

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *MBIRA DZAVADZIMU*
MODES AND ZEZURU ANCESTRAL
SPIRIT POSSESSION.**

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the Humanities, Development and Social Sciences
University Of Kwa-Zulu Natal

In (Partial) Fulfilment
Of the Requirements of the degree
Masters of Arts

By

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March 2009

Of

UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* mode and Zezuru Spirit Possession.

This thesis investigates the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and different levels of Zezuru spirit possession. The research adopted an ethnographic paradigm. Fieldwork, participant observation, face-to-face interviews and video recordings were employed during data collection. The theoretical underpinnings of the research were grounded in Neher's 1960 theory of auditory driving¹, Seeger's 1987 theory of metamorphosis, Wiredu's 2007 theory of interpretation and Tempels' 1959 theory of cosmology. The researcher carried out the research from an emic perspective. Both deep reflexivity and narrative reflexivity frameworks were used in the writing of this documentation and editing of my film.

The position of *mbira* music in the religious life of the Zezuru is quite significant in that it is used to evoke spirits in spirit mediums during occasions when the Zezuru communicate with their ancestors. *Mbira* music is embedded in the modes and tuning systems played on the *mbira*. The Zezuru believe that the modes belong to the ancestors and are passed from generation to generation as part of their heritage. My hypothesis is that *mbira dzavadzimu* modes are responsible for evoking spirits in spirit mediums.

¹ As discussed in Erlmann 1981

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Preface

My first debt of gratitude is directed to my supervisor Dr Patricia Opondo; your intellectual support, time, encouragement and advice is greatly appreciated. I am especially indebted to the following important people whose meaningful data made my thesis documentation as well as my ethnographic film a success: Samuel Mujuru, Abraham Zharare, Tazvinga Chizema, George Nyahwedekwe, Champkin Muringani, Cosmas Zambuko, Remigious Gwama, Cecilia Nyahwedekwe and Musafare Kamamziwa. I thank you all, without you this thesis was not going to be successful. I know that I entered into your private worlds but I appreciate your willingness to share with me your experiences about your rich traditional music from which I produced an awesome documentation and ethnographic video. My greatest thanks go to Cosmas Zambuko who enabled me to film a spirit possession ceremony, a thing that is not easy to do. I also thank Andrew Tracy and Paul Berliner for the constructive help they were giving me as well as allowing me to use diagrams and information from the literature. To my fellow colleagues Jerry Rutsate and Den Sibanda I say may God bless you all for your constructive advice. To my friend Sailas Mangwende I thank very much for accompanying me during my field trip visits. Also to my beautiful, wise wife, one and the only I salute you, hats off for you for looking after the children during my absence. Lastly I thank the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Post-Graduate Scholarship Fund committee for the tuition scholarship. Do not tire up please. Do the same to the other students.

DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts, in the Graduate Programme in Music, University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban, South Africa

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the faculty of Humanities, development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu- Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any other University.

P. Mafure (P. Mafure)

Student name

13 March 2009

Date

Definition of terms

Banya- A traditional hut in which retulas are conducted.

Bira- a traditional ceremony meant for spirit possession.

Chigunwe chikuru cherudyi- right thumb

Chigunwe chikuru- The thumb.

Dare- An open shelter normally built on stones where men usually gather during the evenings while women cook in the huts. It is on this *dare* where old men teach young boys how to be a man.

Dambatsoko – Tuning system that has a preferably deep sound.

Danhiko- The metal bridge that suspends the keys on the sound board.

Deze- The resonator used to amplify *mbira*.

Dira mhamba- A family bull that is used as a spiritual symbol.

Enzaniso yemazwi-Tuning the *mbira* keys

Gombwe- The highest level of spirits.

Gwariva- Wooden sound board on *mbira*.

Gwenyambira- Reknowned *mbira* player.

Gwenzi rakapotera mambo- A totem for *mwendamberi* clan.

Hacha- Fruits obtained from *muhacha* tree.

Hosho- Hand rattles played to accompany *mbira* music.

Hwenha- Onion like roots that can be cooked and eaten.

Hwindimbi- Keys with the same pitch.

Izwi- The pitch of a key or the entire sound of the *mbira*

Izwi rembira- The sound of *mbira*.

Izwi repamusoro- High pitch.

Izwi repasi- Low pitch

Kanyuchi- High pitched sound of bees.

Kubvumira- The response of *mbira* playing or singing.

Kudeketera- Special style of *mbira* singing which makes use of poetic phrases.

Kugadza mambo- Installation of the chief

Kupangira- To tune an instrument.

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Kupfura- A beat that akin to the concept of pulse.

Kupfura- Forging the *mbira* keys.

Kurapa- To heal.

Kushaura- To lead in singing or playing *nhare*

Kusutwa- The state at which the mediums cease to be in control of what their behaviour

Machira- Cloths put on by spirit mediums when possessed.

Madzangaradzimu- Machines like cameras and tape recorders.

Makano- Small axes used long ago by Shona people as a weapon for defence.

Makombwe- The plural word for *gombwe*

Makomo- Mountains

Makumbi- An aide to the spirit medium.

Mambakwedza- Early in the morning.

Manyanyau- Trance like state.

Manyawi- Trance like state.

Mapira- Plural of *bira*.

Maridziro- Way of playing.

Mashambazhou- Early in the morning.

Mashave- These are spirits of people who did not get proper burial and are
Alien people.

Masvikiro- (Singular *svikiro*) spirit mediums

Mavembe- A tuning system that is characterized by sweet sound.

Mazembera- The low keys of *mbira dzavadzimu*.

Mazingizi- Deep sound of *mbira* similar to that of an insect that makes a deep
sound.

Mbira- An African instrument that has an aggregate of some metal keys
mounted on a wooden soundboard.

Mhangura- Copper mineral.

Mhashu- locusts that fly in thousands.

Mhazi- A totem of the people who are of the lion clan.

Mhofu- Eland

Mhondoro- The spirits of the large area responsible for rain-making.

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Mhuri- A family ensemble.

Mubvamaropa- An indigenous tree also called *mukwa*.

Mufenje- Indigenous tree with soft wood.

Mufushwa- Dried vegetables.

Mukwerera- A rain making ceremony done under a *muchakata* tree.

Munongedzo- The index finger.

Muridziro- Playing technique.

Musiyamwa- Totem for the Hera people whose original location is Bhuhera district.

Mutanda- Metal rod used to fasten *mbira* keys on the sound board.

Mutsigo- A stick that is used to hold the *mbira* firm in the resonator.

Mwari- Shona word for god.

N'anga- Is a traditional healer.

Ngoma- Mode or song played on the *mbira*.

Ngoma yembira- *Mbira* modes.

Ngozi- Evil spirit that normally kills family members.

Ngwena- Keys of the middle register on the top side of *mbira dzavadzimu*

Nhaka- Inheritance that is passed over to the next generation by the ancestors.

Nhare- Telephone or relaying information from one person to another.

Nhendure- The first three keys on the right manual.

Nhetete- Small thin keys on the right of *mbira dzavadzimu*.

Nheuri- the top left keys of *mbira dzavadzimu*.

Nheverangwena- Keys that have sound within a low register.

Nziyo- Songs played on the *mbira* using different modes.

Nyika- The word is used to refer to the land and its people.

Pangiro- Tuning *mbira* keys according to how they should sound when played in a mode.

Rwiyo- Song with its text

Sadza- Thick porridge.

Svikiro- A medium possessed by an ancestral spirit.

Vadzimu- Plural of Ancestral spirits *mudzimu*.

Yekwa- Belonging to

Zezuru- An ethnic sub-group of the Shona of Zimbabwe

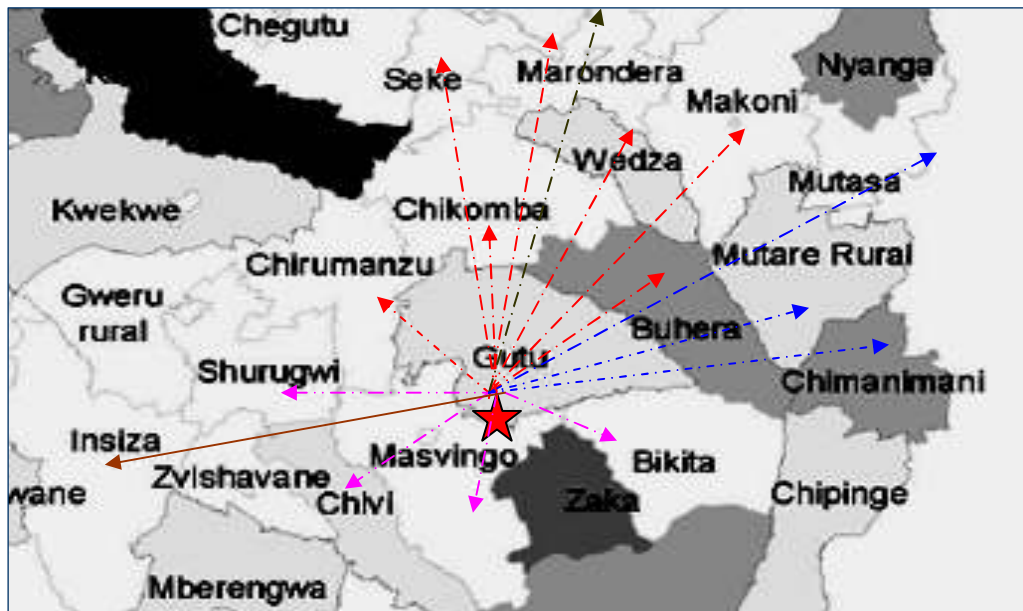
Zvirevereve- Proverbs used during poetic singing by *mbira* players.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 The history of the Zezuru people and their beliefs.

1.1 Who are the Zezuru?

The Zezuru are a sub-ethnic group of the Shona speaking people of Zimbabwe comprising Karanga, Manyika, Korekore, Ndaou and Kalanga. According to Paul Berliner (1993:18) Shona are a Bantu-speaking people who live in Zimbabwe and its borders with Mozambique and Zambia. The Shona are believed to have settled in Masvingo south of Zimbabwe at Great Zimbabwe by about the tenth century. In search of more land, the Shona sub-ethnic groups migrated and presently are mainly located as follows; Karanga, south-east; Manyika, east; Korekore, north-wets; Ndaou, south-east and Kalanga, west as shown in the map.

