

MUSIC OF THE BANTU

by

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Music has been defined as an "orderly sequence of SOUNDS which give satisfaction to the aesthetic and creative instincts of the performer . . . each nation finding its aesthetic satisfaction in sounds which differ from the music of other nations." (Jones)

Each population group has essentially its own manner of musical expression in its folk music, handed down orally from generation to generation. This music that is traditionally bound up with the whole history and contiuance of the community.

Each group finds its aesthetic satisfaction in musical sounds that differ in major or lesser degree from those of other groups. The saying, EACH BIRD IS KNOWN BY ITS SONG, is very applicable to the many Bantu tribes living in South Africa. Each has its own widely differing traditional musical practices, yet underlying these are general basic characteristics.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Let us enumerate these general characteristics . . .

- (i) melodically;
- (ii) harmonically;
- (iii) rhythmically.

(i) The melodic line, broadly speaking, has the outline of the teeth of a ripsaw; a steep rise (usually not exceeding a 5th) followed by a gentle sloping down of the tune, then another sudden rise, then a gentle sloping down and so on. The tendency is for the tune to start on a high platform-pitch and to work its way gradually downwards in this saw-like manner.

There is no key change in the course of the tune. There is, however, a distinct feeling of its hovering about a central pivot note, round which the melody seems to be built.

The phrases of the melodies are fairly long and there is a strong element of repetition. This is a refined art. The Bantu is not afraid of repetitive melodic pattern. Subtle nuance, — not broad changes of melody which he regards as inartistic — and manifold variation, an extra note here, a slight change there, are the bases of this melodic conception.

It is also important to realise that Bantu music is mainly

vocal, and that their melody has grown up in association with words. This has a profound influence on the way in which the melody is constructed. All Bantu languages are "tone" languages and thus, melodically, the Bantu song is subordinated to semantic tone by following the rise and fall of the tonal structure of the language. The Zulu speaker employs a 9-tone system with a range of an octave, these differentiations of tone covering the whole Zulu etymology including emotional content and ideophones. The Sotho languages have 3 tones, i.e. high, medium and low, in varying differentiations. Both Zulu and Sotho have terminal tone-accents. It is this metrical tone vacillation, plus the open vowel-sounds, their "speech-music", which gives the Bantu languages their special charm. We may compare this to our English and Afrikaans languages where the intonational patterns change only with the meaning implied in utterance, and pitch differentiations are merely used to expand "shades" of meaning. Stress accentuation in English is on a very level pitch-keel, and in Afrikaans is again largely dependent on the degree of emphasis and intensity of feeling implied by the speaker.

The words of Bantu languages, therefore, are not set to a fixed melodic line. Bantu song melody was developed as an embellishment to the languages, so much so, that there is a clear-cut change of musical melodic style with every change of linguistic dialect. The fact that the semantic tone-structure of Bantu languages dictates the melody of a Bantu song is also responsible for each verse differing slightly, melodically, the words of each needing separate melodic treatment to make the tune agree with the rise and fall of the syllables. One of the skills of the song-leader is to choose words which allow the tune to remain more or less constant in outline. Added to this, in Bantu languages, each syllable possesses its own "fixed" length. The free development of the Bantu melody is thus further circumscribed by the custom of singing one note to one syllable.

Generally, Bantu pitch-conception is of "magnitude", a note being either "small" (high) or "great" (low). Tonality is "whole-tone", but utterly unconscious of any organised theory. Based on "natural" intonation, melodic steps ascending tend to be "small", and widen in descending passages. Melodic progression has no fixed degrees. What the ear aims at is melody-forming, an undivided unity which is performed at one stroke, the effect obtained by spontaneity of self-expression.

(ii) Harmonically, Bantu singing has developed almost unin-

fluenced by the harmonies of instruments. As a result, Bantu traditional music is primarily antiphonal (solo and chorus), with polyphony arising as a purely accidental concomitant out of the singing of a melody at various tonal-levels, i.e. parallel melody producing harmony in spontaneous practice without preconceived selection or combination. Oblique and contrary melodic-motion is sometimes met with, particularly in bass-movement.

