

## CHAPTER 7

### BAKALANGA MUSIC FOR RITUALS

*Bakalanga* ritual music can be divided into two types: rain praying and healing music. Rain praying consists of *wosana* and *mayile* music whilst healing music consists of *sangoma*, *mantshomane* and *mazenge*.

#### 7.1 TRADITIONAL MUSIC FOR RAIN PRAYING AND WOSANA INITIATION RITUALS

The following introductory statement was made when the *Ndebele* were following *Kalangas* at the Dokonobe mountains during their fightings:

So then the Ndebele did as they were ordered by their coucillor. But the Kalanga did not at all consider (think of) that what was spoken by the Ndebele. They who held the Gumbu (music calabash), danced for the Gumbu; those who danced for Kodobholi (the giant), being of Kodobholi; those who danced for Datsina were of Datsina. Also they who danced for Ndazula were of Ndazula, or for Hosos, were of Hosos. All names of different kinds of dances (Wentzel 1983a: 265).

Rainmaking rituals in one form or another continue in the present day Botswana, and more particularly among *Bakalanga* in Northern Botswana, under the auspices of *Mwari* religious officials commonly known as the *wosana*. It has to be noted that *wosana* music bears the same name as the functionaries. It appears that *Bakalanga* are not the only people in Botswana who engage themselves in rainmaking rituals. For example, the *Batswapong* of *Moremi* village (*Komana* religion) in the Central District of Botswana continue to observe rainmaking rituals during drought (Amanze 1998:32).

There are mainly two types of *Bakalanga* rain praying music. They are *wosana*, which is performed by men and women. The second type of rain music performed by women only is called *mayile*. In this discussion, these two music types will be treated separately, starting

with *wosana*, which seems to be the most practised. For someone to be a *wosana*, he/she has to undergo an initiation.

### 7.1.1 WOSANA TRADITION AND INITIATION

In many of *Mwari*'s districts there are others who are regarded as his special children (*vana va Mwari*). These are *banyusa* and *hosana* who practise at home as opposed to at the Matopos sacred places.

There are various conceptions about the *hosana*. They are described as virgins dedicated to *Mwari*. More commonly, these women and girls are called *bonga* and live at the sacred places in the Matopos, sometimes from as early as birth in response to some covenant of their parents. As virgins they are seen as being married to the god and as such there are strong sanctions against forming sexual liaisons with mortal men. The author finds these *hosana/bonga* similar to the Roman Catholic nuns. Others see *hosana* as local girls or women who display a tendency towards spirit possession. Because of this they are dedicated to *Mwari* and may be sent for a time to one of the sacred places at the Matopos. Here they serve the religion's officials, performing and dancing at ceremonies, cultivating their fields and attending to domestic chores around the village. In return they are helped to identify their host spirits and to develop their perceptual powers and the quality of their performance as mediums. They eventually return to their home districts unless, as occasionally happens, they are selected by male religious officials to remain as wives or associates (or both). There is a contradiction here, as *hosana* are perceived of as taboo to all men, but their entering into sexual union or becoming the wives of religious sacred place leaders is not only accepted, but is perceived as a prestigious and powerful position (Latham 1986: 96).

A *wosana* is *Mwali*'s messenger by initiation. For a *wosana* to be initiated, it is believed that *Mwali* has chosen her/him. In some cases, a *wosana* starts by being thrown on top of a tall tree or a house by *Mwali*

so that people can know her/him. This happens to a *wosana* in a state of total collapse.

**Plate 23**



One of the newly called *wosana* in total collapse

Photographed by Maggy Tema at the annual *Gumbu* Rain Praying Ceremony held at the Mapoka village kgotla in September 1995

This is comparable to *ukuthwasa* in the case of the *sangomas* when a call from the ancestors selects one to his/her state of life to become a medium for the ancestors. A *wosana* is not a diviner or traditional doctor. However, this fact does not rule out the dealings of *wosana* with traditional healers or their use of African traditional medicine. Vumbu Ntogwa, the late priest of Tebgwe sacred place in Ramokgwebane in the North East District of Botswana, in addition to his knowledge of traditional medicine, had such a link with certain traditional healers in the area (e.g. Flaka in a small village of Letsholathebe, Mzingwana: in the fringes of Masunga village and Thubu in Sekakangwe village). These healers, who were acquaintances, had their own respective specialties, and therefore often referred patients to one another. Apart from frequently referring sick people who consulted him to Tebgwe, they also regularly visited the sacred place itself for consultation, thereby establishing a relationship with the priest. Often, sick pilgrims who



visited Tebgwe through other means were referred to these healers by the voice at Tebgwe (Nthoi 1995: 60).

The only power a *wosana* has been given by *Mwali* is to pray for rain to fall, or to stop it. A *wosana* prays for rain to fall through dancing. *Wosana* comes after *Mwali's* messenger (Robert Vumbu the intermediary). A *wosana* also tells people about *Mwali* and teaches them his expectations from them. When a *wosana* grows up, he/she might be deprived of a number of things such as schooling, working, getting married or having children. Some start dancing in their childhood and some are given the exceptional dancing talent later in life.

Before discussing what happens during the whole rain praying process, the author of this document found it necessary to discuss other factors that precede it such as *wosana* initiation, selection of a *wosana*, place and value of place, coolness versus heat, up versus down and the role played by intermediaries.

#### 7.1.1.1 WOSANA (BATHUMBI BE VULA - RAIN SURVEYORS/SEEKERS) INITIATION

Nthoi (1998:64) has noted that *wosana* initiation is the only initiation allowed at Njelele sacred place by the Provincial chiefs. The Provincial chiefs have also argued, following a popular belief, that the sacred place most prominently associated with asking for rain should not be visited by *abantu ba madlozi*, i.e. mediums of ancestral spirits. It is also reported that, in the past, even the initiation of *wosana* was not carried out at Njelele.

However, prior to their visit to Njelele, traditional healers informed these supplicants that their afflictions were the manifestations of their selection as *wosana* by *Mwali*, i.e. they are possessed by *amadlozi e zulu* (rain spirits). They only come to Njelele for this initiation after they have been convinced of, and have accepted, their selection as *wosana*.

There is also the office of *umphehleli (Isindebele)* “the one who stirs” (for cult adepts), who is responsible for initiating *wosana*.

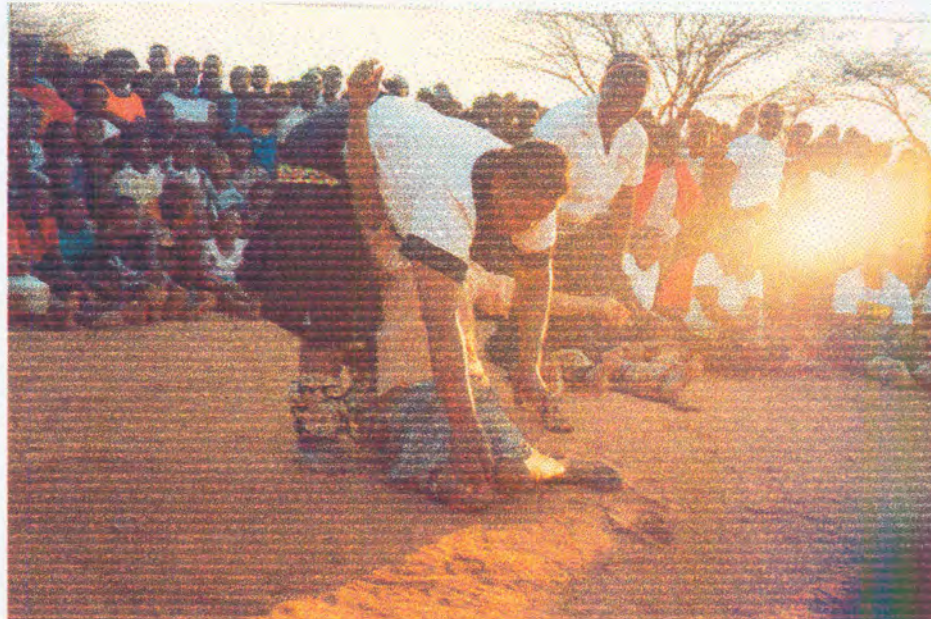
The interpretation of the *wosana* initiation rite is based on personal knowledge of the *wosana*; interviews and discussions with different categories of informants and from reading the literature on the religion. Nthoi’s research conducted on the initiation of the *wosana* at Njelele established that this is a private and secretive ritual to which no stranger was invited. Most of the information Nthoi gathered at Njelele on the initiation of *wosana* was a result of discussions with people who either had some dealings with *wosana* or had witnessed this ritual before.

Religion followers in Northern Botswana hold a conception of a *wosana* and his/her initiation rite, which is different from that of their counterparts elsewhere. Even within Zimbabwe itself, there is no uniform conception of the nature and function of the *wosana*. This very important point must be seriously taken into account in this study.

#### 7.1.1.2 SELECTION OF A WOSANA

The *wosana* initiation rite is the culmination of a whole series of events, which start with the affliction of the individual as a manifestation of his/her selection as *wosana* by some divinity. The religion’s belief is that *Mwali* chooses each adept to succeed a close relative, and makes his choice known through possession after a more or less severe affliction.

**Plate 24**



Palalani Margaret Ntogwa-Tibone assisting the collapsed *wosana* newly called initiate

Photographed by Maggy Tema at the annual seed blessing ceremony held at the Mapoka village *Kgotla* in September 1995

The symptoms in the roughly sixty cases which Werbner observed and recorded were severe anxiety, persisting headaches, attacks of hysteria, swelling of the elbows and aches all over the body, constant fatigue and weakness, crippling illness, and infertility (Werbner 1977a: 190). This is in contrast to Daneel's view in which the youth is dedicated to *Mwali* because the parent has experienced a special inspiration from *Mwari* himself. Daneel does not tell us whether or not this "inspiration" entails affliction of some sort (Nthoi 1998:75).

According to one of my informants, Basetse Mamu, most female *wosana* have fertility problems as an affliction. As in other cases of selection in other religions, the individual first seeks healing of the affliction in vain, and through some specialists comes to know the meaning of this affliction. In most cases revelation of the meaning of affliction is followed by reluctance to accept the vocation. The deterioration of the



individual's condition, however, makes him/her to accept the call, and undergo the initiation. An initiation is often expressed by the *wosana* in Botswana through singing this *Isindebele* song:

**SONG TITLE: NGINGEDWA**

Call: *Ngingedwa khona le Njelele ngingedwa 'mamu ya gaula* - I am alone at Njelele, I am alone, mother is suffering (2x)

Response: *Khona le Njelele ngingedwa 'mamu ya gaula* - At Njelele I am alone, mother is suffering (2x)

Call: *Idlozi lakhe khona le Njelele ngingedwa 'mamu ya gaula* - Because of her ancestral spirit I am alone, mother is suffering (2x)

Response: *Khona le Njelele ngingedwa 'mamu ya gaula* - At Njelele I am alone, mother is suffering (2x).

Metaphorically, the *wosana* initiate is expressing maternal love to her mother she left at home. The initiate has a feeling that when she is away from home, her mother is suffering.

The successful performance of the initiation rite establishes a new human/divine relationship which gives the individual a new "personhood"; that of a *wosana* in this case. The *wosana* is associated with a special type of spirit, which derives from *Mwali*. These spirits are manifestations of *Mwali* himself and not of "a lesser or ancestral divinity" (Werbner 1989: 258). This is what makes them "special".

