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TSONGA FRICTION-BOW MUSIC:
COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT. — The musical performances of several Tsonga bow players are compared, analyzed, and discussed. The typical player adapts tribal beer songs so that they become playable on the instrument, and he uses various ingenious compositional techniques to do this, such as octave transposition, stretching and compressing notes so that the rubbing stick can cope with them, lowering a major third to a minor third, and including the desired melody note by representing it as the lower of two simultaneously sounded bow notes.

The Tsonga are a Bantu-speaking southern African people of whom about 1,200,000 live in Mozambique, and a further 200,000 live in the Northern Transvaal. They appear to be linguistically and culturally distinct from the Tsonga of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Inshambane area. They are largely a patrilineal, viriloclal people, who propitiate their ancestor spirits and, to a lesser extent, engage in phallic worship. An early mention occurs in a book first published at Lisbon in 1699: "In some of these lands other tongues are spoken, especially the Botongas, and it is the reason why they call these lands Botonga and their inhabitants Botongas." Commenting in 1835, invading Zulu under the warlords Zawangana, Shaka, and Soshangane (it is from the latter that the term Shangana-Tsonga derives) caused the westerly situated Nkhlangano clan to flee from Mozambique into "the hitherto unpopulated Low Veld ... in the present Pilgrimsrest district, where they are today" (Van Warmelo 1935), and the ranks of these first Tsonga immigrants were soon swelled by a steady influx from other areas. The immigrant Tsonga, being located inland and to the north of most Southern African tribes, were one of the last to come under European influence. The first substantial contact with them was established by emigrant white farmers under Potgieter, who had trekked northwards between the Vet and Vaal Rivers, crossing the latter where Roodepoort now stands. The Transvaal trekkers, after first scattering the Ndebele under Mzilikazi, encountered several splintered Tswana tribes in the Western Transvaal. Proceeding to Ohrigstad and Lydenburg in 1845 they met Pedi there, and eventually the Tsonga and the Zulus in the north, the Swazi in the east, the Zulu in the south-east, and the Mapoch Ndebele in the central Transvaal.

In 1853 a Volksraad Resolution instructed the Commandants of the Republic of the Transvaal to grant lands to the Bantu "conditional on good behaviour", ignoring the fact that the Bantu, of course, already occupied these lands. In 1881 a Native Location Commission appointed by the Pretoria Convention proposed the assignment of "suitable locations, with due regard to actual occupation", but in 1889 the Anglo-Boer War commenced.

Another Native Location Commission was appointed in 1905, three years after the war’s end, and their report (submitted in 1907) dealt conclusively with all Transvaal locations except those at Lichtenburg, Rustenburg, and Marico, all of which had been prescribed by the previous Commission.
FIGURE 1. Map showing area inhabited by the Tsonga.

The Transvaal Tsonga occupy a 380,000-square-kilometer tract of land from Ventersdorp largely concentrated in two major blocks bordering on the Kruger National Park, and the eastern Tsonga occupy practically all of Mozambique south of the Shingwedzi and Nkana Rivers. The northeasternmost part of the Tsonga homeland is the Nguni uplands. These are the Tsonga-speaking area in the Transvaal are in fact each ruled by a Chief whose predecessors were Pretoria-appointed, and this Chief is usually succeeded by his brothers in turn, only when the last brother has died does the succession revert to the sons of the eldest headman of no real rank or standing ... (Van Warrnello 1935).

Most of the large Tsonga areas in the Transvaal are in fact each ruled by a Chief whose predecessors were Pretoria-appointed, and this Chief is usually succeeded by his brothers in turn, only when the last brother has died does the succession revert to the sons of the eldest headman of no real rank or standing ... (Van Warrnello 1935).

The puberty school supervisor (often the wife of the Chief or of the Tsonga woman - ndlukhumbu means 'the big one') is a respected village elder appointed not by the Chief. She possesses an antelope horn (ndlukhumbu) which indicates her symbol of authority and which is used to summon the meeting. The drumming school supervisor (neluqoqo) is a local musician chosen from among the Chief's subjects, and is appointed annually. These two school appointees are integral links in the ascending chain of Tsonga administrative authority, and as such wield a certain amount of administrative power.