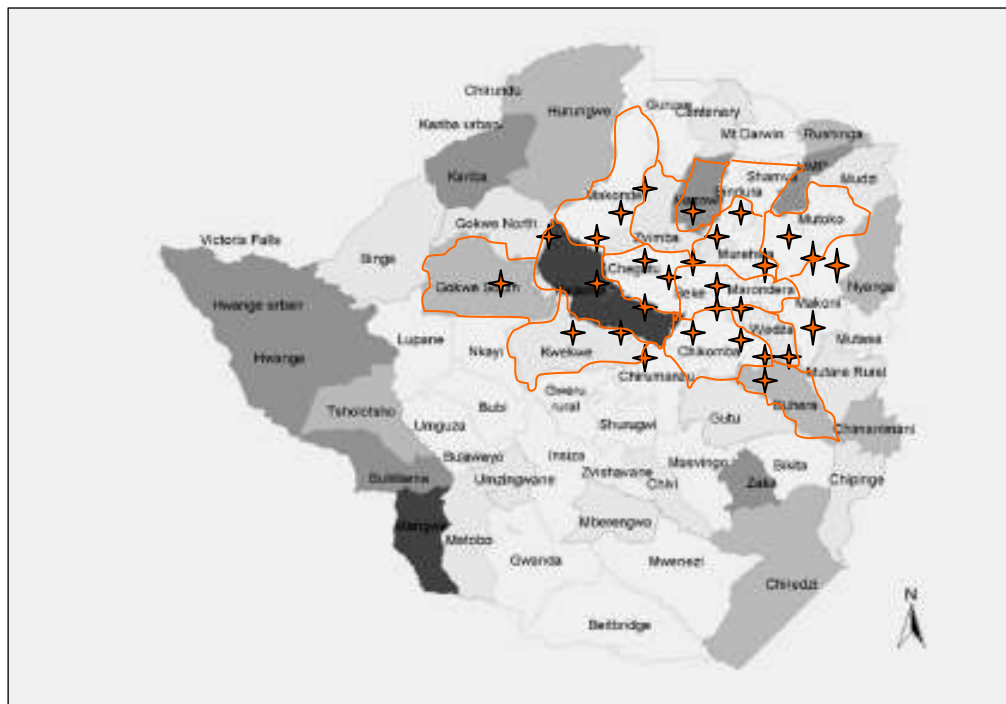


Map 1. Migration of Shona ethnic groups.
<http://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas>

- ★ - Great Zimbabwe or Dzimbabwe
- - - - - Direction of the Zezuru
- - - - - Direction of the Manyika/ Ndaou
- - - - - Direction of the Karanga
- - - - - Direction of the Korekore
- Direction of the Kalanga

1.2 Location of the Zezuru people.

The Zezuru are found in districts around Harare which are Chikomba, Hwedza¹, Marondera, Chihota, Chitungwiza, Mhondoro, Zvimba, Goromonzi, Bhuhera, Makoni, Chiweshe and Guruve (*Map 2*). They are more concentrated in Chikomba and Hwedza districts because when the Zezuru were moving up north from Masvingo, they came across Hwedza Mountains and discovered iron and copper minerals in these mountains. They then stayed around these mountains extracting copper and iron which they traded with Portuguese from Mozambique as well as using them to make hoes, spears, axes and more importantly keys for their religious instrument called *mbira*.



Map 2. Location of the Zezuru <http://commons.wikiped.org/wiki/Atlas>

★ - Location of the Zezuru

¹ Hwedza is the correct spelling of the place as it is pronounced although maps and books spell it as Wedza.

1.3 The Zezuru belief in spirit possession.

The Zezuru people have a strong belief that the spirits of the dead (*mhepo yevadzimu*) continue to live with them. These spirits are believed to have the power to look after the Zezuru by asking for rain from God through rain making ceremony (*mukwerera*). In addition, the spirits inhabit the living who then become spirit mediums (*masvikiro*) who do not only facilitate communication between the living and the dead, but also heal the people (*kurapa*) open opportunities for them to get jobs and promotions, protect people from evil spirits that bring misfortunes or deaths in families (*ngozi*)² and also help in identifying successors to chieftainships in the area (*kugadza mambo*) The Zezuru also believe that *vadzimu* keep them away from dangers, and protect them from lightning and diseases, and that they provide people with food in times of drought and famine in the form of *hacha*. *Hacha* are fruits that are obtained from *muchakata*. According to Gelfand (1987:112), family spirits (*mudzimu*) are responsible for the welfare of the nucleus family, while *mhondoro* and *makombwe* spirits are responsible for the whole clan or extended lineage”. The Zezuru belief concurs with Tempels (1952) as referenced in Gelfand (1965:107) propounds a theory of the *Bantu*³ philosophy in which he defines his metaphysical approach as the “Philosophy of Force”. He claims that it is a theory of life and provides a rational explanation for the African behaviour. His theory emphasizes the everlasting relationship between the living and the spiritual world which is true for the Zezuru people of Zimbabwe.

² *Ngozi* is the spirit of an alien person who was killed by one of the ancestors. The spirit comes to the living to seek revenge. It can cause numerous deaths unless given a payment in form of a wife or cattle.

³ *Bantu* are all the ethnic groups whose dialects are characterized by the root “*ntu*” as in *umuntu*. The word is no longer used instead the word ethnic group is more preferable.

1.3.1 The Zezuru spiritual hierarchy.

The Zezuru believe that their ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*) connect them to their God whom they call *Mwari*. They believe in a hierarchical approach (*kukwira gomo hupoterera*)⁴ to *Mwari* represented in *Figure 1* below:

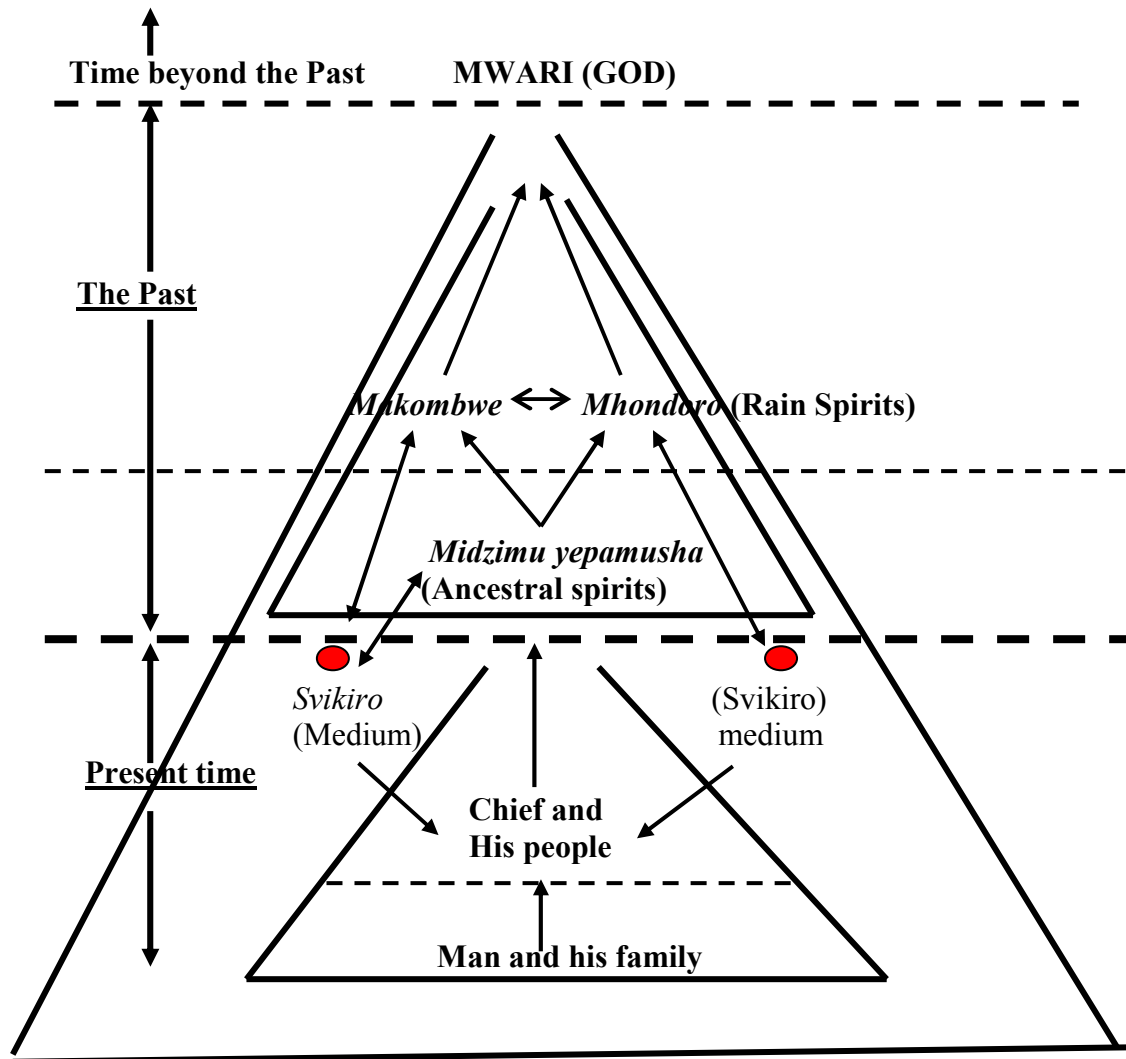


Figure 1 Zezuru spirit possession hierarchy.

From the diagram it can be noted that the Zezuru use three levels of spirits to communicate with *Mwari*. The first is the family spirit (*mudzimu yepamusha*). This is the spirit of a dead relative of a nuclear family. The spirit can be that of the dead father, mother, grandfather or grandmother. When family members want to communicate with *Mwari*, they organize a *bira* ceremony in which a spirit medium of the immediate family gets possessed with the spirit of an

⁴ The Zezuru have a knowledge system that emphasizes a hierarchical approach to whatever they do.

ancestor who will then talk directly with family members. This spirit medium is chosen by the spirit to become its host. The host is a member of the family who proves to be honest, respectful, forgiving, spiritually clean, one who is free from promiscuity and one who is polite and humble. The family spirit is responsible for promoting correct behaviour and punishing those who misbehave. The spirit also gives advice to the elders on issues that are likely to affect them. In general the family spirit looks after the life of its immediate people.

The second level constitutes the clan spirits (*makombwe* and *mhondoro*) which are responsible for the welfare of a clan or extended family and rain making respectively. They help to establish a feeling of fraternity or brotherhood. The *makombwe* and *mhondoro* spirits are the owner of the land or *nyika* (Gelfand 1987:113). They are believed to be able to control the germination, growth and harvest of the crops. Members are not allowed to consume their crops before taking a sample to the *mhondoro* who should acknowledge the readiness of the crops to God. It is only after this process that the members can go ahead and enjoy the crops. The chiefs of the area work hand in hand with *mhondoros*. They also consult them on matters concerning chieftainship and good governance.

According to Cosmas Zambuko⁵ both *makombwe* and *mhondoro* are next to God. He refers to them as creators of people (*sika rudzi*). Their responsibilities include looking after the welfare of the ethnic group members. The *makombwe* spirits' main task is to alert the chiefs on any impending dangers like diseases, hunger, floods and war. They are believed to be the only ones that have a direct link with God, (*Mwari*).

The last level is of the creator, God (*Mwari*). The Zezuru take *Mwari* to be the greatest spirit. They refer to him as creator (*Musikavanhu*). Other names given to God are owner of the universe (*Nyadenga*), he who turns things upside down (*Chipindikure*), the one who provides for good or bad (*Chirazamaura*), the great pool (*Dzivaguru*), and the one who existed for the first time (*Mutangakugara*)

⁵ Cosmas Zambuko is one of my subjects that I interviewed during my fieldwork in Hwedza District.

(Murphree 1969 in Gelfand 1987: 111). The Zezuru also believe in *Mwari Matonjeni* who is believed to dwell in the Matopo hills. He is believed to be the God of rain (*mwari wemvura*) (Rutsate 2007:30). *Mwari* is believed to be the overseer of the whole life experiences of the Zezuru. He is taken to be the provider of life and is highly respected.