The Bantu thus show a preference for solo-chorus singing, also for binary (2-part), and variation form.

(iii) The rhythm encountered in Bantu traditional song is both free end fixed, within a highly-developed rhythmic sense. There are no shapeless tunes. Without "clapping" or "drum" accompaniment, they swing along and are apparently free-rhythm pieces; a rhythm strongly present and existing in its own right. With "clapping" and with or without percussive accompaniment, they become complex and cross-rhythmic. Bantu rhythm is very advanced indeed. Very often a dance-accompaniment will consist of a set of drums, hand-clapping and the stamping of feet, each with its own rhythm. Using basically simple rhythmic-units, these are combined, on the principle of cross-rhythm, into multiple sets of rhythm, intertwined in an intricate rhythmic pattern which can best be described as complex rhythmic harmony, a facet of Bantu traditional music which is most fascinating to the overseas' ear. So much for the general characteristics of Bantu melody, harmony, and rhythm.

Now let us review the differences encountered:

DIFFERENCES:

Differences in style of performance and interpretation characterise the different Bantu groups. Bantu traditional singing is legato. The pace, however, varies; for example, the NGUNI are inclined to sing in a more deliberate manner and the SOTHO in a more flowing tempo.

It must be remembered, however, that the music of the Bantu cannot be divorced or disassociated from the entire complex of Bantu life, individual and communal, and their social and ceremonial pattern of living, both in the villages and in the towns. In considering the "traditional" aspect, we find that different ethnic customs are strongly reflected in song.

RAIN:

We take the RAIN. The PEDI regard continuing drought

conditions in a very serious light. The tribe usually appeals to its chief for a solution. Traditionally-followed steps and precautionary measures he might adopt include: the restoration of the magical efficiency of the vital ingredients of the tribal rain-pot, which is usually kept in a special rain hut behind that of the first tribal wife of the chief. Young girls are sent to the river to draw water in little calabashes to mix with the witchdoctor's medicine which he adds to the rain-mixture. The following day little boys will be sent to plant sticks, medicated with the muti on all important cross-roads to prevent malignant influences from crossing to within the tribal boundary. They also bewitch the lands by sprinkling the muti on them. The whole tribe might even be purified with the medicine. Should this fail to appease the rain-maker, tribal rain-doctors might be commanded to produce rain-fires from green foliage, thereby causing dense clouds of smoke to appear and attract the rain-clouds themselves. Or, a special rain-hunt might be organised, when, after sacrificing a black ox, the men go out to hunt a bird or animal of a specific kind or colour for the rain-medicine. On their way they kill and disembowel other small animals they came across which they throw in to dried-up streams and water-holes. This the women do as well, while roaming the fields and hills beating the ground with sticks and shouting, "PULA, PULA".

With each phase of these rain-making efforts, special songs are sung. When the rain does come, a veritable repertoire of rain-songs greets its arrival.

The SOTHO, on the other hand, have no such fuss or bother. They hail the rain with one simple chant.

INSTALLATION OF A CHIEF:

The BALOVEDU heir-apparent receives instruction in her future duties and the art of rain-making while she is seated on a small "sacred" drum, prior to the death of the old queen. Traditionally, the "sacred" drum is also her coronation chair.

Among the TSONGA, the death of their chief is shrouded in secrecy for a year, after which official mourning is proclaimed. Tribesmen and women gather at the capital, sounding their SHIPALAPALA and singing, their heads shaven in mourning, their head-rings removed. They pay their respects to their late chief, and then to their new, presenting to the tribal heir the bladders of slaughtered oxen and goats brought with them to the feast. By pinning these in his hair, he at once proclaims himself their future royal leader.

The beating of a large traditional drum announces the death of the chief at the official proclamation of mourning, and the same drum accompanied by smaller ones is played at the installation of the tribal heir.

