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APPLIED ORGANOLOGY. CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALS OF TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN PRESENT-DAY CONTEXTS: XIZAMBI, *XIMBVOKOMBVOKO, AND MBIRA*

ORGANOLOGIA APLICADA. DESAFIOS E POTÊNCIAS DE INSTRUMENTOS MUSICAIS TRADICIONAIS EM CONTEXTOS ATUAIS: XIZAMBI, *XIMBVOKOMBVOKO* E MBIRA

Lucas Johane Mucavele

ABSTRACT: The present article investigates the traditional musical instruments of Mozambique such as xizambi, ximbvokombvoko and mbira in their social functions, symbolism, history, origins, evolution and genealogy, as well as in their organological aspects.

Key words: Mozambique, xizambi, ximbvokombvoko, mbira, traditional instruments, organology.

RESUMO: O presente artigo investiga os instrumentos musicais tradicionais de Moçambique *xizambi*, *ximbvokombvoko* e *mbira* em suas funções sociais, simbolismo, história, origens, evolução e genealogia, bem como em seus aspectos organológicos.

Palavras-chave: Moçambique, xizambi, ximbvokombvoko, mbira, instrumentos tradicionais, organologia

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The modern period, strongly shaped by the industrial revolution, reached its peak in the 20th century, with a strong reliance on science and technology as the central factors of human and social development. In music it is reflected in inventions and/or innovations, such as the electric guitar between 1930s-40s; and electronicphonic instruments, as the theremin in 1919, the ondasmartinot, presented in public in 1928; the synthesizer, samplers and others devices, which opened a whole new horizon in the way sounds are explored and music is conceived and performed up to date. Through time more devices have been invented, which, while facilitating the work of musicians, in the case of music, they demanded less and less critical knowledge and skills from music makers.

As argued by Haralambos and Holborn (2002, p.8-9), present-day sociological developments show a tendency to "a major break with the old concept of modernity. They suggest that people have begun to lose faith in science and technology, because of the damaging effect that they cause in society", moving towards "postmodernity", a phenomenon which stimulates the emergence of new theories, or updating of the old ones to meet the new realities.

Looking into the history and evolution of Mozambican musics, I became aware of how pervasive modern user-friendly technologies can be/are being to musical traditions, as they undermine/bypass the value of critical skills and knowledge for music making, and the sociological aspects of music, as for example, pre-programmed drum loops replace drummers, and, chord loops/blocks replace guitar or piano players, and samplers and synthesizers replace real instruments, and sometimes the human voice, even on stage, depriving music makers and audiences, alike, from experiencing the diversity and quality of acoustic/natural sounds, and depreciating the humanness of music, that are patent in the traditional forms of musical practice and expression.

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This study examines the selected instruments: their sociological aspects as function, status, symbolism; historical aspects as origins, evolution and genealogy; technical aspects as: **a)** physical features, e.g. raw materials, sizes, shapes, structures; **b)** tuning, sound activation and control mechanisms, and the mechanical response as a whole; **c)** acoustical aspects as, frequency response, resonation, harmonic content and timbre, radiation – with frequencimeters, sonometres, sound-level meters and overtone\spectrum analysers; **d)** musical aspects as temperament, tuning, scales, (harmonies); **e)** and issues regarding their amplification for modern stage use.

1. Research question

The prevailing question is: What are the challenges and potentials of traditional musical instruments in Present-Day Context? How can we mitigate them?

Through the four instruments mentioned above, the research will be focused on sociological, technical, and musicological challenges and potentials of traditional musical instruments in present-day context, in the Tsonga ethnicities from the provinces of Inhambane, Gaza, and Maputo in Southern Mozambique, where the selected instruments play a fundamental role in the traditional musical styles, and a strong influence in present-day musics. I will, therefore, look into how and why social interaction in the traditional context integrated these instruments, and to the technical and social shortfalls/challenges and potentials for their integration in present-day contexts.

The objectives of this study are to:

- Systematize existing knowledge from and about the selected
- instruments;
- Study their musicality: temperament, tunings, timbres, playing
- technique, and the inherent sounds;
- Address their challenges and explore their potentials for the
- various present-day musical context uses;
- Develop new/improved versions and/or techniques so that suit
- the various present-day contexts.

Most of the information herein presented was acquired through early exposure to the instruments, and their musical context, in general, and later on, through ethnographic fieldwork, studio work, performance, research, academic work, and experimentation.

Placing the value of music in the aural experience it causes on the listener, which can be best studied with qualitative methods, I will start by introspecting myself, looking into my

own experiences with the selected instrument; then, I will use the qualitative interpretative method, through interviews, to get the sensibility of different musicians and members of the studied communities to the integration of the selected instruments in present-day contexts.