Nthoi (1998: 77) noted during his research that the *wosana* is often a medium of other spirits. More often than not, an individual is frequently the medium of different types of spirits: i.e. *manchomane*, *sangoma* and *wosana*. That is why it becomes difficult to study a particular type of spirit without having to mention others. The *wosana* spirit or *mweya* (*Shona*) (breath or soul) has never lived as a human being, but rather emanates directly from *Mwali*. The *wosana* to whom Nthoi talked, understand their possessing spirit as linking them both to a shade who

was a former medium of this spirit, and to *Mwali* from whom this *wosana* spirit originally emanated. This partly explains why the *wosana* spirit is linked to ancestral spirits.

However, the initiation rite itself does recognise the association between the *wosana* and *Banyantjaba*, the female manifestation of *Mwali*. A woman who has infertility problems can only conceive if she allows herself to become a “stool” of *Banyantjaba*. In other words, she has to surrender herself to *Banyantjaba*, the God of fecundity. The idea of total surrender of oneself, and being completely taken over by the Deity, runs through the *wosana* initiation ritual.

Historically *Mwali* manifested his presence at these sacred places through (although not exclusively) his voice. The very seizure of the *wosana* is another manifestation, as is the *wosana*'s affliction in being thrown from place to place. Other manifestations include harbingers like the little red *Mwali* bug (*ndzimu*); thunder-clap; meteorite and the shooting star; and the light rain when *Mwali* is said to have come “courting” or “visiting” (*Kumba koga - Ikalanga*) (see Daneel 1970; 16 and 18). The presence of the voice, and access to communication with *Mwali*, comes as a consequence of preparations in ritual; in other words, from the making of sacred space. Much has to be done in accord with a ritual division of labour between men and women to make the site ready. Only then does *Mwali* “reside”. The obligation on the people's side, is to make the place fit to receive *Mwali*; and thus “sacred”. Other preparations include clearing the entrance of the sacred place, the placement of logs that open and close the entrance of the sanctuary, and construction of the priest's homestead.

It is at such places that *Mwali* chose and chooses to manifest himself. *Mwali* was believed to be a spirit who is “invisible to the human eye, who sometimes elected to speak from trees, stones and caves”, he is in fact pointing to the immanence and presence of *Mwali* at such places. At any other place, he remains transcendent, and has to be approached



by some other means. *Mwali's* omnipotence and omnipresence, and his concern with the fertility of the land and the general wellbeing of his people, explain why pilgrims visit these sacred places.

#### 7.1.1.3 THE PLACE AND ITS VALUE IN INITIATION

Different rituals are performed at different locations, which are not arbitrarily chosen. Part of the symbolic meaning of a ritual is linked to the locality preferred for the given ritual. Failure to appreciate the value attached to a particular locality may inhibit the understanding of the ritual itself. While certain rituals are performed indoors, others are performed far away from home (sometimes at crossroads or in uninhabited places and mountains). The choice of locality is determined by the people's understanding of the characteristics of the deities involved in such rituals, and what the ritual itself is intended to achieve.

The *wosana* initiation rite is carried out at a special place slightly removed from the homestead, in the open countryside. This is indicative of the variable distance between humanity and different manifestations of divinity. *Mwali* the High-God in one manifestation is removed from the daily lives of the people, yet the female manifestation of *Mwali* attends to the welfare of the people and can be approached for the sake of human fertility. This is why the ritual takes place in the wilds (removed yet near the homestead) and next to a small pool. The small pool is *Banyantjaba* herself who is referred to as *dziba le vula* by *Bakalanga*.

When the ritual specialist and participants approach this pool, they show a deference, which indicates that they are now in the presence of an important Deity. This includes the usual taking off of shoes, the short prayer and the spilling of snuff. The ritual specialist even offers a short prayer to *Mwali* as the pool of water/rain (*Dziba le vula*). He wears a black skirt, which is normally worn by the *wosana* and other religious officials, but not messengers when they enter *Mwali's* sacred

place for supplication or any other performance of ritual. The place where this rite is held is indeed a sanctuary or sacred place of *Mwali* (Nthoi 1998: 78).

#### 7.1.1.4 THE CONCEPTS OF COOLNESS AND HEAT

Underlying the *wosana* initiation ritual is the juxtaposition between the coolness of *Banyantjaba* and the heat of the land. *Uku phehlelwa* (*Isindebele*) takes place at a small pool, very early in the morning, and in the late evening, when the land is cool. In Nthoi's view, *Mwali* and all that is associated with him are considered cool: the cool water of the pool, the *wosana*'s concern with cooling the land and *Mwali*'s rain as cooling the heat of the land. It is also insisted the bowl and bucket for drawing and carrying the ritual water should have had no contact with fire. This further indicates the importance of maintaining coolness and purity in this rite (the coolness of *Banyantjaba*). In everyday life, the pot or calabash is associated with fire and cooking.

A ritual is essentially a transformative experience, which is symbolised by the cooking image in this ritual. The image of the bubbling calabash on the head of the initiate suggests that the *wosana* is being cooked. However, this is a different type of "cooking" (anti-cooking symbolism) without fire because *Mwali* is associated with coolness (Werbner 1989: 312). The white and cold froth that flows from the calabash onto the head and shoulders of the initiate is symbolic of the purity and coolness of *Banyantjaba*. In this rite, therefore, *Banyantjaba* does not only cover (takes over), but also cools the body of the initiate. The cooled *wosana* assumes a new relationship with *Banyantjaba*, having been transformed into a new being (Nthoi 1998: 79).

The symbol of the obliteration of the human/divine divide does not only end here with the froth flowing down the head and shoulders of the initiate. The pot is then placed between the legs of the initiate who is sitting on the ground with legs outstretched in front of him/her.

He/she completes the act of giving him/herself over to the divinity by rubbing the froth on all his/her joints using both hands. In this ritual *Mwali* purifies and takes over the whole body (both exterior and interior) of the initiate. This is achieved by systematically capturing the individual parts of the body: the head, shoulders and all the joints of the initiate's body. On the other hand, the initiate also fully embraces the divinity through the ritual of eating the lather, which he/she has created by stirring the contents of the pot (Nthoi 1998: 80).

The process of *Mwali's* taking over and incorporation of the *wosana* begins with the froth flowing on the head and shoulders of the initiate, the placing of the pot between the legs, and the rubbing of all the joints with the froth. All these are exterior parts of the body. The cleansing, cooling and conversion of the exterior cannot bring about total identification of the initiate and *Mwali*. This must be complemented by an inner transformation, which is achieved through the ingestion of the froth by the initiate. All this symbolism shows that the *wosana* initiation rite enables the development of an intimate human/divine relationship, which facilitates the performance by the initiate of special functions later on in his/her career (Nthoi 1998: 81).

The *wosana* initiate has to abstain from sexual activities (*ukuzila-Isindebele*) prior to and during the whole duration of the rite itself. This restriction is also observed in all other ritual activities in the religion of *Mwali*.

#### 7.1.1.5 THE CONCEPTS OF UP AND DOWN

*Mwali* is associated with the mountains and high places. The rain that he gives his people, and that cools the land, comes from the sky. The klipspringer, leopard and the genet, which are associated with *Mwali*, are all mountain creatures whose pelts are given as offering to him. The klipspringer in particular, which lives near to *Mwali* on the mountain top, is captured and brought down to the village. It is believed to carry on its body the coolness of the mountain and that of



*Mwali* down to the people. In the village, it is rubbed with cold hearth ash (that which has had contact with heat and is potentially dangerous), before being returned to the mountain where it is released. On its downward journey, the klipspringer brings coolness from *Mwali* to the people, while it carries the heat of the land to the cold mountains. In the symbol of the klipspringer, we see the up/down contrast clearly. Symbolically, the klipspringer is a *wosana*, and it is referred to as such by the priest. The symbolism of the ritual hunt reveals the symbolic role of the *wosana* (Nthoi 1998: 79).

The up/down contrast is inseparable from the cool/heat dichotomy. During the initiation rite, the ritual specialist places the calabash on the head of the initiate. The initiate supports the calabash with both hands while the ritual specialist vigorously stirs it. The flow of the froth is obviously from top to bottom. The froth cools the initiate as it flows down his/her head and shoulders. The cold calabash is sitting on top of the warm head of the initiate. Through these two pairs of contrasting images of cool/hot and up/down, we understand the initiation rite as a ritual in which the initiate is essentially cooled so that the difference (in terms of temperature) between him/her and the possessing divinity is minimized (Nthoi 1998: 80).

### **7.1.2 WOSANA MUSIC**

*Wosana* music will be discussed under the following sub-headings: *wosana* songs, *wosana* dancers (performers), *wosana* costume (past and present) and finally instruments.

*Wosana* songs are sung by a special group of people called *wosana*. According to some informants, individual group members compose *wosana* songs in different ways. Any *wosana*, who is gifted and can think of a tune he/she can sing, dance and teach the group, is free to do so. The writer was made to believe through oral interviews that some members catch the song when sleeping in the form of a dream. Some tunes are copied from other places and relevant lyrics are fitted in.

Tapela Mudongo Mbulawa who was born in Mapoka village in 1939 and who unfortunately passed away in June 2002 stated that *Bakalanga* artists who are concerned about the dying away of their language and culture nowadays compose new *Ikalanga* songs.

*Wosana* songs are a plea, request and praise to the *Bakalanga* Supreme Deity *Mwali*, who is communicated to and pleased through song and dance. *Wosana* music is sung to ask for rain and good life for the *Bakalanga* people in general. *Wosana* ritual music and dances are performed when rain does not come at the expected time of the year, which in Botswana is usually September to October.

According to Bourdillon's (1976: 301) observation of the *Shona* people in Zimbabwe, the rain praying ceremony is held at the beginning of the wet season to request adequate rains – either too much rain or too little can spoil the crops and lead to famine. Although the time for performing this ceremony may be as early as September or as late as February (the rainy season normally lasts from October to March), some ceremony to request good rains is an annual event throughout most of the *Shona* region. In some places, people may delay organising the ceremony until there is reason for anxiety because the rains are late or sparse, but the early months of the rainy season are always an anxious time and the slightest abnormality in the weather can inspire people to hold the ceremony if it has been omitted earlier in the season.

*Wosana* songs are also sung to praise the Supreme Deity *Mwali* as a *Bakalanga* traditional thanksgiving or appreciation belief, especially during years of good harvest. *Wosana* have special songs related to thanksgiving such as “*amnandi amabele*”:

**SONG TITLE: AMNANDI AMABELE**

Call: *Amnandi amabele* – Sorghum is nice/ tasty

Response: *Amnandi* – It is nice/ tasty

Call: *Amnandi siya wa dla* – It is nice/ tasty we are eating it

Response: *Wo wole ha woye amnandi* – *Wo wole* it is tasty

Call: *Amnandi siya wa dla* – It is tasty we are eating it

Response: *Amnandi* – It is tasty.

The sorghum referred to in this song is traditional beer made from sorghum. So this is an *Isindebele* song literally meaning “sorghum is nice or rich/plentiful”: harvest is good. It has to be understood that most of the *wosana* songs are in the *Ikalanga* language. Some are in *Isindebele* which is an intrusive culture to the *Bakalanga* of Botswana from the *Bakalanga* of Western Zimbabwe across the border, who seem to have been acculturated by the *Isindebele* speakers in their country. This acculturation of the *Bakalanga* of Zimbabwe by the *Isindebele* speakers is also expressed by Wentzel (1983c:25) when he was comparing Zimbabwe *Ikalanga* with *Nambdzwa*. He has this to say; This is another dialect (*Nambdzwa*) of *Ikalanga* cluster which is still a “living” language. It is in lesser danger of falling into disuse than perhaps even *Ikalanga* (the speakers of which are inclined to lean towards the use of *Ndebele*).