Two further musical officials must be taken into account, the dance-depositor (ndleko) or a circumcision lodge and the dance-organizer (ndlwazi) of an 'exorcism' rite. These are often outside 'licensed' by the Chief in return for beer, cattle or cash payment, and the extent of their musical influence lies somewhere between that of the puberty school supervisor and that of the drumming school supervisor. Seeing that the ndleko organizes his private circumcision service once every four or five years, and that the ndlwazi organizes his 'exorcism' rites nightly for a considerable part of the year, one is inclined to rank the latter above the former, musically. Circumcision songs are secret and no drums may be used, but 'exorcism' songs are widely-known and played a great part in 'exorcism' rites — the dancers possessing a set of four man-come-made tambourines (tumourions, drum-shaped drums) which constitute his symbol of authority and which are used by trainee-diviners to meet the mysterious 'exorcism' rhythms.

Tsonga music, regarded in the light of its seasonal applications and discrete social functions, comprises a variety of musical styles that mirror the occupational roles, values, and social allegiances of its performers. Regarded as a whole it exhibits several characteristics which distinguish it from the music of neighboring peoples and which, like the famed Tsonga genealogy-recitations ("The Tsongs ... have a remarkable knowledge of their family genealogies"), (Blacking, John, Venda Children's Songs, Witwatersrand University Press 1967, p. 31), fulfill the xenomorphic function of reinforcing for concretizing immigrant participants the linguistic and cultural unity of a dispersed and widely-separated people.

Frequently, large bodies of ancient, elaborate Tsonga story-songs and game-songs can be found surviving intact amid an alien polyglot (with versions differing only slightly throughout the Northern Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal, Natal and Mozambique). This is so it should be for, like eventual fulfillment of Tsonga aspirations for genuine political independence and adequate, watered home-bonds, they belong to the children of tomorrow.

In Tsonga instrumental music, acclimatization threatens the making and playing of traditional instruments. However, in danger is the renowned Tsonga playing of the xizamè noted fiddle-bow. The Tsonga are unequaled in the performance of this interesting instrument, and I have recorded and transcribed the following examples in an effort to help preserve this valuable heritage.

Several players are compared, and it is noteworthy that these xizamè players utilize different ways of adapting the instrument. The players are Wilson Zulu of Isamare, John Chalse of Sibansha, Johan Vesper of Makhabela, Joel Mashava of Mhlongo, and Njannjarra of the same place. We give the song title as stated by the player, its approximate English translation, the tempo, the metric length of the song, and the interval we have transposed in order to make reading and comparison easy. Where the player sings for a cycle or two, the Tsonga words are given under the appropriate notes. For the benefit of researchers we keep the numbering of the transcription the same as it is on the tapes in the ethnomusicology archives of the University of Alaska because the first thirteen were less relevant to this study we started the transcriptions at No. 14.

We encountered Wilson Zulu first. He played fifteen short pieces, and then recorded the following twelve other songs. Of particular interest is his use of the drum composition and use of the song's ending as an introduction. Note
how the manner of playing the zisamibi (continuous rubbing of the bow with a notched friction stick) affects the manner of representing beer song melody notes: when the bow has a short rest, the bow continues playing, by repeating the previous note for the required length of time. Note how the harmonic property of the bow (use of the series of natural harmonics such as 4ths, 5ths, etc.) means that adaptation can be accomplished by transposing portions of the song up or down a 4th or 5th, and the audience accepts this. Also, the melody note need not be represented by the highest audible zisamibi note. One of two simultaneously sounded notes suffices to convey the tune, and it is often the lower note which does this.

**THE ZISAMIBI-PLAYING OF WILSON ZULU OF SAMARIE**

(For brevity, his initial thirteen short pieces are omitted.)

Zisamibi consists of an overlapping call and response, each complete cycle of which occupies a total of 20 quavers. This length is derived in part from the number of syllables contained in the text, and the irregular quaver-grouping is derived in part from speech-stress, as follows:

| Zisamibi | Ma a mabele ma lwe si noko | Zisamibi | Ma a mabele ma lwe si noko |

The bow accompaniment is of interest in that occasionally either its upper or lower tones may represent the melody, and that it may move in 'contrary motion' to the melody.