As previously mentioned, the choice of the instruments was based on their role in the target communities, their availability, familiarity, and broad geographic distribution through my study area. I will continue to collect relevant information on the selected instruments in their original context, through ethnographic, bibliographic, and documental research; and experiment to examine the presented hypothesis.

In my recording studio facility, I have been using the quantitative research method, with the aid of the CubaseLE5, the Sonar10, and the Sound forge recording-editing softwares to capture the sounds of the selected instruments; and frequencimeters, tone and spectrum analyser hard and/or softwares, to analyse their measurable/quantifiable attributes, such as spectrum/harmonic contents, envelops, ranges, temperaments, and tunings; and then, to assess their compatibility with modern conventional instruments, I will employ the comparative method, confronting their above-mentioned attributes with those of the guitar and keyboards, which are the most commonly used conventional instruments in my target contexts; and the experimental method–playing the selected instruments beside conventional ones.

Within the academic context, preliminary experiments on the *xizambi*and *ximbvokombvoko,* havesuccessfully illustrated the principle and theory of harmonics in lectures and workshops; and in the performance context, they have integrated, as compulsory elements of my stage work, where I explore their fusion with conventional instruments "in present-day contexts", towards "contemporary music". There experimental method is further employed in the construction of musical instruments.

The findings from these experiments and the feedback from the lectures and workshops will provide essential information for the assessment of the presented hypothesis.

2. Hypothesis

- The integration of the selected instruments is challenged by their discrepant temperaments;
- The lack of relevant knowledge on the selected instruments challenges their integration in present-day contexts;
- Thus, the selected instruments need re-contextualization, remodeling and adaptation (features, approaches, techniques, and applications,) to suit present-day contexts;
- Modern society trends/pressures draw music makers to user- friendly technologies, as faster means to their goals;

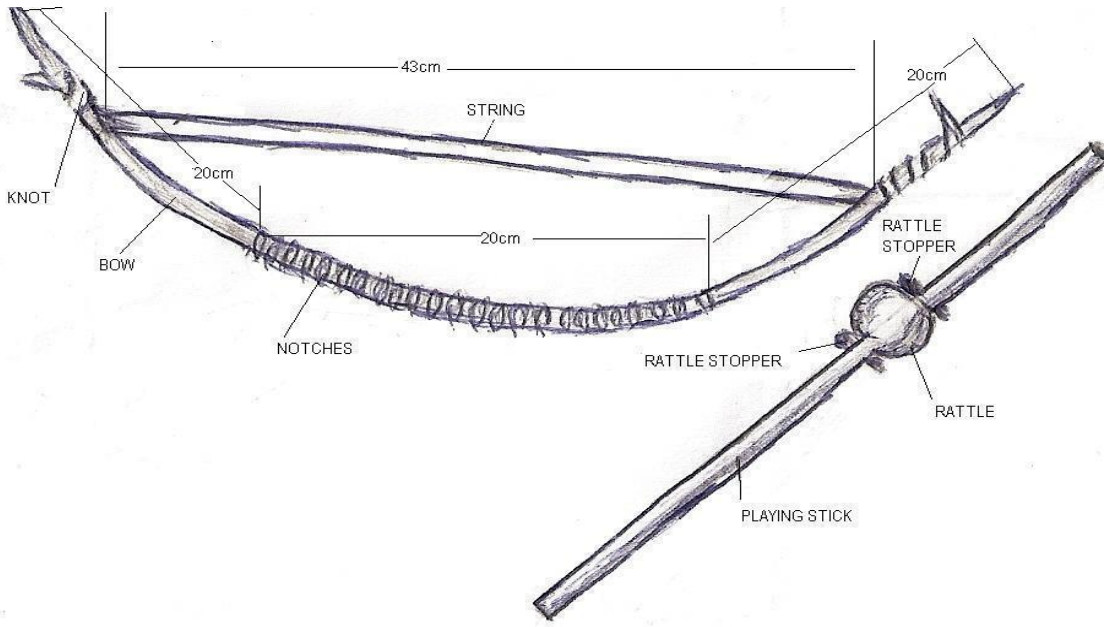
- Irrational use of pre-programmed patterns hinder musical diversity and identities;

- The selected instruments are a foundation for new scientific multidisciplinary discourses in: music theory and philosophies, physics of sound. and repertoires.

3. Organological Study of the Xizambi

The *xizambi* (fig 1 below) is among the smallest in the family of the Southern Mozambican musical bows, which comprises the *xitende*, *xipendany*, *kankubwe*, *nyakatangali*, *muqhangala*and others. As a common heritage disseminated through the various Southern African ethnic groups, it is an important icon for the understanding and reconstruction of the (music) history of this region. Thus, throughout the essay I discuss organological (origins, history and geographical distribution, playing, sound producing and controlling techniques/mechanisms); sociological aspects; nomenclature; and its musicality/musical possibilities, to draw its potential role to present day contexts.

