

## The Mbira, Worldbeat, and the International Imagination

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### *Abstract*

*This paper addresses the processes by which a localised indigenous African tradition, the mbira, rose to prominence at the national level in Zimbabwe after the 1960s and became relatively widely diffused throughout the world after the 1970s. It is suggested that this instrument's fit with the mass media and cosmopolitan aesthetics, along with nationalism, were key to the mbira's transformation from a localist to a world tradition.*

### 1. Introduction

Among the many localised indigenous instruments of Zimbabwe, the 22-key Zezuru mbira (known in the literature as *mbira zdavadzimu*) has become synonymous with Zimbabwean music in the international imagination.<sup>1</sup> As recently as the 1930s, the mbira was a small specialist tradition localised among the Zezuru, a Shona group living in the area surrounding the colonial capital of Harare (then Salisbury).<sup>2</sup> It was certainly a less prominent instrument than the various drums used in Shona spirit possession ceremonies and other social occasions in many locales, and was less common than the relatively widespread *njari* lamellophone during the first half of this century. Rather, the mbira's prominence appears to have been on par with several other localised specialist-lamellophone traditions such as the *matepe* or *hera* in northern Zimbabwe. What, then, catapulted the mbira to national and international fame and, by the late 1980s, led to its prominent place in urban-popular electric guitar bands such as that of Thomas Mapfumo?

Scholars and popular music writers typically have answered this question simply by evoking anti-colonialist African nationalism as the basis of an indigenous cultural revival during the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Fry 1976; Frederikse 1982; Kaemmer 1989; Bender 1991; Brown 1994). The mbira did, in fact, begin to gain wider recognition in Zimbabwe beginning around 1960, so on the surface this analysis makes sense, but it does not address why this particular indigenous instrument rose in prom-

inence over others. Moreover, my research on musical nationalism in Zimbabwe documents that the mbira was not more prominent than other localised dance-drumming styles in the nationalist activities of the early 1960s, the period when cultural nationalism was launched. Further, the Zezuru mbira was strikingly unimportant in the militant nationalist songs of the leading ZANU(PF) and PF-ZAPU political parties during the war years of the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than understanding the mbira's rise to fame as emblematic of indigenous cultural resistance to colonialism and foreign cultural imperialism, the analysis presented here suggests that the mbira's prominence was largely fuelled by the very modernist forces it was seen as opposing. I show that the wider diffusion of mbira within Zimbabwe was initially due to the colonial state-controlled radio of the 1960s. In combination with national sentiment among audiences, musicians' professional aspirations led to the incorporation of mbira music, and a variety of other Shona genres, into electric guitar band repertoires in the 1970s and early 1980s. Thomas Mapfumo was an important innovator in this trend. It was not until he entered the international "worldbeat" market, however, that the mbira began to gain pride of place within the popular music sphere. This, in turn, created another wave of interest in the mbira among young Zimbabweans in the late 1980s and 1990s.

I conclude that it was the mbira's fit with the medium of radio in the 1960s and with the aesthetics and desires of worldbeat fans after the mid-1980s, as well as the activities of ethnomusicologists, that brought the mbira to international fame. African nationalism remains an indirect cause at different points in this history. As with the tango, the rumba, steelband, and merenge in the Caribbean and Latin America, it is often foreign interest in a local tradition that causes it to be selected and popularised as a paramount national musical idiom at home. In turn, this affects its status among the general population. Such was the case with the mbira.

## 2. Mbira—a Small-Scale Localised Tradition

Parallel to the Nigerian Yoruba case described by Waterman (1990), the use of the term "Shona" as an all-encompassing social category is a colonial innovation. The term came to denote a variety of distinct social groups including the Korekore of northern Zimbabwe and the Zezuru, who lived in the region surrounding and to the south of the capital city of Harare, as well as the Karanga, the Manyika, the Ndau, and the Kalanga. The Ndebele, a Nguni people originally from South Africa, was the other major non-Shona linguistic group in Zimbabwe. From the colonial period through the present, most musical instruments and performance traditions have been associated with specific groups and regions. The mbira was probably original to the Zezuru; currently people in the rural north-east think of it as a Zezuru instrument, although it has by now become more widely diffused.

As described in detail by Paul Berliner (1993 [1978]), the Zezuru mbira has between 22 and 28 metal keys in three manuals attached to a soundboard and played in-

side a calabash gourd resonator. The instrument has a delicate metallic sound which is sustained by bottle cap or shell buzzers attached to the soundboard and resonator. Unlike many Shona songs comprising two-phrase ostinatos, the basic ostinato of classical mbira pieces is usually four 12-beat phrases within a 12/8 meter. There is also a good deal of play between duple and triple rhythms. A single musician may produce three or more polyphonic lines on the bass, medium range, and high keys by interlocking right- and left-hand parts and varying the accents on specific pitches. Basic mbira ostinatos often imply harmonic progressions with one "chord" changing stepwise each phrase, e.g., //: G Bm D/ G Bm Em/ G C Em/ Am C Em //: It was this type of four-phrase harmonic structure, with the chord progressions being explicitly realised on guitars and bass, as well as the 12/8 rhythmic movement of mbira music, that was incorporated by popular electric bands after the early 1970s. In indigenous performance, *hosho* (gourd rattles) typically supply the rhythmic ground for two or more mbira players who perform separate interlocking parts (*kushaura* [to lead] and *kutsinhira* [to accompany]). In religious ceremonies and other participatory social occasions, the mbira and *hosho* provide the ground parts for formulaic and improvised collective singing, dancing, and hand clapping.

Hugh Tracey conducted the earliest detailed research on Zimbabwean lamellophones. He was particularly interested in the Zezuru mbira because he thought it to be one of the oldest types (1969:78). At the time of his research in the late 1920s and early 1930s, however, he found that the mbira was not a prominent lamellophone compared to the more widespread and popular *njari*. He states, "The fact that the only people that I have so far found still making and playing the *Mbira* variety are the Zezuru of the Salisbury area, would indicate that they were possibly the originators of the instrument" (1969 [1932]:79). In the same article, written in 1932, he says, "The *Mbira dze Midzimu* [dzavadzimu] are now so rare that it is impossible to determine with any accuracy their modes ..." (ibid.:83), and that the instrument "appears to be dying out" (ibid.:95). Paul Berliner's description of the mbira tradition in the Zezuru region of Mondoro in the decades before the 1960s supports Tracey's observations; Berliner observes that there were very few players, and they tended to be old men (1993:240).

Tracey's comment that the mbira was dying out suggests that it was once more common. In an article published in 1963, Hugh's son, Andrew, states that in Mbare, the main African township bordering Harare, he knew "at least seven youngish men playing [mbira], whereas the *njari* appears to be played mainly by older men" (1963:23). Andrew Tracey goes on to say that the age of the musicians he knew in Mbare Township suggested a "revival of interest" in the mbira (ibid.). This comment is significant because it is the first statement in the literature I know that points specifically to an "mbira revival," an idea that becomes common later. Paul Berliner also employs the language of cultural revival when he says "Rebirth of interest among the Shona in mbira music is explained as the result of a number of interrelated factors ranging from the African nationalist movement to the upsurge of cultural nationalism" (1993:245).