INITIATION CEREMONIES OF THE GIRLS:

The initiation ceremonies of the girls take place in most Bantu tribes under the supervision of a council of elderly women, with the actual direction of activities being in the hands of one woman chosen as the mother of the school.

The VENDA DOMBA ceremony, however, is inaugurated by the tribal witchdoctor and then proceeds under the directorship of the NYAMUNGOZWA, a master of ceremonies, who does this in a professional capacity. He is responsible for their instruction in the MILAYO or tribal laws, the preparing of the models and costumes of the symbolic representations which are used for the more graphic teaching of certain lessons. He conducts the morning and evening sessions of singing, often introducing jingles or "amusement" songs for the sake of variety, and the general supervision and planning of the entire course of the school. We thus have a "male" entity introduced into tribal institution which the Bantu, as a general rule, regard as essentially all-female; this, too, in song.

HUT REMOVAL:

Most tribes have homes, the roofs of which form part of the whole architectural structure. These are seldom removed, and if so, only the conical pole-framework, stripped of its thatching, is transported, lifted into position and then re-thatched.

In the case of the ZULU iNDLU, however, should lightning strike and the bird, which is believed to cause it, is not located and dealt with, it is considered a bad omen and the whole village will move to a new location. The Zulu men carry the iNDLU, with its double-domed framework of wattle branches, with the minimum of thatch removed, walking underneath it and giving the iNDLU the appearance of having sprung legs. Unison-singing creates an esprit de corps and accompanies all their movements.

BIRTH:

Among the TSONGA it is taboo for a mother-to-be to eat or drink during childbirth lest it chokes the child. She is attend-

ed by her own mother and female relatives in addition to the midwife. Whereas with most Bantu, delivery of the baby takes place in the mother-to-be's hut, which is especially cleared for the event, among the TSONGA, it is in a specially prepared enclosure just behind the hut. On the day of the birth, a fire is lit with wood which the young mother has gathered in readiness. Should the child be a girl, the father kills a fowl, and, if it is a boy, he will kill a cock. The mother partakes of the meat and the nourishing broth. The baby is then rocked, in song, through the smoke of a fire to which a protective medicinal preparation has been added, until it produces the required cry, sneeze and cough. This custom is also found among certain XHOSA tribes.

In MALAWI, among the NGONI tribe of Chief Njolomole, at Ncheu, the elderly women relatives sing outside the hut of confinement to announce the birth of either a baby boy or girl, while tapping a large stone with a smaller one in accompaniment.

CATTLE POSTS:

Among the TSWANA, animal husbandry has always been the prime concern of the men themselves. They are only assisted by their adolescent sons. The cattle are kept at the MERAKA, cattle posts, or at grazing grounds often situated miles from their villages. Here, their ever-present companion is the traditional SERANKURE or SEGANKURE instrument, played to soothe the animals, and for personal enjoyment.

The OVAMBO and OKAVANGO tribesmen are also essentially pastoralists, who keep their cattle at cattle-posts in a similar manner. Here, however, a great deal of their time is spent in churning sour-milk in calabashes, which is their chief food while there. Sons accompany the swinging action of the calabash, lending wings to time.

GRINDING:

Grinding is done by most Bantu women on a grindstone at their own homes or at a grinding venue in the village, where numerous little hollows have been worn with the labours of the years. Here the women kneel, early in the morning or in the late afternoon. Throwing down the grain at the one end of the hollow they pound it with a flat stone, held in both hands, working it through the hollow to the other side, where, ground to powder-like consistency, it is pushed aside with a deft sweep

of the hand, before the process is repeated. In solo-chorus, the pace of their song matches the action of the work on hand.

In varying rhythm, the TSONGA and RONGA women of MOZAMBIQUE sing as they grind their grain in earthenware basins using short sturdy sticks in a circular movement.

STAMPING:

Corn and mealies are pounded by all our Bantu women in hour-glass shaped mortars, with long wooden stampers. This exhausting work is executed by one or two women in relay, or both at the same time using two stampers with amazing co-ordination. As they work, they often air their matrimonial grievances in song, safe from male retribution.