Fig.1: The *xizambi*



In discussing the origin of (European/western) musical instruments, Jeremy Montagu (2003) in his previously mentioned paper stresses that: "the origins of most other instruments (excluding the *Theremin* and the synthesizer) are lost in the mist of antiquity, though occasionally we can spot a place, even a name". Such is the case with the *xizambi*, and many other African instruments, which, due to unrecorded history, or rather, non-graphic tradition, and multiple migratory movements, cannot easily be track back to their origins, if not by conjecture.

Ernesto Mathusi, a maker and performer of musical bows, originally from Gaza province, but settled in Maputo, resorted to a rather legendary approach, describing the *xizambi* as "the first guitar of the African people", to emphasize its antiquity; and ascribing its invention to the hunters, where, he claims "it was used to hypnotize the animals with its sound for easy hunting" –the origins of the *xizambi* are really unknown.

It is, nevertheless, obvious that there is a connection between Southern African hunting bows and musical bows, "preserved today in south-eastern Angola and parts of Namibia, where hunting bows are instantly transformed into musical bows by attaching a tuning noose, using either the mouth as a resonator or a fruit shell (KUBIK, 1970, 1987; see musical bow and Angola); and, Fernando Ortiz (1955, p.18) in *Los Instrumentos de la Musica Afro-Cubana*, cites Dorothea Bleek describing how some Angolan ethnic groups temporarily converted their hunting bow into a musical one; as well as in Kubiks contribution on the Brittanica encyclopedia[2]where it read: "the San of the Kalahari often convert their hunting bows to musical use".

The above facts provide compelling evidence of the relationship between the two types of bows, which apart from their resemblance, is overt in their common source material, common ethno-geographical distribution, and the affinity of their socio-cultural functions.

The features and the playing posture of the instrument described by Bleek, as cited by Ortiz, resemble the *xitende,* of the Tsonga-Shangana people, which could suggests a theory that the *xitende* was invented accidently from the hunting bow, and, subsequently, optimized as a musical instrument in appropriate circumstances. However, we still lack relevant information to support this theory – how long these peoples have been converting hunting to musical bows.

Some further support to the theory was provided during my fieldwork, in the province of Gaza, in 1992, where both the musical and the hunting bows are made from the same wood, called *mutshumbi,* in the Shangana language; both used *lisinga,* (a twisted cow skin strap)as the sound producing device; share the geographical region of occurrence; and, both are made by the same people. Nowadays, their relationship is extended to the markets, where they are seen in the same stands for sale, with actually, the same size, finish and decorative iconographic features – as same category, or closely related objects.

In 1993, FelisbertoWukheyu, a Shangana*xitende*player from Ximbhutsu,who claimed, by then, to be 84 years old, declared that in his childhood and adolescence, which could be estimated to be between 1915 and 1929, the term *xitende* did not exist in his area. The closest relative, which he claims to be the prototype of the *xitende* was called *qhaqha,* and had a *lisinga* as the sound producing device, before the metal string in common use today. It is therefore quite

likely that the metal string, today used on *xitende* and other musical bows was a later innovation, at least in that region.

The above discussion connects to the musical bow family as a whole, however, without a specific address to the *xizambi*. The *xizambi*does not seem to have an obvious predecessor, or extra-musical application, which suggests it to have been invented intentionally, as opposed to the possible accidental invention of the *xitende*. That means –theorized, designed, constructed, experimented on, and then "perfected", to its present stage of evolution, however, with ideas borrowed from other instruments, as for example, the *xipendany*, or the *nyakatangali*, which are also mouth resonated bows from the same region.

As demonstrated under playing technique, the *xizambi* is the only musical bow using a palm leave as a sound producing device, and, has a rather intricate/elaborated playing technique, combining various principles, thus, requiring a more commitment in the learning process, as compared to the other bows, which, subsequently, challenges its survival, as many people give-up on it.

From these facts it could be inferred that the *xizambi*was invented in a later age, or evolutionary stage of musical bows, whenbasic principles of acoustics, more specifically, the principle of harmonic activation was already understood and explored.

