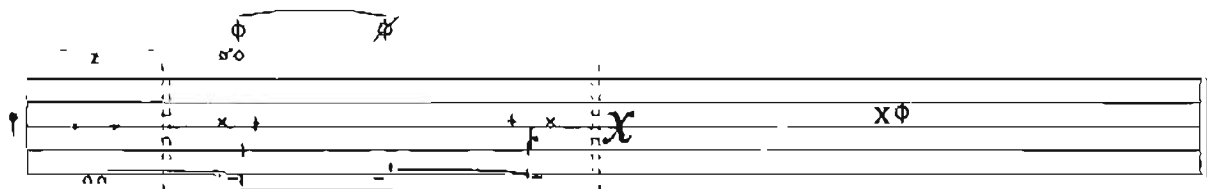


<sup>124</sup> Akosua O. Addo, Florence Miya and Hetta Potgieter, "Intergrating the arts" in Herbst *et al.*, pp. 239-242; Doris Green, "Traditional dance in Africa" in K.W. Asante (ed), *African dance: an artistic, historical and philosophical inquiry*, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 1996, pp. 13-16.

<sup>125</sup> Bakare and Mans, in Herbst *et al.* (eds), p. 219. This point is discussed further in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

The Isukha do not seem to have a name for a right-stomp dance. However, their Luo neighbours have the same dance style with a slight variation and a name for it. The Luo variation is similar to the Congolese right-stomp (See Fig. 3.23). The researcher has thus used the same name for this dance and called it the "right-stomp variation" adopted from North American hip-hop dances.

Fig. 3.23 Right stomp



#### 4. Factors influencing dance formations, dance movements and dramatisation

There are a variety of issues that guide the performances of the *isukuti* performing arts such as rhythm, tempo and melody of songs and instruments, soloist, type of songs, improvisations and context of performance.

##### 4.1 Rhythm, tempo and melody

The drum melorhythmic patterns usually act as the main thrust for dancing. The dancers listen to specific melorhythmic patterns to identify which dance movements to use and how to perform them. The *isukuti isatsa* (the big drum) usually plays the main dance-style melorhythmic patterns. The dancers listen to this drum to execute the appropriate dance style. For example, in the song *Ukimwi* (AIDS), there is an instrumental interlude which acts as a climax. In this interlude, the *isatsa* drummer plays fast melorhythmic motifs and deep sounds to propel the dancers to intensify their movements. In this section, the player of the *isukuti mama* (middle drum) plays high-pitched repetitive melorhythmic patterns.

Where the dancers need to employ alternate limb movements such as in the style *ingoi* (see dance transcription), they listen to the consistent melorhythmic phrases and accents of *isatsa* drum. Each phrase is meant for one set of limbs, for example, right leg and right arm; the next phrase is for the next set, involving the left leg and

left arm. Usually the pitches of the drumming also guide performances in some dance movements. High-pitched *isatsa* rhythms are for much lighter styles, while deeper sounds are for the intensification of styles and for faster and more complex styles.

Besides the drums, other instruments such as the *olwika* (horn), metal ring and rod may also guide the performers. The *olwika* is sometimes blown to indicate change of dance movement. After the *olwika* has been blown, the drummers change their rhythmic patterns to aid the dancers in their change as well. The *olwika* is played to add flavour to the music, in which case the dancers also intensify their movements. It may also alert dancers and announce that the dance is about to begin.

The metal ring and rod have a consistent rhythmic pattern, which is played throughout the song, assisting the dancers in maintaining their rhythmic tempo (see Fig. 3.8). In case a dancer is 'lost' or wants to perform in free style, s/he listens to the regulative beats in order to stay in rhythm. The melorhythmic pattern of the metal ring is the same as the *isukuti mwana* illustrated in Fig. 3.5.

The melodies transcribed are very short and repetitive (see section 2.3.1 (a)). They remain the same throughout the song, even when the texts change. The only variations in the melodies are found in improvised text sections where the soloist has to ensure that the new text closely fits the pattern of the singing and that the text makes sense. The melodic rhythm in this case also changes slightly to accommodate the new text.

As a result of the constant repetition, the song melodies do not undergo elaborate development, apart from improvised sections that are slight variations of the melody. Several melodies on the same theme are sung subsequently (as shown in section 2.3.1) and they are usually joined together with an instrumental interlude or word-interpolations. The melody of the new song may be in a different tonal centre, depending on the pitch tones used and whether or not they are comfortable for the singers. The choice of the key depends entirely on the song leader.

The song melodies have complex rhythms that differ very much from the instrumental melorhythms. Whereas the melodies tend to be flowing and slower in tempo, the accompanying instrumental melorhythms are very fast and polyrhythmic.

Generally, the chorus-response group sings in unison, or octaves apart. When the whole community is involved in singing, there are brief moments when homophonic parallelism usually occurs in intervals of a third apart between the different voices. This kind of harmony only happens seldomly. Sometimes overlapping of soloist and chorus sections may occur. Although the notations incorporated in this chapter show clear demarcation of solo and response sections, sometimes the soloist overlaps with the chorus-response group. A typical example is *Mwana wa mberi* (Fig. 3.11, where sometimes the soloist can overlap with the chorus-response whenever s/he chooses to do so.

In some songs exactly the same rhythm and melody of the soloist is repeated in the chorus-response (see *Waiyeka* in Appendix A). In songs such as *Ing'ombe* (the cow) the soloist's section is very short: the entire soloist's sections are based on one pitch, using the same vowels, ee, except when the soloist extemporises other words. Even when this is done, the pitch ranges are very narrow and move in intervals of a second apart. In the entire *Ing'ombe* song only four pitches are utilised. Most of the melodies have narrow pitch ranges. Most of the rhythms are highly syncopated and they make frequent use of triplets.<sup>126</sup>

## 4.2 The role of the singer soloist

Sometimes the dance movements or postures may change without change of music. In this case the singer soloist usually has full control. He can decide when to start a new song, change and/or end a performance.<sup>127</sup> Since the performers do not use any melodic instruments that can give the pitch or key of a song, the soloist starts a song in a comfortable pitch and the chorus-response follows. Although the *olwika* is used, its limited pitches are not adequate for pitching the song leader. When changing into a new song, the soloist automatically modulates to a comfortable pitch and the

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<sup>126</sup> The terminology used for rhythm is not based on that of pulse notation, but follows the arguments set out in Kofi Agawu, *Representing African music: post colonial notes, queries, positions*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

<sup>127</sup> Conversations with Jean Kidula, 5 March 2004, indicated a different experience. Dr Kidula pointed out that in her own research she witnessed singers pitching off the drums. However, the researcher of this study did not experience this in the field

chorus-response group ensues. S/he also directs the dancers to change into new dance movements by showing directions and giving word- interpolations to follow. The singer soloist also changes into a new song that may require different dance movements. The dancers need to be very alert to change their movements swiftly accordingly.

### 4.3 Songs and structure

The type of song may also determine the dance movements. For example, the song *Nise Ingoi* (I am a leopard) is usually performed with *ingoi* style and/or its variations. This is because the style demonstrates the movements of a leopard.

The main form of all the songs collected is responsorial or call-and-response. In this form there is a singer soloist or song leader and a chorus-response group. The following variations occur in its performance and the findings correspond to some extent with the call-and-response form as discussed by Willie Anku:<sup>126</sup>

- The soloist sings a question and the group answers. In this case the text for the two sections is different. (Refer to the song *Ngao* in Appendix A);
- The soloist sings the first part of the statement, which is then completed by the group. In this case the text for the two sections is also different, as can be seen in the funeral songs discussed in section 2.3.1 (a);
- The soloist sings a full statement and the chorus group respond with a fixed different text that is different and repeated each time. The song *Lumbe* (death) in section 2.3.1 (a) is a relevant example. Sometimes the soloist section overlaps with the chorus-response group.

The above performances display the unity between the singer soloist and the group: their parts are incomplete when presented on their own. The soloist and group need each other to make full meaning of their expression and communication. Again, the idea of communality and dependence on each other is expressed. In most of their performances, for as long as the singers are singing the same section (phrase and text), the dancers perform the same dance movements, even when the singer soloist improvises his/her part.

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<sup>127</sup> Conversations with Jean Kidula, 5 March 2004, indicated a different experience. Dr Kidula pointed out that in her own research she witnessed singers pitching off the drums. However, the researcher of this study did not experience this in the field.

<sup>128</sup> Mitchel Strumpf, Willie Anku, and Kodnwani Phwandaphwanda, and Ncebakazi Mnukwana, "Oral Composition," in Herbst *et al.* (eds), p 131-134.

The texts of all the songs are short and very repetitive. The group leader of the *Ngwaro Isukuti* group states that "our songs are very simple. We take a very short time to learn them. We do not need to write them down." In this statement is encapsulated one of the main purposes of responsorial form in the Isukha community. Isukha has an oral tradition and most learning and / or cultural practices are passed on from one generation to another through songs. The text therefore needs to be short for the community to remember and participate fully in the performance. The same practice is common in many other sub-Saharan African communities, as Andrew Tracey points out:

Practically without exception all African music uses this [repetition] form, it starts at a certain point, goes through a number of ideas, shapes or patterns, and keeps returning to the same point over again [...] Repetition of a cyclic form [...] is a major element of form in African music.<sup>129</sup>

#### 4.4 Context of performance

The ceremony during which a dance is performed largely governs the kinds of movements or drama that are utilised. For example, in the bull-fighting ceremony *shiremba*, there is normally a dramatisation that the group performs in collaboration with other villagers and/or members of the deceased family as discussed earlier in this chapter. If the ceremony is meant for young people only, the performance may contain "suggestive" styles. For example, in the song *Ukimwi* (AIDS), the girls move their pelvises thereby performing a dance movement that is not found in indigenous *isukuti* performing arts. *Ukimwi* talks about AIDS and the dancers emphasise these movements to demonstrate sexual gestures.

It is clear from the above descriptions that there is a strong relationship between the music, drama, and dance among the Isukha. The gestalt performance of the instruments forms poly-meliorhythmic patterns that are usually in juxtaposition with the singing, dancing and clapping.

#### 4.5 Improvisation

The improvisatory nature of the music and dance influences the movements and dramatisations. Sawyer defines improvisation or extemporisation as the art of

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<sup>129</sup> Tracey, 1971, p. 284

creating and performing music at one and the same time.<sup>130</sup> He looks at extemporisation as synonymous with improvisation and sees the art of improvisation as a form of a gift. Wright<sup>131</sup> contrarily argues that the art of improvisation can be acquired through the process of music-making and skill development. He further argues that extemporisation is an art and skill by which people make music on the spur of the moment, whereas improvisation is the process by which this music grows.

Kongo and Robinson also indicated that improvisation is composing as one is performing. They argue that improvisation may contain elaboration and modification of pre-composed materials or the improviser's own compositions that s/he creates on the spur of the moment.<sup>132</sup>

The authors go on to argue that:

Improvisation in music is the equivalent of extemporisation in verbal discourse.<sup>133</sup>

The performances of *Ngwaro* make use of extemporisation and improvisations as explained by Wright, Kongo and Robinson above. The song leader usually adds improvised text on the spur of the moment while singing.<sup>134</sup> The chorus-response group listens carefully to the singer soloist in order to respond accordingly. For example, in the song, *Ukimwi*, the soloist sings about Florence just because she was present at the performance. The chorus-response group had to respond accordingly. Since the word 'Florence' as written and pronounced in English could not fit in the melodic phrase, the singers had to change the pronunciation to suit their Luisukha language and Florence became *Fulorenzi*.<sup>135</sup>

Besides the improvised sung text, the soloist also extemporises word interpolations. He speaks out words that may be directives, encouragement or information for the

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<sup>130</sup> Frank J. Sawyer, *Extemporization*, London: Novello, [n.d.], p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> David Wright, *From extemporization to improvisation: a practical guide*, London: Trinity College London, 1997, p. 5

<sup>132</sup> Zabana Kongo and Jeffrey Robinson, "Improvisation" in Herbst *et al.* (eds), p. 95.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>134</sup> Interviews with Mr Machika, 6 June 2002, revealed that he sings according to how he feels on the inside and the observations he makes.

<sup>135</sup> The old women in the village called the researcher *Fulorenzi*.

dancers, instrumentalists, or other participants. During dramatisation, the soloist also instructs the actors and dancers on what to do and how to do it.

Improvisation is also incorporated in the drumming. Although the drummers have specific melorhythmic patterns for the dances and dramatisations, they improvise on the patterns, changing the rhythmic phrases or motifs. The drummers say they do this to add, "flavour"<sup>136</sup> to the music. Sometimes when a dancer is performing extremely well and others cheer him/her, the drummers may also improvise melorhythms that emphasise the dancer's specific styles, which in turn cause the dancer to intensify his/her movements. Dancers may also use ululation to express their enjoyment of the music. These are done sporadically and when the soloist asks for this. Floyd<sup>137</sup> has noted the same about the musicianship of the Maasai of Kenya:

It is based on individual and communal experience, and requires individual creativity within a well established framework, and with a recognisable repertoire of appropriate motifs, to which the individual is expected to add.

Dancers too improvise their own movements, especially during free-style dancing. What they perform during their practice time is not always what they perform in the actual ceremony.<sup>138</sup> As they improvise, they listen to the time-line instruments so that they can keep their rhythm steady.

## **5. Educational role of the performing arts**

The performing arts of the Isukha play an important educational role that enable the whole community to remember and live according to the societal norms. This section explains these roles based on the preceding discussions. Hence the examples will be referred to but not discussed again. Most of the summaries are also based on the interviews conducted among the Isukha.<sup>139</sup> The section divides the educational roles of the performing arts into four broad categories: general, socio-cultural, religious and musical.

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<sup>136</sup> By adding flavour to the music the instrumentalists mean to make the music sound more interesting.

<sup>137</sup> Malcolm Floyd, "Warrior composers: Maasai boys and men" in Floyd, Malcolm (ed), *Composing the music of Africa: composition, interpretation and realisation*, Ashgate: Aldershot, 1999, p. 135.

<sup>138</sup> Based on field observations on 5 June 2002 and the actual performance on 6 June 2002.

<sup>139</sup> Interviews were conducted with Mrs Christina Musolo, 6 June 2002, Mrs Penninah Musumba, 6 June 2002, Mr Adriano Lusala, 7 June 2002, and Mr Mabiya, 3 August 2003, Mr Joseph Liluma, 3 August 2003, Mr Elkanah Machika, 22 December 2001 and 5-8 June 2002, and Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002. Also see a detailed list of interviewees from Kakamega in Appendix F

## 5.1 General education

In Isukha indigenous community children are brought up through engaging in communal activities. The whole community is involved in the child's education. The initial education is mainly in the hands of the mother.<sup>140</sup> She teaches the child personal hygiene, how to eat, count, dress up and talk. When the child is old enough to carry out these taught life-skills, the male child is taught further by the father and the female child remains in the care and instruction of the mother. Parents thus play an important role in the education of their children. However, other members of the village also help the parents in teaching their children. These people include the grandparents, the aunts, uncles, and the clan at large. Education at this level therefore grows out of the actual physical environment.

Such kind of education prepares children for daily living and adult life in the community. It involves transforming a child into a mature and responsible member of the community.<sup>141</sup> Therefore through education, the child acquires beliefs, norms, customs, skills, behaviour and character that enable him/her to execute his duties as a growing community member, who can survive and fit well in the society.

The children have to learn to live and serve other people in accordance with the Isukha's accepted manners and morality, customary laws and taboos. Through his/her relations with other community members, the child learns to imitate the actions of adults and his peers, which in turn shape his/her community identity. Learning by imitation develops necessary skills in the children such as herding, hunting, sweeping, and carrying water and firewood. The children live by being useful to the adults by working together with them. At this stage gender roles are reinforced by means of taboos and sharp warnings. For example, Mrs Musolo said:

"Boys are not allowed to go to the kitchen to cook. Aa! They can grow up to behave like girls. We have to say this to them, so that they can learn when they are still young. If not, they can fail to get a wife when they grow up."

Grandparents play a significant role in the evening for education through folktales, legends, myths, riddles, proverbs, songs and dances. The tales are both entertaining and instructive and depict the dire consequences of violating certain cultural laws.

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<sup>140</sup> Interviews with Mrs Musolo, 6 June 2002 and Mrs Machika, 26 June 2002

<sup>141</sup> Daniel N. Sifuna, *Development of education in Africa: the Kenyan experience*, Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers, 1990, p. 5.

Embedded in folktales, myths, songs, dances, etc. is also advice on moral character building. Goduka notes the same about other African cultures:<sup>142</sup>

Idioms and proverbs feature prominently in virtually all traditional African cultures and play an important communicative and educational role. A basic idea underlying idioms and proverbs is that such sayings provide succinct, easily remembered summaries of important ideas and experiences that are part of the shared cultural knowledge by indigenous communities.

He also argues that such oral narratives are context-specific. Most of the Isukha oral literature and songs feature wild and domestic animals found in the vicinity. Animals are given human characters in stories in order to convey social standards of behaviour accepted among the Isukha. For example, the hyena is presented as a greedy animal; the ogre is a fierce, man-eating giant; the hare is cunning, the leopard has a strong character and the monkey is mischievous and cunning.<sup>143</sup>

The grandparents also give the children religious advice, offering prayers, and sacrifices on the children's behalf. Therefore, the children grow up with the understanding that their relationship with their grandparents is also a religious one. The grandparents in this case are mediators between god, the ancestors, and their grandchildren. Before the evening meal the grandparents offer libation to the ancestors on behalf of the children. All these prayers, rituals, libations and sacrifices introduce children to religious life, which they adapt and continue practising throughout their lives. Their indigenous religion is concerned with morality, and accepted rules like courtesy, generosity and honesty. It also supports customary laws of the Isukha.

Other methods of instruction include learning through playing such as make-believe play activities, where the children imitate the grown-ups imaginatively and symbolically. Adults also give verbal warnings, commands, sharp rebukes, and rewards or encouragement. Sometimes deception is used to discourage the children

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<sup>142</sup> Ivy N. Goduka, "African/indigenous philosophies: legitimizing spiritually centred wisdoms within the academy", in Philip Higgs (ed), *African voices in education*, Lansdowne: Juta, 2000, p. 76.

<sup>143</sup> The researcher collected 15 folktales from the Isukha, all of which had animal characters (see an example in Appendix H).

from acquiring bad character. Children are punished in various forms when they are disobedient. For example they can be denied a meal, or spanked or ridiculed with a nasty nickname. Punishment in this case is meant to reform.

Children are given formal indigenous education during puberty or their initiation period. The initiates are asked to interpret riddles in order to sharpen their wits. The education at this stage also focuses on transferring a heritage from one generation to another. It is an immediate induction into society and a preparation for adulthood and marriage life.<sup>144</sup> The initiates are taught to be kind and obedient to their elders.

## 5.2 Socio-cultural educational roles

The general aim of indigenous music education is to impart socio-cultural knowledge and skills to the young of the community.<sup>145</sup>

The above quotation is also true of the Isukha. The Isukha's *isukuti* performing arts play an important role of relaying social behaviour expected by the community at large. It provides a forum for socialisation where the community gathers not only to sing and dance, but also to take part in the community's rituals and practices. The community in turn is educated on the social norms required for their cultural survival. The cultural values are not only presented through the text of the songs, but also through their behaviour in the context of the performance, thereby reinforcing individual and group discipline. Individuals learn that they need the approval of the community members, which is obtained by observing the rituals surrounding the performing arts. As in many other African societies,<sup>146</sup> music among the Isukha is a social institution.

The community's sentiments encompassing the performing arts reveal the ontological relationships structured in the ceremonies that unfold their unity, which is to be maintained by each member of the society. Such a communal ideology is an important aspect of the Isukha and realised through living and not just propagating it.

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<sup>144</sup> Interviews with Mrs Christina Musolo, 6 June 2002, Mrs Penninah Musumba, 6 June 2002, Mr Adriano Lusala, 7 June 2002, and Mr Mabiya, 3 August 2003.

<sup>145</sup> Abrokwa, p. 198.

<sup>146</sup> Alan P. Merriam, *African music in perspective*, New York: Garland Publishing co., 1982, p. 434; Meki Nzewi, "Acquiring knowledge of the musical arts in traditional society" in Herbst *et al.* (eds), *Musical arts in Africa: theory, practice and education*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003, p. 16.

When humane people surround a child, for example, the child will acquire the same character.<sup>147</sup> The members participate in societal ceremonies in accordance with the customary laws that govern their behaviour, which reflects the communal ideology. A good performance relies on each member's co-operative spirit. This kind of co-operation is also evident and vital in other African cultural groups as Andrew Tracey and Uzoigwe affirm:

African music is a very close form of participation or cooperation in which the resulting sound is the proof that the participation is working. Everything starts from the feeling of people in cooperation, resulting in musical sounds within the bounds of the style being played. This means that one's participation, accuracy in rhythm, finding the right entry point, the right *coordination*, the right *relationship*, normally precede other considerations.<sup>148</sup>

Kenyatta<sup>149</sup> also observes that the Gikuyu of the Central Province of Kenya value unity and communalism - a virtue that they teach the members of the society who are growing up:

According to Gikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual. Or rather, his uniqueness is a secondary fact about him; first and foremost he is several people's relative and several people's contemporary.

The *isukuti* performance also educates and reminds the community about their cultural beliefs and practices. For example, the use of the three drums illustrates the unity expected in the family and the roles that each family member assumes. These instruments are played during funerals and commemoration ceremonies to signify the importance of funeral rites and the relationship between the members and their ancestors. This unity is just as important as the unity of the living family. The gender roles in this case are also displayed in their instruments. This symbolises male dominance in their society just as drums found in many other African societies.<sup>150</sup> Music thus expresses the community's ideas and philosophies.<sup>151</sup>

### 5.3 Religious educational roles

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the Isukha are very religious. All their cultural practices, rituals and rites of passage have religious connotations. These religious customs are also evident in their performing arts. The songs that this

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<sup>147</sup> Moeketsi Letseka, "African Philosophy and educational discourse," in Philips Higgs (ed), p. 186.

<sup>148</sup> Andrew Tracey and Joshua Uzoigwe, "Ensemble" in Herbst *et al.* (eds), p. 76.

<sup>149</sup> J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, New York: Vintage Books, 1965, p.297.

<sup>150</sup> Kofi Agawu, *African rhythm: a Northern Ewe perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 91.

<sup>151</sup> Tracey and Uzoigwe, p. 76.

chapter has examined exhibit their religious beliefs. The drama performed during *shiremba* unveils their religious beliefs and practices too. The whole organisation of the performing arts in their context lends itself to the philosophical understanding of the belief systems that govern their behaviour. Such intertwined cultural construction of the Isukha can only be fully understood within its context. Gehman asserts that:

African traditional religion permeated the whole of life. One could not point out to anything and classify it as secular, for all of life was sacred with spiritual dimensions. Strictly speaking, African traditional religion is not a religion as understood in the West a set of dogmas, but is life, experiential.<sup>152</sup>

The drama enacted during *shiremba* displays the religious belief that if this is not done, then the deceased will come back to haunt the living. The music that is performed then is to act as a tribute to the dead and to allow the whole community to give the deceased a 'proper send off' to the next world. This belief also reveals that the ancestors of the Isukha played a major role in the welfare of the living. These ancestors were therefore to be respected. Zahan argues that:

In Africa the problem of life and death constitutes the basis for religious feeling and is the unconscious foundation of philosophical reflection.<sup>153</sup>

This philosophical reflection guides the total way of life of the Isukha people.

#### **5.4 Music educational roles**

Indigenous music among the Isukha plays a major role in educating its members, starting with lullabies and ending with funeral dirges. For the purpose of this study the discussion will only focus on the educational roles of *isukuti* performing arts.

Music education of the *isukuti* performing arts is handed down orally from one generation to another. The instrumentalists learn by imitation and memory in order to develop and perfect their skills. The mnemonic sounds used in the teaching of melorhythmic patterns aid in the process of identifying, remembering and reproducing the cultural rhythmic patterns. The instrumentalists learn to identify indigenous rhythmic patterns upon which the instrumentalist improvises his/her own rhythms. According to Kongo and Robinson:

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<sup>152</sup> Richard J Gehman, *African traditional religion in biblical perspective*, Kijabe: Kesho publications, 1989, p. 50

<sup>153</sup> Dominique Zahan, *The religion, spirituality, and thought of traditional Africa*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970, p. 36.

Improvisation is a vital educational activity in any of the performing arts in that it integrates intuition and kinaesthesia<sup>154</sup> in spontaneous creative acts. There simply is no other form of artistic activity that manifests such complex and efficient pre-conscious processing. And it provides the clearest indicator of how thoroughly artistic concepts have been assimilated as opposed to merely learned.<sup>155</sup>

Participating in performing arts groups means that one has to have and develop music imaginative skills and creativity; qualities that are mandatory in indigenous music practice of musicians.<sup>156</sup>

The instrumentalists have to learn great skills of co-ordinating between themselves and the dancers because African music requires maximum physical co-ordination.<sup>157</sup> Likewise, dancers have to listen intently to the music and learn when to perform specific dances and co-ordinate their movements. As a result they end up learning how to work together as a team. The team spirit is also vital in the responsorial form of singing. The singers are always attentive to the soloist's section so that they can respond accordingly and change their sections when the soloist changes the text or song. In dance and drama they have to use their eyes and ears to produce the correct styles. In the singing and drama they use their mouth, eyes and ears as well as their imaginative creativity. In general they learn group musical performance skills.

Besides playing the instruments, the instrumentalists are expected to make their own instruments and take care of them. As they make their instruments, they have to ensure that the instruments produce the sounds required in their *isukuti* drumming. Through this engagement they become well acquainted with their cultural sounds and the skills needed in the making of the instruments.

The dance movements that the dancers employ are very much related to the animal movements that are found in Isukhaland. The dancers thus learn to imitate the animals' movements through their dance movements and gestures. They in turn

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<sup>154</sup> Kongo and Robinson define kinaesthesia as 'the feedback mechanism of the nervous system that conveys information between the mind and the body and is fundamental to all forms of music making and dance because it is what coordinates all the faculties we use in these activities; hearing, seeing, feeling, knowing and reasoning', p. 108.

<sup>155</sup> Kongo and Robinson, p. 109.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>157</sup> Tracey and Uzoigwe, p. 83

learn community dances and how to express themselves musically. By so doing they develop a strong sense of rhythm.

Since the dancers also sing as they perform, they learn how to co-ordinate melody, rhythm and dance in their music expressions. Their aural and memory perceptions are highly developed in the process; they have to learn to hear and remember the rhythms and melodies that guide their performance.

Musicians learn and develop vocal skills and techniques through their performance. As seen earlier, the soloists have to know the language and culture in order to extemporise successfully in performance. This involves learning how to sing within the cultural expectations and what to sing. In the process they also learn composition skills. In their compositions they depict the cultural norms and practices. They aid in keeping the community's culture and memory through their songs. In West Africa too the 'mother' [master] musician is the custodian of a people's history.<sup>158</sup> Wa Thiong'o<sup>159</sup> notes the same about African community artists:

Writers, artists, musicians, intellectuals, workers in ideas are the keepers of memory of a community.

Wa Thiong'o argues that such people embody their community's cultures in their works and in turn record what generations to come can learn about those communities. Agawu also observes that:

The idea of belonging separates this [the] African composer from composers elsewhere who deliberately position themselves outside the mainstream and sometimes in opposition to the prevailing ethos. The African composer's work takes on its fullest meaning within the context of his particular community<sup>160</sup>

Agawu's observations imply that an African musician (composer) depicts his culture through his music, thereby documenting the cultural norms, practices and behaviour intertwined in his music.

The song texts also play a major role in educating Isukha society. The texts relay messages related to their cultural norms and practices, behaviour expected of the societal members which render them as good Isukha history of clan and individuals

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<sup>158</sup> Michael Nixon, Joshua Uzoigwe and Benon Kigozi, "Musicianship" in Herbst *et al.* (eds), p. 54.

<sup>159</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "The fourth Steve Biko memorial lecture", unpublished document, South Africa: University of Cape Town, 12 September, 2003, p. 6.

<sup>160</sup> Kofi Agawu, "Defining and interpreting African music" in Herbst *et al.* (eds), p. 5.

(especially the deceased), etc. The messages embedded in these songs carry the keys to understanding the Isukha concept of music, cultural rituals such as those practised in funerals and other philosophical underpinnings.

## **6. Summary**

The Isukha, like other ethnic groups in Africa, have music practices that are closely intertwined with their daily lives, social practices and religion. Their performing arts depict their belief systems, social lives, philosophical underpinnings and communal approaches. The discussions in this chapter show how their performing arts convey educational values to their members, such as socio-cultural, religious and musical values. These cultural values have, however, changed tremendously due to the introduction of Christianity and formal schooling.

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## Chapter Four

### Popular music from Kenya and the Congo

#### Introduction

There are some popular music styles, which have influenced the dance styles of the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*. This chapter provides an historical overview of the development of popular music in Kenya on a general level and addresses, more specifically, the influence of the Congolese popular performing arts on the MMM. Similarities between Congolese performing arts and *Maximum Miracle Melodies* are illustrated through an analysis of Koffi Olomide's<sup>1</sup> video clips, *Loi and Micko*, because the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* have adapted his performance modes into their performances to a large extent. The discussion focuses on Koffi Olomide's style in relation to other Congolese performing arts. This section mainly examines the aspects of the *Loi* video clip and refers, when necessary, to the *Micko* video clip. The text of the two songs and their English translations appear in Appendix A.

#### 1. Popular music in sub-Saharan Africa

Like many other African countries that the West colonised, Kenya has adopted music elements from the West to create new forms of music on the popular music scene.

Abrokwaa indicated that:

The basic purity of indigenous African music lasted until the arrival of Europeans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Their influence reached its climax in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, by which time colonial rule was firmly established in Africa [...] New musical instruments included the guitar, violin, woodwinds, the piano and organ, the accordion, and drum sets, some of which were later adopted into the traditional African musical forms to create new forms of African music.<sup>2</sup>

Each country or region in Africa in turn had specific kinds of popular music that integrated Western music with the country's indigenous music, for example, 'highlife' in Ghana (West Africa), *mbaqanga* and *kwela* in Southern Africa, *soukous* in Zaire/Congo (Central Africa), *juju* in Nigeria (West Africa), *benga* in Kenya (East

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<sup>1</sup> Kofi Olomide is a Kora Award winning Congolese popular music artist. Two of his video-clips are used in the analysis of Congolese popular music in this study: Kofi Olomide, "Loi" track 1, *Loi: Les 12 titres de l'album en clips*, produced by Sonodisc, 5 min., VHS, videocassette, 1995; and "Micko" track 3, *Loi: Les 12 titres de l'album en clips*, produced by Sonodic, 5 min., VHS, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Abrokwaa, p. 193.

Africa), as well as *viva* and *chimurenga* in Zimbabwe (Southern Africa).<sup>3</sup> Music acculturation thus occurred as a result of colonisation. According to Taylor:

Rather than cultural imperialism simply wiping out indigenous musicking and indigenous sounds, new popular musics are being made, old ones altered or maintained, sometimes museumized and sometimes lost altogether.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.1 The growth of popular music in Kenya

Popular music in Kenya developed because of Western contact and influence, experiencing tremendous growth after the Second World War.<sup>5</sup> The Kenyans, who participated in the war and were influenced by the music of the Europeans not only brought Western musical instruments such as guitars, mandolin and accordions with them, but also learnt to play the musical instruments and incorporate the styles into their music.

These instruments laid the foundation for the formation of the word *beni* (Kiswahili), a mispronunciation of the word 'band.' *Beni* first emerged in Kenya in the 1890s; however, the period during which *beni* flourished came to an end in the 1960s after Kenya became independent.<sup>6</sup> These bands initially played European music using European instruments such as the accordion and guitars. The dancers wore European military uniform and displayed loyalty to the British colonial masters and culture. However, after the First and Second World Wars, these *benis* took a different turn. The Kenyans, similar to other musicians in other African countries mentioned earlier,<sup>7</sup> endeavoured to use European instruments to play their original compositions with both European and African music characteristics – hence the rise of popular bands.

The popular bands consisted of Kenyans who were striving to compose and play music in African languages using a combination of Western and African musical instruments. The bands had clearly defined audiences for music in Kenyan

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, cosmopolitans, and popular music in Zimbabwe*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp. 244-246; Bergman, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Timothy D. Taylor, *Global pop: world music, world markets*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> John Collins, *West African pop roots*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992, p. 52; Caleb C. Okumu, *The development of Kenyan popular guitar music: a study of Kiswahili songs in Nairobi*, unpublished MA. thesis, Nairobi: Kenyatta University, 1998, pp. 27-32.

<sup>6</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Dance and society in Eastern Africa 1890-1970*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Roberts, pp. 240-244.

languages of the respective home districts. In conjunction with the bands, another kind of music called *dansi* developed, with its name deriving from the word 'dance'.<sup>8</sup> *Dansi* incorporated guitars, mandolin or banjo and percussive African instruments. This specific genre was performed in a variety of local languages and its popularity grew rapidly.

The inception of radio and television broadcasting in Kenya also enhanced the influence of the popular music. Many Kenyans learnt to play the guitar and musicians began forming their own bands. As popularity of the music grew, recording industries such as East African Records limited,<sup>9</sup> Jambo Label, AIT, EMI and Phonogram (Polygram), were established in Nairobi after the Second World War, which served the whole of the East African region.<sup>10</sup> Popular musicians could record their music on 78 rpm records and sell them in order to earn a living

The popular bands that emerged such as *Gabriel Omollo*, *Apollo Komesha '71* and *Super Mazembe*<sup>11</sup> tried to imitate the playing techniques of the musicians they heard on popular music records performed by artists from European countries and the rest of Africa. By the end of the 1950s, Nairobi had been established as a music business centre that served East and Central Africa.<sup>12</sup> At the time anything Western or European was associated with the elite and civilised society. The musicians therefore imitated Western popular music performance and styles. The records sold well all across the country and East Africa in general. Musicians such as Daudi Kabaka, Paul Mazera and Fadhili Williams began singing in Kiswahili, especially after Kenya became independent in 1963. By this time, Kiswahili was understood by a variety of people across East and Central Africa. It had become a *lingua franca* that promoted nationalism and trade across East and Central Africa.<sup>13</sup>

A civil war broke out in the Congo (then known as Zaire) in Central Africa in the 1960s, forcing many of the Congolese and especially musicians to move to East

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<sup>8</sup> Okumu, pp. 24-25.

<sup>9</sup> Kirster Malm and Roger Wallis, *Media, policy and music activity*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> Collins, 1992, pp. 249-250.

<sup>11</sup> John Collins, *Music makers of West Africa*, Washington. Three Continents Press, 1985, p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> Malm and Wallis, pp. 84 and 89.

<sup>13</sup> Kidula, 1998, p. 37; Graeme Ewens, *Africa o-ye! A celebration of African music*, London: Guinness Publishing Limited, 1991, pp 158-159; Kaplan *et al*, p. 103.

Africa and Kenya in particular. These Congolese musicians recorded their kind of music, *rumba*,<sup>14</sup> in Nairobi, attracting and influencing many Kenyan musicians. Hence Kenyan popular musicians such as Fadhili Williams, and Fundi Konde started to imitate the guitar picking style of the lead guitar found in *rumba* music. Congolese music became so dominant in East Africa that it gave rise to *benga* music.

*Benga* was started amongst the Luo, who are known for their lyre instrument, the *nyatiti*.<sup>15</sup> The *nyatiti* is an eight-stringed lyre played by the Luo of Nyanza province of Kenya. It is the men, *jathum*, who usually play the instrument by plucking the strings.<sup>16</sup> Since the Luos were used to plucking the strings of the *nyatiti*, the guitar plucking technique of Congolese pop music fascinated them and they found it easier to play the guitar.<sup>17</sup> According to Omondi,<sup>18</sup> the Luos also adopted some guitar-playing techniques into their *nyatiti* performance, for example, strumming. Later other language groups adopted the style and called their music *benga*.<sup>19</sup> Different kinds of *benga* music developed such as Kikuyu *benga*, Luhya *benga*, etc., each identified by the scales used in their music. The tones and rhythmic patterns used were those found in Kikuyu, Luhya, etc. traditional songs.<sup>20</sup> *Benga* therefore developed as a result of Congolese music influence. The musicians that were popularly known for *benga* music are George Ramogi, Gabriel Omollo, Ochieng Kabasellah, Goerge Ojijo, Prince Jully, D. O. Misiani, Sam Chege and David kamau.<sup>21</sup>

By 1958, Congolese Lingala music based on *rumba* was making use of electric guitars, which were considered vital in dance bands.<sup>22</sup> Kenyan popular music also adopted the use of electric guitars into *benga* music. The 1970s marked massive

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<sup>14</sup> Roberts, p. 252.

<sup>15</sup> Bergman, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Charles N. Orawo, *Miel: the Luo dance*, Kisumu: Lake Publishers and Enterprises, 2002, pp 12-13; Washington A. Omondi, *Thum: traditional lyre music of the Luo of Kenya*, unpublished PhD dissertation, London: University of London, 1980, pp. 150-151, 372-373.

<sup>17</sup> Roberts, p. 255.

<sup>18</sup> Omondi, pp. 76-77.

<sup>19</sup> Ronnie Graham, *The world of African music: stern's guide to contemporary African music*, Vol. 2, London: Pluto Press, 1992, p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> Roberts, p. 243.

<sup>21</sup> "96.4 Nation FM: Collela Mazea," available from <<http://www.nationaudio.com/96-4NATION/feature7.html>> accessed 28 July 2004; Douglas B. Paterson, "Trends in Kenyan Popular music: the best kept secret in Africa," available from <<http://www.members.aol.com/dpaterson/trends.htm>> accessed 28 July 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Bergman, p. 48.

importation of Western and Congolese popular music in Kenya.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the popularity of Kiswahili music began to suffer in favour of the foreign music that was often heard on radio. As a result the president of Kenya at the time, Daniel Arap Moi, appointed a National Music Commission to devise ways of enhancing local Kenyan music.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, amongst many other recommendations, the Commission recommended that the only local radio station at the time, Voice of Kenya (VoK), should limit the transmission of non-Kenyan music to 20 per cent of the total air time.<sup>25</sup> The government of Kenya thus banned the broadcasting of Congolese music on the Voice of Kenya to protect local music from such foreign domination and actively promote it.<sup>26</sup> The government also turned down the renewal of work permits of some Congolese musicians who lived in Kenya. The result was that the newly electrified *benga* music thrived in the market throughout the 1970s.<sup>27</sup> Gabriel Omolo, whose records received the Golden Disc award for selling tens of thousands of copies at the time,<sup>28</sup> flourished in this style.

Another style of popular music known as the twist developed rapidly during the 1970s.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Daudi Kabaka considered himself as the 'King of twist.' Others<sup>30</sup> refer to him as the 'King of twist' to this day, although he is already dead. Among the Kenyan popular musicians who flourished in the twist style are Daudi M. Kabaka and Paul Mazera, who later became an URTNA award winner, David Amunga, Fundi Konde and Fadhili Williams. *Omutibo* was yet another style that flourished in the same period. The leading musicians of this style include George Mukabi, George Nzenze, Fanuel Amimo and Peter Akwabi.

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<sup>23</sup> Ewens, p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> Malm and Wallis, p. 95.

<sup>25</sup> Presidential National Music Commission Kenya, *Report of the presidential national music commission*, Nairobi: Government Printers, 1984, p. 89.

<sup>26</sup> Ewens, p. 168-169.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Okumu, 1998, p. 124.

<sup>29</sup> Ewens, p. 159.

<sup>30</sup> Otieno Otieno, 'His music still popular at fun spots', in *East African Standard Newspaper*, 20 December 2003, p. 12; Emmanuel Mwendwa, 'He twisted the hearts out of dance lovers', in *East African Standard Newspaper*, 20 December, 2003, pp. 12-13.

Since many of the Congolese musicians were still living in the country, they formed bands with other Kenyan musicians.<sup>31</sup> Congolese musicians led most of these bands. Some of the outstanding ones include *Les Mangelepa* and *Orchestre Virunga*.<sup>32</sup> Such groups had a wide audience and their performance in any club filled the dance floor with Kenyan fans. Many Congolese popular musicians also toured Kenya many times, thereby increasing their influence on Kenyans. Such musicians include Francois Luambo Makiadi, popularly known as Franco, with his *OK Jazz band*<sup>33</sup> and Tabu ley Rochereau and his *Afrisa* band. Kenyan popular bands also began to enlarge their bands, earning them a good reputation in music. The *Maroon Commandos*, *Morogoro Jazz Band*, *Victoria Jazz*, and *Kilimambogo Brothers*<sup>34</sup> are a few examples. The better the bands could imitate the Congolese pop band musicians, the more popular they became. These bands mainly sung in Kiswahili and became popularly known as Kiswahili *rumba*.<sup>35</sup> However, local non-Congolese pop music was left to a less elite category of fans.

Due to the popularity of Congolese music in Kenya, many Kenyans, especially in the music business industry, bought Congolese pop music that was brought into the country through audio and videotapes. Since the market was 'booming', pirated music from Zaire found its way into Kenya and Nairobi in particular. Collins indicates that:

Pirating is another problem in the music business, and pirating cassette production has almost become a cottage industry in East Africa. It has cut deeply into the profits of record companies, both foreign and local. It has become so bad that the Kenyan government has tried to outlaw pirating.<sup>36</sup>

The practice continues even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is through these videotapes that many local musicians are able to imitate the Congolese music dance styles, dramatisations and video-recording ideas.

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<sup>31</sup> The same seems to be the practice even in other East African countries (Stephen Harvey Martin, *Music in urban East Africa: a study of the development of urban Jazz in Dar es Salaam*, Washington: University of Washington, 1980, pp. 58-67).

<sup>32</sup> Ewens, p. 160.

<sup>33</sup> Jazz in this case refers to a 'pop group'. Bergman, p. 49, gives this definition

<sup>34</sup> Ewens, p. 166.

<sup>35</sup> Paterson, "Trends in Kenyan Popular music: the best kept secret in Africa," available from <<http://www.members.aol.com/dpaterson/trends.htm>> accessed 28 July 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Collins, 1992, p. 250.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Congolese music is played often on Kenyan radio and television stations and channels. Kenyan musicians continue to borrow from Congolese dance music. The music is performed in clubs, dance halls, and other ceremonies such as weddings, evening parties, and fundraising occasions. It has been commercialised and is currently one of the most popular music genres in Kenya. The churches and Christian musicians in Kenya have also been influenced greatly by this music, including *Maximum Miracle Melodies*, as will be seen in Chapter Five.

## 1.2 Congolese popular music: *rumba*

This section devotes itself to a brief account of the historical development of Zairian popular music, also known as Congolese or Congo-Zairian Music with specific reference to *rumba*. It also discusses the spread of *rumba* in Kenya and other parts of Africa. The analysis of the Congolese performing arts is based on Koffi Olomide's video clips of his performances in the video *Loi*, as mentioned earlier.

Congolese pop dance music has become very popular in sub-Saharan Africa over the years.<sup>37</sup> According to Ewens:

Kinshasa, the capital city of Zaire, is the undisputed music center of Africa [...] And what is first heard here will later be packing dance floors in Europe, America and even Japan as well as the rest of Africa".<sup>38</sup>

Congolese music, also referred to as *rumba*, has become very popular in Kenya. It is a fusion of African and foreign musical elements that targets interethnic audiences. *Rumba* became popular around 1940 through an accordionist, Feruzi,<sup>39</sup> and the term became a generic name for popular dance music. It became a fusion of Afro-Caribbean, Latin, Cuban and a variety of traditional musical styles of ethnic groups in the Congo.<sup>40</sup> Over the years several popular musicians have helped to develop this genre, which in later years expanded to embody several kinds of music and new dance styles such as *boucher*, *kiri kiri*, rock and roll and *soukous*.<sup>41</sup> The guitar was and still is central to this music. It is referred to by several names:

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<sup>37</sup> Bob Whitman White, *Popular culture, mastery and politics of dance music in Congo-Kinshasa: modernity's spiral*, unpublished PhD. dissertation, [n.p.], McGill University, 1998, p. xii

<sup>38</sup> Ewens, p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> Ewens, p. 129.

<sup>40</sup> Roberts, p. 245; Gary Stewart, *Rumba on the river: a history of the popular music of the two Congos*, London: Verso, 2000, pp 21-22

<sup>41</sup> Bergman, p. 50.

It has [been] given many names in the course of the years: African jazz, Congo jazz, Congo music, musique zairoise, rumba, Zaire rumba, and soucouc. Soucouc was actually one of the many dance styles that succeeded each other within this musical style.<sup>42</sup>

The musicians whose music has sold well and spread across East, West and Central Africa are known as the founders of specific new styles incorporated in the *rumba*. For example, Joseph Kabaseke or Kalle was considered the father of Congolese popular music and Franco was the godfather. Pepe Kalle is known as the 'elephant' of Congolese music and founder of *Kwasa Kwasa* dance; Bozi Boziana as the founder of the original and famous *Zaiko Langa Langa* band that was the pace-setter of many *rumba* styles; and Koffi Olomide as the golden star, or *Tcha Tcho*.<sup>43</sup>

The early *rumba* bands had large orchestral sections. Typical instruments included electric guitars (rhythm, lead and bass), pop drum-set, cymbals, trumpets, tubas, horns and saxophones. *Rumba* bands had a large group of instrumentalists and singers and played identical music. The lead vocalist's timbre and variations on the guitar that were unique to each group differentiated them from each other. The music business consequently proved to be a lucrative one, attracting a great number of musicians.

Due to the civil wars in this country, many people left Zaire and the country suffered economically. However, music seemed to be and still is the major business that earns musicians much money and a 'bétter' life. Among the prolific musicians that flourished during this period were Sam Mangwana, Dizzy Mandjeku, Ndombe Opteum, Tabu Ley, Mbilia Bel, Papa Wemba and Franco.<sup>44</sup>

Due to the breakaways, many new bands were formed that had similar musical styles and techniques. Subsequently there was and continues to be competition amongst musicians. This practice has resulted in eager borrowing of styles for the survival of bands, publicity, marketing, and fashion. The musicians keep adding new practices, dances, styles, etc. to their performances in order to be ahead of the others. Such ambition and creativity has caused tremendous development of *rumba* over the years. For their records to sell well, the musicians strive for uniqueness in order to

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<sup>42</sup> Wolfgang Bender, *Sweet mother: modern African music*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> Ewens, pp. 132-144.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

contribute in the music scene. Such uniqueness includes ways of dressing, new dance movements and stage choreography. The developments have thus been led predominantly by commercialisation.