1.3.2 The *Mashave* Spirits

Apart from the spirit levels alluded to above there are also alien spirits (*mashave*) that possess the Zezuru people. *Mashave* spirits which literally mean “those who go out and source wealth” normally capitalize on the host chosen by the *makombwe* spirits or *mhondoro* and then ask for permission to possess the same host. Gelfand (1987:129) calls them patron spirits. *Mashave* spirits are believed to be animal spirits or wandering spirits of men or women who did not get decent burials. They can also be defined as the spirits of foreign people who failed to get attention from their own immediate relatives (Forge 1954:34). It is possible for one host to serve the *gombwe* spirit together with several other *mashave* spirits. The function of the *mashave* spirits is to improve the host’s talents such as in identifying herbs for healing people, hunting, farming, singing and dancing, pottery and musical instrument making, cleanliness and forging hoes, axes, spears and *mbira* keys. Examples of these *mashave* spirits are *majukwa*, *njuzu*, *dona*, *changani*, *zvingweme*, *zvipunha* and *zungu*. During a *bira* ceremony *makombwe* spirit mediums may get possessed by these *mashave* spirits⁶. Normally the *mashave* spirits come first and the *gombwe* will come early in the morning, *mambakwedza*⁷. This implies that the ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*), rain spirits (*mhondoro*), clan spirits (*makombwe*) and alien spirits (*mashave*) all contribute in looking after the welfare of the Zezuru people. Each spirit level has its own particular task with *Mwari* as the overseer.

⁶ It is a common practice that *makombwe* spirit mediums can be possessed by a variety of spirits some of them being *mashave* spirits.

⁷ *Mambakwedza* is early in the morning. The Zezuru believe that the *makombwe* spirits prefer to possess their host during early hours of the day, which is from 2.00 am onwards.

1.4 Personal biography and rationale for the study, and its location.

1.4.1 Personal biography and rationale of the study.

As a Zezuru by origin the researcher was brought up in a family which practiced a traditional lifestyle, observing and participating in rituals and celebrations. He grew up in Chikomba district (Table 1.1) some twenty kilometres south of Hwedza Mountains. He was first introduced to *mbira* by Edwin Dandara in 1978 at the age of twelve. The researcher used to accompany his two older brothers Claitos Matiure and Norman Matiure to Edwin Dandara's home where they were learning *mbira dzavadzimu*. He was very keen to get a chance to learn to play *mbira* but was not paid any attention to. When his brothers would tire and when their thumbs became painful, they would put the *mbira* aside to rest a bit, the researcher would then pick the instrument and start playing exactly what he had observed during Edwin Dandara's demonstrations. His brothers reported this to our parents and then Nathan Matiure; his father's younger brother bought a big *mbira dzavadzimu* for me in September the same year, 1978. The researcher was very happy but at the same time wondered why the *mbira* was not given to his two brothers who were older and were showing more interest. From the day he was given the *mbira* he learned many songs by consulting other *mbira* players from the neighbouring villages like Agustin Dandara, brother to Edwin and Boaz Mutsago. He also learned some of the modes like *kuzanga* and *bhukatiende* through dreams. The belief according to the Zezuru is that a *mbira* player or *gwenyambira* can be taught *mbira* by the ancestors through dreams.

The first *bira* ceremony the researcher played in was on 27 June 1979. He remembers this day very well because this was his first time to play *mbira* in order to evoke spirit in a *bira* ceremony. He was scared while at the same time anxious to see what really happens when a host gets possessed. Around four in the morning is the time suitable for *makombwe* and *mhondoro* spirits to come and possess their hosts. Around this time the researcher felt tired and sleepy but continued to play *taireva* mode, one of the old modes preferred by local spirits in our community. A local man called Gondo was accompanying the music with shakers, *hosho*. What surprised the researcher was that after playing the song for almost ten minutes he felt a bit hot. His hair stood erect and my body had a

funny sensation, he could feel that there was something unusual as he was entering a trance state (*manyaunyau*). The researcher started to enjoy the mode more and more. The sound of the *mbira* became louder. All of a sudden he heard a loud sound of the *hoshos* dropping to the ground. When the researcher looked at Gondo who was sitting beside him playing the *hoshos*, he saw Gondo jumping up and down producing a loud sound like an animal saying, “*Ayii! Ayii! Ayii! Ayi-i-i!*” His hands were stuck between his legs and his body was shaking uncontrollably. All the elderly men started clapping their hands while all the women were ululating. The researcher was really scared and wondered what was wrong with Gondo. Of course the researcher used to hear about possession but had never seen it. There it was, just a few inches away from him.

From that day the researcher was invited to play in similar ceremonies in the villages around. He began to gain more experience and courage. Since then he has been interested in investigating on the relationship that exists between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and spirit possession in Zezuru culture. Based on this personal experience the author was prompted to research the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes⁸ and Zezuru spirit possession, thus able to do this thirty years later in this Masters dissertation.

In this study the broader issues were concerned with an investigation into how the different characteristics and reactions in the Zezuru spirit mediums portray their manifestation of the spirits during spirit possession and how the *mbira dzavadzimu* modes are connected to the spirit possession process. The main questions to be answered were:

- What systems are commonly used by the Zezuru in tuning *mbira dzavadzimu*?
- What do the Zezuru consider to constitute a mode?
- What are the different spirit levels evoked by *mbira dzavadzimu* modes?
- What is the relationship between modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* and spirit possession?

⁸ A mode in this thesis will be taken to mean the core structure of a song played on *mbira dzavadzimu*. The same name is also used to mean the song or the tunings systems of the *mbira*.

The objectives of this study were:

- To investigate how the Zezuru people tune their *mbira*.
- To identify the different modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu*.
- To investigate the relationship between modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* and spirit possession.
- To identify the different spirits evoked by *mbira dzavadzimu* modes.
- To establish the meanings of modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu*.

1.4.2 Location of the study and research subjects.

The research study was conducted in the districts of Hwedza, Chikomba, Makoni and Marondera in Zimbabwe. Hwedza is located south of Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe near Hwedza Mountains. It is believed that the original owners of *mbira dzavadzimu* who are the Zezuru of *mhofu yemukono* clan once lived around these mountains mining copper or *mhangura* for making hoes, axes and *mbira* keys (Jones 1992:29). These Zezuru people were displaced from these mountains by the Mbire people of chief Svosve around the early 19th century. Some of them resisted and are still living in the area but some moved back and occupied Chikomba district whilst others spread to neighbouring districts like Makoni, Marondera and Seke refer to (Figure 1.2). It is against this background that the researcher decided to carry out my research in these areas. His research subjects were drawn from Hwedza, Chikomba, Marondera and Makoni districts and one from Grahamstown in South Africa. The following are his major subjects that the researcher interviewed during my field work:



1. Remigious Gwama
Hwedza District
Mbira player



2. Samuel Mujuru
Makoni District
Mbira player and maker



3. Cosmas Zambuko
Hwedza District
Mbira player



4. Champkin Muringani
Hwedza District
Mbira player



5. George Nyahwedekwe
Hwedza District
Mbira player



6. Cecilia Nyahwedekwe
Hwedza District
Gombwe Spirit medium



7. Musafare Kamazizwa
Marondera District
Gombwe Spirit medium



8. Abraham Zharare
Chikomba District
Mbira player



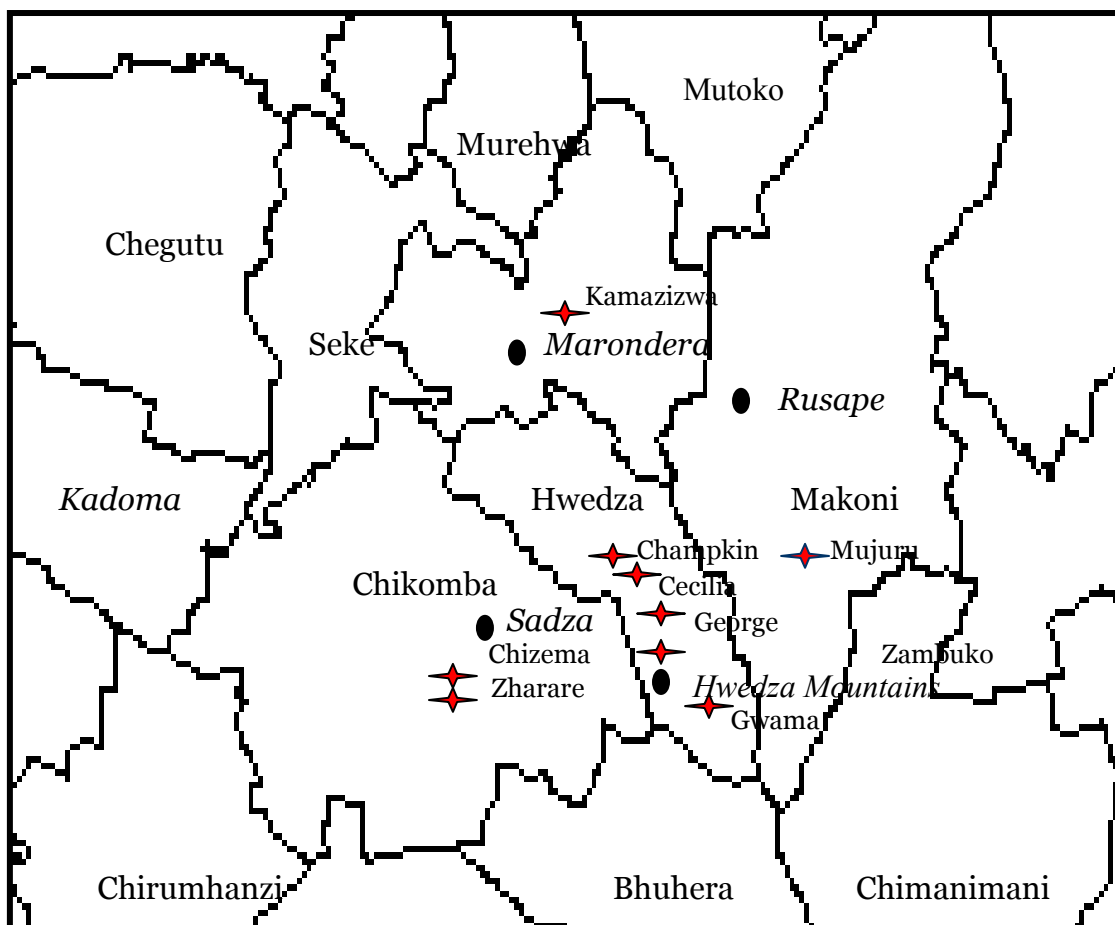
9. **Tazvinga Chizema**
Chikomba District
Mbira player



10. **Prof Andrew Tracy**
Grahamstown
Mbira maker, researcher and
player

Figure 2. Research Subjects

The map in (Figure 1.5) shows the location of my subjects with the exception of Andrew Tracy who stays in Grahamstown in South Africa but was born and brought up in Zimbabwe in District of Masvingo.



Map 3 Location of some of the subjects.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Research methods.

In order to collect data for this thesis an ethnographic approach was embraced. The methods and strategies employed included participant-observation, full participation, face-to-face interviews as well as video documentation of a staged spirit possession ceremony by Celilia Nyahwedekwe and Cosmas Zambuko. The researcher was in the field for the whole of June and July 2008 collecting data from the subjects in Hwedza, Chikomba, Marondera and Harare. He also returned to the field for two weeks in September 2008 for further questioning on outstanding issues and giving room for dialogical editing of my work.