Some of the *wosana* songs are even a mixture of the two languages, *Ikalanga* and *Isindebele*. This influence comes from Njelele hill in Zimbabwe, which is the headquarters of Botswana *wosana*. This is the talking hill in which *Mwali* is believed to be living. Njelele hill is also known as *Ka Mwali*.

#### 7.1.2.1 WOSANA DANCERS (PERFORMERS)

*Wosana* music performers, who are named after their music, are believed by *Bakalanga* to have been specially chosen by their Supreme Deity *Mwali*. Except for a few cases, *wosana* normally come from the same families, i.e. descending from adults to the offspring. The example



is that of the Ntogwa family in Ramokgwebana village in North Eastern Botswana.

The majority of *wosana* music performers are usually women and only very few men take part. When the *wosana* start dancing, they all converge in the direction of sunrise towards the three drummers. This symbolises that when they send messages and gifts to the *Bakalanga* Supreme Deity *Mwali*, they do not look elsewhere. They have a particular direction to face at a specified period. During the dancing process, anybody who feels highly entertained from the audience of the non-*wosana*, can throw or place some money on the dancing ground. This is normally done for the dancer whom one feels is the best entertainer. This process is called *ku fupa bazani* (to show appreciation to the dancers) in the *Ikalanga* language.

#### 7.1.2.2 THE WOSANA COSTUME

The manner of costume varies from region to region. The occasion on which the dance is going to be performed also determines the design as well as the colour of the dancer's costumes. For example, professional mourners throughout Africa clothe themselves in black togas. A black band of cloth around the arm or black feathers worn in a tuft on the head is a sign of mourning (Kebede 1982:103).

*Wosana* costume is elaborate. According to oral sources (informants), in the past, *wosana* used to wear costumes made of wild animal skins, beads and ostrich eggshells. Nowadays the *wosana* costume has changed because of the newly enforced wildlife laws concerning protection and conservation of wild animals. According to one informant, Mbako Mongwa, the *wosana zwitimbi* (beads) were locally made out of ostrich eggshells. After the arrival of the Portuguese and Arabs, *zwitimbi* (beads) were bought from *Kilimani* (Mozambique). Van Waarden (1999: 5) also confirms this fact in her research about the origins of the *Bakalanga*.

Besides being used by *wosana* dancers to revere *badzimu* (ancestors) who are believed to have invited the *wosana* into the profession, *zwitimbi* (beads) can also be used to ornament *malombe* (praise-singers) and small children's hips. In the past, *zwitimbi* (beads) were placed around the breasts of virgins. These had a special name known as *mammani* in the *Ikalanga* language. *Mammani* beads were not supposed to be touched by boys without an intention of getting married to that particular maiden who is wearing them. *Bakalanga* maidens had a cultural right of not taking the *mammani* back anymore if a boy forcibly touched them without aiming at marrying her. Touching *mammani* beads on the body of a maiden was equated to the proposal of marriage.

*Wosana* costume is basically the same for men and women. During their rain praying rituals, the *wosana* could be singled out from the whole audience by black skirts with black cloths covering their heads before dancing commences. *Wosana* also put on *zwitimbi* (beads) for decorations on the head and hips, and percussive *mishwayo* (leg rattles) made of the *zwigogoro zwe mababani* - plural (cocoons) of a certain inedible type of *mopane* worm called *babani* - singular. These worms are associated with the *mopane* tree because they feed on its leaves. A few small stones are placed inside these cocoons for them to produce a highly percussive sound. A great number of them are threaded together and wrapped around the dancer's ankles. The rhythms produced amplify the dance rhythm. Inter-rhythm improvised rhythms may emerge when a virtuoso dancer executes rapid stamping movements, interwoven with the basic rhythm of a dance in inter-rhythmic patterns.

### 7.1.2.3 WOSANA DANCE ACCESSORIES

*Wosana* use a good number of accessories in performing their music. The *phende* (flywhisk) is made from any of the following available animal tails: *mbizi ye shango* (zebra), *n'gombe* (cow), *pkhwizha* (eland) and *vumba* (wildebeest/gnu or hartebeest). The zebra tail is mostly preferred because it is big and well decorated to attract the audience.

The zebra is also regarded as a fast and rare animal. This tail, compared to the other two, satisfies the whole purpose of a *phende* (flywhisk) in the dance, which is to be decorative and to attract the audience.

In their dance, *wosana* also use three drums of different sizes (*tjamabhika*, *shangana ne shumba* and *dukunu*). The *wosana* drums are made from two different trees of light wood. These trees are *nlidza dumba/mpiti* (*erythrina abyssinica*), *ngoma* (*schinziophyton rantanellii*) and in some cases *nthula* (*marula - sclerocarya caffra*). These light drums enable performers to carry them around with ease.

#### 7.1.2.4 WOSANA MUSIC PERFORMED DURING FESTIVALS

The North East District Council of Botswana, which mainly constitutes *Bakalanga*, hosts a cultural festival normally held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May annually. The event is called *Ngwao Boswa* in the *Setswana* language, literally meaning "culture is heritage". This event is organised by the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs through the Department of Culture and Youth. Before this department took responsibility, these activities were organised by the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare.

The *tjilenje* (*Ngwao Boswa*) cultural festival is composed of any *Ikalanga* singing groups from all over North East and Central Districts. All kinds of *Bakalanga* community and school cultural groups are allowed to attend this festival. Schools hold their own cultural festivals at different times and venues. They are sometimes invited to the adults' performances as entertainers during short breaks.



**Plate 25**



Jakalasi No. 2 Primary school practising *wosana* dance with Basetse shooting her toy gun on the extreme right and the researcher clapping on the extreme left

Photographed by Moleti Seleti with the author on a field trip at Jakalasi No.2 Primary school in May 2001

Ritual music such as *wosana*, *mayile* and *sangoma* serves a different purpose in these festivals. They are meant to entertain people and promote/preserve the *Bakalanga* culture.

*Bakalanga* cultural competitions also have cultural dishes (food) for competitions. These cultural dishes are aimed at teaching the youth about how they were prepared, who they were prepared for as well as the nutritional value they provide. Some of *Bakalanga* traditional food the researcher observed at Tshesebe village in the 2000 competitions was:

*Shadza le zembwe* – Porridge prepared from millet

*Shadza le mathunde* – Porridge prepared from sorghum

*Shogwana* – Porridge prepared from refined millet grains

*Tjimone* – A mixture of samp, beans and ground nuts

*Tjimone tje mathunde matjena* – A mixture of sorghum mealie meal, beans and ground nuts

*Kendenge* – No English equivalent name

*Dhitima* - Pumpkin

*Bhobola* – Pumpkin leaves

*Delele* - Okra

*Manongo* - Peanuts

*Dobi* – Meat cooked with ground peanuts

*Mashonja* – Mopane worms.

Groups of other cultural backgrounds from any part of the country are welcome to perform in these festivals, mainly for cultural exchange. The most popular group that attends this festival from outside North East District and the *Bakalanga* culture is called *Dipitse tsa Bobonong*, literally meaning “horses of *Bobonong*”. This group comes from *Bobonong* village in the Central District and it is a non-*Ikalanga* speaking group. Their costume resembles the colours of a zebra.

It has to be noted that this annual cultural festival gives all performing groups an opportunity of practising and presenting each other’s music types outside the ritual concept. This also helps in the cultural and musical cross-fertilization as well as preservation from one group to the other. It becomes very interesting, for example, to see a *wosana* dancing a different music type such as *sangoma* or *mukomoto* and vice versa. The author finds this interesting because *sangoma* and *wosana* music belong to different rituals that are not related. *Wosana* is for rain praying whereas *sangoma* is for healing so one would not think these

two different groups would be interested in each other's music. This shows a sense of musical appreciation among these cultures.

### BASIC WOSANA THEMES

Drums, pulse and embellishment

Claps (phrasing referent)

Arms

Torso

Feet (shuffled in continuous quavers)

R L R

R: right foot  
L: left foot

(Density referent 12 x)

The *wosana* drums are sometimes used as speech surrogates to the *Bakalanga* Supreme Deity. Their language is centred on the rain *wosana* are praying for. According to Ms. L. L. Tshandu of Moroka village, a primary school teacher at Jakalasi No. 1, the following messages are conveyed by *wosana* drums in the form of drum sounds:

#### DRUM 1 (*tjamabhika*)

This drum produces the lowest pitch.

The message communicated is:

*Zwitimbi, Zwitimbi*

Beads, Beads.

#### DRUM 2 (*shangana ne shumba*)



This is the middle pitched drum.

The message communicated is:

*Matshime, Matshime*

Water fountains, Water fountains.

### DRUM 3 (*dukunu*)

This drum produces the highest pitch of the three.

The message it is said to be delivering is:

*Vula, Vula*

Rain/Water, Rain/Water.

Hand clapping is regarded as a body percussive accompaniment that helps to bring out the simultaneous rhythms of *wosana* music. The singing, which is carried out by both performers, is another instrument of paramount importance in *wosana* music.

In some cases, the main dancers in *wosana* music dance with a *ludozo* (*Ikalanga* word for a walking stick). In other instances, some *wosana* dancers use a gun-like stick. Both types of sticks are acceptable and simply meant to decorate the dance.

Adepts pray and chant laments to *Mwali* and sing of oracles and famous adepts of the past and present. They mime things and memorize events of broad significance to every congregation in the cult's domain. They dance with a stick or a wildebeest tail in a sacred place's clearing or ring, sometimes imitating a fatted cow, an eagle, a game animal or horse, an elder bent with age, a marksman or hunter with a gun, a soldier on military drill with a rifle, or an afflicted victim (Werbner 1977a: 189).

### 7.1.3 *MAYILE* (CIRCLE DANCE) RITUAL MUSIC

*Mayile* is the second type of rain praying music. Only women perform this music. Unlike *wosana* music, which is performed by *wosana* dancers only, *mayile* accepts any woman who feels like joining the dance.

*Mayile* performers sing and dance, running and clapping in a circulating manner. The Botswana Society (1991:100) calls *mayile* a passing dance because one woman approaches the opposite and passes her moving round in a circular form. Whilst running, hand clapping and singing, the performers also criss-cross in turns around this circle. This criss-crossing style is said to be imitative of some birds associated with rain such as *njelele* (eagle), *nyenje* (white stork), *makololwani* (stork birds) and *nyenganyenga* (swallows). These birds are seen around the rainy season. The picture below visually explains *mayile* dance.

#### Plate 26



Mulambakwena village Cultural Group performing *mayile* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

Unlike *wosana* music where nobody is allowed in the dancing circle, in *mayile*, *wosana* are allowed to join. However, men and young children, both boys and girls, are not allowed in the dancing ground. They can only be spectators. The *Mayile* rain-praying dance normally takes place at the local village chief's court called *lubazhe gwa she/khuta*. Sometimes this dance takes place at the *nzeze* (*peltophorum africanum*) tree where the *wosana* normally perform their dance.

*Mayile* songs are short and repeated. The singers are divided into two groups of call and response. Hand clapping results in a communion pattern because of these two groups that clap interchangeably.

According to Waters (2000:32), traditionally women would perform the rainmaking songs called *mayile*. In these songs, the words are not important; the hand-clapping and dancing are the primary focus. In fact, words can be added or dropped at the discretion of the performers. Despite the fact that *wosana* music is performed by men and women, *mayile* by women only, these two music types finally converge by serving the same purpose of rain praying.