For the language of revival to be pertinent to the Zezuru mbira, the instrument would have to have been much more commonly played and culturally important in earlier times and then suffered decline. Since Hugh Tracey's research is the earliest we have, there is no specific data that I know of indicating that this was the case. The Zezuru type existed in earlier centuries (A. Tracey 1972) and even may have been played in a different region (H. Tracey 1969:79). But this in no way indicates that there were earlier substantially more mbira players than Hugh Tracey found around 1930, or that the instrument formerly had greater cultural prominence. Indeed, the fact that Hugh Tracey could find so few instruments circa 1930 suggests that it was probably a rather specialised, small-scale tradition around the turn of twentieth century, the period when colonialism, the typical reason given for the mbira's decline, began in earnest. The crux of the matter is that we simply do not know what the situation was earlier.<sup>4</sup> What is clear is that the popularity and diffusion of Zezuru mbira music began to flower from the early 1960s through the early 1990s in various waves and within specific social circles.

### 3. Urban Performance and Musical Nationalism

Andrew Tracey noted that the mbira and njari were performed in Mbare, the main African township bordering Harare, at least by the early 1960s. Others report (unspecified) lamellophones in Mbare in the 1950s (Vambe 1976:212; Zimbabwe interviews [Maluwa] 1993–76:3; Kauffman 1970:201). From the 1930s on, regional migrant associations also performed one or two selected dance-drumming or instrumental traditions from their home regions in the Mbare market area, typically on a weekly basis. *Jerusarema* (Murehwa District), *muchongoyo* (Ndau), *shangara* (Zezuru), and *mbakumba* (Karanga) were the Shona dance-drumming genres most commonly performed.

It was precisely these regional Shona dances and the mbira that were featured at the African nationalist rallies around Harare as the movement got underway during the early 1960s. These migrant performing ensembles were readily at hand to Robert Mugabe and the other middle-class party leaders.<sup>5</sup> At the rallies, the leadership chose to present traditions that indexed the different 'tribes' (Zezuru, Korekore, etc.) and regions to create an inclusive image of the "nation." Of the two lamellophones readily available in Mbare, the mbira may have been selected over njari because of its strong Zezuru associations, whereas the njari was more widely diffused and not strongly associated with a specific social group.<sup>6</sup>

It was also the same Shona traditions performed in Mbare that became the canonic repertory of the new government's National Dance Company after independence in 1980. If the limited selection of "rural" instruments and dances performed in Mbare are by now the most famous in Zimbabwe, it is because their prolonged presence in the city, in conjunction with nationalist activities, has made them so. From the 1960s through the 1980s, however, the middle-class nationalists wanted to

project an inclusive image of a "multitribal" nation; as the ZANU party rose to power they did not favour one regional Shona genre or instrument over others.<sup>7</sup> Thus, while the Zezuru mbira was included in the emerging nationalist canon, it did not have a particularly pronounced role, vis-à-vis the dance-drumming genres, within this sphere. Rather, it was in the colonial mass media, especially radio, where the mbira began to gain special prominence.

### 4. Mbira on Radio

By the end of the 1950s, the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) began recording and airing a great deal of indigenous Shona and Ndebele music on African Service Radio (now Radio 2). A major motivation was to attract Africans to media controlled by the Rhodesian state rather than the potentially "subversive" broadcasts that could be picked up from elsewhere. Since little local music was released commercially, single-copy 78 rpm discs were recorded by RBC mobile units throughout the country, but most of the recording took place in the radio studios in Mbare Township.

My partial list of the RBC collection, recorded between 1957 and 1972, suggests that more lamellophone recordings were made during this period than any other single indigenous tradition (135 sides), with mbira being most common among these.<sup>8</sup> After lamellophones, the next largest indigenous music category in my partial catalogue list was *shangara*, with 83 sides. *Shangara* is a Zezuru recreational dance accompanied by choral singing, hand clapping, and sometimes drumming. Other regional genres commonly performed in Mbare were recorded much less often: *jerusarema* (circa 20 sides), *mbukumba* (circa 25 sides), and *muchongoyo* (circa 20 sides). Since *shangara* is also a Zezuru tradition, and the other dances come from regions further off, this breakdown suggests that Zezuru proximity to the city significantly affected what was recorded and presumably what was aired.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Mbofana, current director of Radio 2, was an announcer for African Service Radio back in the mid-1960s. He said that although he worked under a white director, Mr. Bernard Gilbert, the musical content of his programs was basically up to him, and he used to play a variety of music. Being a member of the black middle class,<sup>10</sup> it is not unusual that he particularly liked "American music, like the Mills Brothers and that sort of thing." He went on to say, "But I used to like, you know, from our African point of view, I liked mbira. Yeah, that's my favourite" (Zimbabwe Interviews 1992-19:2).

I asked Mr. Mbofana how they found mbira players to record and about prominent musicians such as Bandambira and Hakurotwi Mude whom he had produced himself, and who also worked with the Traceys and Paul Berliner. He responded:

You see, what we used to do is to put an announcement across the air, yeah, to say, any mbira players could come and see us here [in Mbare Studios]. Then we auditioned them in the studio. This is how we discovered most of the mbira players.

And some used to come on their own, of course, because we were the only station (ibid).

This method of locating musicians would explain why nearby Zezuru performers were recorded in proportionally greater numbers, and this pertains to both mbira and shangara.

From the 1960s through the mid-1990s, special weekly programs on the African Service Radio 2 were dedicated solely to lamellophone music (see Berliner 1993: 243), while separate Shona and Ndebele programs played a variety of indigenous genres. In the Shona programs this also included lamellophones. Within the field of indigenous Shona music, then, these instruments were singled out for special attention by the radio staff. In a later interview Mbofana directly stated that, among all indigenous styles, lamellophone music, and especially mbira, has received significantly more airplay since the 1960s compared to other indigenous traditions on the African music station (Zimbabwe Interviews 1993-43:1).

Mr. Mbofana thus was apparently not the only announcer who preferred mbira music over other indigenous styles. Given the colonial government's mandate to broadcast indigenous music, I would speculate that the preference for lamellophone music was framed by the media itself in combination with the cosmopolitan musical values of the middle-class African announcers and producers like Mr. Mbofana. In comparison to dance-drumming traditions, which depend more on the vibrancy of the dance than on musical elaboration for their interest, the intricate melodic quality of lamellophone music was probably deemed more suitable for the radio. Put another way, mbira music was easier to abstract from its participatory context and to objectify, while still maintaining musical interest. Among indigenous traditions, lamellophone music was most like the popular songs accompanied by melody and harmony instruments such as the guitar that dominate the airwaves internationally. Such a connection would not have been lost on the middle-class announcers at Radio 2; audience response may also have played a part.

To summarise up to this point, it was the colonial state's vested interest in capturing African listeners, rather than African nationalism *per se*, that led to the recording and broadcasting of indigenous Shona and Ndebele music over the radio. Lamellophone music seems to have provided the best indigenous fit with the medium of radio, certainly for the announcers, and perhaps for the audience. Among lamellophones, Zezuru proximity to Mbare Studios favoured mbira over other types and enhanced this instrument's presence in the translocal Zimbabwean soundscape.