1.5.2 Sampling technique

The author used purposive sampling techniques to select my subjects. This technique was preferred because there are very few *mbira* players and spirit mediums left in Hwedza District. Although the location is believed to be the origin of *mbira dzavadzimu* very few *mbira* makers and players are still present in the area. Most of them have migrated either to towns to look for jobs or have been resettled in the neighbouring districts like Chikomba, Makoni, Marondera and Chihota. In order to increase my sampling frame the author included two *mbira* players Abraham Zharare and Tazvinga Chizema from Chikomba just across Save River from Hwedza. He also included Samuel Mujuru and Musafare Kamaziwa from Makoni and Marondera Districts respectively. Both Samuel and Musafare's ancestors once lived in Hwedza but migrated to neighbouring districts after they were displaced by the Mbire people in the early 19th Century.

1.5.3 Data collection instruments

Field notes were used to capture data on my experiences and reflections during these performances. An interview schedule was used as a guide line during the interviews. The author used video recordings to collect data during interviews and performances. He used a Sony model DCR-HC52E digital video camera

recorder. The footage was used to produce an ethnographic film which accompanies my documentation of the research findings. The film is entitled “The Spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi speaks out” (Appendix I). The film has two scenes; the first scene is about *mbira dzavadzimu* tuning systems and modes discussed and demonstrated by Abraham Zharare and Samuel Mujuru. The second scene features Cecilia narrating her calling; this is then followed by a performance by Cosmas Zambuko and Remigious Gwama; and lastly a possession ceremony in which Cecilia gets possessed by Ambuya Mudevairi’s spirit. *Nyamaropa* mode is performed by Zambuko to evoke the spirit in Cecilia. John Baily supports the integration of film and written text when he says:

Filmmaking should be regarded as only part of the research, and the film as only part of the product, to be used to communicate the kind of information that film does well and that writing does not. Film and written texts should be mutually illuminating; the written text enhances our understanding of what we see, and the visual image makes what we read more comprehensible and meaningful (1989:16).

These instruments enabled the author to collect valuable information and materials in form of still pictures and video footage. The information and materials collected did not only help in answering my research questions but also made it possible for me to present data about spirit possession and *mbira dzavadzimu* tuning systems and modes symbolically and to make my documentation more engaging.

1.5.4 Data analysis

The data collected was analyzed qualitatively. In order to present my field notes in an engaging manner the researcher used Gregory Barz’s (1997) methodology of using different fonts to represent my experiences, reflections and my interaction with my field notes. Sequence shots were also used for the purpose of transcription and analysis of modes played by *mbira* players, analysis of the stages of spirit possession as well as to produce the ethnographic film. Baily (1989:11) says that “sequence shots are essential for filming musical

performances, where we want to see, as far as possible, complete and uninterrupted sequence of performances”. The researcher used this approach when he filmed the possession ceremony at Mawire village. He wanted to note the developmental stages that take place when the host gets possessed and hence establish the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and spirit possession.

In order to analyze and elicit more data about *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and spirit possession the author used “intra-cultural field feedback” Baily (1989), and complemented this with what Stephen Feld calls “dialogical editing”, an interactive strategy with the participant which he explains as follows:

The “dialogic” dimension here implicates what the subjects (Kabuli) and I say to, about, with, and through each other: with developing a juxtaposition of subjects’ voices and my own. My focus invokes a concern with authoritative representation: the power to control which talk when, how much, in what order, in what language (1976:191).

As a follow up to Baily and Feld’s approach, the researcher went back to screen the film to the subjects. He afforded these subjects an opportunity to comment on their performances and actions and to give input on what to include in the film and what to exclude. The researcher also checked with them on the accuracy of the discourse that he intended to use in my documentation. He asked them further questions on how spirit possession, tuning systems and the modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* interrelate.

The still pictures displayed in this thesis were developed from video footage taken during field work. All the still pictures, video footage taken and editing of the final video are the works of the researcher. These skills were acquired during the course on video documentation.

1.6 Conclusion

As a sub-ethnic group of the Shona, the Zezuru have a strong belief that there is an ever lasting relationship between them and their ancestors. They communicate with their ancestors at different levels during *bira* ceremonies depending on the context. A *bira* ceremony is an all-night ceremony conducted in order for family or clan members to communicate with their ancestors. The Zezuru believe in God (*mwari*) whom they approach through a hierarchical process. This approach emanates from their common practice of respect and humility. Whenever the Zezuru approach a respectful person like God, they do not go straight to God instead they follow the family or clan hierarchy starting with their ancestors going up to God (*kukwira gomo hupoterera*). In order to necessitate this hierarchical communication, *mbira* music is used to evoke spirits in spirit mediums during *mapira* ceremonies. Different modes are used to evoke different levels of possession although there is an overlap in the preferences of the modes by the different levels. *Mbira* music has been used for that purpose since the 10th century.

There appears to be no literature about the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and spirit possession yet this marks the most crucial practice of the Zezuru people's cosmology. As both a Zezuru by birth and *mbira* player by inheritance, it has been my concern to find out more about the relationship that exists between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and Zezuru spirit possession in order to make a scholarly contribution to the existing literature, herein lies the contribution of this research to ethnomusicological scholarship.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 *Mbira Dzavadzimu* modes, tuning systems and *mapira* ceremonies.

The scholarly work that supports this research emanates from a number of writers, whose early findings have contributed to knowledge on *mbira dzavadzimu* modes, tuning systems and spirit possession during *mapira* ceremonies. These include Berliner's 1993 monograph *The Soul of mbira* and his 1980 article "John Kunaka, *Mbira* maker"; Hugh Tracy's 1932 publication "The *mbira* Class of African Instruments of Rhodesia"; and Andrew Tracy's 1963 article entitled "Three tunes for *mbira dzavadzimu*". In this chapter I review the literature on the types and distribution of *mbira* in and around Zimbabwe; *Mbira dzavadzimu* tuning systems; *Mbira dzavadzimu* modes and the Zezuru *bira* ceremony; spirit possession and mediumship.

The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis are grounded in Neher's (1960) theory of auditory driving as discussed in Erlmann (1981) which states that music can evoke immediate physiological effects on the brain leading to trance and possession. Although this theory was dismissed by Rouget (1977), the researcher still finds it relevant to his thesis because it helps in articulating how particular *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and tuning systems evoke spirits to embody the mediums. This theory will be used juxtaposed with Placide Tempels' (1959) theory of cosmology derived from his "Philosophy of Force", Seeger's (1987) theory of metamorphosis and Kwasi Wiredu's (2007) theory of interpretation.

The Zezuru spirit possession is a clear indication of the connection between the living and the dead. For them life never ends as the dead continue to interact and influence their lives. This understanding is supported by Tempels' (1959) theory based on his Africanist Philosophy which he defines in his metaphysical approach as "Philosophy of Force". He coins this approach as the theory of life which basically provides an explanation for African behaviour. He maintains that the theory governs the whole African life and man whether living or deceased can develop, reinforce or diminish the being of another man. This hypothesis emphasizes the strong influence between the progenitor, the spiritual

force and the progeny the living force. In the case of the Zezuru, the progenitors are the ancestral spirits who have the power to influence the life of living, and the progeny are the living people.

Communication between the Zezuru people and their ancestors is not only in form of direct dialogue during a *bira* ceremony, but can also be conducted through dreams. Gelfand (1987:127) supports this by maintaining that “In his dreams the host sees his/her former relative instructing him/her on what to tell to people.” Temples (1959) corroborates with Gelfand by saying that a rational being whether in a spirit or living can act indirectly upon another rational being by communicating his vital influence to an inferior force through the intermediary (*midzimu spirits*) of which it influences the rational being. For the Zezuru this is evidenced by their practice of communicating with their ancestral spirits during *mapira*⁹ ceremonies. His theory emphasizes the belief that the vital force, which is God (*mwari*) is the source of the force of every creature. Even the Zezuru believe that *mwari*’s vital force is passed on to the spirits of the dead which gives the spirits the power to heal, provide rain, foretell future events, increase talent in a living being, protect the living, communicate with God himself and the power to possess a living being. This takes place when the ancestral spirits manifest themselves in spirit medium after they have been evoked by *mbira* music. Tempels’ theory reinforces my hypothesis in this thesis which states that *mbira dzavadzimu* modes are responsible for evoking spirits in spirit mediums during a *bira* ceremony.

Knowledge systems embedded in the social cosmos is better presented in the indigenous discourse of the society that owns it. Any attempt to do so in foreign language is likely to misrepresent the knowledge. This is evidenced by the word “thumb piano” used in some of the literature to refer to *mbira*. The word distorts the real indigenous concept of a *mbira*. In order to retain the Zezuru conceptualization of words pertaining to beliefs about *mbira* and spirit possession, the researcher adopted Wiredu’s (2007) theory of Interpretation which advocates for an Africanist approach in interpreting culture. It states that

⁹ *Mapira* is the plural word for *bira* which means a all-night ceremony in which the Zezuru invite their ancestors so that they speak to them.

interpretation of African music should be based on the Africanist beliefs and approaches. Inline with Wiredu's theory, Meki Nzewi (2007:225) strongly advocates for an adoption of an Africanist approach in advancing human knowledge system when he says "Africa should no longer be deemed a curio, a zoo continent that must not determine original way of advancing its human knowledge and system except as dictated by exogenous manipulators...". In support of this approach the researcher used some of the Zezuru discourse juxtaposed with English so that the meanings of the words maintain the Zezuru's conceptualizations. Wirandu and Nzewi's theories were drawn upon as the author explained issues concerning modes and spirit possession from a Zezuru point of view. Some of the Shona words and their inclined meanings are found in the definition of term section or in footnotes.

2.1 The *mbira* instrument, types and distribution in Southern Africa.

The *mbira* instrument has a wooden soundboard (*gwariva*), some metal keys (*mbiras*) mounted on it using a crossbar (*mutanda*) and a bridge (*danhiko*) as shown in *figure 2.1*. The soundboard is made from wood extracted from *mubvamaropa* and *mufenje* trees. The keys are forged from any high carbon wire used to make nails and mattress springs. For the Zezuru the word *mbira* has several meanings; the entire instrument, keys, the songs played on the instrument and the dance style.

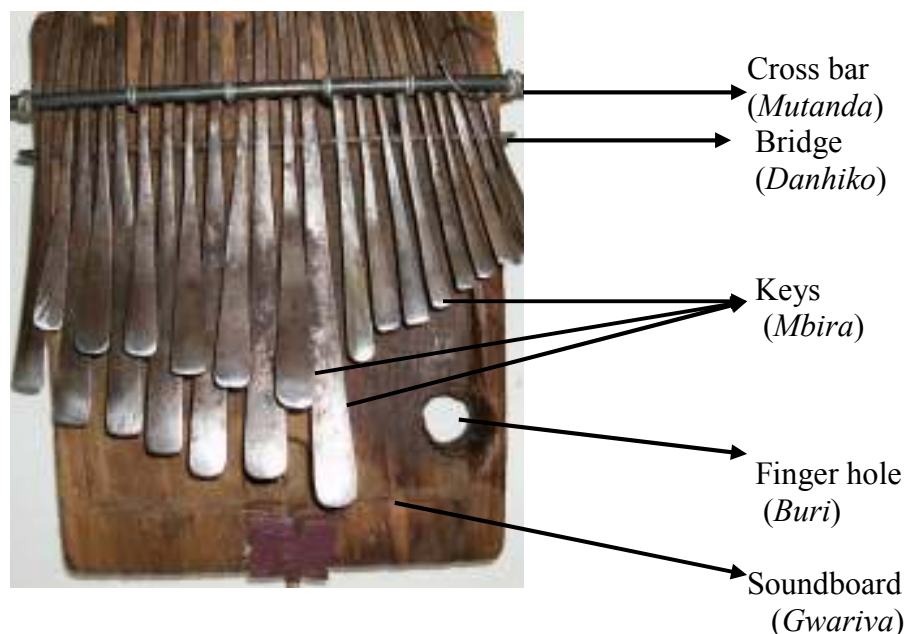


Figure 3. Parts of the mbira.