Dance styles and variations became an important part of the whole performance and popularisation of orchestral bands.<sup>45</sup> Women were and still are mainly used as dancers who took their names from their artists or bands, for example, *Francolets* were Franco's dancers, *Rocherettes* were Tabu Ley Rochereau's dancers, etc. Male musicians dominated most of the orchestral bands. In later years there were women who took up vocal sections and even solos. They include Mbilia Bel, Tshala Mwana, M'pongo Love and Deessee Mukanti (also known as *little goddess*).<sup>46</sup>

The dances that these musicians have performed in *rumba* music have evolved to include a variety such as *Bouncers*, *Kin Kin*, *Cavacha*, *Kwasakwasa*, *Mayebo*, *Madiaba*, *Ndombolo* and *Kirwanzenza*.<sup>47</sup> At the time of writing this dissertation, *kirwanzenza* was the latest dance style. All these dance movements are often referred to as *soukous* dance styles (see footnote 40).

As the civil war intensified in Congo-Zaire, many musicians fled the country and those who remained could not afford to buy many instruments. The brass instruments were especially expensive and almost unaffordable. Therefore, a new wave of *rumba* emerged which excluded the brass section. This new music that was still regarded as a new wave of *rumba* in the Congo, became known as *soukous*<sup>48</sup> in the west. According to Bergman,<sup>49</sup> *soukous* means 'having a good time.' *Soukous* includes a *sebene* section from the beginning as opposed to the previous *rumba* that had its *sebene* in the second section of the music, while the first was a slow *rumba* section. *Soukous* also makes use of a small band instead of a large orchestra. The musicians developed their own characteristics that were unique to their bands, which are considered as guitar-based. The main rhythm and excitement of the music lies in

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<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that the popular bands use the word orchestra for their groups/bands.

<sup>46</sup> Collins, 1992, p. 184-185; Bergman, p. 51.

<sup>47</sup> Bergman, p. 50; Interviews by the researcher with Congolese musicians, Nene and Dido Nday, 7 February 2002.

<sup>48</sup> Ewens, p. 141.

<sup>49</sup> Bergman, p. 46.

the guitars and the interlocking of their performance. Dancers are energised by the guitar interplay.

Many of the musicians or bands like touring the West to record and market their music as well as to acquire new fashions. Today the clothing fashion craze<sup>50</sup> in Congo-Zaire is linked with music. These fashions are also displayed in their performances and video clips. Currently they record their music on videotape, which unfortunately has encouraged piracy of their music. Video-recording has also led a wide variety of bands and music groups in Kenya to imitate dance movements, dramatisations and costumes of the Congolese pop musicians.

### **1.3 Congolese performing arts: *Loi***

This section discusses the performing arts of Koffi Olomide with specific reference to his video *Loi*. Koffi Olomide is a Congolese popular musician, who is popular not only in Kenya but also in sub-Saharan Africa (see footnote 1 of this chapter). He has also won several awards such as artistic merit in 1987 and best composer in 1987 given to him by Zaire's Commissioner of arts and culture and Kinshasa music writers respectively<sup>51</sup>. He has a full performing arts group composed of instrumentalists, female and male dancers (see accompanying VCD for a display of the dancers), singers and Koffi as the lead singer. This section analyses his song, *Loi*, in terms of text, rhythm and melody, form and instrumentation, dance and dramatisations of the video performances.

#### **1.3.1 Song**

##### **(a) Text and message**

The song is sung in both Lingala and French.<sup>52</sup> The title of the song, *Loi*, means law. It is descriptive of the law or regulations required when performing Congolese popular dances. The singers mention the names of the dance movements as the dancers perform them accordingly.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> Stewart, p. 348.

<sup>52</sup> A transcription of the text and its English translation appears in Appendix A.

A variety of themes related to day-to-day activities and issues that affect the lives of the urban Congolese are expressed, for example, lying, truth, money, fashion and beauty. The text of the song refers to a variety of people, issues and objects. The people referred to include Shamukwale, dancers, 'prophet of dressing' and 'the great one' among others. Sometimes these names are just mentioned without having any relation to the theme. The lead singer also refers to his god whom he does not describe or name.

The texts have allusive messages that can only be understood by the people the singer is referring to, for example:

Prophet of dressing there is an answer. There is a solution this way They had a gun but they could not kill me. I am the farm owner and my name is Liyunzi.

These statements are spoken as word interpolations by the bandleader, Koffi Olomide are improvised texts meant for a selected group of people. While an outsider may find the word interpolations incomprehensible, they make sense to specific people in the audience and the performers.<sup>53</sup> The improvised texts are therefore not just meant for the singers, dancers and the general audience, but also for specific people that the singers are targeting. This is a common practice in *soukous* music lyrics, where musicians 'gossip' or 'make fun' of others. Sometimes they sing about their enemies or competitors. When addressing the dancers, the texts mainly direct them on what to do or how to dance. For example, *tout le monde position* (everybody, take up your positions), alerts the dancers to get ready for the *sebene* dance section.

The word interpolations reveal the singer's feelings and contemplation in the form of a soliloquy. In the song *Loi*, the bandleader says, "They had a gun but they could not kill me." He does not reveal who these people were. While the entire song is about the 'law of dance', which is meant to expose the various dance movements of

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<sup>53</sup> Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Nday Dido, 6 February 2002 and Prof. Adeyepo Yapo, revealed that usually the Congolese musicians speak to their friends and enemies through their singing. Certain texts are meant to address individuals but are spoken as word-interpolations or as *les cries*. The text may not have any co-ordination with the main theme of the song but they pass a message. In such cases, those musicians addressed in the music will respond through their own compositions /recordings in a new album that they release.

*soukous*, the singer is also talking about his enemies, giving at least two dimensions to the meaning of the text. The word interpolations are thus short phrases interjected occasionally that may or may not have direct relationship with the message of the whole song.

The text of the song also refers to listeners, dancers, and the singer's god, which symbolises the commercialisation of this kind of music. The musicians ask the female dancers to perform the various dances referred to in the song. As the name suggests, *Loi*, the song is about the law or regulations required when performing the dances. In other songs on the same album such as *Micko* and *Motomolo* the same 'law' is followed in the dance performances. When the names of the dances are mentioned, the dancers perform the given dances.

There is use of images, descriptions, and metaphors to express ideas. For example, "lies come via a lift and truth comes by stairs." This indicates the speed at which lies and truth come. In the song, *Micko*, the singer sings 'Micko, I have water in my eyes', indicating that the singer has been crying for Micko, his lover. Water here symbolises tears. The use of images, descriptions, and metaphors are also common features of not only Congolese pop music, but also African indigenous music as discussed in Chapter Three.

Some of the words used are culture-specific, for example, *buka*, which literally means 'break'. However, this word used by musicians is an encouragement to dancers and listeners to dance and/or intensify their movements or involvement.<sup>54</sup>

There are certain words in the song that shed light on the Congolese musicians' life styles and surroundings. For example:<sup>55</sup>

*Prophet of dressing* (fashion-craze)

*Electric stairs* (modern urban Africa)

*Money and riches* (craving for riches amongst popular musicians)

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<sup>54</sup> Interviews with Congolese musicians living in Kenya, Mr. and Mrs. Nday Dido, 6 February 2002 (see chapter six for more details about these musicians and the accompanying VCD, "Mr and Mrs Dido").

<sup>55</sup> These observations are also common to other Congolese musicians as indicated by Ewens, p. 148.

The text is performed in several ways: through word interpolations, speech–melody and sung melodies. As seen in Chapter Three, word interpolations, speech-melody<sup>56</sup>, and the responsorial style are typical African music traits. The pop musicians thus draw on their African music repertoire in their compositions. The speech-melody section and word interpolations are highly improvised. The texts in these sections are meant to encourage dancers to intensify their movements, or to dance. Such words include *buka buka*, *bingeli*, etc. They are improvised words that must be carefully selected and timed.

### **(b) Melody and rhythm**

A lead singer and/or chorus-response usually sing the melodies. Although the *atalakus*<sup>57</sup> execute *les cries*, sometimes these *les cries* take melodic forms or contours. The melody and sometimes sections of it are imitated or doubled by lead and bass guitars. As in most *soukous* music, men are the main singers. They sing in high tessitura and falsetto.

The lead guitars have their own repetitive melodies that are different for each section. There is often an interchange of melodic sections between the lead guitars (high tessitura and medium) and rhythm guitar. When the bass guitar plays the melody, it often doubles the melodic line. However, the melodies are not generally played in full when performed by the guitars. A few rhythmic and melodic motives are played which identify the melody. Sometimes these short phrases are played repeatedly, but sporadically as improvisation. They are executed in such a way that rhythmic interlock can easily propel dance. It has to be danceable because *soukous* is 'dance music'.

There is an interesting interplay of melodies as they shift from one guitar to another then to the voice. The chorus-response section has harmony in parallelism and/polarity. Sometimes the chorus sings in unison, then briefly in harmony for two

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<sup>56</sup> Here the word speech-melody means words that are half-spoken and half sung. The tone of the speech is important in determining the melodic line.

<sup>57</sup> The Congolese refer to *les cries* as shouts or cries. Although they may sound like sung melodies to the listener, the Congolese do not regard them as songs. Men in high tessitura voice (falsetto) usually execute them. One who sings such a section is referred to as *atalaku*. Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Nday, 6 February 2002, Adepo Yapo, 30 August 2003. Okumu, p. 46, refers to *les cries* as animation. He asserts that Kenyans call them 'pandisa'.

bars before going back to unison singing. Although the harmony is often in parallelism, the percussive accompaniments and guitar melodies and rhythms give the music rich texture. The two songs make use of at least three *atalakus*, who perform solo sections interchangeably thus adding to the rich texture and varied timbre of the music.

In *Loi* the response section has very short phrases that last less than a bar. Whereas in the song *Micko*, the chorus–response has long melodic phrases repeated throughout the first section. This song has high text<sup>58</sup> that expounds on various themes.

The rhythms utilised are usually complicated and organised in triplets (see Figures 4.1 and 4.3). For each of the sections, whether slow *rumba* or *sebene*, rhythmic and melodic patterns are repetitious. The chords employed for these melodies are primary chords, I IV and V.

Fig. 4.1 Bingeli

Bingeli

Kofii Olomide

E ta-la bi-nge-li bi-nge-li bi-nge-li e-i e-i E ta-la-bi-

nge-li bi-nge-li bi-nge-li le-lio le-li

In *Loi* the song begins in B Major then modulates to C Major on the first *sebene* section. Chord V of the new key is played as a pivot chord. The lead guitar then picks up a new melody in the new key that marks the beginning of the *sebene* section. Despite the fact that the song modulates, only primary chords are used in

<sup>58</sup> The term 'high text' refers to music with different many words and phrases as opposed to 'low text' with very few repetitious words

accompaniment. This is a common practice in African popular music.<sup>59</sup> In *Micko* the song begins with moderate *sebene* in the key of E Major then modulates to F Major in the second *sebene*. However, except for the key, the melody remains the same as seen in Fig. 4.2. The bass guitar transits to the new key by use of a descending F Major scale. In both keys the primary chords are still the predominant ones utilised. (Listen to music on accompanying VCD, "Dramatisation of Congolese pop").

Fig. 4.2 Micko



### (c) Form and instrumentation

The instrumental section plays a major role in shaping the form of the song and these two aspects are discussed here. The instruments in use include bass guitar, lead guitars (with both high and medium tessitura), rhythm guitars, *tumba* drums, pop drum-set and keyboards. The song opens with a moderately fast section, then it moves to a *sebene* section that is divided into two smaller parts, implying that the instrumentation changes when the form of the song changes.

The *rumba* section is the slowest in comparison to the others. It has a thinner texture, with a timbre with less rhythmic excitement. This section has entries of guitar, word interpolations and chorus. The section begins with an *a Capella* chorus section (See Fig. 4.3 for the notation and Appendix A for the full text), followed by drums, lead guitar and shouts from chorus then word interpolations and finally *les cries*. *Micko* starts with drum prelude, then word interpolations, followed by lead guitar and finally the male chorus section. The dance movements in this section are also slower and take the pace of the instrumentation tempo.

<sup>59</sup> Okumu, p. 104.

A short transition leads to the *sebene* section. The *sebene* is characterised by complex polyrhythmic and cross-rhythmic patterns played by the electric guitars. There is interchange of vocal and instrumental section; different melodic phrases played by high and medium tessitura lead guitars as well as rhythm and bass guitars.

Fig. 4.3 [T]/Ningisile

**Tingisile**

Koffi Olomide

♩=96

The musical score for 'Tingisile' consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble staff and a bass staff. The tempo is marked as ♩=96. The music is characterized by frequent triplets, indicated by a '3' over a bracketed group of notes. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system continues the melody and accompaniment.

There is variation of number of instruments at a given time; many vocables, word interpolations and *les cries*; responsorial singing; exchange of vocal solos; shouts; repetitive melodic phrases by lead guitars, voice and bass guitar, and an exciting rhythmic build-up that leads to the climax.

The number of *sebene* sections varies from one song to another. In both *Loi* and *Micko* there are four distinct sections. The *sebene* sections are distinct from each other in various ways:

- Number of instruments used at any given time;
- Exchange of solos and type of word interpolations;
- Type of melodies played or sung;
- Tessitura of lead guitars;

- Techniques of instrumental playing;
- Vocal sections; e.g. responsorial, chorus only, harmony etc.;
- Rhythmic and melodic motifs executed in instrumental interludes.

Each *sebene* section or part has its own melodic pattern, guitar-playing technique, and interchange of parts and rhythmic motifs recurring throughout the section.

### 1.3.2 Dance

It is obvious that since *soukous* is considered as dance music, it is accompanied by dancing. In the *Loi* and *Micko* video-clips both male and female dancers perform the dances. Their styles are varied and not always similar. Female dancers perform a greater variety of dance movements and are more actively involved in all the dances. Their costumes are also different from those of the male dancers.

Different costumes are used for each song. The female dancers are always in tight fitting trousers of various colours such as black and blue in *Loi* and *Micko* respectively. The type of texture of the trouser fabric and its tight-fitting nature enhance or highlight the hip movements prevalent in their dances. They wear brief tops ('midriffs') that match their trousers in colour and expose their tummy and belly buttons. All of them wear the same costumes. They have curly kit on their hair, which is dyed tan, a hairstyle that was fashionable in Africa at the time of recording the video. They dance bare-foot.

The men are always in trousers of various specific colours for each dance such as orange, blue, black, etc. Unlike the women's trousers, the men's are loose and/or fitted but not tight. The texture of the costumes is apparently much heavier. They wear shirts and caps that match their trousers. The men wear sneakers at all times; they do not dance bare feet (See accompanying VCD for these costumes under the title *Micko*. Also see Plates 7 to 9 in Appendix C).

The singer soloist, Koffi Olomide, is always in flashy suits, signifying the 'prophet of dressing' and the fashion craze of Congolese musicians with colours that match those of the male dancers. Unlike the dancers, he sometimes wears a tie and his dance movements often differ from those of the rest of the dance group.

All the performances of the dances are staged on an outside veranda, balcony or enclosed veranda, by the swimming pool, garden square or inside a house. The various scenarios are made possible by modern video-editing technology. This specific performance is not performed for an audience but for the camera. However, the dance group and Koffi Olomide also perform in concerts, public places, etc.<sup>60</sup>

**(a) Choreographic pattern formations**

The dance pattern formations or choreography performed are far fewer than the dance movements. The figures presented in Table 4.1 are drawn from the video performances of *Micko* and *Loi*.

Table 4:1 Number of Choreographic Pattern formations & Dance Movements

| Song         | Choreographic patterns | Dance movements |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Loi</i>   | 4                      | 25              |
| <i>Micko</i> | 3                      | 32              |

The following are the choreographic pattern formations utilised in the two songs:

Fig. 4.4 Cluster: dancers clump together in one area



Fig. 4.5 Two horizontal lines



<sup>60</sup> Ewens, p. 144.

Fig. 4.6 The run (Haphazard running across the stage)

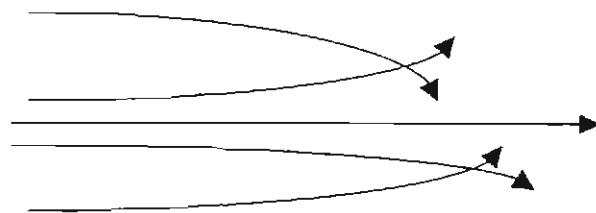


Fig. 4.7 V-shape: dancers form the letter V in their pattern

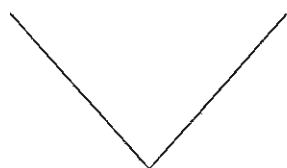


Fig. 4.8 One single line



Fig. 4.9 Circle

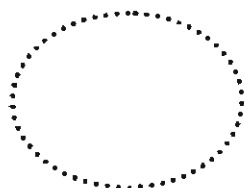
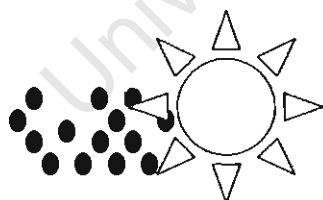


Fig. 4.10 Free position



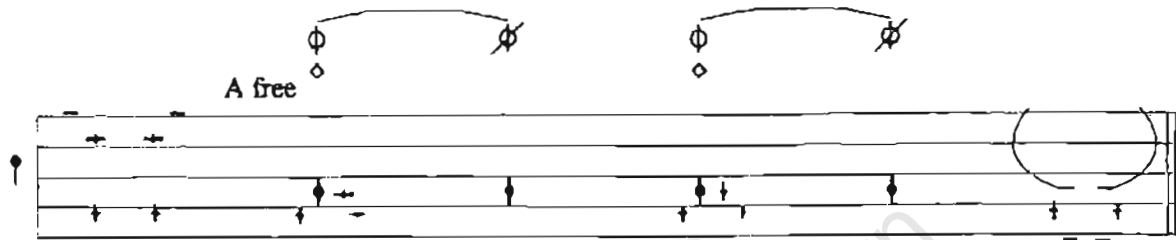
### (b) Dance movements

A variety of dance movements are utilised in the two analysed performances. This section describes only the Congolese dances that have been adapted by the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*. The dance notations appear beneath the descriptions of the movements and short video clips on the included VCD illustrate the various movements. The following are their descriptions.

i. *Nzomo*

This dance involves forward-back contractions of the pelvis while lifting up their right legs and arms, and is performed only by female dancers.

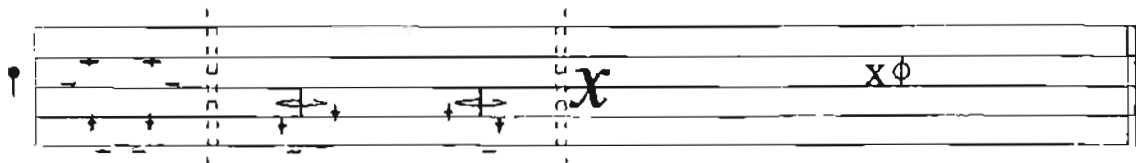
Fig. 4.11 *Nzomo*



ii. The Wriggle

Only performed by female dancers, the dancers wriggle their pelvis in a circular motion, shifting their body weight to the left and right leg alternately. All the dances involve pelvic movements in various forms (see also *nzomo* and *micko* on accompanying VCD for variations of pelvic movements). This dance movement is usually performed even in conjunction with other movements. The researcher has labelled this dance as 'the wriggle' to indicate the specific emphasis of the dance movements. The Congolese musicians label this as *soukous* music because the *soukous* music usually incorporates hip movements. However, the researcher has given it this name to distinguish it from other *soukous* dance movements, which are varied.

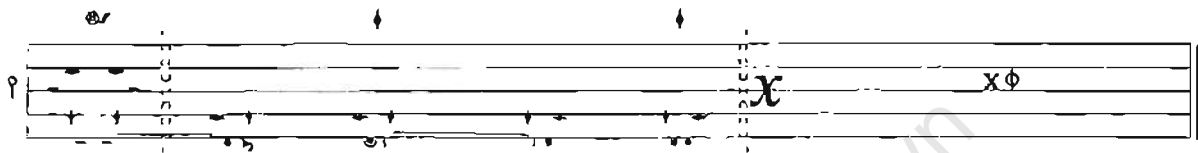
Fig. 4.12 'Wriggle'



iii. *Ndombolo*

The men perform this dance movement. 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.

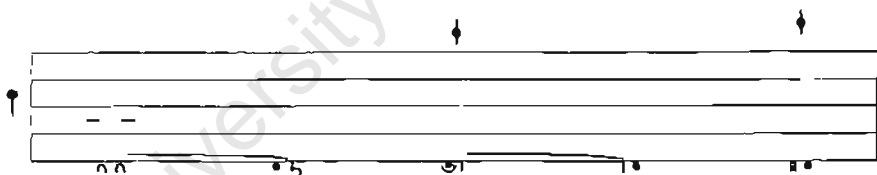
4.13 *Ndombolo*



iv. Variation of right *stomp*

The researcher could not find a name that the Congolese use for this dance movement. Therefore, the name has been adopted from the Luhya *isukuti* dance that was used for Chapter Three.

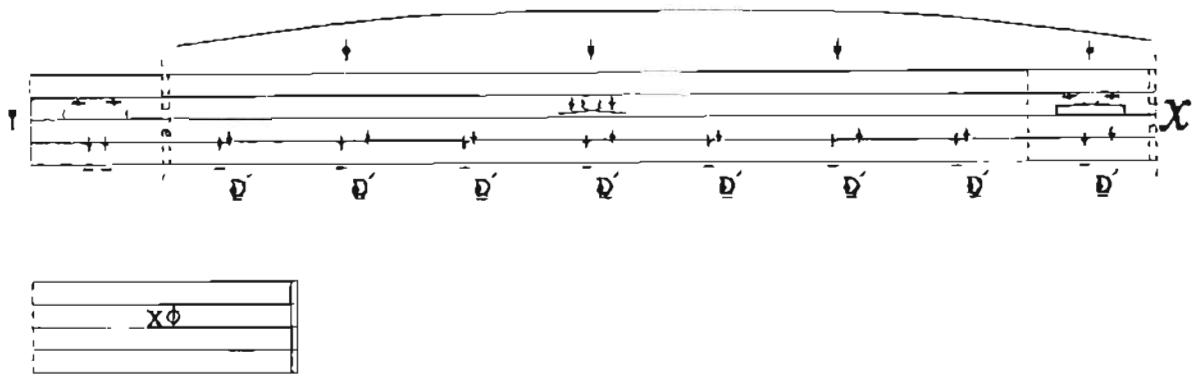
Fig. 4.14 Variation of traditional right *stomp* [*ohangla*]



v. *Bingeli*

The dancers twist the right leg on the spot. Both arms move to the right and left in opposite directions so that they cross at the centre-front of the body. They combine these movements with 'the wriggle' above.

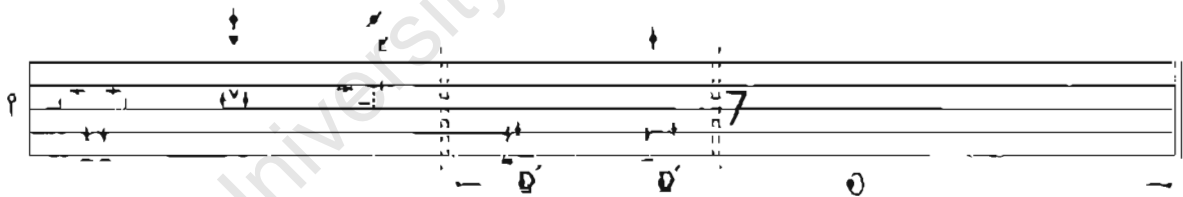
Fig. 4.15 Bingeli



vi. *Yumbani*

The right arm is stretched outward to the front with a fist. The torso is bent slightly to the front. The left leg is twisted on its toes as the dancers turn round. At every twist, the right leg lightly stamps on the ground as the dancer moves in a circle. After a 360° turn, they clap their hands and shift to another leg as they turn round in the opposite direction.

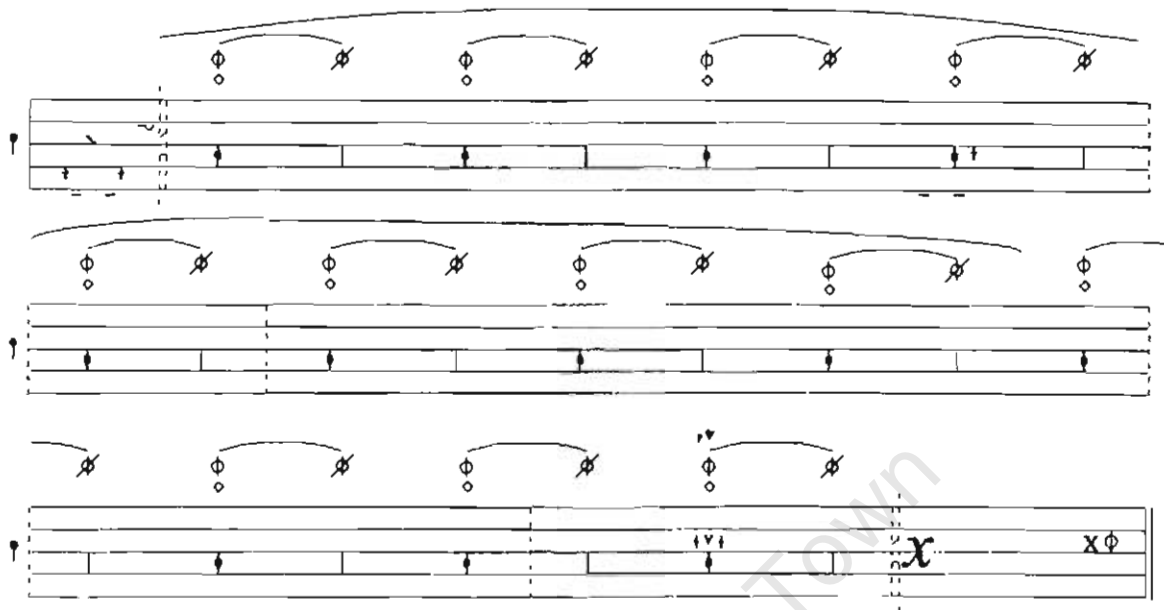
Fig. 4.16 *Yumbani*



vii. *Micko*

This movement is only found in the video-clip of *Micko*. The dancers perform this movement when they are singing about Micko. Since no specific name is given to this movement, so researcher adopted the name *Micko* for it. Just like in *nzomo*, the dancers move their pelvis in forward and backward motions, but this time the movement is performed while the dancers are slanting the whole torso to the left then right alternately. Their arm movements are also different (See accompanying VCD).

Fig. 4.17 Micko



### 1.3.3 Dramatisation

All the songs have dramatisations. The actors are mainly the dancers, the chorus singers, and the lead singer, Koffi Olomide. The actions incorporated interpret the messages of the song. The dramatisations of the song *Loi* are discussed briefly.

Koffi Olomide is the main actor in this song performance. He tries to enact the message of his own word interpolations. He is shown in different venues mainly just posing in different positions with minimal actions. At the beginning of the song, he stands at the balcony with the female dancers and looks down at the male dancers. These dancers lift up their hands towards him as they look up, thereby demonstrating the message of the song: "Dance oh women come and bring money. Shamukwale, come and bring money." The dancers beckon unto the women to come down and dance and for Koffi to bring the money. In turn, Koffi makes gestures to them as though throwing the money towards them.

As the music goes on, the dancers perform dance movements mentioned by the *atalakus* such as *yumbani*, *bingeli*, *ndombolo*, etc. The dancers are also asked to get ready to dance, so they run across the stage haphazardly and then they pose to

show that they are ready for action as soon as they hear the appropriate music signal.

It is evident from the above discussions that a number of factors guide the dancers and actors in their performances. These include song texts, music instruments, improvisations, melodic and rhythmic motifs and commercialisation. All these determine the dance movements, gestures, posture and stance to be utilised.<sup>61</sup> when to change them and the intensity of the movements. Most of these dance movements combine traditional music dance styles and movements found in Congo with creativity of the artists and styles imitated from other Congolese pop groups.

Many of the books written on Congolese pop music such as those by Ewens, Bergman and Okumu<sup>62</sup> do not give the meanings of the dance styles and movements. Some of these authors describe the dance as having "sexual innuendo." According to the Congolese popular band musicians interviewed, none of them knew the meaning of the dance movements, gestures, components or even patterns. They regarded them as movements that express the joy of their music. However, one research participant, Dr Dikaniaki,<sup>63</sup> who is a Congolese, suggested that the dance movements not only have sexual innuendoes but also spiritual implications. He emphasised that witchdoctors from the Congo teach dances to some Congolese pop dance groups. The dances are meant to be as 'sexy' as possible. The witchdoctors perform their rituals on the pop stars and the dancers so that the artists can gain fame or popularity among the listeners. It is believed that such musicians' albums are sold in huge quantities. This is meant to be a secret between these indigenous witchdoctors and the pop stars. Since competitive popular bands imitate the styles of these dancers, it is not easy to tell which of these popular stars consulted the witchdoctors. Since they take an oath never to reveal this secret, not many of them agree to reveal the secrets of what was done behind the scenes. Dikaniaki received

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<sup>61</sup> Most pop music videos are intended for promotion of artists and their dance styles. Preston-Dunlop quotes Jayne Dowdeswell who defines pop music video as "video made of pop groups in which dance usually plays a part, as either loose improvised rhythmical accompaniment to the music or as choreographed dance material, intended, to promote the song and the group. From Valerie Preston-Dunlop (compiler), *Dance words*, [n.p.], Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup> Ewens, 1991; Bergman, 1985; Okumu, 1998.

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with the pastor of a leading Pentecostal church in Democratic Republic of Congo, Dr. Dikaniaki, 5 May 2002. Dr. Dikaniaki is a Congolese who has been involved in converting a number of witchdoctors in Congo to Christianity.

this information from one of the ex-witchdoctors who converted to Christianity. This area seems to be a spiritual mystery that probably other researchers can take up as a topic for further research.

Dikaniaki indicated that dance movements may also symbolise some of the dancers' intentions; in *Yumbani* (see accompanying VCD), for example, a hand gesture is used by the dancers with their arms stretched out horizontally towards an audience/camera, making a fist with their hands. This movement symbolises the capturing of the mind of the viewers, drawing them towards the artists' performance and music. Therefore the viewers/'fans' will flock into the artists' concerts and buy their albums. The artists will consequently become rich and famous.

Dikaniaki also mentioned a style where the dancers make a fist with their left hand and then tap it with their open right hand. This symbolises the sexual act *per se*. It is possible that many of the groups that imitate this gesture are not aware of the meaning and implications of the signs.

#### **1.4 Educational content in Congolese performing arts: Koffi Olomide's dance group**

This section draws on the discussions above and observations of the video-clips of Koffi Olomide's performing arts. It specifically examines Koffi Olomide's performing arts since MMM has adapted his performances. As mentioned earlier, Mr. Olomide is a KORA award winner of Congolese popular music and is well-known for his *soukous* music and dance. The following are some educational contents found in his musical performances based on the songs "*Loi*" and "*Micko*."

The lyrics of the songs educate on life issues or lessons. For example, the words, "Lies come via a lift and truth comes by stairs," in *Loi*, imply that lies spread faster than truth. If a lie is spoken, by the time people get to know the truth of the matter, it will be too late. It will also be harder to convince people of the truth.

The performing arts also educate the audience on the various dance movements of *soukous*. They portray the new or latest dance movements in this genre. They reveal the development of popular music in Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo in particular. They expose the life styles of musicians as well as contemporary issues

facing central Africa. For example, flashy cars, expensive furniture, clothing fashion-craze, love of money etc. common among Congolese musicians.

They provide music education to those that perform these kinds of music and others who listen to and imitate the music performance. Such music educational matters include guitar interlocking styles, new dance styles, movements, and music innovation creativity.

Koffi Olomide's performing arts have influenced MMM in areas like dance movements, dramatisations, and video recording and editing techniques. Consequently, the MMM have helped to shape the music scene in Kenyan churches with the inclusion of Congolese performing arts.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter Five

# Christian dance groups in the United States of America: a case study

### Introduction

The *Maximum Miracle Melodies* have been strongly influenced by the video recordings of Kirk Franklin and his performing group.<sup>1</sup> The video clip that has been chosen for analysis and used as illustration of the dance movements and stage choreography that the MMM has adopted is *Revolution*. The analysis will be preceded by a very brief historical overview of the development of Christian music amongst African-Americans in the United States of America.

#### 1. Historical background

Basic to the American Musical heritage are the folk traditions of the British Isles, brought to this land [USA.] by English-speaking settlers.<sup>2</sup>

Among these settlers were colonists who greatly influenced the development of American music with their joyful singing of hymns and psalms. They took their sacred music seriously and tried to defend it as their heritage. They also taught the same hymns to Africans whom they had taken from West Africa as their slaves.<sup>3</sup>

Although the British tried to evangelise the Africans in the USA, thereby forcing them to discard their traditional religion, they did not allow them to worship together with the white population, expecting them to have separate worship services.

In trying to hold their services as the Europeans taught them, the African slaves took the European songs and hymns and changed them to fit into their socio-cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Kirk Franklin is an American contemporary Christian artist whose video-clips of performing arts often feature on Kenyan television programmes; his video-clip chosen for the analysis of the North American performing arts in this study is *Revolution*, track 1 in *The Nu Nation tour*, produced by Gospo Centric Records, 45 min., VHS, videocassette, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Manoff, *Music: a living language*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982, p. 375.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

environment.<sup>4</sup> According to Manoff, to the African-American community, "Music is to worship as breathing is to life." Music thus played a very important role in their worship as it originated in their social circumstances. Through music they voiced their daily oppression, suppression, troubles and discouragement.

This early African-American musical expression led to the inception and development of religious singing known as African-American spirituals.<sup>5</sup> Although African-Americans were the composers of these spirituals, they were illiterate and 'untrained' musicians (from a Western perspective). The texts they used referred mainly to their sorrows, afflictions, freedom and hope for a better future. As the African-Americans became more literate, they adopted many hymns from the European Protestant slave owners, but sang the hymns in African folk style.

European hymns and songs were also borrowed, but the singing style was unique and was characterised by shouts, wails, grunts, slides, bends, moans, and use of polyrhythms. They strongly assimilated African music characteristics and other music practices in their singing. Maynard-Reid states that:

It [African-American worship] is informed by Judeo-Christian religious content, Western-European and American interpretations of Judeo-Christianity, and traditional African primal world views.<sup>6</sup>

This new style of singing greatly transformed popular music in America, including in the theatrical performing arts and the movies, as well as on radio and television.<sup>7</sup> It gave rise to other music genres such as blues, jazz, soul, ragtime and rap, among others. Titon points out that:

Spirituals, the blues, jazz – to Europeans these unusual sounds are considered America's greatest (some would say her only) contribution to the international musical world.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>5</sup> David P. Press, *A multicultural portrait of America's music*, New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1994, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> P. U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse worship: African-American, Caribbean & Hispanic perspectives*, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> Murray Webster Forman, *The 'hood comes first': race, space, and place in rap music and hip hop, 1978-1996*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], McGill University, 1997, p.4; Andrew Wilson-Dickson, p. 203.

<sup>8</sup> J. T. Titon (ed), *Worlds of music: an introduction to the music of the world's peoples*, second edition, New York: Schirmer Books, 1992, p. 106

Willoughby emphasises the fact that 'black gospel music' is the result of incorporating ragtime, blues and jazz into religious music:

It became a style that comfortably merged sacred and secular influences.<sup>9</sup>

Gospel music was created out of African-American social lives during the Great Awakening period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Black gospel music in the United States of America acted as a major inspiration for rap and many forms of hip-hop.<sup>11</sup> This music emphasises the day-to-day life of African-American Christians, their hopes, joys and other experiences. African-American gospel music is highly syncopated and improvisatory in nature, reflecting its African roots. Other West-African music characteristics utilised incorporate spontaneous word interpolations, falsetto voice, shouts and repetitions of musical phrases, texts and the instruments chosen. The person who called this music genre 'gospel' was Thomas A. Dobey, who was a blues and jazz musician.<sup>12</sup> The period between 1930 and 1969 is known as the 'golden age' of gospel.

In the 1960s gospel music gave rise to Christian contemporary music (CCM).<sup>13</sup> Saenz found that Christian contemporary music is a culmination of traditional gospel, rap, pop, heavy metal rock and alternative rock. American evangelicals introduced and propagated Christian contemporary music for the purpose of evangelisation among the youth.<sup>14</sup>

In 1970 a new generation of black musicians began what was known as contemporary gospel music.<sup>15</sup> These artists, who were predominantly from the Pentecostal movement,<sup>16</sup> moved their worship music from church buildings or sanctuaries to concert halls. Their music instruments included strings, brass

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<sup>9</sup> David Willoughby, *The world of music*. [n. p.]: Wm. C Brown Publishers, 1990, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54

<sup>11</sup> Press, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> Maynard-Reid, p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> Luis Saenz, *Sing to the Lord a new song: an examination of contemporary Christian music*, unpublished MA thesis, Texas: The University of Texas at El Paso, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> William David Romanowski, *Rock 'n' religion: a sociocultural analysis of the contemporary Christian music industry (music industry, popular music)*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], Ohio: Bowling Green State University, 1990, p. i.

<sup>15</sup> Maynard-Reid, p. 83.

<sup>16</sup> Pentecostal here refers to "a religious group emphasizing divine gifts, especially healing, and often fundamentalists" Julia Elliot, *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 549

instruments, synthesisers and other electronic instruments such as guitars. Similar to the reaction to rap music,<sup>17</sup> this practice led to conflicts between church members and denominations, because more conservative Christians regarded this music as mere entertainment rooted in African-American secular musical forms and idioms.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this conflict, Maynard-Reid reports that:

Gospel music is evolving, however. Christian hip-hop is its newest form. It began about 1989 in the concert hall (like contemporary gospel) rather than in the liturgical setting. However, it is finding its way into the black churches as youth are finding worship more meaningful when it draws on sounds and idioms that speak to them.<sup>19</sup>

Wilson-Dickson<sup>20</sup> also indicates that gospel music has become a lucrative business.

Manoff<sup>21</sup> cites a number of underlying basic features found in African-American music regardless of the genre. These include:

- Complex rhythm structures;
- Responsorial form;
- Heightened speech-melody;
- Heightened dramatic impulse;
- Repetition of motifs;
- Strong rhythmic bond between audience and performers that propel dance/movement;
- European-American sacred folk harmony;
- Ostinato rhythms.

In the 1980s the music video format became popular through the Music Television (MTV) channel in America.<sup>22</sup> Generally, recorded music became popular, widespread and easily accessible during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> Christian musicians also began to

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<sup>17</sup> Kwaku Person-Lynn, "Rap music: Afrikan music renaissance in America", in Djedje, Jacqueline Cogdell and Carter, William G. (eds), *African musicology. current trends, a festschrift presented to Kwabena Nketia*, Los Angeles: Crossroads Press, 1989, p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> Maynard-Reid, p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson-Dickson, p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> Manoff, pp. 393-398.

<sup>22</sup> Jack E. Banks, *The historical development of the video music industry: a political economic analysis (music video, popular culture)*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Oregon: University of Oregon, 1991, p. i; Roger Kamien, *Music an appreciation*, fifth edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992, p. 607.

<sup>23</sup> Beth Mehocic, "Learning to dance with live music", in *Dance Teacher Now*, Vol. 19, number 6 July-August 1997, p. 56

make music videos. De Bruyn,<sup>24</sup> who has done research on a number of Christian music videos from United States of America, concludes that Christian music videos serve to convey Christian messages and as an advertising vehicle.

Currently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many of the African-American Christian gospel artists record live performances of their concerts on videotapes, digital videos (DVDs) and video compact discs (VCDs). These videos are marketed, globalising rap and hip-hop music and cultural practices that are prevalent among North American gospel artists today.<sup>25</sup> Christians from various parts of the world have subsequently imitated the performances and incorporated them into their church worship. This kind of performance has evidently influenced the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* group in Kenya. These dancers borrow and adopt the performing arts from these videotapes and utilise them in their church worship, as will be discussed in Chapter Six.

The following section will analyse the video-concert performances of Kirk Franklin's music, *Nu-Nation Tour*. This video has played a major role in *Maximum Miracle Melodies'* performing arts. The song from this video-clip that largely exhibits what the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* group has adopted will be analysed: *Revolution*.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. Performing arts in the contemporary Christian church: *Revolution*<sup>27</sup>

This section analyses music, dance, and dramatisations of Kirk Franklin's *Revolution*. The elements analysed include text, form, rhythm and instrumentation, dance and dramatic actions. It concludes by giving a summary of the educational content in these performing arts.

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<sup>24</sup> Jacob Philipus de Bruyn, *A missiological evaluation of a number of music videos*, unpublished DTh dissertation, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1997, p. i.

<sup>25</sup> Ian Condry, *Japanese rap music: an ethnography of globalization in popular culture*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Yale: Yale University, 1999, pp. 1-2; Vamsee Juluri, *Becoming a global audience: music television in India*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts, 1999, pp. vii-viii; Hallfu Osumare, *African aesthetics American culture: hip hop in the global era*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Hawaii: University of Hawaii, 1999, p. vi.

<sup>26</sup> Kirk Franklin, *Revolution*, track 1 in *The nu nation tour*, produced by Gospo Centric Records, 45 min., VHS, videocassette, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> The text of this song is extracted from the printed copy on the cover case of the audiotape by Kirk Franklin and Rodney Jerkins, *The nu nation tour*, produced by Gospo Centric Records, 45 min., VHS, videocassette, 1999.

## 2.1 Text<sup>28</sup>

As the title suggests, the main theme of the song is the call for revolution. The text refers to the daily life experiences of many of the people living in the USA, especially, among the African-Americans. Topics that are addressed are murder, absentee fathers, religiousness in the church, racism, fascism, pollution, lies among politicians, crime, etc.<sup>29</sup> The singers indicate that they need a total revolution against this kind of life to have a brighter future. Hence, at the beginning of the music the lead singer urges the audience to get up on their feet and to dance if they truly want a revolution, clearly not sharing the viewpoint of some church leaders that dance should be discouraged within church contexts.

The song also expresses some of the theology that the musicians believe, for example:

- Jesus is the true Son of God (John 20: 31);<sup>30</sup>
- They believe in the Trinity (Matthew 28: 19);
- Jesus Christ is the first and the last (Revelation 22: 13);
- The Spirit of God moves within them as they perform. They believe that they are vessels that God uses to pass His message to the audience (2 Timothy 2: 20-21).

The singers seem to have complete confidence in their God. Even though they are judged, shaken and silenced when they perform their music, they are not worried because they have Christ on their side, as depicted in Romans 8: 31.

The language of the song is English. However, there is also slang used that is common in African-American hip-hop music. For example:

*Polnah* (meaning partner or close friend)  
*Yes its comin* (meaning Yes it is coming)  
*Don't be caught slippin brotha* (i.e. don't be caught sleeping brother)

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<sup>28</sup> The texts of the audio and video examples differ because the text on the video-clip is intended for a live concert performance, where the audience can watch the drama and dance in order to understand the message. The audiotape-text has more words incorporated with some explanation for the drama part, so that the listener can understand the full message even without observing the dance drama. Both texts are used for the purposes of analysis. Full transcriptions of the text appear in Appendix A.

<sup>29</sup> Press, p. 74 and Willoughby, p. 58 have also observed that such crimes are prevalent among the African Americans in the USA, and they are depicted in most of their music

<sup>30</sup> All the references in the bulleted section were taken from *The Holy Bible*, AV.

The language of rap artists in general (secular and sacred) sometimes uses the 'harsh language of the streets', especially in gangster rap.<sup>31</sup> Warner points out that:

Through rhetoric strategies of metaphors, similes, contextual figurative logic, rappers engage in ritual and myth-building to develop narratives.<sup>32</sup>

The text reflects who they are and the type of people they are addressing. According to Press,<sup>33</sup> rap music is an African-American creation. The rappers therefore use a language that they understand and use on a day-to-day basis. Low<sup>34</sup> argues that the popular youth cultures drive and reflect societal cultural and technological change. The language the youth use in their music, lyrics and style reflects the changes they go through, utilising popular culture. This is true of the African-American rap and hip-hop music that *Revolution* represents. Walker<sup>35</sup> indicates that:

[Afrocentric analysis of hip-hop music] recognises hip-hop as not simply music, but as a collection of African-centred philosophical attitudes, experiences and values that inspire art, movement, fashion, music and the totality of African life.

According to Rose,<sup>36</sup> African American life experiences and values are complex and dynamic; thus the artists reflect them in their lyrics and dance performances. Such performances frequently change to depict the new life styles and philosophical underpinnings of African-Americans. Even the spellings they use reflect who they are, for example:<sup>37</sup>

*Mo* for 'more'  
*Talkin'* for 'talking'  
*Brotha* for 'brother'

They also use coded language that an "outsider" may not understand. For example:

That won't pass so don't be caught slippin brotha. Don't be trippin brotha cause when I see Him I'm getting caught up.

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<sup>31</sup> Ede Jr. Warner, *Searching for a pragmatic aesthetic: the rhetorical strategies of gangster rappers - Myths, rituals, and dramas of an outlaw music (2Pac, Ice Cube, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Dr. Dre)*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], Wayne State University, 1998, p. i.

<sup>32</sup> Ede Jr Warner, *Searching for a pragmatic aesthetic: the rhetorical strategies of gangstar rappers. Myths, rituals and dramas of an outlaw music (2Pac, Ice Cube, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Dr. Dre)*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p. ], Wayne State University, 1998, p. i.

<sup>33</sup> Press, p. 74.

<sup>34</sup> Bronwen Elisabeth Low, *Spoken word: exploring the language and poetics of hip hop popular*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], York University, 2001, pp. iv-12.

<sup>35</sup> Tshombe R. Walker, *The hip hop worldview: an Afrocentric analysis*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], Temple University, 1998, p. v.

<sup>36</sup> Patricia Lorraine Rose, *Black noise: rap music and black cultural resistance in contemporary American popular culture*, unpublished PhD dissertation, [n. p.], Brown University, 1993, pp. i-ii.

<sup>37</sup> Please refer to Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and his songs*, Westport: Negro University Press, 1976, pp. 269-296, for more examples on spellings and full meaning of such texts.

We move too much. We do too much. And if you step against us then you loose too much.

The first statement above means that Jesus Christ is coming back for "His own" and no one should therefore be caught unawares. This caution is based on the following words of Jesus Christ:

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man [Jesus Christ] cometh.<sup>38</sup>

The second statement means that young people among African-Americans are actively involved in the church or community. If the church stops them from being involved in the Christian music of their taste, the church will also lose. It is implied that the families will also lose because of the crime that will prevail. The text in this case leaves room for the audience's interpretation.

The text of the song is spoken as word interpolations, rapped in speech-melody style or sung. The words are spoken so fast in rap-style that it is not very easy to hear and understand what is rapped. The music in general therefore has very limited melodies.

The group leader, Kirk Franklin, speaks the word interpolations. He addresses the singers, dancers and audience. His words include:

What are you saying?  
I can't hear you.  
Let's dance.  
Clap your hands.