It was through this conjuncture in the 1960s that the mbira began to gain some prominence relative to its former localised status, and this had a gradual ripple effect. A number of mbira players that I interviewed had learned music from the radio and continue to do so today outside the Zezuru region.<sup>11</sup> More important for the next stage of the mbira's rise to prominence, it was through radio broadcasts that a younger generation of guitar players became familiar with mbira music. The two primary guitarists who helped Thomas Mapfumo create his band arrangements of mbira music, Joshua Hlomayi and Jonah Sithole, told me that they had not grown up with mbi-

ra music because they came from other parts of the country. Sithole said that he learned to play mbira music on the guitar by listening to mbira on the radio after he moved to Harare. Hlomayi related that he just had the general sound of mbira music in his head from broadcasts and other encounters with players after coming to the Harare area. Several other guitarists made similar comments to me. This is an important link. It was through the work of these and other electric-guitar band musicians that mbira music continued to grow in national and, ultimately, international fame in the 1970s and 1980s. Mbira music on the airwaves, African nationalism, and rock 'n' roll set the stage for this next conjuncture.

### 5. The Rise of Electric Band Mbira Music in the 1970s

The early 1960s saw the eruption of cosmopolitan youth culture in the urban townships of Harare. Previously, "youth" had not been conceptualised as a separate cultural category in Zimbabwe. After 1963, "teen" culture emerged and, as elsewhere, dress, hair, rock 'n' roll, and accusations of loose morals were marking the generation gap (e.g., *Parade*, February 1963:15; October 1964:56).<sup>12</sup> The Beatles, North American soul artists and, by the late 1960s, hippie and Afro music, clothing, and hair styles became primary models for Zimbabwean rock bands such as The Odd Generation, The Gipsy Band, and Love Generation, operating out of Harare.

Two features of 1960s cosmopolitan rock culture are of particular importance to my discussion. The first involves a new value placed on artistic originality and musical composition. This value previously had not been present in Zimbabwean urban-popular or indigenous traditions, but following Buddy Holly, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and many others, having an individual style and being a performer-composer became key for artistic standing. This idea was pushed in the black music press in Zimbabwe during the 1960s and 1970s. The second and more important issue, however, involves new aspirations among urban youth to become full-time professional musicians. Robert Kauffman (1975:140), Zimbabwean music scholar Joyce Makwenda (p.c. 1993), and my own data suggest that the idea of making a living as a full-time musician did not begin to emerge commonly in Zimbabwe until the 1960s.<sup>13</sup> The legalisation of European alcohol for Africans in 1957 and the subsequent opening of African night-clubs created more professional venues by the 1960s. Commercial recording opportunities began to open up locally in the 1960s,<sup>14</sup> and tales of the tremendous wealth and glamour of the Beatles and other rock stars created new dreams and professional aspirations among cosmopolitan-oriented youth. Many young musicians began to experiment with how such dreams might be achieved. As usual, only a few had the talent, drive, instinct for marketing, and luck that are necessary to succeed. Thomas Mapfumo, the popular performer most closely associated with mbira music, was among this number.

## 6. The Rise of Thomas Mapfumo

Having begun making music in the early 1960s, Thomas Mapfumo sang a variety of local Shona songs (e.g., the RBC recording "Chemtengure," 1966), rock, soul, rumba, and South African jive and kwela with the electric-guitar band The Springfields between 1966 and 1970. Their eclectic repertory and garage-band sound were very much like those of a host of other young electric bands of the 1965–1970 period.<sup>15</sup> In 1971 Mapfumo is quoted as saying that he was absolutely determined to have a successful professional career in music, and that his primary musical aspiration was "to blow tenor saxophone like Stan Getz" (*Parade* 1971:9).

Shortly after this, however, Mapfumo changed directions and began the search for an original sound, as he told me, "You know, something of my own is what I actually needed" (Zimbabwe Interviews 1992-23:8). Based in the new value of originality diffused through transnational rock culture, black music writers and critics in Zimbabwe had been haranguing local artists for covering foreign artists. By 1972–73 Mapfumo was concerned with establishing himself with a style that would have longevity, attract a wide audience, and that would distinguish him as original. This led Mapfumo to experiment with different styles. During this period with the Halelujah Chicken Run Band he told me:

We were trying to play what we called 'Afro-rock music.' This music was a fusion of Shona music and some Western styles. Like, you know the music of Osibisa. It was a [Ghanaian group, formed in London] that used to play Afro-rock who were very popular in England. Well, we were trying to take that direction ... But when it came to selling the music, to record sales, that music was not, no people got excited. It was not very popular with the rest of our fans; it didn't sell very well. We were recording some of it, and a lot of it was a flop. Now one record came on top because this record was pure traditional, you see where the whole thing came about? ... [The] one song which was pure Zimbabwean traditional, mbira but now played with guitars, well, people just went for it. They thought it was the best of them all ... So, well, this made me take the direction that I now am today (Zimbabwe Interviews 1992-23:8–9).

The "traditional" song he mentions is "Ngoma Yarira" of 1974, his first commercial 45 rpm recording based on a classical mbira piece ("Karigamombe"), performed by his guitar band and featuring indigenous Shona vocal style.<sup>16</sup> The flip side of "Ngoma Yarira" was an indigenous war song called "Murembo," and Mapfumo identified this piece as his first political song in support of the ZANU and ZAPU guerrillas. Political lyrics were another key component of Mapfumo's style and appeal.<sup>17</sup>

## 7. Professionalism and Nationalism

M.D. Rhythm Success had released an electric band version of a classical mbira piece ("Kuzanga") the year before Mapfumo's "Ngoma Yarira," and Lipopo Jazz had also done so in 1974 ("Taiveva," see Berliner 1993:244). In 1968, M.D. Rhythm Success released a *jit* song (a term associated with village recreational dance-drumming) that included an actual indigenous drum solo to emphasise the use of "roots" elements in their music. Thus, like Mapfumo, other artists were experimenting along similar lines around the same time. Unlike these other bands, however, Mapfumo dedicated himself largely to "electric-traditional" music. By 1977, an *African Parade* writer could unproblematically assert: "Nobody in Rhodesia who hears the name Thomas Mapfumo will fail to associate it with African traditional music. And recently, Thomas Mapfumo has climbed and is still climbing the ladder of success in traditional music" (December 1977:43). A picture with the article shows Mapfumo wearing a black robe like ones worn by spirit mediums; he is holding an elder's walking stick in one hand and a microphone in the other, a visual image that paralleled his fusion of indigenous songs and "modern" instrumentation.