There are several types of *mbiras* found in Southern Africa. The *mbiras* are distinguished by the size, shape of soundboard, tuning system, origin, function and number of keys on each *mbira*. The various different types of *mbiras* commonly found in the Southern part of Africa can be classified according to their function which can be religious or secular. The pictures below show some of the many *mbiras* that fall under either of the two categories. Those that are used for religious purposes are further classified under the *mbira dzavadzimu* family and the *njari* family. The categories are characterised by the difference in tuning systems or number of keys. It is important to note that this class of *mbiras* used for religious functions include *matepe* which is not easy to come by, thus is not on the list of pictures.

Mbiras used for religious functions

Mbira dzavadzimu family



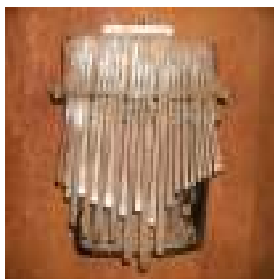
Mbira dzavadzimu
Zezuru/ 28 keys
Gandanga tune
Zimbabwe



Mbira dzavadzimu
Zezuru/ 22 keys
Nyamaropa tune
Zimbabwe



Mbira dzavadzimu
Zezuru/ 30 keys
Zimbabwe



Mbira dzavadzimu,
Zezuru/25 keys
Dambatsoko tune
Zimbabwe



Mbira dzavadzimu
Zezuru/ 21 keys
Nyamaropa tune
Zimbabwe



Mbira dzavadzimu
Zezuru/ 24 keys
Dongonda tune
Zimbabwe

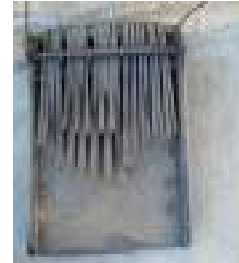
Below are some of the *njari* commonly found in Southern Africa.



Njari
Zezuru/ Chivhu
Zimbabwe



Njari from Gokwe
Karanga
Zimbabwe



Njari
Zezuru/ Chivhu
Zimbabwe

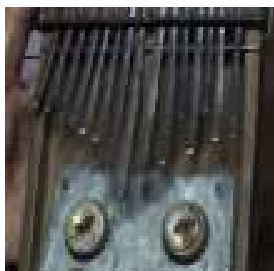


Njari huru
Zezuru/ Njanja
Zimbabwe

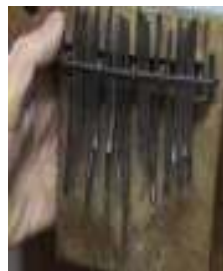


Njari
Zezuru/ Njanja
Zimbabwe

Below are some of the *Mbiras* that are played for secular purposes in Southern Africa.



Ndimba
San
Botswana



Dipila
Pedi
South Africa



Kalimba
Nsenga
Zambia



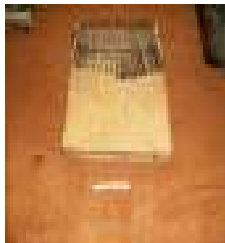
Ndandi
Nsenga
Zambia



Karimba
Chikunda
Mozambique



Karimba
Nyungwe
Mozambique



Nyonganyonga
Sena
Mozambique



Mbira dzavaTonga
Tonga
Zimbabwe



Kwanongoma Karimba
Zimbabwe



Mbira DzavaTavara
Tavara
Mozambique



Mbira dzavaNdau
Ndau
Zimbabwe

Figure 4. Different mbiras in Southern Africa. Photographs taken at International Library of African Music at Rhodes University in Grahamstown 20 August 2008 with permission from Andrew Tracy.

On the 20th of August the researcher was privileged to meet Andrew Tracy at the International Library of African music (*Figure 2.3*). He confirmed that the oldest *mbira dzavadzimu* they have collected is *dambatsoko* although it is very difficult to tell. He added that *mbiras* are more concentrated in Zimbabwe but could not give reasons.



Figure 5. Andrew Tracy explaining the distribution of mbira. Photographed at International Library of African Music at Rhodes University in Grahamstown 20 August 2008

Tracy identifies and explains in detail all the different types of *mbira* collected by his father Hugh Tracy and himself. Of interest were the different types of *mbira dzavadzimu* distributed in Southern Africa. What he explained is evidenced by a map in his article “The original African mbira” (1972:96) which is presented in map 4 below. Out of these *mbiras* the Zezuru usually use *njari*, *matepe* and *dzavadzimu*¹⁰ for evoking spirits in spirit mediums as previously said. For the purpose of this study the author concentrated on *mbira dzavadzimu* or the *mbira* of the ancestors also called *nhare*. The reasons for choosing *mbira dzavadzimu* are that it is the one that is commonly used by most of the Zezuru people to evoke spirits in spirit mediums and also because the writer has played the same type of *mbira* since the age of twelve in *mapira*¹¹ ceremonies.

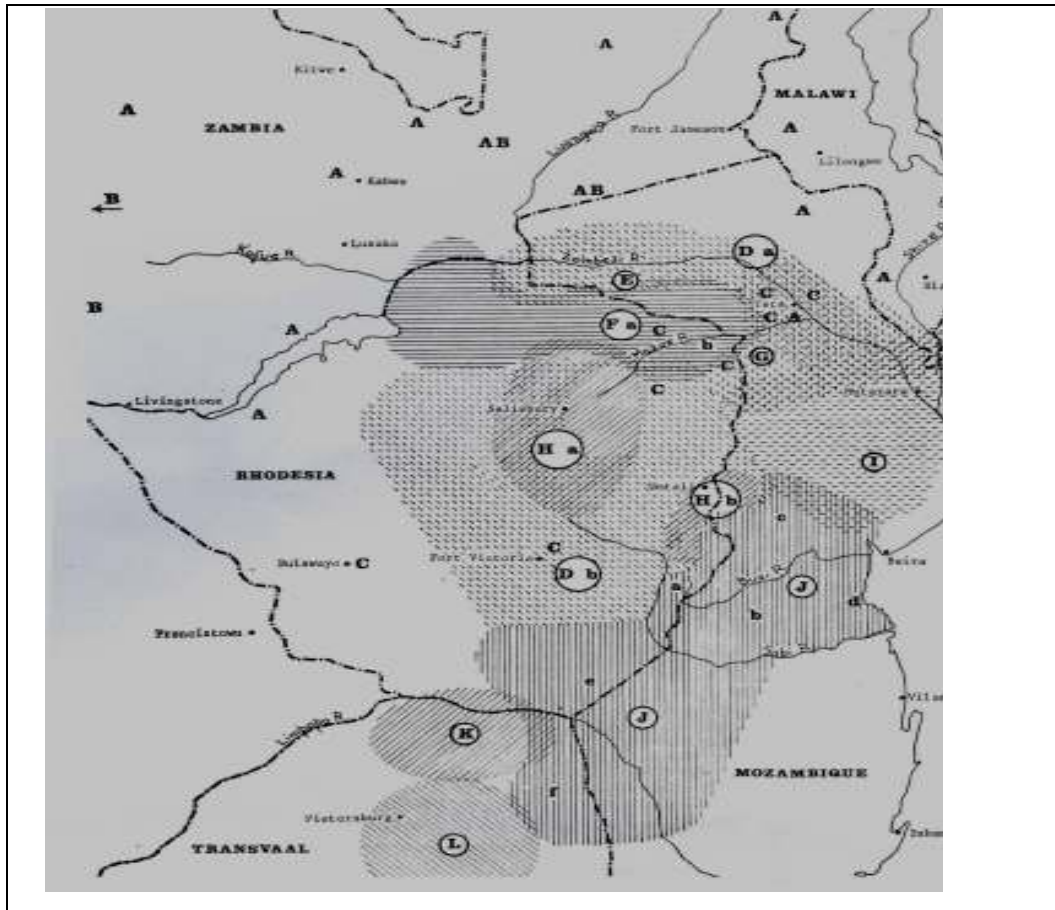
Andrew used letters to represent different *mbira* in their respective areas as follows:

A- *Kalimba*- (Nyungwe, Chewa, Nsenga, Nguni)

¹⁰ The three *mbiras* have a common history. They are all originally for the Shona people. They also have similarities in the keys and can be used to play similar modes.

¹¹ *Mapira* is the plural of *bira*.

- B- *Ndimba*- (Nsenga)
- C- *Karimba* - (Nyungwe, Chikunda, Sena, Tonga, Korekore, Karanga)
- D- *Njari*- (a) (Nyungwe, Sena, Tonga
(b) (Njanja, Karanga, Hera Bocha, Zezuru)
- E- *Njari huru*- (Chikunda)
- F- *Hera*- (a) (Korekore, Tavara, Nyungwe)
(b) (Sena, Tonga)
- G- *Mana embudzi*- (Tonga)
- H- *Mbira dzavadzimu*- (a) (Zezuru)
(b) (Manyika)
- I- *Nyonganyonga*- (Barwe, Sena)
- J- *Mbira dzaVandau*- (a) Tomboji
(b) (Danda)
(c) (Utee)
(d) (Mashanga)
(e) (Hlengwe)
(f) (Shangani)
- K- *Mbila deza*- (Lemba, Venda)
- L- *Dipila*- (Pedi)



Map 4. Map from Tracy 1972 page 86¹²

2.2 Previous interpretations of *Mbira dzavadzimu* tuning systems

Mbira players tune their *mbiras* on day-to-day basis when they go for *mapira* performances or when they want to play their *mbira* for entertainment by altering the length of the keys that are out of tune (Berliner 1993:60). A *mbira* gets out of tune when dropped or due to weather changes. So each time when a player wants to play the instrument the first thing is to find out whether the *mbira* is in tune.

Tuning of *mbira* requires a good ear and being a *mbira* player does not necessarily mean that one is also good at tuning the instrument. Some *mbira* players have to take their *mbira dzavadzimu* to specialists for tuning. Berliner

¹² Extracted from African Music Journal on the 27th of October 2008 with permission fro Tracy (Appendix III)

(1993:60) confirms that John Kunaka one of his subjects relied on his nephew's assistance when tuning his *mbira*. Berliner (1993:60) points out the different preferences on the tuning systems on *mbira*, saying that, "The tunings that *mbira* players adopt either as an individual or collectively vary considerably". He gives examples of Hakurotwi Mude, a well experienced Zezuru *mbira* player whom he says changed the tuning of his *mbira* frequently and that the *mbira* players play their entire repertory from the *mbira* in the tuning they have adopted either from other *mbira* players or the ancestors. Berliner summarizes the Shona concept of tuning as follows:

Mbira players use the Shona-ized English word *chuning* to refer to a number of interrelated aspects distinguishing the overall sound of a certain *mbira* from that of others. These include tone, sound projection, pitch level, variation within octaves, and relationships of corresponding intervals among the three manuals and presence or absence of tuned overtones (1993:61).

