

Mbilamutondo music and instruments in Venda culture

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There is a decline in the performance and promotion of one of the significant African cultural heritage components, *Mbilamutondo* music. This heritage is facing possible extinction, and its disappearance may spell the death of one of Vhavenda's religious rituals and indigenous spiritual healing processes. Recent research into indigenous African knowledge systems has led me to interesting conclusions: while *Mbilamutondo* is an indigenous Venda instrumental musical practice, there are no more practitioners of this heritage, and there are no learners who could continue the practice. Tshivenda indigenous mbila music (*Mbilamutondo*) performance is quite different from that of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Whereas Zimbabwe and Mozambique still have many practitioners of this heritage, presently a practitioner of the Venda repertoire and style is yet to be found. Venda *Mbilamutondo* music's continued existence can, therefore, not be guaranteed. This study has also discovered that there is more to *Mbilamutondo* than just music. An aspect worth documenting and investigating is the trees that have contributed more to *Mbilamutondo* than just the building of a musical instrument. The aim of article is to highlight the significance of these *Mbilamutondo* music instrument-making trees, to promote an appreciation for this heritage, and to encourage young people to become active in conserving such valuable heritage. The article also explores some intervention strategies that may thwart this heritage's possible disappearance.

Keywords: *Mbilamutondo* music, Vhavenda, indigenous knowledge systems, musical instrument, music instrument-making trees, heritage, rituals, conserving, promotion, extinction

Muzika wa Mbilamutondo na zwilidzo kha sialala la Vhavenda

Hu khou vhonala hu na u fhungudzea huhulu kha vhubvedzi na thuthuwedzo ya tshinwe tsha zwilidzo zwa kale na kale zwi divheaho na u thonifhiwa kha la Afrika, Mbilamutondo. Heli sialala li khou vhonala li tshi khou mbwandamela. U ngalangala halo zwi amba u lovha ha manwe a maitele a vhurereli ha sialala ya Vhavenda iyi ndila ya vhurereli ndi manwe a maitele a phodzo ya muya. Kha thodiso dzanga ndo tama u bvukulula zwa maitele a sialala ya vharema vha Afrika nda wanulusa zwi tevhelaho: A hu tshée na vhalidzi na vhagudiswa vhane vha nga isa phanda maitele a ili sialala la ndeme. Kulidzele kwa mbila dza Tshivenda (*Mbilamutondo*) kwo fhambana na kula kwa vha Zimbabwe na Mozambique. Naho vhalidzi vha mbila dza Zimbabwe na Mozambique vha tshe hone, vha Vhavenda vhane vha nga lidza Mbilamutondo nga ndila ya Tshivenda a vha tsheeho. Zwenezwo-ha, u ri Mbilamutondo dza Tshivenda dzi do di dzula dzi hone zwi a timatimisa. Zwinwe zwe hedzi thodiso dza zwi tumbula ndi zwauri mathina miri i shumiswaho kha u fhata Mbilamutondo i na zwinwe zwine ya thusa khazwo nga nnda ha u bveledza tshilidzo. Ndivho ya hei atikili ndi ya uri vhatu vha divhe nga ha ndeme ya miri ine ya shumiswa kha u fhata itshi tshilidzo, na u tutuwedza vhaswa u ri vha thuse kha u vhulunga sialala la ndeme ngaaurali. Heyi atikili i dovha hafhu ya todisisa ndila dzine dza nga shumiswa kha u thivhela uri sialala ili li songo ngalangala.

Maipfi a ndeme: Muzika wa *Mbilamutondo*, Vhavenda, Ndivho ya zwa sialala, zwilidzo, miri ya u fhata zwilidzo, vhubvo, vhurereli, vhulunga, thuthuwedzo, mbwandamela

In October 2002, a workshop on *Researching and transcribing African music* was held under the auspices of the Travelling Institute of Music Research in South Africa, sponsored by the National Research Foundation at the University of Venda, which was attended by, amongst others, a delegation from the National Department of Arts and Culture, prominent scholars such as Professors Ceasar Ndlovu (music scholar) and Andrew Tracy of the International Library of African Music at Rhodes University, Dr Jaco Kruger, a scholar on Venda music research, Dr. Mogomme Masoga, Manager of IKS at the NRF, Professor Maphalala (an oral history scholar from the University of Zululand), and a number of research students from tertiary institutions around the country. It was indeed an historical milestone for research into the indigenous African music of South Africa.