## BASIC MAYILE THEMES

Drums 1














Drums 2  
(Pulse and embellishment)

Drums 3

Claps in communion: Part 1  
(as performed) Part 2

Perceived claps

Dance

(Density referent 12 x )            

## 7.2 TRADITIONAL MUSIC FOR HEALING PURPOSES

*Bakalanga* traditional music for healing purposes is of three types: *mazenge (shumba)*, *sangoma* and *mantshomane/mancomane*. *Sangoma* and *mantshomane/mancomane* music types are intrusive cultures to *Bakalanga*, but have been adapted to form part of the culture from the neighbouring *Amandebele* in Zimbabwe.

### 7.2.1 MAZENGE MUSIC

This is music performed by ladies who have been confirmed to be *shumba*, literally meaning lion. These ladies are believed in the *Bakalanga* culture to have powers of communicating with the ancestors for healing sick people. *Mazenge (shumba)* music is performed by chosen old women to appease the ancestors to heal the sick person.



Children are allowed to attend *mazenge* rituals. However, they are cautioned not to sing *mazenge* ritual songs out of the ritual place. Children strictly adhere to this because it is believed that when *mazenge* songs are sung outside the ritual place the sick person (*zenge*) who is under treatment during this ritual can die. It is also believed that after dying this person's corpse is eaten by termites and turns into an ant hill.

During *mazenge* rituals, all participants eat cooked *Bakalanga* traditional food known as *makapugwa* (*gapu*) only. *Makapugwa* is a *Bakalanga* traditional dish which is preferably a mixture of samp, beans (*shanga*) and bean leaves cooked in crushed ground nuts (*nlibo we nyemba waka khabutegwa*). This dish is eaten from a *Bakalanga* traditional mud pot called *tjilongo*.

*Mazenge* (*shumba*) music is private and personal, and has great emotional appeal - it can make people cry. It is usually sung at night to a select audience in the singer's hut. It is believed that when this music is performed, the sick person normally gets healed.

### **7.2.2 SANGOMA MUSIC**

The *sangoma* religion is today found all over Southern Africa, mainly among the *Nguni* people (*Zulu*, *Swati*), although occurrence of this religion has been reported as far as Tanzania. In Zimbabwe it is common among the *Amandebele* and *Bakalanga*. Other people who have links with either the *Amandebele* or *Nguni* are known to belong to this religion of affliction (Nthoi 1995: 49). Oosthuizen has noted that:

The *sangoma* emerges as a person, usually a woman, who is called to the profession by her ancestors rather than by inheriting it. Dance, symbolic garb and ritual are vital and divination forms an essential part of the *isangomas* practice (Oosthuizen 1986: 97).

The possessing spirit normally manifests itself through affliction; mainly through protracted illness: e.g. dizziness, stomach problems and

headache. A traditional healer/diviner called in to determine the cause of the illness attributes affliction to the desire of a particular *idlozi* (*Isindebele*) “spirit” to possess the afflicted individual. Eventually the afflicted accepts his/her calling and is attached to a renowned specialist (usually *sangoma* far away from the novice’s home) for *ukutwasa* (*Isindebele*) “initiation”. The initiation often takes a period no less than a year. The *sangoma* (*amatwasa*) novices, who undergo a year long initiation, also abstain from sex for the whole duration of their initiation rite (Nthoi 1998: 87).

During, and certainly before the successful completion of the initiation, *ilitwasa* (*Isindebele*) “the novice” is expected to fall into a trance, during which the *sangoma* spirit reveals its identity and the geneological link between its former medium and the present one (Nthoi 1995: 50).

Besides that, they would opt for a family traditional doctor called *bango* (log). *Bakalanga* of Botswana are not fond of *Izangoma* because they are believed to be an intrusive culture from the *Amandebele* or *Mapothoko* as they are commonly called. The name *Mapothoko* is a gossip term that was devised during the Nguni raids among *Bakalanga*. The name *Amandebele* was avoided because they could be alert that the discussion was about them. These people come from across the Botswana border in Western Zimbabwe. *Sangoma* songs are believed to belong to *Isindebele* speakers, which is why they are sung in *Isindebele*, which is their language. One can also conclude that the *Bakalanga* of Zimbabwe have nonetheless accepted wider the *Amandebele* tribal identity.

**Plate 27**



Basadi Ndoda of Ditladi village performing *sangoma* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

Both men and women perform *sangoma* music. Despite this fact, most of the *Izangoma* found in *Bukalanga* are women. These *Izangoma* attend to sick people through singing, asking for the healing power from the ancestors as well. It is through these songs that these *Izangoma* (traditional healers/diviners) have special powers to identify the source of misfortunes, diseases and other negative things afflicting an individual. According to one of my informants, Mr. Mbulawa, in the past, when the *Izangoma* visited a certain family to heal someone, anybody sick from the neighbourhood was allowed to attend for free treatment. There is singing, hand clapping, drumming and dancing in *sangoma* music. In most cases, the *Izangoma* in Botswana do not use drums, for reasons to which the author has not been alerted. However,



this is not the case with all *Izangoma*. When discussing this fact with one of my South African *Zulu* informants, Mr. Thulasizwe Nkabinde, he confirmed that the South African *Izangoma* use drums since they regard them to be therapeutic. Dancing is only performed by the *Izangoma* themselves. The rest of the people present at the scene clap, sing and respond to what the *sangoma* is saying. The *sangoma* normally shouts “*vumani madoda*”! The audience has to shout back by saying “*siya vuma*”. These slogans, coupled with strong answering from the audience, are believed to give the *Izangoma* more strength to dance more forcefully.

### BASIC SANGOMA THEMES

The image shows musical notation for four different parts of a sangoma theme, all in 4/4 time. The notation is as follows:

- Claps phrasing referent:** A single half note followed by a whole note.
- Torso:** A single half note followed by a whole note.
- Feet:** A sequence of four quarter notes.
- Density referent:** A sequence of four eighth notes, with the first two grouped by a bracket.

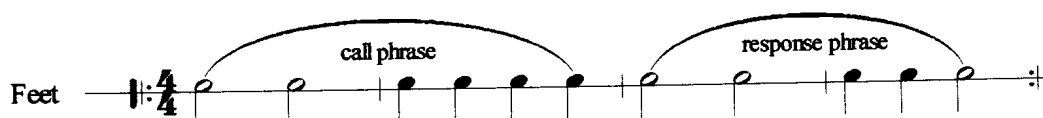
The notation is presented in two columns separated by a vertical line. The word "OR" is placed between the two columns. Below the density referent notation, there is a note: "(Density referent 4 x ♩)" followed by a musical symbol consisting of four eighth notes.

### SANGOMA (SEE VIDEO – SONG 2.1.1)

Clapping



### SANGOMA (SEE VIDEO – SONG 2.1.2)



### 7.2.3 MANTSHOMANE/MANCOMANE (MASHABI) MUSIC

*Bakalanga* practise *mantshomane* traditional dancing. When interviewed, they explained it was an intrusive culture from the Zimbabwean *Amandebele*. The *Bakalanga mantshomane* dance is not very different from that of the *sangomas*. The dressing is almost the same throughout, marked by *tshala/ndlukula* (ostrich feathers) on the forehead and a python vertebra crossing each shoulder down the waist. According to the *Bakalanga mantshomane* dancers, this type of music serves the same purpose of healing as that of the *Izangoma*. The *Bakalanga mantshomane* dance uses three drums like most of the dances in this tradition.

**Plate 28**



Basetse Mamu and the Jakalasi No. 2 Group Performing *Mantshomane* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

In actual fact, *mantshomane* is originally a *Tsonga* dance, which is used in the exorcism of the evil spirits, which are believed to “possess” certain of the *Tsonga* from time to time. The *woso* (*ndjele* - *Tsonga*) is used, with *mantshomane* drum, in the exorcism of evil spirits that are supposed to inflict certain unfortunate individuals.

**BASIC MANTSHOMANE THEMES**

(Density referent 4 x )

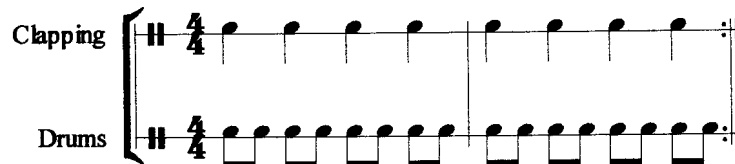


**MANTSHOMANE (SEE VIDEO - SONG 2.2.1)**

**MANTSHOMANE (SEE VIDEO - SONG 2.2.2)**

**MANTSHOMANE (SEE VIDEO - SONG 2.2.3)**

### **MANTSHOMANE (SEE VIDEO – SONG 2.2.4)**



The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Clapping' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Drums'. Both staves are in 4/4 time. The Clapping staff contains a sequence of eight quarter notes. The Drums staff contains a sequence of sixteen eighth notes, grouped into four pairs of eighth notes, each pair corresponding to a quarter note in the Clapping staff.

### **7.3 SUMMARY**

There are two types of *Bakalanga* ritual music: rain praying music and music for healing purposes. Rain praying music consists of *wosana* and *mayile* music, whilst healing music consists of *sangoma*, *mantshomane* and *mazenge*.

Rain praying music is prospering under the performance of the *Mwali* religious officials known as the *wosana*. *Wosana* music is performed by men and women, whilst *mayile* is performed by women only.

A *wosana* becomes *Mwali's* messenger through initiation. For a *wosana* to be initiated, it is believed that *Mwali* has chosen him/her. *Wosana* initiation is the only initiation allowed at the Njelele sacred place. Nthoi's research conducted on the initiation of the *wosana* at Njelele established that this is a private and secretive ritual to which no stranger is invited. The *wosana* initiation rite is the culmination of a whole series of events, which start with the affliction of the individual as a manifestation of his/her selection as a *wosana*. The initiation rite itself recognises the association between the *wosana* and *Banyantjaba*, the female manifestation of *Mwali*.

Different rituals are performed at different locations, which are not arbitrarily chosen. Failure to appreciate the value attached to a particular locality may inhibit the understanding of the ritual itself. The *wosana* initiation rite is carried out at a special place, slightly removed from the homestead, in the open countryside.



Underlying the *wosana* initiation ritual is the juxtaposition between the coolness of *Banyantjaba* and the heat of the land. It is also insisted that the bowl and bucket for drawing and carrying the ritual water should have had no contact with fire. In this rite, therefore, *Banyantjaba* does not only cover (takes over), but also cools the body of the initiate.

*Mwali* is associated with the mountains and high places. The rain that he gives his people, and that cools the land, comes from the sky.

This chapter also covers *wosana* music under the sub-headings of *wosana* songs, *wosana* dancers (performers), *wosana* costume (past and present) and instruments. Traditional music for healing purposes is discussed under the three sub-headings of *mazenge*, *sangoma* and *mantshomane*.

## CHAPTER 8

### BAKALANGA MUSIC FOR ENTERTAINMENT

*Bakalanga* entertainment music is as follows: *ndazula*, *mukomoto*, *woso*, *iperu*, *tjikitja/tshikitsha*, *bhoro* and *ncuzu*.

#### 8.1 TRADITIONAL MUSIC FOR HAPPY OCCASIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT

There are seven main types of *Bakalanga* happy occasion and entertainment music: *ndazula*, *mukomoto*, *woso*, *iperu*, *tjikitja/tshikitsha*, *bhoro* and *ncuzu*. Men and women perform *ndazula*, *mukomoto*, *woso*, *tjikitja/tshikitsha*, *bhoro* and *ncuzu*. *Iperu* is only meant to be performed by young men and women. Nowadays, since boys and girls lack interest in traditional music, *Bakalanga* elderly women perform *iperu* to preserve culture.

While both men and women sing, another vocal style, called *pululudza* (ululate), is exclusively the province of women. It is an expression of approval or encouragement for all the performers and it adds to the excitement of the music. In response to the ululation, participants put more of themselves into whatever part they are playing in the total music event. The counterpart of ululation for men, a powerful, rhythmic dental whistle called *nlidzo*, is also heard periodically throughout the music.