Wilson Zulu, on another occasion, recorded a shorter version of Zimenjezanie wherein he first sang six verses unaccompanied, and then played five cycles of the tune, as follows.

The metrical length of the repeated section in Wilson Zulu's performances of this song differs from those of certain other performers, as follows:

I. Zisamibi player Joel Maschava extends his performance for 20 quavers during unaccompanied singing, 8 dotted crotchet during clapping, and 20 quavers during his zisamibi-playing;

II. Zisamibi player Elias Khosa extends his performance for 45 crotchets;

III. Men singers at Messina extend their performance for 8 dotted crotchets;

IV. Girl singers at Ribola extend their performance for 8 dotted crotchets.

Transcriptions of these four performances of the song Zimenjezanie are given below, for purposes of comparison.

Of interest is the fact that Zisamibi player Joel Maschava, when singing and clapping Zimenjezanie (Zisamibi Transcription 16), employs the metrical length usually employed by ensemble vocal groups when performing that song, i.e., 8 dotted crotchets. When playing Zimenjezanie on his Zisamibi, however, Joel Maschava employs the metrical length used by zisamibi player Wilson Zulu, i.e., 20 quavers. These 20 quavers are in each instance grouped thus:

Of the two rhythms, this is certainly the more interesting rhythm to play on an instrument exhibiting primarily percussive and rhythmic characteristics.

Different melodies seem to be used for each of the foregoing six versions of Zimenjezanie. To the Tsonga, however, most of these melodies are one and the same melody — they merely employ a different selection of 'harmonic equivalents' (a different inversion of the descending pentatonic scale),
the interesting cross-rhythm provided by the clap — 8 claps against 12 units of the vocal pattern. This is a standard polyrhythmic formula in Tonga music, and the performers who are simultaneously singing and clapping in different rhythms are exercising what might be called an ambivalent conception of meter.

In the above transcription, as in the previous one, song-tones are often instrumentally represented a 5th (inverted 5th) distant. Note how the xizambi conception 'stretches' tonally at the point where the word lavarus is sung — this is accomplished within the meter of 16 dotted crotchetts, the tune's overall length remaining undisturbed.

In Transcription No. 23, Wilson Zulu not only groups quavers irregularly (8+4+1+4-3), but he stretches and compresses alternate cycles of the tune. The 8 cycles shown comprise a total of 128 quavers, which averages out at 16 quavers per cycle.

In the above transcription, Wilson Zulu groups the quavers into interesting and exciting rhythms such as the following:

Although the melodies of Wilson Zulu's vocal compositions can by no means be regarded as inconsequent, the salient feature of his performances is their exploitation of the instrument's rhythmic possibilities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE XIZAMBI-PLAYING OF WILSON ZULU

Wilson Zulu utilizes six main musical procedures:

I. Octave transposition;
II. Use of the ending as an introduction;
III. Instrumental representation of song-tones at the 5th (inverted 4th);
IV. Instrumental representation of song-tones, by one of two simultaneously-sounded xizambi tones;
V. Instrumental representation of a vocal rest, by repeating the previous xizambi tone;
VI. Creation of instrumental variations. He does not do the following commonly used xizambi procedures:
   a) represent vocal gags by playing 'harmonic equivalents' of the previous xizambi tone;
   b) interpret songs by using a descending tone-row;
   c) drastically change a song's rhythm in the instrumental version;
   d) change major- to minor- when effecting an instrumental adaptation.

A prominent feature of Wilson Zulu's xizambi playing is its rhythmic vitality. Within the context of a 16- or 32-unit cycle he employs thrusters, jagged accents that mask the basic pattern and build up tension. Wilson Zulu carries the principle of irregularity beyond that normally indulged in by Tonga musicians: he adds to one cycle and subtracts from another, leaving the heavier in constant anticipation of when the music will re-enter phase. This is probably his greatest contribution to Tonga xizambi music.