By the mid- to late-1970s a host of other guitar-band artists such as Zexie Manatsa and the Green Arrows, Oliver M'tukudzi, Jordan Chataika, and many others were recording mbira music and other indigenous genres with guitars and, like Mapfumo's songs, often with lyrics referencing the guerrilla war. In various interviews, Mapfumo makes it clear that he was led to specialise in the arrangement of mbira and other village genres by the overwhelmingly positive audience reactions at shows and by gauging record sales. Mapfumo made the same comment about his original impetus for singing political lyrics: these were the songs popular with audiences and so he kept producing them.<sup>18</sup> Jackson Phiri of Lipopo Jazz and Zexie Manatsa told me that they too played some mbira-based pieces to please part of their audience, and, like Mapfumo, Manatsa specifically related this to a concern with record sales (Zimbabwe Interviews 1993-58:11).

Mass-cultural nationalism begun by the middle-class political leadership in 1960, and intensified by the Liberation War of the 1970s, may well have been involved here. But it operated indirectly through the tastes and desires of urban audiences. The key point is that national sentiment among urban audiences worked in conjunction with the artists' professional career goals of building a mass audience and selling records. It was this conjuncture of cultural nationalism and musical professionalism that led to the development and greater diffusion of electric-band mbira music, along with the band arrangements of other village genres such as *jerusarema*, *jit*, agricultural songs, and war songs.

Given his stated love for mbira music, I once asked Mapfumo why he did not simply perform with mbira and *hosho*. He replied that playing mbira music with electric instruments was a way of appealing to a broader Zimbabwean population: "young people" who want "modern music" are attracted by the electric instruments while "older people in the rural areas" like his music because it is "traditional" [his

terms]. This mode of forging a broad-based audience parallels, and could even be mistaken for, the typical nationalist *modus operandi* of blending diverse indigenous and “modern” elements into unified images of the nation.<sup>19</sup> In culturally pluralistic societies like Zimbabwe, the same technique is applicable for building a career in the capitalist music business and for nation building because success in both fields relies on mass appeal. The motivations underlying each, however, are quite different.

### 8. Mapfumo’s Adaptations of Indigenous Music

Since the mid-1980s, the mbira has been the musical feature most frequently commented on in scholarly and popular writings about Mapfumo, and he also tends to emphasise it in interviews. In fact, for most of his career, mbira-based pieces, defined here as comprising a four-phrase ostinato usually in 12/8 and using the types of harmonic progressions described earlier, represented a small portion of Mapfumo’s recorded output. He did not actually incorporate the instrument into his band until the mid-1980s. Rather, as lead vocalist, he has performed and recorded a wide range of indigenous genres as well as rock-styled numbers, South African styles, and, later, some reggae-influenced pieces accompanied by electric guitars and bass, drum kit, saxophones, brass, percussion, and sometimes keyboards. After his 1974 recording “Ngoma Yarira,” Mapfumo often emphasised indigenous-styled vocals, including low vocable singing and relatively strident yodelling.

Among indigenous Shona genres, Mapfumo has recorded jerusarema dance-drumming songs various times. This genre is distinguished by its four-bar cycle within a 4/4 meter, a two-bar woodblock pattern (s. Fig. 1) and various formulaic drum patterns played against the woodblocks.<sup>20</sup>



Fig. 1: Jerusarema Dance Drumming Pattern

Mapfumo also frequently records and performs a unique syncretic style of Zimbabwean music known as *jit* or *jiti*. A recreational dance-drumming tradition in the rural north-east, as well as an acoustic guitar genre of the 1950s and 1960s, *jit* is a blend of South African urban jive and *marabi* transformed by Zimbabwean rhythmic norms. *Jit* songs typically comprise a two-phrase ostinato over a I-IV-I-V harmonic progression and a rapid 12/8 rhythm, with driving bass drum accents falling every three beats. Mapfumo has also used threshing songs, war songs, recreational songs, and other types, often comprising two-phrase ostinatos in 12/8 time with descending melodies, as the basis of his compositions.

On a collection of his early singles recorded between 1976 and 1980 called *The Chimurenga Singles 1976-1980* (1985, Shanachie-Meadow Lark 403), there are no songs based on classical mbira music. The collection does include two *jit* songs (“Kwaenda Mu Zimbabwe” and “Chipatapata”), and several based on two-bar 12/8 Shona ostinatos (e.g., “Tozvireva Kupiko” and “Pfumvu Pa Ruzevha”). On “Pfumvu Pa Puzevha” the guitarist plays the “damped-guitar” style (right palm dampens the plucked strings) meant to imitate mbira timbre. This technique was popularised by Mapfumo’s guitarists Joshua Hlomayi and Jonah Sithole and was used on many songs, whether mbira-based or not. Other songs in *The Chimurenga Singles 1976-1980* collection are more pop-oriented and harder to classify (e.g., “Munhu Mute-ma,” and “Ndiyani Achatipa Runyararo”).

On *Hokoyo!*, his first LP recorded circa 1977 with the Acid Band, only two of ten songs are based on classical mbira pieces (“Hwahwa,” “Mhandu Musango”). Three songs feature *jit* rhythm (“Diningwe,” “Murandu,” “Matiregerera Mambo”), and two others are ostinato-based Shona songs featuring call-and-response in 4/4 time (“Dendera,” “Jaju-mu jakacha”). The title song of the album, “Hokoyo!” (Watch out! or Beware!), is in a pop style Mapfumo called “Afro-rock.” The remaining two pieces are based on South African *mbaqanga* music in moderate 4/4 time, a genre popular in Zimbabwe after the late 1960s. The variety of styles and percentage of mbira pieces on this LP are more or less similar to most of his later recordings with his present group, The Blacks Unlimited.<sup>21</sup> On some LP records such as *Ndangariro*, released internationally in 1983 (Earthworks ELP 2005), and *Chimurenga for Justice* (1985, Chimurenga Music Rough 91), there are no songs based on classical mbira music.<sup>22</sup> On these LP records indigenous vocal style and hand clapping patterns are prominent on several songs. On *Ndangariro* there is a piece originally associated with jerusarema, “Kambiri Kaenda,” and several based on two-phrase, 12/8 Shona structures.

Given their minority status within his repertory, it is curious that Mapfumo is best known internationally for his performance of mbira music (as well as for his political lyrics). Mapfumo’s strong association with mbira music appears to be the result of a special awareness of this instrument among worldbeat fans and music writers once Mapfumo entered the transnational market.

### 9. Thomas Mapfumo and Worldbeat

Like Nigerian *juju* star Sunny Ade earlier, Mapfumo was picked up briefly (1989–1991) by Mango, a division of Island Records, in their attempt to find a worldbeat star like Bob Marley after Marley’s death (Blackwell in Fox 1986:320). Island Records was a major force behind the worldbeat phenomenon, and Island’s founder, Chris Blackwell, was involved in both discovering and helping to create the worldbeat market niche. In discussing his initial marketing of Bob Marley, Blackwell remarks:

I felt reggae was the white liberal market. I always hoped that it would sell to black America, but it never did because the music was too ethnic-ish. It wasn't smooth enough ... The only people who really related to it were white liberal, college oriented-type people who were interested in it because of its sociological aspects as well as its rhythm. But it was really its sociological side that gave it its base (Blackwell, in Fox 1986:306).

As with Marley, Mapfumo largely attracted "white liberal, college oriented-type people" in the United States of America, confirming Blackwell's assessment of a major worldbeat market.<sup>23</sup> In Britain, Japan, Australia, and elsewhere the specific ethnic make-up of worldbeat audiences may vary,<sup>24</sup> but by its very nature and ideology, worldbeat appeals to and is shaped by a particular type of cosmopolitan aesthetic.