These words illustrate the communication between the leader and the singers, dancers and/or audience. Sometimes onomatopoeic sounds are used. For example, the *Ki-Ki – Ki-Ki* sound is used to imitate record-scratching tones. Record-scratching/spinning is one of the characteristics of rap and hip-hop music.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Matthew 25:13, AV.

<sup>39</sup> Low, p. 11; Walker, p. 3; Condry, p. 1.

## **2.2. Form**

The form schemes used in *Revolution* are responsorial, verse and refrain as well as prelude and song.

### **2.2.1 Responsorial**

Responsorial form is a typically African music trait discussed in Chapter Three. The responsorial part in this song comes mainly in the refrain section. The lead singer asks, "Do you want a revolution?" in speech-melody and the chorus responds with a short answer "Uuuh" in agreement with the song leader. The women sing the chorus section in unison. This is repeated throughout the refrain section every time the refrain is sung.

### **2.2.2 Verse and refrain**

The song makes use of one of the hymnal forms: Verse and Refrain.<sup>40</sup> However, the execution of this form in *Revolution* differs from the norm. The verse is in rap style with both men and women taking part in this section, alternating from time to time. For verse 3, which is only found in the audiotape version, two solos rap the whole verse interchangeably. The refrain section is in responsorial form as discussed in the above section.

### **2.2.3 Prelude and song**

The music begins with a thinly textured prelude, which is full of action/drama that sets the mood and theme of the music. There is no dancing but action and incidental music only. This section then leads to the main song.

The song section incorporates singing, dancing, some dramatic actions, consistent and regulative instrumental accompaniment and rap.

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<sup>40</sup> James Rawlings Sydnor, *Hymns and their uses*, Illinois Agape, 1982, pp. 23-45.

## 2.3 Rhythm and instrumentation

The rhythmic drum pattern gives the music its driving force and is performed for the entire duration of *Revolution*. The rhythm of the rap section differs from what is performed in the instrumental section, creating polyrhythms.

The rhythmic patterns are repetitive. For example, the same melody and rhythmic pattern are repeated throughout all the refrain sections. The rap rhythms are irregular and the emphasis of the music is more on the rhythm than melody. This is typical of rap music. Most of this music is in rap style, which is common in hip-hop music.<sup>41</sup>

The music instruments utilised include bass guitars, pop drums, brass instruments, synthesiser and strings. The prelude section has very thin texture. The music performed has an accompanying function: synthesised sounds accentuate actions. The strings play a sombre and lethargic melody and the bass guitar and keyboard melody feature only after the prelude. When the main section of the music begins, its character changes completely, becoming more rhythmic and faster in tempo (refer to accompanying VCD, under the title; "Dramatisation of Revolution"). The drum rhythm in this particular section lasting to the end is repetitive, except for the drum-rolls that act as transitions. The pre-set drum rhythms of the keyboard synthesiser are used.

The instruments are used for special effects as well. For example, in the prelude the brass instruments are played in crescendo to create suspense. This is a common practice used in the video/motion picture because incidental and electronic music are frequently used in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century music.<sup>42</sup>

## 2.4. Dance

There are both young male and female dancers, nine each. This kind of gospel music is popular among the youth as the song suggests. The costumes the dancers wear are baggy, shiny tracksuits and not conventional choral robes and suits worn by church musicians. The dancers' choice of dress also depicts the kind of revolution

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<sup>41</sup> Person-Lynn, p. 103-105.

<sup>42</sup> Kamien, pp. 524-531.

the performers want in the church. Cutler asserts that the hip-hop trend has generated multi-million dollar clothing and music sales.<sup>43</sup> According to her:

Characteristically, hip hoppers display their affiliation through a stylistic complex that involves clothing, hairstyle, forms of walking,<sup>44</sup> gesturing, language, and by participating in activities like rapping, Djing and break dancing.

Person-Lynn<sup>45</sup> expresses the same view when explaining that rap music:

has not only captured the imagination and expressions of the youth, it has created its own culture, known by the youth as hip hop. Hip-hop has its own vocabulary, code of dress, walk, social, stance, and just about anything that would involve a legitimate subculture. The film, record, clothes industry, professional athletes and even advertisers who produce commercials for radio and television have capitalized on this popular youth art form.

The dancers perform the following four main choreographic patterns on three main areas of the stage: the balcony, raised mid-stage and front stage.

Fig. 5.1 Circle

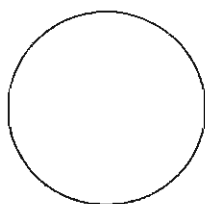


Fig. 5.2 One horizontal line



Fig. 5.3 Two horizontal lines

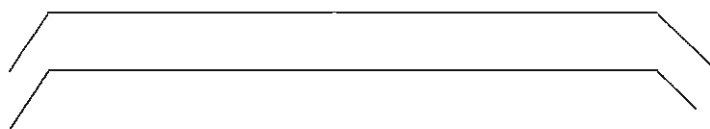


Fig. 5.4 One broken horizontal line



<sup>43</sup> Cecilia Anne Cutler, *Crossing over: white youth, hip hop and African American English*, unpublished PhD dissertation, New York: New York University, 2002, p. i.

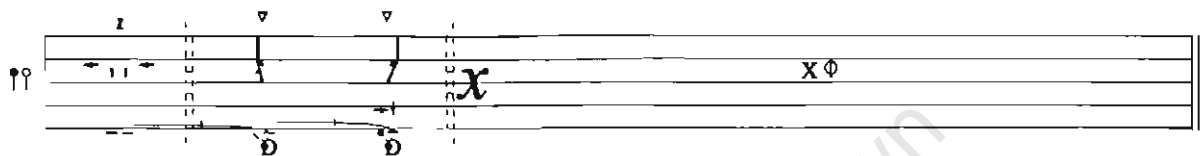
<sup>44</sup> Please refer to Fig. 5.11 for the dance notation of 'cool walk'.

<sup>45</sup> Kwaku Person-Lynn, p. 101.

Within the choreographic pattern formations, the dancers use a variety of dance movements. Only the movements adopted by the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* (9 out of 29) are discussed below (Refer to the accompanying VCD for the visual examples).<sup>46</sup>

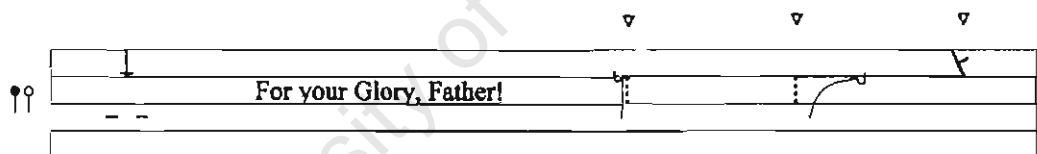
- *Stomp*: This involves the stamping of the feet emphatically in various directions.

Fig. 5.5 Stomp



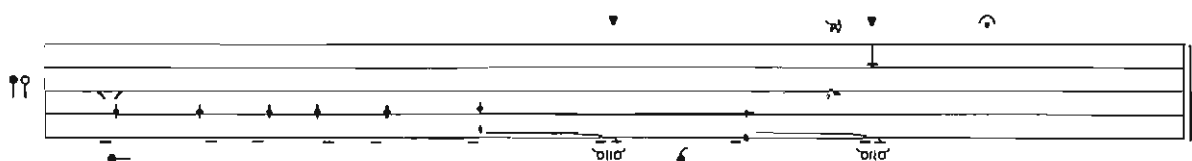
- 'Glory': The dancers lift up their hands in slanting position as they face upwards on the right-hand side. The various limb and head movements are carried out in sequence as shown in the notation.

Fig. 5.6 Glory



- 'Spot-march': The dancers use automated and emphatic marching on the spot.

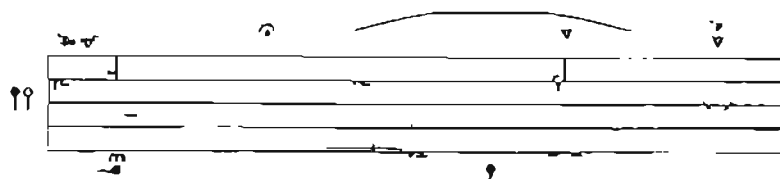
Fig. 5.7 Spot-march



- 'Grab 'n turn': The dancers stretch out their hands and grab an 'imaginary' door knob then they turn it around with their curved hands. They mime these actions.

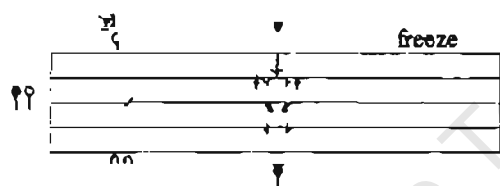
<sup>46</sup> The dancer Eduard Greyling, a lecturer at the Dance School of the University of Cape Town, assisted the researcher with the choice of names for some of the dances.

Fig. 5.8 Grab 'n turn



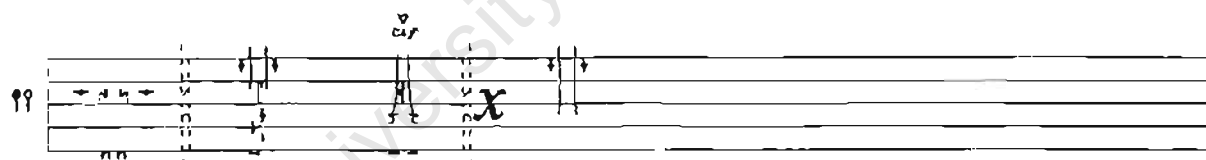
- 'Instantaneous bow': The dancers drop down instantaneously and emphatically on their knees and hands with the faces buried in the ground. This is opposed to the conventional solemn bowing in prayer.

Fig. 5.9 Instantaneous bow



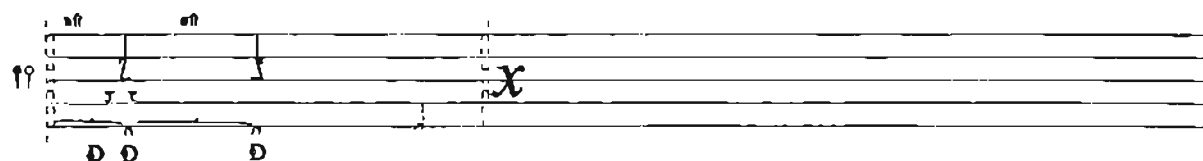
- 'Arm jerk': The dancers skip up and down as they move forward and jerk one arm as they clap their hands.

Fig. 5.10 Arm jerk



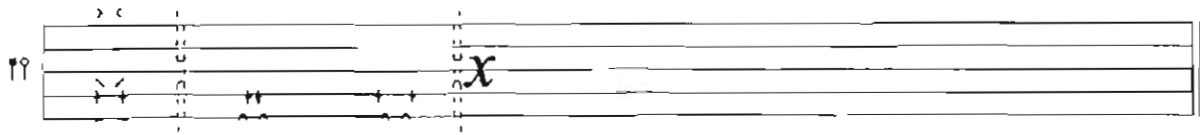
- 'Cool walk': The dancers walk across the stage with one hand clinging onto the body and the other stretched forward and back as they bounce while moving forward.

Fig. 5.11 'Cool walk'



- 'Knee shake': The dancers do fast knee shake with both knees simultaneously and with the feet wide apart (see notation for direction of knee shake).

Fig. 5.12 Knee shake



- Fall: The dancers fall to the ground on their side instantaneously, and then they fling their legs and arms in the air.

Fig. 5.13 Fall



The following factors guide the choice of dance movements incorporated in the performance:

- Accentuation of instrumental beats: dancers listen to the accents in order to emphasise their movements;
- Word interpolations: some of the words uttered by the song leader are directives to the dancers. The dancers change movements on words such as *move*, *let's dance*, *go*, etc.;
- Instrumental incidental sections such as record scratching, bells, etc.;
- Melodic phrases: some melodic phrases guide the dancers on the movements to employ. For example, when the chorus sings 'ooh', the dancers lift up their hands, using different movements every time this section is repeated. These movements last as long as the phrase(s).

## 2.5 Dramatic actions

The drama enacted depicts the theme of revolution, beginning with some background noise of conversations, shrills, shouts, etc. Amidst this noise a clear statement from an accuser of Kirk Franklin in the crowd is heard:

You are not a Christian artist; you are really a secular artist posing as a Christian artist.

This already indicates to the listener that Kirk Franklin is being accused of bringing secular music to the church, an accusation made by many churches against African-American gospel music, as pointed out earlier.

The above statement causes uproar by the crowd. The judge orders the people to maintain order in court. It is then that we hear the charges made against Kirk Franklin, accusing him of spreading the gospel to the world, making the gospel secular and tearing down the religious walls of the church. These are allegations that may seem ironic to the Christian, as the accused is blamed of the very things he is supposed to do.<sup>47</sup>

Although these words occur on the audiotape, they are only implied and enacted in the video. The video drama begins by Kirk locked up in a dark jail. He emerges via a lift from the basement to the ground floor, which is the stage, and walks out of "jail". The dancers enter by marching militaristically like soldiers, ready to take him back to jail. He then stands in the centre as though on trial.

Banging-like sounds are produced on the electronic instruments to demonstrate the banging of jail doors and gates. As this is done, the dancers demonstrate the actions such as moving from one jail room to another and then to court, falling on fours symbolising submission (see accompanying VCD, 'instantaneous bow') and bowing to God, and lifting up hands to God showing 'Glory to God' (see VCD 'glory'). When the first voice (see transcription of song) utters, "For your glory Father," the dancers lift up their hands to God, implying that although the accused is 'falsely' blamed by the church; he did these things for God's glory. Most of the actions of the dancers/actors are emphatic and automatic.

Several actions, dances, scenarios, and musical details on the video depict revolution, as illustrated in the following examples:

- Use of 20<sup>th</sup>-century incidental music<sup>48</sup> that accompanies dance and drama;
- The music is characterised by loud rock 'beats', emphasising the metre of the work. Rock music has been categorised by many Christians as rebellious;<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Matthew 28: 30 AV.; Jesus Christ was also against the religious leaders of his time, Pharisees and Saducees, whom he described as 'hypocrites' (Matthew 7: 5) and a 'brood of vipers' (Matthew 12: 34).

<sup>48</sup> Kamien, pp. 435-531.

<sup>49</sup> M. B. Schlink, *Rock music: where from? Where to* [n.p.], Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, 1990, p. 1-15.

- Use of incense-like smoke to indicate the arrival of Kirk Franklin, a practice common in Western secular musicians' shows or concerts;<sup>50</sup>
- Mechanical as well as vigorous and emphatic dance movements are used as opposed to the usually slow and non-emphatic dances performed in non-Pentecostal churches;
- Use of tracksuits, T-shirts and shiny leather outfits as costumes. This is different from the usual choir robes or formal wear adopted by musicians.
- They use entertainment dances including hip-hop and gym-like movements. Apart from a few movements, most of the dances are not interpretative. They have been incorporated to demonstrate that a revolution must take place in Church music worship. Among African-Americans, many artists show their dissatisfaction with their lifestyles and norm through their music.<sup>51</sup>
- Use of discotheque and secular popular concert-lights.<sup>52</sup> The differently coloured lights keep flashing and changing. This is opposed to the use of theatrical lighting that is used for actors and to create a mood or preferred setting.

### 3. Educational contents in North-American performing arts: Kirk Franklin

This section draws on the discussions above and observations of the video-clips of Kirk Franklin. The following are some educational contents that North American performing arts as performed by Kirk Franklin portray.

The lyrics of the song educate viewers and listeners on biblical teachings, as well as life issues affecting African-Americans. They expose the life styles of contemporary issues facing African Americans and their churches. Their dance performances and dramatic actions also educate viewers on the change that is needed among the African Americans.

The arts educate the audience on the various hip-hop dance movements. They also portray the new or latest dance movements in this genre thus illustrating the development of Christian Contemporary music in North America.

The performing arts also provide music education to those that perform these kinds of music and others who listen to and imitate the music performance. Such music

<sup>50</sup> Stanley Sadie (ed), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 15, London: Macmillan Publishers, 1980, p. 120.

<sup>51</sup> Frank Kofsky, *Black nationalism and the revolution in music*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970, p. 120.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Schlink, p. 15.

educational matters include dance innovations, performing arts creativity and standard expectation in the church and music ministration in church services.

The Christian Contemporary scene is also developing and changing fast. Other churches adapt the Christian artists' international exposure that aids in setting a given standard across the globe and Kenya in particular. The MMM in particular learn non-formally from the videotapes thereby helping to shape the music scene in the churches in Kenya.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter Six

### The role of the performing arts in the Christian church: a case study of the Nairobi dance group *Maximum Miracle Melodies*

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the performing arts of the Christian dance group *Maximum Miracle Melodies (MMM)*, the main focus group of this study. It discusses the historical background of this dance group, the roles that their performing arts play, factors that influence their choice of performing arts, the dance movements they utilise and specific educational content exemplified in their performing arts.

#### 1. Historical background and structure of *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries*

The *Maximum Miracle Melodies* dance group is associated with the *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries (MMCM)*<sup>1</sup> and derive their name from MMCM.<sup>2</sup> Pastor Pius Muiro started this ministry in 1994 as a street preacher and would hold lunch hour open-air meetings at Jivanjee Gardens in Nairobi city centre.<sup>3</sup> He later held open-air crusades in various estates in the city where he gained large following, necessitating regular meetings of the growing congregation for church services. The Kariokor Methodist Church was a preferred and available site for the congregation to meet for daily evening services.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation MMCM will be used to denote *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries* throughout the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with the main leader of MMM, Lucy Muiro, 18 January 2002, Andrew Muiro, 19 January 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with the church administrator, Ken Bakuli, 12 January 2002.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

As the church expanded, the Nairobi city centre became the most convenient site for the MMCM and they relocated to Casino and then Odeon Cinema in 1996.<sup>5</sup> The congregation still meets in these halls for daily services, which are conducted to provide a variety of people with the opportunity of attending at least one of the services. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the MMCM acquired its own premises at Ruaraka Maximum Miracle Worship Centre in Nairobi, where three worship services are held every Sunday alongside the daily services in town.

Currently MMCM has several branches in Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa. These congregations follow the same programmes and procedures as the Ruaraka branch in Nairobi, which is now considered as the 'Mother church' of the MMCM. This is also where the founder of the Ministries, Pastor Pius Muiru, preaches most of the time.<sup>6</sup>

The Ministry in Nairobi has a total of 75 full-time workers and 50 part-time workers ranging from secretaries, receptionists, musicians, security workers, television crew, electricians, drivers, church co-ordinator, pastors, publication staff and cleaners. The Pastor and his wife are the main directors of the ministry. All the full-time workers that were interviewed are 'born-again-Christians'.<sup>7</sup> According to the co-ordinator and the co-founder, Mrs Lucy Muiru, this is the first qualification the ministry looks for before employing an individual.

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<sup>5</sup> The MMCM hire these cinema halls for their services. They still meet in these cinema halls for their worship services every morning and lunchtime from Monday to Friday at 6h30 - 8h30. The lunchtime meetings are from 12h45 - 13h45. On Saturdays, they meet from 10h00 - 14h00. They have their weekday evening services everyday at the Embassy Cinema hall between 17h00 and 20h00. They also hold overnight prayers every Friday at Cameo Cinema. These services are advertised in all editions of the monthly Magazine *Maximum Miracle Times*.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Ken Bakuli, 16 February 2002.

<sup>7</sup> According to Mrs Muiru, 18 January 2003, a born-again Christian is one who is 'saved'. The ministry's definition of salvation is based on, *The Holy Bible*, Romans 10: 9-10 and Ephesians 2: 8-9 among others. This information is also found in their website and is defined as follows: "On the cross Jesus Christ became sin and sickness, providing both salvation and healing for all mankind. This salvation comes by believing in your heart. That God raised Jesus from the dead and confessing with your mouth, Jesus as Lord. The inward evidence, to the believer, is the direct witness of the Spirit. The outward evidence to all men is a life of true holiness and love. Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ and not by human works, however, our works are evidence of faith and will determine our rewards in eternity." (Pius and Lucy Muiru, 'About Us,' p. 1, *Maximum Miracle Center*, available from <[http://www.mmcm.in.org/about\\_us.html](http://www.mmcm.in.org/about_us.html)> accessed, 19 March 2004).

In addition, sub-ministries are functional in MMCM such as intercessory ministries, a marriage committee, children's ministries, youth ministry and music ministries<sup>8</sup>. A ministry leader, the church co-ordinator, and the pastor's wife spearhead these ministries. The church co-ordinator facilitates their main activities in various premises in the city centre of Nairobi as well as their Ruaraka cite. He also assists with the co-ordination and administration of all the workers and activities of the church.

The MMCM is evangelical in nature, taking the form of worship services, open-air crusades and evangelism through electronic and print media. All services and crusade meetings are videotaped and edited to form a 30-minute programme *Kuna Nuru Gizani*. Additional clips are often included during the editing process. The *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)* and *Family TV* air *Kuna Nuru Gizani*. The former is a national television broadcasting corporation that exposes the programme to many people across the country. The latter is a Christian television channel, where MMCM begun airing their programmes since the end of 2002. The channel is only available to viewers in Nairobi and its immediate environs.<sup>9</sup> The same programmes are also aired on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation radio station every Saturday evening at 20h00, prime time, ensuring access to an audience who do not own television sets. These programmes have increased the popularity of MMM across the country.<sup>10</sup>

The MMCM has a 32-page magazine entitled *Maximum Miracle Times*, which is circulated throughout the country.<sup>11</sup> It is also sold at open-air crusades and shops situated within the city centre of Nairobi. The magazine usually consists of

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<sup>8</sup> The intercessory ministry is involved in making intercessory prayers for the MMCM congregations, the country and world. The marriage committee is responsible for organising weddings that take place in MMCM. The children's ministry is responsible over the affairs of the children in Sunday school. The youth ministry is mainly geared to help the youth spiritually and the music ministry is responsible for all the music that is performed in MMCM and its activities. Interviews with Ken Bakuli, 16 February 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Ken Slingerland, "About us," p. 1, *Family Media*, available from <<http://www.familykenya.com/about.htm>>, accessed 29 September 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews with Ken Bakuli and *Maximum Miracle Times* editors, Elizabeth Mwangi and Joan Mwai, 16 February 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Interviews with Elizabeth Mwangi, Joan Mwai and the salesman of *Maximum Miracle Times*, Paul Makoma 16 February 2002. The magazines are on sale from vendors in various parts of the country. The magazine often publishes testimonies of people's personal victories because of their contact with MMCM, stories about the ministry and biblical teachings, a music column, sermons and pictures of individuals and meetings. The writers get information for their magazine by attending meetings (lunch hour and Sunday services, crusades, and conferences).

testimonies, advertisements of meetings, crusades, other activities as well as television and radio programmes. Four to six of the pages of testimonies are in Kiswahili with the rest of the articles in English. Kiswahili is included to cater for non-English-speaking groups in Kenya and to maintain the language in which the testimonies were given.<sup>12</sup> Through this magazine MMCM reaches the large number of people who attend the meetings and gatherings from various parts of the country, many of whom seek healing.<sup>13</sup> MMCM holds crusades throughout the country, towns, and villages. Samita<sup>14</sup> affirms that the Christian crusades in Kenya are very popular partly because they help to meet the cognitive and affective needs of attendees.

The MMCM has a wide variety of performing artists consisting of the worship team (usually led by a song leader), 2 choral groups (*Holy Spirit Choir* and *Mass Choir*), 3 dance groups (*Glorious Kids*, *Glorious Teens* and *Maximum Miracle Melodies*) and instrumentalists. Apart from these groups, solo singers and small singing groups also perform. The congregation takes part in the singing of choruses in Kiswahili, English and other languages such as Lingala and Kikuyu. A typical worship service programme<sup>15</sup> contains the following components, allowing all performing groups to perform in one service:

- Congregational worship music led by the worship team;
- Music performances by the above-mentioned groups (usually a song or dance each);
- Welcoming of visitors;
- Prayers;
- Congregational worship music led by the worship team;
- Announcements;
- Preaching;
- Testimonies.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Lucy Muiru, 22 July 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Pastor Pius Muiru is said to have healing and miraculous powers. Therefore, many people with social problems and different kinds of infirmities and diseases attend his crusades and meetings for miraculous healing and solving of problems. Consequently, his crusades and meetings draw people from a variety of denominations, ethnic groups, towns and nationalities who may not necessarily be members of his congregation.

<sup>14</sup> Zacharia Wanakacha Samita, *Christian crusades in Nairobi: an analysis of social-religious factors underlying their upsurge*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: OSSREA, 1998, pp. 25-30.

<sup>15</sup> The researcher noted this programme on all the visits to their worship services.

All the groups perform at a variety of occasions and performance venues. They include open-air crusades<sup>16</sup>, worship services, weddings, television, radio broadcast (*Kuna Nuru Gizani*), concerts, overnight prayers and special occasions such as New Years Eve celebrations, among others.

## 2. The founding of *Maximum Miracle Melodies*

The *Maximum Miracle Melodies* group was founded by Harold Nyavanga<sup>17</sup> in 1996 and has been headed by Andrew Muiru, the son of the founders of MMCM, since its inception. The MMM begun as a development of the *Glorious Kids* group ministry. *Glorious Kids* is a dance group for the Sunday school children of the MMCM between the ages of 5 to 12 and became very popular at the MMCM. The main purpose of the group in 1994 was to use the performing arts to (a) educate the children on Christian biblical teachings through the relevant songs, (b) help children develop and improve language use suitable for Christians and (c) encourage other children to attend Sunday school.<sup>19</sup> When asked how the performance of the group benefited the congregation, Mr Nyavanga responded as follows:

Many parents appreciate their children as they perform. They become proud of them. They also become more committed to church attendance because they have to bring their children to Sunday school.

When asked what qualities he hoped the dancers would achieve he said:

[...] to develop a sense of participation and to stir up talent and to discover them. We also hoped that the children would retain the message in the songs. Another thing is that the children glorify God using their gifts [...] They pass a message across through their performance and bless people too.

However, as the children grew older and became teenagers, they felt uncomfortable performing with children in the group who were younger than they were. Consequently, a young teenage group was born, resulting in the formation of MMM. This group was composed of the best dancers in *Glorious Kids*, new members interested in joining and those who grew up together with Andrew Muiru, who

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<sup>16</sup> Open-air crusades are Christian rallies with an evangelical nature that are held outside in an open field.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Harold Nyavanga, 19 January 2002.

<sup>18</sup> This group started the same year that the MMCM was founded, 1994. Interviews with founder of the team, Harold Nyavanga, 19 January 2002.

became the leader of this group in 1996. The church anticipated that the teenagers would continue performing until age 15, leaving the group and making room for the upcoming teenagers. However, the current MMM gained such popularity that the older members did not want to leave the group. The younger teenagers that could not associate with the *Glorious Kids* or the senior MMM members felt left out. The *Glorious Teens dance* group was subsequently formed in order to fill this gap.

This study focuses on MMM, because this group is often aired on television, attends MMCM crusades more often than other dance groups, and is more actively involved in the church than the other groups. According to Mrs Lucy Muiru, the co-founder of MMCM, and Ken Bakuli, the co-ordinator, MMM is apparently the most popular of the groups in MMCM and Nairobi. The group ministers to all age groups. Other MMCM congregations in Nakuru and Mombasa have also started dance groups in their churches and they call them *Melodies*.<sup>20</sup> Currently, the main MMM dance group in Ruaraka, Nairobi, has 26 members of whom only 12 are active.<sup>21</sup> The members are between the ages of 13-23 (see Table 6:2 in Appendix D), with only one 5-year-old.

### 3. Reasons for the inclusion of the performing arts in the MMCM activities

The first objective of the study was to determine why the performing arts exist in MMCM. As indicated before, it is the researcher's belief that a case study of the dance group MMM could provide some key answers to this question. The leaders of the MMCM as well as the leaders and dancers of the MMM were interviewed to find out why they allow the performing arts in their church services. The *Maximum Miracle*

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<sup>19</sup> The MMCM normally begin their Sunday worship service where children and adults meet together in one venue. After all the music teams have presented an item each, the children are released to go to a separate class, where they are taught biblical stories and informed about the doctrines of the MMCM. The children are usually grouped according to their ages and are assigned specific teachers. These classes are referred to as 'Sunday school'.

<sup>20</sup> Lucy Muiru, "From our branches," in *Maximum Miracle Times*, Vol. 3, November 2001, pp. 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Andrew Muiru, 19 January 2002.

<sup>22</sup> The main church leaders who were interviewed are the church co-ordinator and co-founder of the MMCM ministries. The two have been with the ministry since its inception and are aware of all the activities and programmes of the church since they are involved in all the planning. Their observations and comments were verified with the staff and musicians of MMCM as seen in Appendix F. Other leaders interviewed include all the dance group leaders. These are the people who are involved with the planning and execution of the activities of the dance groups. The Sunday school leaders and teachers were also interviewed in order to find out how the *Glorious Kids* and *Maximum Miracle Teens* dance groups operate and the reasons for their existence. All the dancers of MMM were interviewed.

*Times* magazine and the ministry website<sup>23</sup> were also consulted for verification of information obtained through interviews.

As indicated in Chapter Two, the inclusion of the practice of the performing arts in Christian churches in Nairobi worship is a recent phenomenon in the church in Kenya. The reasons for its existence in MMCM are that it is biblically supported, it offers ways to serve God, it is an important role player in evangelism, it is presented during worship services for worship purposes, it is used for moral, social and scriptural education, it attracts the young people, it is used as an entertainment tool, and it is used to promote musical artists.<sup>24</sup>

All the leaders and dancers interviewed about the existence of the arts stated that "it is scriptural to dance." Some referred to biblical passages such as Psalm 150:4:<sup>25</sup>

Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

A number of verses<sup>26</sup> in the Bible refer to the word 'dance', urging God's people to dance to their God illustrating that dance is an integral part of Christian worship.

The pastors and church leaders of MMCM encourage and support dance as part of worship.<sup>27</sup> This support, as discovered by Musumba,<sup>28</sup> is crucial for performance practices not only to continue, but also to flourish in the church community.

Even though the acculturated musicians are liable to bring change in music, the church leaders and especially the pastors, have more power. They [church leaders/pastors] can either incorporate or refute change completely.

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<sup>23</sup> Available from <<http://www.mmcm.in.org>>last accessed 19 March 2004.

<sup>24</sup> These roles emerged from the interviews conducted.

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 150: 4, AV.

<sup>26</sup> Examples include Ecclesiastes 3:4, Psalm 30:11, Psalm 149:3, and Mathews 11:17 AV. According to Boschman who has done extensive biblical research on music, there are 23 verses in the *Holy Bible* that refer to dance, dances, or dancing (Boschman, pp. 79-101).

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Lucy Muiru, 8 January 2002 and 22 July 2003, revealed that the pastors of MMCM are fully supportive of the MMM in their performances. They also finance needs such as transportation, costumes, etc. During the researcher's second visit to the field, January 2003- 2003, the senior pastor of this church, Pius Muiru, had released two CDs and accompanying videotapes: Pastor Pius Muiru, *Lango* [door], produced and directed by the *Maximum Miracle Centre*, 1 hour, VHS, videocassette, 2003; and Pastor Pius Muiru, *Fuatilia* [follow], produced and directed by *Maximum Miracle Centre*, 1 hour, VHS, videocassette, 2003. In the video performance, the MMM are also involved in the dance and dramatisations. The MMCM advertise these tapes on television, in their magazines, at crusades and in services too. The MMM also perform the same dances in crusades and services.

<sup>28</sup> Musumba, p. 209.

The researcher interviewed a few church leaders and music directors of the Nairobi Baptist Church, Lutheran Church, Seventh Day Adventist, and New Hope Church denominations.<sup>29</sup> The three major areas covered in the interviews were (a) the interviewee's opinion on Christian dance groups as well as their denominational stand, (b) their advice on the genre, and (c) their advice to the congregations in Kenya. Table 6.1 illustrates some of the comments they made about the genre.

From the responses of the above leaders, it is evident that not all the denominational leaders allow Christian dance group performances in their churches. However, even those who allow it feel that careful selection of dance styles and movements ought to be done prior to the performance, implying that there are some dance styles/movements that may not be acceptable for use in church activities.

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<sup>29</sup> The people interviewed were mainly leaders in the various denominations. Much as they represented their own views, they indicated that their denominations have more or less the same views. The leaders included a music director, pastors, dean of the church youth ministry and a bishop. This sampling represents the leadership views of various leading denominations in Nairobi. The people interviewed included Sarah Oyungu (Nairobi Baptist Church music director), Rev. Peter Ndung'u (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya), Rev. Peter Macharia (Anglican Church of Kenya), Pastor Paul Mwasia (Seventh Day Adventist), and Bishop Munala (New Hope Church).

<sup>30</sup> The interviewees gave permission for their names to be used in this work.



Table 6.1: Church leaders' opinion and advice on Christian dance groups

| Name and church   | Opinion on Christian dance groups  | Advice on the genre   | Advice to Christian congregations  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Sarah Oyungu (Music Director, Nairobi Baptist Church)     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dance is part of worship and a human expression.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worship dance should be holistic and should incorporate body, mind, and soul.</li> <li>Dance should be relevant to the target audience.</li> <li>Dances should be implemented carefully when introduced in a congregation.</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congregations should incorporate them into their worship services.</li> </ul>   |
| Rev. Peter Ndung'u (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dances are good and effective for crusades and concerts.</li> <li>It is a good form of entertainment.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dancers should be guided so that they do not "go to extremes."</li> <li>Care should be taken in the manner of performance.</li> <li>Balance in styles of performance to suit everyone in the congregation.</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Churches should accept the practice since it is biblical.</li> </ul>  |
| Rev. Peter Macharia (Anglican Church of Kenya)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It can be used in church services as praise and worship to God.</li> <li>Although some dances have been brought into the church worship, they are not "Christian."</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dancers should imitate the Word and not secular dance styles like <i>ndombolo</i> and Kanda Bongoman's styles.<sup>31</sup></li> <li>There should be a difference between secular and Christian dances.</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The church should teach on the genre so that musicians can understand the reason for its existence.</li> <li>Christians should not be attracted to the world but should attract the world instead.</li> </ul>   |
| Pastor Paul Mwasia (Seventh Day Adventist)                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dance groups and their performances are not glorifying to God.</li> <li>The dance performances draw attention to the performers and not to God, who is to be worshipped.</li> <li>The performers copy dance styles of the world such as <i>ndombolo</i>.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worship should express reverence to God.</li> <li>Music should draw people to God and not to the people who perform it.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congregations should not introduce such dance groups in church at all.</li> </ul>   |
| Bishop Otieno Munala (New Hope Church)                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dance is acceptable so long as it is used to glorify the Lord.</li> <li>The motive of the dancers is important.</li> <li>Some dancers claim to be performing for the Lord but their lifestyles are questionable.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dancers must approach God knowing that he is sovereign.</li> <li>The dancers' lifestyle must also tally with the message of the gospel.</li> <li>Dancers should consider the impact their performance will have on the congregations.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>know why they are introducing the genre in their congregations.</li> <li>Do not be quick to borrow dance styles of the world just because you want to keep "in step" with the fashion of the day.</li> <li>No disco/secular pop styles in worship.</li> </ul> |

<sup>31</sup> Refer to Chapter Four for information on *ndombolo* and Kanda Bongoman.

The MMCM believe that the MMM serve God by taking part in the performing arts. They believe that, through the arts, the youth become more actively involved in the church ministry.<sup>32</sup> Harold Nyavanga also supports the idea<sup>33</sup> and states that:

[t]he contemporary Christian music they [MMM] use, plus the dances, sets a place for the youth to feel part of the church. The ushers and the elders in church are grown-ups. When the youth see the melodies [MMM] perform in church, they know that they too have a place in church and that they too can get involved.<sup>34</sup>

At certain occasions the dancers use the genre to attract the youth and use this opportunity to preach the message of the gospel, thereby showing more involvement in church ministry. Andrew Muiru had the following remarks about the Christian youth of MMM group in an open-air crusade:

Well, if you thought that the youth who are committed to the work of the Lord only sing and dance then you are wrong. You may tend to wonder *kwani*<sup>35</sup> is there anything else that they can do apart from singing and dancing? Yes... I know you thought that the youth perceive sermons as very boring and the only reason that they go to church is to sing, entertaining the congregation with their 21<sup>st</sup> century dancing styles, or to meet with their friends... fullstop. After all isn't this the age in a person's life where you have to 'enjoy life to the maximum.'<sup>36</sup>

The performing arts of the MMM are also considered as powerful evangelistic media.<sup>37</sup> In the *Maximum Miracle Times* the MMM are usually portrayed as a dance team that 'wins souls for Jesus'<sup>38</sup> through their performing arts. The team chooses dancers not only because they are members of MMCM and that they have the ability to perform, but also because of their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Ken Bakuli, 12 January 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Harold Nyavanga, the founder of *Glorious Kids*, *Glorious Teens* and MMM, has also been instrumental in training other dance groups in various *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries*' branches such as Mombasa, Chandaria, Kayole and Ruaraka. The dance groups in these branches also use the name "Melodies." Interview with Harold, 19 January 2002; *Maximum Miracle Times*, vol. 5 January 2002, p. 18; Lucy Muiru and Monicah Githiri (eds), "Maximum Melodies Mombasa holds crusade," *Maximum Miracle Times*, Vol. 4, December 2001, p.19.

<sup>34</sup> Muiru and Githiri, *Maximum Miracle Times*, December 2001, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> *Kwani* is slang in Kiswahili that literally means 'why?' The full word is meant to be *Kwa nini*. (No editor, *A Standard English-Swahili Dictionary*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 624).

<sup>36</sup> Joan Mwai, "Destroy all other gods... For they are nothing before God," *Maximum Miracle Times*, Vol. 9, May 2002, pp. 19-20.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Lucy Muiru, 22 July 2003, Ken Bakuli, 12 January 2002, Andrew Muiru, 19 January 2002 and Harold Nyavanga, 19 January 2002.

*Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries* holds evangelism in high esteem. They hold crusades every month across Kenya for evangelistic purposes. They also believe in salvation as God-given through Jesus Christ as they put it in their Statement of Faith (see footnote 7).

<sup>39</sup> Through interviews with all dancers, Andrew Muiru on 19 January 2002 and Lucy Muiru on 22 July 2003, the researcher discovered that they all professed to be 'saved'. Lucy Muiru declared that all the church workers are saved; a qualification that they hold in high esteem

Dance groups in the United States of America that seemingly influence MMM, as shall be discussed later, also profess to use their arts for Christian evangelism. Romanowski indicated that:

...a popular music enterprise [Contemporary Christian Music –CCM] established by American evangelicals on the premise that contemporary forms of music were viable means for the evangelisation of spiritually lost youth. The CCM industry emerged as a subcultural phenomenon within the context of the larger recording industry and American culture.<sup>40</sup>

Christian Contemporary Music later developed video recordings which greatly influenced the MMM. Scholars such as Gow, Saenz and de Bruyn<sup>41</sup> pointed out that, besides serving an advertising purpose, these videos also evangelise the youth because they convey a Christian message.

The MMM perform in crusades, weddings, concerts, worship services and at occasions to which they are invited such as weddings and private birthday parties of the MMCM members. In crusades and worship services, they perform before the preaching of a sermon. Their performance accordingly aids in preparing the hearts of the congregation for the sermon.<sup>42</sup>

Performing in crusades has increased the popularity of the MMM across the country. The MMCM hold crusades all over the country and the MMM usually perform their

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<sup>40</sup> William.D. Romanowski, *Rock 'n religion: a sociocultural analysis of the contemporary Christian music industry (Music industry, popular music)*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio: Bowling State University, 1990, p. i.

<sup>41</sup> Joe Gow, "Saving souls and \$elling CDs: the mainstreaming of Christian music videos," *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, Winter 1998, pp. 183-188; Luis A. Saenz, *Sing to the Lord a new song: an examination of contemporary Christian music*, Texas: University of Texas, 1995; Jacob P. Johannes de Bruyn, *A missiological evaluation of a number of music videos*, unpublished PhD. dissertation, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1997, p. i.

<sup>42</sup> Interviews with Andrew Muiru, 19 January 2002 and Ken Bakuli, 12 January 2002. The researcher observed that in every worship service, all the music teams of MMCM perform a song or a dance before the sermon is given. Lucy Muiru, 8 January 2002, reiterated that their church is a musical ministry, "We love singing and praising God. All our groups perform music before preaching. This is very uplifting for the congregation. It lifts our hearts to God."

arts in these crusades. Kelvin Waweru,<sup>43</sup> the current dance group leader of the *Glorious Teens* and *Glorious Kids*, testified that he was attracted to the performing arts of the MMM and *Glorious kids* in crusades and television broadcasts.

Usually new music and music forms performed in Christian open-air crusades and gatherings are copied by the audience and implemented in various congregations as discussed in Chapter Two. According to Musumba,<sup>44</sup> such interdenominational Christian gatherings are fertile grounds for borrowing new music styles. The researcher noted that the genre has become very popular in many churches in Nairobi regardless of denomination.<sup>45</sup> Each dance group has its own kind of music dance style. A visit to the Nairobi Pentecostal church in Westlands<sup>46</sup> revealed that the Asians in this congregation who have converted to Christianity have started to

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<sup>43</sup> An interview with Kelvin Waweru on 23 April 2002 revealed that he was attracted to the dance group when he was in primary school, attending a crusade organised by MMCM. That is when he desired to join this church and become one of the dancers. Kelvin also confessed, "I also watched them perform on television and I also wanted to join the team so that I can be seen on tele [television]." The researcher attended practice sessions of *Glorious Kids* and *Glorious Teens* and interviewed the dancers to verify information received from the MMM members and their leaders. Since the MMM members were not always available for interviews and even practice sessions due to their busy schedules, interviews with the former two groups shed light and insight on areas that the researcher needed more information on. Interviews with Ken Bakuli, 12 January 2002, *Glorious Teens*, 23 March 2003, and Peter Mutua, 19 February 2002, confirmed that some of the children join the dance team so that they can get some publicity through mass media.

<sup>44</sup> Musumba, p. 208.

<sup>45</sup> During the first visit to the field between December 2001 and June 2002, the researcher noted that the MMM was the main Christian dance group aired on television and that performed in open-air crusades. However, during the second visit between January and August 2003, the researcher noted that more television channels in Kenya air a variety of Christian dance groups. They include Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Kenya Television Network, Stella Television, and Metro FM Television. Other Christian dance groups have been established and perform in crusades, concerts, and church services. The researcher attended various churches to verify the existence of dance groups including the Nairobi Baptist Church, the Nairobi Pentecostal Church, the New Hope Church, the Loresho Presbyterian Church and the Kariokor Lutheran Church. All the churches have dance groups mainly performed by the youth in their youth services.

<sup>46</sup> This church was initiated with the aim of reaching out to the Asian community in Westlands-Nairobi (conversations with the Pastor of the church, Prof. Emil Chandran, 10 May 2002). The researcher attended one of their annual concerts in May 2002, and noted that the church had only one dance group composed of three dancers. An interview with the trainer of the group, Annie Clement, 17 May 2002, indicated that the performing arts were a new Concept that she was trying in her church in Kenya. The songs were in Gujirati and the dance styles heavily borrowed from Indian classical dances. Annie affirms that the styles are very much related to secular Hindu dances. The dance styles she uses have generally accepted and known meanings in Indian classical music. She chose to use movements and dramatisations that interpret the message of the songs. Prof. Chandran admitted that this is the first time that the Asian Christian committee is incorporating the genre in their service.

include the performing arts in their church services, using Indian Christian Music and Indian dance styles. This practice never existed before in this church.

The MMCM allow the MMM to use the performing arts in the hope that other young people will be attracted to church worship.<sup>48</sup> Mrs Lucy Muiru thinks that, since this genre is popular among the youth, regardless of their faith, the performing arts will enable the youth to identify with it and thus be drawn to their services, meetings, crusades and the church in general.<sup>49</sup>

Mbasu also confirms that other Kenyan youth Christian artists use the genre in their performances. For example, he describes DJ Moz, who is a renowned gospel singer in Kenya, as follows:

Moz has been spinning funky gospel-based jams for about a year now, appealing to young people to seeking divine inspiration through music they can actually stomp to, like Kirk Franklin, Gospel Gangsters and Pigeon John. His aspiration is to reach out and let the youth know the love of God through Christ. He also teams up with the dance group, Ollivar, for lively gigs.<sup>50</sup>

Since the performing arts include dance and dramatisations, the entertainment element is almost inevitable. Just like African indigenous music and African popular music, the MMM performing arts also entertain the congregation and/or its television viewers. From the interviews carried out with the leaders of the genre and MMCM, only two leaders used the word 'entertainment'. The rest of the leaders as well as the dancers used the word 'fun' or 'enjoyment' to describe their feelings when taking part in performing arts.

Whatever other roles the performing arts play, the MMM evidently thoroughly enjoy the process, while also being hopeful that the congregation is also entertained.<sup>51</sup> The

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<sup>47</sup> Conversations with the Pastor of Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Westlands, Prof. Emil Chandran, 10 May 2002.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Mrs Lucy Muiru, 22 July 2003.

<sup>49</sup> The researcher also attended a youth crusade organised by MMM. This crusade attracted a large crowd of youth in Githurai, Kenya on 19 January 2002. Besides the MMM, other Christian dance groups also performed including 'Abundant Life Teens group', 'Kahawa West Deliverance Church Teens Group', and 'The X-Spites'. This is an indication that other churches also allow their youth to carry out the performing arts.

<sup>50</sup> Moses Mbasu, "Gospel buzz, young and vibrant, exude confidence: Milele", in *PHAT Magazine*, February-April 2001, p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> The researcher attended several worship services of *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries*, crusades, and concerts. Each time the MMM performed, the congregation applauded with jubilation - a response that portrays satisfaction or affirmation.

congregants affirm that MMM have been successful in their attempts, using words such as 'we were blessed' rather than 'we have been entertained.'<sup>52</sup>

At times the original artists of the chosen song that the MMM choreograph for their own performances request to perform with the group. Emachichi, who is considered by Bahry *et al.*<sup>53</sup> as 'the most successful gospel singer in Kenya', has become very popular in MMCM and Kenya.<sup>54</sup> According to Mukoma:<sup>55</sup>

He thrilled the crowds at KICC [Kenyatta International Conference Centre] Plenary Hall at the Music Extravaganza on December 1, 2001 with his popular 'Amenisamehe.' 'We also take this song as the Maximum Miracle Centre anthem.'

Other artists such as Esther Wahome, Roughtone, *Shammar* group and John Kamau have performed with the MMM in crusades and concerts. When these artists perform their music with the MMM dancers, they also sell their tapes or CDs at the same meetings. Not only did these meetings provide marketing strategies to the artists but they also proved to be very lucrative.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4. Factors influencing dancers' choice of music, dance, and drama

The second objective was to find out what guides the performers when selecting music, dance and drama for performance. This section divides the analysis of the observations into two five areas, namely musical factors, spiritual factors, electronic media factors, formal schooling factors and MMCM musicians.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Andrew, 5 February 2002. He gave examples of statements that the congregation gives such as 'You are a blessing,' 'Continue the good work'.