The workshop also afforded some of the practitioners of indigenous Venda music a rare opportunity and platform to showcase their skills to the representatives from various parts of our country, some of whom expressed amazement at the existence of such a rich cultural heritage in Venda. It was at this workshop that, after a moving *Mbilamutondo* music performance by the late Vho-Ravele of Makonde, who was then 102 years old, that a spontaneous feeling engulfed the delegates that, before the old man passed on, an attempt should be made to preserve this

cultural heritage. It is against this background that the documentation of *Mbilamutondo* music was embarked upon.

Mbilamutondo music is practiced by Vhavenda in the north of South Africa. The traditional instrument is a keyboard made out of the wood of the *mutondo* tree. While this music is still widely performed in Zimbabwe, at the time of my information gathering, there were only two practitioners who could be identified in the area around Venda; Vho-Ravele vha Makonde and Vho Munyai vha Pile. Vho-Ravele was an expert at performing *Mbilamutondo* music, whereas Vho-Munyai is an expert only at carving the instrument, *Mbilamutondo*, but not a notable player. Vho-Munyai is also very good at carving different images onto *Mbilamutondo* instruments. Unlike Vho-Ravele who builds the instrument in its simple conventional (traditional) manner, Vho Munyai carves his instruments with different images on them. Vho-Ravele was born in 1901, and at the time of the interviews (December 2003 and January – March 2004); he was 102/3 years old. He has since passed away, in 2005. At the time of these interviews, he could still perform on the instrument, though he needed a patient interviewer because he was by then slow at speech, with elements of forgetfulness. Hence, it was no possible to extract from his memory, and to be able to record, the many compositions he had played during his time of active popular performances. This research has, nonetheless, managed to gather valuable information about the indigenous instrument. Although he had a wealth of information about this indigenous instrument (*Mbilamutondo*), he could not perform songs from the instrument any longer due to old age. He could only manage to demonstrate a little in order for one to understand how the instrument works. With the decline in the performance and the promotion of this intangible African cultural product, the prospect of its continued existence may not be guaranteed. It is therefore facing possible extinction.

Research has also discovered that there is actually more to the trees that contribute to the music than just the building of musical instruments. The trees *mutondo* (or Wild Teak in English) and *muonze*, (also known as “Tamboti”, the Afrikaner name, from the *Spyrostachys Africana species*.) have significant functions that were known to the earlier generations of practitioners. These functions need to be recorded, and an advocacy should be made for the resuscitation of this indigenous knowledge. Therefore, while the article will discuss both the music and the materials that build the musical instrument, emphasis will be on the uses or the value of these music-instrument-building trees.

Mbilamutondo: the origin of the concept

According to Vho-Ravele, the origin of *Mbilamutondo* is traced from Vhavenda and Vhakalanga of Shona origin, hence, when people play *Mbilamutondo*, they usually play Shona songs (Tshikalanga in Venda or Karanga in Shona). “*Mulovhidzhana*”, for example, is a Shona song, and is one of the songs inherited by Vho-Ravele from his father Vho-Vele (Vho-Ravele, 2004). Meanwhile, Vho-Munyai contends that Vhavenda brought with them a number of musical instruments, including *Mbilamutondo*, when they came from Vhuxwa (that is the place of creation in Central Africa before Matongoni) to Venda. According to Vho-Munyai, Vhasenzi¹ are the inventors of *Mbilamutondo* (Vho Munyai, 2005).

The concept *Mbilamutondo* has been derived from two names, namely “*Mbila*” and “*Mutondo*”, to form the compound name *Mbilamutondo*. *Mbila* as a word has different explanations, based on different usages by different peoples. The first explanation refers to the rock dassie, a small, tailless animal that prefers to live in rocky outcrops and mountainous areas. Vhavenda used to stay in the mountainous areas, using caves as their shelters during times of battles. In most of the caves, *mbila* (rock dassies) were present. It is very common for a rock

dassie to make a calling sound in the morning as it wakes up inside the cave. The echo from the cave increases the intensity of the sound made by the rock-dassie. This sound makes its whereabouts easily identifiable to man (usually hunters).