In the liner notes to his 1986 *Graceland* album, Paul Simon captured the core of this aesthetic best when he wrote that the South African music that had attracted him was "familiar and foreign-sounding at the same time." The appeal of foreign or "exotic" sights and sounds in mainstream European and North American popular music has a long history. The Hawaiian music and ukulele boom after the turn of the century, the tango, rumba, and chacha dance crazes earlier in the twentieth century, and the Beatles' use of sitar with its "eastern" spiritual references are well-known examples. Although revelling in cultural difference, these trends simultaneously involve the selection of forms that are distinctive and yet compatible with mainstream aesthetics. It is also typical that foreign forms and practices are transformed by cosmopolitan aesthetics and diffused in familiar contexts and packages. The evolution of Mapfumo's style conforms to these patterns.

### 10. Foreign Distinctiveness

Mapfumo's use of mbira and indigenous-styled vocals fit perfectly with the emphasis on "exotic" cultural difference. Once he included actual mbira players in his band, the instrument's visual and sonic distinctiveness played a part in drawing attention. Zimbabwean drums do not differ much from many other African drums (or even the congas used in Mapfumo's band), but the 22-key mbira is relatively unique to Zimbabwe and thus served well as an index of a localised, authentic African culture.

In combination with the distinctiveness of the instrument itself, I partially attribute the international awareness of the mbira in Mapfumo's music to Paul Berliner's landmark study, *Soul of Mbira*, and the accompanying Nonesuch LP records. A widely read ethnomusicological classic, this book focused almost exclusively on the 22-key Zezuru mbira. Since it was the only easily available detailed work on Zimbabwean music, it had a major impact on shaping international perceptions. Although not the intent of the author, Berliner's study has sometimes led people to think of the mbira as the major or most common tradition in the country.<sup>25</sup> I know I had this impression for years as a graduate student.<sup>26</sup> Berliner's work has also served as a major

source for world music textbooks, various secondary accounts of African music, and popular music writers. Taken together, this body of literature has helped shape the popular mbira-centred view of Zimbabwean music among world music fans, mass media music writers, and ethnomusicologists. In addition, the presence of Shona musicians such as Ephat Mujuru and Dumisani Maraire in the United States of America, visits which were arranged by Berliner and other ethnomusicologists, helped foster the popularity of mbira and *karimba* (a 15-key lamellophone) outside Zimbabwe.

One of the most important reasons for the international focus on mbira, although perhaps the most difficult to document, is that its sound and music are easily accessible and especially attractive for people with cosmopolitan aesthetics. Personal experience as a player and a classroom teacher indicate that North Americans often respond easily and enthusiastically to mbira music. Although I sometimes get complaints about the buzzing produced by the bottlecaps, people find the instrument's sound attractive. I would also suggest that the harmonic progressions that emerge from guitar arrangements of classical mbira pieces are also familiar and particularly effective in the context of cosmopolitan popular music conventions. The continual shifting between major and minor chords and the ambiguous tonal centre is a device also found in North American and British popular music (e.g., Sting's "Every Breath You Take," various songs by Madonna; see McClary 1991). This ambiguity between major and minor tonalities in mbira music helps create a moving, mysterious effect that supports the romantic imagery of foreign places.

I frequently asked urban-popular musicians in Zimbabwe why the mbira became incorporated in guitar bands more than local drums. The typical response was that its sound fit better with guitars: the melodic quality of the instrument and its delicate metallic timbre worked well in a band context. Thus, the same features that led to the mbira's prominence on RBC radio decades earlier seems to have played a role in its inclusion in guitar bands.

The connection of the mbira with Shona spirit possession ceremonies also fit well with worldbeat thematics. Following the precedent set by Bob Marley, two themes are often used to market worldbeat artists, the "sociological side" referred to by Chris Blackwell above. These are liberatory politics, especially as pertaining to the African diaspora, and exotic spiritualism. Mapfumo's connection to the Liberation War of the 1970s was his major "sociological" selling point, but the mbira's connection with Shona religion has also proven to be an attractive feature for worldbeat and "new age" fans.<sup>27</sup> This connection was made known through Berliner's book and the work of touring Zimbabwean artists.

The mbira is the musical feature in Mapfumo's work that is most frequently commented on internationally because its distinctiveness, coupled with the relative fame it achieved through ethnomusicologists, made it the easiest aspect to recognise by people unfamiliar with Zimbabwean music. Mbira music was also a particularly attractive part of Mapfumo's repertoire for worldbeat fans because it was both uniquely "foreign sounding" and yet had familiar, accessible elements, and because of its "roots" and spiritual "sociological side."

Worldmusic fans' and writers' special interest in the mbira appears to have inspired Mapfumo to emphasise increasingly the instrument in his band. Although consistent with the continual "indigenisation" process that has characterised his career, he added a permanent mbira player, Chartwell Dutiro, to his band for the first time in 1986, after he had begun touring Europe. Between 1986 and 1992 the number increased to three permanent mbira players. In stage shows even more than on recordings, the mbira players came to have pride of place, forward and toward the centre of the stage.

It is also striking that on Mapfumo's second Mango (Island) release, *Chamunorwa* (1991), four of the six pieces were mbira-based ("Hwahwa," "Chitima Ndikature," "Chamunorwa," and "Nyama Yekugocha"),<sup>28</sup> and all four begin with a short solo mbira section before the band kicks in. *Chamunorwa* also included a jit song ("Hurokuro"), and the remaining piece ("Muramba Doro") is based on jerusarema. *Chamunorwa* thus represents a radical shift in the percentage of mbira pieces usually found on Mapfumo recordings. This appears to be a response to his perception of the popularity of mbira music in worldbeat circles, a point I will develop further.

### 11. Similarity and Transformation

While mbira music provided both foreign distinctiveness as well as accessible features in itself, Mapfumo transformed the instrument and the music further in light of worldbeat aesthetics. Mapfumo's British sound engineer, Chris Bolton, devised a way of putting electric pick-ups on the mbira soundboard which was important for incorporating this quiet instrument into the band. After the mbira was electrified, Bolton decided to remove the bottle cap buzzers so that the sound would be clearer. Moreover, the instruments used (made by Chris Mhlanga) were tuned in the standard European system so that the pitches matched the electric keyboards.<sup>29</sup> Readily apparent on Mapfumo recordings and at shows, the transparent, light metallic sound of these mbira (tuned in E, with particularly short, high keys) is quite distinct from the lower-pitched, dense, buzzy quality that is preferred by indigenous players. Similar alterations were made to other African instruments when used in the worldbeat arena. For example, the buzzers typically attached to the Mande kora are also usually removed, and the timbre is made to sound more like an acoustic guitar (bass augmented, higher strings made less thin) through microphone placement and equalisation on worldmusic recordings.