<sup>53</sup> Kelly Jo Bahry *et al.*, "Emachichi going pan-African and beyond," in Fiona D. J. Pearson and Moses Mbasu (eds), *PHAT Magazine*, No. 008 February-April 2002, p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Muiru observed that Emachichi saw MMM perform on television as they performed their choreographed dances to one of his songs. He then decided to record the whole album on video with the MMM. This video is aired often on television in the *Kuna Nuru Gizani* programme. It is also on sale in various Christian music stores in Kenya. According to Andrew Muiru, part of the proceeds of video sales goes to MMCM.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Mukoma, "News Pictorial" *Maximum Miracle Times*, Vol. 5, January 2002, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> During one of the recording sessions of a Christian programme called *Joy Bringers*, musicians indicated to the researcher that performing with the MMM was a good way of marketing their CDs. *Joy Bringers* is a Christian programme aired weekly on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) television. It encompasses biblical teachings and music performances by Christian artists. The researcher attended some of the recording sessions on 17 December 2001, 14 January 2002, 28 January 2002, and 4 February 2002.

#### 4.1 Musical factors

The MMM members never sing as they dance, but mime to pre-recorded music of Christian musical artists. This group does not compose, sing or record its own music. A number of factors guide the dancers' choice of music for performance, including text and message, popular demand, target audience, leadership, meter, rhythm and tempo, and requests by musical artists. The following discussion is based on an analysis of six songs that have been recorded during fieldwork. Transcriptions of the texts appear in Appendix A.

Text and its message is a very important aspect of the MMM dance performance and songs that have messages embedded in the Christian faith are chosen. It is obvious that the text has been the essential emphasis of church music all over the world from time immemorial, as Gow, Jennings, Nicholson and Archbishops' Committee<sup>57</sup> indicate. These authors feel that text is what mainly distinguishes Christian music from secular. The text should therefore be regarded as being of the utmost importance.

*Imba haleluya* (sing halleluiah)<sup>58</sup> is a medley of six short choruses with repetitive text. All the choruses are sung in the Kiswahili language, except for one that is in Lingala. Apart from the Lingala chorus, all the choruses are in responsorial<sup>59</sup> form. The response section often has less text than the soloist's does. For example, in the first chorus, the response section has only two words: *Imba haleluya*. In the third chorus, the response text is short and repetitive, but the soloist keeps changing his/her text to expand on the subject of the song through improvisation. Improvisation on a standard pattern is a typical African music trait as explained in Chapter Three.

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<sup>57</sup> Gow, p. 184; Bernadine Jennings, "Peoples of the Book...Torah in Motion-Creating Dance Midrash" in *Attitude: the dance magazine*, Summer 1999, p. 80; Sidney Nicholson, p. ii; Archbishops' Committee, *Music in church: report of the archbishops' committee*, Westminster: The Church Information Board, 1951, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Emachichi, 'Imba haleluya,' track no. 3 in *Amenisamehe*, produced by Emachichi Productions, 1 hour, VHS, videocassette, 2000.

<sup>59</sup> This study adopts the definition of responsorial singing given in *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* "[...] the performance of a chant by one or more soloists (cantor, cantors) in alternation with the choir (schola) as opposed to performance by two alternating half-choruses, known as antiphonal singing." From Willi Apel, (ed), *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, second edition, revised and enlarged, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1970, p. 727. The two groups in this case are the singer soloist and the chorus-response group.

The first chorus urges the listeners to praise Jesus Christ. The soloist's text gives reasons for praising Jesus, using words such as 'he is worthy, merciful, gracious, able, strong and loving.'<sup>60</sup> All these phrases describe various attributes of God found in the *Holy Bible*.

The second chorus is a prayer to God, asking Him for guidance. In the chorus acknowledgement is given to the fact that God knows all humans' problems, needs and sufferings. Although not quoting specific passages from the Bible directly, the soloist's text unfolds the issues in his life that God knows about. The text indirectly refers to the following passages from the Bible:

Would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?<sup>61</sup>

The Lord knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.<sup>62</sup>

Do not be like them, for your Father [God] knows what you need before you ask him.<sup>63</sup>

The third chorus portrays the eternal nature of God and the word 'everlasting' is repeated in the response section through the entire chorus. The soloist's section illustrates one of the doctrines of the Christian faith: 'He is mine and the saviour is Jesus'. This statement demonstrates that followers of Christ personalise their God.

The fourth chorus addresses God directly. The Christians praise God jointly: 'Halleluiah we praise you'. This implies that besides worshipping God as individuals, they can also worship Him jointly as the 'body of Christ'.<sup>64</sup>

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

The chorus also reveals other names that their God is referred to such as, Saviour and Messiah.

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<sup>60</sup> These words are found in various Scriptures such as Nehemiah 9:31, Isaiah 30:18, Daniel 3:17, Proverbs 18:10 and John 3:16 respectively.

<sup>61</sup> Psalm 44:21, AV.

<sup>62</sup> Psalm 94:11, AV.

<sup>63</sup> Matthew 6:8, AV.

<sup>64</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:27, AV.

The last chorus also addresses God. The Christians quote sections from the *Holy Bible*, for example, 'What shall separate me from your love?'<sup>65</sup>

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

However, the singers add their own text that depicts their circumstances in their context. While the chorus section sing the above verse, the soloist keeps alternating his texts with words like 'hunger', 'poverty', 'famine' and 'friends' – all very realistic concepts that people can identify with in Kenya. Similar to indigenous Kenyan music and African popular music, topical issues are addressed via music. These words guide the performers in choosing dance movements, as shall be seen later.

*Rafiki Pesa*<sup>67</sup> (Money, my friend) is a 'high-text' story-song sung in Kiswahili; each verse unfolds and develops the story. The first verse introduces the audience to the theme of the song, i.e. money. The refrain explains the various common Kenyan lifestyles that money could buy such as a house, car, dresses, suits, women and beer. Reference is made to Florida,<sup>69</sup> which is not the state in the United States of America but a club in Nairobi.

Verse two gives the details of how the singer suffered, but his friend, 'money', could only offer to buy him a coffin, revealing the truth that 'money' only pretended to be a friend. The composer of the song, Shari Martin, uses personification to explain the relationship between money and humans. The story of the relationship between 'money' and the singer is sung, and word interpolations are used to address the audience. Some of the practices of the present day are also exemplified in the song. For example, the singer explains that money will buy a person a coffin and a white cloth. When Christians die in Kenya today, the body is kept in a coffin covered with a white cloth symbolising that they are ready for burial. This is unlike the Isukha

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<sup>65</sup> Note that although the biblical text shows 'who' the Kiswahili song uses *kitu gani*, which means 'what.'

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, Romans 8: 35, AV.

<sup>67</sup> Shari Martin, *Rafiki Pesa*, produced by Wamaitu Productions, 45 min., audiocassette, 1999.

<sup>68</sup> High text refers to songs with many words as opposed to short repetitive text of the indigenous Kenyan music (low text).

<sup>69</sup> *Florida 2000* is a nightclub in Nairobi that young people frequently visit. According to Katy Salmon, *Florida* is full of action and is considered as one of the 'most happening clubs' in Nairobi', (Katy Salmon, "Jam Time! Florida 2000 Nightclub, Nairobi" in *PHAT Magazine*, No. 001, September 1999, p. 14).

indigenous setting, where coffins were not used and white cloths did not have a symbolic religious meaning in funeral settings.

The singer also uses the 'flashback' technique to tell his story of the way he lived before and after death. He further describes how many people live, not knowing that 'money' is deceiving them and announces that condemnation (fire)<sup>70</sup> awaits them if they do not believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation. The behaviour of people who are friends with money is also described: they drink excessively, smoke 'bang' (drugs), have unkempt hair and are lovers of pleasure. According to the text the end result is death:

*Wakati urafiki wako* (When your friendship)  
*Na bwana pesa unapoisha, mambo mawili* (with Mr Money is over, there are two things)  
*Anakufanyia: anakununulia kitambaa cheupe na* (he does for you: he buys you a white cloth and)  
*Coffin ya kukuingiza ndani.* (a coffin to put your body in.)

The message of this text refers to 2 Timothy 3:1-5:

However, mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.<sup>71</sup>

The song ends with the advice not to value money and the worldly pleasures, but to rather find salvation in Jesus as he is [the beginning and] the end.<sup>72</sup>

*Hakika Mungu yu mwema*<sup>73</sup> (God is so good) is sung in Kiswahili to praise God. It unfolds the reasons for praising, exalting and worshipping God and thus calling him a good God. To explain these reasons the singer gives biblical references. For example, he sings 'God is good [because] he has given his son to die instead of us.'

These words are found in the following verse:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Matthew 5:22, Mark 9:43 and Revelations 20:14-15 AV, provide the seed beliefs of Christians about life after death. They believe that there is hell and heaven; the righteous (saved) will live in heaven but sinners (unsaved) will face eternal damnation.

<sup>71</sup> 2 Timothy 3:1-5, AV.

<sup>72</sup> Revelations 21:6, AV.

<sup>73</sup> John Kamau, *Hakika Mungu yu mwema*, [n.p.], 45 min., audiocassette, 2001.

<sup>74</sup> John 3:16, AV.

This idea is reflected in several lines as the song unfolds. In addition to the above verse, the singer intersperses other verses from the Old and New Testaments to explain why their God is good. For example, 'by the stripes of Messiah, by the persecution of this Jesus, today this day I can be saved'. These words are found in the following verse:

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.<sup>75</sup>

Kenyans may understand some of the words used much more easily than other people. For example, the words *shuka* (get down) or *tushuke* (let's get down) lose their distinctive meaning when translated. However, those who understand Kiswahili know that when the words are used in music, they mean that one needs to intensify one's dance and 'literally' dance while getting/crouching down. They have their equivalent in the Congolese word *buka*, which was discussed in Chapter Four. Several characteristics of African music are used such as responsorial singing, repetition of text and other music elements, word interpolations and exchange of soloists.

*Napesi*<sup>76</sup> is sung in Lingala as a dedication to God. The Christian acknowledges his/her God as the only Lord of his/her life and fully surrenders him/herself to his God in order to be used by Him. S/he believes that God is omnipresent, the healer, and provider. The 'worldly' [unsaved listeners] are warned to be careful of what they do because of God's omnipresence.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.<sup>77</sup>

The singer gives a biblical example of a man called Jonah,<sup>78</sup> who thought that he was hiding from God, but even in his hiding place he was seen by God. The singers then persuade the 'worldly' men to give their hearts to Jesus the Messiah who will heal them. The worldly man is perceived to have a sick heart that only God can heal.

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<sup>75</sup> Isaiah 53:5, AV.

<sup>76</sup> Makoma, "Napesi," in *Nzambe na Bomoyi*, produced by Westcoast Music, 1 hour, VHS, videocassette, 2000.

<sup>77</sup> 1 John 2:15-16, AV.

<sup>78</sup> Jonah 1:1-4:11, AV.

Just like North American Christian Contemporary Music and hip-hoppers, this song makes use of rap. A male soloist raps in Lingala, which is a contextualisation of rap style. Rap music has become very popular even among Christian artists in Kenya. Gospel musicians such as Moz, Henrie Mutuku (a KORA award winner of female vocalist of the year 2002) and Roughtone<sup>79</sup> have popularised this music style in Kenya. The rap style has also gained popularity in other non-Western parts of the world such as Japan, India, Tanzania and Uganda.<sup>80</sup>

The song has borrowed heavily not just from North American music styles and culture, but also from Kenyan indigenous music. Some of the indigenous music characteristics that can be traced in the song are responsorial singing, exchange of soloists and repetition of text and other music elements.

Apart from focusing on the content of the text and message of songs, the MMM group also selects songs according to their popularity, which is determined by:

- Listening to Christian music programmes on radio and television; there are some Kenyan television programmes such as *Joy Bringers*, *In His Presence*, and *A Moment with God* that air the latest releases by Christian musicians. Radio stations such as *Wake up call*, give the top ten Christian songs of the week and/or month;
- Newspaper and magazine exposure of Christian artists;
- Exposure to the MMCM worship team who teach popular choruses and lead the whole congregation in singing/worship. An example is *Bwana wa Mabwana*,<sup>81</sup>
- Songs that are popular among the group members. The MMM claim that the songs such as *Na Pesi* inspire them;
- Artists' requests to the MMM to choreograph some of their music.

According to Andrew Muiru and Kelvin Waweru, the group leaders of MMM and *Glorious Teens* respectively, the dancers consider the audience when selecting

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<sup>79</sup> Mbasu, "Milele: young and vibrant, exude confidence", in *PHAT Magazine*, February-April, 2001, p.38; Paul Makoma, "Highlights on Music Extravaganza" *Maximum Miracle Times*, Vol. 14, September 2002, p.17.

<sup>80</sup> Condry, pp. 1-2; Juluri, pp. vii-viii; Sebidde Kiryoya, "Old and new groups rhyming for Uganda's hip-hop throne" in *PHAT Magazine*, No. 008, February - April, 2002, p.8.; Katie Salmon, "The Nyerere of rap: Mr. II" in *PHAT Magazine*, No. 003 November 200-January 2001, p.24.

<sup>81</sup> Pastor George Okudi, "Bwana wa mabwana" in *Jesus is a Mighty God*, n.p., audiotape, 1997. The congregation at Githurai Youth Crusade performed this song, 5 February 2002, Sunday morning worship service held at Ruaraka MMCM on 13 January 2002 and on numerous lunch hour meetings.

songs for performances. The reason for this is that the dancers strongly feel that the audience needs to be 'blessed' by their performance. Most of their songs are in the Kiswahili language, since the MMCM services and crusades are usually conducted in this language.<sup>82</sup> Out of the numerous songs collected from the field, only four were not in Kiswahili.

Andrew Muiru furthermore pointed out that they need a variety of song types in their repertoire and therefore they choose music with various beats:

We can choose songs in reggae beats, jam-like beats, Congolese rhythms, or rap. It just, you know, it depends on what we want ... We mostly like beats that are upbeat you know. They make us feel like dancing.<sup>83</sup>

To determine the principles that guide the MMM's choice of dance and drama, all the videotapes recorded in the field on dance and drama were viewed to establish a pattern of choice. The dancers were interviewed for verification. The researcher attended their practice sessions to study the process and procedures used to determine the type of dance or dramatisation used. All the dancers interviewed unanimously agreed that the beats of the music determine the dance styles they choose.

Gow,<sup>84</sup> in discussing the Z-music television channel that broadcasts Contemporary Christian Music videos in the United States of America, mentions three different categories used by the producers of these videos:

- 'Unequivocally' Religious: the religious lyrics and the action or movements of performers are synchronised;
- 'Moderately' religious: the actions do not relate to the religious lyrics;

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<sup>82</sup> All the services, crusades, and meetings held by MMCM that the researcher attended were conducted in Kiswahili. Their radio and television programme: *Kuna Nuru Gizani*, is also in Kiswahili. It is only in 2003, during the second visit to the field, that the researcher discovered that an English version of the television programme exists on a different channel, the Family TV channel, aired in Nairobi and its environs.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Andrew Muiru, 5 February 2002.

<sup>84</sup> Gow, pp. 183-188

- 'Ambiguously' religious: the visuals are not necessarily Christian and do not tally with the text. The text is also open to interpretation and may not evidently refer to God.

In this study, the following five categories emerged from the analyses of the video material:

- Interpretative movements: movements and facial expressions interpret and communicate the liturgy or religious lyrics of the songs based on the text and message of the song, for example *Imba Haleluya*;
- Interpretative dramatisations of story songs: dramatic movements are guided by the message of the song and performed on an makeshift stage using calculated movements to coincide with the text at a given time, for example *Rafiki Pesa*;
- Non-interpretative movements: the dance movements used do not interpret the biblical text or message and are not chosen with the text in mind, but for reasons of creativity and enjoyment. The dancers may choose the movements because of their popularity or to contribute to the repertoire of dance movements based on their experiences.<sup>85</sup> *Bwana wa Mabwana* is an example of non-interpretative movement;
- Copying of popular artists' styles: the songs are not in English or Kiswahili and a bulk of the audience may not necessarily understand the song. The dance styles are also not necessarily interpretative. Since the audience does not understand the song, it is also not easy for them to understand the movements.

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<sup>85</sup> Visuals here include dance movements and dramatisations.

<sup>86</sup> During practice times the leaders give the dancers an opportunity to contribute ideas about movements that can be executed in a given song. The researcher discovered that some of the styles they use were learnt through their experiences. Table 6.4 in Appendix D, shows the members who teach styles and the type of styles they teach.

Communication in this case is therefore not contextualised as can be seen in, for example *Napesi*,<sup>87</sup>

- 'Ungodly' ambiguous styles:<sup>88</sup> styles that would be considered seductive and 'too worldly', involving hip or pelvic movements that are lustful.<sup>89</sup> They also include dance movements that may not portray known meanings to both the dancers and the audience. The difference between this category and non-interpretative category is that the latter has movements that may not necessarily be offensive to the audience, although they may not be interpretative. The majority of the dance movements in this category are adapted from Congolese pop music dance styles discussed in Chapter Four. The movements in this category are chosen for entertainment and have no association with the liturgical text. The dances can also be considered ambiguous, as the lyrics are in a language that the audience and dancers can understand, but the dance movements do not depict the liturgy nor communicate it to the audience.

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<sup>87</sup> This song is in the Lingala language, which is the lingua franca of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo). When the researcher asked MMM the meaning of this song, none of them could interpret. They enjoy the melody and the 'beats' of the song. According to Andrew Muiru, the group that sang this song, *Makoma*,<sup>87</sup> has inspired him and his team the most. They love the rhythms and 'beats', the costumes, melodies and dance styles of this group. In this case, it is not the lyrics of the song that guides the choice of dance styles/movements. MMM has copied the exact movements that the *Makoma* use for the song. Analyses of the MMM performance reveals that they have not only copied *Makoma's* dance movements but also their way of dressing with a few differences as seen in Table 6.3 in Appendix D. The information in this table is important because it shows the power of media on the young people.

<sup>88</sup> The term 'ungodly' indicates that some dance styles or movements are considered as 'extreme' and not appropriate by Christians and even non-Christians for use in the church. The comments in footnote 97 support this statement.

<sup>89</sup> The following comments made by different people indicate the extreme nature of such dances. "Some say that I teach the boys and girls *ndombolo* and in a sense I spoil them and mislead them." Interview with Andrew Muiru, 15 February 2002. In Kenya Congolese dance styles, which involve pelvic movements, are nicknamed *ndombolo*. However, the real *ndombolo* dance as practised by the Congolese is discussed in chapter four. "Aa.. *hawa nao wamezidi. Wamezidi!*" (Oh, these ones have gone too far. They've gone too far) The researcher overheard these comments from the audience in Githurai crusade held on 19 January 2001, when the MMM were performing Congolese styles together with John Kamau, the composer of the song that they were dancing to: *Hakika Mungu yu Mwema*. Some of the members of the audience standing next to the researcher were not happy with the performers. "No, no, no. They've gone too far." Mr. George Mwiruki, lecturer at Kenyatta University, made this comment when he saw a video in which the MMM perform secular Congolese pop styles on 28 July 2003. He acted as verifier for the fact that some dance styles were derived from indigenous *isukuti* Luhya music.

To copy styles the MMM use what Green<sup>90</sup> calls 'purposive listening', which she describes as

The most systematic, conscious and goal-oriented approaches to learning through listening and copying...

During the preparation phase the MMM listen attentively to the music and memorise words to mime while they dance. The dance styles are mastered through repetitive viewing of the relevant videotapes. Andrew Muiru sometimes uses what Green<sup>91</sup> calls peer-directed learning, where the dancers learn from each other.<sup>92</sup> Their goal is usually to dance as close to the artists as possible. Where need-be, they incorporate their own creativity.

## 4.2 Spiritual factors

Besides the language common to the audience, Andrew Muiru and Kelvin Waweru indicated that the status (mood and spiritual atmosphere) of the audience is also considered in selecting songs. In one of the interviews with Andrew Muiru he remarked:

...in fact when I go to church in the morning and I realise that the groups that have just performed before us had something in common...like their dances are full of vigour or a particular message. Then I will change the song for our performance. I would just talk to the other dancers and our DJ<sup>93</sup> and we'll change....I can choose a song which has vigorous dances and almost the same message as the others.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Lucy Green, *How popular musicians learn: a way ahead for music education*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001, p. 61.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> An interview with Andrew, 5 February 2002, revealed that he recruited the two small children in MMM, Valentine Muthoni-5 years, and Ambrose Mburu-12 years in 2002, because they are very good dancers in MMM. They get their steps faster than the more mature dancers. Andrew therefore uses these two to train the other dancers. The two are in primary school and seem to have more free time than the other dancers. They are also committed to practice times than the older ones. Before most of the other team members arrive at the practice venue, Power House-Nairobi, Andrew Muiru sometimes tries a few styles with them (23 March 2003—practice session).

<sup>93</sup> The MMM group has a disc jockey. The difference between hip-hop or rappers' DJ and that of MMM is that MMM's only operates the CD/tape recorder. He carries the equipment for use in a given service or meeting and ensures that the music to be used is readily available for a performance.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Andrew, 5 February 2002. When asked why he had to change abruptly, he responded that it is good to reinforce a message to the congregation. He also added that they have to practice a variety of dances during the practice time. So they choose from their repertoire when they need to change a song.

When Andrew Muiru was asked how he chooses music for performance, one of his answers was 'through prayer, seeking confirmation from God about the songs to perform.' He believes that through prayer, the Spirit of God will lead him to choose the right song to perform.<sup>95</sup> This implies that their choice of song is also spiritually influenced.

The MMM being a Christian dance group has definitely been influenced spiritually. The pastors, who are their spiritual leaders, have played a major role in rejecting or accepting certain practices. As seen in section 3, the pastors give them good support, thereby propelling the existence and execution of the performing arts. However, there are instances where the pastors have rejected the use of trousers by the girls. This led to the departure of some key dancers.<sup>96</sup>

As seen earlier, today the girls wear trousers in their performances. All the girls interviewed felt that wearing trousers in performances makes them more flexible and free in executing their dance movements. Sometimes the girls have very vigorous movements (See accompanying VCD, Zambe 2 and kick).

Some parents also object on the use of certain dance movements as 'unspiritual or ungodly.' They also object to the long hours of practice for their children. Therefore parents have no longer allowed their children to perform with MMM.<sup>97</sup> Ken Bakuli and Andrew Muiru noted that some girls and boys leave the group because their parents move from the area where MMCM functions, thereby creating a distance problem. These parents change churches/denominations and their children leave with them. In addition, there are parents who leave MMCM for spiritual reasons and their children follow them. Such actions among the children demonstrate the power that the parents have over their children, especially concerning spiritual matters.

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<sup>95</sup> Andrew indicated that he gets to know that God is leading him to choose a given song when another member of the group confirms that he was also thinking of the same song OR when the majority of the members agree with enthusiasm, or when the pastor preaches a message that is consistent with the song they had just danced to (Interview with Andrew Muiru, 5 February 2002).

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Andrew Muiru, 15 February 2002. When the researcher asked Andrew about whether they have had any dropouts, he gave this answer as one of the reasons.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Andrew Muiru, 15 February 2002. Peter Mutua, 19 January 2002, Harold Nyavanga, 19 January 2002, and Ken Bakuli, 12 January 2002, reiterated the same sentiments.

### 4.3 Electronic media factors

The mass media help to shape the taste of the audience. Television, radio and music videos have influenced the MMCM. All the MMM members watch selected television programmes<sup>98</sup> such as *Shake*<sup>99</sup> and *Channel O*<sup>100</sup> to learn dance styles and integrate them into their own performances.<sup>101</sup> These two programmes seem to be popular among the youth in Kenya. Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 show the viewership of these programmes.

All the MMM members mentioned that they enjoy watching *Family TV*.<sup>102</sup> Most of the programmes they enjoy watching are aired on this channel. The mission statement and purpose of *Family TV* is:

As a Christian broadcast house, Family Media was formed for the purpose of advancing the message of Jesus Christ by providing quality wholesome Christian entertainment in conformity with God's Word.<sup>103</sup>

Family Media indicates that it plays:

a wide variety of CCM to suit all tastes, previously unheard of in Kenya, hence starring up a "radio revolution" in audiences<sup>104</sup>

The Christian Contemporary Music played on *Family Radio* is also played on *Family TV* with the video-clips of the artists. Some of these videotapes have performing arts that have influenced MMM – especially some from North America such as Carman,

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<sup>98</sup> The researcher asked all the members for their favourite television programmes. All of them had at least 2-3 music programmes. Their favourite programmes also included gospel-teaching programmes such as 'John Hagee'-a famous television evangelist from the United States of America

<sup>99</sup> This is a Christian Contemporary Music programme aired on Family TV.

<sup>100</sup> Incorporates Congolese pop music and dance, hip-hop and Music television (MTV).

<sup>101</sup> The researcher had to watch these programmes to find out any similarities and differences in the performing arts of the television artists and MMM.

<sup>102</sup> On several visits to the MMCM offices, the researcher noted that the television at their reception area was always switched to Family TV too

<sup>103</sup> Leo Slingerland, 'Mission statement,' p. 1, *Family Media*, available from <<http://www.familykenya.com/statement.htm>> accessed 29 September 2003. Family Media runs both Family Radio and Family TV. The two stations run 24 hours per day.

<sup>104</sup> Leo Slingerland, "About us," *Family Media*, available from <<http://www.familykenya.com/about.htm>> accessed 29 September 2003.

Kirk Franklin and other American rap artists.<sup>105</sup> David Pragassa<sup>106</sup> declares that Family Media plays all kinds of music as long as they are Christian. The most important thing they look for in a song performance is the message contained in it and the quality of the music. He insists that the music must be of good quality. Hence, the selection criteria for television videos for their programmes are not based on the dance or dramatisation but on the text.<sup>107</sup>

*Channel O*, a secular television music channel (MTV), broadcasts videos from America and videos by African popular artists, especially from the Congo. It is a programme that usually comes on air every day, mainly on two television channels in Kenya, namely Kenya Television Networks (KTN) and Stella Television (STV). Some MMM individuals watch these programmes in order to perfect their Congolese styles.<sup>108</sup> Most of the time individuals watch the videotapes and practice on their own before meeting together for rehearsals. At other times they view tapes as a group or in small groups of two or three in their own free time.

The leader of the MMM, Andrew Muiru, indicated that he chooses most of the songs for performances, thus influencing the group by his own music preferences that include artists such as Makoma, WOW and Carman.<sup>109</sup> He also encourages his team to study these programmes and videotapes in order to learn and get new ideas on the performing arts. All the dancers interviewed indicated that they watch the *Shake*

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<sup>105</sup> MMM assert that these artists have inspired them. The researcher also watched these programmes to discover the similarities and differences displayed by the MMM and artists they admire.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with David G. Pragassa, 26 June 2002, 2.00 p.m. David Pragassa is in charge of music section at Family Media. The researcher carried out this interview in order to establish why and how Family Media selects music and videos for airing. This is because this channel has influenced MMM.

<sup>107</sup> The researcher discovered that most of their programmes are not local. They get them from Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), which is American-based. Therefore, the Christian Contemporary Music performing arts that are played in America are also aired on Family TV. Consequently, they have influenced MMM and other performing arts in Kenya. Mr Pragassa further explained that local artists usually give their music videos to the Family Media for airing. Programmes such as "Light in Darkness" (*Kuna Nuru Gizani*) by MMCM pay for the airtime. Paying for airtime is very expensive and thus very few local artists can afford it. This leaves room for American videos to dominate.

<sup>108</sup> The researcher watched several series of these programmes to identify styles, costumes, and action common to both Congolese and MMM dances. It was through viewing the programmes that more questions were generated for the research.

<sup>109</sup> These are groups and individuals with hip-hop influence. *Makoma* is a group from Congo but its music has North American hip-hop culture influence in terms of rhythm, dance styles, and costumes. *WOW* videocassettes are collection of Billboard gospel artists' songs of a given year in USA. Carman is a Contemporary Christian Music artist that also incorporates hip-hop music characteristics in his video recordings. All these videotapes are often aired on television in Kenya.

programme, which is one of Andrew Muiru's favourites.<sup>110</sup> Fig. 6.3 reveals that people between the ages of 18-24 in Nairobi view this programme. The majority of the MMM dancers fall within the age bracket, as can be seen in Table 6:2 in Appendix D.

Although the dancers enjoy watching the *Shake* programme, they enjoy Congolese dance styles the most and perform these dances with joy and zeal. Despite the fact that many dancers are not from the Luhya ethnic group, the African dance styles they incorporate are mainly from Luhya community.

Radio music programmes have played a major role in as far as aiding the MMM to get to know the latest releases and popular Christian music which the MMM select for their dance choreography is concerned.

#### 4.4 Formal schooling factors

The primary and secondary schools have proved to be centres of acquisition of music skills, knowledge, dance, choreography and a variety of music cultures. All the MMM members, except Valentine Muthoni, have had formal music training at primary school level, where they acquired and developed their music interest and talent. However, Andrew Muiru, the leader, is the only one who studied music formally in secondary school and developed a keen interest in dance during this period. He used to play in the school band and perform neo-traditional dances as a requirement for his education and indicates that these activities have greatly shaped his music taste, skills and talents.<sup>111</sup>

Four MMM members have been actively involved in the Kenya Music Festivals and teach dance styles such as *lipala*, *amabeka*, and *khumkongo* that they have learnt through these festivals to the MMM members. (See dance notations in Chapter Three and accompanying VCD for the demonstrations.)

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<sup>110</sup> This programme is aired on Family TV channel every Saturday. Customarily it features North American Christian Contemporary Music artists.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Andrew Muiru, 5 February 2002.

Apart from performing the neo-traditional dances with the school dance groups and MMM, these dancers agreed that they have not performed those dances anywhere else. In fact, it is through MMM that their church gets a taste of neo-traditional dances.

Dominic Maungu is a member of an acrobatics club in school as seen in Table 6:3. He learns the movements in school and creatively teaches the same movements to MMM. He loves working out with gymnastic movements that he learnt from the acrobatic club, and feels free to use them in the dance performances of MMM when given an opportunity. The song *Bwana wa Mabwana* has many acrobatic movements that he taught (see accompanying VCD, 'Gym').

Some of the members who teach *salsa*, Congolese pop dance styles and Christian Contemporary Music belong to music clubs in their schools. In these clubs they perform a variety of styles, including the above. In turn, the MMM members in these clubs teach those styles to the team.

The MMM has organised and attended several concerts. The one that is most popular among them is the JITH (Jesus in The House) concert. It is normally held every December in MMCM. In such concerts dance groups and artists from various churches and denominations attend and perform. MMM members and *Glorious Teens* affirmed that they all learn some dance styles from the visiting dance groups.

The groups that are invited to the concerts do not usually use the same songs and even dances as MMM. The majority of those who attend are heavily influenced from North America and not by Congolese music. Such groups include Shammah, X-Spites and Abundant Life Teen group.

#### **4.5 Maximum Miracle Centre Ministries' musicians**

The musicians in the MMCM have influenced MMM in as far as Congolese music is concerned. They include instrumentalists, worship team and music recorded artists. The instrumentalists usually play Congolese styles in their performances similar to those discussed in Chapter Four. Their music is usually guitar based and the lead

guitar is vital in determining the various sections like *sebene* and slow *rumba*, climax, etc. The keyboard player, John Nyika<sup>112</sup> made the following statement:

It is difficult to blend with guitarists 'coz they are used to Congolese styles but I am not. In accompaniment guitar and drums are considered as the key instruments and not keyboard [...] At first Congolese style was difficult for me. Their dance was not yet acceptable by many. We are all from different backgrounds and therefore we do not like the same kind of music [...] So playing together was very difficult for us at first. But now we are trying to get along well in blending our accompaniment.

This shows that even those instrumentalists who are not used to Congolese styles have to learn and synchronise with guitarists. Congolese styles are very popular in this church. The guitarists do not seem to have a problem with the styles. For example, Gideon Makala, Justus Mulema and Kamonga Dido<sup>113</sup> all enjoy and prefer *rumba* music and they have been playing Congolese styles for many years.

Since the MMM members have heard Congolese music style played in MMCM, they have grown to love it. Therefore, they look for songs with Congolese music to choreograph.

The worship team in MMCM leads the congregation in worship during every meeting and service. The church instrumentalists who incorporate Congolese *rumba* styles as seen above usually accompany them. The dance movements that they perform are also Congolese. Such movements include *ndombolo*, *bingeli* and *yumbani*.<sup>114</sup> (See accompanying VCD, 'crusade music'.)

There are a number of individual recorded artists who have also influenced the MMM. Some of these artists have already been discussed. Others such as Nene and

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with John Nyika, 14 February 2002. Mr. Nyika is the keyboardist of MMCM.

<sup>113</sup> Interviews with Gideon Makala (lead guitarist), 14 February 2002; Justus Mulema (rhythm and lead guitarist), 14 February 2002; and Kamonga Dido (lead, rhythm and bass guitarist), 19 February 2002. Justus Mulema had played in secular pop bands in Kenya before becoming a Christian. One of the bands he played for was *Maroon Commandores*, which was one of Kenya's leading pop bands in the 70s (see chapter four). He learnt how to play Congolese pop guitar styles in this band. Mr Dido is a Congolese musician and was playing for secular bands for many years in Zaire including *MUVA Musica*, *B. MOUUA Mussica du Congo*, and *Saka Saka* bands. He learnt his Congolese guitar styles from these bands and is now implementing the same styles in MMCM.

<sup>114</sup> These dance movements are discussed in Chapter Four. The researcher noticed that in all the worship services, lunch hour meetings and crusades of MMCM the worship team use these dance movements. The MMM group has also incorporated these movements in their dance repertoire.

Nday Dido produced the Christian music videotape: *Dunia Hii ni Mbaya*<sup>115</sup> (This world is terrible). In this videotape the Didos perform Congolese dance movements with a group of dancers. These dances are just the same as those executed by MMM (see accompanying VCD, 'yumbani variation' and 'variation of wriggle'). Besides recording the tape, the Didos also perform the same songs and dance movements in MMCM worship services and concerts thereby influencing the MMM<sup>116</sup> (see accompanying VCD for an example, 'Mr and Mrs Dido').

Mr Kamau has also produced an album entitled *Hakika Mungu yu Mwema* discussed in section 3.1. This cassette is popular among the MMM members. These members dance to the song *Hakika Mungu yu Mwema* from the album. Andrew Muiro asserts that John Kamau taught them the dance movements, which are typically found in Congolese pop styles. Their performance for this song is categorised under the 'Extreme' section. Mr Kamau himself asserts:

Moses, my friend from Nakuru, is the one who taught me the dances. Before I got saved, I used to watch Lingala pop music videotapes like Koffi Olomide's, Kanda Bongoman, Extra Musica, etc. When I got saved I decided to use the same styles to dance for the Lord. Sometimes I can dance even the deep Lingala styles (*ile ya ndani*) [extreme]. But in this church (MMCM) you know people are not used to my type of dance. They have accepted it but they are still adjusting. A number of them are still struggling. But I believe that when we introduce the dance styles slowly by slowly, they will be able to accept even the deep stuff [...] I am not yet dancing as much as I know.<sup>117</sup>

## **5. The significance of dance and drama movements and their relationship to music<sup>118</sup>**

This section discusses a selection of songs that depict the various categories of songs and dances/dramatisations that the MMM have. The researcher viewed an enormous number of performances and selected the following specific songs and their performances under the categories given. The categorisation was based on the type of performances. A song for each category is illustrated and the full text is given in Appendix A. The accompanying VCD illustrates each of the movements discussed.

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<sup>115</sup> Mr and Mrs Nday Dido, *Dunia Hii ni Mbaya*, [n.p.], 1 hour, VHS, videocassette, 2000.

<sup>116</sup> Interviews with Mrs Dido, 19 February 2002, revealed that Mr and Mrs Dido perform in every JITH concert.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with John Kamau, 19 February 2002. Mr Kamau also teaches the same dance movements to the MMM. He performs with MMM in crusades and worship services.

<sup>118</sup> All the dance movements discussed in this section are found in the accompanying VCD.

The dancers perform vigorous movements to the song *Imba haleluya* (Sing halleluiah) that vary according to the text and have an interpretative function. The text is thus important in determining these movements. The following are interpretative movements that they utilise in this song. The names of the dance movements are derived from the texts that the actions represent. The names of the dances in this section are chosen according to the text that they are associated with.

- *Haleluya*: The chorus-response section of the *Imba haleluya*, which is repeated throughout is demonstrated by quick lifting up of the right hand.<sup>119</sup> In this case they use gestures that represent what Christians in Kenya commonly know and combine it with their own creativity.

Fig. 6.1 *Haleluya*



In yet another section of the song (*Wa milele*), the dancers lift up their right hands and swing them sideways as they mime the words. The left hand is held akimbo as they move sideways (See accompanying VCD with dance movement titled '*haleluya variation*').

Fig. 6.2 *Haleluya variation*



<sup>119</sup> This gesture is common in Christian circles in Kenya. At the MMCM, when an individual stands up to greet the congregation, he lifts up his hand and utters "Praise the Lord" and the congregation responds, "Amen". They either lift up one hand or both hands. The Christian bible also urges believers to lift up their hands in prayer to their God (1 Timothy 2:8, AV.).

- *Niongoze Bwana* (Guide me Lord): Both arms are stretched out on the left-hand side pointing heavenward.<sup>120</sup> This action is done when the following words are sung: *Niongoze Bwana, niongoze kwa kila jambo* (Guide me Lord, guide me in everything). When the soloist is singing his part, the dancers' arms are relaxed on the side and are only lifted when the chorus sings.

Fig. 6.3 *Niongoze*



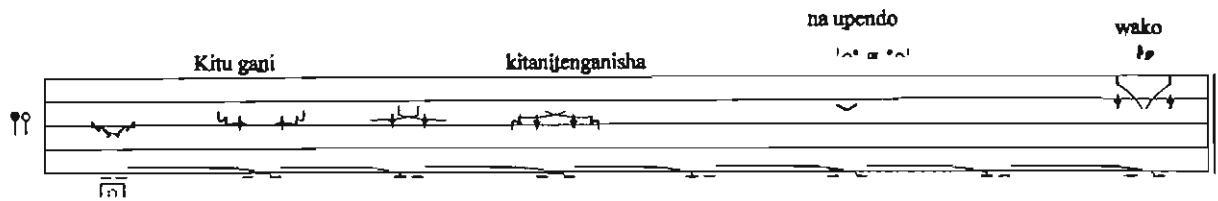
- *Kitu gani?* (What?): The dancers use appropriate gestures to represent the texts, *kitu gani kitanitenganisha na upendo wako* (What will separate me from your [God's] love). When the word 'what' is sung, the dancers demonstrate it with an open-arm gesture, which, to the Luhya, is a quizzical sign. The Luhya also use the sign when they want to inquire about something. Even if words are not used, one would understand the gesture. This gesture is also commonly used in Nairobi in conversations. It is almost like tacit knowledge that when the words 'separate me', are sung, the dancers use a gesture that, according to Andrew Muiro, symbolises total refusal. It is often used even in everyday conversations in Nairobi.

When singing the word 'love', the dancers place both hands on their chest. This symbolises that love comes from the heart. They use this gesture to show the love of God.

While singing the word 'You', the dancers raise up both hands and point heavenward. They indicate that God is in heaven and they are addressing him by pointing at him. Fig. 6.4 shows the actions that are executed when singing specific words.

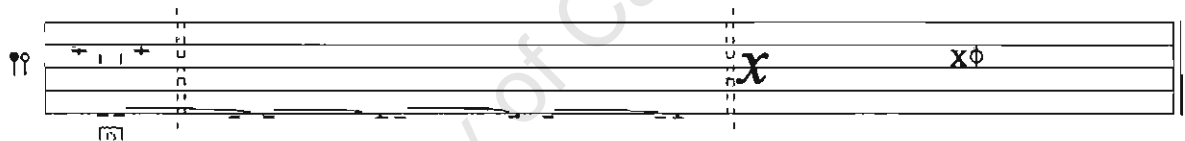
<sup>120</sup> Gesture showing that they are calling on God who resides in heaven (Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 6:9, AV.) but His Spirit dwells on earth among His people (Luke 11:13; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 3:16, AV.).

Fig. 6.4 *Kitu gani?*



- *Basic position:* Throughout the song, when the dancers are not miming the text of the song, they keep a steady basic position. The movements they utilise here keep a steady pulse, which is consistent with the basic pulse of the song. The feet are generally apart with slight movements to the left or right. When the soloist is singing the dancers keep on using this movement. When the chorus-response section comes in, the dancers mime the text as they interpret the message with their actions.

Fig. 6.5 Basic position



- *Sebene section dance movements:* During the *sebene* section of this song, the singer soloist sings the Lingala text. The instrumental accompaniment in this section acts as a climax for the song. The lead guitar plays in high tessitura just like in Congolese *soukous* music discussed in Chapter Four. The interlocking of rhythms of the guitar based instrumental section guides their performance. The dance movements performed in this section vary and they keep changing in every *sebene* section. The movements include the following, *haleluya*, *zambe 1*, *zambe 2* and *zambe 4*.

Fig. 6.6 *Zambe 1*

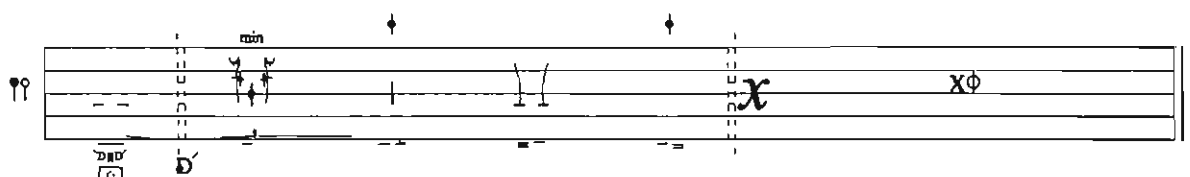


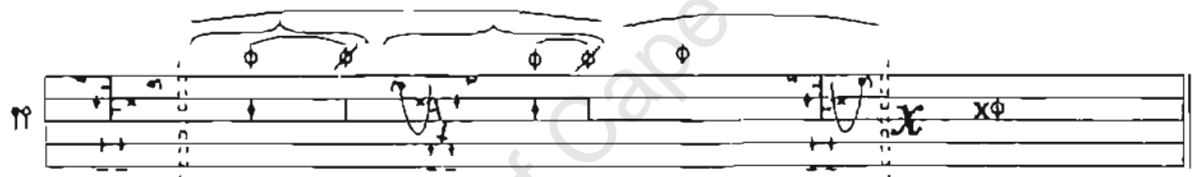
Fig. 6.7 Zambe 2



Fig. 6.8 Zambe 3



Fig. 6.9 Zambe 4



The dancers come up with their own creative dance movements. They also combine *isukuti* dance styles creatively such as *khumkongo*. However, they execute this style in a slower tempo, because of the slow tempo of the song, unlike the *isukuti* dance songs that are much faster.

The costumes they wear include:<sup>121</sup>

Girls: Red buggy tops with dotted brown design across the front. Their blouses are untucked.

- Blue long skirts that reach the ankles. Only the small girl, Valentine, has black trousers
- Black shoes;
- Combed hair and some tie the hair at the centre with a band;

<sup>121</sup> It is fashionable to the youth in Kenya to wear such kinds of costumes. From Consumer insight Kenya, *Hola*, Nairobi: Consumer Insight Publications, 2001, pp. 25-35 Consumer Insights is an organisation in Kenya that carries out research for organisations and companies. This specific documentation was based on research among youth (teenagers) in major towns in Kenya including Nairobi (see Plate 13 in Appendix C).

- Only the little girl has braided hair;
- Neither jewellery nor makeup.

Boys: Same shirts, colour and design of shirts as the girls. They tuck in their shirts.

- Blue trousers that match the girls' skirts;
- Andrew has different costumes from the other men. He has red trousers and plain blue shirt;
- They wear black shoes.

Solo (lead singer—Emachichi)

- He is in a blue suit, beige shirt and blue tie with beige dots/designs;
- His suit colour matches that of the MMM;
- He does not dance like the MMM. He mainly sings while standing or with slight side way movements. As in Congolese music videotapes like those of Koffi Olomide, he is in a different costume from the dancers. His dance movements too are different with minimal movements.

Scenery: There are neither instrumentalists nor singers shown on video.

- It is an open area with green plantations, banana plantations, flowers and other plants around the area;
- They have only one choreographic pattern formation (two horizontal lines as the Congolese dancers discussed in Chapter Four). They use this pattern throughout their performance. What they change are only the dance movements;
- The site is not necessarily dramatic or part of the textual representation. They chose a convenient site to shoot the video.<sup>122</sup>

These scenarios and kind of video shooting is similar to Koffi Olomide's discussed in the previous chapter.

*Rafiki pesa* (My friend, money) begins with an instrumental prelude. The main actor is Andrew Muiro.<sup>123</sup> Money is his great friend. As the opening phrase begins 'I had a friend, Money', he walks on stage and meets with Mr Money. In this context money is

<sup>122</sup> Interview with the video crew manager, Paul Mukoma, 15 February 2002. Mr Mukoma organised the recording and shooting of the videotape. He said he needed a place that is beautiful and quiet. The whole performance therefore was done specifically for video.

<sup>123</sup> The full dramatisation of the song is demonstrated in the accompanying VCD under the title, "*Rafiki Pesa*."

personified. They both face the audience and act. In each verse, whatever the soloist sings will be enacted by the MMM members, Andrew and Money.

There is one MMM member on stage who mimes the words of the solo singer throughout. He acts the part of Mr Money, pointing to the items that the singer is singing about. He points at real items, since the play is acted in an open space. When he sings about clothes, Mr Money rushes backstage and comes back with clothes for Andrew Muiru to wear. When he sings about women, he rushes back stage and comes back with two women. At this time there is an instrumental interlude and the actors take time to act as though they are in a bar. Money serves them with beer until they get drunk.

When verse two begins with the phrase "One day I contracted a very bad disease", the two girls leave the stage indicating that they want nothing to do with the singer. He then falls down due to weakness brought about by the disease. Mr Money then runs off the stage with the two girls. A female doctor comes to check on the singer, but she shakes her head to indicate that the disease is not treatable. The singer holds him and takes him back to his house.<sup>124</sup>

While at home the singer gets severely sick and begins vomiting. Mr Money then comes in and mimes his word-interpolation section as he laughs at Andrew Muiru. Andrew Muiru then lies down flat on the stage indicating that he is dead. Then Money runs off the stage.