On the shores of LAKE MALAWI, however, at one of the largest Bantu villages in Central Africa, NKHOTA-KOTA, three CHEWA women pound grain in a mortar singing as they work.

BEER-DRINKING:

The standard formula for making Bantu beer involves a nine-day process. Kaffir corn is soaked, then covered and left to germinate. Six days later, the yeast thus obtained is dried and stamped. A supply of stamped mealie-flour, plus husks, with a handful of yeast is then placed in a pot of boiling water, cooked like porridge and stirred to prevent lumps forming. As the mixture cools and ferments, a little grain is added as a final touch before the beer is strained ready for drinking. Beer inspires all partakers to song, the theme changing with the variety of beer.

In MOZAMBIQUE, the TSONGA make a potent beverage called MAKANJI from the CAJU-tree nut. In the Northern Transvaal, during the latter part of February and the months of March-April, when the ground beneath the lovely spreading MARULA trees is carpeted with the golden marula fruit, the women gather in groups in the shade of the trees, armed with the necessary implements to make delicious marula beer so loved by the PEDI TSONGA, VENDA and NDBELE living in this area. This only takes five days to ferment, and, given the opportunity, can last for a whole year. Even elephants in these parts are noted for their "high-stepping" during this season. In differing song-context, beer is also used as a libation at a family or tribal sacrifice to the ancestors.

LITERARY INCLINATION:

Story-telling is considered by the TSONGA as the most refined and pleasing of evening pastimes. Elderly women hold the children enthralled with their lively solo narration of folk-tales and legends in which the catch phrase, GARINGANI, is repeated animatedly in chorus by the children at intervals.

Among the SOTHO tribes, however, laudatory praises, in recitative form, proclaiming the glory of tribal ancestors and warriors, are chanted on all important occasions by tribal bards, men who shine in eloquence. These form an essential characteristic particularly of the MOKOROTLO historical and regimental songs of the BASOTHO.

INTEGRAL PART:

Thus we find music is not an isolated entity but an integral unit of the traditional Bantu ways of living, very much an "alive" participant, rather than a scientific bystander; not a cultivated art of the privileged or especially talented few, but the natural heritage and integral part of the whole panorama of Bantu life and living, every phase having its quota of song.

BIRTH — DEATH:

From birth, every phase of the Bantu child's life is accompanied by music, singing and dancing. In most tribes it is customary for the woman's first child to be born in her "maiden kraal" and for subsequent births to take place in the kraal of her in-laws where she takes up permanent residence. After a lapse of about ten days following the event, a feast is usually held in the kraal for the baby's namesake where a goat is slaughtered, food and beer prepared for the joyous occasion and presents given to the new-born infant. Jubilantly the new life is ushered in on an auspiciously musical note.

In its earliest years the child is soothed by the lullabies of the mother or a daughter of the household. As toddlers, they watch the games of their mothers or elder children, and as their powers of speech develop, we find them "la-la-ing" the various tunes and putting an odd word in here and there as they remember them, while stamping their little feet and whirling their sturdy little bodies in imitation of the movements of their elders. They are natural mimics and it is a familiar sight to see a tiny tot executing some sprightly steps, based on those of the per-

formers. They grow up in an essentially musical atmosphere which they cannot help but absorb. As a result MUSIC forms an integral part of the Bantu child's make-up and features in almost every game and activity during their adolescent years.

Much of the children's moral training is received from old women in the form of folk-tales, SOLO and CHORUS when gathered round the fire of an evening. In the ceremonial tribal schools, instruction is given largely through the medium of song. In every Bantu tribe there are definite songs which accompany the various preceding stages of the tribal ethnical procedure, and the lengthy negotiations which take place between the families of the bride and the groom-to-be. The wedding-feasts, social highlights, abound in song and dance. Death, too, is mourned in song.