3.1. Physical Features and Raw Materials

The *xizambi* (fig.1) has a stave made from a roughly 60cm of length of high resilience woods that stands flexion. Shangana*xizambi* builders prefer the *musiphani*tree, which has the desired qualities, and is available in their region. As shown in the picture, the string of the *xizambi* is actually a strap, traditionally, made from a palm leaf about 1,5cm wide, which is tensioned and tied near the two ends of the stick to turn it into a bow; separately, there is a playing stick with a little rattle in the middle of its length, either made from a wild fruit shell, called*thongwana*, in the Shangana language, or woven with palm leaves, as a small box. Nowadays, many builders and players prefer nylon packaging straps to palm leaves string, because of their durability, but also, their accessibility**.** I have not yet compared the sonorities of the two types of strings, because since I began to focus on the instrument I have not had access to a *xizambi* with a palm leaf string, which suggests an abandonment of the palm leave, most probably, due to its fragility. Sizes of *svizambi*(plural of *xizambi*) can vary, slightly from builder to builder, as they are not standardized.

[2]<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/719112/African-music/57074/Musical-bows.) 20/8/2014>

3.2. Contextualization of the Xizambi

During my fieldwork in the southern Mozambican provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane, and Manica, Sofala and Tete in the centre, I interviewed and recorded Vasco Sithoye and Boavida Zumba (fig.1), Francisco Xigulani, ZacariasMawhayi, Alberto Muthetho and Sifazonke, who are *xizambi* players from the Shangana-Ndawu ethnic groups from the centre and south of Mozambique. Later on, through bibliographic research, I learned about similar musical bows occurring in Namibia, Angola, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe, whose resemblance suggest a genealogical relationship and common prototype. E.g. different versions at I found in Minette Mans's "Ongoma: Musical instruments of Namibia" (1977); Dias's *InstrumentosMusicais de Moçambique*(1986), and the real instruments collected into ARPAC (cultural heritage archives) during my fieldwork look similar to (fig. 1), and in Mozambique, all version are used in the folkloric genre, in leisure time for entertainment and socialization.

3.3. Playing Technique

Posture

Fig.1 shows the typical playing posture for *xizambi*: The player, usually male, in the Tsonga –Shangana, sitting on a stool, preferably, a low one, with about 30 to 40cm of height, secures the stave from its left end with his left hand, and rests its right end on his chin, allowing the string to pass between his lips, so its vibration can excite the air in his mouth, which functions as a resonator. (As shown in figs. 2/3);

Fig. 2:playing position(Vasco Sithoye-right, Boavida Zumba-left). Sitting on a low stool, the player holds the stave on his left palm and the stick with the right hand.

Fig.3: Finger position. The little, ring and middle fingers of the left hand are positioned as shown below, to stop the sting at different lengths and, subsequently, vary the fundamental frequency.

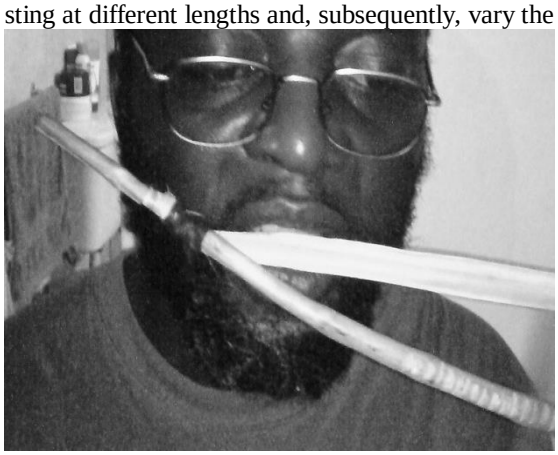


Fig.4: Position of string and the right end of the bow. The string passes between the lips, to transmit the vibrations to the air in the mouth of the player.

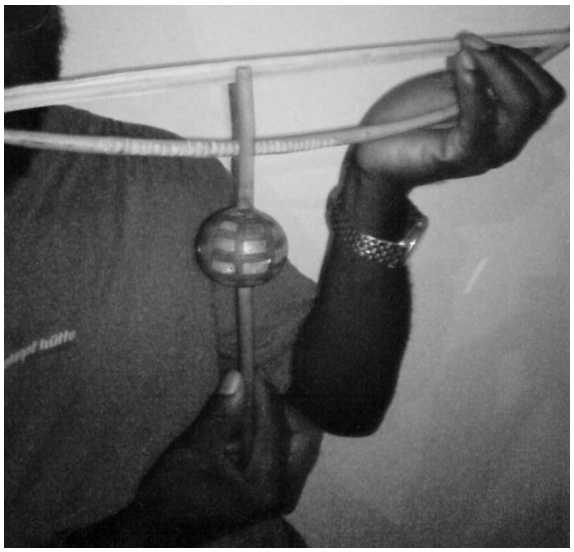


Fig.5: Stick position. With his right hand, the player holds the playing stick upwards, resting it on the notches of the bow.