When the singer sings "When I died my children suffered..." some MMM girls dressed like old women come on stage with Mr Muiru's children and they begin to mistreat them by beating them and dragging them mercilessly on stage.

As he sings about drunkards, some MMM boys wobbles on stage, signifying that they are drunk. Soon after, one boy comes dressed roughly, with a torn shirt, barefoot, unkempt hair, and a cap. He holds a small pipe filled with ashes then he puts it in his mouth and begins to blow through it. When the ash comes out on one end, it gives

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<sup>124</sup> Andrew's house is situated in a different part of the stage. It is an imaginary one.

the impression that he is smoking 'bang.' He does this to the words, "They smoked bang."

In the next scene, a boy comes on stage dressed in a big coat, trousers and a T-shirt filled with clothes to indicate that he has a big tummy. Mr Money goes to him and he touches his stomach to indicate that he is a rich man. He does this to the words "The rich drank [beer]." The rich man throws some papers (meant to be money) around the stage to display how rich he is. Finally all the men who have been acting form a single line on stage, mime, and dance to the last words of the song "Jesus is the end."

Although the music has high text<sup>125</sup> that is different for each verse, the melody is simple and repetitive (see Fig. 6.1 in Appendix C). The instrumental interlude only helps to separate this repetitive melody. The MMM actors/actresses use the instrumental interludes to act out their parts.

#### Scenery:

- The stage is used for acting only since it is an open-air crusade;
- Props such as bottles, notes, and pipe are used;
- The dancers wear costumes to depict characters such as a rich man, drunkards, elderly women etc.;
- There is no dancing involved until the last section of the song.

The performance of *Hakika Mungu yu mwema* (God is so good) is situated in an open-air crusade. The performance is thus live and done on a raised platform. The MMM have a large crowd as an audience. With the exception of the little girl, Valentine,<sup>126</sup> only the male MMM dancers perform the dance. The dancers use Congolese pop style movements in their performance. It is in three parts, slow *rumba*, first *sebene* and then second *sebene*. The following are some of the dance movements executed in this song.

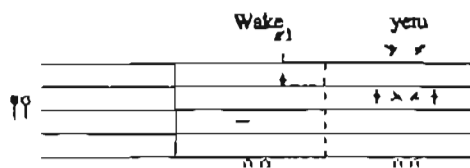
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<sup>125</sup> The term high-text is used here to denote songs with many words as opposed to most Christian choruses that use very few words (low-text) that are by nature short and repetitive.

<sup>126</sup> According to Andrew Muiru, the MMM group did not have enough time to rehearse with the girls as a team.

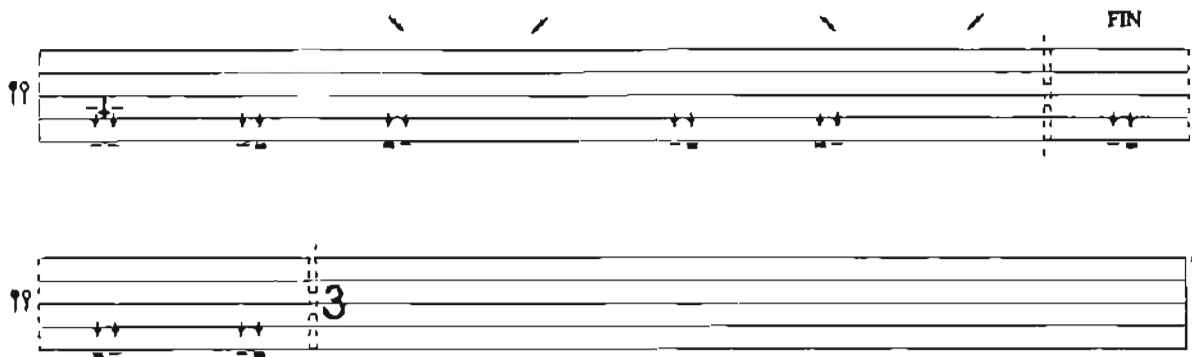
- *Mwana wake* (His son): The dancers have a slow dance movement that goes with the slow rumba tempo. Their feet movement keeps the basic pulse of the song as in basic position movement discussed earlier. When the refrain section is performed, the dancers mime the words and interpret the message of the song through their actions. This is the only section in the whole song that the dancers interpret the message of the song. The only words they interpret are *Mwana wake* (His child) and *yetu* (Ours). They lift up one hand and point heavenward as though to indicate where God is then they point at their chests to illustrate that they are God's children.

Fig. 6.10 *Mwana wake*



- *Triplet stomp*: This movement is performed in the transition between the first and the second *sebene* sections. The dancers generate their movements from an accented rhythmic pattern. The movements do not have any meaning, but they give the dancers marked steps that lead them to the next section, a practice common in Congolese pop. The dance movements emphasise the leg movements as seen in dance notation.

Fig. 6.11 *Triplet stomp*



- *Soukous dance movements*: The music in the *sebene* sections changes rhythm, style and tempo. It is faster. The vocals part is in responsorial form and the text, melody and dance movements are highly repetitive. The drums are the main instruments in this section and they give a more danceable rhythm/swing. Their dances do not interpret the message of the song.

The second *sebene* section has faster beats than the first *sebene* section. An instrumental interlude acts as the climax of the song. The dancers are meant to intensify their dance movements like in Congolese pop music. The *les cries* parts are common too. The main instruments that stand out are guitars. The lead guitar plays in high tessitura, while the rhythm and bass guitars support it. The interlocking of guitar rhythms, like in Congolese pop, gives the music a swing that acts as a dance propellant.

In this section, the dancers use a variety of *soukous* movements, as exemplified in 'variation of *yumbani*', '*Katika* position' (a variation of the *buka* movement described in Chapter Four), *bingeli*, *ndombolo* and variation of 'wriggle.'

Fig. 6.12 Variation of *yumbani*

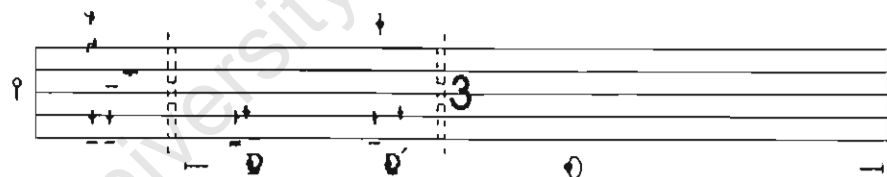


Fig. 6.13 *Katika* position

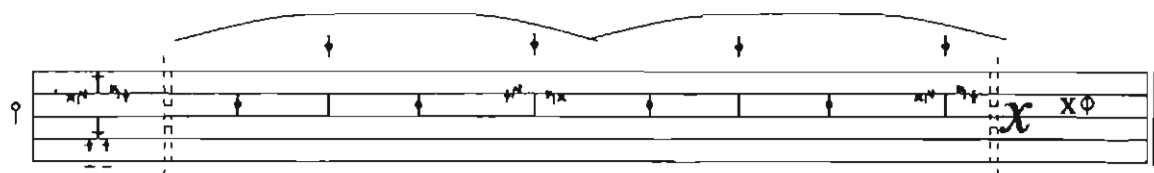
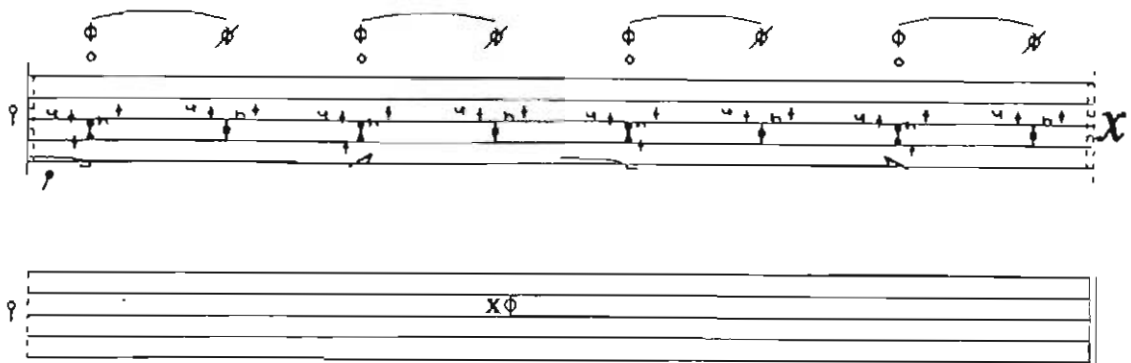
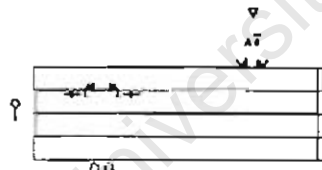


Fig. 6.14 Variation of 'wriggle'



They also use pelvic movements that are common in Congolese music. The MMM learnt the execution of these specific movements in the given section from John Kamau, the artist of the song.<sup>127</sup> These dance movements are directly imported from the Congolese performing arts and do not interpret the message of the song at all. They also incorporate other movements in conjunction with the *soukous* ones such as 'high ten'. The *les cries* guide the dancers in their performance just like in Congolese pop. For example, when the *atalaku* sings *mikono juu* (hands up) the dancers perform the 'high ten' movement.

Fig. 6.15 High ten



They also use clapping which is common in most Kenyan indigenous dances, but they add *soukous* dance movements in the process. For example, in the section where they sing *Yesu ni Bwana* (Jesus is Lord), the singers use rhythm patterns played by the keyboard and drums (see accompanying VCD titled, "High ten").

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Andrew Mulru, 15 February 2002. After this interview, John Kamau was also interviewed to find out how he learnt his dance styles/movements. He confirmed that he learnt the dance styles from the friends he had before he was saved and by watching Congolese secular pop music dance videos and programmes on television.

The dancers are dressed in their red T-shirts and black trousers. The artist of the song, John Kamau, and two of the back up singers join in the dance during the *sebene* section.

*Bwana wa mabwana* (Lord of lords) uses characteristics common in Kenyan Christian choruses such as repetition of music elements, responsorial singing, low text and ululation.<sup>128</sup> It also combines a series of short choruses and various dance movements from Congolese pop styles, *isukuti* indigenous dances and creativity of the MMM. All the dancers perform the same dance movements.

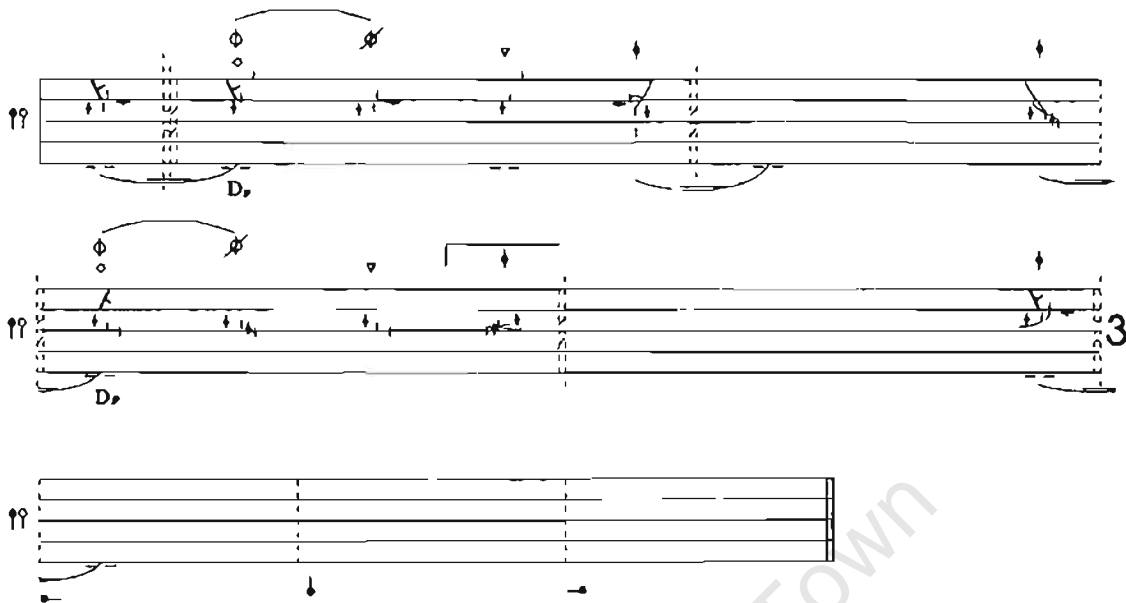
- *Four point*: A few of the dance movements are interpretative. For example, in the 'four point' movement, when the singers sing 'May the Lord of Lords be lifted up today', the dancers lift up both hands. They lift them up twice on either side. Then they also put them down as they squat on either side. The MMM have adapted this dance movement from Koffi Olomide's video song *Micko*. The difference is that the dancers in Mr Olomide's tape have a slower dance that goes with their slow music tempo and that the MMM leave out the pelvic movements and the fists of the hands. Instead, they jump up and down as they perform and then point their hands in the various directions as indicated Fig. 6.16. The MMM perform the same dance movements even when the soloist is singing his part.

They perform the same dance movement on each side, i.e. front, left, back and right before they change to a new movement. In this case what guides them is the full cycle of a dance movement that is illustrated by a full turn on all the sides.

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<sup>128</sup> Musumba, pp. 97-135. She discusses the various characteristics embodied in Kenyan choruses.

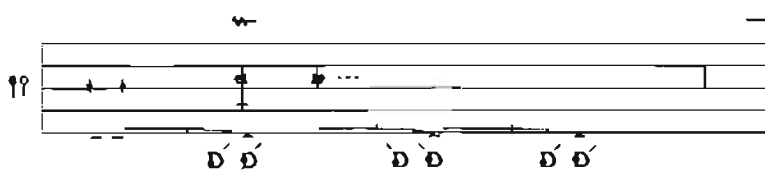
Fig. 6.16 Four-point



- *Isukuti dance styles*: The MMM also make use of some *isukuti* dance styles. They include *amabeka* and *lipala*. The dance notations show how they have adapted these *isukuti* dances and creatively modified them to suit their kind of performance. (Compare the dances as performed by MMM and the neo-traditional dance groups in accompanying VCD) The instrumental section guides the dancers' performance. For example, the lead guitar plays a short melody before they perform *lipala* dance. When the *lipala* dance begins, only the drums play. In this case, the *lipala* dance goes on until the guitars re-enter. They dance *lipala* just as performed by the Luhya.

They perform diverse dances during both the instrumental section and when the vocal part is performing. These dance styles do not interpret the song texts.<sup>129</sup>

Fig. 6.17 *Amabeka*



<sup>129</sup> An interview with Andrew Muiru, 22 July 2003, revealed that they chose these dance movements just to show their enjoyment of the music. He feels that the song is about praising God and so they choose dance styles in praise of God.

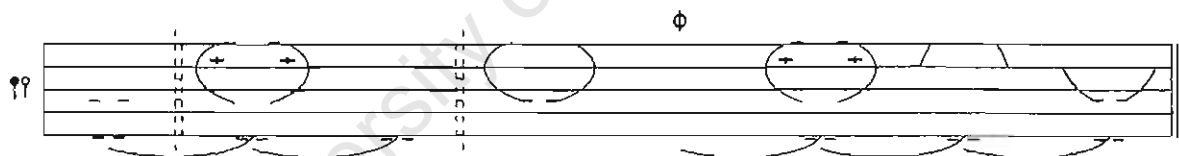
- *The run*: In this movement component, the dancers run in a line on stage and below the stage during one of the instrumental interludes. The dance does not have any meaning at all. They adopted this directly from Congolese pop dance video, *Loi*.

Fig. 6.18 The run



- *'Gym'*: These dance movement components are imitations of the dance aerobics often performed in gymnastic classes presented at local exercise venues such as Bodywise Fitness Centre, Gym and Tone, and Body by Design in Nairobi. The dance movements have no specific association with the lyrics of the song. The MMM incorporated the movement for enjoyment (see accompanying VCD).

Fig. 6.19 Gym



In *Napesi* (I give you) the MMM have tried to imitate the main artists of the video, Makoma. The song begins with an instrumental section that is not exhibited on the Makoma video.<sup>130</sup> This section is highly rhythmic with no vocal singing. The dance movements that the MMM execute in this section are similar to the hip-hop movements of North America discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>130</sup> Andrew Muiru confirmed that this prelude section is only found in the Makoma's rehearsal CD. They decided to include it in their performance

- *Mechanical movements:* The music has incidental sounds like record scratching, a typewriter and foot tapping often found in rap music. The MMM use these sounds to develop their own dance movements. For example, Andrew Muiru moves forwards mechanically and emphatically and types an imaginary typewriter when he hears the sound of a typewriter. This is not related to liturgy at all. Likewise, when there are tap-dancing sounds in the music, the dancers execute tap-dancing as well. They perform dance movements according to what the sounds mean to them. Examples of the dances they execute in this section include the following: 'variation of stomp', 'typewriter', and 'the count'.

Fig. 6.20 Variation of stomp

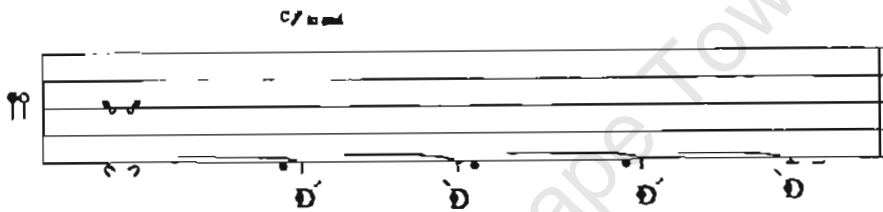


Fig. 6.21 Typewriter

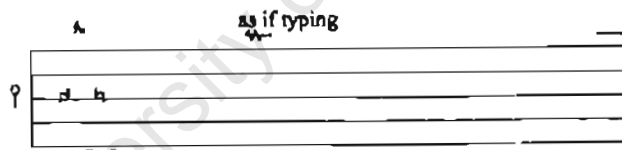
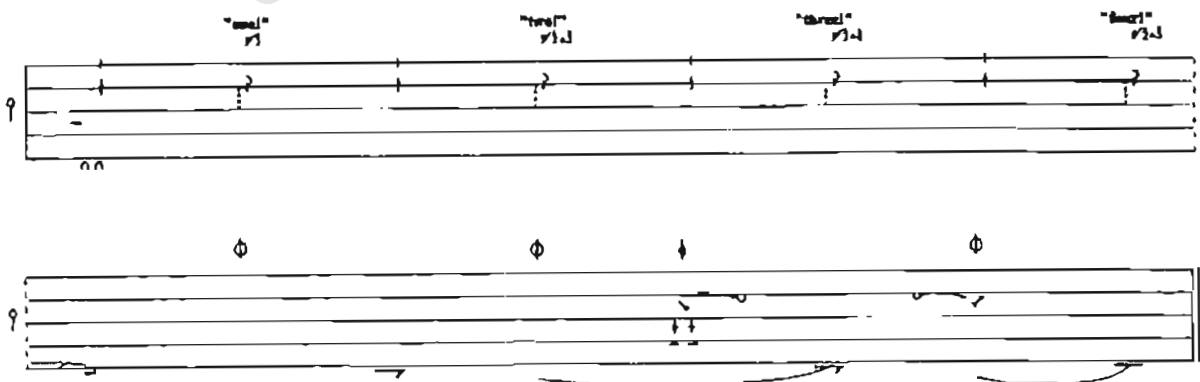


Fig. 6.22 The count



- *Hip-hop movements:* The dance movements for the rest of the performances are directly adopted from Makoma tape. The MMM do not understand the text of the song, nor the dance movements that are executed. They imitate all movements 'wholesale'. They only improvise dances where the videotape of the Makoma does not indicate what the dancers are doing, such as when the soloist is singing and not necessarily dancing.

The following are examples of the dances they perform in this section: variation of knee shake, hip-hop loose walk, hip-hop kick, hip-hop jump and hip-hop arm movement. The Makoma also adopted these dance movements from North American hip-hop performing arts.

Fig. 6.23 Variation of knee shake

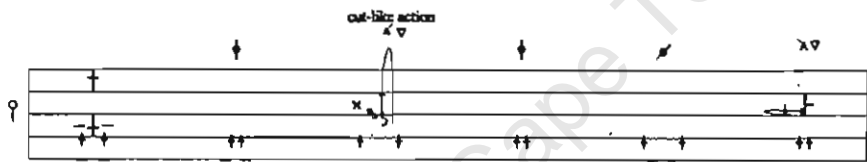


Fig. 6.24 Hip-hop loose walk

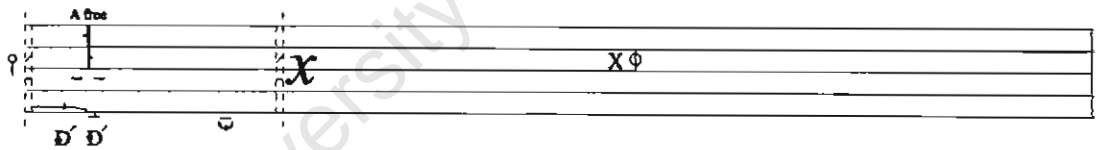


Fig. 6.25 Hip-hop kick

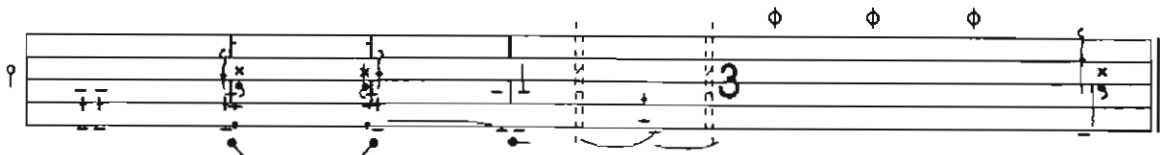
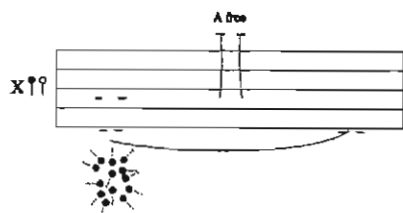


Fig. 6.26 Hip-hop jump



## 6. Educational role of MMM performing arts

From the preceding discussions the following conclusions can be drawn about the educational role of the MMM performing arts:

The performing arts

- convey biblical, social and moral teachings;
- educate the youth on the importance of serving God;
- provide an opportunity for the MMM to learn music non-formally;
- foster leadership skills.

All the song texts that the MMM perform contain biblical, moral or social teachings. The main lessons are learnt through this avenue. The interpretative dances that they demonstrate interpret the messages in the songs. Besides telling a story about daily living and biblical teachings, the drama that accompanies the story songs enact the message using props and scenarios that are common in Kenya. In the process the audience/congregation is also educated on the same issues.

Although the MMCM use the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* in their crusades to attract other youth, the fact that they perceive it as service to God reminds the MMM that their performance is a religious act. Such perception educates the dancers on the importance of using their talents to serve God. It inculcates this virtue in their lives. The responses they gave to the questions on the genre, as seen earlier, illustrate how this virtue is placed in high esteem in their lives.

There are many musical and dramatic skills that the MMM develop as a result of participating in the performing arts. They include:

- The MMM dancers learn by imitation. This activity develops strong listening and observation skills in them. They also use 21<sup>st</sup>-century electronic media to imitate the performing arts;
- They develop creative and imaginative skills required in formulating movements;

- They learn to co-ordinate movements and music and in turn develop a strong sense of rhythm;
- They increase their memory capacity by learning all the texts of the songs by heart in order to mime them as they perform. This is an important skill for musicians.

The MMM have a leader who in turn also trains them to become leaders. The leader usually gives them challenges within the group such as teaching dance styles and movements to the team. By so doing, the members use the experiences and observations they acquire from schools (Kenya Music Festivals and clubs), MMCM musicians, electronic media, and other music artists who perform in concerts to creatively teach each other in the team. In the process they also develop a spirit of teamwork.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter Seven

### The performing arts in Kenyan churches: a theoretical framework

#### Introduction

The previous chapters clearly reveal the disparity between music practices and education within the indigenous setting and those that take place in the Christian churches of Kenya. Not only has Kenya become multicultural in its population and ways of living over the past decades, but the ways of educating people have also changed markedly locally and globally.<sup>1</sup> Kenyan Christians, who have accepted a faith that differs from their indigenous religion, face the challenge of making Christianity more relevant in their local social context.

Minette Mans,<sup>2</sup> with reference to the term *Ngoma*, framed a philosophy of music education where the holistic connections between music, dance, other arts, society and 'life force' are emphasised and treated as 'an organic whole.' She highlighted that, in indigenous Africa, the performing and other arts are interwoven into daily life, celebrations and ordinary work. Mans indicates that:

In performance, the individual becomes part of community, but also part of the music, linking earth to heaven, past (via ancestors) and future (via children).<sup>3</sup>

Performing artists and church leaders should know that music, dance and drama are also encouraged and used in the Bible,<sup>4</sup> forming part of worship as a human response to what God had done for the people. Schaeffer<sup>5</sup> mentions several works of art found in the *Holy Bible* such as temple, music, dance, drama, sculpture and poetry. He implies that these artistic works are acceptable to God and therefore the church<sup>6</sup> should embrace them and teach about these biblical arts and stories through

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<sup>1</sup> C. C Okumu, "Music education in Africa: a media approach", in Caroline Van Niekerk (ed), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Minette Mans, "Using Namibian music/dance traditions as a basis for reforming arts education" in *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, Vol. 3, number 3, available from <<http://ijea.asu.edu/v1n3/>>, accessed 24 March 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Mans, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Dance: Exodus 15:20, 2 Samuel 6:14-16, Psalm 149:3, and Psalm 150: 4-5; Drama: Ezekiel 4: 1-3; and Music 2 Chronicles 5: 11-14, 2 Chronicles 20:20 - 22, Psalm 150: 1-6, AV.

<sup>5</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, pp. 27-30.

<sup>6</sup> The church here denotes the "The community or whole bodies of Christ's faithful people collectively" J. A. Simpson, (ed), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, Vol. III, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 200

the performing arts. Music as a divine human expression is central to Christian worship.

This study proposes that the educational processes embedded in indigenous Kenyan music can be used in church activities for effective communication and educational purposes. This proposition draws on the social theories that ethnomusicologists such as Alan Merriam, John Chernoff, Kwabena Nketia and Meki Nzewi,<sup>7</sup> to name just a few, have suggested. These scholars, as discussed in Chapter Three, have noted that sub-Saharan African indigenous music is organised as social events and plays a crucial part in communication. Oehrle<sup>8</sup> describes this kind of socialisation as "the manner in which persons imbibe the values implicit in their society."

According to Santrock and Barlett,<sup>9</sup> psychology is the study of both behaviour and the mind (cognitive processes such as thinking, memory, retention, and problem solving). As such, this study also draws on theories of learning to develop an educational model for the performing arts that incorporates the development of cognition, which will be reflected in social behaviour.

As seen in Chapter Five, churches in Nairobi form acculturated communities consisting of various cultural groups. The performing arts should also be representative of these groups, exemplifying high standards of excellence. High standards of music performance were also emphasised in the Western churches. For example, during the medieval period:

The monasteries and the schools attached to cathedral churches were educational as well as religious institutions. The cathedral schools gave more attention to speculative studies, and, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, it was chiefly these schools that prepared students for the universities.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Alan P. Merriam, *The anthropology of music*, Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1968, pp. 14–17; John Miller Chernoff, *African rhythm and African sensibility: aesthetics and social action in African musical idioms*. Chicago: The Chicago press, 1979, pp. 155–167; Kwabena Nketia, *The music of Africa*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1992, second edition p. 21; Meki Nzewi, "Acquiring knowledge of the musical arts in traditional society" in Herbst *et al* (eds), pp. 13-37.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Oehrle, "Towards a philosophy of education through music/arts for Southern Africa," in Caroline Van Niekerk (ed), p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> John W. Santrock and James C. Barlett, *Development psychology: a life-cycle perspective*, Dubuque: Wm. Brown, 1986, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A history of Western music*, fifth edition, New York: W. W. Norton, 1996, p.54.

Such training developed out of the church's need for trained musicians. Both Western and African cultures show that music has been a central part of their lives and worship.

The findings of this study propose that the performing arts should form an intrinsic part of church activities and be used for educational purposes in the church context similar to the way that they were used in indigenous Kenyan societies. This aspect is wanting in the church context. Nketia poses the following questions:

Why should African art forms be for ever condemned as unworthy or incapable of being recreated and made a fitting vehicle of worship in an African's own country? Why should the African be for ever condemned to worship only in the western idiom? Is western music less spectacular, less theatrical, less entertaining?<sup>11</sup>

As seen throughout the entire study, the performing arts are powerful media of communication and education. The way they are used in church activities can either be destructive or extremely useful to church members. The arts chosen for use in the church must therefore be culture-specific and highly contextualised in order to be meaningful to the listeners, viewers, and participants. According to Kato:

While the content of God's work should remain what it is, the expression of it in teaching, preaching, and singing should be made relevant. Drama and story telling, for instance, should be considered more seriously in Africa. Any method that helps the advance of Christ's message should be employed.<sup>12</sup>

## 1. Theoretical framework

This section formulates a new framework<sup>13</sup> that could act as a model<sup>14</sup> for educating congregations and observers in churches in Kenya through the performing arts. However, the suggested framework and model that emerged from fieldwork findings and literature studies can also be adopted for use in other settings such as schools, organisations and institutions in Africa. The framework rests on three pillars: the members of the congregation who are in need of music and religious education, the

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<sup>11</sup> J. H. Kwabena Nketia, "The contribution of African culture to Christian worship," in *International review of missions*, [n. p.], 1958, p. 266.

<sup>12</sup> Byang Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa*, Achimota: African Christian Press, 1985, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> The term 'framework' can be defined as "a set of beliefs, ideas or rules that is used as the basis for making judgements, decisions". A. S Hornby (ed), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, sixth edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 510.

<sup>14</sup> The term 'model' has various definitions, of which the two most appropriate to this study are as follows: "a simple description of a system, used for exemplifying how something works or calculating what might happen"; or "something such as a system that can be copied by other people" A. S. Hornby (ed), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, sixth edition edited by Sally Wehmeier. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 819.

subject matter that should be taught, and the ways in which the subject matter should be handled. The three pillars are rooted in communication and cultural issues related to the performing arts within the Christian religious context.

### **1.1 The members of the congregation**

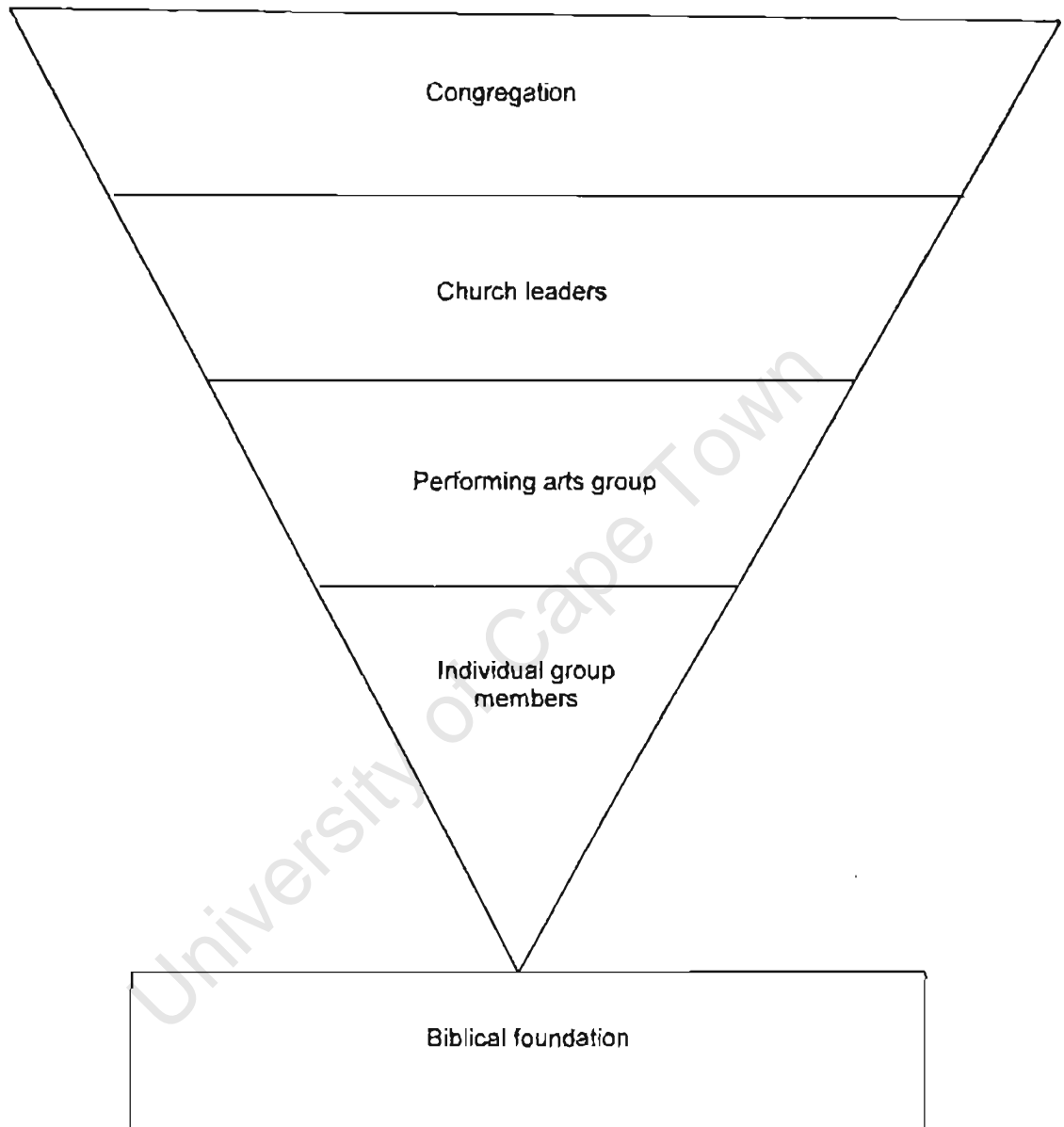
Because of the oral and visual nature of the performing arts the congregation members, church leaders and even the performing artists have little knowledge of the educational purpose of the arts. Oyer points out that oral traditions of music seem not to count or be given due attention.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore of the utmost importance to educate all members of the congregation, including the leadership structures, about the important and biblical role that the performing arts could and should play in church activities. The framework thus proposes that education through the performing arts must take place at various levels, as indicated in Fig. 7.1. The first is that of the individual musicians and dancers who need to be educated in and about the performing arts; second, the performing group as a whole; third, the church leaders;<sup>16</sup> and fourth, the congregation at large. The congregation, which is the target audience of the performing arts group, may want to give comments to the performing artists. For these comments to be constructive, the leaders should educate the congregation on the importance and purpose of the use of the arts in the church worship.

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Oyer, "Black African and Western music: a comparison," *Wajibu*, Vol. 1, January-March, 1987, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> The literary study and case study of MMM revealed the influence of the church leaders on the performing arts. Performing arts are only incorporated in church activities if the leaders allow it. Leaders play a major role in the spiritual, moral and social lives of the young people. Church leaders therefore need to be educated about the arts, their purpose, use and biblical basis. In turn, they will gain knowledge necessary to help the artists to grow socially, spiritually and morally. This kind of education is of a different level.

Fig. 7.1 Hierarchical order of the proposed educational levels



## 1.2 Educational content

Educational content in this section is viewed from two different perspectives: the music, dance and life skills that individual and group members of the congregation need to acquire as well as the kinds of the music, dance and drama that should be taught. The contents are discussed in terms of the church community as presented in Fig. 7.9.

What each member of the congregation learns from and through the performing arts varies at the different levels. Firstly, at the individual level, members of the performing arts are meant to learn and grow musically,<sup>17</sup> spiritually,<sup>18</sup> morally,<sup>19</sup> intrapersonally,<sup>20</sup> cognitively<sup>21</sup> and affectively.<sup>22</sup>

As seen in the previous chapter, morality is considered as a great virtue in Christian life. This virtue can be developed first at the individual level, followed by the performing group as a whole and then by the members of the congregations at large. Morality seems to be an issue that has been given attention even in Western formal school systems since the early twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> Scholars such as Hirst, Hersh *et al.*, Straughan and Jarrett<sup>24</sup> have emphasised the importance of teaching children and

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<sup>17</sup> "Of [or pertaining] to music." Clarence L. Barnhart and Robert K. Barnhart (eds), *The World Book Dictionary*, Vol. 2, Chicago: World Book, 1992, p. 1371. Examples include sound, musical instruments, music performance, dance and music, etc.

<sup>18</sup> "Of or having something to do with the spirit or soul [...] Of or having to do with the church [...] Sacred; religious." From *Ibid.*, p. 2017.

<sup>19</sup> "[T]he right or wrong of an action; doing right." *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Chicago: World Book, 1992, p. 1350.

<sup>20</sup> Gardner defines intrapersonal intelligence as "a capacity to form an accurate veridical model of oneself and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life." Howard Gardner, *Multiple intelligencies: the theory in practice*, New York: Basic Books, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Cognitive means "having to do with cognition," Cognition is also defined as "the act of knowing; perception; awareness." From Barnhart and Barnhart (eds), Vol. 1, p. 839. It may also involve "thinking, memory, attention, reasoning and problem-solving." Santrock and Barlett, p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> "[M]otive to action." Barnhart and Barnhart, Vol. 1, p. 36. According to Hanna (1998), it means "physical activity of dance." From Judith Lynne Hanna, *Dance and stress: resistance, reduction, and euphoria*, New York: AMS Press, 1998, p. 12. However, the physical activity may best be placed under kinesthesia.

<sup>23</sup> J. Welton and F. G. Blandford, *Principles and methods of moral training with special reference to school discipline*, London: W. B. Clive, University Tutorial Press, 1909, p 3; A. K. White and A. Macbeath, *The moral self: its nature and development*, London: Edward Arnold and company, 1923, pp. 107-205.

<sup>24</sup> Paul H. Hirst, *Moral education in a secular society*, second impression, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, pp. 23-24; Richard H. Hersh *et al.*, *Models of moral education: an appraisal*, New York: Longman, 1980, pp. 3-7; Roger Straughan, *Can we teach children to be good? Basic issues in moral, personal and social education*, new edition, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988, pp. 23-26; James L. Jarrett, *The teaching of values: caring and appreciation*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 223.

adolescents moral values, which culminates in character building. Gustafson argues that religious moral training “can and ought to, like other moral nurture, aid in developing autonomous, morally responsible persons.”<sup>25</sup>

According to Hare,<sup>26</sup> “all morality is not social morality - to think that it is, is a mistake that has often been made by moral philosophers and by educationists.” Hare thus illustrates that there are forms of morality that should begin with the individual. In this case, the individuals are the leaders and members of the performing arts group who need to grasp moral, musical, spiritual, intrapersonal, cognitive and affective issues as depicted in the Bible and related to church doctrines.

Secondly, the performing artists also need to be taught together as a team, thereby learning to share and socialise. The skills they should acquire as a team include interpersonal,<sup>27</sup> social, kinaesthetic motoric,<sup>28</sup> communication and evaluation skills, as well as skills in the interpretation of songs and Bible verses. Gardner<sup>29</sup> also advocates for interpersonal, kinaesthetic and intrapersonal<sup>30</sup> development. In his theory he argues that “people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles”, which should be utilised and developed according to an individual's abilities. He identifies seven intelligences, which he refers to as “multiple intelligences.” These intelligences work together to yield the desired results and to solve problems. Gardner defines intelligence as:

The ability to solve problems, or fashion products, that are valued in one or more cultural or community settings.<sup>31</sup>

Chapter One discussed how the young people in the churches in Kenya expressed the need for church leaders to organise activities for them that would aid in their

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<sup>25</sup> James M. Gustafson, “Education for moral responsibility” in Gustafson *et al.*, *Moral education: Five lectures*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> R. M. Hare, *Essays on religion and education*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 129.

<sup>27</sup> The term interpersonal literally means “between people,” Julia Elliot (ed), *Oxford Paperback Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.398. The artists need to learn how to relate to each other. See footnote 30.

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 30.

<sup>29</sup> Gardner, pp. 6-9.

<sup>30</sup> Gardner defines these intelligencies as follows: interpersonal intelligence is “the ability to understand other people: what motivates them, how they work, how to work co-operatively with them.” He defines bodily kinesthetic intelligence as “the ability to solve problems or to fashion products using one's whole body, or parts of the body.” From Gardner, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

spiritual and moral education. The performing arts are very appropriate means of providing such education. Since the young people in indigenous Kenyan societies underwent initiation ceremonies, they acquired necessary knowledge for adult living and societal norms that were passed on from generation to generation.<sup>32</sup> The performing arts played a crucial role in indigenous Africa to transmit knowledge through music, dance and drama and could still play a role to inculcate moral, spiritual and social values as well as leadership skills in young members of the Christian church. According to Munroe:<sup>33</sup>

The purpose for leadership is not the maintenance of followers, but the production of leaders [...] The leadership inspires others to discover, develop, and become themselves.

Thirdly, the church leaders should learn about the nature of the performing arts and the educational implications of their usage. Knowledge of the performing arts will help to expand the worldview of leaders on issues related to all members. Understanding the social context, which includes the performing arts, of the young members of the congregation will assist the leaders to provide relevant guidelines for these members. Consequently, the young congregation members will benefit from teachings that the church leaders will convey to them about and through the arts. Jesus Christ gave this command to the church:

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.<sup>34</sup>

This command concerns teaching others, which the leaders need to do. How can they teach the youth who are in their churches without having adequate information on a key/ central issue: performing arts?

In Chapter Six the views of some church leaders on the performing arts were presented. While the majority of leaders interviewed indicated that the performing arts have a role to play in the church community, some viewed the arts as secular and therefore not fit for Christian worship. This debate is not new as to what is

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<sup>32</sup> James R. Sheffield, *Education in Kenya: a historical study*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1973, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Myles Munroe, *Becoming a leader*, Lanham: Pneuma Life, 1993, p. 58.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 28:19-20, AV.

considered 'Christian' or 'secular', and what kind of music should be allowed in church worship. For example, according to Lightwood:<sup>35</sup>

The custom of arranging popular melodies of every description for sacred purposes has prevailed more or less at all periods of church history, and more especially at all times reform and revival, owing to the desire of those in authority to provide well-known tunes in order that people may not be prevented from joining in the singing.

Apel also confirms that the practice was noted as early as the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century with Gregorian chants. During this time the practice was referred to as *contrafactum*, which Apel defines as:

A vocal composition in which the original text is replaced by a new one, particularly a secular text by a sacred one, or vice versa.<sup>38</sup>

Other authors such as Douglas and Dickinson<sup>37</sup> have noted that, during the great church Reformation period in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, German Christians such as Heinrich Isaak, Nicholas Decius and Martin Luther provided secular folksongs with sacred texts and called them hymns. Those hymns became part of their Christian worship. The fact, that from a historical viewpoint, the church has always borrowed music styles, melodies and performances from the world (contextualisation), implies that there is a thin line between the two music practices. The major difference has always been in the text and its implied or direct meaning that has been used.

Nicholson<sup>38</sup> also gives specific principles that church choirs were to follow for music performance in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He recommends that the standard of church choral music in England should measure up to the standards expected in the secular choral music of the time. This implies that the church was struggling to keep up a standard that the secular choristers had set for themselves. It also indicates that the church still had to take cognisance of secular music performance practices and gauge how these could be incorporated into religious practices. Because of globalisation and exposure to high performance standards, congregations are expecting the same level of expertise of their performance artists as those of secular popular artists. In the Old Testament there were professional musicians such as

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<sup>35</sup> James T. Lightwood, *Hymn-tunes and their story*, London: [n.p], [n.d], pp. 345-346.

<sup>36</sup> Apel, p. 203.

<sup>37</sup> Winfred Douglas, *Church music in history and practice: studies in the praise of God*, London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937, pp. 209-214; Edward Dickinson, *Music in the history of the Western church*, New York: Green Wood press, 1902, pp. 225-267.

<sup>38</sup> Nicholson, p. ii.

choristers and instrumentalists,<sup>39</sup> who were trained for five years in temple music ministry.<sup>40</sup> The performing artists in the contemporary church should also receive training of high quality using the various channels, technology and Christian music educators available.

There is a great deal of material available on dance and/or the performing arts that the performing artists can use to achieve excellence in their performances. For example, the Bonasdancesite website gives the following guidelines for Christian dances:

If you are using dance to present a message to a congregation, it is important that they can see every movement without hindrance or distraction. Dance is received visually, and attention to detail in this area is the equivalent of the preacher using the PA system to be heard properly.<sup>41</sup>

The website also highlights the aim of Christian dancers:

Our [Christian dancers] main aim is of glorify God through our expression and movement. We may bless and encourage others, and be blessed ourselves, but our primary purpose is to worship JESUS.<sup>42</sup>

The preceding discussions demonstrate how secular and sacred music have been intertwined for church music use. By learning about African cultures, urbanisation and interpersonal communication skills, leaders can aid the performing artists in the learning process as they consider contemporary issues that affect/influence young people globally. Leaders need not be ignorant of the changing trends in society and their impact on the society. Cole observes that:

[...] many people are trained to love different styles of music from birth. Each time they hear a piece of music, they are reminded of extraneous things besides music: their parents, homeland, even favorite foods.<sup>43</sup>

Cole's statement signifies the power of association that leaders need to be aware of and educate the congregation and performing artists accordingly. Usually the older generation, due to their convictions imposed by the early European missionaries about African music, considers African traditional dances or instruments suspect. Educating such leaders and the congregation at large on African music and culture

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<sup>39</sup> 2 Chronicles 7: 6; 2 Chronicles 5:1-14, AV.

<sup>40</sup> Cole, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> [No author], "Using dance in church," in *Dance in Christian Worship*, 2003, available from <<http://www.bonasdancesite.homestead.com/usingdance.html>>, accessed 24 March 2004.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Cole, p. 13.

while situating them in the Christian context will help neutralise negative preconceived ideas about them.

Fourthly, the congregations need to be educated morally, spiritually, artistically and cognitively in the interpretation of the performing arts and on how to evaluate them. Moral, spiritual and artistic education mostly comes through the observation of performances and listening to the text of the music at surface level. Note that all the people in Fig. 7.1 are involved in the process of evaluation as demonstrated in Fig. 7.9 and thereafter explained. Bloom<sup>44</sup> views evaluation as an important educational process and ranks it highest in his taxonomy. At the evaluation level learners are able to give value judgement from various perspectives on given materials and, in this case, the performing arts. To do effective evaluation, the performing artists need visual literacy. Mondela and Russell describe visual literacy as:

[T]he learned ability to interpret visual images accurately and to create such messages.<sup>45</sup>

The artists in this case will need to think, learn and express themselves in terms of images/dances/dramatisations.

### 1.3 The education process

Education is a process and there are several ways and means of communicating educational values. This section discusses these processes in light of the performing arts under the headings 'Nature of processes', 'Implicit, associative, observational and oral-kinaesthetic ways of learning', as well as 'Communication'.