THE BANTU BOY:

At an early age the Bantu boys take up their herding duties and the milking of cows. While out in the fields they delight in trapping small animals, looking for wild fruit and honey, playing games, usually involving training in aim and observation. Their pursuits are invariably accompanied by singing. There are even instances where songs, which these boys sing out in the fields while lighting a fire with stones, were originally tribal ritual songs.

BANTU WOMEN:

Once the fields have been ploughed by men, the women spend much of their time hoeing the land. Having learnt that many hands make light work, they often form work-parties. Working in unison, their singing sets the pace and maintains harmony of action, with shrill trills on high notes executed at periodic intervals by some, who inspire all to renewed effort.

BANTU MEN:

The men have songs they sing when going out to hunt and on their return, describing their hunting exploits and the kill of the trip. They are welcomed home in song by the villagers. Congregated round a fire in the evening, or assembled at the chief's kraal, the men often listen intently as the history of the tribe and the glory of their chiefs is related, in recitative manner, in praise-poems by a tribal bard. Even today, as was their wont in the past, the appreciative male-audience will join in the

chorus. Unfortunately these epics, in which so much authentic historical data is retained, as well as the regimental songs telling of the valorous deeds of tribal heroes, are stored in the retentive memories of the grey-heads and are in process of dying out with them.

INDIVIDUALLY — COMMUNALLY:

The Bantu have traditional songs accompanying every phase of living, both communally and individually. Folk-song is a taken-for-granted part of their daily lives and forms an intrinsic part of their tribal ceremonies and traditional festivities. MUSIC is interwoven into the very being of the Bantu people.

In many tribes there is a tribal feast to mark the partaking of the "first fruits of the season". Another feast of this nature can be held at the close of harvesting when the chief is presented with a portion of the yield by his people in gratitude of the success of the agricultural activities of the year. Every festivity or tribal occasion of import has its wealth of songs.

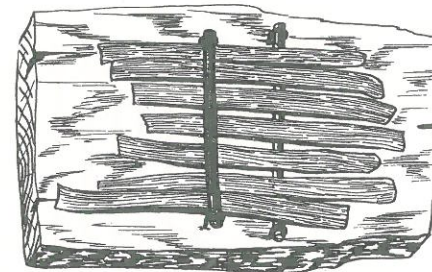
TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTS: (See illustrations on pages 13 and 14)

(a) PERCUSSION:

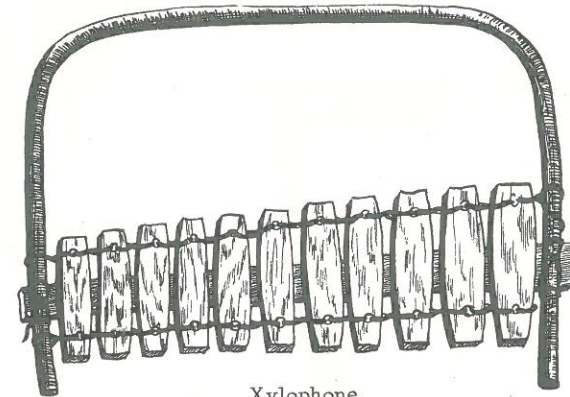
Wooden drums, or their tin substitutes, provide the pulsating rhythm which accompanies the singing and dancing on most festal occasions, whether family or tribal. At puberty and initiation ceremonies their tatoos serve to convey specific meanings, summoning and warning. Among the BALOVEDU the queen hands over a drum-stick to a new district head as a sign of her recognition of his new status. In most Bantu tribes no drumming is heard during official periods of mourning, the drums being "opened" once more thereafter. Even today many drums are kept in special enclosures for specific tribal-rites associate dwith ancestors. Leg and hand rattles accentuate the rhythm of the dance.

(b) WOODWIND:

Every PEDI, TSWANA and VENDA village has its GIVHA/KIBA/TSHIKONA FLUTE-ensemble which, accompanied by a set of drums, provide entertainment at festivities, or are found competing in friendly fashion.