In Zimbabwe, indigenous mbira performance is guided by participatory values and practices which result in a particularly vibrant, dense sound quality. Loud *hosho* (shakers) and multiple vocal and clapped parts both interlock and overlap, almost covering the sound of the mbira themselves. People enter at will with their own contributions such that each performance has its own dynamic and its own musical variations and combinations. Mapfumo, on the other hand, carefully arranges the instrumental and vocal parts in his ensemble. While he maintains the polyphonic textures

of indigenous performance, he emphasises the clarity and separation of parts in both his recordings and live shows. Once arranged, pieces are performed very close to the recorded model.<sup>30</sup> His conception is closer to the Western idea of a song as a finished product or art object than it is to the indigenous *modus operandi* of music being shaped anew through each performance.

"Muramba Doro," the jerusarema-related piece on *Chamunorwa*, is indicative of the way Mapfumo's music came to fit with worldbeat aesthetics. The reference to jerusarema is heard in the opening *ngoma* (indigenous drum) part and in a later *ngoma* solo. The jerusarema rhythm is maintained subtly throughout the recording but would be easily missed by anyone not very familiar with the genre. More prominently, the song has a 4/4, rock-oriented rhythm with snare accents on two and four. The progression is a typical two-phrase Shona type (F Am Dm Dm / F Am C C). Mapfumo emphasises indigenous-styled yodelling (*huro*) and call-and-response singing on vocables with the female chorus, as would be done in indigenous jerusarema performance.<sup>31</sup> What is striking is the way Mapfumo performs the *huro* vocal style. Rather than the often penetrating or strident style of indigenous Shona yodelling, Mapfumo softens the vocal quality, doing away with any harsh or strident edges. The overall softening of Mapfumo's yodelling and general vocal style in the 1980s is particularly apparent when comparing the versions of the mbira-based "Hwahwa" on *Hokoyo!* (1977) and on *Chamunorwa* (1989). On the earlier recording Mapfumo produced a thinner, more strident vocal timbre for *huro* singing, more in keeping with the indigenous model.

On "Muramba Doro," the combination of jerusarema and rock rhythms, the use of indigenous-styled vocals and form with a full, tightly arranged accompaniment on electric instruments, and the softening of his vocal style produces a final effect that is both "familiar and foreign-sounding at the same time." In an August 1990 interview with *Moto*, a Zimbabwean journal, Mapfumo speaks directly to his reformist role of "modernising" and "improving" indigenous Shona music for cosmopolitan audiences:

Chimurenga music [referring to his style] is the traditional beat of *mbira*, rattles (*hosho*), and drums played at important gatherings by our ancestors, so I would not outrightly agree that I am the founder of the beat, but rather just one who inherited, improved and perfected it, and managed to present it by modern electrical instruments, and made it to be liked by more people in these hightec times. Now I am exporting the beat. I am very proud of my culture (*Moto* 1990:19).

After *Chamunorwa*, Mapfumo was dropped by Mango Records, and by 1995 was having major problems with overseas promoters. In the summer of 1996 he took a quick trip to participate in the WOMAD festival in the U.K., with his ensemble greatly reduced to cut costs. The eight musicians who were selected for the concert included three mbira players, a bassist, a guitarist, a drum-kit drummer, and a percussionist. The horn players, keyboardist, his other guitar player, and the accompanying singers and dancers were left home. It is clear that he was particularly emphasising mbira for the worldbeat fans at WOMAD.



Chris Bolton, Mapfumo's sound engineer, told me that touring with this smaller configuration began in 1992, when Mapfumo played a concert with the Kronos Quartet in San Francisco. They had also done an "unplugged" concert emphasising the mbira in London in 1993. Bolton said that Mapfumo liked this smaller sound; it was more intimate and "traditional," with more space for his singing (p.c. July 1996). It remains to be seen how the forces of the transnational market will affect Mapfumo's and other Zimbabweans' future artistic and career choices, but as of 1996, international interest in the mbira had inspired Mapfumo increasingly to emphasise and identify with this particular tradition.

## 12. The New Wave of Indigenous-based Guitar Bands

Mapfumo's relative success abroad created a new boom of young bands specialising in "electric-traditional" music in Zimbabwe after 1988. In fact, between the late-1980s and approximately 1994,<sup>32</sup> the number of indigenous-based guitar bands, now often quite consciously in the Mapfumo mould, probably equalled or exceeded the number recording during the high nationalist period (1978–82). After 1982, the national sentiment generated by the war and independence began to wane. Around the same time many musicians began to turn away from indigenous-based band music. Mapfumo briefly did so as well (e.g., the music on *Chimurenga for Justice*, 1985), but he quickly returned to the indigenous style when he discovered this was what foreign audiences wanted, culminating in the heavily mbira-based album, *Chamunorwa* (1991). The success of Stella Chiweshe, the Bhundu Boys, and especially Thomas Mapfumo in the worldbeat market led more bands to take up the indigenous-based electric style anew.

Mapfumo's prominence as a model is partially based on the fact that, while he frequently tours outside the country, he remains based in Harare, whereas Chiweshe and the Bhundu Boys are based in Germany and England, out of sight and out of mind. Mapfumo is seen to be constantly coming and going, and his travels receive more attention in the press at home. The new bands of the late 1980s also wanted a crack at the transnational market since the local scene was too small to support them. The style popularised by Mapfumo seemed to be the best bet, and groups like the Black-Its, Vadzimba, The Legal Lions, Zimbabwe Clear Sounds, Ephant Mujuru and the Spirit of the People (his newer electric band), and Mazana Movement, among others, have followed his lead. Like Mapfumo, these groups have actually added one or two mbira to their ensembles and use them to perform classical mbira pieces as well as for other genres.

In Harare during the 1988–94 period, not only were increasing numbers of young people showing interest in mbira-based guitar music, the mbira itself was continuing to gain in popularity among young people, especially, but not exclusively, of rural and working-class extraction. This worldbeat-generated boom created the perception that one could work, and perhaps even tour, as a professional mbira player. For low-

er-income youth who wanted to play in bands, mbira were cheaper and more available than guitars. Perhaps as another result of the international popularity of mbira, the instrument was beginning to be included in the curricula of elite secondary schools in Harare, where it was studied by white as well as middle-class black students. As I suggested earlier, this does not so much represent a "revival" of the mbira as much as a new phase of flowering and diffusion.<sup>33</sup>

It is a common phenomenon in "Third World" countries that international attention to, and marketing of, particular local styles will give a boost to those styles at home. Because of international attention, such styles often come to be considered *the* national or most important local style. The heightened prominence of mbira-based music and the mbira itself in Zimbabwe during the late-1980s is one clear example.

## 13. Conclusion

In this paper I have traced the processes by which the mbira rose to national and international prominence from its former status as a small, localised specialist musical tradition. While African nationalism played a role at some points in this story, I have suggested that it was not the single most important driving force, as is often suggested. Rather, radio diffusion in the 1960s and the professional aspirations of guitar-band musicians in the 1970s and 1980s played equally important roles. It was not until after the mid-1980s, when Thomas Mapfumo went after the worldbeat market, however, that the mbira rose to its present prominence at home and abroad. I believe that the work of ethnomusicologists, especially Paul Berliner, also played a key role in this conjuncture. International interest in the mbira inspired Mapfumo increasingly to emphasise this instrument and music in his band, and his relative success abroad helped to create a new boom of interest at home.