This study suggests that the church in Kenya should reconsider educating its members and performing artists through non-formal and informal means. Informal education for the artists will involve their interaction with church leaders and congregation members. Through such interactions, the leaders can inform the artists about Christian living as they observe their moral behaviour.

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<sup>44</sup> Benjamin S. Bloom, *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals*, London: Longmans, Green and company, 1956, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> R. Heinrich, M. Mondela, and J. Russell, *Instructional media and the new technologies of instruction*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1982, p. 62.

### 1.3.1 Nature of processes

The church community indicated in Fig. 7.1 needs to be educated by means of educational processes that are suited to their needed level of understanding the performing arts. These processes can be formal, non-formal and informal.

Grandstaff, Henry *et al.* and Kinsey<sup>46</sup> define non-formal education as “organized, out-of-school education and training programs.” They emphasise that these programmes are deliberate and systematic, whereas informal education is defined by Grandstaff and Jeffs *et al.*<sup>47</sup> as “education that is not deliberate/regular or prescribed.” The authors illustrate that informal education takes place in social interactions between family members, friends, etc. Formal education is education that is “very regular, symmetrical, [and] orderly”, usually taking place within schools and universities.<sup>48</sup> It is executed according to some set rules and an almost predictable order.

When missionaries introduced Christianity into Kenya, most of their education was formal, even in church. Since the performing arts were not encouraged in church ceremonies, many aspects that could have been learnt non-formally and informally were left out of church activities.

### 1.3.2 Implicit, associative, observational and oral-kinaesthetic ways of learning

Implicit learning can be defined as

[A]cquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operations.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Marvin Grandstaff, *Alternatives in education: A summary view of research and analysis on the concept non-formal education*, East Lansing: Institute for International Studies in Education, Michigan State University, 1974, p. 8; Fredrick H. Harbison, “Three types of education,” in Henry Ehlhers (ed), *Crucial issues in education: an anthology*, New York: H. Holt, 1977, p. 186; David C. Kinsey, *Evaluation in nonformal education: the need for practitioner evaluation*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Centre for International Education, 1978, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Grandstaff, p. 8; Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith, “Using informal education,” in Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith (eds), *Using informal education*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Barnhart and Barnhart, Vol. 1, p. 839.

<sup>49</sup> Nick Ellis, “Implicit and explicit language learning – an overview,” in Nick Ellis (ed), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages*, London: Academic Press, 1994, p. 1.

It takes place unconsciously, casually and incidentally.<sup>50</sup> Such learning is also common in indigenous Africa. Similarly to the way that the indigenous African societies taught their children to be responsible members of society and live life according to their cultural requirements, churches can also train the young people formally and non-formally on how to live as responsible Christians according to Christian teachings through the performing arts. According to Weeks:

To create choreography that can, like a sermon, take ancient words and make them resonate for believers today, it helps to have an intimate knowledge of scripture. [...] An understanding of various prayers and scriptural passages goes a long way toward putting clergy at ease.<sup>51</sup>

The Albert Bandura observational learning theory emphasises the process of learning through observation or by example.<sup>52</sup> According to Bandura:<sup>53</sup>

[M]ost human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

It is clear that Bandura holds the view that observational learning exceeds mere imitation. The learner acquires skills that will enable him/her to learn from the teacher's (model's) mistakes and successes. The learner acquires these skills through observation, which normally takes place in a social setting.<sup>54</sup> In the process the learner comes up with his/her own innovative, creative or new behaviours. In the case of performing arts groups in church, for example, the dancers can imitate the trainer's movements, skills and/or performances. However, they can also be more creative by introducing their own acquired styles or change the trainer's styles to suit their context or taste. Four processes govern observational learning: attentional, retentional, motor reproduction and motivational.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Bill Winter and Arthur S. Reber, "Implicit learning and the acquisition of natural languages," in Ellis (ed), p. 117.

<sup>51</sup> Janet Weeks, "Religion in motion," *Dance magazine*, December 2001, Vol. 75, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> Barbara Engler, *Personalities theories: an introduction*, fourth edition, Boston: Houghton Mufflin Company, 1995, p 226.

<sup>53</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social learning theory*, Englewood: Prentice-Hall, 1977, p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> Sharan B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Cafarella, *Learning in adulthood: a comprehensive guide*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass publishers, 1990, p. 134.

<sup>55</sup> The term 'attentional' means to "determine what is selectively observed in the profusion of modeling influences to which one is exposed and what is extracted from such exposures". The term 'retention process' means "retention of activities that have been modeled at one time or another." The 'motor reproduction process' refers to the process of "converting symbolic representations into appropriate actions." 'Motivational process' refers to "adopting modeling behavior if it results in outcomes they value than if it has unrewarding or punishing effects." Bandura, pp. 24-28.

Minette Mans addresses the aspects of immediacy of music and dance that take place in time and space, emphasising that the teaching and learning of the performing arts take place in an oral-kinaesthetic way.

Sound, touch and action (not words) are direct sensory media through which music and dance are learnt in oral societies.<sup>56</sup>

The teaching of the performing arts in indigenous societies takes place through imitation in the form of Bandura's observational learning. Learning takes place orally through listening to the music and kinaesthetically through movement. Mans indicates that in indigenous societies the adult community provide models for performance and social behaviour.

The performing arts provide opportunity for the social development of the young people as they share their experiences with their peers and adults. At this age, young people are usually looking for and trying to develop an identity that will provide a firm foundation for their adult lives. Woolfolk<sup>57</sup> states that:

An important aspect of dealing with undesirable or inappropriate behaviour is providing alternative behaviours for students.

The church should therefore view the young members of the congregation as people who need to have a sense of identity or belonging<sup>58</sup> and are looking forward to being taught by the church for Christian living. In this case, the young members will be involved in 'legitimate peripheral participation' also viewed as 'situated learning'. Lave and Wenger describe legitimate peripheral participation as:

...draw[ing] attention to the point that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. (It) provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Mans, p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222.

<sup>58</sup> David P. Ausubel, *Educational psychology: a cognitive view*, New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1968, p. 421; W. D. Wall, *Constructive education for adolescents*, Harrap, London: UNESCO, 1977, p. 29; Tuntufye S. Mwamwenda, *Educational psychology: an African perspective*, second edition, Durban: Butterworth, 1995, p. 63

<sup>59</sup> Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated learning. legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 p 29

The newcomers in this case are the young members of the congregation who are also the performing artists. As the young members participate in sociocultural activities in the church, they will in the process become part of the community of practice. The performing arts can therefore be used as an alternative way to help shape the behaviour of young members of the congregation.<sup>60</sup>

### 1.3.3 Communication

Although the performing arts are powerful means of educating people, attention to specific aspects is needed to ensure successful communication between members of the performing arts and their audience. Effective communication is necessary for the intended meaning to be realized by a receiver from a sender/source. Wahlstrom<sup>61</sup> argues that communication must be contextualised for understanding to take place. When the sender of a message and the receiver share the same language, the communication is contextualised and understanding is bound to take place. He thus defines communication as follows:

Communication is the transmission of information with the intention of influencing an audience. It is a symbolic, purpose, two-way process that is highly contextualised. There are many models of communication, which serve as graphic representations of the interactions of the variables involved in the communication process. These include sender, receiver, message, medium, noise and feedback.<sup>62</sup>

Several models of communication by Hesselgrave, Johnson-Laird, and Fiske<sup>63</sup> indicate how messages are sent and received. These models adapt Shannon and Weaver's, Gerbner's, Lass Well's, Jackson's, Newcomb's, Westley and MacLean's, and cybernetic models, among others. Each model draws on Aristotle's view of communication with its three referral elements: the speaker, the speech and the audience.

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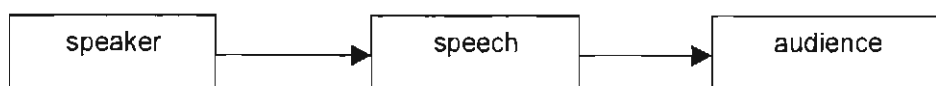
<sup>60</sup> Refer to the following authors who have given apt examples of teachings lacking yet required for the training of behavior in a Kenyan (and to a large extent, African) context. Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Salvation in African tradition*, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House 1979, pp. 104-105; Byang Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa*, pp. 24-31; Simon M. Mbevi, *Dealing with idolatry*, Nairobi: The Prayer Movement, 1999, pp. 6-8; Mae Alice Reggy-Mamo, *Widows: the challenges and choices*, Nairobi: SALAMTA, 1999, pp. 44-55.

<sup>61</sup> Billie J. Wahlstrom, *Perspectives on human communication*, [n.p.]: W.M.C. Brown Publishers, 1992, pp. 13-14.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.

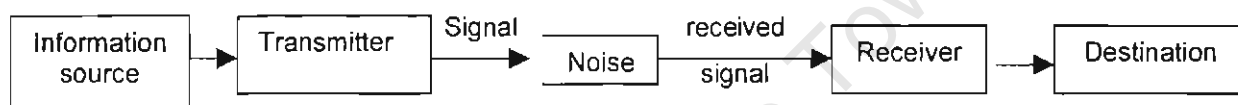
<sup>63</sup> David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ cross-culturally: an introduction to missionary communication*, second edition, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991; P.N. Johnson-Laird in Mellor, D.H. (ed), *Ways of communicating*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 1-13; John Fiske, *Introduction to communication studies*, second edition, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 6-36.

Fig. 7.2 Aristotle's communication theory<sup>64</sup>



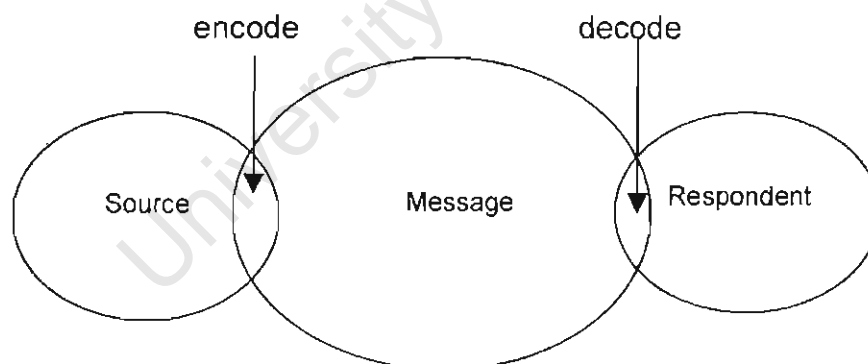
It assumes that the speaker is the sender of a message; his/her speech is the message and the audience is the receiver of the message. When the receptor gets the message, s/he may need to respond to the sender. According to Fiske,<sup>65</sup> Shannon and Weaver adapted and extended Aristotle's theory, providing the following model from which communication studies has grown:

Fig. 7.3 Shannon and Weaver's communication model<sup>66</sup>



Hesselgrave<sup>67</sup> has further developed a model from Shannon and Weaver that he uses to demonstrate how Christian communication takes place cross-culturally.

Fig. 7.4 Hesselgrave's model of communication<sup>68</sup>



He explains the source as the sender of a message and is similar to Aristotle's 'speaker'. The sender encodes<sup>69</sup> his/her message in some form of code like language and other signals that formally exist in the source's mind. The message is what Aristotle calls 'speech'. The message in this context refers to any form verbal or non-

<sup>64</sup> Adopted from Fiske, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Fiske, p. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Shannon and Weaver's communication model as adapted by Fiske, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Hesselgrave, p. 51.

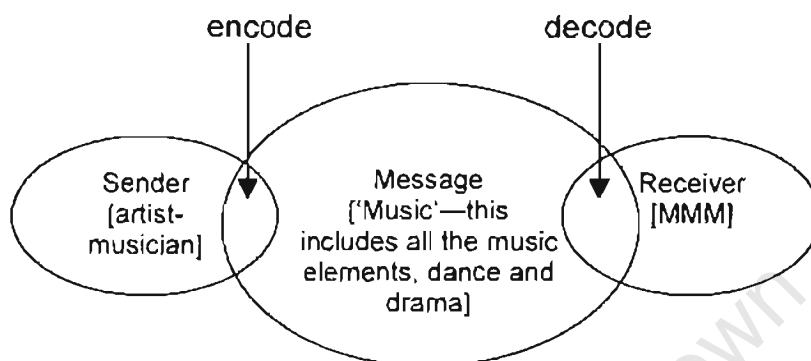
<sup>68</sup> Adapted from Hesselgrave, p. 41.

<sup>69</sup> He refers to encoding as using the mind and body to pass the message across to the receiver.

verbal communication. The respondent, who is the 'receiver' of the message, decodes<sup>70</sup> the message received in order to give responses of his understanding.

In the context of Christian dance groups, this can be reconstructed as follows:

Fig. 7.5 Communication model for Christian dance groups



The dance group encodes the message of the music according to how they understand it through their dance and drama. Goldberg and Larson, Gudykunst *et al.* and Hunning<sup>71</sup> argue that a person's cultural background affects the way s/he communicates. Gudykunst *et al.*<sup>72</sup> specifically argue that the way a person communicates may "change the culture they share."

Likewise, dance groups' performance could also be perceived negatively by those who do not share the same cultural experiences. According to Johnson-Laird:

[C]ommunication is not simple. In fact, it is profoundly complicated, and the revelation of its hidden complexity is one of the great discoveries of the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup>

He further indicates that communication:

calls for the communicator to construct an internal representation of the external world and then to carryout some symbolic behaviour that conveys the content of that representation. The recipient must first perceive the symbolic behaviour, i.e. construct its internal representation, and then from it recover a further internal representation of the state that it signifies.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> He refers to decoding as the reversal of the process used by the source and turning "the code back into a message."

<sup>71</sup> Alvin A. Goldberg and Carl E. Larson, *Group communication: discussion process and applications*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975; Gudykunst *et al.*, *Culture and interpersonal communication*, London: Sage Publications, 1988, pp. 17-19; James H. Honning, *Improving oral communication*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

<sup>72</sup> Gudykunst *et al.*, p. 17.

<sup>73</sup> Johnson-Laird in Mellor, (ed), p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

The MMM's communication media become very complex, especially considering the fact that they use a variety of media to communicate to audiences of amalgamated cultures, denominations and age-groups. Fig. 7.6 shows the extended communication process of the MMM.<sup>75</sup> In the encoding and decoding processes the original meaning of either or both the source and MMM may be distorted or misunderstood and could be referred to as 'noise.'<sup>76</sup> Hesselgrave and Fiske<sup>77</sup> argue that meaning is intimately related to context. What the dance styles mean to the dance group may not necessarily be what they mean to church leaders and other viewers/audience.

Fig. 7.6 MMM's complex communication model

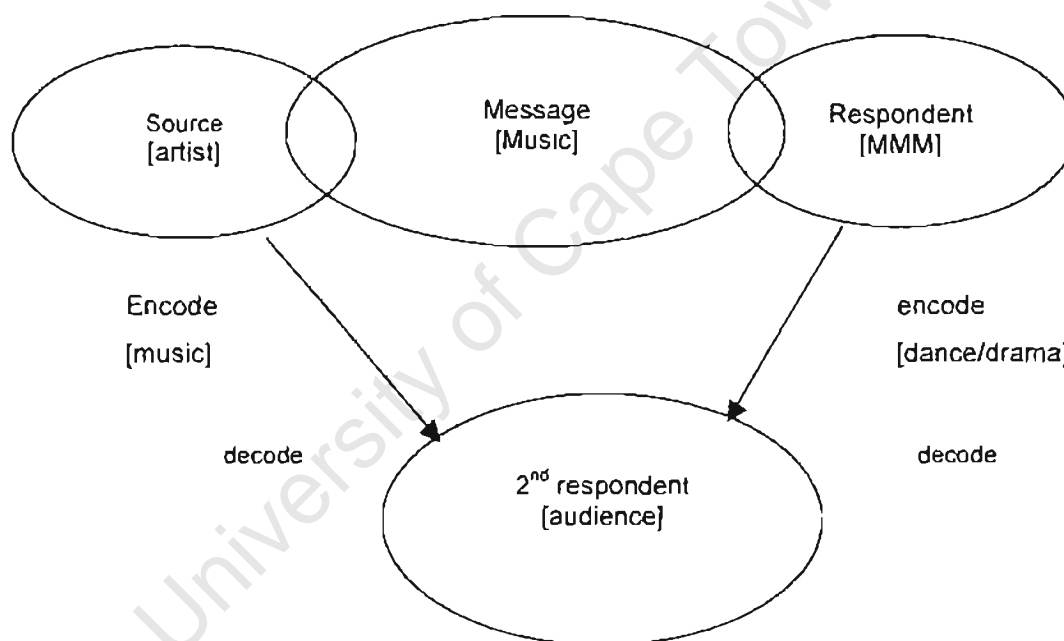


Fig. 7.7 shows the kind of model that this study proposes. In the model the dance group is the primary source; this group encodes their message through music, dance and drama. The receivers of the message are the members of the congregation who have to decode the message. Note that during encoding and decoding of the

<sup>75</sup> Adapted from Hesselgrave, p. 41.

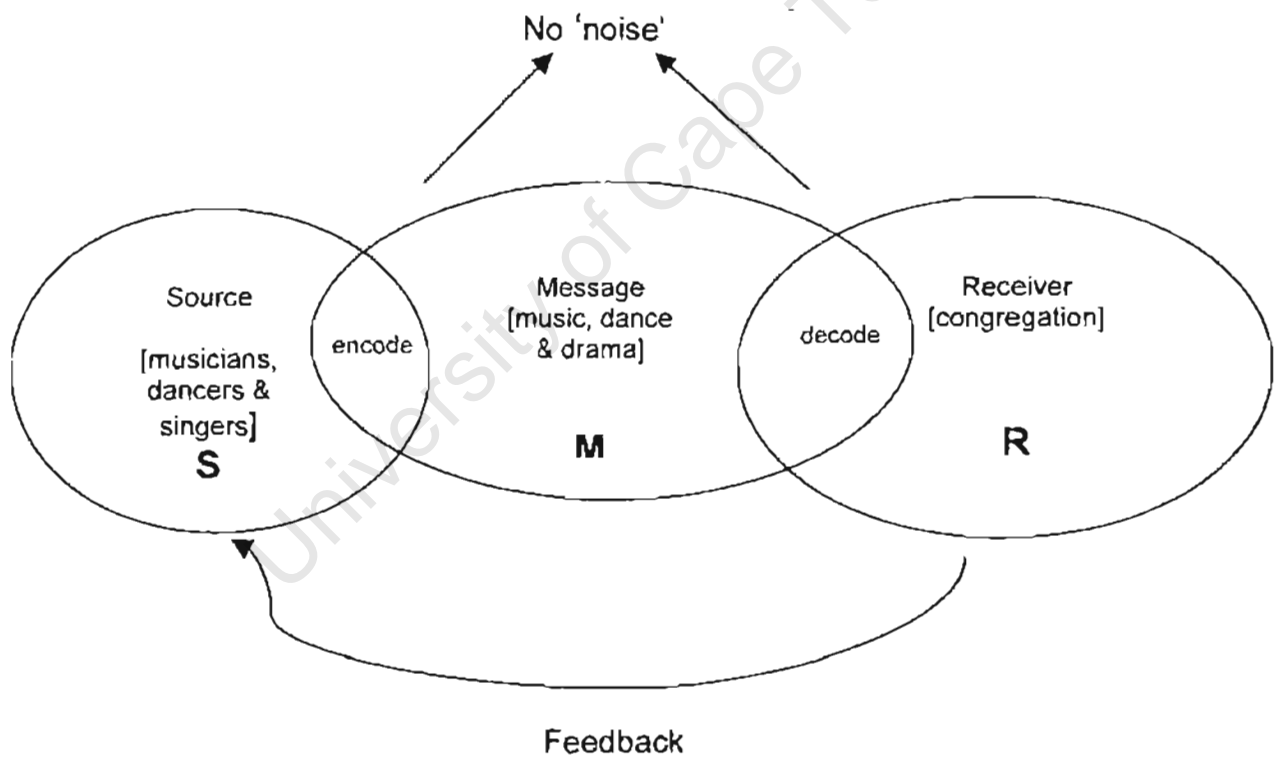
<sup>76</sup> Noise is the altering of the signal "which may mean that the message arriving at the destination is not the exact one sent from the information source." From Forrest G. Wisely, "Communication models," in David M. Moore and Francis M. Dwyer (eds), *Visual literacy: a spectrum of visual learning*, Englewood: Educational Technology Publications, 1994, p. 86.

<sup>77</sup> Hesselgrave, p. 51; Fiske, p. 6.

messages, there should be no 'noise'. This may be an easier and less complicated model since the primary source is the same group as opposed to Fig. 7.6 where there are several sources of information that reach the audience.

The performing arts group does not have to consist of dancers and artists merely. The churches need to organise 'live' singers in their performance to encourage the development of skills of the artists and more participation from the young people. The young people will also learn music education non-formally through the people that they use as models. Since music is a human expression, the artists will exercise their creative skills.

Fig. 7.7 Suggested communication model



Such practice will help them to organise more culture-specific dance styles, songs and dramatic actions. Currently, the Christian dance groups in the MMCM perform to pre-recorded music. However, these groups should try to incorporate live musicians in their performances. In the indigenous Kenyan societal context, the music is live

and musicians are expected to perform a variety of roles, which in turn develops their musicianship and societal norms. For example, Nzewi <sup>78</sup> observes that:

As it was perfected the philosophy and practice of holistic music education, which enable the competent composer to be, equally a competent performer and critical audience. Thus in African music education practice, the musician is invariably the dancer, is the actor, is the poet, is the healer, is the priest, is the politician, is the philosopher, is the ombudsman, is the policeman, is the educator, is the entertainer.

Giving opportunity for the dancers to make music by singing and playing musical instruments will widen and sharpen their music skills. The experience of the dancers' involvement in live music encourages interaction between instrumentalists, singers and dancers. It also widens the opportunity for more young people to be involved in church activities and the music-making process. Dancers will also be encouraged to master the playing of musical instruments, singing and acting.

On several occasions the MMM group was let down by power failures and technical problems (see accompanying VCD, track "Power letdown" for a relevant example). However, if the group had also learnt how to perform the song and instrumental accompaniment, the group could easily present the alternative. It is also important to note that communication is culture-specific. Winwright and Scott<sup>79</sup> mention several signal systems used in human communication: spoken words, written words, sounds, pictures, artefacts, numbers, kinetics, colour, touch, time, space and smell. These signal systems can be interpreted culturally and biblically. For example, the Bible displays purple as a royal colour. The cross is portrayed as a symbol of forgiveness and as the way to God. Performers should be familiar with the symbols embedded in biblical stories to creatively merge these ideas with their cultural meanings and practices to make sense. Kato recommends:

Contextualisation (in Christian circles in Africa) can take place in liturgy, dress, language, church service, and any other form of expression of the Gospel truth.<sup>80</sup>

If the performing arts are not contextualised, the results will be 'noise' to the listeners (viewers), as stated earlier. The less 'noise' a performing group 'produces', the more effective their communication will be. In music the style, language, performance and

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<sup>78</sup> Meki Nzewi, "Music education in Africa – mediating the imposition of Western music education with the imperatives of the indigenous African practice," in Caroline van Niekerk (ed), p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> Scott; pp. 77-78; Gordon R. Winwright, *Teach yourself body language*, eighth impression, Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990, pp 5-125.

<sup>80</sup> Kato, p. 24.

choice of instruments need to be considered. Kato, Miya and Scott emphasise the use of indigenous musical instruments for the purpose of church worship in Africa.<sup>81</sup> The same applies to the text of the songs. They should be in a language that both the audience and the dancers understand. If the song texts are foreign, some translations should be done for the sake of understanding and meaningful expression. In this case the performers need to take the needs of the congregation into consideration.

Since the message of the songs is most important in Christian worship, the text needs to be theologically sound and understandable to the listeners. Van de Laar argues that:

Understanding that God is musical is one thing. Applying this musical practice in a way that is theologically and musically secure is another, and it is in this area that the church can easily be misled, albeit with the best of intentions.<sup>82</sup>

The movements utilised should be meaningful to both the dancers and audience. If the dance style chosen offends the congregation, then the performers should not distress the congregation until proper education on the styles is communicated to the audience. The choice of style must be carefully selected. Scott<sup>83</sup> thinks that if singers use actions or movements in performance, these actions must be acceptable in that specific culture. It is therefore the responsibility of the dancers and their leaders to ensure that their choice of movements is appropriate.

Christian performing arts groups deal with a variety of cultural issues as stipulated in Fig. 7.8. The term 'culture' has been defined in different ways by different authors such as Mair, Ayisi, Oosten and Williams.<sup>84</sup> These scholars indicated that it is problematic to try to define the term 'culture' in a few sentences. This study adopts Ayisi's definition as given earlier in Chapter One:

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<sup>81</sup> Kato, p. 24; Florence Miya, *Building effective worship teams*, Nairobi: Uzima press, 2002, pp. 63–73; Scott, pp. 123–128.

<sup>82</sup> John William Van de Laar, *A theological exploration of the role and use of music for worship in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa*, unpublished MTh thesis, Pretoria: UNISA, 2000, p. 79.

<sup>83</sup> Scott, p. 77.

<sup>84</sup> Lucy Mair, *An introduction to social anthropology*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965, pp. 7-8; Eric O. Ayisi, *An introduction to the study of African culture*, second edition, London: Heinemann, 1979, p. 4; Jarich Oosten, "Cultural anthropological approaches," in Frank Whaling (ed), *Theory and method in religious studies: contemporary approaches to the study of religion*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1995, p. 357; Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture*, London: Fontana, 1988, pp. 87-93.

Culture consists of the ways, mores and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation, it may be generally shared by some population or a group of people - in other words, it should represent the collective conscience of a group of people.<sup>85</sup>

This means that culture refers to ways "particular people order and shape their world."<sup>86</sup> From Fig. 7.8 a variety of cultural issues come into play such as the Old and New Testament culture, the performing artists' smaller and larger culture, the media culture and the receivers' culture. Engeström<sup>87</sup> has also noted that activity theory in education has five principles<sup>88</sup> one of which is 'multi-voicedness' of activity systems. He comments that an activity system is a co-operation of multiple interests, traditions, and viewpoints that interact as a network. Therefore, an individual in a cultural group is influenced by the various activities that come into play in his day-to-day life.

No doubt, the mass media have played an enormous role in shaping the taste of the young people. Mass media have been adopted as their models for acquiring styles and ideas. According to Sizer:<sup>89</sup>

Technology in communication is likely to flourish much more in informal education. [...] What the future holds (and, to a large extent, it's here already) is an informal educational system of immense power and variety. The culture will teach unremittingly, and with great effectiveness.

The leaders need to watch television and music video tapes with the artists and teach them how to screen and choose only what is beneficial for them and the church. The artists can therefore develop discussions from such viewing and discuss them in light of the gospel. Thus the 'ungodly' styles will be challenged and eliminated/minimised.

Although certain trends common globally have been adopted in Christian circles in Kenya, not all of them are beneficial for specific congregations. Liesch<sup>90</sup> points out that "[s]ome worship styles may be permissible but not appropriate." He argues that

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<sup>85</sup> Ayisi, p. 4.

<sup>86</sup> Oosten, p. 357.

<sup>87</sup> Yrjö Engeström, "Expansive learning at work: toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization," in *Journal of education and work*, Vol. 14, No.1, 2001, p. 136.

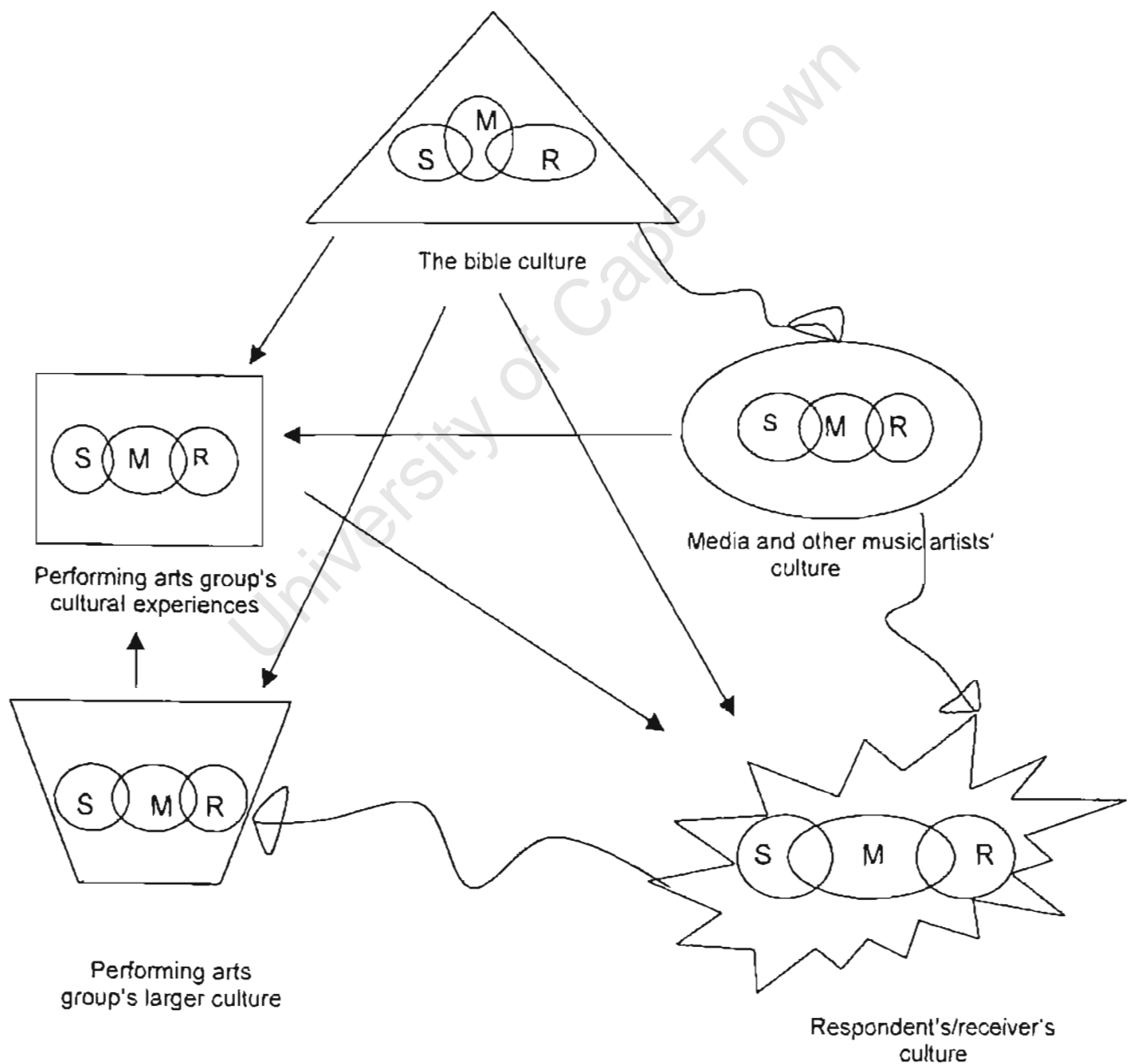
<sup>88</sup> The five principles that Engeström mentions are: a collective, artifact-mediated and object activity system; the multi-voicedness of activity system; historicity which represents activity systems shaped over a long period of time; contradictions as sources of change and development; and expansive transformations in activity systems (*Ibid.*, pp. 136-137).

<sup>89</sup> Theodore R. Sizer, "Education for an age of television," in Henry J. Comp Ehlers *et al.* (eds), *Crucial issues in education*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1977, p. 211.

<sup>90</sup> Barry Liesch, *The new worship: straight talk on music and the church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996, p. 245.

since music is a human invention, church music should be governed by the nature of a given congregation. This implies that the performing arts should spring from the people who make it and their culture. Hence, the people in that culture know best what is appropriate and beneficial for them. Hanna also refers to the fact that dance movements have been a concern of Christianity, which separates the sacred and sexual.<sup>91</sup> This statement is also true of the churches in Kenya as seen in chapter six, which do not appreciate the Congolese *soukous* dance movements that are seen to have sexual innuendo.

Fig. 7.8 Culture model



<sup>91</sup> Judith Lynne Hanna, *Dance, sex and Gender: signs of identity, dominance, defiance, and desire*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

All of the above information is summarised in Fig. 7.9, which presents the culminating framework as an ecosystem<sup>92</sup> for the performing arts within a Christian religious context. At the top is the church community, which is rooted in biblical teachings. A network of arrows runs from this heading, pointing to the groups that comprise a church community, which include the individual performing artist, the collective performing arts group, the church leaders and the whole congregation at large. Note that all four groups comprise the congregation but they have been separated in this diagram in order to illustrate the kind of education expected for each group.

The dotted arrows that emanate from the four church community groups indicate the various interactions and responses (feedback) among the groups. Such interactions may occur in formal and/or non-formal manner and thereby enhance growth in various ways.

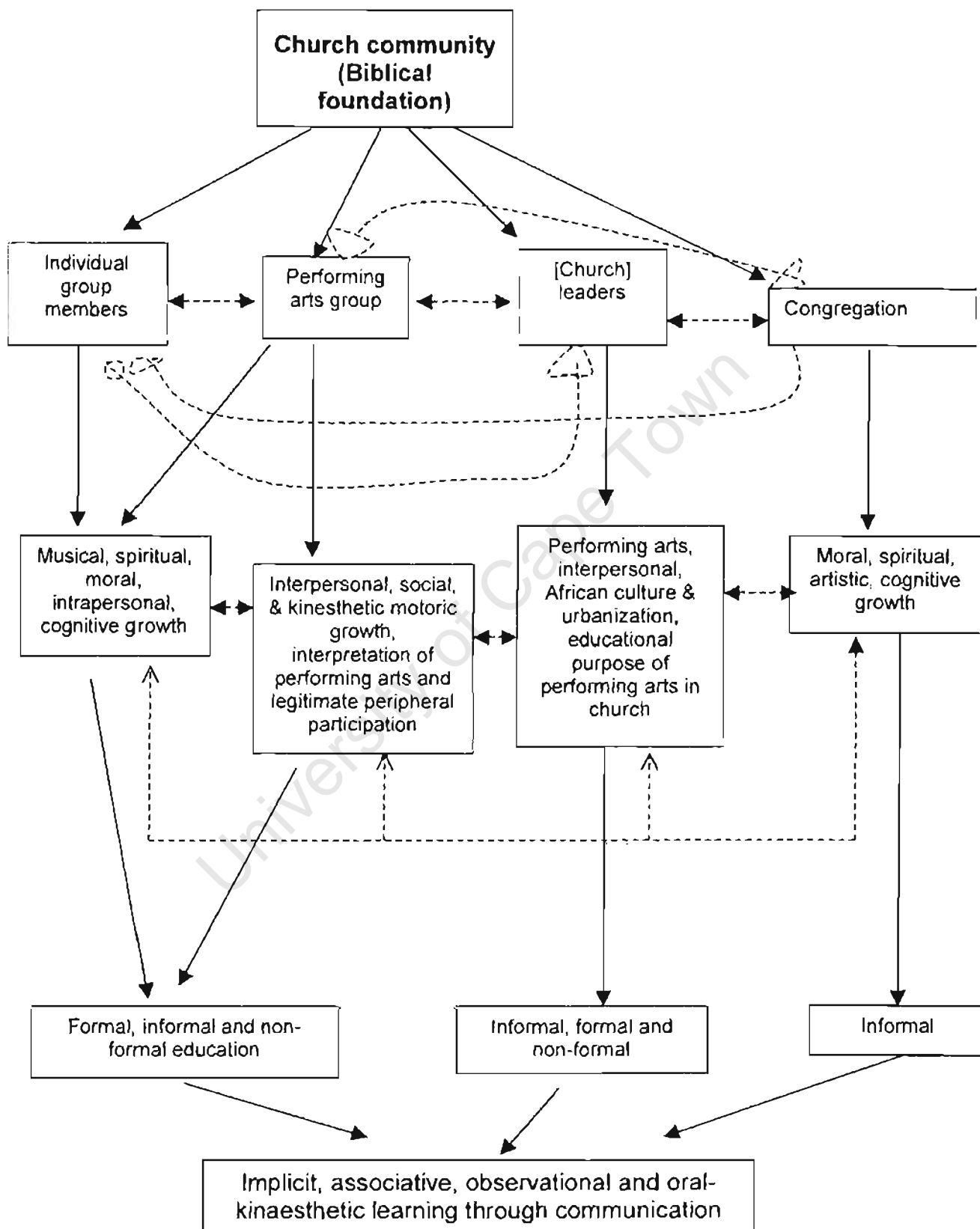
The boxes in the third level show the kind of educational growth experienced by each of the groups as indicated by the continuous arrows. Much as each group experiences some growth, their target audience is the congregation. However, through their various interactions as shown by the dotted arrows, each group is able to help each other in the kind of growth shown in the boxes.

The boxes on the fourth level show how the education of the four groups takes place. Finally, the fifth level gives specific details of how the formal, non-formal and informal education takes place and where this education originates.

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<sup>92</sup> “[A] the plants and living creatures in a particular area considered in relation to their physical [spiritual and social] environment”. A. S. Hornby, p. 400. In the context of the Christian performing arts, only living creatures in the form of human beings are being referred to.

Fig. 7.9 An ecosystem of the performing arts



# Chapter Eight

## Summary, conclusions and recommendations

### Introduction

The primary research question for this study was:

*What is the role of the performing arts in the church in Nairobi as demonstrated by the Christian dance groups?*

The core purpose was to investigate specifically the educational role of the performing arts. To answer this question, a case study of the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* (MMM) from the *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministry* in Nairobi was carried out. This group exemplifies the acculturated nature of Christian dance groups in Kenya. The various performing arts groups that have influenced the MMM were also examined and compared. Hence, the study investigated the similarities and differences between the MMM and three other culturally diverse groups in terms of the educational role that the performing arts play in them. Apart from the MMM, the other groups included two neo-traditional dance groups in Kenya, the *Isukha Amalemba Maternde Ngwaro isukuti* dance group and the Mukumu Girls High School *isukuti* dance group; the dance group of the Congolese artist Koffi Olomide; and Kirk Franklin's (North American hip-hop) performing arts groups. The task was also to develop a theoretical framework illustrating ways of using the arts in church services for educational purposes and to help the church members and artists to benefit from the arts. This chapter presents a summary and conclusion of the findings of this study and ends with recommendations for further research.

### 1. Indigenous performing arts and Christianity

The study has illustrated the indigenous life of the Isukha sub-ethnic group of the Luhya society in relation to the philosophical underpinnings of their music as an important aspect of their total lives. This is done with reference to other Kenyan indigenous groups that had similar experiences as the Isukha. Chapter Three of this dissertation discusses the indigenous lives of the Isukha.

In pre-colonial times the indigenous Isukha had their own way of life that was governed by their indigenous knowledge systems unique to their cultural groups. The total way of life

was centralised and governed by their traditions. However, with the coming of the Western Christian missionaries who brought Christianity to Kenya, the Isukha community, like other Kenyan societies, was divided. The aim of the Western missionaries was to evangelise the indigenous peoples and turn them into followers of the Christian faith. In the process, becoming a Christian meant that they had to discard their traditions and in turn embrace the Europeans' customs, ideologies, styles of dressing, formal education and interpretation of life. These new practices caused the Christians among the Isukha sub-ethnic group of the Luhya to discard their indigenous ways of life and the knowledge systems that governed their lives.

Religion plays a major role in determining ways of behaviour and thinking.<sup>1</sup> Traditional religion is part of the indigenous African way of life, which is lived and not simply propagated as abstract doctrine. A child is brought up to think and behave according to customary laws governed by their indigenous beliefs and religion. Likewise, Christianity is also a religion and a way of life. The Bible, the Christian Holy Book, guides Christians' behaviour, belief system and philosophical underpinnings.<sup>2</sup> The teachings of the *Holy Bible* are therefore taught to individuals when they accept the Christian faith as opposed to the indigenous religions that have been transmitted from generation to generation orally. Since Christianity is a religion that was foreign to indigenous Kenyans until the coming of the Christian missionaries, whenever an indigenous Kenyan became a Christian, he/she learnt the biblical teachings 'afresh' regardless of age and gender. Since the scriptures are written down, the Kenyan Christians, after learning how to read and write, also studied and interpreted the *Holy Bible*. As a result, many new denominations arose due to the interpretations that the church leaders developed for themselves in the African context in an attempt to contextualise Christianity. Such interpretations brought schisms and differing views about life issues and practices within the Christian body, the performing arts being one of them.

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<sup>1</sup> Were, 1977, pp. 1-2; M. F. C. Bourdillon, *Religion and society: a text for Africa*, Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1990, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Myron Rush, *Management: a biblical approach*, Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983, p. 14.

As seen in Chapter Three, in the indigenous Isukha society the environment and occupation helps to shape and interpret their beliefs, inform their oral narratives and educate the society. The Isukha imitate sounds and animals in their narratives, songs, dances and drama. The ideology of communalism that is reflected in their lifestyle and performing arts is held in high esteem. Even the idea of worshipping their supreme god is done communally and their god is not for an individual but a community, as seen in chapter Three. They believe in one Supreme Being that has supernatural powers, is involved in the begetting of children and resides in nature and the sky.

As in many other cultural groups found in Africa, music forms an integral part of the indigenous Isukha through all the stages of life and occasions. The performing arts of the Isukha, known as *isukuti*, are depicted as the ones that the MMM group has adapted. These arts are usually performed in funeral ceremonies. Chapter Three showed how these arts reveal the cultural practices, belief system and educational procedures of the indigenous Isukha. The three *isukuti* drums, *isatsa*, *mama* and *mwana*, are symbolic of the nuclear family; father, mother and child. They reveal the impact of the belief system of the Isukha on the family. The father guides the family as its head. The rhythmic patterns played on the *isukuti isatsa* also aid the dancers in performance and guide them in changes of style.

The performing arts are organised as social events and are therefore closely intertwined with the social lives of the indigenous Isukha. To the indigenous Isukha all of life is sacred/religious. The arts are thus organised also to accompany rituals. On the other hand, Christianity makes a distinction between the sacred and the secular. The music that the missionaries introduced to the indigenous Isukha was considered sacred and the followers were not meant to be involved with any other kind of indigenous music. All other kinds of music in the Isukha indigenous life were considered secular and unsuitable for the Isukha Christian.

The Christians also believe in one Supreme Being, God, who is the giver of life and all good things. He is also regarded as the only God who must be worshipped. The Christians will face the wrath of their God if they worship any other gods. Worshipping both their indigenous and their Christian God is considered unholy. Communalism in Christianity has taken the shape of denominationalism and churches, which have become the new family

for the indigenous Christian. This also presents a challenge to the indigenous Christians who have two families, their indigenous family and the church, which have conflicting ideologies. This has left the African Christian with the dilemma of not knowing what to choose for his/her day-to-day affairs. Christianity introduced two different worlds, secular and sacred. In indigenous sub-Saharan African societies these two concepts are not separated; all of life is religious. However, to the Christian life activities are split between secular and sacred. The distinction between what is considered secular or sacred has been a challenge to the church for many centuries, as seen in Chapters Two and Five. The challenge to the indigenous Christian therefore is how to live as a faithful, committed Christian who is also African by descent.

## 2. Colonialism, urbanisation and change

Colonialism is seen as a major contributing factor to this change. The British colonised Kenya, thus imposing their own system of rule, formal education and way of life on the indigenous Kenyans. The British collaborated with other colonists<sup>3</sup> who lived in Kenya such as the Portuguese, Indians, Germans and Arabs to achieve their purposes. Consequently, they developed towns that have a European outlook, where they engaged in ruling the indigenous Kenyans with a centralised government. Mudimbe observes that:

It is possible to use three main keys to account for the modulations and methods representative of colonial organisation: the procedures of acquiring, distributing, and exploiting lands in colonies; the policies of domesticating natives; and the manner of managing ancient organizations and implementing new modes of production. Thus, three complementary hypotheses and actions emerge: the domination of physical space, the reformation of *natives'* minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective.<sup>4</sup>

The primary focus of this study is an urban city, Nairobi. Nairobi is portrayed as an African city with a cosmopolitan outlook, an international business city, a tourist locality and a melting pot of different nationalities, cultural and religious groups. This information is presented in Chapter Two of this dissertation. As a result of urbanisation, many indigenous Kenyans, including the Isukha, contributed to the process of acculturation. The intermingling of the various cultural groups has in turn originated new ways of life, new philosophies and new music practices.

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<sup>3</sup> Mudimbe, p. 1, distinguishes between colonialists, i.e. "those exploiting a territory by dominating a local majority," and colonists, i.e. "those settling in a region."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

The introduction and development of various mass media have also contributed to change of behaviour and worldview of the city dwellers. Such media include radio, television, audiotapes, videotapes and compact discs (CDs). Nairobi has many television channels and there is a general availability of videotapes and compact discs, which are imported from a variety of countries across the world. These media thus expose the city dwellers to performing arts viewed globally and in the process also promotes globalisation. Therefore, some of what is found in other parts of the world on screen or on video will also be found in Nairobi. The music artists and churches have also adopted some of the performing arts practices found in these countries.

Popular music found in other countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United States of America is common in Kenya. Kenyan musicians have adopted these popular styles and fused them with their own to form new syncretised styles. The major influence on Kenyan popular music has been from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Congolese musicians have formed popular bands in conjunction with Kenyan artists and in the process influenced each other. Congolese popular bands have also performed in Kenya, gaining increased popularity among the Kenyans. The mass media also frequently broadcast Congolese music, shaping the musical taste of Kenyan listeners and viewers. The result is that Congolese music has become very popular in Kenya among Christians and non-Christians. The performing arts background of these popular music artists is presented in Chapter Four.

Apart from Congolese influences, Christian musicians have also been influenced by North American contemporary Christian music. Such influence has come from the mass media that often broadcast this music on general and Christian radio and television stations, participation in school music festivals, attendance and performance at music festivals, interdenominational Christian gatherings, exposure to Christian music video tapes from Africa and the United States of America, and the existence of dance groups in churches. Urbanisation therefore has resulted in significant changes in the activities of churches in Nairobi. These changes include ideological and cultural changes as well as changes in the performing arts, as discussed in Chapter Five.

### 3. The performing arts as education

Performing arts as executed in the churches in Kenya transmit educational values.

These educational values are transmitted through various forms such as non-formal, associative and formal modes. The educational contents vary in indigenous, neo-traditional, popular and North American societal settings. It was seen how the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* group has purposefully adapted musical dance styles, drama, costumes and performance ideas from the performing arts of indigenous Kenyans, North American contemporary Christian dance groups and African popular performances.