Meanwhile, “*Mbila*” as a concept has also been used to refer to an indigenous Venda musical instrument, which is made up of flat carved wooden keys. Each key on its own is called *mbila*. The whole instrument is usually made up of groups of seven different notes. The derivation of the name *Mbila*, therefore, has significant imagery or symbolism. The *Mbila* instrument has been equated to this small animal that yells or calls out in a resonant voice early in the morning from the caves. Vhavenda have also derived a proverb from the tailless state of this animal which goes thus:

“*Mbila yo kundwa mutshila nga u rumela*”,
“A rock dassie was deprived of a tail because of its laziness”,

an interpretation of which is well known amongst Vhavenda.² On the other hand, the hide of *mbila* (the rock dassie) has a very important function in Venda cultural rituals. The skin is used to make “*thevhele*” (the fortune-telling container for bones), for African orthodox medical practitioners.

The second part of the name, “*Mutondo*” is the Wild Teak tree, scientifically referred to as *Pterocarpus angolensis*, a tree of great value to Vhavenda. It is a plant species with important medicinal value, as will be elaborated later. The Wild Teak tree itself has a very strong wood; hence most wooden tools used by Vhavenda are carved from this tree. *Mbilamutondo* as an instrument was traditionally, without exception, carved from this tree.



Figure 1
Mbila/Mbambo (Wooden keys or notes) and zwiombo (the mallets or beating sticks)
(picture courtesy of University of Venda Art Gallery).

According to Vho-Ravele, not all *mutondo* trees are useful for producing *Mbilamutondo*. There are two types of *mutondo* trees; a male and a female. An interesting fact emerged during the

various interviews conducted with the two Vhavenda Mbilamutondo practitioners, Vho-Ravele and Vho-Munyai. Vho-Ravele prefers the female species, whilst Vho-Munyai prefers the male one. Each gave reasons to support his preferences. According to Vho-Ravele, the female species has more sap and produces more resonance. Meanwhile, Vho-Munyai contends that while the female species has got more sap, it is not as strong as the male species because the sap is thin, and it therefore offers problems when the wood has to be roasted³ in preparation for instrument building. He prefers the tougher (male) wood because it can withstand the heat from the furnace and cannot be easily damaged or destroyed. Vho-Munyai adds that the leaves of a female tree are broad, whereas those of the male leaves are small and scattered.

It is interesting to note that Vho-Ravele is both a player and a carver whilst Vho-Munyai is only a carver. Whilst Vho-Ravele is basing his argument on sound preferences and not the toughness of the wood, Vho-Munyai bases his preferences solely on the best wood to produce a good looking instrument.

It is worth mentioning that the *mutondo* tree is best carved for instrument building purposes when it has been lying cut and dried for some time. When decomposing, the male wood decreases slowly in diameter size in much the same way that bath soap gets smaller when being used. Contrary to the male wood, with the female wood, small particles are broken from the main wood, and they develop a powdery cover whilst lying cut and drying up.



Figure 2
Mikumbu (The Resonating Calabashes)
(picture courtesy of University of Venda Art Gallery).

The keys of the Mbilamutondo instrument are usually laid above calabashes, equal in number (both the keys and the calabashes). These calabashes, which mainly serve to offer the much desired resonance which has popularized this instrument, are equated to the resonance that the cave offers in echoing the Mbila animal yelling sounds. The word “*Mbila*”, which is a name of

an animal, and the word “*Mutondo*” which is a name of a tree have, therefore, been combined to give a compound name, *Mbilamutondo*.



Figure 3
Maalo (“the base blocks”) serve as the base for the keys and the resonators
(picture courtesy of University of Venda Art Gallery).

Meaning, function and performance context

Mbilamutondo has its own language. An artist can demonstrate his sadness or happiness by playing this instrument. The whole rhythm starts from within the artist’s body, and extends, via the instrument, to the people.

In moments of pain, this instrument soothes and consoles an individual or a group of people. So a group of people participating in the performance using this instrument are able to share their feelings. Equally, the audience may join in the emotional accompaniment induced from the performance. In the process, they will be sharing the feelings of the artist, revealed by the songs. Mbilamutondo music is not only used in times of sorrow; it can also be useful in times of happiness and in different ceremonies such as weddings, etc.