THE XIZAMBI-PLAYING
OF JOHN CHAUBE OF SIBASA

John Chaube is a xizambi-player working in the copper mines of Mnesia. He owns a carefully-carved instrument, brought with him from the Sibasa area. He plays it during the evenings and weekends at levee-side, and most of his repertoire is of his own composition.

The above piece is unique in this collection of xizambi pieces in that it features a short, clearly-stated theme, which is then played or sung in
various ways and gradually developed. Chonke first taps rather than rubs the notched bow, producing a clipped but musical "popping" sound — this style of performance was not used by any other player. He then reverted to conventional playing.

changing the quavers into paired semiquavers. After next singing the piece he played it again in another rhythm, changing the semiquavers into dotted semiquavers. The resulting impression is one of perfect form and musical unity.

Eighteen further xizimbi performances by John Chonke will now be briefly discussed, and our findings summarized. The transcriptions themselves will then be given in full.

In Xizimbi Transcriptions 27—29, Chonke's instrumental F represents his vocal C. In Xizimbi Transcription 30, instrumental D represents vocal A. The metrical length in all four of these pieces is two bars of 7-unit rhythm, generally grouped thus:

Note, in Xizimbi Transcription 29, how Chonke simultaneously sings and plays in different rhythms, thus:

In Xizimbi Transcriptions 31 and 32, Chonke's instrumental F represents his vocal C, and in No. 33 instrumental C represents vocal F. In Nos. 35 and 36, instrumental D represents vocal A. Note how, toward the end of No. 34, the voice descends C-to-F,
Xizambi Transcription 37. In this piece, based on a metrical length of 16 dotted crotchets, Chauke maintains a steady triplet rhythm on his *fellowana* rattlesick while singing. The singing, however, consists mainly of paired quavers, thus:

Xizambi Transcription 38. This piece consists of a short 5-crotchet theme which is alternately sung and played. In the played portions, instrumental F represents vocal C.

Xizambi Transcription 39. This piece consists basically of a short theme 4 dotted crotchets in length, but it is unusual in that Chauke adds an extra instrumental dotted crotchet after each section, thus:

Xizambi Transcription 40. In this piece Chauke represents vocal A and C by instrumental D and F respectively, at the point where a rest is sung. Note that the grouping of 9 pairs of quavers is unusual, but that 6 groups of 3 each is common, as is shown in the following.

Xizambi Transcription 41. It was earlier suggested that the melodies of some Tsonga traditional songs derive from the speech tones of their song-words. That this is not always so is shown in No. 41 where the words *ka-muza matsi* we are syllabically set to quavers in the first half of the song, but in the last half of the song the music is given over entirely to melismatic mon-lexical syllable singing.

Xizambi Transcription 42. This piece extends 32 crotchets, and neither the 22-crotchet instrumental section nor the 10-crotchet vocal section are separable — the two sections must be played consecutively as one whole. In many of his pieces, Chauke appears to prefer a jerked rhythm, thus: 

This preference may be due to Chauke's awareness of the rattlesick's rhythmic potential.

Xizambi Transcription 43. In each transcription presented in this volume, the metrical length attributed (by the author) to a piece, is the minimum basic pattern to which the performance can be reduced. Chauke, however, often so interestingly and musically varies his second cycle, that the work appears to be in bipartite form, and thus may often be considered to consist of double the number of units we have indicated. In No. 43 for instance, the words in the final bar of the second cycle (i.e., the final bar of the piece) constitute a mere repetition of previously-sung words, but the melody to which they are set constitutes a musical answer to the melody in the corresponding bar of the first cycle.

Xizambi Transcription 44. In this piece, comparison of the first voice-line with the third voice-line reveals that vocal gaps may be accompanied by either of two instrumental tone colours, as follows:

I. An 'empty' (measure-filled) area toward the end of a vocal section that precedes another vocal section is generally accompanied by the rattlesick alone;

II. An 'empty' area toward the end of a vocal section that precedes an instrumental section is generally accompanied by buced resonantation.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE XIZAMBI-PLAYING OF JOHN CHAUKE**

Many aspects of John Chauke's *ziamba*-playing are unusual — they are as follows:

a) his occasional tapping of the are rather than rubbing;

b) his maintenance of interesting accompaniments (i.e., 2s 3s 4s with the rattlesick) while singing across the rhythms of same;

c) his interpretation of extra 'camp' lines between sections;

d) his use of fingered F as 'tonic'.