The MMM use videotapes of North American and Congolese pop performing artists to learn their dance styles and ideas on dramatisation. Popular and Christian contemporary Kenyan music, which developed because of the interaction of indigenous Kenyans with the West, changed the educational values and processes that the indigenous Africans experienced before. The social, community role that the performing arts played were no longer experienced through interaction as much as before. The music of the popular musicians is recorded on phonogram records, audio- and videotapes, television programmes and compact discs. The audience therefore does not have to know or be in contact with the musicians. The communalism that was so vital in indigenous music performance lost its meaning in this sense. The introduction of discotheques, clubs and hotels provided different settings for the execution of popular music by Kenyan artists. These gatherings were intended mainly for entertainment and not necessarily for indigenous ceremonies, which are normally accompanied with community rituals and drama. North American contemporary Christian performing arts that have influenced the *Maximum Miracle Melodies* also embody most of the educational values found in popular performing arts. The educational roles of the various socio-cultural groups are summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Summary of educational role and content of the performing arts in five different socio-cultural settings

|   | <b>Educational messages (What)</b>  | <b>Education process (How)</b>  | <b>Target audience (Whom)</b>  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>indigenous</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural beliefs, practices and socio-cultural musical knowledge of the people through contextualised performances</li> <li>• Group solidarity</li> <li>• Religious beliefs of the people</li> <li>• Musical roles: music creativity, kinesthetic, team performance, performance skills, making of their own instruments, co-ordination of music and movement, memory, imagination and retention (cognitive)</li> <li>• Language mastery and ways of communicating through language</li> <li>• Vocal skills development</li> <li>• Symbolism of use of instruments in relation to culture</li> <li>• Rhythmic, melodic and improvisational skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal, non-formal and informal</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The indigenous community at large - contextualisation of Performing arts</li> <li>• Individual performing arts participants</li> </ul>                |
| <b>Neo-traditional</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-traditional practices</li> <li>• Moral issues in contemporary settings</li> <li>• Neo-traditional cultural practices</li> <li>• Religious beliefs</li> <li>• Musical: music creativity, amalgamation of styles from different ethnic groups, instrumental, vocal and performance skill building, memory and retention (cognitive)</li> <li>• Language mastery</li> <li>• Little knowledge on cultural symbolism of instruments and dance performance</li> <li>• Live performances but out of context. Have to learn dramatisation skills to enact a situation/context</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-formal</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass audiences and indigenous community. Perform out of context</li> <li>• Educates performing artists</li> <li>• Educates school students</li> </ul> |
| <b>MMM<br/>(African urban Christian dance)</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical, moral and spiritual teachings</li> <li>• Convey importance of serving God.</li> <li>• Musical: dance creativity, kinesthetic motoric, teamwork, dramatic and dance performance skills, co-ordination of music and movement, memory and retention (cognitive)</li> <li>• Do not always understand the message of text. They do not sing the songs (no vocal skill development)</li> <li>• They do not play music instruments, so instrumental skill development is lacking</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-formal</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educates masses (acculturated groups)</li> <li>• Educates performing artists</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Koffi Olomide<br/>(Congolese rumba)</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate on life issues</li> <li>• Educate on various Congolese pop dance styles</li> <li>• Expose life styles of Congolese musicians</li> <li>• Dramatisation ideas</li> <li>• Audio music performance styles such as guitar interlocking styles, harmony, melodies and its execution. No visual representation of instrumentalists and live singers.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewers learn through observation and imitation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masses: Mainly for commercial purposes and to convey their message.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Kirk Franklin<br/>(North American Hip-hop)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revolution of the church music performance</li> <li>• Spiritual issues</li> <li>• God-centred</li> <li>• Expose new dance styles for the church in general in the 21<sup>st</sup> century</li> <li>• Exposes dramatisation ideas</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewers learn through observation and imitation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masses: for spiritual and commercial purposes</li> </ul>  |

#### **4. Theoretical framework**

After the discussions on the educational roles of the performing arts, it was the task of this study to propose a framework that the churches in Kenya can adopt for their services to make the performing arts educational and more meaningful in their multicultural contexts. The framework illustrates that there should be four major hierarchical levels of people that should be educated through the arts: individual performing arts members, performing arts groups, church leaders and finally the congregation.

The framework also suggests the educational processes and methods that should be utilised for each of the levels. The processes include the spiritual, moral, musical, social, interpersonal, cognitive and intrapersonal, among others. These educational processes can be realised through formal, informal and non-formal ways, depending on the educational level in question.

As educational values are being transmitted, the study proposes that communication channels and effectiveness should be taken into consideration. It proposes that evaluation of the arts should take place at various levels in order to maintain a high standard and effective communication, while guarding against "noise" in the process. For the performing arts to be culture-specific and educational, these arts must be planned and executed with the educational and socio-cultural context in mind.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The recommendations made are grouped into the following two categories:

##### **5.1 Recommendations to religious leaders about the performing arts**

- Church leaders and artists should carefully select appropriate music, dance and drama in order to educate people on various issues. The movements and music chosen must be culture-specific, theologically sound and appropriately communicated in order for intended and effective education to take place.

- In order to be effective and to plan appropriately for performances, the dance group leaders should consciously aim to make these arts educational. The dramatic action, scenarios, costumes, artefacts, music and dance will thus be chosen with this purpose in mind.
- Christian dance groups can introduce the use of indigenous musical instruments, apt costumes and appropriate indigenous dance styles that are easily recognisable and understood by the congregation. The same applies to make up, props, artefacts, etc. The presentations should also have contents that are appropriate for the congregation, event and purpose of their gathering. However, the church leaders should educate the congregation on these innovations before introducing them to prevent misunderstandings and misconceptions.
- The Christian dance groups should try to incorporate live singers and instrumentalists in their performances. Such practice will provide more room for the youth to get involved in the performing arts. It will also promote more interaction among team members and give them a sense of identity. More music skills can also be developed.
- The study proposes that Kenyan churches should organise music departments to maintain high standards. A well-trained music and performing arts director and/or minister should lead this department and offer formal, informal and non-formal education to the performing artists. In turn, music schools can be developed in these churches. Currently, there are very few music schools in Kenya, such as the Kenya Music Conservatoire, Ebenezer Music Centre, and Real Music School. None of these schools offers lessons on dance and dramatisation.<sup>5</sup> The churches can thus help to fill the gap by providing more opportunity for more people to receive training in music, dance, and drama. The words of Welch best sum up this kind of education:

Music education is concerned with the promotion of musical development as a form of intellectual functioning in its own right. It is also concerned at the same time, with inducting and socialising the individual into an understanding of the nature of particular musical genres that are important within the socio-cultural group to which they belong. Such socialisation should lead to a critical understanding, an 'ownership' that constrained by the educational process but also open to change and transformation in the light of other experiences (including self-reflection).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The researcher conducted a survey of the music programmes in a variety of music schools in Nairobi between January and February 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Graham F. Welch, "Education and musical improvisation: in response to Keith Sawyer," in *Psychology of Music*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1999, p. 212, available from <<http://www.iimpt.chadwyck.com/cgi/fulltext>> accessed 24 March 2004.

## 5.2 Recommendations for further research

This study makes the following recommendations for further studies:

- This study has mainly been concerned with the educational content of the performing arts. Musicological studies should also be undertaken which examine the songs and notations to provide further insight into the indigenous music theory as well as the contemporary music performed by Christian artists. Such studies should also document these music styles before they undergo further changes, providing data for future scholars.
- Similar studies could be carried out in a variety of churches and ethnic groups across Africa to investigate the role of acculturation on the continent as a whole.
- Further studies are needed on indigenous, neo-traditional and popular dances with specific reference to their transcription and notation.
- The relationship between Congolese popular performing arts and their spiritual connections needs in-depth scholarly investigations.

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## Appendix A

### Song texts and English translations

Isukuti songs as performed by *Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group and  
Mukumu Girls' High School *isukuti* dance group

Wedding song  
Installing of a chief (*Ngao*)  
Shishebo (circumcision)  
Harvest song (*injeso*)  
Buyanzi (love)  
AIDS  
*Baracherera* (They will arrive)  
Kweya (Sweep)  
Birth song

#### Songs performed by the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*

*Imba haleluya* (Sing halleluiah)  
*Rafiki pesa* (Money my friend)  
*Hakika Mungu yu mwema* (God is so good)

#### Two songs by Koffi Olomide (Congolesse popular music)

*Loi* (Law)  
Micko

Kirk Franklin

Revolution

**A. Isukuti songs as performed by *Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group and Mukumu Girls' High School *isukuti* dance group**

**Wedding song**

|                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Solo                               | <i>Waiyeka mukhana waiyekha ye,</i>                                    | She scratches herself [the bride]                              |
|                                    | <i>Waiyekha Rosemary</i>   | Rosemary scratches herself                                     |
| All                                | <i>Waiyeka khumukongo)</i>   | She scratches herself on the back                              |
|                                    | <i>Waiyeka mukhana waiyeka ye</i>                                      | She scratches herself [the bride]                              |
|                                    | <i>Waiyeka mukhana waiyeka khumukongo</i>                              | Rosemary scratches herself on the back                         |
| Solo                               | <i>Waiyeka mukhana waiyeka ye waiyeka wa harusi waiyeka khumukongo</i> | She scratches herself, the girl<br>The bride scratches herself |
| All                                |  | Remains the same as before throughout                          |
| Solo                               | <i>Tsi uisinji kwanza</i>  | Go and take a bathe first                                      |
| All                                | <i>Arumba rumba</i>  | Words adopted from the word <i>rumba</i>                       |
| Solo                               | <i>Mkhana tsiuisinji kwanza</i>  | Oh girl, go take a bathe first                                 |
| All                                | <i>Arumba rumba</i>  |  |
| Solo                               | <i>O uhunyangachafu</i>  | You are stinking   |
| All                                | <i>Arumba rumba</i>  |  |
| Solo                               | <i>O uhunyangachafu</i>  | You are stinking   |
| All                                | <i>Mkhana tsia uisinji kwanza</i>                                      | Girl, go take a bathe first                                    |
|                                    | <i>Uikolekole....mkhana uikolekole...</i>                              | Look at yourself girl, look at yourself                        |
|                                    | <i>Toto...toto...</i>  | Really...  |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX <sup>1</sup> |  |  |
| Solo                               | <i>Aee harusi</i>  | Oh wedding   |
| All                                | <i>Hulila harusi</i>   | Hear, the wedding  |
| Solo                               | <i>Mwana mkhana</i>  | Oh bride   |

<sup>1</sup> X denotes instrumental interlude.

|      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| All  | <i>Hulira harus</i>  | Oh bride – interspersed the solo sections that follow throughout   |
| Solo | <i>Luyali ni lwefwe</i><br><i>Mkhali ni weru</i><br><i>Tsing'ombe ni tsieru</i><br><i>Luyali ni lweru</i><br><i>Mundu musasta</i><br><i>Heshima lweru</i><br><i>Harusi ni yeye</i><br><i>Mwana mukhana</i> | Honour is ours<br>The woman is ours<br>The cows are ours<br>Honour is ours<br>Oh man<br>Respect is ours<br>The wedding is ours<br>Oh bride |
|      | Word interpolations: <i>harusi ya mwana mkhana yabesta mareko, mkhana abe mwana mchenyi khulingana na mila ya zamani.</i>  | The wedding of the bride is usually tricky, the girl needs to be new [virgin] according to our old traditions.                             |

### Installing of a chief (Ngao)

|                      |  |   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Solo                 | <i>O mwami ubolanga uri</i>  | Oh chief, what are you saying?<br>How are you?  |
| All                  | <i>A woiye ha</i>  | (Vocables)  |
| Solo                 | <i>O wamwami mubolanga uri</i>   | Oh those who belong to the chief, what are you saying?  |
| All                  | <i>Ha ha woiye ha wundi abulayo khwenyanga mwami wonyene.</i><br><i>Isukha mubolanga uri</i><br><i>I ee Ngwaro</i> | Ha, there is no one else, we only want chief<br>Isukha, what are you saying?<br>Oh Ngwaro, what are you saying? |
|                      | <i>Rrrrrah</i>   | guttural sounds   |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |  |   |
| Solo                 | <i>Mwami wa khwenyanga</i>   | It is the chief that we want  |
| All                  | <i>Ngao</i>  | Ngao [the chief's name]   |
| Solo                 | <i>O mwami wa khwenyanga</i>   | Oh chief, the one we want   |
| All                  | <i>Ngao khwenyanga Ngao</i>  | Ngao, we want Ngao  |
| Solo                 | <i>Mwami wonyene</i><br><i>Woiyeye</i>   | Only the chief<br>Vocables  |

O baluhya banje  
Mwami wa buluhya  
Mwami wundi abula

Oh my fellow Luhyas  
Chief of Luhyaland  
There is no other chief

### **Shishebo (circumcision)**

Solo *Musatsa woi*

Oh man

All *Ingwe*

Leopard

All *Ingwe (Leopard)*

Leopard

Solo *Utinyi so*

Be brave

*Khushieba woi*

Oh circumcision

*Musatsa woi...Urili mbanu*

Oh the man is afraid of the knife

*Ingwaro woi...musatsa nwouyu*

Oh Ngwaro, here is the man

*Khushieba woi... musatsa uyu...*

Circumcision, the man is here

*Ingwe yamala bandu, ingwe yamala bandu*  
X2

The leopard has finished people. Oh the leopard has finished people

Word-interpolations: *musatsa uitinyi kabisa...*

Oh man be very brave

### **Harvest song (Injeso)**

Solo *Lera matuma ka waraka*

Bring the maize that you had planted

All *Khuhe khubandu, lera matuma ka waraka*  
*khuhe khubandu*

So that we can give people, bring the maize that you had planted so that we can give people

Solo *Leri injeso ka wa chesa*

Bring what you have harvested

All *Khuhe kubandu leri injeso ka wachesa*  
*khuhe khubandu*

So that we can give people, bring what you have harvested so that we can give people

Solo *Lera makanda*

Bring the beans

*Lera mikhonye*

Bring the sugarcane

*Lera obule*

Bring the millet

*Lera mapera*

Bring the guavas

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| Solo | <i>O lera matuma</i>  | Oh bring the maize   |
| All  | <i>Ee kamama yachesa</i>  | Oh, the ones that mother harvested   |
|      | <i>Lera tsinuni...</i>  | Bring sim sim, that mother harvested   |
|      | <i>Makanda, obule, makomia...</i>   | Bring beans, millet, bananas...  |
|      | Word interpolations: <i>mama yaraka mapwoni, makomia nende makanda. Khu litikhu lino, khwenya khulya ka mama yachesa. Lera lera ka mama yaraka. Ni siku kuu. Khusangale</i> | Mother planted potatoes, bananas, and beans. So this day, we want to eat what mother harvested. Bring, bring, what mother had planted. It is a great day, let us rejoice |

### **Buyanzi (Love)**

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| Solo | <i>Lero khusangale buyanzi</i>  | Let us be glad in love                   |
| All  | <i>Lero khusangale buyanzi</i>  | Let us be glad in love                   |
| Solo | <i>Chendi khusangale buyanzi</i>  | Let us go and be glad in love            |
| All  | [Word interpolations: <i>Khutsi bandu ba bashiebwa khuli nende buyanzi...eee</i><br>response from the chorus] | Those of us who are circumcised are glad |

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

|      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| Solo | <i>Florensi usangale shichira mwene umwoyo</i>         | Florence is happy because she is alive            |
| All  | <i>Bacheni bosì basangali shichira bosì bali mwoyo</i> | All the visitors are happy because they are alive |

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

|      |                             |                         |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Solo | <i>A woi buyanzi</i>        | Oh love                 |
| All  | <i>A woi buyanzi</i>        | Oh love                 |
| Solo | <i>Florenzi buyanzi</i>     | Florence, love          |
| All  | <i>Woi buyanzi</i>          | Oh love                 |
| Solo | <i>Mushibala buyanzi...</i> | In this world, love     |
|      | <i>Mulitala buyanzi...</i>  | In this homestead, love |
|      | <i>Ngwaro buyanzi...</i>    | Ngwaro, love            |

## Aids

|      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| Solo | <i>Wasichana tuwe chonjo oo</i>        | Oh girls let us be careful                                   |
| All  | <i>Tuwe chonjo</i>                     | Let us be careful  |
| Solo | <i>Dakitari wa ukimwi alikufa</i>      | The doctor that treats AIDS is dead                          |
| All  | <i>Amebaki wa malaria aa, aeaeeee</i>  | It is only the doctor that treats malaria who is still alive |
| Solo | <i>Wavulana tuwe chonjo oo</i>         | Boys, let us be careful                                      |
|      | <i>Wanaume ...</i>                     | Men, let us be careful                                       |
|      | <i>Vijana ...</i>                      | Young people, let us be careful                              |
|      | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX                   |  |
|      | <i>ndombolo</i>                        | <i>Ndombolo</i> [the dance]                                  |
| All  | <i>Ndombolo X2 wo khulole ndombolo</i> | Oh let us see <i>ndombolo</i>                                |
|      | <i>Wo khusiebe ndombolo</i>            | Oh let us dance <i>ndombolo</i>                              |

## Baracherera (They will arrive)

|      |   |                                      |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Solo | <i>Basiani baluri haha</i>                    | The boys who left here               |
| All  | <i>Baracherera</i>                            | They will arrive                     |
| Solo | <i>Basiani baluri haha</i>                    | The boys who left here               |
| All  | <i>Balacherera buyanzi (Mirembe) khunyoli</i> | They will arrive. We have love/peace |
| Solo | <i>Eee</i>                                    |                                      |
| All  | <i>Buyanzi</i>                                | Love                                 |
| Solo | <i>Eee</i>                                    |                                      |
| All  | <i>Ee mama buyanzi</i>                        | Oh mother, love                      |
| Solo | <i>Ee</i>                                     |                                      |
| All  | <i>Buyanzi</i>                                | Love                                 |
| Solo | <i>Ee</i>                                     |                                      |
| All  | <i>Ee mama buyanzi</i>                        | Oh mother, love                      |
|      | <i>Buyanzi</i>                                | Love                                 |

|      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| Solo | <i>Bayayi bo</i>                           | Boys oh                                  |
| All  | <i>Eee</i>                                 |  |
| Solo | <i>Bayayi bo</i>                           | Boys oh                                  |
| All  | <i>Ambi mulole lwa khusiebanga buyanzi</i> | Come and see how we are dancing for love |

### **Kweya (Sweep)**

|      |                      |                  |
|------|----------------------|------------------|
| Solo | <i>Kweya X3 mama</i> | Sweep mother     |
| All  | <i>Kweya X3 mama</i> | Sweep mother     |
| Solo | <i>Nzie X3 mama</i>  | Let me go mother |
| All  | <i>Nzie X3 mama</i>  | Let me go mother |

### **Birth song (Mwana wa mberi – The first born)**

|      |                                     |  |
|------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Solo | <i>Mwana wa mberi bayaye</i>        | Oh the first                               |
| All  | <i>Mwana wa mberi</i>               | The first born                             |
| Solo | <i>Bayaye</i>                       | Oh   |
| All  | <i>Mwana wa mberi ni shikhoyero</i> | The first born is the pride of the parents |

## Songs performed by the *Maximum Miracle Melodies*

### *Imba haleluya*<sup>2</sup>(sing halleluiah)

Chorus 1

|      |                               |  |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| Solo | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe</i>     | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
| All  | <i>Imba haleluya</i>          | Sing halleluiah  |
| Solo | <i>Aleluya</i>                | Halleluiah   |
| All  | <i>Imba haleluya</i>          | Sing halleluiah  |
| All  | <i>Yeye Astahili sifa</i>     | He is worthy of praise (these words are repeated by the response section throughout) |
| Solo | <i>Aleluya</i>                | Halleluiah   |
|      | <i>Mwenye nguvu na uwezo</i>  | The one who is strong and able   |
|      | <i>Aleluya</i>                | Halleluiah   |
|      | <i>Mwenye neema na rehema</i> | The one who is merciful and gracious   |
|      | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe</i>     | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
|      | <i>Aleluya</i>                | Halleluiah   |
|      | <i>Bwana asifiwe</i>          | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
|      | <i>Yeye mwenye uwezo</i>      | He is the one who is able  |
|      | <i>Mwenye nguvu na amani</i>  | He is the one who is strong and peaceful   |
|      | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe X2</i>  | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
|      | <i>Mwenye neema na rehema</i> | He is the one who is merciful and gracious   |
|      | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe</i>     | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
|      | <i>Yeye astahili sifa</i>     | He is worthy of praise   |
|      | <i>Mwenye nguvu na amani</i>  | He is the one who is strong and able   |
|      | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe</i>     | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
|      | <i>Mwenye neema na rehema</i> | He is the one who is merciful and gracious   |
|      | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe</i>     | Praise the Lord Jesus  |

<sup>2</sup> Emachichi, 'Imba haleluya,' track no. 3, *Amenisamehe*, Produced by Emachichi Productions, 10 min., VHS, videocassette, 2000.

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
|          | <i>Mwenye nguvu na upendo</i>  | He is the one who is strong and loving   |
|          | <i>Bwana Yesu asifiwe X2</i>   | Praise the Lord Jesus  |
| Refrain  | <i>Zambe nabiso azabokazi yeye<br/>Zambe nabiso azabolamu yeye</i>   | My God is worthy to be praised<br>My God is worthy to be worshipped  |
|          | <i>Sanzola yeye bikiza yeye<br/>Sanzola yeye yembela yeye<br/>Bikiza yeye yembela X2</i>   | Lift him up, glorify Him<br>Lift Him up, yes<br>Glory, yes   |
| Chorus 2 | <i>Niongoze Bwana</i>  | Guide me Lord  |
| Solo     | <i>Niongoze Bwana x3 niongoze kwa kila jambo<br/>Maisha yangu ni wewe wayajua.<br/>Niongoze kwa kila jambo</i>   | Guide me Lord X3 Lead me in everything<br>You know my life. Guide me in everything   |
| All      | <i>Niongoze Bwana</i>  | Guide me Lord  |
| Solo     | <i>Na shida zangu zote ni wewe wajua<br/>niongoze.Niongoze kwa kila jambo</i>  | You know all my problems<br>Guide me in everything   |
| All      | <i>Niongoze Bwana</i>  | Guide me Lord (these words are repeated by the response section throughout the rest of Chorus 2)   |
| Solo     | <i>Mahitaji yangu yote ni wewe wayajua,<br/>niongoze Bwana Niongoze kwa kila jambo<br/>Maisha yangu ni wewe wayajua.<br/>Niongoze kwa kila jambo<br/>Mateso yangu yote ni wewe wayajua.<br/>Niongoze Bwana niongoze kwa kila jambo<br/>Maisha yangu ni wewe wayajua.<br/>Niongoze kwa kila jambo</i> | You know all my needs, guide me Lord in everything<br>You know my life. Guide me in everything<br>You know all my sufferings.<br>Guide me Lord, guide me in everything<br>You know my life. Guide me in everything |
| Refrain  | <i>Zambe as in chorus 1</i>  |  |
| Chorus 3 | <i>Wa Milele</i>   | The Everlasting One  |
| Solo     | <i>Wa milele wa milele Bwana Yesu</i>  | Everlasting, Everlasting. The Lord Jesus is Everlasting  |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>   | He is the Everlasting one  |
| Solo     | <i>Ni wa milele Bwana Yesu niwe</i>  | He is Everlasting the Lord Jesus is  |

|          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Solo     | <i>Ndiye wangu na mwokozi ni Yesu we</i>        | He is mine and the saviour is Jesus          |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Solo     | <i>Ndiye wangu na mwokozi ni Yesu we</i>        | He is mine and the saviour is Jesus          |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Solo     | <i>Ni wa milele Bwana Yesu we</i>               | The Everlasting one the Lord Jesus is        |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Solo     | <i>Wa milele Bwana Yesu we</i>                  | The Everlasting one, the Lord Jesus is       |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Solo     | <i>Wa milele Bwana Yesu ni wangu we</i>         | The Everlasting one The Lord Jesus is mine   |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Solo     | <i>Ni wa milele Bwana Yesu we</i>               | The Everlasting one the Lord Jesus is        |
| All      | <i>Ndiye wa milele</i>                          | He is the Everlasting one                    |
| Chorus 4 | <i>Haleluya Tunakusifu</i>                      | Halleluiah We Praise You                     |
| Solo     | <i>Aleluya tunakusifu mwokozi</i>               | Halleluiah we praise you saviour             |
| All      | <i>Aleluya</i>                                  | This is repeated throughout                  |
| Solo     | <i>Aleluya tunakusifu masia</i>                 | Halleluiah we praise you Messiah             |
|          | <i>Aleluya sifa ni zako mwokozi</i>             | Halleluiah all the praises are yours Saviour |
|          | <i>Aleluya tunakusifu masia</i>                 | Halleluiah we praise you Messiah             |
|          | <i>Mwokozi</i>                                  | Saviour                                      |
|          | <i>Sifa ni zako mwokozi</i>                     | Halleluiah we praise you Saviour             |
|          | <i>Sifa zote ni zako</i>                        | Halleluiah all praises are yours             |
| Refrain  | <i>Zambe as in chorus 1</i>                     |  |
| Chorus 5 | <i>Kitu Gani Kitanitenganisha</i>               | What will separate me?                       |
| Solo     | <i>Kitu gani kitanitenganisha na pendo lako</i> | What will separate me from your love?        |

|         |  |  |
|---------|--|--|
| All     | <i>Kitu gani kitanitenganisha na pendo lako</i>      | What will separate me from your love? (These words are repeated by the response section throughout the rest of Chorus 5) |
| Solo    | <i>Wala njaa hautanitenganisha na upendo wako</i>    | Even hunger will not separate me from your love  |
|         | <i>Umasikini hautanitenganisha na upendo wako</i>    | Poverty will not separate me from your love  |
|         | <i>Wala njaa hautanitenganisha na upendo wako</i>    | Even hunger will not separate me from your love  |
|         | <i>Binadamu hatanitenganisha na upendo wako</i>      | No human being can not separate me from you love   |
|         | <i>Kitu gani kita kitanitenganisha na pendo lako</i> | What will separate me from your love?  |
|         | <i>Ufukara hautanitenganisha na upendo wako</i>      | Famine will not separate me from your love   |
|         | <i>Kitu gani kita kitanitenganisha na pendo lako</i> | What will separate me from your love?  |
|         | <i>Marafiki hawaitenganisha na upendo wako</i>       | Friends will not separate me from your love  |
| Refrain | <i>Zambe as in chorus 1</i>                          |  |

### **Rafiki pesa<sup>3</sup> (Money my friend)**

Solo,  
Verse 1

*Nilikuwa na rafiki yangu*

I had a friend

*Rafiki pesa tulipendana sana*

My friend money, we loved each other

*Maisha yetu yalikuwa mazuri*

Our friendship was good

*Nitakacho hunipatia*

Whatever I wanted, he gave me

*Nikitaka nyumba nzuri*

If I wanted a good house

*Alikuwa anijengea*

He used to build for me

*Nikitaka gari nzuri*

If I wanted a good car

*Alikuwa aniletea*

He used to bring for me

*Nikitaka nguo nzuri*

If I wanted a nice dress

*Anakimbia dukani aniletea*

He used to run to the shop and get me one

*Nikitaka suti nzuri*

If I wanted a nice suit

*Alikuwa aniletea*

He used to bring to me

*Nikitaka wanawake*

If I wanted women

*anakimbia Florida aniletea (*

He used to run to Florida to get them

*Nikitaka kunywa bia*

If I wanted to take beer

*alikuwa kaniletea.*

He used to get me some

Solo,  
Verse 2

*Siku moja nilishikwa*

One day I contracted

*na ugonjwa mbaya sana*

a very bad disease

*Nikapelekwa kwa madakitari*

I was taken to doctors

*Ugonjwa huu haukuponywa*

But this disease did not heal

*Waliposhindwa nikarudishwa*

When they failed to treat me I was returned

*Mjini kwetu nyumbani kwangu*

to my town, my home

*Nikalazwa kitandani mwangu*

I was laid on my bed

*Nilikuwa naumwa sana.*

I was in great pain.

<sup>3</sup> Shari Martin, *Rafiki pesa*, produced by Wamaitu Productions, 5 min., audiocassette, 1999.

*Siku moja rafiki pesa* One day my friend money  
*Akajakwangu kunitazama* came to visit me in my home  
 Word interpolations and instrumental backup: *Akaniambia rafiki yangu pole sana kwa ugonjwa. Usijali hata ukifa nitakununulia 'coffin'*

He told me, 'my friend, I am very sorry for the disease. Do not worry even if you die, I will buy you a coffin

*Siku ile nilikufa rafiki pesa alitoroka* When I died, my friend, money ran away

*Watoto wangu waliteseka* My children suffered  
*majirani waliwacheka* my neighbours laughed at them

Word interpolations: *Pesa akaniambia*, (Money told me)

*sasa maisha kwisha utaenda wapi?* Now life is over, where will you go?

*Utaenda motoni.* You will go to the fire.

*Wakati urafiki wako* When your friendship

*Na bwana pesa unapoisha, mambo mawili* with Mr. Money is over, there are two things

*Anakufanyia: anakununulia kitambaa cheupe na* he does for you: he buys you a white cloth and

*Coffin ya kukuingiza ndani.* A coffin to put your body in.

Solo,  
 Verse 3

*Walevi walikunywa pombe* The drunkards took liquor  
*wakashindwa na kutembea* They could not even walk  
*Wakitazama chini* When they looked down  
*waona kuna mashimo* they saw holes/pits  
*Hata bangi walivuta sana* They even smoked bang  
*moshi nao ulipoganda* When the smoke became sour  
*Hata nywele za vichwa zao* even the hair on their heads  
*wakashindwa kuzichana* they could not comb  
*Matajiri walipata pesa* The rich got money  
*wakaziika kwa anasa* But they invested in pleasures  
*Nazo pesa zaendelea* And the money continued  
*kuwanunulia masanduku* to buy them coffins  
*Matajiri walipata pesa* The rich got money

*wakazieka kwa anasa  
Nazo pesa zaendelea  
kuwanunulia geneza.*

but they invested in pleasures  
and the money continued  
To buy them hell.

Solo *Usidhamini pesa*  
All *Pesa zina mwisho zina mwisho*  
Solo *pesa zina mwisho*  
All *Raha nazo baba*  
Solo *Raha zina mwisho zina mwisho*  
All *Raha zina mwisho*  
Solo *Shika Yesu baba*  
All *Yesu ndiye mwisho, ndiye mwisho*  
*Yesu ndiye mwisho*  
*Kwa wokovu baba*  
*Yesu ndiye mwisho, ndiye mwisho*  
*Yesu ndiye mwisho*  
*Kwa msamaha wa dhambi*  
*Yesu ndiye mwisho ndiye mwisho*  
*Yesu ndiye mwisho.*

Do not think money  
Monies have an end, they have  
an end  
monies have an end  
Oh even pleasures  
they have an end, they have  
an end  
Pleasures have an end  
Get hold of Jesus  
Jesus is the end, He is the end  
Jesus is the end  
Oh in salvation  
Jesus is the end, He is the end  
Jesus is the end  
For the forgiveness of sin  
Jesus is the end, He is the end  
Jesus is the end.

**Hakika Mungu yu mwema<sup>4</sup> (God is so good)**

|        |  |  |
|--------|--|--|
| Solo 1 | <i>Hakika Mungu yu mwema , Mungu yu mwema</i>  | God is so good, God is good  |
| All    | <i>Amemtoa mwanawe afe kwa ajili yetu</i>  | He has given His son to die instead of us  |
| Solo 1 | <i>Hakuna njia nyingine yakuturidisha kwa Bawna</i><br><i>Ila ni kwa kupitia njia yake Masia {A yo yo yo}</i>  | There is no other way to turn us back to the Lord<br>(except through the way of the Messiah)   |
| Solo 2 | <i>Amelitoa uhai wake ili wewe pamoja nami</i><br><i>Tupate kuokolewa</i>                                      | He has given His life so that you and I<br>can get saved                                       |
| All    | <i>Hakika Mungu yu mwema , Mungu yu mwema</i><br><i>Amemtoa mwanawe afe kwa ajili yetu</i>                     | God is so good, God is good<br>He has given His son to die instead of us                       |
| Solo 1 | <i>Kwa kupigwa kwake Masia</i><br><i>Kwakuteswa kwake huyu Yesu</i><br><i>Leo siku ya leo naweza kuokolewa</i> | By the stripes of Messiah<br>By the persecution of this Jesus<br>Today this day I can be saved |
| Solo 2 | <i>Alimwaga damu {yeye} ili wewe pamoja</i><br><i>Nami tupate kuokolewa</i>                                    | He shed His blood so that you and<br>I can be saved  |
| All    | <i>Hakika Mungu yu mwema, Mungu yu mwema</i><br><i>Amemtoa mwanawe afe kwa ajili yetu</i>                      | God is so good, God is good<br>He has given His son to die instead of us                       |
| Solo 1 | <i>Mungu yu mwema</i>  | God is good  |
| All    | <i>Aa Aa yu mwema aa</i>   | Oh, oh he is good  |
| Solo 1 | <i>Mungu yu mwema</i>  | God is good  |
| All    | <i>Aa Aa yu mwema aa</i>   | Oh, oh he is good  |
| Solo 1 | <i>Anatupenda Bwana Yu Mwema</i>   | He loves us, God is good   |
| All    | <i>Aa Aa yu mwema aa</i>   | Oh, oh he is good  |
| Solo 1 | <i>Ainuliwe Bwana yu mwema</i>   | Let the Lord be exalted, He is good  |

<sup>4</sup> John Kamau, 'Hakika Mungu yu mwema', track no 1, *Hakika Mungu yu mwema*, [n.p.], 4 min., audiotape, 2001.

|        |                                  |                                   |
|--------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|        | <i>Apewe sifa Bwana yu mwema</i> | Let him be praised, he is good    |
| All    | <i>Aa Aa yu mwema aa</i>         | Oh, oh he is good                 |
| Solo 1 | <i>Aabudiwe Bwana yu Mwema</i>   | Let him be worshipped, he is good |
| All    | <i>Aa Aa yu mwema aa</i>         | Oh, oh he is good                 |
| Solo 1 | <i>Apewe sifa Bwana yu mwema</i> | Let him be praised, he is good    |
| All    | <i>Apewe sifa yu mwema aa</i>    | Oh, oh he is good                 |
| Solo 1 | <i>Ainuliwe Bwana yu mwema</i>   | Let him be exalted, he is good    |
| All    | <i>Ainuliwe yu mwema aa</i>      | Let him be exalted, he is good    |

#### Ullulations

Word-interpolations: *Twende* (Let us go)

*Tumtukuze Yesu masiya*

Let us praise Jesus the Messiah

*Wewe ndiye*

You are the one

Speech-melody: *sifa, sifa, sifa zote kwa Yesu* (Praise, praise, all praise to Jesus)

|        |                                       |  |
|--------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Solo 1 | <i>Mikono juu, mikono juu</i>         | Hands up, hands up   |
| All    | <i>Yesu ni Bwana X3</i>               | Jesus is Lord  |
| Solo 1 | <i>Tumwimbie Bwana Yesu wa milele</i> | Let us sing to the Everlasting Lord                              |
| All    | <i>Yesu ni Bwana</i>                  | Jesus is Lord (response that intersperses the following section) |
| Solo 1 | <i>Tumwimbie Bwana wa mabwana</i>     | Let us sing for the Lord of Lords                                |
|        | <i>Tumwimbie Bwana Yesu wa milele</i> | Let us sing to the Everlasting Lord                              |
|        | <i>Bwana wa mapendo Mungu Yesu we</i> | The Lord of love, God Jesus, oh                                  |

Word-interpolations: *shuka chini* (come down), *mikono juu* (hands up), *tushangilie Bwana wa uzima* (let us praise the Lord of life)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Word-interpolations: *sifa twazileta kwa nyumba ya Bwana* (We bring praise to the house of the Lord)

#### Ullulations

Word-interpolations: *Maandiko yanasema Bwana Yesu asifiwe kila wakati. Asifiwe na kila mmoja kwakuwa ni yeye mkuu. Yeye peke yake astahili kusifiwa na kuabudiwa. Yeye ni Mungu mkuu.* (The Scriptures say that the Lord Jesus is to be praised all the

time. He is to be praised by all since he is the great one. He alone, deserves to be praised and worshipped. He is the great God)

|        |                                    |                                   |
|--------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Solo 1 | <i>Mikono juu</i>                  | Hands up                          |
| All    | <i>Yesu ni Bwana</i>               | Jesus is Lord                     |
| Solo 1 | <i>Apewe sifa Bwana wa majeshi</i> | Let him be praised, Lord of hosts |
| All    | <i>Yesu ni Bwana</i>               | Jesus is Lord                     |
|        | <i>Tushuke... aa...</i>            | Let us get down                   |
| All    | <i>Yesu ni Bwana</i>               | Jesus is Lord                     |

### **Na pesi <sup>5</sup>(I have given you)**

|                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Na pesi yo nde motema nanga</i>    | I have given you my heart       |
| <i>Yo moko Zambe salela yango</i>     | You alone are God, use me       |
| <i>Na elikya na nga napesi yo</i>     | I give you my hope              |
| <i>Nzambe salela nga salela nga</i>   | God use me, use me              |
| <i>Na pesi yo Yahwe motema na nga</i> | Yahwe I have given you my heart |
| <i>Yo moko Zambe salela yango</i>     | You alone are God, use me       |
| <i>Na elikya na nga napesi yo</i>     | I give you my hope              |
| <i>Nzambe salela nga salela nga</i>   | God use me, use me              |

|                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Natamboli na mokili oyo nkolo</i> | I have walked in this world Lord |
| <i>Nazui nde lobiko te nkolo</i>     | I did not get healed Lord        |
| <i>Na pesi yo motema na nga</i>      | I give you all my burdens        |
| <i>Nkolo salela nga</i>              | Lord use me                      |

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Yo nde mobikisi na nga</i>            | You are my healer                   |
| <i>Solo na kazanga eloko mokote</i>      | Truly I will not lack anything      |
| <i>Yonde ozalaka na nga</i>              | for you are with me                 |
| <i>Epai na yo nde na pesi motema</i>     | I have given you my heart           |
| <i>Yo moto na mokili ozakoyebate</i>     | You worldly man, you do not know    |
| <i>Miso na nkolo masia eza kotala yo</i> | The Lord Messiah's eyes can see you |
| <i>Soko okimi likolo okimi pe na se</i>  | If you run up or down               |
| <i>Miso na nkolo masia eza kotala yo</i> | The Lord Messiah's eyes can see you |

<sup>5</sup> Makoma. "Napesi", track 1, *Nzambe na Bomoyi*, produced by Westcoast Music Production, videocassette, VHS, 4 min.,s 2001.

*Neti yona azalaki na kati ya mai*

Like Jonah when he was in the middle  
of the ocean

*Miso na Yesu masia emonaki ye*

The Lord Jesus' eyes saw him

*Akimaki na bateau abosanaki masia*

he got into the ship and forgot the Lord

*Miso na Yesu masia emonaki ye*

The Lord Jesus' eyes saw him

*Bo pesa motema epai na Zambe*

Bring your hearts to God

*Ye moko masia anlela yo*

so that he alone, the Lord can use it

*Ndimelaka ukombo na Yesu Masia Nzambe*

Accept the name of Jesus Messiah,  
God

*Akobikisa molimo na yo nde ko na nga*

He will heal your heart, brother

*Ndimeyaka nkombo na Yesu masia  
Nzambe*

Accept the name of Jesus  
Messiah, God

University of Cape Town

## Two songs by Koffi Olomide (Congolese popular music)

### *Loi* (Law)

|                               |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Chorus-response:              | <i>Ah ningisile ba yaya ningisile</i>  | Dance oh ladies dance   |
| Solo                          | <i>Shamukwale yako pesa mbongo</i>   | Shamukwale come and bring money)  |
| Word interpolations           | <i>Loi</i>   | law   |
| Solo                          | <i>Shamukwale papa mbongo</i>  | Shamukwale, father, bring   |
|                               | <i>Ya buwili kibamba twakubundu pesa mbongo</i>  | Please bring a lot of money   |
|                               | <i>Abomoi nga pesa ka nga abomi nga a pesa ka nga</i>  | Bring, bring money  |
| <i>Les Cries</i> <sup>6</sup> | <i>Nako banga bino te nako nzambe na nga</i>   | I will not fear them, I will fear my god)   |
| Word-interpolations           | <i>aleluya, chivundu</i>   | <i>Haleluya</i> , (vocables)  |
| <i>Les cries</i>              | <i>tala bingeli X10 mama tala bingeli</i>  | Look at what glitters, mama look at what glitters                                     |
| Word-interpolations (solo)    | <i>Lokuta eyaka na assangeur, verite eye na escalier mpe ekami</i>                                 | Lies come via a lift and truth comes by stairs but it reaches                         |
|                               | <i>Tout le monde position.</i>   | Everybody take your positions   |
| Speech-melody                 | <i>Nzele lai lai</i>   | The winner. Lady  |
| Word-interpolations (solo)    | <i>Sidonokoteko cheche charlouil le prophete de la sape. Koteoyo ba solution ezuama. Ye!</i>       | Prophet of dressing there is an answer. There's a solution this way                   |
|                               | <i>Mokolo bilanga Ye! Kombo na nga Liyunzi bango bazalaki na lisasi kasi bakoki koboma nga te.</i> | They had a gun but they could not kill me. I am the farm owner and my name is Liyunzi |

<sup>6</sup> The Congolese refer to *les cries* as shouts or cries. Although they may sound like sung melodies to the listener, the Congolese do not regard them as songs. Men in high tessitura voice (falsetto) usually perform these songs. One who sings such a section is referred to as *atalaku*. Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Nday, 6 February 2002, Prof. Adepo Yapo, 30 August 2003. Okumu, p. 46, refers to them as animation. He indicated that Kenyans call/label these songs 'pandisa'.

|                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Les Cries</i> (solo) | <i>Yumbani yukana kosi o tolema kudile ya lelo toko lala wapi. Mama e kuna makambo a ye biso to suka wapi mama ye brukutu ma.</i> |   |
|                         | <i>Ba yebate mama ba yebate</i>   | They should not know, mama, they should not know  |
| Chorus-response         | <i>Nzomo</i>  | [Name of dance]   |
| <i>Les Cries</i>        | <i>Ba yebate mama ba yebate</i>   | They should not know mama, they should not know   |
| Chorus-response         | <i>Nzomo</i>  | [Name of dance]   |
| <i>Les Cries</i>        | <i>Ndomoblo X3</i>  | <i>Ndomoblo X3</i> [name of dance]  |
| <i>Les Cries</i> (solo) | <i>Tala tobinaki kebo na quarteier sela ndombolo tsitutala, tsitu tambula malembe</i>   | Look <i>tilu</i> . We danced in Quartier Latin. The great one let's dance.  |
|                         | <i>kitisela, ndombolo, tsitu</i>  | Walk slowly   |
|                         | <i>Ndombolo. Mwana tata tala maman nzule nzule tala bana bakokatisa. Mukulu mbaka ndombolo ya tsitu tale buka, buka, buka.</i>    | <i>Ndombolo</i> the world's winner. The father of staton, <i>ndombolo</i> . Child, look at <i>Nzule</i> . Look at the children, they will defeat him. The great one! Dance <i>ndombolo</i> of <i>tsitula</i> . Break, break, break. |

Word-interpolations (solo)

*Madiela na Nicolette avele na aminata pepe ya coup press*

|                         |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| <i>Les cries</i>        | <i>Nawi nawio nga nawi</i>  | (vocables)   |
| Chorus-response         | <i>Kocho, kocho</i>   | "  |
| <i>Les cries</i>        | <i>Libela a yaye. Libela libela</i>                                       | "  |
| Chorus-response         | <i>Kocho, kocho</i>   | "  |
| <i>Les cries</i> (solo) | <i>E papa na nga kolanda choko te. E papa na nga kolanda quartier te.</i> | I am dying, I am dying, me. I am dying forever. Oh father, do not follow beauty, but follow her place of residence |

## Micko

### Verse 1

*Ici planet chachou. Neti kaka neti te. Mokolo bilanga  
Niko si ce vrai kabomba esala rien  
Niko ezamawa kobomba esala rien  
Nako kufa nanga une Foi pour toute  
Po na tika ba souffrance pe la joie  
Natikela baye balinga bango fe  
Miso elulaka motema e ponaka rien  
Nazalaki kabanza basi nyoso ya pembe  
Bakokana nzoka eza nango bongo te*

*Kikwaza fleur ba jardin ba sengaka ba jardienier  
Kikwaza fruit elongaka lianga  
Kikwaza sucre ekomisaka sukali  
Kikwaza diama elate elonga moto  
Kikwaza imeuble oyetambolaka  
Ata molili niko ako ngengaka niko.*

### Vers 2

*Clouis katumba comme singe songe horloge  
Nzete ezua niko te memelaye le cadeau kasi niko tika tika  
Tika ee ya niko te  
Niko linga nga okomisanga riche  
Niko linga nga nakoma moto ya mbongo  
Na koma muuama koleka tout le mvuma respect du paix on la  
Suspide espere de skoni craisis  
Papa na mama vukisa retour  
Ndeke efelo pourquoi bo yebisaki nga te*

*Nasala keba na miso za miconfusion  
Sourir ya niko ezui nga na motambo.  
Tamboe na kulee, nasiliee  
Niko na mai na miso niko butu moi nazako lela yo X2  
Wapi yo kaniko bukaji  
Niko natiaki nde faute na yo faute na ecevale  
Cassette ya l'amour ekangi nga na kingo.  
Ba fette karate eko kanga aa  
Niko oyeba kati ndeko butu moi nazakolela yo*

*Niko oyeba kalibuko butu moi naza kolela yo*

*Onse cours X2 kaliko bukaji sauner nga X2 kalikobuka*

*Ba bomaka lianzi na lisasi te*

*Bakombaka mpe zamba te*

*Bokambo, edi lokoka match eza ya 3 point.*

### **General English translation**

#### Verse 1

This is Pianette Chachou

Whether it is true or not, oh garden owner

If it is true, there is no need of hiding it

It is a pity to hide because it does not benefit

I will die only once so that I can leave all the sorrows and joy behind

I will leave it to those that love freedom

The eyes desire but the heart chooses

I used to think that all light skinned women are the same

But it is not so

Kikwaza, garden flowers need a gardener

Kiwaza, the fruit glitters

Kikwaza, sugar does something

Kikwaza, clothing surpasses all

Kikwaza, the electric stairs.

Even in the dark Micko shines

#### Vers 2

You cannot get Micko on the tree

Give him gifts but leave Micko alone

Leave what is Micko's

Micko, love me and make me rich

Micko, love me so that I can be a rich man

I have become richer than the rich

Why didn't you tell me when the plane was leaving

I am cautious about the dreadful eyes

The laughter of Micko causes my body to tremble

My body goes down, I faint

Micko I have water in my eyes

Day and night I cry for you

Where are you oh Micko Bukaji.