##### 8.1.1 NDAZULA MUSIC

*Ndazula* music is normally performed when there is good harvest. This is happy music also performed on occasions such as *bukwe* (engagements), *ndobolo* (marriages), *ndale* (beer drinking sessions) and other feasts that are meant to praise the *Bakalanga* people. The most effective occasion on which *ndazula* music is performed is after a good harvest.

In the past there was a short growing crop called *lukwezha* (finger millet) in the *Ikalanga* language, specially grown for traditional beer brewing. When there was a good harvest, *ndale* (traditional beer) would be brewed from the *lukwezha* crop. The purpose of this was for elderly people to rejoice and show appreciation to the ancestors for this good harvest. During the day, these people would be drinking traditional beer without much singing. *Ndazula* songs were meant to be sung after supper. This was done at this time to allow children to go to bed so that adults could sing these songs, some of which are metaphorically vulgar, with freedom. It is permissible to sing abusive songs about named members of the group, whose conduct is deemed unsatisfactory.

These songs also have a high degree of sexual jargon referring to both men and women. This jargon does not imply that there is a fight or some form of misunderstanding. This is carried out in a happy, descriptive, provocative mood between men and women. None of the two parties would be offended since they know the intention of the songs. It is from these types of musical sessions that creative singers and dancers would be identified.

*Ndazula* songs also carry important messages in addition to the vulgar jargon. When *ndale* (traditional beer) was tasty, *ndazula* songs were performed to express happiness and appreciation to the brewer who is always a woman. In the *Ikalanga* culture, traditional beer brewing is a woman's job.

#### 8.1.1.1 NDAZULA DANCERS (PERFORMERS)

Despite the fact that men and women perform *ndazula* songs, it is evident that men take the lead. Women mostly do drumming and hand clapping. Men, depicting what wealth they have, especially cattle, would perform some songs. This would be demonstrated by shaping cattle horns through hand movements. In cases where a cow was slaughtered, real horns were used for *ndazula* dance as demonstrated below.



**Plate 29**



Botlhe Madala of Mulambakwena performing *ndazula* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

Because *ndazula* music is initiated by beer drinking sessions, there is no special costume for it. Anybody can appear the way they came dressed from their homes in their normal clothes. In most cases, it becomes interesting when men are putting on their boots. The excitement arises when they jump up and strike their boots together, imitating *ncuzu* dancers.

*Ndazula* singing involves a limited number of instruments. It has two drums of different sizes and pitch (*matumba mabili a singa lizane*), *woso* (hand rattles) and *pemba* (referees whistle) that acts as an accompaniment. The two drums are beaten at a slow speed to



determine the tempo of *ndazula* music. In situations where drums are not available, improvised materials such as tins are beaten on.

#### 8.1.1.2 THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF DROUGHT AND TECHNOLOGY MECHANISATION ON *NDAZULA* MUSIC PERFORMANCE

*Lukwezha* (finger millet) has been gradually replaced by sorghum for traditional beer brewing. Nowadays African traditional beer is mostly brewed from sorghum. Ladies no longer have an opportunity of enjoying pounding of *lukwezha* or sorghum accompanied by rhythmic singing as it used to be in the past. Grinding machines have taken over this activity.

Drought that continued for years in Botswana also had a negative effect on traditional beer brewing. People do not produce enough crops to brew traditional beer. As a result, modern breweries have taken over the task of traditional beer brewing. Nowadays, people go to *chibuku* depots to buy this traditional beer. In the past, they used to drink at their homes, brewing beer in family turns. In these drinking sessions, people used to sing and rejoice together. Apparently, stereos and jukeboxes have replaced this singing.

#### Plate 30



Mr. Maphane Mukhopo with a box of *chibuku* beer in his hand

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

While other people enjoyed *Ikalanga* traditional beer supplied by the North East district Council Cultural Festival at Nlapkhwane village in 2001, Mr. Maphane Mukhopo was drinking his *chibuku* bought from a nearby depot, as can be seen in the above photograph.

At the modern *chibuku* depots, people have very little or no opportunity to sing traditional songs. *Chibuku* beer is expensive for the villagers who are mostly unemployed. So, it is not easy for one to get drunk and be merry to dance *ndazula* as it used to be in the past. It should also be noted that when elderly people are drunk and happy, they perform *ndazula* songs.

### BASIC NDAZULA THEMES

Drums  $\frac{4}{4}$

Drums  $\frac{4}{4}$

Drums (on viewer's right)  $\frac{4}{4}$

Drumming with embellishment  $\frac{4}{4}$

Claps (phrasing referent)  $\frac{4}{4}$

Other claps  $\frac{4}{4}$

(Density referent 4 x)

#### 8.1.2 MUKOMOTO MUSIC

*Mukomoto* is a happy type of music performed by men and women during occasions such as *bukwe* (engagements), *ndobolo* (marriages) and other feasts. This music is used for entertainment and most of the performers are women. *Mukomoto* music can also be used as a source of entertainment at beer drinking sessions. Other happy feasts that



*mukomoto* music is usually used at, are those of *Bakalanga* praises. *Mukomoto* is a fast type of music, comparable to *wosana* in speed.

Men and women perform *mukomoto* music. Normally men become very reluctant and women dominate the dancing. The costume for *mukomoto* music has no specific restrictions. The concerned dancers agree upon clothes. *Mukomoto* performers also put on *mishwayo* (a type of leg rattles).

**Plate 31**



Ndziili Ntogwa of Ramokgwebana Performing *mukomoto* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at the North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

The performers of *mukomoto* use three drums of different sizes. In cases where performers run short of drums, two are acceptable even though the effect would not be the same. *Mishwayo* (leg rattles) and *pemba*

(referees whistle) are also used as rhythmic accompaniments for *mukomoto* music. The dancer, who is also the lead singer for that particular song, blows the whistle.

### BASIC MUKOMOTO THEMES

Drums

Claps  
(Phrasing referent)

Dancing and rattles

Foot patterns

Foot patterns

Rattle patterns

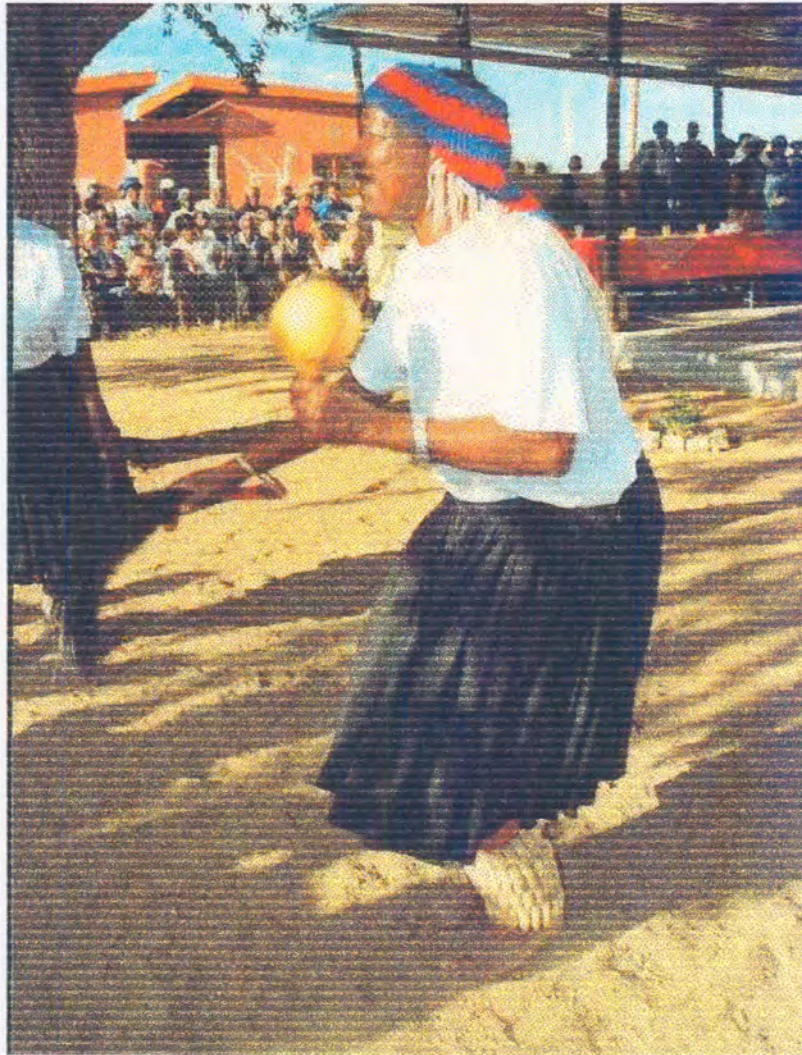
(Density referent 4 x p)

#### 8.1.3 WOSO MUSIC

This music is meant to entertain people in happy occasions such as *bukwe* (engagements), *ndobolo* (marriages) and *ndale* (beer drinking sessions). *Woso* music is sometimes played to entertain people at *wosana* ritual dances. *Malombe* - plural/*lombe* for one (praise-singers) who are *woso*, sometimes lead *wosana*-dancing groups when they enter the dancing ground. These dancers also entertain the audience when *wosana* have their resting breaks.



**Plate 32**



Makwala Stanley Seleka of Letsholathebe performing *woso* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

The main dancers of *woso* music are men with their hand-held rattles, also called *woso*. This rattle is traditionally made of a hollowed gourd with hard seeds or stones inside. It is sometimes called *lende*. Women are occupied with drum beating, hand clapping, singing and ululating. There are three drums of different sizes and pitch in *woso* music. Leg rattles are another percussive instrument used. The concerned singers decide upon *woso* music uniform. In *woso* music, the lead singer would be creative and just sing about what is happening in that area.

It is true with *woso* that, in traditional songs, the words seem to take precedence over the tune. The good lead singer is the one who does not have to repeat words he/she has already sung. Instead, he goes on improvising new words, which closely fit the pattern of the singing and also make musical sense. Because of this practice, the melodic line does not receive the attention it deserves, and very often the same type of short phrases are repeated time after time, without the melody developing any further.

### BASIC WOSO THEMES

The musical notation consists of six staves, each representing a different rhythmic element of the *woso* theme. All staves are in 12/8 time. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, often grouped together to show specific rhythmic motifs.

(Density referent 12 x )

#### 8.1.4 IPERU MUSIC

*Iperu* music is meant for entertainment on occasions such as *bukwe* (engagements), *ndobolo* (marriages) and *ndale* (beer drinking sessions). There is drumming, hand clapping, singing and dancing in *iperu* music.



The main aim of iperu music is young men and women's evening games in the moonlight. "As a social activity, dance brings men and women of marriageable age together" (Kebede 1982:102). Young people perform this music after finishing the household chores such as cooking and dish washing. These teenagers meet at their chosen playing area from different families. They make two lines, one for boys and the other one for girls. These two groups face each other to start playing and singing. The leading young woman sings and blows a whistle while the rest respond. Young men answer by producing frog-like sounds or overtones. These two groups sing, provoking each other. In most cases young men and young women from these groups ended up getting married. Since young men and women nowadays lack interest in performing *iperu* music, old ladies have taken over the event to preserve the *Ikalanga* culture as can be seen below

**Plate 33**



Mapoka village *tjilenje* group performing *iperu* dance.