This instrument was also significant for honouring great people amongst Vhavenda. Mbilamutondo music featured prominently during the installation of Vhavenda royal leaders such as King Malilele Nethengwe of Thengwe village, Chief Mphathele Takalani of Mukula, Chief Masindi Ravhura of Makonde, King Rambuda of Dzimauli, King Ramaremisa Tshivhase of Mukumbani and Chief Ratshalingwa Tshivhase at Muhuyu. Vho-Ravele has featured prominently with his Mbilamutondo performances in these festivities of the installation of royal leaders. Whilst he was living at Shadani, some of these traditional leaders used to frequent Vho-Ravele’s homestead just to come and be entertained by his *Mbilamutondo* performance. Usually a cow, quite often donated by one of these rulers, would be slaughtered for the occasion.

One of the functions of *Mbilamutondo* is to celebrate. Khosi Rambuda Tshiwa-nga-Matembale, who defeated Tshikosi at Dzimauli (unfortunately Vho Ravele could not remember the year of the battle), was an *Mbilamutondo* musician. According to Vho-Ravele, in celebration of his victory over Tshikosi, Khosi Rambuda performed a song on his *Mbilamutondo* instrument (Vho Ravele, 2005). Vho-Ravele has played the song, which he was taught by his father Vho-Vele.

In addition, typically of indigenous African musicians, *Mbilamutondo* performers do not make music only for others. Very frequently, they make music for themselves, for self-entertainment. Vho-Ravele quite often used to perform on the *Mbilamutondo* that was built by his father, Vho-Vele, when he was guarding maize-fields from being foraged by birds. For him, there was no space for boredom during solitude.

Mbilamutondo has the ability to send a person into a trance if one dances to the music. Tshifaro, Vho-Ravele's sister, used to make music with her father to the extent that the latter would forget about eating, because she was a good dancer of *Mbilamutondo* tunes. Tshifaro, on the other hand, used to enjoy dancing mostly when her father Vho-Vele was performing. Tshifaro would usually become so emotionally engrossed in the music that the porridge which was served warm would become cold and dry before people could be served. An *Mbilamutondo* musician thrives particularly in a performance involving dancing to the music. Both instrumental player and dancers may transcend into another world. For quite some time, they become oblivious of this world and its problems (Vho-Ravele, 2005: Personal Interview). *Mbilamutondo* practitioners undergo some spiritual and emotional transformation.

Vhavenda have held the belief that any problem or stumbling block is easily resolved by evoking the spirits of their ancestors, and the belief was that these ancestral spirits could be evoked fully through *Mbilamutondo* music. Traditionally, indigenous African people resolved matters in indigenous tribal courts, and when they met with difficulties, *Mbilamutondo* artists were invited to play so that the music would refresh people's minds and change the mindset for the next day. A consensus must be reached on the following day, but if this still leads to failure and further disputes, *Tshikona*⁴ music is used as an alternative peacemaker until the matter is finally resolved. *Mbilamutondo* music is associated with victory, rituals, and healing (Vho-Ravele, 2005). To Vhavenda, *Mbilamutondo* is furthermore regarded as a weapon. It has some healing power in it. It is similar to "*tshovha*."⁵ It is part of indigenous African rituals and must be respected. Every Vhavenda ruler's royal court usually has a set of drums for *tshigombela*,⁶ reed pipes for *tshikona* and *Mbilamutondo* instruments. All these are held in high esteem, for they play a vital role in Vhavenda rituals.

The choice of music on each occasion is usually determined by the mood of the occasion. There are songs for general entertainment, amusement, for visitors, for lamentations, war songs, victory songs, and so on. This instrument is capable of reproducing music from many other indigenous musical practices such as those of *Tshikona*, *Malende*⁷ and so on.

It is significant to state that there are taboos related to the *Mbilamutondo* instrument, particularly for performances during rituals. For instance, engagement in sexual activities a day or days (depending on specific stipulations relevant to specific family tradition) prior to the performance day is prohibited. Whereas there may not be any restriction when performing for fun, performing whilst drunk is viewed as contempt and not acceptable. *Mbilamutondo* is treated with utmost respect amongst Vhavenda.