Rather than seeing the rise in prominence of the Zezuru mbira as the product of a grassroots cultural movement, it is better understood as the result of this instrument's fortuitous fit with cosmopolitan media, aesthetics, and musical as well as social trends. The mbira story is a clear illustration of the profound interplay between local cultural traditions and transnational processes and market forces in the post-colonial world.

## Notes

- Names for the various lamellophones played in Zimbabwe differ. Often instruments will simply be referred to by their proper names, such as *mbira*, *njari*, *matepe*, and *karimba* (see Berliner 1993). Sometimes, however, the term *mbira* is used generically for lamellophones, thus requiring qualifiers such as *mbira dzavadzimu*, or *matepe-mbira*. For the sake of clarity, in this article I will use "lamellophone" as the generic designation and will refer to the various types by their simple names. Thus, here the term *mbira* refers only to the Zezuru variety.

2. With the winning of majority rule in 1980, the name of the country was changed from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, the capital of Salisbury was renamed Harare, and the former black township of Harare was renamed Mbare. In this paper I will use contemporary place names.
3. This assertion is based on existing recordings of ZANU and ZAPU's political *chimurenga* songs of the 1970s and testimony by Comrade Chinx, a prominent ZANU *chimurenga* composer and political song leader during the war years. In order of prominence, the most common musical basis for the parties' *chimurenga* songs were Christian hymns, school songs, and the syncretic *jit* and *makwaya* genres, with localised Shona and Ndebele genres, including *mbira*, being used occasionally.
4. Why, then, assume former prominence, decline, and revival? My hypothesis is that this view grew out of a common ethnomusicological assumption of the time that indigenous arts were dying and needed to be preserved. After 1960 this belief operated in tandem with African nationalist discourse that stressed a blanket indigenous cultural decline, due to colonialism, and the nationalist championing of an indigenous cultural revival.
5. Back from a stint in Ghana where he learned the techniques of nationalism first hand, Mugabe had the role of Publicity Secretary for the leading nationalist parties in the early 1960s. From this position he had a key role in developing cultural nationalism as an important basis for the political movement (Shamuyarira 1965:67-68).
6. It is possible that the *njari* was also played at rallies, but in my sources when a lamellophone is specified it is identified as *ZeZuru*.
7. Because ZANU had strong Shona affiliations, they did emphasise the arts of Shona subgroups rather than of the Ndebele, who were more closely aligned with the competing ZAPU nationalist party. People involved with organising the National Dance Company after ZANU came to power, however, denied political motivations and simply explained that Shona dancers were the ones who showed up at the auditions held in Harare.
8. This collection is now housed in the National Archives of Zimbabwe. I studied the entire computerised catalogue and obtained a relatively comprehensive print-out for the genres of special interest for my research.
9. This whole line of reasoning and research was inspired by a comment made by Andrew Tracey in a lecture at the College of Music in Harare in 1993. He suggested that the increased popularity and diffusion of the *mbira* may have been due to the *ZeZuru* people's proximity to Harare.
10. He went into radio work after leaving a post as an agricultural extension assistant, a position based on a higher level of education and indicating higher class standing. The radio typically hired middle-class Africans as announcers.
11. For example, two of my teachers, Chris Mhlanga and Tutu Chigamba, who took up the *mbira* in the early 1960s in Highfield Township, told me they had been inspired by these radio broadcasts, especially the recordings of *Bandambira*. John Kaemmer writes that the "*ZeZuru mbira*" (his term) had recently been introduced into north-central Zimbabwe, *Korekoreland*, where the *hera* was the main ceremonial lamellophone, around the time of his 1972-73 research (1975:85). The timing would suggest the influence of radio. In the north-eastern *Murehwa* district, I met young men who learned *mbira* almost exclusively from the radio. In that region the *mbira* appears to have completely replaced the *njari*, formerly the main lamellophone type there. I witnessed the *mbira* as well as the *hera* being played in the northern region of *M'toko* in 1993. Thus, the *mbira* had become more widely diffused but had not necessarily replaced other lamellophones in all locales by the time of my research.

12. For example, in 1959 an *African Parade* music writer commented that jazz appealed to the young and old alike (January 1959:14). This sentiment was echoed later in *Parade* (October 1964:56), but the same writer went on to describe rock 'n' roll as a divisive force between the generations. (*African Parade* and later *Parade* were the most widely read Zimbabwean news and cultural magazines and were written by Africans for a largely middle-class black readership.)
13. Previously, music had been largely conceptualised as an avocation, as a non-income-generating part of ritual and recreational activities, or, at most, as a way of earning supplementary income. Exceptions include some members of the Police Band (founded 1939) who moonlighted in jazz combos and earned their full income from music. Kenneth Mattaka, one of the founders of the middle-class "concert" vocal-group tradition, also worked as a full-time entertainer. There are probably a few other exceptions, such as the successful band leader August Musarurwa. Occasionally village drummers and *mbira* players would attach themselves to a *n'anga* (healer) and be supported as part of his establishment. The role of full-time professional musician, however, was not commonly held or understood previous to the 1960s in Zimbabwe.
14. Teal Record Company was incorporated in Bulawayo in September 1959 (later to become Gramma Records located in Harare). Gallo Records from South Africa opened Musical Distributors Ltd. in Bulawayo in December of 1962 (becoming Gallo Rhodesia Ltd. in 1972, and Zimbabwe Music Corporation in 1985). During the 1970s, local record production and promotion, especially 45 rpm records, was greatly expanded in Zimbabwe by these companies.
15. Other bands in this vein were the All Saint's, St. Paul's Band, The Zebrons, The Beatsters, and the Harare Mambos.
16. The piece was co-composed with guitarist Joshua Hlomayi, as credited on the 45 rpm label (Teal Records, Afro Sound AS 105).
17. Although *Mapfumo* sang political songs during the 1970s, his role as a supporter of the guerrillas is sometimes contested, perhaps unfairly, by militant nationalists. Since he was performing inside the country, his political songs were often purposefully vague and were, in fact, open to co-option by various factions, including the Rhodesians, during the war. *Mapfumo* was once forced to play a concert for the Rhodesian puppet regime of A. Muzorewa, put in place by the Smith government in the late 1970s. As a demoralising tactic, *Mapfumo*'s music was actually played from loudspeakers out of Rhodesian helicopters while they made bombing raids on guerrilla camps, as ex-combatants told me (see also Frederikse 1982:265). While not the fault of the artist himself, these incidents have hurt *Mapfumo*'s stature as a nationalist within the country.
18. Speaking about his first song about the war, "*Murembo*," for example, *Mapfumo* told me: "This is my own tune, and when I composed this tune it was during the liberation struggle. This is the first *chimurenga* tune, you know, that people went out to buy. When I recorded this music on a single, eh, we recorded a lot of singles, and out of those singles, this was the only single that the people thought was good music. It had a good message. And straight away, they received the message loud and clear. And they went into the shops to buy it. And the rest of the music that I recorded, ah, when I recorded "*Murembo*," we threw all that music into the dustbin because people never liked it" (Zimbabwe Interviews 1993-46:1).
19. In my forthcoming book on Zimbabwean popular music, I discuss this typical aspect of nationalist discourse and practice as *modernist reformism*, or *cultural reformism*. Nationalists from Mao to Mugabe typically propose that a new national culture should be forged from "the best"

of local culture blended with "the best" of foreign "modern" culture. Within this process, local forms and practices are "reformed" in light of "modern" values, practices, and contexts.