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

Here is an example of their song:

**SONG TITLE: TJIBHAKE**

Call: *Wa tola uwe nga tole wole* -- The one who takes his/hers should take

Response: *Tibone wa tola* – For us to see who has taken

Call: *Wa tola hema towo seka* – If you take a fool we will laugh

Response: *Tibone wa tola* – For us to see who has taken

Call: *Wa tola gamu tjilengwe* – The one who takes a relative is a fool

Response: *Tibone wa tola* – For us to see who has taken

Call: *Wa tola hema towo seka* – If you take a fool we will laugh

Response: *Tibone wa tola* – For us to see who has taken

Call: *Wa tola gamu tjilengwe* – The one who has taken a relative is stupid

Response: *Tibone wa tola* – For us to see who has taken

Call: *Tjibhako* – Snuff container!

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush

Call: *Tjibhako!* – Snuff container

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush

Call: *Tjibhako* – Snuff container!

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush

Call: *Tjibhako* – Snuff container!



Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It (snuff container) has fallen into the bush

Call: *Tjibhako tjangu banana* – My snuff container oh girls!

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko baisana tja wila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush boys it has fallen into the bush

Call: *Tjibhako tjangu banana* – My snuff container oh girls!

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko baisana tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush it has fallen in the bush

Call: *Tjibhako tjangu banana* – My snuff container oh girls

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko baisana tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush boys it has fallen in the bush

Call: *Mu jokotjoko baisana* – In the bush boys

Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko baisana tja wila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen into the bush boys it has fallen in the bush

Call & Response: *Tjawila mu jokotjoko* – It has fallen in the bush.

*Iperu* is similar to a *Xhosa* dance called *intlombe*. *Intlombe* dance-songs are meant for marriageable young men and women. These dance songs show the change in attitude, for these are young adults of marriageable age. The two-part structure is still discernible, but the style of movement is different. The men keep their feet fairly close together, lifting their heels, using their knees to feel every nuance of rhythm. The young women remain on the outside of the circle, the young men inside (Honore 1988: 14-21).

Blacking in Malan (1982:460-461) has this to say about the *Venda* people music, which is also similar to *iperu*. On moonlight nights during autumn and winter, and especially during “the time of staying home” (*madzula-haya*), unmarried people of both sexes come together to dance

on an open piece of ground. The dances are known by different names, according to the areas in which they are performed. They may be called *dzhombo*, *nzekenzeke*, *tshinzerere* or *tshifase* (a *Tsonga* word). It is surprising that they are most popular in areas where *Tsonga* live amongst the *Venda*, because the *Tsonga* prefer to settle in flat, open country, which is ideal for this type of dance. One is inevitably reminded of the similar scene depicted by the song, “Boys and girls come out to play”. Drums are not used. Hand-claps and the foot-stamps of the dancers accompany songs. Boys stand opposite girls and at some distance from them. One of them dances out and touches a girl, who then dances back with the boy and touches another boy; this boy dances out with the girl whilst the first boy takes his place with the other boys. The dance continues in this fashion and boys and girls naturally like to touch a partner in whom they are interested, as they can dance provocatively close to each other while moving from one group to the other.

Blacking goes on to say that the songs are rhythmically and melodically more advanced than the children’s songs proper, though their texts are brief and repetitive. Their brevity gives young people an opportunity to try improvising new words to the basic pattern. They may attempt no more than repeating the names of persons and places, but it is good training in the art of fitting words to a given pattern. When they dance, they must stamp and jump in time to the rhythms in the same way that adults dance to beer-songs. Thus the play-dances lead a *Venda* child towards mastery of the techniques, and appreciation of the ethos of adult music. An evening of dancing is sometimes enlivened or terminated by a musical game. There are little songs that accompany the antics of people in various types of disguise, or a game in which boys tie ambers to their limbs and then dance in the dark.

### BASIC *IPERU* THEMES

Drums

Audible drum pattern

Claps

Pulse  
Body movement of  
clapping persons

Whistle patterns

Whistle

(Density referent 12 x ♩)

#### 8.1.5 *TSHIKITSHA/TJIKITJA* MUSIC

The statement below was made when the *Amandebele* were following the *Bakalanga* at Dokonobe Mountains during their fightings:

So the Ndebele stayed at the foot of the mountain, eating, drinking being without cares; dancing, also dancing for those of their home a Ndebele dance (called “Zwichikicha”) (Wentzel 1983a: 265).

*Tshikitsha* is another entertainment music from the *Isindebele* culture. *Bakalanga* sing *tshikitsha* songs when they are taking a bride (*nlongo*) to her place of marriage (*njimbo dzi no kotosa nlongo*). This music depicts some *Bakalanga* traditional chores the bride is expected to perform at her place of marriage. Such activities include sweeping with a bunch of grass, which is a typical traditional *Bakalanga* broom. A bride in the *Bakalanga* traditional culture is expected to sweep the whole yard every morning before people wake up. She is also expected



to make fire and warm up water for the whole family to bath. So these are some of the activities demonstrated in *tshikitsha* music. Women dancing *tshikitsha* music are easily recognised by their multicoloured sashes across shoulders. In the *Bakalanga* culture, such a sash is a sign of respect to either a daughter-in-law (*nlongo*) or a son-in-law (*nkwasha*).

*Tshikitsha* dancers put on different coloured sashes, which are a sign of respect to either the daughter-in-law or son-in-law.

**Plate 34**



Basetse Mamu of Jakalasi No. 2 Performing *tshikitsha* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001



### BASIC TSHIKITSHA THEMES

Claps 1

Claps 2

Foot pattern

Dance steps

Hops or skips

(Density referent 4x  $\bullet$ )

### TSHIKITSHA CLAP THEME (SEE VIDEO SONG - SHELENI)

Clapping

introductory theme

main theme

#### 8.1.6 BHORO MUSIC

In some villages, the San used to live side by side with the *Bakalanga*. According to the elders of villages, their songs and dances mingled (Waters 2000:32).

*Bhoro* is an intrusive traditional music practised by the *Bakalanga*. It is a San culture. San sing *bhoro* songs when they are satisfied from lots of milk at the cattle post. They also sing these songs when they are drunk and happy. One of the informants, Reverend M. Mothibi, explained that *bhoro* music is for entertainment as well as for praising the San's Supreme Deity called *Toro*. Another informant, Ms. Mavis Mlilo of Dingumuzi Primary School in Plumtree (Zimbabwe), gave an additional view of *bhoro* dancing. In *bhoro* dance, each man dances in front of his wife to avoid interference with each other's wives after drinking, as it is common with the San people. This fact also confirms the past presence of *bhoro* music, even though it is now obsolete in Zimbabwe.

**Plate 35**



Pole village group performing *bhoro* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at The North East District Council Annual Cultural Festival held at Nlapkhwane village in May 2001

*Bakalanga* traditional music groups have no full knowledge of *bhoro*. For instance, the San put on their costume called *misubelo* (animal skins covering the bottom part of the body) when they dance. This attire is made from animal skins. *Bakalanga*, on the other hand, dress normally when performing *bhoro* music. The San use *zwingwango* (concussion plagues of iron) instead of hand clapping. In the absence of these short hoes, San use *zwikei* (cattle yokes). In performing *bhoro* music, *Bakalanga* use hand clapping only as an accompaniment.

### BASIC BHORO THEMES

Drumming  $\frac{12}{8}$

Claps 1 Pulse  $\frac{12}{8}$

Claps 2  $\frac{12}{8}$

Dances  $\frac{12}{8}$   
RT W RT RT W RT LT Hop RT LT W LT RT W LT LT Hop LT

Dances  $\frac{12}{8}$   
R R L L R R

Dances  $\frac{12}{8}$   
R R R L L L

Dances  $\frac{12}{8}$   
R L R L R L

Key:  
RT: right toes  
LT: left toes  
W: Walk  
R: right  
L: left

(Density referent 12 x  $\text{♪}$ )



### 8.1.7 NCUZU/MASKHUKHU (GUMBOOT DANCE-ISICATHULO) MUSIC

*Ncuzu* is another type of entertainment music, mainly danced by men. This music was practised among the *Bakalanga* of North Eastern Botswana, adopted from the *Amandebele* people of neighbouring Zimbabwe. It is now becoming obsolete. However, a similar dance called *phatisi* is flourishing in Kweneng District of Botswana. Unlike other types of entertainment musical styles that are being revived through cultural festivals, *maskhukhu* has not taken off the ground. *Ncuzu* music is predominantly a men's dance with women responding to the men's call, through singing, drumming and hand clapping. Women also shake their shoulders and breasts vigorously (*tshitshimba-Isindebele*) to encourage/excite the men to dance more lively. Nowadays, there are very few men taking part in *Bakalanga* traditional music. This is either because they are shy to perform indigenous songs, or because of being occupied with other forms of work, most probably in towns removed from their home setting, or because they are not interested in taking part at all. Performance of *maskhukhu* music might also have been affected by the absence of traditional beer (*Ndale*) brewing and drinking sessions as it used to be the case in the past. Men usually performed *maskhukhu* music after the excitement during these traditional beer-drinking sessions.

There are several elements of gumboot dance that are characteristic of precolonial *Nguni* music and dance practices. These include: the call-and-response interaction between dance teams and within the teams, as it occurs between individual dancers (this is particularly so in the improvised solos that team members perform). This shows the importance of audience community support in performance (drawn from both traditional and minstrel performance) and the manner in which gumboot dance engages with, and is constituted from, the substance of everyday life and experience (Muller 1999: 93).



During his field work, the author of this document had an opportunity of meeting one *ncuzu* dancer by the name of Mr. Caiphaz Thusani at Jakalasi No. 2 village. Mr. Thusani was born in the year 1936 in Bulilima-Mangwe District (Matabeleland South Province) of Zimbabwe. A farmer called Malingers owned the place he was born at. This place was popularly known as Home Farmer. Mr. Thusani started dancing *ncuzu/maskhukhu* when he was a young boy. Being given tickets after dancing in stokfels motivated him. The more coins thrown, the better the spectacle. The practice of throwing money has a long tradition in black performance culture. Mr Thusani came to reside in Botswana in 1947 after the death of his father in Zimbabwe in 1946. He worked in Johannesburg for forty two years. He was residing at Montgomery Park where he acquired skills in performing different types of music such as *marabi*, *kwela*, *bump jive* and *ncuzu* (gumboot dance).

The author finds it necessary to explain what stokfel means to the reader of this document. According to Coplan (1985: 102), the term stokfel appears to derive from the rotating cattle auctions or “stockfairs” of English settlers in the Eastern Cape during the nineteenth century. Cattle had been a principal form of currency in precolonial South African societies, serving, like cash, as a standard of value, a store of wealth, and a medium of exchange. Cape Africans brought the stokfel to Johannesburg, where the word came to refer to small rotating credit associations based on African principles of social and economic cooperation.

Coplan goes on to say stokfels were and are credit rings in which each member contributes a set amount each week in anticipation of receiving the combined contributions of all the other members at regular intervals. Commonly, each member in her turn uses the lump sum she receives to finance a stokfel party, at which other members and guests pay admission and buy food and liquor and even enjoy musical entertainment. Profits go to the hostess of the week.

For most *Bhaca* migrants to eGoli, the City of Gold, work and leisure were continually controlled by structures of authority and surveillance in the form of mine bosses, managers and police. In this context, all space was public. There was little room for individual expression or privacy. The nature of this experience gave rise to the particular aesthetic of gumboot dance performance, regardless of who now performs the dance (Muller 1999: 91).

The gumboot style of dance draws on a variety of dance sources: *Bhaca* traditional dances such as *ngoma*; minstrel performance; popular social dances such as those that accompanied jazz music performance in the 1930s and 40s. The jitterbug, for example, and most obviously, the tap dance popularised through films of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. Gumboot dancers may have been influenced by touring black tap dance groups (Muller 1999: 100).