Sound production and control technique:

The sound production and control mechanisms are indispensable for an object to be considered a musical instrument, because, as John Blacking (1973) asserts, sound is only music when it is humanly organized (produced and controlled) to be perceived as such. The *xizambi* is a polyphonic instrument, exploring three simultaneous sounds, which are produced in three different, "chain reacting"/interconnected processes as described below:

The first process produces an unpitched frictional sound, by rubbing the playing stick against the notches carved on the bow (see fig.5), in a left-and-right seesaw movement, which, at the same time, shakes the rattle on the stick. The shaking rattle produces the pulse, and the friction on the grooves produces a frog or reco-reco-like sound; still in the second process, the reco-reco-like sound is propagated through the stave to the string, exciting it; the excited string, then, produces the fundamental pitch of the music; to vary the fundamental, the player stops the string at different lengths with his/her little, ring and middle fingers of the left hand (in a similar way as on a guitar); in the third process, the vibrating string excites the air contained in the mouth of the player, which acts as a resonator, similar to a Helmholtz resonator[3], where different pitches are produced by activating different harmonics of the fundamental, in a similar manner as in diphonic singing (STOCK, p.20). To produce low pitches the player reduces the aperture of the mouth; and pushes the tongue back and downwards; and the lower jaw and throat muscles downwards, to expand the size of the mouth/resonating cavity; for high pitches the mouth aperture is widened; the tongue pushed up and forward; and the mouth/resonating cavity is narrowed;

3.4.Classification

Among the many musical instruments classification systems, the Hornbostel-Sachs introduced in the rationale section, is the most commonly used in music scholarship. This system groups instruments, according to their sound producing devices as idiophones (whose sound is produced by solid parts of the instruments body, not needing air column, tensioned string or membrane); membranophones (by a tensioned membrane); chordophones (by a string); aerophones (by air), and with a later addition of electrophones (by electronic circuit); and sub grouping them according to the sound producing method as friction, percussion, plucked, blown.

3A Helmholtz resonator in an air vibrator system consisting of an air mass in container, and a neck, whereby the container behaves like an air spring, and the neck, as a piston, which compresses and releases the air contained in the larger container. For further reading see Rossing Moore and Wheeler (2002).

According to this system the *xizambi* is a friction chordophone, because its string, which is actually a strap, is caused to vibrate through friction. But, unlike the most friction instruments, whose playing bow excites the string directly, on the *xizambi* the fraction is applied on the grooves cut on the stave, and only excite the string indirectly; it is a simple chordophone, because it does not have a resonator as part of its body –its sound is amplified by the mouth of the player. Detailed description is provided in the previous section, presenting the playing technique.

3.5. Geographical Distribution and Nomenclature

As previously mentioned, the *xizambi*is widespread through the southern African region, stretching from the Indian Ocean coast in Mozambican to the Atlantic coast in Namibia and Angola, and covering over 1300km, northwards, from the southern border to the centre within Mozambique. As cited by Margot Dias (1986, p.157) Kirby found 11 (eleven) types of musical bows in South Africa.

The study of the nomenclature of the *xizambi* reveals the exchange of its names between different languages, as for example, according to Dias, (1986, p.157) citing Hugh Tracey, a Zimbabwean Ndawu musician uses the name *xitende* for the *xizambi;* similar names for the same instrument in different languages, as for example, *xizambi* in Shangana and *Xizambiza* in the *Citshwa*language from the Inhambane province, in the south of Mozambique.

3.6.Xizambi in Mozambique

In Mozambique the *xizamb*i occurs in the centre provinces of Sofala and Manica, where it is called *ximazambi, nyakazambi, nyakajambi, or nyakazeze*, but it is more popular in the south being known as *xizambi*, in Maputo, Gaza provinces; and *xizambixizambiza* and *xivelani* in Inhambane province. Although the *xizambi* spills over to Zimbabwe and South Africa from the provinces of Gaza and Manica, in those countries it is not as popular as in Mozambique. In Zimbabwe it is most frequent among ethnic groups overlapping the border with Mozambique, as Shangana, Ndawu, which suggests it to have crossed the border;

In each of its versions in Mozambique, the *xizambi* is adapted to the local music sung in local languages, with a distinct accent, intonation, and repertoire, such that experienced listeners can tell the ethnicity of each player just by listening to the music.

3.7. Xizambi "Relatives" In Namibia

In Namibia relatives of the *xizambi* occur in the ethnic groups/language listed below, with the respective names on the right side. According to the description and pictures from my sources, the instruments are almost identical to the Mozambican ones, just having different names in the different languages. Minor variations are observable, but could not be considered regional variations, as they also occur among different makers from the same ethnic group, even in Mozambique.