The major difference in the tuning systems of *mbira* belonging to different player is in what Berliner refers to as the relative highness or lowness of the *mbira* tuning system. The lowness or highness is decided by the *mbira* players in consultation with the preferences of the spirits of the area. Conventional *mbira* players and makers rank the tuning systems of their *mbira dzavadzimu* from those with low voice which they call number one, followed by number three and so on up to number five for those with high voice. However regardless of these ranks, the tuning systems continue to retain the name of the modes used to tune individual keys. These levels are relatively close to some of the western keys as shall be illustrated later in this thesis. For Berliner the keys of the *mbira dzavadzimu* he studied ranged from G to C. This is different from what I found out during my fieldwork in which the *mbira* ranged from G to D. This implies that the *mbira* players' range of tuning systems has widened with time. Berliner's study provides an illustration of the variations in tuning systems of two *mbiras* for Kunaka and Bandambira (Berliner 1993:63).

2.3 *Mbira dzavadzimu* modes and their place in Zezuru culture

Mbira songs are generated from “modes”. These are major pieces that are characterized by tonal centre and phrase arrangement. Although it is possible for different modes to have the same characteristics, they differ in the way the notes are arranged in the mode. Each mode can be used to create several songs depending on the player’s creativity and improvisation. Berliner (1993) and Tracy (1972) agree on that repertoires/modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* are dedicated to the ancestors (*vadzimu*) and that the pieces belong to the ancestors and are passed down orally from generation to generation. Berliner (1993:73) identifies several modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu*. Most of them are related to hunting experiences. The pieces narrate the experiences of the Zezuru people some thousand years ago. The names of the mode are derived from these experiences. For example *nyamaropa*¹³ mode refers to the meat and blood of the animals they hunted in the forest, and *shumba*¹⁴ and *nhemakonde*¹⁵ refer to animals they encountered in the forest.

The modes identified by Berliner (1993:73) with the help of *mbira dzavadzimu* players like Bandambira, Ephat Mujuru, John Kunaka, Pasipamire and Mude show that they are the same throughout Zimbabwe but players have different variations. They are *Nyamaropa*, *Taireva*, *Chipembere*, *Mukatiende*, *Kuzanga*, *Nhemamusasa*, *Mandarendare*, *Chipundura*, *Nhimutimu*, *Karigamombe* and *Shumba*. The mode that appears to be the mother of most of them is *nyamaropa*. Berliner (1993:78) takes tonal centre to be the starting point of the mode depending on the overall key of the *mbira*. He gives a comparative analysis of *nyamaropa* and *nhemamusasa* by saying that the two share basic elements of harmony and thematic structure in spite of the difference in their tonal centres, that is *nyamaropa* G and *nhemamusasa* C. For him in *nyamaropa* the first part of

¹³ *Nyamaropa* is a word that is formed by two words *nyama*, meat and *ropa*, blood. The mode refers to the meat and blood of the animals hunted by hunters.

¹⁴ *Shumba* is the Shona word for lion. The mode signifies the authority of the lion which competes with hunters in the forest.

¹⁵ *Nhemakonde* is a word formed by combining the words *nhema*, rhinoceros and *mukonde*, aloe. The mode signifies the fierceness of the rhinoceros and its favourite food, an aloe. Normally it is alleged that when a rhinoceros has eaten an aloe (*mukonde*) it gets drunk and becomes fierce and dangerous.

the motive is transposed up a scale degree and in *nhemamusasa* the entire phrase is transposed up a scale.

2.4 Spirit possession and mediumship

Spirit possession is a common practice in most African countries and other parts of the world. Gilbert Rouget has this to say about possession:

...possession itself is the socialized behaviour of an individual consisting, given certain circumstances, in a change taking place within him, with the effect that his usual personality (which governs his everyday behavior) is replaced by the persona of the deity, who dictates different forms of behavior to him; this substitution being accompanied by an alteration of psychic activity generally termed trance (1985:30).

Complementing and extending Rouget's definition of possession is Boddy's assertion that:

Possession refers to an integration of spirit and matter, force or power and corporeal reality, in a cosmos where the boundaries between an individual and her environment are acknowledged to be permeable, flexibly drawn or at least negotiable. Spirit possession rests on epistemic premises (1994:407).

According to Rouget possession is the embodiment of a medium (*svikiro*) by an ancestral spirit. The Zezuru define possession as *kusutswa* meaning the state in which the mediums (*masvikiro*) cease to be in control of their behaviour. This means that the spirit will have taken over both the body and the mind of the medium. Boddy's explanation of spiritual embodiment likens it to the marriage between the spiritual and natural being. Given that the ancestral spirit is more powerful than the medium, the medium will, at the point of possession, yield to the more powerful spiritual force. When Zezuru mediums reach such state of embodiment, they pronounce the presence of the spirit through psychic activities, frequently referred to as trance (*kunyaunywa*), such as yawning, lethargy, convulsions, protruding eyes, hype-active dancing, thermal disturbances, insensitive to pain, noisy breathing, fixed stare and closing eyes.

The rest of the participants, *mbira* and rattle players, dancers and singers at a spirit possession ceremony experience the effect of the trance the medium has entered into.

A spirit medium (*svikiro*)¹⁶ can be a male or a female. For one to be a spirit medium he/she has to undergo a calling process. This involves suffering from ailments like headache and stomach-aches. Such ailments are not be healed by common medication. The victim may also dream about the ancestors telling him/her what they want (Gelfand 1987:127). Upon realizing these symptoms, the elders will suspect the presence of the spirits. They will then consult other spirit mediums who will confirm the wishes of the spirits to possess the host and a *bira* ceremony will be organized (Refer to film *Scene two Appendix 1*).

2.5 Mbira modes and spirit possession at a Zezuru bira.

The word *bira* is derived from the word *kupira* which literally means “to forward one’s concerns to a respected person”. In this case it is used to refer to the collective communication between the people and the ancestors during an all night ceremony in which *mbira* instrument is played. The main purpose of a *bira* is to enable dialogue between members of the family or clan with their ancestors. Berliner defines a *bira* as “a formal, all-night ceremony in which family members come together to call upon a common ancestor for help” (1993:187). He adds that during the ceremony the members are served with ritual beer which is brewed in honour of the ancestors. According to Berliner (1993:190) the nucleus of the music is usually provided by *mbira* ensemble consisting of two or more players, *hosho* players and singers. This is also confirmed by Dumisani Maraire (1990) in his dissertation when he researched about the position of music in the spirit possession of the Shona. *Mbira dzavadzimu* musical performance is inseparable from the instrument’s connection to ancestral spirits. For the Zezuru the *bira* is a social institution where *mbira* music is enacted for the purpose of spirit possession. However each *bira* is distinguished by its own context. The Zezuru may want to contact the *mhondoro*, the *vadzimu* or *mashave*

¹⁶ *Svikiro* is a person who gets possessed by the spirits. The word is derived from the verb *kusvikirwa* which means being possessed.

or may wish to thank the spirits for a special service rendered (Gelfand 1987:135).

2.5.1 Types of *mapira*.

The table summarizes the different types of *mapira* ceremonies common in Zezuru culture. It is important to note that *mapira* ceremonies are performed any month of the year with the exception of November or *Mbudzi*. According to the Zezuru beliefs it is a taboo to perform any ritual in this month. The reason is that this month is meant for the ancestors to rest after working for the whole year.

Type of <i>bira</i> and the spirits involved.	Description	Purpose	Period
<i>Mukwerera</i> -Rain spirits	Rain making ceremony linked to God of <i>Matonjeni</i> .	To ask for rain from God, <i>Mwari</i> .	From September to October.
<i>Doro renyota</i> -Family spirits (Beer for quenching the ancestors' thirst)	A ceremony meant to thank the ancestors.	To thank the ancestors for looking after their people.	Any time of the year except in November
<i>Bira rematendo</i> -Rain spirits	Thanks giving ceremony	To thank the ancestors for a good harvest.	From April up to October.
<i>Bira remasvikiro</i> -Clan or family spirits.	Initiation or possession ceremony	To initiate spirit mediums or for healing purposes.	Any time except in November
<i>Bira rekugadza mambo</i> -Clan spirits.	Installation of a chief	To celebrate the success of a new chief following the death of the predecessor.	Any time except November
<i>Dira mhamba</i> -Family spirits	Sacrificing any chosen bull to the ancestors.	To put in place a bull for the spirit to dwell in.	Any time except November.
<i>Kurova guva</i> -Family spirits	Is done a year after the death of an elderly person.	To welcome the spirit of the dead to the living.	Any time except in November.

Table 1 Classification of *mapira* ceremonies.

It is important to note that different modes are played during ceremonies listed in the table above. However the text assigned to the modes determine the kind of the ceremony suited to it. For example, the mode *nhemamusasa* can have text that can suit *kurova guva*, *bira remasvikiro* or *mukwerera* where singers can use words such as *mudzimu dzoka*, *mazuva angu asara mana* and *dziva renjuzu*, respectively.

2.5.2 Details of *Mapira* Ceremonies

Most of the *mapira* ceremonies involve both men and women. Children may also attend but they will have their own activities outside the ritual hut (*bwanya*). Important key members like *varoora*, *vakuwasha* and *vazukuru*¹⁷ play a significant role of coordinating events on behalf of the elders. *Mbira* music is performed by ensembles of more than two or even as many as ten players or more as shown in the picture of Muchatera Mujuru's ensemble (*mhuri*) in (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Muchatera Mujuru's *mbira* ensemble. Photograph from Berliner 1993 Plate 43 used with permission from Paul Berliner.

Before the *bira*, elders consult the *n'anga* or traditional healers on what to do depending on the reason for conducting the *bira*. They brew traditional beer (*hwahwa*) from grain like maize, sorghum (*mapfunde*) or rapoko (*zviyo*). The beer is brewed by women who no longer have sexual relationships with men. This is inline with the Zezuru belief that ritualistic activities should be handled

¹⁷ *Varoora* are newly married wives of the village, *vakuwasha* are those men who have married sisters of the village and *vazukuru* are children of the sisters of the village.

by members who are “clean” (Gelfand 1987:135). The elders invite other spirit mediums from neighbouring villages, *mbira* players and relatives. Traditional drums are dried in the sun or with fire to tune them. *Mbira* players tune their *mbira* and make sure that they suit the preferences of the spirits to be evoked and also make sure that they all have the same tuning system if they are to play as an ensemble. Rattles or *hosho* players make sure their rattles are in order. Pots used to store beer are cleaned and a cow is slaughtered for meat which will be part of the food to be eaten during the ceremony. In the case of a *bira* in which the family bull (*dira mhamba*) is killed, the bull will be killed in the morning after people have spent the whole night drinking, and dancing to *mbira* music. Spirit mediums will then drink the blood (*kumwa muropa*) of the bull as soon as its throat is cut. The Zezuru believe that the spirits like the blood of the family bull. So when the spirit mediums drink the blood, the belief is that it will be the spirits drinking it not the living hosts (Gelfand 1987:136). The ritual hut (*banya*)¹⁸ is cleaned and everything in it is taken out to create enough space for the ceremony.

The ceremonies normally start around eight o'clock at night. To open the ceremony a short prayer (*kupira*) is conducted. Four small pots (*pfuko*) and a wooden plate with snuff (*chinyemero*) are put in front of the hut in which the ceremony will be held (*Figure 2.7*). Each pot signifies some special type of spirits. The first pot on the extreme right is filled with beer (*hwahwa*). The second is filled with unprocessed beer (*mhanga*)¹⁹, the third is filled with (*musungwa*)²⁰ and the last one with (*maseke*)²¹. The pots with *mhanga* and *hwahwa* are dedicated to the spirits of grandfathers (*madzisekuru*) and those with *maseke* and *musungwa* are dedicated to the spirits of grandmothers (*madzimbuya*). The Zezuru believe that their life is influenced by both maternal (*madzimbuya*) and paternal (*madzisekuru*) spirits. *Mhanga* and *hwahwa* have high level of alcohol content level hence for men and *musungwa* and *maseke* are alcohol free hence is for women. For the Zezuru very few women drink beer and

¹⁸ *Banya* is a special traditional hut in which *bira* ceremonies are conducted.