Erlmann (1991: 99-100) argues that *isicathulo* or gumboot dance was developed around mission stations in KwaZulu Natal with the introduction of footgear to African peoples by missionaries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Muller 1999: 92).

*Isicathulo* means shoe, boot or sandal; it also refers to a boot dance performed by young boys since the first contact with Europeans (Muller 1999: 94).

In their search for aesthetic models and expressions of self-conscious urban status, workers first became interested in the dances and songs developed in and around the mission stations. Interestingly, it was on rural mission stations that *isicathulo*, one of the first urban working-class dance forms, developed. Tracey maintains that the original *isicathulo* dance was “performed by *Zulu* pupils at a certain mission where the authorities had banned the local country dances”. The name *isicathulo*, “shoe”, “boot” or “sandal”, reflects the introduction of footgear at the missions, the sharp sound of boots and clicking of the heels contrasted with the muffled thud of bare feet in more rural dances such as *indlamu-Zulu* (Erlmann 1991: 99).

Coplan (1985: 78) argues that schools picked up new urban influenced rural dances, even though missionaries forbade them. One such dance, *is'cathulo* ("shoe") was adopted by students in Durban; from there it spread to dock workers who produced spectacular rhythmic effects by slapping and pounding their rubber Wellington boots in performance. All this rhythm made it popular with mine and municipal labourers elsewhere, especially Johannesburg. There it became the "gumboot" dance, divided into a series of routines and accompanied by a rhythm guitar. By 1919, gumboot had filtered back into school concerts. It soon became a standard feature of urban African variety entertainment, and a setting for satirising characters and scenes drawn from African worklife.

What clearly distinguishes all gumboot dance from earlier rural practices is its use of footgear for its performance. Precolonial dance forms are generally thought to have been performed barefoot. One *Zulu* name given to gumboot dance, *isicathulo*, provides the first indication of innovation. The root of the word *cathama* means to walk softly, quietly and stealthily. It has been incorporated into two kinds of black performance culture in South Africa: *isicathamiya* and *isicathulo*. The first is the style of music and dance performance recently made famous by Joseph Shabalala and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. In this context it means to walk softly and stealthily, like a cat. The second refers to the opposite, gumboot dance, which is characterised by louder stepping in gumboots, the clapping of hands and slapping of the boots (Muller 1999:93).

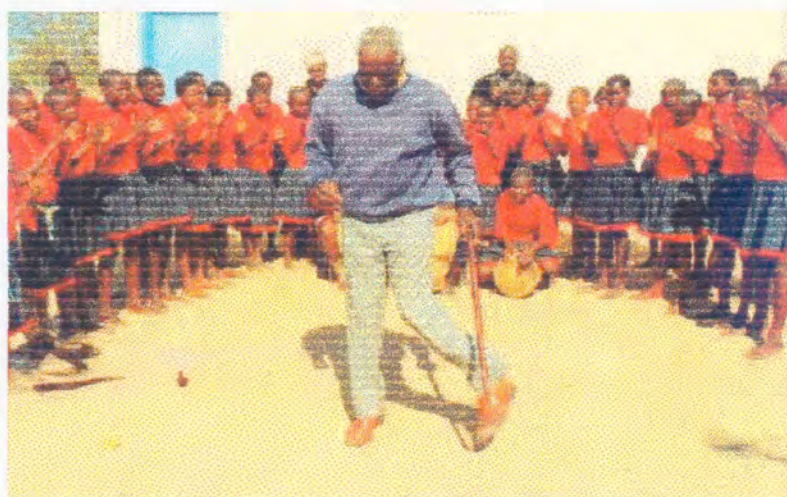
Perhaps the most revealing source, however, is the dance as practised by these older *Bhaca* dancers and transmitted to their sons in KwaZulu Natal. Unlike the autonomy of many dance forms in the Western world, gumboot dance engages and comments on the exigencies of everyday experience in mine culture (Muller 1999: 98).



During the researcher's visit to the Jakalasi No. 2 Primary school traditional dancing troupe, he also arranged to meet Mr. Caiphas Thusani for a *ncuzu/maskhukhu* dance oral interview. Currently Mr. Thusani is a farmer in his home village of Jakalasi No. 2. He does not have any permanent group to dance with. He normally dances to entertain people in local village ceremonies such as weddings and other community related happy gatherings. According to Mr. Thusani's experience, whenever he dances, his audience appreciates his presence and they sing, drum and clap hands for him (i.e. acting as his supportive singing group).

During his meeting for an interview at Jakalasi No. 2 Primary school, Mr. Thusani took advantage of the school traditional dancing troupe to sing, drum and clap hands for him while he performed his *ncuzu* dance. This group was with its leader (Basetse Mamu) who is also a local parent in this village. She had also come for the interviews concerning *wosana* music she is teaching to the school-dancing troupe. The group sang one *wosana* song which Mr. Thusani took advantage of to display his *ncuzu* dance skills. Occasionally, he punctuated his movement by hitting his boots together at the ankles in a quick rhythmic pattern.

**Plate 36**



Mr. Caiphas Thusani of Jakalasi No. 2 village performing *ncuzu* dance

Photographed by Moleti Selete with the author on a field trip at Jakalasi No. 2 Primary School in May 2001



## 8.2 SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on *Bakalanga* entertainment music. For entertainment, *Bakalanga* use the following types of music: *Ndazula*, *mukomoto*, *woso*, *iperu*, *tshikitsha*, *bhoro* and *ncuzu*.

Adults during beer drinking sessions, engagements and weddings perform *ndazula*, *mukomoto* and *woso* music types for entertainment. Both men and women perform *ndazula*. *mukomoto* music is dominated by women and *woso* music by men.

*Iperu* music is used for beer drinking, engagements and weddings. The main aim of *iperu* music is to bring young men and women of marriageable age together. This music is carried out in the form of evening dances and games in the moonlight.

*Tshikitsha*, *ncuzu* and *bhoro* are believed by *Bakalanga* to be intrusive cultures. *Tshikitsha* and *ncuzu* (*isicathulo*) are from the *Amandebele* of neighbouring Zimbabwe whilst *bhoro* is from the local San people.

*Bakalanga* sing *tshikitsha* music during beer drinking sessions (*ndale*), engagements (*bukwe*) and weddings (*ndobolo*). *Tshikitsha* music is actually meant to be sung when taking a bride (*nlongo*) to her place of marriage. When singing *tshikitsha* music, performers depict some *Bakalanga* traditional chores the bride is expected to carry out at her place of marriage.

*Ncuzu* (*isicathulo*) is another entertainment music type *Bakalanga* adopted from the *Amandebele* of Zimbabwe. This music is believed to be originally from the *Zulus* of Natal in South Africa. Because of lack of practice, *ncuzu* music is becoming obsolete among the *Bakalanga* people.

*Bhoro* is an intrusive culture among the *Bakalanga* from the Botswana San people. Even though *Bakalanga* use *bhoro* music for entertainment, the San use it for different purposes. The San sing *bhoro* music when they are satisfied from lots of milk at the cattle post. They also sing *bhoro* songs

when they are drunk and happy. The San sing *bhoro* music when praising their Supreme Deity called *Toro*.

Despite the origins and differences in these seven musical types, *Bakalanga* use them all for entertainment.

## CHAPTER 9

### RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS OF THIS STUDY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Since Botswana was a British Protectorate for eighty-one years, it is of both the African and the Western world. It has its feet in both cultures. It is, however, not a cultural outpost of Europe, and maintains cultural traditions that are unique to its people.

#### 9.1 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS OF THIS STUDY

The main question on which this study is based was asked in Chapter 1 section 1.2:

Why is *Bakalanga* indigenous music still only practised in communities, and/or used in formal institutions/institutional contexts as a form of entertainment?

Indigenous music in Botswana is still used as a form of entertainment because people seem not to be seeing its importance. They still think western music is more superior than indigenous music. After Botswana's independence in 1966, *Ikalanga* speaking was forbidden in schools and other official places. As a result of this deprivation in cultural democracy, *Bakalanga* traditional culture in general started not being practised effectively. This was a result of Botswana's post-independence idealism against the so-called minority tribes. Since language and culture are inseparable from music, the forbidding of *Ikalanga* affected the continuity in performing *Bakalanga* traditional music.

Related to this major question, are the following sub-questions in connection with *Bakalanga* traditional music.

- Is data on *Bakalanga* traditional music available?

Information that was obtained on *Bakalanga* music came from different sources ranging from people in villages through oral interviews, questionnaires, video recordings and tape recordings. Some music types were notated during this process for use by present and future generations.

- Why does the community at large treat *Bakalanga* indigenous music as an entertainment activity?

Music in Botswana as a whole is not a teaching subject in government Primary schools/Setswana medium schools, as stated in Chapter one. Out of a large number of Community Junior Secondary Schools in Botswana, only fifteen have been selected for music pilot teaching. Besides lack of class music teaching in these two categories of schooling, which is the focus of this study, *Bakalanga* traditional music in North Eastern Botswana is only practised as an extra-curricular activity. It is the responsibility of one or two teachers who are responsible for the school traditional dancing troupe in each school. Since *Ikalanga* is not an official language in Botswana, schools and communities have also been discouraged from practising *Ikalanga* music in schools.

- What are the views and attitudes of parents towards indigenous music being brought into the classroom?

Since Botswana is a multicultural country, parents' views are widely divided. The *Ikalanga* speaking parents are very interested to see their traditional music being part of the school curriculum. The non-*Ikalanga* speaking parents are against this view. The second category of parents is backed by the Botswana constitution, which classifies the country's languages as major or minor. Besides this fact, Botswana as a whole has not perceived traditional music as music that can be formally taught in the classroom. Parents assume that



since traditional music is practised within the daily activities of the community, everybody can do it, hence finding no need for its classroom teaching. Most parents still perceive choral singing and Western music teaching as the only music suitable for classroom teaching. In the true sense, the western notation system and all that it stands for should be used as a point of departure in the teaching of theoretical aspects of African music.

- What *Bakalanga* musical activities are currently taking place within the North Eastern Botswana communities?

The North East District Council through the Department of Social and Community Development started annual *Bakalanga* traditional festivals in 1994 that are held on every 21<sup>st</sup> of May. This activity has been currently handed over to the Department of Culture and Youth of the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs.

Most of the villages in North Eastern Botswana have *Bukalanga* traditional dancing troupes specialising in different types of *Bakalanga* music. They meet in different villages on an annual rotational basis to compete in *Bakalanga* traditional music and traditional dishes (food types). In these competitions, traditional music groups and individual traditional dish competitors are adjudicated for first, second and third prize.

- What is the relationship between Botswana *Bakalanga* music and that of Zimbabwe and the *Amandebele* people?

Through his research, the author of this document found that *Bakalanga* of Botswana and Zimbabwe practise the same traditional music. Both *Bakalanga* of Botswana and Zimbabwe have three categories of music: Rain Praying, Healing and Entertainment music. Songs sung by these two groups of people mainly contain two languages, *Ikalanga* and *Isindebele*. Traditional music of these two groups is further strengthened by their joint annual *wosana*

ceremonies carried out at one place called Njelele in the Matopo hills in Zimbabwe.

- What *Bakalanga* musical activities are currently taking place within the North Eastern Botswana communities?

*Bakalanga* of North Eastern Botswana hold annual rain prayers at the *Gumbu* in Mapoka and Ramokgwebana villages that end up at Njelele in Zimbabwe. They also hold annual cultural music festivals every 21<sup>st</sup> of May that started in 1994 which also rotate with villages. School children include *Bakalanga* songs in their annual traditional music competitions.