Ethnic group/language	**Name**
Silozi	*Kaholoholo*
Oshikwanyama	*Okayaya*
Thimbukutshu	*Kagrorongongo*
Otjizemba	*Elumba*
Sisambyu	*Kagrorongongo*
Rukwangali	*Kaorongongo*
Kxo	*Rxonxoro*

3.8. Xizambi "Relatives" In Angola:

Relatives of the *xizambi* in Angola occur in five language/ethnic groups as listed below:

Ethnic group/language	**Name**
Bangala	*Lukungu*
Lunda	*Lukungu*
Quioco	*Lukungu*
Gangela	*Kawayawaya*
Ambuela	*Kawayawaya*

The similarities herein observed provide and confirm a compelling evidence of the *xizambi* as a common heritage, in the studied ethnic groups. E.g. Shangana, Chopi, Citshwa and Ndawu from the south and centre of Mozambique are genealogically related. So, the similarities in case are rooted in their common ancestry, which also gives a hint of the instruments prolonged existence.

Unlike the *xitende*, known as *berimbão* in Brazil; the *marimbula*, a Cuban descendant of mbira and other instruments that have been carried to America by African slaves, I could not find any references of *xizambi*-like instruments in America.

The different names of the *xizambi* in the different languages are onomatopoeic, however, being determined by the speakers/hearer's own perception of its sound. For example, in the Mozambican languages there is the recurrence of the letters "z"/ "j" in the middle of its

name, whereas the "xi" syllable tends to dominate as the first syllable. The letters "z" and "j" are alternated in these languages (some languages from the centre replace Z with J). When people reproduce the *xizambi* sound vocally, as in the process of teaching a tune on it, they use these letters in combination with different vowels, making different syllables around them, in a way similar to the oral notation system used in the teaching and playing the table.

In the –*"DicionárioChangana-Português"*- the syllable "xi" pronounced [shi], is shown to have multiple grammatical functions. As the first syllable of a word, as is the case with the name of this instrument, it suggests the following: 1. Allusion to the small size of the instrument ("xi" as a prefix is a diminutive morpheme). ex. *nhwanyana*=girl and ***xi****nhwanyatana*= little girl; 2. "xi" as a prefix is also equivalent to "er" at the end of an English verb, as in work-work**er**. For example, (xi = object for) (-tirha= to work),***xi****tirho*= working tool; 3. And, "xi" describing the sound of the rattle.

So, the words *xizambi/xivelani* , theoretically, came to mean the object that makes the zzzzzzz… and the v vvvvv… sounds, respectively. The "za" describing the seesaw/smooth movement of the hand, as in cutting a piece of wood with a hand saw, describes the right hand movement in the playing technique of the *xizambi*. This "za" syllable is also chanted to build the climax of the performance, and to synchronize the dance movement with the right hand of the *xizamb*i player. (Observed in a live performance in Ximbhutsu in 2006);

In the case of Namibia the root "orongongo" occurs in two languages: Sisambyu and Thimbukutsu in kagr**orongongo** and in ka**orongongo**respectively. Analyzing these words requires knowledge of the respective languages, which I do not have. Comparative analyses do not help either, as this syllable "ngon" in Tsonga and Ndawu languages from the region describe sounds produced by knocking/beating on metal objects, as a metal gong, metal drum, metal bells, containers, etc., not related to the *xizambi*

4. The Musician and his Instrument

In African traditions "Instruments are personalized and personified, and they are addressed in the languages of their owners". For example, Antonio Marcus, an older generation musician has a song in the Shangana language titled: "*A vhiyolaya mina yavulavula*", meaning: my guitar is speaking; and Xidiminguana, actually, performs dialogues between himself and his personified guitar telling different stories. The same is true with the *xizambi*, as played/listened to in Shangana communities, where, even without a verbal calling voice, the audience will

respond to the instrumental melody with a text, as they will understand the surrogated or implicit words.

Traditionally, musical instruments are, usually, made for self use. An accomplished instrumentalist is one who can make his/her own instrument. And, because instruments are made by hand, each one is unique, having its particularities and identity. The builder spends much time on each instrument, thus developing an intimacy with it. When and instrument is ordered, the builder will consider the size of the "orderer's" hand, or the "orderer" himself, will give specification regarding the size, the tuning and the tonality, if applicable, so the instrument is customized to him/her (its owner).. Thus, the owner/orderer participates in the construction process, which makes the instrument personal. Then, depending of the beliefs, as the instrument is taken home for the first time, it is formally or informally presented to its new home, through a ritual, or, simply, a performance.

Although the*xizambi*is not usually part of spiritual, religious or sacred music, it is still associated with spirituality, because of its personalization: it belongs to one person, and when that person dies, his soul preserves the ownership of the instrument. For example, when my uncle, the younger brother of my mother, who was a *xizambi* player, died his instrument was kept in his house, and according to his son, "as a way to keep his (father's) soul in the house". And, because my uncle was some sort of a "social deviant", my mother denied me to use his instrument as, according to belief, I would inherit his "undesirable qualities".