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harmony G's and no sixth-harmonic G's. His music exhibits several unique rhythmic and melodic characteristics, and the following two examples suffice to demonstrate these.

This entire piece is based on two simple yet effective ideas, one rhythmic and one melodic: a) use of the same nuclear rhythmic pattern in every bar; and b) alternation between a tone and its similarly fingered lower harmonic 6th. This latter results partly from the former, because an unvarying rhythm needs melodic motion to provide musical interest, but the type of melodic motion found here is derived from motor-sensory impulse. Khsosa's use of motor-sensory impulse incurs frequent use of B (lower harmonic of fingered E), a tone rarely used by other players.

With regard to b) above, many zimabi-players use open-tones C and G as 'guide-notes'. While these tones do not always function as 'tonic', when they appear to do so it is probable that the player is aware of it. Kuhik considers that in Aranda harp music "there is a clear keynote" (Kuhik 1965) and that "most of the horizontal Zande harp themes end on the tonic." (ibid. p. 53.)

John Chauke's zimabi playing, like that of Wilson Zulu already discussed, utilizes the following procedures:

I. Instrumental octave-transposition of vocal tones;
II. Instrumental representation of song-tones at the 5th (inverted 4th);
III. Creation of instrumental variations.

THE XIZAMBI-PLAYING OF ELIAS KHOSA OF MACHERACKA

The tension of Khosa's bow is adjusted so that lower partials are favoured at the expense of upper partials, and for this reason he plays many third-

In the above piece, as in the previous piece, Khosa bases every bar on the same rhythmic motive, which in this case goes thus:

This is an intriguing way of phrasing the 12 quavers of a rhythm based on 6 dotted crotchets. Note that Khosa's first bar is a quaver short—partial bars often occur at the beginning in instrumental pieces.

The voice sounding simultaneously with the buzzed resonated zimabi tones is Khosa's own. This is quite an accomplishment, for constant mouth-adjustment is needed during resonation, as well as concentration on the required harmonic. To sing triplets thus while producing his own opposing instrumental rhythm is no mean feat.

In the second vocal bar Khosa accompanies vocal A by playing instrumental B. He is capable of playing A for he did so in the previous piece. Khosa played D at this point, not because he considers it to be suitable 'harmony', but because he considers it to be synonymous with the A—a 'harmonic equivalent' (controlled test was conducted).

When accompanying vocal gape, Khosa neither reiterates his previous tonic tone nor plays substitutions (procedures followed by other players). Instead, he creates complementary melodic figures that line up with the oncoming phrase.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE XIZAMBI-PLAYING OF ELIAS KHOSA

Many of Khosa's procedures are the same as those already found in the work of others—substitution by 'harmonic equivalent', vocal rhythm contrasted with instrumental rhythm, etc., but his use of nuclear rhythmic ideas and motor-sensory-based melodic ideas shows considerable ingenuity.

In addition, Khosa's simultaneous singing and playing makes him unique among known zimabi players.

THE XIZAMBI-PLAYING OF JOEL MASHAVA OF MTHINGA'S LOCATION

In Zimabi Transcription 47, the voice belongs to Mashava's companion, whom he accompanies on the zimabi. In No. 53, however, the voice is Mashava's own, and during the sung portions the rhythm ceases, leaving only an instrumental accompaniment consisting of rattlesick (and the continuously-sounding fundamental C). On another occasion, when Mashava was without his zimabi friction bow, he recorded six of the seven pieces again, this time employing only his unaccompanied voice. In order to show possible relationships between these two sets of recordings, we follow Zimabi Transcriptions 48—53 with transcriptions of their related non-zimabi pieces, numbering the latter 59A, 50A, etc.

Zimabi Transcription 47. In this zimabi-accompanied song, the vocal quavers of Mashava's companion are grouped in pairs, thus their phrasing crosses that of the instrumental triplets thus:

This occurs occasionally, instrumental D accompanies vocal A, and instrumental G accompanies vocal C, thus 59A (inverted 58A) are here used as 'equivalents'.