- What role does *Bakalanga* traditional music play in the *Bukalanga* cultural activities such as Rain Praying, Healing and Entertainment?

There are annual rain praying ceremonies held in Botswana around September. Groups from both countries further jointly hold them at the *Mwali* “headquarters” (Njelele) in Zimbabwe. There are also *sangomas* who use their music for healing purposes in North Eastern Botswana. Other community activities such as beer drinking sessions and weddings are marked by *Bakalanga* traditional music for entertainment.

## 9.2 FINDINGS

These findings were drawn up after attending a number of the North East District Council cultural festivals. A follow up of obtaining the annual festival minutes was very useful in determining these findings.

Through involvement with this study, the writer observed that there are three main categories of *Bakalanga* traditional music namely:

- Music for Rain Praying

*Wosana* and *Mayile*

➤ Music for Healing

*Mazenge, Mantshomane and Sangoma*

➤ Music for Entertainment

*Ndazula, Mukomoto, Woso, Iperu, Tshikitsha, Bhoru and Ncuzu/ Maskhukhu.*

Twelve musical types amongst the *Bakalanga* were thus discovered through this research. However, not every village in the area practices all these twelve types. Certain villages specialise in different types as can be seen below from the cultural competition results of 2000, whereas other villages specialise in cultural dishes:

Results for 2000 *Ikalanga* traditional music held at Tshesebe Village in North Eastern Botswana;

➤ Rain Praying Music

*Wosana*

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> prize: Jakalasi No. 2 | 281 points |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: Ramokgwebana   | 279 points |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize: Ditladi        | 249 points |

*Mayile*

|                                      |            |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> prize: pole          | 175 points |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize: Mulambakwena: | 166 points |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize Masukwane:     | 161 points |

➤ Healing Music

*Sangoma*



1<sup>st</sup> prize: Ramokgwebana: 282 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Jakalasi No. 2: 257 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Ditladi: 251 points

*Mantshomane*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Ramokgwebana: 279 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Jakalasi No. 2: 275 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Ditladi: 245 points

➤ Entertainment Music

*Ndazula*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Mosojane: 271 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Pole: 267 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Kgari: 263 points

*Mukomoto*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Ramokgwebana: 263 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Kgari: 260 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Masukwane: 250 points

*Woso*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Jakalasi No. 2 270 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Tshesebe: 265 points

*Iperu*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Pole: 254 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Mapoka: 252 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Masukwane: 241 points

*Tshikitsha*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Ramokgwebana: 279 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Jakalasi No. 2: 271 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Tshesebe: 231 points

*Bhoro*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Pole: 193 points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Botalaote: 184 points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Nil

No group competed in *Ncuzu* music, as revealed from the above results.

Villages that did not participate in traditional music sent some representatives to participate in traditional dishes. The results can also be seen below:

Prizes were as follows:

*Shadza le Mathunde matjena* – Sorghum porridge

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Mpone Tabengwa: Sekakangwe

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Khungwani Bobi: Shashe Bridge

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Mbulo Thogo: Botalaote

*Shogwana* – Millet porridge

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Khungwani Bobi: Shashe Bridge

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Mbulo Thogo: Botalaote

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Ompeni Tabuthiwa: Kalakamati

*Tjimone* – No English equivalent found

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Mbulo Thogo: Botalaote

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Barei Hepu: Butale

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Monang Joba: Kalakamati

*Tjimone Tje Mathunde* – No English equivalent found

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Babatshi Masala: Makaleng

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Sefelani Masala: Makaleng

3<sup>rd</sup> prize; Goitshasiwang Motshabi: Makaleng

*Kendenge*

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Monang Joba: Kalakamati

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Ndu Seven: Kalakamati

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: J. Tshupoeng: Kalakamati

*Dhitima* – Pumpkin

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Babatshi Masala: Makaleng

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Sefelani Masala: Makaleng

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Sefelani Mojamela: Makaleng

*Bhobola* – Pumpkin leaves

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Sefelani Masala: Makaleng

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Babatshi Masala: Makaleng

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Mbulo Thogo: Botalaote

*Delele – Okra*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Monang Joba: Kalakamati

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Mbulo Thogo: Botalaote

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Sefelani Mojamela: Makaleng

*Manongo – Peanuts*

1<sup>st</sup> prize: K. Bubi: Shashe Bridge

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Mpome Tabengwa: Sekakangwe

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Balebi Blackie: Sekakangwe

*Dobi* – No english equivalent found

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Sefelani Masala: Makaleng

Prizes for both competitions were as follows:

Traditional dance

1<sup>st</sup> prize P60.00

2<sup>nd</sup> prize P50.00

3<sup>rd</sup> prize P40.00

Traditional dishes

1<sup>st</sup> prize P20.00

2<sup>nd</sup> prize P15.00

3<sup>rd</sup> prize P10.00.

*Mashonja* (mopane worms) is one of the *Bakalanga* traditional food types which no competitor brought to the competition.



## **9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations of this thesis are divided into three categories, namely education related, research related and media related.

### **9.3.1 EDUCATION RELATED**

Education related recommendations are further divided into pre-service and in-service.

Music pre-service training:

- Possibilities of using retired teachers and parents who are knowledgeable in traditional music as resource persons to conduct workshops for both schools and communities should be explored.
- Culture related thinking should be stimulated among parents, teachers and students towards indigenous music composers.
- There should be an establishment of “satellite” teaching programmes with parents and teachers rendering their services either free of charge, or for a small honorarium.
- An interdisciplinary studies subject for cultural studies and music education should be developed. This could promote a culturally relevant, sound music education programme with indigenous musical traditions forming the basis of educational programmes in all schools in Botswana. A variety of African cultures as well as Eastern and Western cultures exist in Botswana. It is therefore essential to be aware of all these cultures and to make provision for them in music education. The different cultures can learn from one another, and the use of many styles of music can enrich pupils’ musical experiences and understanding,
- When it comes to changing the approach to music education in primary or secondary level schools, people who are going to do it

have to be taken into consideration. In other words, it has to be started at the tertiary level, training teachers in a new manner.

- Song books with indigenous songs that are representative of the many different languages in Botswana should be compiled for use in the classroom. This will encourage music educators to use music/songs of different cultural groups in music education wherever they are in Botswana as is suggested in the Community Junior Secondary Schools (CJSS) syllabus. A multicultural approach would make it clear that a wide variety of music should be brought into the classroom. In the selection of the teaching content the criteria of each music tradition should be used and the idea that specific music traditions are better than others, be rejected.
- Many more guidance and support systems are needed to assist teachers in the teaching of African and Western music side by side in organised lessons. As many music teachers in Botswana are mostly familiar with the tonic solfa system of notation, it is desirable to notate songs in staff notation as well as tonic solfa. Some teachers may find themselves insufficiently skilled in reading staff notation and may be unable to use the wealth of African song material in staff notation.
- In addition to the fifteen music teaching pilot Community Junior Secondary Schools, more schools should absorb the currently trained (degree holders) music teachers. Some music teachers who were trained at the Universities of Pretoria and Natal in South Africa are presently not teaching music. This is because the fifteen music pilot schools could not accommodate them all.
- School teachers are encouraged to use information in this thesis for their learning and teaching situations.

Music in-service training courses for serving teachers and college lecturers:

- Teachers and lecturers already in service need to be constantly helped in music through in-service training courses that may be facilitated by music subject advisors, universities and other stakeholders.
- The Ministry of Education through its various sections should bear the cost of such in-service courses and workshops. Cheaper venues such as colleges, Education Centres and other government places should be used.
- Part time and full-time programmes such as Further Diploma of Music Education can be obtained by serving teachers from institutions like the University of Pretoria. This might be another way of recruiting more music teachers to specialise in music teaching.
- With the introduction of indigenous music into schools, instruments unfamiliar to the teacher, using unfamiliar playing techniques may now be introduced into the classroom. The teacher may be required to teach African drumming and interpret drum notation. With ever-increasing financial restraints and larger classes, the teacher may have to be skilled in the making of simpler, cheaper traditional instruments.

### **9.3.2 RESEARCH RELATED**

- Identify knowledgeable persons in the construction and playing of indigenous instruments, i. e. both children and adults.
- Carry out further research and documentation of Botswana traditional music types.
- Investigate the relationship of *Bakalanga* traditional music with other tribes such as the *Shona*, *Venda*, *Zulu* and *Ndebele*.
- Develop music research and publication habits among college lecturers. College lecturers should be encouraged to involve themselves in music research within their colleges. The research

findings should be shared among the institutions and may also be published in music journals.

- Undertake further research on indigenous music in *Bukalanga* and the rest of Botswana.

### **9.3.3 MEDIA RELATED**

The active participation of newspapers, radio broadcasting and television in the development of traditional music would be one of the ways of keeping musical traditions alive.

## **9.4 CONCLUSIONS**


The diversity of *Bakalanga* musical styles reflects a diversity that underlies the apparent homogeneity of the *Bakalanga* culture, and expresses the cleavages and alignments in the *Bukalanga* society, and hence both the historical process which has brought them about, and their meaning in contemporary *Bakalanga* life.

The impact of *Bakalanga* music on its audiences depends as much on its social significance as on the music itself. The expressive meaning of the same song may vary from one occasion to another.

*Bakalanga* music is always a language of communication and not just an expression of form. The content of the music is social, and the form expresses this content most adequately: the music has the greatest impact on those to whom the social content is most meaningful. *Bakalanga* mostly sing about events related to a particular type of music. For example, in *wosana* music which is meant for rain praying, the lyrics are rain oriented.

Nobody is excluded from music making in the *Bukalanga* society, except by virtue of membership of the “wrong” social group. *Bakalanga* sing *Ikalanga* and *Isindebele* songs or a mixture of the two languages. This is



due to the Njelele sacred  al joint ceremony held in neighbouring Zimbabwe in which the dominant language is *Isindebele*.

In this research, the author of this document reached a number of conclusions from his findings. There are twelve music styles found among both *Bakalanga* of Botswana and Zimbabwe. These styles are classified under three major categories according to the purposes they are meant to serve among the *Bakalanga* communities. The *Bakalanga* music categories and styles are as follows:

The first category comprises two styles of traditional music for rain praying rituals namely:

*wosana* and *mayile*.

The second category comprises three styles of traditional music for healing purposes namely:

*mazenge (shumba)*, *sangoma* and *mantshomane*.

The third category comprises seven styles of traditional music for happy occasions and entertainment namely:

*ndazula*, *mukomoto*, *woso*, *iperu*, *tshikitsha*, *bhoro* and *ncuzu* (gumboot dance).

Out of all the twelve *Bakalanga* music styles, only two are not available on the video accompanying this thesis. These are *ncuzu* and *mazenge*. *Ncuzu* music is near extinction so there was no particular group to perform it for the researcher. *Mazenge* was not recorded because of its private performance in compliance with the *Bakalanga* cultural norms.

Three common elements have been found to be present in all twelve *Bakalanga* music styles. These are:

Hand clapping, dancing, singing (with a call from the lead singer and a response from the whole group). In most *Bakalanga* music styles, the

lead singer also plays the role of a master dancer. This is reflected in the ten *Bakalanga* music styles on the video accompanying this thesis. Drums, leg rattles and other accessories are found in some music styles, but not in all. In most cases, it is only dancers who are allowed to wear leg rattles.

The author has found *wosana* music to be the most practised in the *Bukalanga* area because of the purpose it serves (rain praying), since everybody needs rain. For the past two years, *wosana* music has found its way into Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary schools in the *Bukalanga* area in Botswana.

Presently, annual *Bakalanga* traditional competitions are only carried out in the North East District despite the fact that there are some *Bakalanga* in some parts of the Central District.