5. The Actual Situation of the Xizambi

Like all the other instruments, the integration of the *xizambi* in present-day contexts is critical for its survival, for the survival of the musical legacy it conveys, and for the evolution of local musical traditions. However, the *xizambi* is at an extinction risk, as indicated by the decline of the number of its makers, players, and its marginalization in present-day contexts; the dissolution of its social function/role and performance contexts such as evening story telling sessions, and family/social occasions where it is traditionally played and taught to younger generations, due to the fast growing popularity of video games and TV culture, and other modern forms of entertainment, in urban, and in rural areas, make it less noticeable or appreciated. In recording studios in Maputo, its sampled sound is played from midi keyboards, by people who, due to their unfamiliarity with the instrument itself, have no confidence in handling its peculiarities.

Through the long tradition of migration work to South African mines in the south and centre of Mozambique, many modern technology products as gramophones, radios, record players, and European conventional musical instruments as accordions, guitars, and harmonicas, and their respective musical cultures and repertoires have been steadily imported, and replacing local musical traditions at an alarmingly fast and irrational rate. The culture of building musical instruments is dying away. For example, during my fieldwork in 2009, I observed that inthe districts ofChókwe and Ximbhutsu, in the Gaza province, a traditional home of the *xizambi*, many people, including musicians, didn't know the *xizambi*. Instead, I found many local musicians playing on ragged harmonicas and guitars, and their repertoire, mainly consisted of South African popular hits, which sounded out of context.

Hypothetically: The use of the *xizambi* in present-day musical styles and contexts is challenged, due to its low sound pressure, and complex playing technique, but also lack of knowledge of this instrument.

6. Social Integration and Role of the Xizambi

In the previously mentioned interview with Ernesto Mathusi, he described the *xizambi* as "the first guitar of the African people", adding that "The *xizambi "*was played as a hunting aid instrument, as "its music was used to hypnotize animals for easy hunting". In his assertion, Mathusi emphasized the role of the *xizambi*, as a prototype to other musical instruments, but also, as an agent in one of the most important activities for the survival of the Shanganaand , probably, other peoples –the hunting.

Thus, the *xizambi* is part of a functioning whole, playing an important role in the everyday life of the Tsonga-Shangana people and other ethnicities of Southern Africa, with its lyrics and rhythms depicting various scenes of spiritual, individual, social, and professional life of people; The lyrics and rhythms performed on the *xizambi* are a direct complement of everyday activities, critical for the survival of old traditions, through the process of transmission of relevant knowledge and skills from older to younger generation. For example, the beat on the *xizambi*, usually performed with the dancer's foot stamping on the ground, has been transposed to the bass drum in one of the most popular urban musical styles – marrabenta. In the traditional contexts, it is used in food processing music, to sustain the rhythmic pounding of cereals in a mortar, while the rhythmic rubbing of the stick on the notches of the stave gives the *kulhele*(sieving) rhythm –which is actually the separation of flakes and grains with a round basket.

As I repeatedly observed in Xilembeni, Ximbhutsu and Magudu in the South of Mozambique, the performance of the *xizambi* is a contingent moment, when relevant skills and knowledge are passed to the younger generations in form of song, dance, acting and miming; for news propagation, social commentary, sharing of experiences etc. As previously described, the music played on the *xizambi* is a summary and source of samples for modern music. Its performance context involves people of all ages and sexes. In the Tsonga-Shangana communities, where, by tradition, women don't play the instrument, they are involved in several ways, such as singing and dancing, and as performers in the demonstration of women's social roles/activities to young girls, as observed in fieldwork.

7. The Music, the Musician and the Social Status

As Bob Marley says "One thing about music…you feel no pain… hit me with music…". Musicians have a privilege in society –they enjoy a relative freedom of speech, through which they express their and the society's problems "without hurting". Since the resonator for the *xizambi* is the mouth of the player, during the performance many words are mumbled, thus, giving room for speech manipulation, and subsequently, ambiguous perception/interpretation: For example, plosives, fricatives, (bi) labials cannot be properly pronounced. Sometimes, *xizambi* players sing social taboos, or attack authorities with (mumbled) words without much/direct consequences, as long as they play "good" music. E.g. Vasco Sithoye adapted a folkloric song about a woman who cannot cook well to criticize the government for its inability to stop the civil war, in a satirical style, in a time when such speeches were punishable, as reactionary. (Observed in Ximbhutsu in 1993). Likewise, Alberto Muthethu, satirically, criticized the government's failure to satisfy the people's expectation saying: *"whonitsonanizukaSamora"* which translates *more or less as* "How can you deny me five cents,Samora" (the then president of Mozambique)! (Observed in Xilembeni in 1978).