Micko, I say it is your fault; it is the fault of the love cassette that has held my throat  
The karate game has held me  
Micko, know that day and night I cry for you  
Help me X2 kalikobuka  
Bakambo, edi lokoko, the game is a 3 point

## Kirk Franklin

### Revolution<sup>7</sup> (Audiotape)

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Spoken Text:<br>Voice 1 | You are not a Christian artist; you are really a secular artist posing as a Christian artist. (Word-interpolations, shrills, conversations in the background).   |
| Voice 2                 | Order in court X3  |
| Judge                   | Mr. Coleman, will you please read the charges  |
| Jury                    | Charge number 1: Trying to take the gospel to the world;<br>Charge 2: Making gospel music secular;<br>Charge number 3: Tearing down the walls of religion.<br>We the jury find the defendant in the case of Kirk Franklin versus the state of the world the verdict is... [Suspense] |
| Solo 1                  | The book of Revelation Chapter 7, verses 16-17.  |
| Interjection            | Yes Sir  |
| Solo 1                  | They shall hunger no more neither shall they thirst anymore.   |
| Interjection            | Preach preacher  |
| Solo 1                  | For God shall wipe away  |
| Interjection            | Yes sir  |
| Solo 1                  | Every tear from their eyes   |
| Interjection            | Yes sir  |
| Solo 1                  | Get ready for a revolution   |
| Interjection            | Comin' X5  |
|                         | [All the above are spoken words]   |
| Refrain                 |  |
| Chorus                  | Oh...  |

<sup>7</sup> The text of this song is extracted from the printed copy on the cover page of the audiotape by Kirk Franklin and Rodney Jerkins.

Solo 1 Do you want a revolution?  
 Chorus Uhuu<sup>8</sup>  
 Solo 1 Do you want a revolution?  
 Chorus Uhuu  
 Soloist Sick and tired of my brothers killing each other. Sick and tired of daddies leaving babies with their mothers. To every man that wants to lay around and play around. Listen potnah you should be man enough to stay around.  
 Sick and tired of the church talkin' religion. But yet they talk about each other making decisions. No more racism. Too fascism. No pollution. The solution: A revolution.

Refrain  
 Chorus Ooh...  
 Men No crime. No dying. Politicians lying. Everybody's trying to make a dollar. It makes me wanna holla.  
 Ladies The way they do my life. The way they do my life. There's gonna be a brighter day, all your troubles will pas away.  
 Chorus A revolution coming. Yes its comin comin comin. Revolution's comin'. Yes it's comin'. Revolution comin' comin'.  
 Soloist Do you want a revolution?  
 Chorus Uuuh  
 Soloist Do you want a revolution?  
 Chorus Uuuh  
 Solo 1 (rap) What you feeling what you want son? Who you callin to son? You know Jesus is the true son. The second in the Trinity I Know. You feelin' Him. 500 days left until the new millennium. You hear 'em. Trumpets crack the sky. Christ the last one first the first the last that won't pass so don't be caught slippin brotha. Don't be trippin brotha cause when I see Him I'm getting caught up.  
 Solo2 (rap) We move too much. We do too much and if you step against us then you loose too much. Aint no stoppin what we doin when the spirit is movin don't be hating what I'm doing I'm the vessel He's using. Everywhere I be they try to judge me. They try to shake me, they try to buzz me but they can't break me cuz I'm down with Christ. Darkchild and Nu Nation make you feel alright.

\*\*\*

Put your hands  
 Together! Hands up!

\*\*\*

Revolution.....

---

<sup>8</sup> Uuuh is a singing sound that the chorus is making

## Revolution (Video)<sup>9</sup>

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Solo          | For your glory Father. Ah!... go... move... Ah... Ah... Ah...<br>(On your fours somebody get set) x 2 If you came to have a revolution get up on your feet and make some moves.  |
| Female Chorus | Ooh  |
| Solo          | Do you want a revolution?  |
| Female Chorus | Uuuh   |
| Solo          | Do you want a revolution?  |
| Female Chorus | Uuuh   |
| Solo          | I can't hear what you are saying?  |
| Female Chorus | Uuuh   |
| Solo          | Clap, clap your hands  |
| Chorus rap    | Sick and tired of my brothers killing each other. Sick and tired of daddies leaving babies with their mothers. To every man that wants to lay around and play around. Listen potnah, you should be man enough to stay around.<br><br>Sick and tired of the church talkin religion. But yet they talk about each other making decisions. No more racism. Too fascism. No pollution. The solution: A revolution. |
| Refrain       |  |
| Chorus        | Ooh...   |
| Men           | No crime. No dying. Politicians lying. Everybody's trying to make a dollar. It makes me wanna holla.   |
| Ladies        | The way they do my life. The way they do my life. There's gonna be a brighter day, all your troubles will pas away.  |
| Chorus        | A revolution coming. Yes its comin' comin' comin'. Revolution's comin'. Yes it's comin'. Revolution comin comin'.  |
| Soloist       | Do you want a revolution?  |
| Chorus        | Uuuh   |
| Soloist       | Do you want a revolution?  |
| Chorus        | Uuuh   |

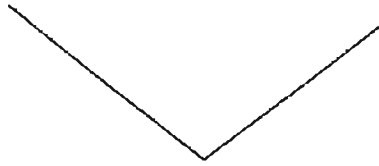
<sup>9</sup> Transcription of text has been done directly from the video-clip.

## Appendix B

### Dance pattern formations

#### Pattern formations of Mukumu Girls' High School performing dance group

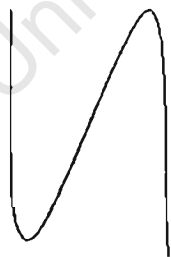
- V-Shape



- Two circles



- Inverted S-Shape



# Explanatory notes on the Benesh notation system by Eduard Greyling<sup>1</sup>

Movement is recorded using a five-line stave:



Figure 2

Top of the head Line  
Shoulder Line  
Waist Line  
Knee Line  
Floor Line



Figure 1

The body is viewed from behind and the body positions are placed in frames.



Figure 3

The positions are linked, thereby creating simple movement read from left to right.

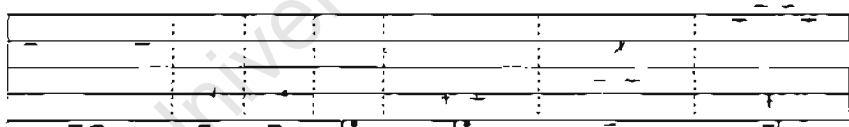


Figure 4

The combination of simple movements becomes sequences of dance movement which relate directly to rhythm.

<sup>1</sup> The notes by Eduard Greyling are based on lecture handouts of courses he attended in London. There is no dictionary of signs available. (*Benesh Movement Notation* © Rudolf Benesh, London 1955.)

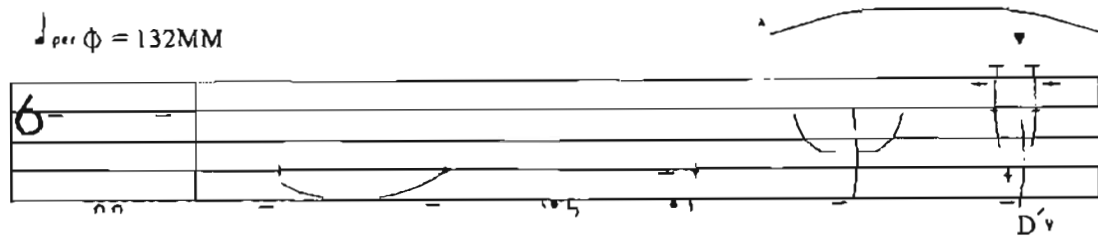


Figure 5

The area above and below the staff is used for information relating to the in-stave notation as indicated in Figure 5.

There are three basic signs from which thousands of signs are derived.

The three basic signs used to identify the extremities (hands and feet)

- used to show extremities which are level with the body
- | used to show extremities which are in front of the body
- used to show extremities which are behind the body

The three signs used to identify bent elbows and knees

- ⊕ used to show bent elbows or knees which are level with the body
- † used to show bent elbows or knees which are in front of the body
- × used to show bent elbows or knees which are behind the body

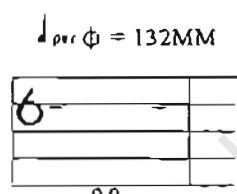


Figure 6

Figure 6: The frame at the beginning shows the starting position. The numeral 6 indicates that there are 6 pulse beats in each bar.

⊕ The sign for a full pulse beat

Above the starting position the pulse beat is shown together with the metronome speed.

The position of the body shows the feet apart in parallel and the arms outstretched to the sides with the hands at a height just below the shoulders.

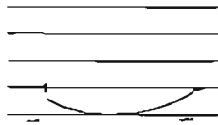


Figure 7

Figure 7: The right foot is lifted at knee height in front while standing on the left foot. The right foot is brushed through to the back at knee height. The path of travel of the right foot is shown with a between-frame movement line.

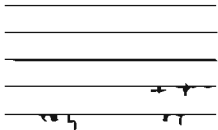


Figure 8

Figure 8: The right foot is placed in front and the weight adjusted so that it is in between both feet. Both feet turn to a natural turnout. Both knees are then bent indicated by the signs placed underneath the knee-line. The knees are both slightly bent.

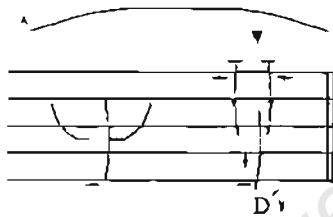


Figure 9

Figure 9: The right foot is lifted in front to just below shoulder height. At the same time the hands are brought down to the sides. The right foot is then lowered to the ground while the left knee bends quite deeply. The knee written directly above the foot means that the leg is now in parallel. At the same time the arms are lifted via the furthest point in front (indicated by the two lines drawn through and perpendicular to the movement lines). When the arms reach the position level above the head the elbows are bent level. The dark triangle indicates that the right foot has been brought down to the ground making a noise. The D below the stave is the right foot with the v written next to it indicating a downward emphasis. The curved line above indicates a smooth transition from the one frame to the next. The small A signifies that the 'legato' line applies to the arms only.

# Appendix C

## Figures

Fig. 6.1 *Rafiki pesa*

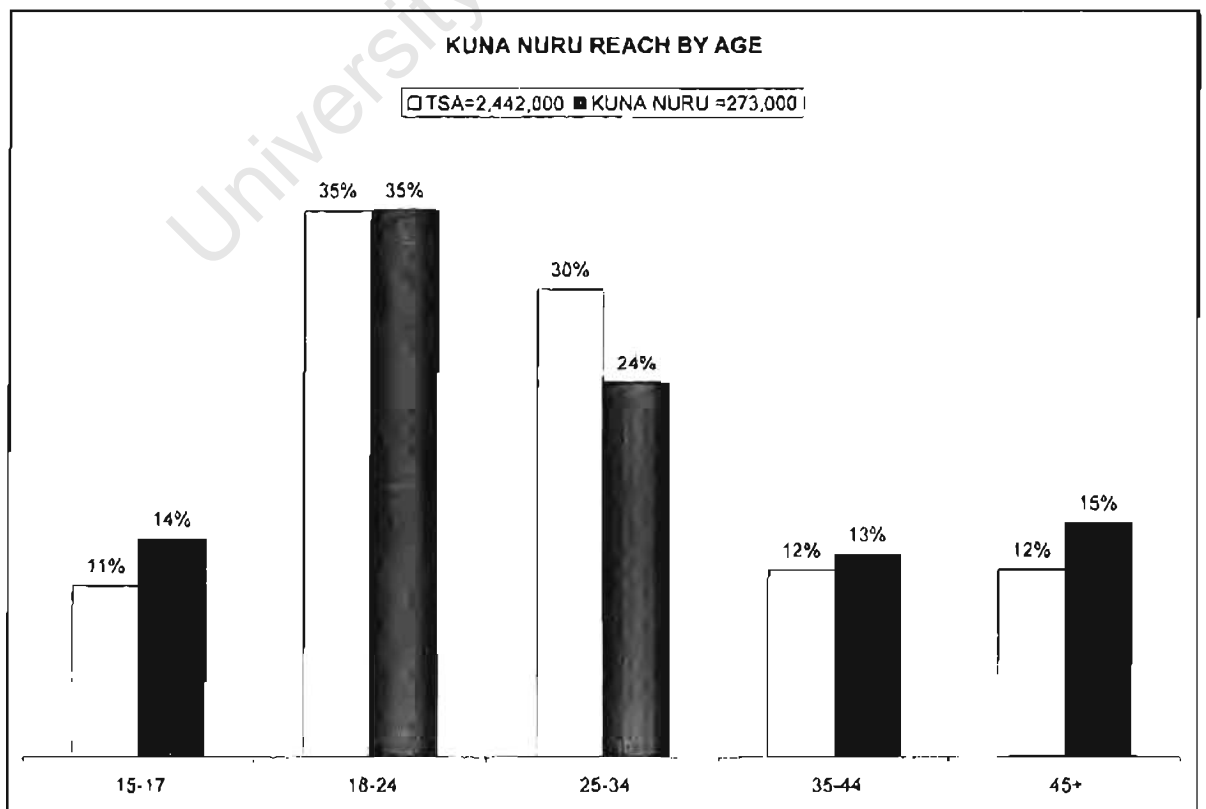
**Rafiki Pesa**

Shari Maztin

$\text{♩} = 106$

Ni - li - ku wa na ra - fi - ki ya - ngu, ra fi - ki pe - sa tu - li - pe - nda - na  
 sa - na ma - i - sha ye - tu ya - li - ku - wa ma -  
 - zu - ri. Ni ta - ka - cho ni - li pa - ta.

Fig. 6.2 Viewership of *Kuna Nuru Gizani* on KBC<sup>1</sup>





Plates 1 & 2 Amalemba Malende Ngwaro isukuli dance group in performance



Plates 3 & 4 Mukumu Girls High school dancers



Plate 5 Ngwaro group instrumentalists



Plate 6 Mukumu instrumentalists



Plate 7 Koffi Olomide's female dancers



Plate 8 Koffi and male dancers



Plate 9 Koffi and female dancers



Plate 10 Kirk Franklin



Plate 11 Kirk Franklin in performance



Plate 12 Kirk Franklin's dancers



Plate 13 MMM dance group



Plate 14 Mr and Mrs Dido



Plate 15 MMM with Emachihi



Plate 16 Glorious Teens



Plate 17 Makoma

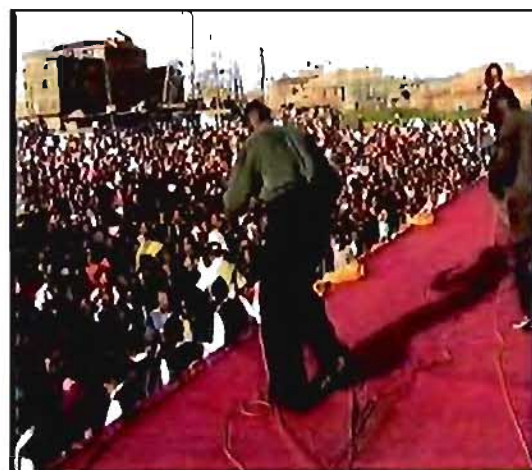


Plate 18 Kamau in MMM crusade

## Appendix D

### Tables

Table 3.1 Information on the *Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group

Table 6:2 MMM Members' ages, classes and tribes

Table 6.3 Comparisons between the costumes of *Makoma* and MMM

Table 6:4 MMM dance teachers, dance styles, and learning process

University of Cape Town



Table 3.1 Information on the *Matende Ngwaro isukuti* dance group

|    | Research participant | When joined    | Where they learnt their dances             | School/KMF*                | Role in team                                  | Age |
|----|----------------------|----------------|--|----------------------------|---|-----|
| 1. | A                    | As a teenager  | School                                     | Yes                        | Singer/dancer                                 | 23  |
| 2. | B                    | 1996 (15 yrs)  | Township dance group                       | Yes (dancer) [now trainer] | Dancer/singer                                 | 21  |
| 3. | C                    | When in std. 6 | School (KMF), State Lodge dance Group – NK | Yes (dancer) [now trainer] | Dancer, soloist                               | 22  |
| 4. | D                    | Teenager       | KMF (Schools)                              | Yes                        | Soloist/dancer                                | 24  |
| 5. | E                    | 1992 (10 yrs)  | School                                     | Yes                        | Dancer/singer                                 | 20  |
| 6. | F                    | Teenager       | Village, from elders                       | -                          | Chairman/actor/ singer instrumentalist        | 26  |
| 7. | G                    | 18 years       | Father, elders                             | No                         | Teacher/main soloist/organiser                | 40  |
| 8. | H                    | Teenager       | Older members of group                     |                            | Secretary/singer/dancer/instrumentalist/actor | 26  |
| 9. | I                    | 20's           | Older members of the group                 | Yes                        | Singer/dancer                                 | 37  |
| 10 | J                    | 1994           | Grandfather                                | No                         | Singer/instrumentalist                        | 25  |
| 11 | K                    | 2001           | Ngwaro                                     | No                         | actor/drama                                   | 7   |
| 12 | L                    | 2001           | Ngwaro Dance group                         | No                         | Actor   | 7   |
| 13 | M                    | Teenage        | KMF  | YES                        | Instrumentalist/-singer                       | 22  |
| 14 | N                    | 19             | Older Community Members                    | NO                         | Instrumentalist/singer                        | 21  |
| 15 | O                    | 15             | Ngwaro & School                            | YES                        | Dancer  | 16  |
| 16 | P                    | 16             | Ngwaro & School                            | YES                        | Dancer  | 17  |

Table 6:2 MMM Members' ages, classes and tribes

| Name                 | Age/class    | Tribe  |
|----------------------|--------------|--------|
| 1. Vincent Katamu    | 18 (HS)      | Luhya  |
| 2. John Irungu       | 18 (F3)      | Kikuyu |
| 3. Dominic Maungu    | 18 (F4)      | Luhya  |
| 4. Wilfred Njenga    | 15 (F1)      | Kikuyu |
| 5. Venanzio Githai   | 18 (F4)      | Kikuyu |
| 6. Stephen Ndung'u   | 18 (F4)- DJ  | Kikuyu |
| 7. Ambrose Mburu     | 13 (Std. 8)  | Meru   |
| 8. Valentine Muthoni | 6 (Std. 1)   | Kikuyu |
| 9. Alice Wanjiru     | 14 (F1)      | Kikuyu |
| 10. Nancy Muthui     | 14 (F1)      | Kamba  |
| 11. Winnie Wambui    | 18 (F4)      | Kikuyu |
| 12. Malta Mwikali    | 18 (F4)      | Kamba  |
| 13. Rachel Kasyoka   | 18 (F4)      | Kamba  |
| 14. Mercy Muthui     | 19 (College) | Kamba  |
| 15. Grace Kagondo    | 19 (College) | Meru   |
| 16. Emmy Muiru       | 19 (College) | Kikuyu |
| 17. Mercy King'ori   | 19 (College) | Kikuyu |
| 18. Jane Nyambura    | 19 (College) | Kikuyu |
| 19. Kevin Njogu      | 18 (F4)      | Kikuyu |
| 20. Andrew Muiru     | 23 (Working) | Kikuyu |

- HS represents High school
- F represents Form (eg. Form 1, 2, 3 etc.)

Table 6.3 Comparisons between the costumes of *Makoma* and MMM

| Item                      | Makoma  | MMM  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Top gear                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boys wear black T-shirts with numbers printed on them.</li> <li>• The girls wear red sweatshirts with the number 45 printed on the shirts.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boys wear red T-shirts with white short sleeves. The leader (Andrew Miuru) wears a red T-shirt with red sleeves as well. The shirts have the word 'Dreamcat' printed on them.</li> <li>• The girls wear red baggy T-shirts with the word 'Vodafone' printed on them.</li> </ul>                     |
| Bottom gear               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boys wear black or grey trousers.</li> <li>• The girls have red, yellow or black trousers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the boys wear black trousers.</li> <li>• The girls wear black loose trousers [initially they had black baggy, long skirts].</li> </ul>  |
| Shoes                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They all wear either black or white sneakers</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boys wear black shoes</li> <li>• The girls wear either white sneakers or black shoes.</li> </ul>  |
| Hairdo                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boys have short plain hair, braids or curly kit.</li> <li>• The girls have braids, curly-weave, straight perm or hats.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boys have short hair. Only Andrew wears a hat.</li> <li>• The girls have headbands and long braids. The solo-actress wears a hat.</li> </ul>  |
| Jewellery and accessories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some boys wear one earring and others a nose ring.</li> <li>• The girls wear earrings on both lobes, nose rings, and eyebrow ring.</li> </ul> <p>They wear sunglasses and carry handbags across their shoulders and around their waists.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The men do not wear any jewellery.</li> <li>• The boys wear rack-sacks on their backs or bags across their torsos.</li> <li>• The girls wear handbags across their torsos. They have neither jewellery nor sunglasses even though the video-clip is taken in a sunny open-air crusade sight.</li> </ul> |
| Make-up                   | Only the girls wear make-up.  | None of them wear make-up.   |

Table 6:4 MMM dance teachers, dance styles, and learning process

| <b>Name</b>    | <b>Dance style</b>   | <b>How they learnt the style</b>                                     |
|----------------|--|--|
| Ambrose Mburu  | Contemporary pop styles  | Videotapes, TV programmes, school                                    |
| Dominic Maungu | Acrobats, Congolese pop, Contemporary pop styles, African traditional styles | Gym/acrobat classes in school, KMF, video tapes, TV music programmes |
| Alice Wanjiru  | Congolese pop, Salsa,  | School, Congolese dance videotapes and TV                            |
| Nancy Muthui   | Congolese pop, Salsa, African traditional dances                             | Video tapes, TV programmes, school, KMF                              |
| Emmy Muiru     | Jam  | School, Glorious Kids  |
| Andrew Muiru   | Contemporary pop styles, jam, African traditional styles                     | School, Glorious Kids, videotapes, TV programmes                     |

## Appendix E

### Kenya Music Festivals

The Kenya Music Festivals are held once a year during the period of May to August. The Festival has four levels of competition: Zonal, District, Provincial and National. They began during the colonial era in Kenya in 1927 with the aim of involving students in the practice of music.<sup>1</sup> During their initial stages, the festivals were held once a year for three consecutive weeks at the national level. They incorporated students in schools and colleges. However, by 1989 there was a need to split the festivals into two groups in order to enable more schools and non-educational institutions to participate and also to reduce the duration of the programme.

One group became known as the Kenya Music and Cultural Festival, which falls under the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services in Kenya. This festival is designed for colleges and non-educational institutions in Kenya. It is held once a year in November or early December. Its main purpose is to develop Kenyan musicians and to expose them to African cultural music and dances in the hope that the participants will appreciate various cultural music and dances.

The second is the Kenya Music Festival, held once a year from May to August. This festival falls under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. It is meant for primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Kenya. Students in educational institutions in Kenya compete in the festivals under various classes including choral, small vocal and instrumental music ensembles, solo vocal and instrumental groups, poetry and dances. Students are normally expected to participate in Western, African and Oriental music and dance drama categories. When the festival started during the colonial era in Kenya, the emphasis was on Western music performances. It was only after Kenya became independent in 1963 that African cultural and Eastern Oriental music have been included.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Assistant Director of Culture in Kenya, Ms. Gladys Gatheru, 10 December 2003.

One of the main objectives of the Kenya Music Festival is to promote the performance and appreciation of Kenyan and other African cultures and their music, while also exposing students to a variety of music.<sup>2</sup> After independence neo-traditional music was introduced in schools and the Festival, with the exclusion of indigenous music instruments. At this time most of the schools were still mission-aided and the missionaries had forbidden Africans from performing on African musical instruments.

An adjudicator of the Kenya Music Festival since 1979 to date, Mr Mwiruki,<sup>3</sup> recalled that, although the students from Western Province of Kenya used to sing *isukuti* folk songs, they were not allowed to play the *isukuti* drums. He also recalled how his secondary school mission teachers punished him for attending an *isukuti* cultural festival.

Since he had a passion for *isukuti* music, he realised that the only way he could get the schools to play the *isukuti* drums was to introduce the drums through the mission churches. At this time he was a member of the Salvation Army Church, which did not allow *isukuti* drums or any other African instrument in church worship. Mwiruki states that in 1972 he introduced African instruments in church services through the help of a Salvation Army officer, Captain Mburu.<sup>4</sup> The captain asked him to teach his family how to play the drums. After several practice sessions with the family, Captain Mburu organised a special presentation in church. On the given day the whole family of Captain Mburu and Mr Mwiruki sang a Christian song and accompanied themselves on the *isukuti* drums. Their performance presented the church leaders and members with a predicament as Captain Mburu held a very influential position in the church. Through Captain Mburu's participation and influential position, the inclusion of African instruments in church services became acceptable. Consequently, *isukuti* drums have since then been allowed in the Salvation Army. This controversial performance

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Mr. Anami, 29 July 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Mr. Mwiruki, 28 July 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Captain Mburu was the section officer for Mbale Division in Western Province.

by Captain Mburu and Mr Mwiruki paved the way for the introduction of the same instruments in schools and subsequently the Kenya Music Festival.<sup>5</sup>

According to Mr Mwiruki, it was a challenge to teach drumming at girls' schools, as the girls were customarily not allowed to play these instruments. Women in indigenous Kenya had a very low status, a status not only evident from their limited participation in music performances, but also in oral narratives.<sup>6</sup> However, because music education in Kenya incorporated both genders, all students had to learn to play instruments and perform all kinds of music.<sup>7</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Three, these Festivals attract many young people. However, the dances incorporated, although considered as African indigenous dances, are an amalgam of various cultural dances and creativity. According to Sylver Anami and George Mwiruki,<sup>8</sup> the changes occur due to the fact that:

- girls are now expected to play musical instruments to accompany their performances;
- the teachers of the dances may not necessarily understand the culture and cultural dances and practices of the dances their students perform. Likewise, students try to borrow ideas from other schools and cultures, thereby producing syncretised dance forms.
- the dancers borrow heavily from the dramatised dance festivals usually held in March-April every year.<sup>9</sup> The schools that take part in these festivals use the same performances, with a few adjustments, and present them at the Kenya Music Festivals. Therefore, the students use creative and syncretised styles from different African cultural groups, thereby losing the authenticity of the traditional performing arts.

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<sup>5</sup> Mr. Mwiruki has introduced, played, and taught *isukuti* drumming in various primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Kenya. He has also been an adjudicator of the Kenya Music Festival since 1979 to date.

<sup>6</sup> Wanjiku M. Kabira, "Gender and the politics of control: an overview of images of women in Gikuyu oral narratives" in Austin Bukunya *et al* (eds), *Understanding oral literature*, Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1994, pp. 79-80; Ciarunji Chesaina, "Images of women in African oral literature: a case study of Kalenjin and Maasai oral narratives" in Bukunya *et al.* (eds), pp. 85-92.

<sup>7</sup> Helen A. O. Agak, *Gender difference and academic achievement in music form four students in Kenya 1991-1995*, unpublished DMus Dissertation, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1999, pp. 2-25.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews with Sylver Anami, 8 August 2003 and George Mwiruki, 1 August 2003. Mr. Anami and Mr. Mwiruki have been adjudicating Kenya Music Festivals for the last 20 years. The two men gave their ideas of their experiences.

<sup>9</sup> This is a schools - drama Festival in Kenya. According to Mr. Mwiruki, the drama Festivals in the past used to be very poorly attended. To make them more interesting, the African dramatised

## Appendix F

### Interviewees<sup>10</sup>

1. Adriano Lusala- Old Isukha villager and research participant
2. Andrew Nyumu (Rev.) – Pastor, Presbyterian Church of East Africa
3. Annie Clement – Dance Teacher
4. Bachuza Nene Nday Dido – Evangelist, Song leader, worship team member, recording Artists
5. Christina Musolo – Research participant, Isukha, Kakamega.
6. David Pragassa – in charge of music, *Family media*
7. Dr. Otieno Mare Munala Bishop of New Hope Church
8. Elizabeth Mwangi – Editor of *Maximum Miracle Times*
9. Evangelist Lucy Muiru – founder of MMCM, Song leader at MMCM- Chif editor of *Maximum Miracle Times*.
10. Fabian S. Lilumba- Chief of Bukhulu location in Amalemba, Kakamega district
11. George Mwiruki – lecturer at Kenyatta University, *Isukuti* Performer
12. Gideon E. Makala – Lead guitarist, MMCM
13. Gladys Gacheru – Assistant Director of Kenya in Kenya
14. Harold Nyaranga – Teacher of Sunday school, and *Glorious Kids & Glorious Teens*
15. Joan Mwai – Editor, *Maximum Miracle Times*
16. Job Rufus Miya – Pastor of Church of God, Research Participant, Ebusiekwe
17. John Kamau – Recording artist, Song leader at MMCM Worship team member
18. John Litswa Lumati – *Isukuti* drummer, Leader of Lumati Traditional Dance group
19. Joseph Liluma – Research Participant
20. John Nyika – Keyboardist of MMCM
21. Joseph Karaja – Saxophonist, lead & brass guitarist at MMCM
22. Justus Mulema – lead guitarists at MMCM
23. Kamonga Dido Nday – Bass, lead & rhythm guitarist at MMCM, recorded artist and evangelist
24. Kelvin Waweru – Leader of *Glorious Kids* and *Glorious Teens*
25. Ken Bakuli – Church Administrator, MMCM
26. Mark Mabiya – Field work assistant

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dances (dance drama) were initiated in the 1990s. This created so much interest in schools and consequently the drama festivals have become very popular.

<sup>10</sup> People interviewed between December 2001 – August 2004.

27. Maurice Mukhabali - Sub-chief of Bukhulu location, Amalemba, Kakamega district
28. Michael Mwaura - Camera man, sound technician, video mixer, and video editor at MMCM
29. Paul Mwangi Mukoma – Television producer in charge of TV crew MMCM
30. Paul Mwasia – Pastor Seventh Day Adventist church
31. Penninah Musumba– Research participant, assistant translator and research assistant
32. Peter Macharia (Rev.) – Anglican Church of Kenya, Parish, pastor
33. Peter Mutua Mwaka – Children's pastor MMCM, *Glorious Kids* dance teacher
34. Peter Ndung'u (Ev.) – Lutheran Church in Kenya, Dean Nairobi District leader
35. Priscilla Machika – Research participant, ex-*Isukuti* Dancer
36. Prof. Adeyepo Yapo – Lecturer, University of Angola
37. Sarah Oyungu – Music co-ordinator Nairobi Baptist Church
38. Sylvere Lisamula Anami – Director of culture in Kenya, *Isukuti* Drummer, dancer and singer and teacher
39. *Amalemba Matende Ngwaro* dance group members
  - Antony Alusiola – Secretary of group/singer/dancer/actor
  - Anthony M'maisi – Singer/actor/dancer
  - Atanus Mabuyi – Song Leader/singer/horn player
  - Consolata – song leader/dancer
  - Doris Mkasembi – singer/dancer
  - Elizabeth – Singer/dancer
  - Elkanah Machika
  - Ingasa
  - Luka Andobe – Actor
  - Masitsa – singer/dancer
  - Sarah – Singer/dancer
  - Sylvester Muhondo – Chairman/horn player

*40. Maximum Miracle Melodies Dancers*

Andrew Muiru  
Vincent Katamu  
John Irungu  
Dominic Maungu  
Wilfred Njenga  
Venanzio Githai  
Stephen Ndung'u  
Ambrose Mburu  
Valentine Muthoni  
Alice Wanjiru  
Nancy Muthui  
Winnie Wambui  
Malta Mwikali  
Rachel Kasyoka  
Mercy Muthui  
Grace Kagondo  
Emmy Muiru  
Mercy King'ori  
Jane Nyambura  
Kevin Njogu  
Kelvin Waweru

## Appendix G

### Letter to research participants

#### SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET AND REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I, *Florence Ngale Miya*, have received approval from

- (1) *The University of Cape Town*
- (2) *Maximum Miracle Centre Ministry, Nairobi, Kenya*

to undertake a research project entitled:

#### ***Educational content in the performing arts: tradition and Christianity in Kenya***

The objectives of this study are:

- (1) To ascertain the role of the performing arts in the church in Nairobi;
- (2) To determine the principles which guide the dancers' choice of music, dance and drama;
- (3) To analyse the relationship between music, dance and drama performed by the dance group;
- (4) To establish the extrinsic factors which affect the dance group's performances;
- (5) To investigate the reasons for the existence of the performing arts and the dance groups in the church in Nairobi;
- (6) To develop a theoretical framework to aid in making recommendations as to how the performing arts can be used in an African multicultural setting in educating the society.

The project involves evaluating

- (1) The dancers' attitudes and perspectives on the performing arts;
- (2) The religious and dance leaders' perspective on the performing arts;
- (3) Performance practices such as dance movements, stage choreography and costumes.

This information will be obtained by:

- (1) Personal interviews;
- (2) Participant observation methods;
- (3) Video and audio-tape recording by permission from participants and church leaders.

I would appreciate your willingness to participate. All information obtained will be kept confidential and no participant will be identifiable in the research report. You should feel free to withdraw from this project at any stage should you not be comfortable with the information we are requesting from you.

Research Participant

I ..... have read the above and agree to participate in this study on the understanding that

- (1) All information will be confidential
- (2) I am free to withdraw at any stage without jeopardy to myself or UCT.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

University of Cape Town

## Appendix H

### Examples of oral narratives of the Isukha

Story song: *Nzese*

Singing game: *Obule bwanje* (My millet)

Proverb

University of Cape Town

### **Story song: Nzese (as narrated by Peninah Musumba)**

Once upon a time, there lived a man called Nzese. He had a wife and six children. One day, he told the wife that he was going on a long journey and that he will not be back for a while. He also warned the wife not to cook a certain pumpkin that he had planted in his farm. Therefore, he left the wife with enough food to eat with the children until he would be back.

However, Nzese stayed away for too long. The wife cooked all the food that she had until it all got finished. She then wondered what she should do because the children were crying of hunger. She went to her neighbours to ask for food but they too had none to spare for her. After a while she thought, "what will my children eat since I have no more food for them and my husband has not come back? I cannot let my children die of hunger; I will get Nzese's pumpkin and cook it for them."

So Nzese's wife plucked the pumpkin from the farm and cooked it for the children. As soon as the children finished eating the pumpkin, they all died. Their mother then cried and cried and cried. "Why did this happen to my children? What have I done? What was wrong with the pumpkin? Oh Nzese, where are you? Nzese, Nzese, Nzese..."

Later, the wife sent a bird to look for Nzese and sing this song to him:

Nzia Mmbo wa Nzese X2 (I am going far away to Nzese)  
Nsese khaondo kha walekha (Nzese, the little pumpkin you left)  
Nsese khamalila abana (Nzese it has finished the children)  
Nsese manani kitubule bana (Nzese, the ogres are dancing, your children)  
Nzese, Nze, Nze, Nze, Nzese... (Nzese...)

The bird wondered up in the air, singing as he looked for Nzese. At the time, Nzese, was laughing, and talking with his friends in a distant land. Then, the singing of the bird attracted his attention. He listened keenly to the singing again.

Nzia Mmbo wa Nzese X2 (I am going far away to Nzese)  
Nsese khaondo kha walekha (Nsese, the little pumpkin you left)  
Nsese khamalila abana (Nsese it has finished the children)  
Nsese manani kitubule bana (Nzese, the ogres are dancing, your children)  
Nzese, Nze, Nze, Nze, Nzese... (Nzese ..)

Suddenly, he realised that the bird was singing about a pumpkin, "Could that be the pumpkin I left at home. Oh no, are those my children the bird is singing about?"

thought Nzese. He quickly jumped up with a startle then he said, "I must go home and find out how my family is doing. I have stayed in this land for too long." His friends bid him farewell and then he left.

On arriving home, he found his wife crying and wondering what she should do. She narrated the whole story to Nzese who was very sorry that he stayed away longer than he should.

### **Singing game: *Obule bwanje* (My millet)**

Soloist: *Obule bwanje* (My millet)

All: *Obule* (Millet)

Soloist: *Khatunyi sinjira* (Khatunyi, stand up)

All: *Obule*

Soloist: *Bina mabeka* (Shake your shoulders)

All: *Obule*

Soloist: *Auii* (vocables)

All: *Chachacha* (vocables)

### **The game**

The children sit down in a circle as they sing and tap the ground with one hand. When the soloist singer calls on a child's name, s/he will stand up and perform the *Amabeka* dance. This exercise goes on until all the children have performed their turn.

### **Proverb<sup>11</sup>**

*Amakhino amabi sikera iseresi* [Do not be put off by a partner's poor dancing].

You should not judge by superficial characteristics. You can't tell a book by its cover.

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<sup>11</sup> Mirimo, p. 4.

# Appendix I

## Questionnaires

Sample questions for dance leaders

Sample questions for Musicians/dancers

Sample questions for the television crew

Sample questions for the *isukuti* instrumentalists

Sample questions for non-MMCM church leaders

Sample questions for old research participants on traditional practices

Sample questions for *isukuti* teachers

University of Cape Town

## Sample questions for dance group leaders

Full names

Age

Gender

Occupation

Educational level

Music education background

1. Where have you lived longest?
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Are you born again?
4. When were you saved? (D/m/y)
5. What is your denomination?
6. In which denomination have you served longest?
7. How long have you attended your current church?
8. Rank your five favourite programmes in order of preference:
9. Give reasons for your choices.
10. What type of music do you enjoy most?
11. Do you view music videotapes?
12. What type do you view often?
13. Why?
14. How do you choose dancers for the group?
15. What qualities do you hope the dancers to achieve?
16. How do you choose music for performance?
17. How do you select the dance styles and stage choreography for performances?
18. Why?
19. What do you hope to achieve with the performances?
20. Are there any educational values you transmit through the performances?
21. How does the performance of the group benefit
  - the group in general?
  - you the (leader )?
  - the congregation?
22. What have you learnt through the group and its performances?
23. What African traditional practices do you incorporate in your performances?
24. How do you learn the dance styles and choreography?

25. Have you ever had any dropouts?
26. Why?
27. What problems do you encounter  
as a leader?  
as a group?
28. How many active members do you have?
29. Are all members good timekeepers and attendees in practice and performances?
30. Why/ Why not?
31. When do you hold your practices?
32. Why?
33. What happens during such practices?
34. Do you hold any other type of meeting?
35. Name them.
36. Why do you have such meetings?
37. Where do you perform your dances?
38. Why?
39. Do you use costumes?
40. Why/ Why not?
41. How many types of uniform do you have?
42. Why did you choose these specific uniforms /costumes?
43. How many of the MMM members have been involved in school traditional Music festivals (Kenya Music Festivals)?
44. How old are the small girl and the boy too?
45. Where did you get the track used at the beginning of Makoma's song?
46. Which Congolese musicians have influenced your dance?
47. When did MMM begin?
48. The last time I was here you told me that the girls in your dance team were not allowed to use trousers; why have they started using trousers in recent performances?
49. How old are the MMM members?
50. Which members teach dances?
51. When do you hold your practices?
52. Why?
53. What happens during such practices?

54. Do you hold other types of meetings?

Name them

55. Why do you have such meetings?

### **Sample questions for Musicians /dancers**

Name

Time

Venue

Date

Age

Gender

Occupation

Current carrier status

1. Where have you lived longest?
2. How long have you lived in town?
3. What type of music do you enjoy listening to?
4. Why do you like their music?
5. Do you watch any music videos?
6. What type of music do you enjoy most?
7. Why?
8. What are your 6 favourite television programmes in order of preference?
  1. Are you 'saved'?
  2. When did this happen?
  3. How then did you join MMCM and why?
  4. When did you start singing in this church?
  5. How did you join the music group in this ministry?
  6. Do you find the dance styles difficult to learn and perform
  7. Do you think a dance group is necessary in church ministry?
  8. Why do you think so?
  9. What have you learnt through the dance ministry?
  10. Where do you perform your music and dances?
  11. What languages do you often sing in?
  12. Have you recorded any music on tape?
  13. How many?

14. Did you compose these songs?
15. How did you come up with the songs?

### **Sample questions for the *isukuti* instrumentalists**

Name

Group name

Major occupation

Age

1. How did you learn how to play the *isukuti* drums?
2. What kind of instruments do you have in your group?
3. What kind of instrumentalists do you have?
4. What kind of costumes do you wear?
5. Why do you use 3 drums?
7. Why were women not allowed to play these drums?
1. Why do you paint your bodies in performances?
9. What kind of rhythms do you play on each of the instruments? (please demonstrate)
10. What names do you give your dance styles?
11. When do dancers know that it is time to change their dance styles?

### **Sample questions for church leaders at MMCM**

Name

Profession/ occupation

Time

Venue

Age

Educational level

Gender

1. Are you 'born again'?
2. When did you join *Maximum Miracle centre Ministries*?
3. Why did you join MMCM?
4. How did this ministry begin and why?
5. Give the developmental narration of MMCM.

6. What specific structure and sub ministries exist within MMCM?
7. What type of music exists within the ministry?
8. Who is the music director or leader?
9. How many dance groups and music groups do you have?
10. Why do you allow dance groups in your ministry?
11. What role do they play?
12. What recruitment process do you use?
13. When and why did the ministry begin?
14. Is 'salvation' one of the qualifications of the workers? Why/ why not?

### Sample questions for the television crew

Name

Age

Occupation

Specific task in the department

Education level

1. Are you 'born again'?
2. What kind of activities do you shoot on video?
3. Where do you get the equipment to do so?
4. Do you shoot the video alone?
5. What normally is your focus when recording?
6. Where do you keep the information that you record?
7. What types of equipment do you use/have?
8. For whom do you record?
9. About the *Kuna Nuru Gizani* programme: do you get any feed back on your viewers and listeners?
10. Do you lend the tapes to other people?
11. What kind of problems are you currently facing in your work?

## Sample questions for non-MMCM church leaders

Name

Church

Age

Position in Church

Nationality

Contacts

1. What is your opinion on dance groups and performances in church?
2. What would you like the church to know about Christian dance group performances?
3. What is your advice on Christian dance group performances in worship services and other meetings (e.g. concerts, fellowships, etc.)

## Sample questions for old research participants on indigenous practices

1. Amongst the Abisukha, what normally happens when a mother gives birth?
2. Who normally sings?
3. When do they usually sing?
4. When the women sing the songs, do they dance?
5. How will they know that it is time to sing the song?
6. Do they wear any costumes?
7. Do they perform *isukuti* drums?
8. As children grow up, what do they normally do and what songs do they perform?
9. How do they learn their stuff and what is their stuff?
10. Did the children graze livestock at all?
11. Did they used to sing?
12. How did they used to learn the song?
13. How old were the children by the time they'd go for initiation?
14. Why did they used to initiate?
15. Did they used to sleep somewhere together?
16. Where did they used to stay?
17. Did they used to cry?

18. Why were they told not to cry?
19. What were they taught?
20. How long were they in this homestead?
21. What used to happen after their three months of seclusion?"
22. What followed this period-- was it wedding?
23. How old were they by the time they would be getting married?
24. During courtship, when ready to marry what were the expectations of the community?
25. What plans would follow after this agreement?
26. How was the dowry process done?
27. How did they decide on how many cows to take as dowry?
28. When dowry is paid, how would they perform the wedding?
29. If the girl was a virgin, would they add more dowry, or was the dowry different from the others?
30. What if she was not a virgin?
31. So the girls were told that they'd to be virgins when they're getting married.
32. What used to happen during death?
33. What happened to the widow?
34. What's the meaning of *makumbosho*?
35. Did you used to have work songs?
36. What used to happen during harvest time?
37. Did the Isukha have their own gods?
38. Was there singing and dancing?

### Sample questions for *isukuti* teachers (verification of information)

Name

Age

Occupation

Institute

Tribe

Date

Time

Venue

1. What kind of music is *isukuti*?
2. When was *isukuti* allowed in church music performance?

3. How did you introduce them in schools?
4. How has the music Kenya Music Festivals influenced the performance of *isukuti* music?
5. How many drums are they meant to be in performance?
6. Which other instruments are played with the drums?
7. When did you begin playing *isukuti* drums?
8. Where have you taught *isukuti* instruments?
9. How long have you been an adjudicator?
10. Does the original *isukuti* still exist in the village?
11. What is the impact of Kenya Music festivals on indigenous *isukuti* music?
12. What kind of *isukuti* dance styles and names do you know?
13. How did these names come about?
14. What is your opinion on the performance of *isukuti* music today as compared to how it was originally played in indigenous contexts?

## Appendix J

### Order of dance excerpts on VCD

#### **Maximum Miracle Melodies**

1. *Haleluya* variation
2. *Zambe 1*
3. *Niongoze Bwana*
4. Basic position
5. *Zambe 2*
6. *Zambe 3 – 'Gym'*
7. *Zambe 4 – Khumkongo*
8. *Haleluya*
9. Variation of right stomp
10. *Kitu gain*
11. *Mwana wake*
12. Triplet stomp
13. Variation of *Yumbani*
14. *Katika* position
15. High ten
16. Variation of wriggle (Dancer in green shirt)
17. Variation of stomp
18. Typewriter
19. The count
20. Variation of Knee shake
21. Loose (cool) walk
22. Kick
23. Hip hop jump
24. Hip hop arm movement
25. Four point (Congolese)
26. *Lipala 2* (Luhya adoption)
27. The run (Congolese adoption)
28. 'Gym'
29. *Amabeka 2* (From Luhya community)
30. Dramatisation of *Bwana wa Mabwana*
31. Power letdown
32. Crusade song leading [order of indigenous dance styles as they appear: Congolese, Maasai, Luo, Luhya (*Lipala*), and Kikuyu]
33. Makoma
34. Mr and Mrs Dido (Congolese musicians of MMCM)

- 35. Emachichi and MMM in crusade
- 36. *Rafiki Pesa*

**Isukuti dances**

- 37. *Ingoi 1* (Ngwaro)
- 38. *Ingoi 2* (Mukumu - main dance on top right stage-soloist)
- 39. *Khumkongo 2* (Mukumu-[soloist])
- 40. *Khumkongo 3* (Mukumu)
- 41. *Lipala* (Ngwaro)
- 42. *Amabeka* (Mukumu)
- 43. Grinding dance (Mukumu)
- 44. *Isukuti* amusement (Ngwaro)
- 45. *Isukuti* dramatisation 1 (Ngwaro)
- 46. *Isukuti* dramatisation 2 (Mukumu)

**North American (Kirk Franklin)**

- 47. Stomp
- 48. Glory
- 49. Spot march
- 50. Grab 'n turn
- 51. Instantaneous bow
- 52. Arm jerk
- 53. Cool walk
- 54. Knee shake
- 55. Fall
- 56. Dramatisation of *Revolution*

**Congolese pop (Koffi Olomide)**

- 57. *Bingeli*
- 58. The run
- 59. Variation of traditional right stomp
- 60. *Yumbani*
- 61. *Nzomo*
- 62. Wriggle
- 63. *Ndombolo*
- 64. Micko
- 65. Four point
- 66. Dramatisation of Congolese pop (Koffi)