Finger Piano



Xylophone

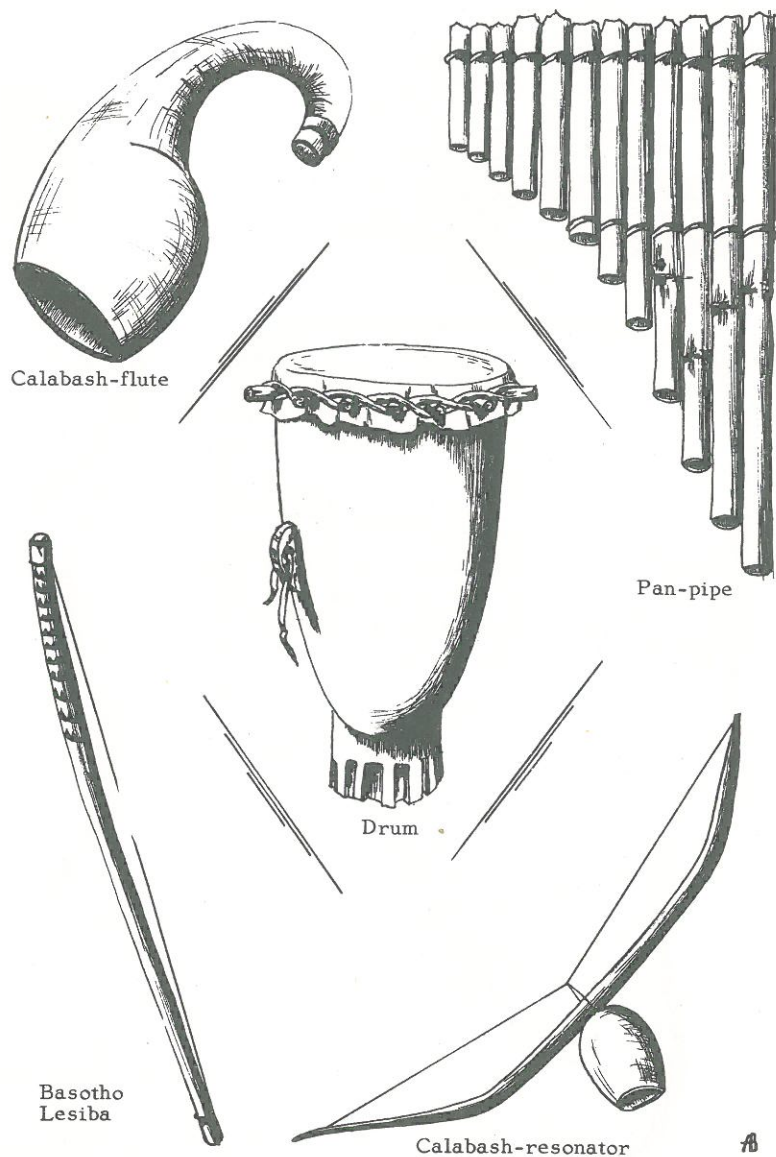


Saxophone



Horn

AB



MALAWI bands have their flutes made from calabash-lengths with embouchure hole in the stalk covered with a tissue-paper membrane, and stopped with a covering of brown paper.

Pan-pipes, graduating sets of reeds, each yielding one note, bound in sets by means of thonging, are played in ensemble by the NYUMGWE of Tete, Mozambique.

(c) STRING:

In individual instrumental performance, we have the traditional LESIBA of the BASOTHO men, which is a sinew-string bow held in play, horizontally, extending outwards and slightly upwards from the face, with the quill at the one end placed between widely-stretched, scarcely-open lips, the string caused to vibrate by being agitated through the sharp expiration and suction on the quill. Two tones are produced: laryngeal, a pedal effect as the air is breathed out, and buccal melody-notes, as the air is sucked in. Varying tones is obtained through the shape and size of the mouth in the act of suction, and the pressure exerted during this act on the quill.