8. The Character of the Xizambi

The gentleness in the playing technique of the *xizambi*, its low sound pressure and the subsequent smoothness of the dance movements have a lot of influence in the performer-audience rapport, and in the disciplining of the musician and the audience, especially regarding dynamics: the *xizambi* brings the audience closer to the performer, creating a cosy ambience, calling for silence and focus, which, influences the musicians to sing softly and in a deep voice,

but sometimes in falsettos for higher pitched passages, and thus, it provides an intelligent listening experience.

Whereas in the same society, most musical instruments accompany harvesting, soil tilling, military training, or religious music, the *xizambi* does not seem to, most likely, because of its sound character. Traditionally, the *xizambi* is played by young men, to wind up time, as they watch grazing cattle. They, usually, learn it from their elder folks, or fellow shepherds as entertainment during cattle grazing (SITHOYE, 1993). But as they grow into adolescence they use the *xizambi*to express their loneliness, and desire and/or promptness to get married. Hence, the role and repertoire of the *xizambi* change at adolescence, and again at adulthood. For example, Vasco Sithoye and Boavida Zumba, peers from childhood, played together as the entertainers of their village as adults, adapting old lyrics and introducing new ones; building new repertoires, which became "the *xizambi* classics". The following lyrics: *"He masevekunjhani, svakalalesviunganitirhela...*" thanking the parents of the daughter-in-law…, were adapted as: *"Viva ferelimoXisanu, svakalalesviungahitirhela…"* to mean: "Long live Frelimo (the ruling party) and Xisanu! (the then president of Mozambique), for stopping the civil war and bringing peace (…)". By so doing, they contributed to the integration of the *xizambi* in present-day contexts.

The matrix for traditional music is traditional culture, which is acquired through socialization. Thus, older musicians have broader repertoires and finer skills, built through the accumulated practice and experiences, and subsequently becoming social models. For example, just before his death, Vasco Sithoye performed in a National Festival of Traditional Dance and Song organized by the Ministry of Culture, and was given a status of a dignitary; his image together with his colleague's (fig.2) taken during fieldwork at his home, was used repeatedly to introduce the TVM (Mozambican Television) traditional music program, and as the cover of the first CD of traditional music, titles *Arcos e Cordas do Sul de Moçambique*, recorded in 1992.

9. Musical Possibilities on the Xizambi

As discussed in the playing technique section, the *xizambi* has multiple sound producing and controlling mechanisms and processes: Because it is a non-tempered instrument it can produce "an infinity" of pitches within its range. With the string it produces fundamental melodies, sometimes drones, which are harmonized with the mouth activated harmonics. The mouth controlled sounds can produce verbal-like tones and speech-like melodies; and the rubbing of the stick and the shaking of the rattle produce the pulse, and rhythmic patterns. (See

playing technique). It is also characteristic of *xizambi* players to combine their voice with the instrument's sound; surrogate the voice with it; alternate it with the voice, simulating a dialogue with it, or shift the focus between the different aspect of the music (rhythm, melody, harmony, text). It is actually rich in that it plays the pulse, the rhythm, and two melodies.

NOTE: This is an ongoing research, so detailed studies on the topics below are still to come.

1. Temperament and Tuning
2. The Polyphony
3. Transcription and Analysis of Some Tunes/Songs?
4. Exploring the Xizambi in Present-Day Contexts
5. The Mbira

(To come)

6. The Ximbvokombvoko

(To come)

10. Conclusion (only Preliminary as the latest are still hypothesis under verification)

This study shows how traditional music can be integrated in present-day contexts, providing ideas and material for new academic, scientific and artistic discourses, and shaping the evolution of present-day music, both in the academy, and in the arts. Traditional musical instruments provide sustainable ideas for the creation of "contemporary music/musical instruments", made from, mostly, locally available and affordable material and ideas, providing sustainability, and empowering local musics and musicians.

Paradoxically, the studied cases are old musical traditions, but they are new contribution to music sciences and arts, as they have never been well explored in the past. For example, on the *xibavhani*, the tuning of the strings (to be presented and analysed in data analysis chapter) requires different fingering positions and techniques, and produces different/unique intervals, melodies, chords, harmonic "voicings", and progressions. Thus, new chord and harmony theories, and/or playing techniques are to be drawn from this instrument.

Successful implementation of this project will foster the creation of present-day/contemporary music with a proportionate reliance on modern user-friendly technologies and local/traditional technologies, in new scientific and artistic discourses, and the concept of "Postmodern Philosophies", contemplating new concepts, repertoires, and the reconstruction and/or renovation of existing knowledge.

NOTE: This is only a preliminary conclusion, as the actual conclusion will be written after the completion of the project.

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