¹⁹ *Mhanga* is undiluted beer. It is diluted with water and *maseke* to produce beer.

²⁰ *Musungwa* is a weaker beer which has very low alcohol content

²¹ *Maseke* is non-alcoholic traditional drink that is processed from grain, (*chimera*)

those who do not drink beer will drink *masese* and those who want less alcoholic beer will drink *musungwa* while a majority of men drink beer. *Mhanga* is too strong hence it is drunk soon after the prayer by just taking a sip.



Figure 7 Four pots signifying the spirits. Photographed at Mawiri Village in Hwedza on 23rd September 2008

The eldest member of the family will then kneel down in front of the pots and brief the ancestors about purpose of the function while the rest of the members punctuate the prayer with clapping and ululation.

The elder will then go out and walk around the hut and come back. Going around the hut signifies that he is connecting all the spirits so that they notify each other according to their hierarchy. As soon as the man is back in the hut the small pots (*pfuko*) are passed around so that everyone takes a small sip. The contents of the pots are not supposed to be finished. They leave some in each pot for the ancestors. The pots will be left in the hut for the whole night. This prayer declares the ceremony officially open. Singing and dancing will then follow.



Figure 8. Cosmas Zambuko praying to the ancestors.
Photograph taken on 23rd September 2008

The first song is an opening song which depicts the objectives of the *bira*. For example in Jambwa village where the researcher comes from we always open *kurova guva bira* ceremonies with a song entitled *mbavarira*. The song's text is about inviting spirits to come to the village and join the living. After that then comes *mbira* music. Participants dance freely to *mbira* music and also sing, drum, ululate and clap. *Mbira* music will be played throughout the night with short breaks to give people time to drink beer. According to Berliner (1993:198 different ensembles take turns to play throughout the whole night). However in a *bira* ceremony everyone is part of the whole performance, thus a truly communal event, and as such each participant has to contribute by way of clapping, singing, playing *mbira*, dancing and drumming. The *mbira* players divide themselves into two major groups. The first group will play the lead, *kushaura* and the second will play the response *kubvumira*. Even the singing follows the same style of leading and responding (*Refer to film Scene One Appendix 1*). *Mbira* music will come after several songs accompanied by drumming have been performed. In the early hours of the ceremony *mashave* spirits possess the hosts first as previously indicated. *Makombwe* and *vadzimu* spirits normally possess the hosts early in the morning from two to about four (Berliner 1993:198).

Possession in Zezuru culture comes in different forms. After dancing to *mbira* music for some time, some hosts shout at the top of their voices, others roll on the ground and some cry like animals. When the spirits have manifested

themselves in the hosts, they may demand beer, snuff and some *mbira* modes to be played for them before the meeting (*matare*) ²²(Refer to film *Scene Two Appendix 1*). Berliner concludes that the *mbira* players and their music are responsible for the possession of the spirit mediums. They are also responsible for placing other villagers in a meditative state and inspires their tireless participation in dancing, clapping, ululating throughout the night (1993:196).

After the *bira* the elders will then follow up on the advice of the spirits. *Mbira* players will return to their respective homes. People of the village will have post-mortem discussions on the proceedings of the ceremony. Beer pots (*zviringo*) will be washed and the surroundings of the home where the ceremony took place will be cleaned. It is a common practice that some beer drinkers continue to come back for few days after the ceremony to finish up the remaining beer. The Zezuru call them *vana musiyadzasukwa* literally meaning those who leave only after the pots of beer have been washed.

The success of the *bira* ceremony depends on the modes played on the *mbira*, participation by the members, the tuning system preferred by the spirits and the spirits themselves. The absence of any one of the above may lead to the failure of the ceremony.

²² *Matare* is a word that refers to the discussion that take place between the spirits and the living during the *bira*.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Modes and tuning systems and their relationship to Spirit Possession.

This chapter presents *mbira dzavadzimu* tuning systems, transcriptions of selected modes and an analysis of the relationship between the tuning systems, modes and spirit possession.

3.1 Construction and tuning of individual keys on *mbira dzavadzimu*.

Tuning of individual keys on *mbira dzavadzimu* starts at construction stage. The *mbira* maker makes the instrument with the fundamental principles of tuning in mind. This starts from forging of the keys, tuning of individual keys and also tuning of the entire *mbira* instrument. According to Samuel Mujuru a *mbira* maker and *mbira* player, “*Kuenzanisa mazwi embira kunotangira paunoigadzira.*”²³ The material should be suitable for both musical and spiritual requirements and should be associated with the ancestors. If appropriate materials are used in constructing the *mbira*, the resultant sound will ensnare the spirit. The table below summarizes the materials and their spiritual embodiment according to Samuel Mujuru:

Part of <i>mbira</i>	Material	Source	Spiritual connotations	Effects on tuning system and modes.
Keys (<i>mbira</i>)	Metal (<i>mhangura</i>)	Iron ore	This personifies the presence of the ancestors in the form of the metal used for making hoes, axes, and arrows. The metal is extracted from the mountains where the dead are buried.	Is capable of producing clear and hard bright sound when tuned.
Soundboard (<i>gwariva</i>)	Wood (<i>mubvamaropa</i>) <i>pterocarpus angolensis</i>	Trees	The wood of <i>mubvamaropa</i> represents a source of shelter for the Shona.	The wood produces clean sound when the

²³ Interviewed on 10 July 2008 in Glendora, Harare.

			The blood like sap from the bark of the tree signifies the blood of the animals hunted by the Shona.	keys are struck. It acts as the primary resonator of the instrument.
Resonator (<i>deze</i>)	Gourd	Pumpkin	Symbolizes the strong relationship between ancestors and the natural resources as well as their agricultural products.	Amplifies the sound and produces natural sound.
Buzzers (<i>majaka</i>)	Sea and land Animals	Sea shells, snail shells, tortoise shells.	Signifies the relationship between the ancestors and the spirit in the water, <i>mashavi enjuzu</i> or the hunting spirit and also their relationship to animals.	The buzzers help in adding depth to the sound of the keys so that they resemble the voice of the ancestors.

Table 2. Parts of mbira and the material used to make them.

According to Samuel Mujuru construction of *mbira dzavadzimu* starts with the soundboard or *gwariva* which is made from special wood, *pterocarpus angolensis* (*mubvamaropa*) literally meaning “that which produces blood”. If you cut the tree its bark produces blood like sap which signifies the blood of animals that the ancestors hunted. This is the reason why most of the modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* are about hunting expeditions. Alternative wood is *albizia antunensiana* known as *muriranyenze* in Shona and *burkea Africana* or *mukarate* in Shona. The three types of wood are favoured because of their clear resonant sound, straight grains and few knots (Jones 1992:116). The wood helps the individual keys to produce the desired pitch level.

The keys are made from special type of high carbon wire like springs of beds, bicycle spokes or umbrella wire. The metal must have high tension level to allow free vibration. It is up to the maker to first heat the wire before forging or to forge it without heating. For Samuel Mujuru forging without heating creates cracks within the wire resulting in poor sound quality. Instead Samuel prefers

heating the wire before forging it to make it soft and easier to work at the same time maintaining its elasticity.

The keys are then mounted on the sound board (*gwariva*) using a cross bar (*mutanda*) fastened with a wire or chain adjusters. The keys should run over a bridge (*danhiko*) which allows them to vibrate freely. Once the keys are mounted on the *gwariva* then final tuning is done on individual keys using a particular desired mode. The tuning is done by sharpening or flattening the keys to suit the desired voice according to the nature of the mode used to tune the *mbira*. In order to sharpen a key, it is trimmed or filed at the end to reduce weight. To flatten it the key is pounded on the lower part or on the point above the bridge to make it wider and longer thus lowering the pitch as illustrated in *figure 9* below.

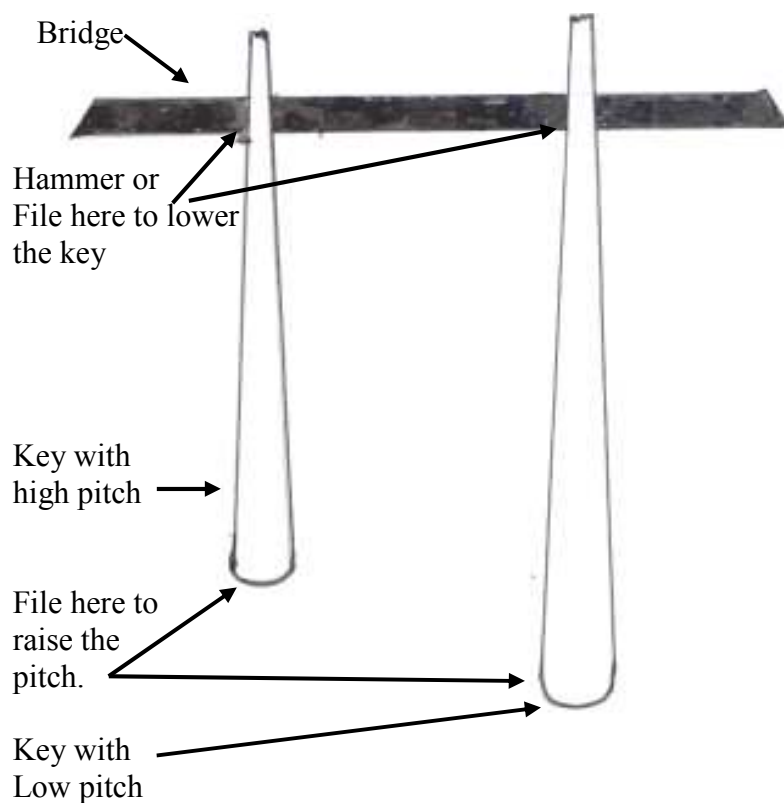


Figure 9



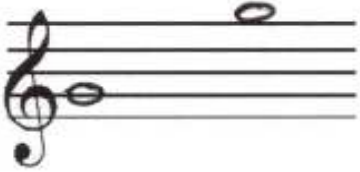
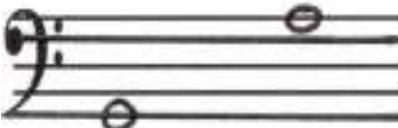
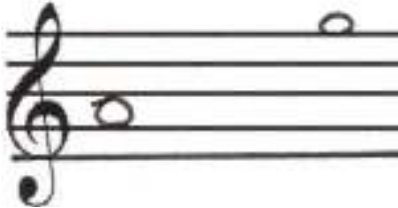

Samuel Mujuru suggested that some *mbira* makers including him use another *mbira* to tune a new *mbira*. He says that this makes the tuning process faster and also helps to make the tuning systems consistent.