A popular solo traditional instrument, played by both men and women today in most tribes is the bow with calabash-resonator attached to the wooden shaft either in the centre or at the lower end, facing away from the string. Held vertically in front of the player, fundamental tones are produced by tapping the string with a sturdy piece of grass in a sharp staccato action, the volume of tone being varied by the calabash-opening being held against or away from the body. Further fundamental tones are obtained by pressing the knuckle of the hand against the string, the intervals between these tones depending on string tension.

(d) KEYBOARD:

The FINGER PIANO, metal pens struck by the thumbs at their free-ends, is well-known among the PEDI, VENDA, LEMBA and other northern tribes.

The VENDA have their large xylophone-like keyboard instruments with calabash resonators and wooden slats of graduating sizes, played singly or in duo, by striking with mallets. The masters of this MBILA, however, are the CHOPI of ZAVALA (Mocambique), who have made an art of skilful variation on short, basic themes played on this instrument, singly but usually in ensemble.

(e) BRASS:

While the Bantu women hold sway in the percussion, or "kitchen" instruments, the Bantu men excel at playing the traditional "melody" instruments. As the tribal king pins, they are also the big brass, the horn blowers.

Formerly an instrument of war, the horn now adds prestige to tribal gatherings. It is blown through a lateral blow-hole, or through the tip.

BANTU JAZZ:

This traditional love of "brass" is now further manifesting itself in "traditional" sound using the saxophone, an instrument which Bantu men in the towns have taken to like fish to water, creating the so-called township or Bantu jazz, or, in its most up-to-date dress, saxophone jive; tremendously stimulating rhythmically, basically "traditional" in sound.

PROGRESSIVE JAZZ:

From these have emerged today a school of progressive jazz-players, completely at home in the art of improvisation and variation, so much part of the traditional folk-song and dance.

CHORAL COMPOSITIONS:

Some Bantu composers are venturing to write choral works that are traditional in style and feeling. In this way they are creating individual music, whereas for a long time their own original musical potential was ignored.

WESTERN INVOLVEMENT AND ORIGINALITY:

The urban involvement with Western musical systems has had the tendency of drying up Bantu musical ability and destroying the natural taste of the people by causing a complete break in the continuity of their musical style and in their use of music as a social force. This has tended to make the urban Bantu despise the past and stress the doubtful virtues of imitation in preference to self-reliance and originality.

To date, however, this impact on Bantu Musical development has been chiefly in the manner and style of presentation rather than in actual substance. The "traditional" in Bantu music has undergone an urban metamorphosis. It has, however, not been obliterated and remains the source of inspiration, basically, from which the "modern" in Bantu music has emerged. The Bantu, however, should be proud of his own cultural heritage and consciously strive to become re-acquainted with the best in it and to develop it. Music is his natural heritage; it is a field in which he can make a contribution to the world.

OPSOMMING

Musiek word gedefinieer as "ordelike opeenvolging van klanke wat bevrediging gee aan die estetiese en skeppende instinkte van die deelnemer . . . "elke volk vind estetiese bevrediging in klanke wat verskil van die musiek van ander volke". (Jones).

Elke bevolkingsgroep het noodwendig sy eie vorm van musikale uitdrukking wat onafskeidbaar verweef is met sy voortbestaan. Hoewel "elke voël word aan sy lied geken", betreffende die Bantoe waar is, lê die volgende basiese elemente die algemene musikale eienskappe ten grondslag:-

- (i) melodieuse;
- (ii) harmoniese;
- (iii) ritmiese.

(i) Die melodielyn kan vergelyk word met die tande van 'n reep-saag — 'n vinnige styging en stadige daling. Die neiging is om op 'n hoë platform-toon te begin en geleidelik af te daal soos die tande van die saag. Daar is geen sleutelveranderinge nie, maar wel 'n waarneembare komplement tot 'n sleutelnoot waarom die melodie vorm. Die frases van melodieë, betreklik lank met 'n sterk repeterende element en subtile nuansering, is die basis van sy melodiese konsep.