The performance of *Mbilamutondo* music

Whereas at most times two artists perform on a single *Mbilamutondo* instrument, it is also

possible to have more than one instrument, each with its own artist, making music simultaneously. In the case of each artist having his own separate instrument, each plays a specific voice-part on his own instrument. One takes the role of the leader whilst the other assumes the role of a follower in the manner reminiscent of the “call” and “response” that characterises most typical indigenous African music practices, or what in Jazz would be the “leader” and the “background” artists respectively. In such cases where the music is being performed on two sets of Mbilamutondo, the tuning of the two sets has to be done by one person. The instrument is not designed for playing and singing at the same time. It is designed for songs without words. However, some artists do play and sing simultaneously. Some artists are able to produce an ululating sound, similar to that done by a human being, on a single key. This is done by playing one key repeatedly in a very rapid manner.



Figure 4
Making music on *Mbilamutondo*
(picture courtesy of University of Venda Art Gallery).

The Mbilamutondo instrument comprises of eight wooden keys, arranged in a manner similar to an octave on a western keyboard instrument. The length of the instrument also determines the number of performers. For instance, four people can play on one instrument, with each performer confined to a particular voice-line similar to the typical of the first (soprano), the second (alto), the third (tenor), and the bass (baritone) voices in a standard choir. This African instrument, however, does not follow the western pattern of tones and semitones. Mbilamutondo music is mostly modal. The first eight wooden keys are termed *Luta*⁸.

The value of Mbilamutondo instrument-building materials

One of the materials used in *Mbilamutondo* music instruments, namely *Muonze*, also known as “*Tamboti*” (Afrikaans name) from the *Spyrostachys Africana species*, has medicinal value. *Muonze* is used for the construction of mallets (Tracey 2004) or beaters (sticks used for striking

the wooden bars or keys of the instrument. The bark of this tree is used as a remedy for wounds. Over and above healing wounds and sores, it is reportedly also able to treat many different diseases such as cancer and menstrual problems.

In addition, *Muonze* has an aroma, with the result that indigenous Venda people have used it down the years as a deodorant. Scent-balls were created from parts of the tree. They would then put these in their clothes' containers or *vhurala* (wardrobes) to make their clothes smell good. "The fact that it has a good-smelling scent is an added incentive to practitioners of *Mbilamutondo*" (Vho Munyai, 2005).

Vhalemba, also commonly known as Vhashavhi (Black Jews) and now part of Vhavenda, predominantly use *Mbilamutondo* for their rituals such as *Malombo*. They add "*Tshele*" (rattles) to *Mbilamutondo* for these religious rituals. The ritual performances occur in a dark, sound-proofed house. This is to prevent interference by outside stimuli. Any possible intrusion by outsiders is avoided. The practitioners do this by patching the whole house with mud and cow-dung to ensure that all the holes are fully closed. Unlike Vhavenda, Vhalemba do not beat drums during this ritual. *Mbilamutondo* performance during *Malombo* rituals has been a significant spiritual healing process for Vhavenda down the years (for self and for the audience).

There is more to this indigenous tree than just music-making. An *Mbilamutondo* musical performance with the exclusion of parts of plants such as *mutondo* and *muonze* would be regarded as meaningless to the custodians of African indigenous knowledge systems. Vhavenda view their art and their traditional healing in the same light. *Mbilamutondo* music is valued and highly regarded as part of indigenous Venda culture, especially when it comes to religious rituals.

Conclusion

With the advent of modern day deforestation occurring on a large scale in many parts of the former Venda territory, there is now a great scarcity of *Mbilamutondo* building- material. *Mutondo wa tshifumakadzi* (the female *mutondo* tree) does not grow just anywhere. It is very scarce. *Muonze* tree is also no longer easily available.

The present generation of Vhavenda is disinterested in the promotion and preservation of their own cultural heritage, and *Mbilamutondo* music practice has therefore become one of the most endangered traditions. With the decline in the performance and the promotion of this intangible African cultural practice and its musical instrument, the prospect of its continued existence may not be guaranteed. The indigenous Venda repertoire is about to disappear. Intervention strategies are necessary. The Venda style of *Mbilamutondo* music performance is quite different from that of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Presently, a practitioner of the Venda repertoire and style is yet to be found. After Vho Ravele, no one is reportedly performing Venda *Mbilamutondo* music anymore. Players of the original instrument are no more. Only Marimba players are found. *Mbilamutondo* music is on the brink of extinction.