Xizambi Transcription 48. Here, the unusual nature of the first time is entirely due to parallel 5th's produced by the physical and musical characteristics of the zimabi, and it is created only incidentally while Mashava naturally matches his upper harmonics to the song-tones they represent. Note the irregular division of this 16-crotchet composition 3.5.4.3.4.4.
Xizambi Transcription 49. The sixth harmonic G's of this zizambi piece represent vocal C's, but it must be remembered that instrumental C is always present with G — the latter cannot be sounded on the zizambi without incurring concurrent sounding of the second harmonic C of inaudible fundamental C. Note that, while Mashava employs duplet meter in his zizambi version

he employs dotted crotchet meter in his unaccompanied vocal version shown in No. 39A.

While the overall metrical lengths of these meters are the same (allowing for notation method); their internal grouping of tones is different.

Xizambi Transcription 50. Mashava occasionally uses an interesting 'fragmented' rhythm, thus:

In another piece that we shall examine (No. 51), he varies this pattern thus:

The aforementioned effects are produced by using sharp, jagged thrusts of the jikubwa rattlesick.

Note that the zizambi-accompanied vocal version uses only the first line of his unaccompanied vocal version shown in No. 31A. Note that, in the latter, Mashava's final line is a 4th below his first line, the two lines being regarded by him as 'equivalent'.

Xizambi Transcription 52. The overall metrical length of the repeated section in this transcription, including both played and sung sections, is 24 crotchets, but this is preceded by a 4-crotchet instrumental introduction, a 6-crotchet vocal section, and a 6-crotchet instrumental section. Considering certain melodic, rhythmic, and textual differences in the 6-crotchet sections, a 36-crotchet metrical length might just as well be applied to this work.

Note that Mashava's zizambi-accompanied vocal version uses only the fourth line of the unaccompanied vocal version shown in No. 52A.

Xizambi Transcription 53. This piece, like many of John Chauke's zizambi pieces, is based on a metrical length involving units of 7 — in this case,

\[ \frac{7}{4} \]

Note that the zizambi-accompanied vocal version consists of the text salani mmamali repeated at different pitch levels in a musical question-and-answer style, using the same triplet phrasing as appears in the unaccompanied vocal version shown in No. 53A.

In several of his pieces (Nos. 8, 16, 50, 52, 53) Mashava represents vocal E by instrumental F # — a procedure often followed by zizambi players.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE XIzambi PLAYING OF JOEL MASHAVA

Joel Mashava produces interesting 'fragmented' rhythms by means of sharp, jagged thrusts of the fuhlwana rattlesick; he makes frequent use of the principle of tone-substitution by 'harmonic equivalence', and he transforms 'minor' vocal tonality into 'minor' instrumental tonality.

THE XIzambi PLAYING OF NJARANJARA OF MHINGA'S LOCATION

Njaranja is the companion of Joel Mashava referred to in our discussion of Xizambi Transcription 47. Both are highly respected members of the Chief's Council, and they often accompany each other's singing.

Xizambi Transcription 54. Note that the 32-quaver metrical length of the instrumental section and the vocal section is unusually divided thus:

Xizambi Transcription 56. The repeated instrumental Cs at the end of this piece represents the repeated vocal G's at the point where dhuva-dhuva is sung.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE XIzambi PLAYING OF NJARANJARA

In two of his three xiZambi accompaniments (Nos. 54 and 56) Njaranja juxtaposes duplet- and triplet-grouped quavers. Similar juxtaposition by XiZambi Transcription 55. The 8 dotted crochets of this piece are divided between a 4-unit instrumental section and a 2-unit vocal section – these divisions functioning rather like the call and the response of Tsonga traditional songs. They are not, however, known by the same terminology. In vocal music the call and the response are known as the nOtotelamana (small voice) and the nOtoteluna (big voice) respectively. In XiZambi music the divisiOns are referred to by terms which distinguish between the player's discrete actions — ka chupa (to play it) and ka gimbelda (to sing it).

other players is usually motivated by a desire to exploit the xiZambi's rhythmic potential, but in Njaranja's case it is seen to derive from the rhythm of the song-words — his instrumental duplet/triplet juxtaposition occurs only where his voice-line does likewise.