Bantoemusiek is vokaal en het ontwikkel saam met woorde. Bantoetale is "toon"-tale en die melodieë is ondergeskik aan die semantiese toon in ooreenstemming met die taalstruktuur. Die Zoeloe gebruik 'n 9-toon sisteem en die Sothotale 'n 3-toon sisteem. Die woorde van Bantoetale is nie beperk tot 'n vaste melodielyn nie. Sangmelodie het bygedra tot 'n verdeling van die taal sodat melodiese stylverskille ook in dialektiese verskille waarneembaar is.

Die semantiese toonstruktuur bepaal die melodie en is verantwoordelike vir die effense differensiasie van die verskillende verse, want vir elke lettergreep word een noot gesing en woorde moet gevind word wat naastenby by die wysie kan aanpas.

(ii) Harmonies het Bantoesang ontwikkel sonder instrumentale beïnvloeding. Gevolglik is Bantoe tradisionele musiek primêr antifonaal met polifonie as 'n bykomstige verskynsel wanneer 'n melodie op verskillende toonhoogtes gesing word. Die Bantoe toon 'n voorkeur vir solo-koor, tweedelige en variasiesang.

(iii) Ritme is vry sowel as vasgelê in 'n hoogsontwikkelde ritmiese aanvoeling. Sang, dromme, handgeklap en voetgestamp, elk met sy eie ritme, vorm soms 'n fassinerende komplekse ritmiese harmonie.

Verskille in styl, aanbieding en interpretasie karakteriseer die verskillende Bantoe-groepe. Tradisioneel sing die Bantoe legato, met tempo-verskille by Nguni en Sotho. Bantoe-musiek is onafskeidbaar geïntegreer in die verskillende etniese kultuurpatrone.

Die Pedi het 'n wye repertoire reënsange. Die Balovedu het 'n ingewikkelde reënmaak-rite wat deur die Reëngodin gevolg moet word. Die drom speel 'n belangrike rol.

Die Tsongas blaas die SHIPALAPALA, sing en speel die groot en klein drom by die aankondiging van die afsterwe van die hoofman en ampsaanvaarding van die opvolger. By die DOMBA-inisiasieseremonie van die Venda speel die drom en sang 'n baie prominente rol. Die Zoeloe dra met 'n lied die dakstruktuur van die hut na 'n nuwe verblyfplek. Die Tsonga wieg 'n pasgebore baba met 'n lied deur die rook van 'n medisinale vuur, terwyl in Malawi die ouer vroue buite die kraamhut sing. Die Tswana beeswagter speel sy serankure op die ver veepos en die Ovambo en Okavango-veeherders sing terwyl hulle hul kalbasse met suurmilk in die rondte draai. Die ritme van die maakklipwerk of stampblokstamper word vergesel deur 'n lied, terwyl drinkliedjies landswyd bekend is. Elke aspek of faset van die mense se lewe, vanaf geboorte tot die dood, word met sang vergesel.

TRADISIONELE INSTRUMENTE:

Hout slaginstrumente verskaf die polsende ritmes by verskillende geleenthede. Hand- en voetratels aksentueer die dansritmes. Hout blaasinstrumente vergesel gewoonlik 'n stel dromme terwyl rietfluit ensembles ook deelneem, maar snaarinstrumente solo optree. Klawerbordinstrumente bestaan uit die vingerklavier asook die xilofoon waarin die Chopi uitmuntend presteer.

Die waldhoring word oral gehoor en het gaan aansluit by die saksofoon, met die resultaat — Bantoe jazz, waaruit weer 'n skool van Progressiewe jazz-spelers ontwikkel het.

Komponiste van koorsang is besig om hul eie tradisionele etniese identiteit en individualiteit te herontdek.

Stedelike kontak met westerse musiek het veroorsaak dat die Bantoe se musikale oorspronklikheid tot 'n tydelike stilstand gekom het en na-afery posgevat het. Die "tradisionele" Bantoe-musiek het 'n verstedelingsproses ondergaan sonder om egter sy basiese inspirasie te verloor.

Musiek is die Bantoe se natuurlike erfenis en op hierdie gebied kan hulle 'n wêreldbydrae lewer.