It is, therefore, prudent to implore Government to play its role: for the continued existence of these materials, there is a need for government intervention, particularly by the Department of Water and Forestry. Unless the government helps in preserving these indigenous trees, both by cultivating more of them and putting modalities in place to prevent large scale deforestation, these valuable indigenous trees are facing possible extinction. Both the Departments of Water and Forestry and that of Agriculture could circumvent this and contribute through planting and protection of such indigenous trees as *mutondo*, *muonze*, and many others of value.

This article also encourages an interaction between the Department of Education and all interested stakeholders such as IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems) practitioners. The two parties could assist each other in identifying people who might be trained in manufacturing the original *Mbilamutondo* instrument for posterity. Whereas there may not be any objection to modification of the instrument into the present-day *Marimba*, the original indigenous *Mbilamutondo* instrument cannot be compromised in the name of innovation, especially in view of the spiritual healing purposes and the medicinal values attached to it. Undoubtedly, this demonstrates the richness of South Africa's indigenous knowledge systems.

Affirmation of indigenous African cultural values (religious rituals such as Malombo) has become one of the South African government's imperatives. Already there is a movement by government towards the development of indigenous material for the teaching of IKS in educational institutions and the integration of IKS into the curriculum.

The South Africa government's acknowledgement and encouragement of the development of services provided by indigenous medical healers is hereby also applauded. This assists in raising awareness about certain 'hidden' indigenous knowledge. Presently, only a few know about the value of *mutondo* and *muonze* tree materials that are essential for *Mbilamutondo* music.

This article hopes to contribute to the affirmation, development and sustainable livelihoods through the maximum utilization of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the African indigenous cultural heritage and practices.

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Notes

1. Vhavenda comprised a few tribes when they migrated from Matongoni in the Great Lakes of Central Africa to the present Venda territory in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. One of these tribes was Vhasenzi. More information on Vhasenzi can be obtained from Mugovhani, N.G. 2007. *Venda Choral Music: Compositional Styles*. Doctoral Thesis, Pretoria, University of South Africa.
2. The legend that the Mbila animal is tailless due to its failure to go and collect its tail while the other animals went to collect theirs, was one of the ways used by Vhavenda elders for discouraging laziness, particularly in the youth, by making reference to the absence of a tail in Mbila.
3. The Mutondo tree is used to produce the most important component of the *Mbilamutondo* instrument; mbambo or mbila (the wooden keys or notes). Small flat wood blocks are cut from the bigger block that is cut from the forest; similar in length but different in thickness according to the desired key (pitch). It is the tendency of Vhavenda to make fires in the evening. It is only when the flames are down and only coal is left in the fireplace that the *Mbilamutondo*-carving artist will take the small wood blocks and place them around the fire to roast them. The sap in the pieces of wood must be completely eliminated until the wood is totally dry. Even in cases where the mother wood may have been found dry, the blocks must

still be fire- dried so that they do not lose the intended pitch of the note with the change of weather; for instance, on cloudy days.

4. *Tshikona* is a very popular and unique and is one of the oldest indigenous Venda traditional pipe-blowing and dance musical practices. It is performed during very important ceremonies and rituals such as the installation of a new Venda ruler, the commemoration of a ruler's death, and during the sacrificial rites at the graves of a ruler's ancestors. It is also a favourite *bepha* (music expedition) musical practice.
5. *Tshovha* is a Venda name for a traditional African flywhisk. This instrument has been a source of myths about the mystical powers traditional African elders such as leaders and healers possessed. For a detailed discussion about this, see the article about Kamuzu Banda and his flywhisk in R.M Chirambo's *Culture and Tyranny of the Post-Colonial State in Malawi, 1964-1994*, 2008, Unpublished Article.
6. *Tshigombela* is an indigenous Venda traditional women's musical ensemble performance. It is a group performance, with drum accompaniment.
7. The word "*luta*" has a dual meaning in Tshivenda. Whilst in the first instance it may mean the first eight wooden keys (similar to the octave in western music), it may also mean one round of several repeated movements.
8. *Malende* is traditional Venda call-and response singing, with drumming, dancing and clapping. The soloist is usually the leading singer (caller) and dancer, whilst the majority of the musicians offer the response by singing and clapping, with a few on the drums. This usually occurs whenever a number of people are gathered after completion of a task and are enjoying drinks, usually African beer.

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