THE XIzambi DUETS OF JOEL MASHAVA AND NJARANJARA

In order to play in duet with Njaranja, Joel Mashava re-tuned his xiZambi so that its open tone was a 5th distant to that of Njaranja's xiZambi. He did not do this solely by tightening or slackening the nula 'string', for there is an optimum tension on each xiZambi which best produces its harmonics. He re-tuned by carefully shedding off a sliver from the nula 'string' along its edge, end to end. This action narrowed the vibrating medium and was used in conjunction with tension adjustment.

Xizambi Transcription 57. In each note of this XiZambi, the chupa section is written above the gimbelda section. Njaranja's violin parts have been indicated with x's.

In the above duet, the second xiZambi enters across the penultimate dotted crochet of the first xiZambi, each player's contribution lasting 16 dotted crochets but being staggered by 5 quavers. The quavers of the second xiZambi fall on the accents of the first xiZambi, thus:

This Tsonga xiZambi phrasing is common and may apply elsewhere; it is said that (Venda) dotted crochet rhythm is never accepted thus

(Blacking 1967).

As regards the two melodies of this duet, note that disparate but interlocking pairs of xiZambi tones yield four-part polyphony, mainly in 5ths (inverted 4ths). As regards the rhythm, the second player is probably aware that the first player's phrasing changes in the second half, and that by keeping his the same, it will cross the other.

Prior to performance of this duet, Mashava consulted Njaranja and tapped out the following rhythm:

(Blacking 1967).

The original melody of Xaasi wu rilwenta is being carried by the second xiZambi, and this is confirmed by comparing the latter with the following performance of the same tune, by xiZambi player Xafatsuka Mahuna of Mawambe's location.

Xizambi Transcription 58. Xizambi duet with XiZambi. Chupa in 2, gimbelda in 3.

(Blacking 1967).
This pattern consists of two sections which, because of their mixed duplet/triplet groupings, can each be viewed as either 6 crotchets in length, or 4 dotted crotchets in length. Note the irregular accentuation and the intriguing rhythmic asymmetry of these two equal-lengthed sections — this 24-quaver pattern constitutes the subjective or ‘inherent’ rhythm of the two xizambi contributions combined. (The ‘inherent’ rhythms of Tsonga xizambi duettists, while constituting a means of arriving at a given rhythmic pattern, do not constitute a means of arriving at a given melodic pattern, as do the ‘inherent’ rhythms of Kiganda xylophone music.)

The second performer enters on the first performer’s fourth quaver (third cycle), and every four repetitions of the first performer’s 30-quaver cycle (every five repetitions of the second performer’s 24-quaver cycle) will find the juxtaposed phrases back in this position, rather like the cyclic phasing encountered in Indian drumming.

Tsonga xizambi duets are, in the main, rhythmically oriented, and the players are intensely aware of their rhythmic relationship to each other. Melodically, this is not so, for as Nketa observes in connection with Tanzanian Gogo music, “simultaneous occurrences of sounds may or may not be intended to relate structurally to a common point of reference even though they may be meaningful clusters in terms of the separate roles assumed by individual performers in a given musical situation.” (Nketa 1967.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE XIZAMBI DUETS OF JOEL MASHAVA AND NJARANJARA

In these duets, the intervalllic relationship between the two instruments (a 5th, or inverted 4th) parallels the intervalllic relationship found between the voice and its xizambi accompaniment in many of our 60 transcriptions, and serves to emphasize the importance of the concept of ‘harmonic equivalence’ in the Tsonga musical system.

The primary role of rhythm in xizambi-playing (due to the essentially percussive nature of the instrument) is particularly emphasized in duet-playing. The rasping against the notched bow, and the rattling of the seeds on the rattlestick, are prominent constituents of the xizambi sound, and the rhythmic patterns yielded by them function as a ‘grid’ against which voice and/or buccal resonation or another xizambi provide interest.

REFERENCES