20. Jerusarema music is particularly famous in Zimbabwe currently because it is used to lead into the national news throughout the day on radio and TV. The rapid woodblock pattern sounds something like the old teletypes.
21. On *Chimurenga Masterpiece* (1990, TML 103) one out of five pieces is classical mbira ("Dangu Rangu") and three are jit. On *Hondo* (1991, TML 104) one out of five pieces is mbira based ("Maiti Kurima") and three are jit. On a 1994 international release *Vanhu Vatema* (Zimbob TMBU 14), three out of ten pieces were based on classic mbira music and four were jit.
22. For example, on *Zimbabwe-Mozambique* (1988, Gramma TML 100) a mbira is featured on the album but no songs are based on mbira music. *Chimurenga for Justice* includes two reggae-based songs, a rock song, a jit song, and two compelling original pieces that are difficult to classify. On this record Mapfumo sometimes emphasises Shona vocal style and on other pieces sings in English in a rather bland pop style reminiscent of his vocal work in the late 1960s (e.g., on "One Man, One Woman").
23. The "sociological side" that Mango Records and the British and North American press used to market Mapfumo involved the liberatory politics of his songs and his connection to Zimbabwean nationalism during the 1970s.
24. Fred Zindi described the audience at a Mapfumo concert in London on an early foreign tour in 1984: "At a glance at least ten different nations were represented on this particular day—Europeans, West Indians, Africans, Indians, Americans, Chinese, Arabs and many more" (1985:37).
25. The dissertations and articles by Robert Kauffman and John Kaemmer and the work of Hugh and Andrew Tracey provided a broader picture of Zimbabwean music, but these sources were little known except to specialists. Berliner opens his book with an overview of Zimbabwean traditions, but this section is short and easy to forget in relation to the wealth of information on the Zezuru mbira.
26. I was an Andeanist specialist at the time, but like other ethnomusicologists had been tremendously impressed by Berliner's book and recordings. I was also deeply moved when I first heard mbira played live by Ephat Mujuru at the 1980 annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Bloomington, Indiana. My interest in Zimbabwe and this particular research actually grew out of those encounters.
27. Stella Chiweshe, an mbira player and band leader, is the Zimbabwean worldbeat artist who is most closely associated with spiritual matters, whereas liberatory politics was more important for marketing Mapfumo; e.g., in the Mango Records press release about his personal history. Nonetheless, in his 1989 tour of the U.S., Mapfumo's mbira player, Chartwell Dutiro, sometimes wore a spirit medium's robe on stage to make the spiritual connection. Publications directed to worldbeat audiences, such as *World Music: The Rough Guide* (Broughton et al. 1994), also emphasised the religious aspect of the mbira. For example, beneath a picture of the mbira in *The Rough Guide* the caption reads: "Every key a spirit: the mbira" (1994:398).
28. "Nyama Yekugocha" or "Baya wa Baya" is not specific to the classical mbira repertory; a war song, it is performed with *dandanda* ceremonial drumming as well as in other forms. It is commonly performed by mbira players with a four-phrase ostinato, although its rhythm does not easily fit the typical 12/8 metric structure as with Mapfumo's rendition.
29. Mbira tunings in indigenous contexts can be quite idiosyncratic, and they frequently vary from standard Western tuning (see Berliner 1993).

30. For example, at Mapfumo shows in Harare in 1993, I was surprised by how close his performance of "Pidigori" and other pieces I knew well were to the original recordings, sometimes made over ten years earlier.
31. The only difference here is that men typically comprise the chorus in jerusarema groups.
32. A period of decline for the new bands playing this style began around 1994–95 due to an economic depression in Zimbabwe. Record companies and clubs competing for shrinking audiences ceased experimenting with new groups and returned to artists with established track records such as Mapfumo, Oliver M'tukudzi, and Leonard Dembo.
33. Even with this new boost, Zimbabweans outside the cosmopolitan loop are not nearly as mbira-centric in their views of indigenous music as foreigners are, whereas because of international attention, mbira may be the main indigenous tradition of which urban middle-class Zimbabweans are aware.

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## Book Reviews

**International Index to Music Periodicals.** Chadwyck-Healey: <<http://music.chadwyck.co.uk/>>, <<http://music.chadwyck.com/>>. World Wide Web online bibliography. ISSN: 1087-6871. (Also available on CD-ROM.) \$2495 / £1700 (site license; reductions for single users or small groups).

*International Index to Music Periodicals* (IIMP) is an electronic index of over 360 music periodicals, available by subscription on the World Wide Web or on CD-ROM. Before embarking on this review—which assesses the Web version only—I had had little experience of web-based databases; this makes my stance that of a "typical" user rather than that of an expert. I set out to see whether someone in my position—with a number of research and teaching projects in progress, and looking for time-saving aids to literature searching—could benefit from a service such as IIMP, and how the results obtained from this database compared with those from other online databases offered by BIDS (Bath Information and Data Services) and OCLC FirstSearch. In the former case I used the BIDS-ISI Arts and Humanities Citation Index, while OCLC provided access to the general databases WorldCat and Article 1st as well as the more specialised RILM.

IIMP in fact comprises two complementary databases: a "current file" covering more than 360 music periodicals, whose records include not only basic bibliographic information but also short abstracts; and a retrospective "full file" cataloguing around 130 titles, some covering complete runs of journals going back as early as 1874. (The publishers inform me that they intend to simplify matters in the future by publishing the database in the form of a single file.)

IIMP's coverage of the subject is broad, and ethnomusicological titles feature strongly on the list (as do those dealing with popular music, music therapy, music technology and music education, for instance). The journal *Ethnomusicology* is indexed in the current file, along with the *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology*, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* and *Asian Music*, in addition to this journal. *Ethnomusicology* is also included in the full file list.

Searching is carried out through a comprehensive set of data fields (author, title keyword, subject category, document type, language and so on; see Fig. 1); date ranges can be specified, and searches can be carried out on full file only, on current file only or on both files concurrently. All fields have browsable alphabetical lists of "thesaurus" terms, which I found an extremely useful feature (see Fig. 2).

IIMP offers an impressive selection of Boolean, truncation and proximity search options, making it possible to refine searches with some precision. The interface is attractive, clear and easy to use, and retrieval is fast (even connecting from home via a 28.8 kbps modem I experienced no intolerable delays).

Searchers can specify the number of results required per batch: the default setting presents "hits" in batches of 50 records. Results appear initially in the form of listings of short records (see Fig. 3).

Clicking on any citation takes the user to the corresponding long record (see Fig. 4); alternatively one can make selections by ticking off the check boxes provided to the left of each citation and request all the required Full Citations at once.