3.2 Layout of keys and registers on the *mbira dzavadzimu*.

Mbira dzavadzimu has 21 to 30 keys which are divided into three manuals²⁴, top left manual, lower left manual and right manual. The difference in the number of keys is due to personal preference of *mbira* players. Some *mbira* players prefer additional keys on the top right and left registers. For example during the researcher's field work in June 2008 in Hwedza, Marondera, Rusape and Chikomba districts, he found out that the *mbira* belonging to the players he interviewed and those housed at the International Library of Africa Music in Grahamstown have keys ranging from 21 to 30 in number. The number of keys and their layout on the keyboards is presented in tabular form below with specific reference the *mbira* players and their musical biographies.

It must be noted that the notes for the right manual are transcribed one octave lower and those on bottom left manual are transcribed one octave higher. This helps in avoiding many ledger lines above the treble or below the bass clefs.

²⁴ A manual is a layer of keys arranged on the soundboard of the *mire* instrument.

Picture of <i>mbira</i>	<i>Mbira</i> player's Biography.	Range of keys in each Register
 <p>22 keys Date of Picture: 17th June 2008</p>	 <p>Remigious Gwama lives in Rapako village in Hwedza District. He is around 50 years old. He plays <i>mbira</i> in <i>mapira</i> ceremonies. He can play a number of modes and prefers <i>mahororo</i> tuning system with an average voice of Number three. His favourite modes are <i>nhemakonde</i> and <i>dangurangu</i>. Remigiuous occasionally plays <i>mbira</i> with Cosmas, also one of my subjects who happen to be his uncle.</p>	<p>1.Top left (ngwena) Number of keys-6</p>  <p>2.Bottom left register (nheverangwena) Number of keys-7</p>  <p>3.Right register (nhetete) Number of keys- 9</p>  <p>4.Overall range of instrument</p> 

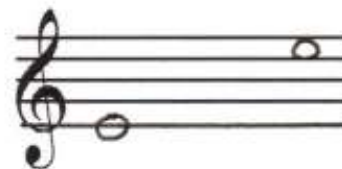


24 keys
Date of Picture:
10th July 2008



Samuel Mujuru is around 48 years old. He grew up in Mujuru village Rusape in Makoni District. He is a grandson of Muchatera a great *mbira* player as well as a *gombwe* spirit medium for Chaminuka. Samuel is a *mbira* player and a maker. He has travelled to several countries like America to perform *mbira* music. Currently he makes *mbira* to sell at his workshop in Glennora in Harare. I relied very much on his contributions because of his strong background of *mbira* music. Samuel prefers playing *dambatsoko* tuning system which has a low voice which he calls *mazingizi*.

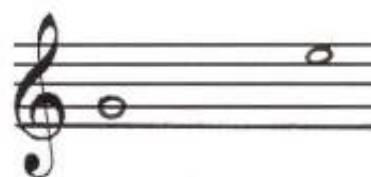
1. Top left register (*nheuri*)
Number of keys-7



2. Bottom left register (*mazembera*)
Number of keys-7



3. Right register (*nhetete*)
Number of keys- 10



4. Overall range of instrument:





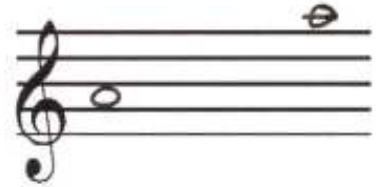
22 keys
Date of Picture:
30th June 2008



Abraham Zharare is a peasant farmer who lives in Chingwa Village in Chikomba District. He is 50 years old. He is a father of six children and has a good experience of performing in *mapira* ceremonies. His father was also a *mbira* player. He loves playing several modes on his 22 key *mbira* tuned in *nyamaropa* number three. He prefers modes like *bhukatiende* and *nyamaropa*. He usually spends most of his time playing his *mbira* on top of a hill behind his home. I used him for the introduction to my film. (Refer to film Appendix 1)

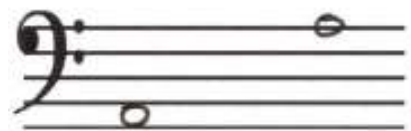
1. Top left register (*nheuri*)

Number of keys-6



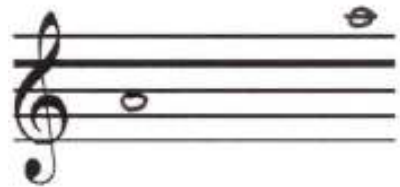
2. Bottom left register (*mazembera*)

Number of keys-7



3. Right register (*nhetete*)

Number of keys- 9



4. Overall range of instrument:



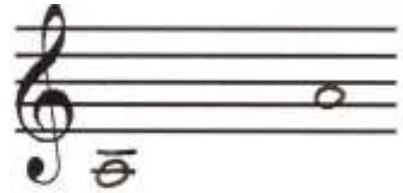


21 keys
Date of Picture:
22nd June 2008

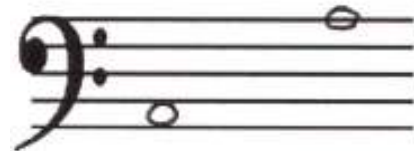


Cosmas Zambuko of Mawiri village Hwedza is around 70 years. He is a peasant farmer and has eight children and twelve grandchildren. He is a well experienced *mbira* player who plays for Ambuya Mudevairi's spirit. Apart from playing for the spirit he is also the spirit medium's aide. He helped me in creating good rapport with Cecilia Nyahwedekwe the spirit medium of Ambuya Medevairi which made it possible for me to film the possession ceremony. Over and above Cosmas is a very a talented singer and dancer too. (Refer to film *Appendix 1*)

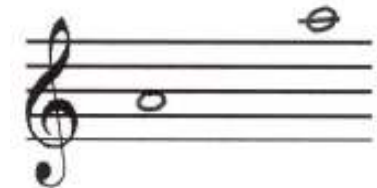
1. Top left register (*nheuri*)
Number of keys-6



2. Bottom left register (*mazembera*)
Number of keys-7



3. Right manual (*nhetete*)
Number of keys- 8



4. Overall range of instrument:



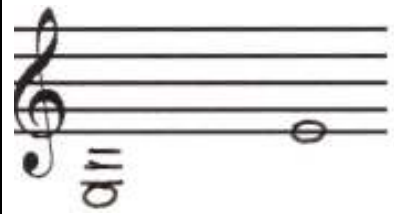


23 keys
Date of Picture:
1st July 2008

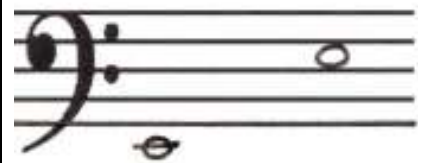


Champkin Muringani of Mawiri village in Hwedza is a young man who is still acquiring skills in playing *mbira*. He is around 30 years old. He loves playing modes like *chemutengure*, *nhemamusasa*, *mahororo* and *nyamaropa*. He enjoys creating more polyphony by combining similar modes like *nyamaropa* and *mahororo*. He plays a *mbira* that is tuned in *nyamaropa*.

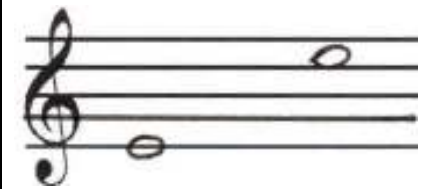
1. Top left register (*nheuri*)
Number of keys-7



2. Bottom left (*mazembera*)
Number of keys-7



3. Right register (*nhetete*)
Number of keys- 9



4. Overall range of instrument:



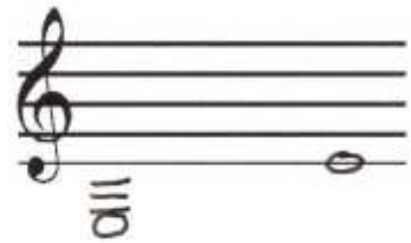


23 keys
Date of Picture:
1st July 2008

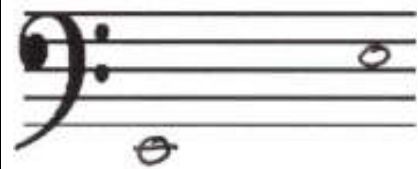


George Nyahwedekwe of Mawiri village in Hwedza is 23 years old and is the son of Cecilia the spirit medium. He is still single and loves playing modes like *mahororo*, *nyamaropa* and *taireva*. He sometimes plays as duet with Champkin.

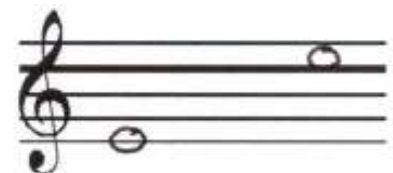
1. Top left register (*nheuri*)
Number of keys-7



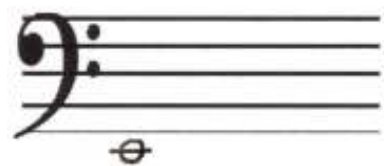
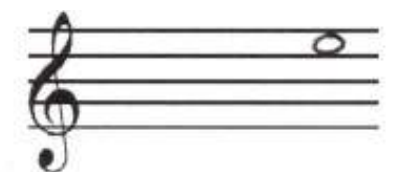
2. Bottom left register (*mazembera*)
Number of keys-7



3. Right register (*nhetete*)
Number of keys- 9



Overall range of instrument:





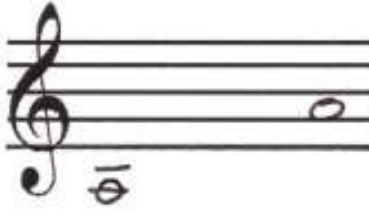
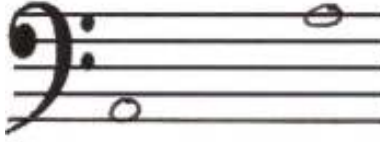
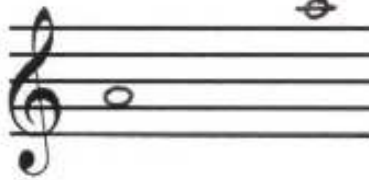

		<p>1. Top left register (<i>nheuri</i>) Number of keys-6</p>  <p>2. Bottom left register (<i>mazembera</i>) Number of keys-10</p>  <p>3. Right register (<i>nhetete</i>) Number of keys- 9</p>  <p>4. Overall range instrument:</p> 
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Table 3. *Mbira dzavadzimu and their manuals.*

The three manuals on *mbira dzavadzimu* are arranged such that each manual is strategically positioned for easy distribution of fingering. The notes in each manual belong to a register²⁵ although there is some overlap. The three registers are *ngwena*, *nheverangwena* and *nhetete*. The word “manual” refers to a layer of keys on the soundboard and denotes the physical positioning of layers of keys rather than the sound levels of the keys where as the word “register” refers to a group of keys belonging to the same sound range. The three registers for a *mbira* whose overall home key is the arbitrary G are such that the lowest register range from G (B₁) to G (L₁)²⁶, in the bottom left manual overlapping into the top left manual²⁷. The second register is from the G (L₁) to G (L₆) or (R₂), in the top left manual overlapping to the right manual. The third register G (L₆) or (R₂) to G (R₉) on the right manual. The other thing is that the first key (R₁) of the right manual does not belong to the right hand register. Instead it is the third note R₁ of the middle register which has an estimated pitch of B in the western sense.

²⁵ A register is a set of keys found in the same voice range.

²⁶ The labeling of *mbira dzavadzimu* notes using L₁ to L₆ for top left manual, B₁ to B₂ for bottom left manual and R₁ to R₉ for right manual was designed by Berliner (1978) I will adopt this way of labeling the keys in this thesis.

²⁷ Refer to figure 3.4 next page.

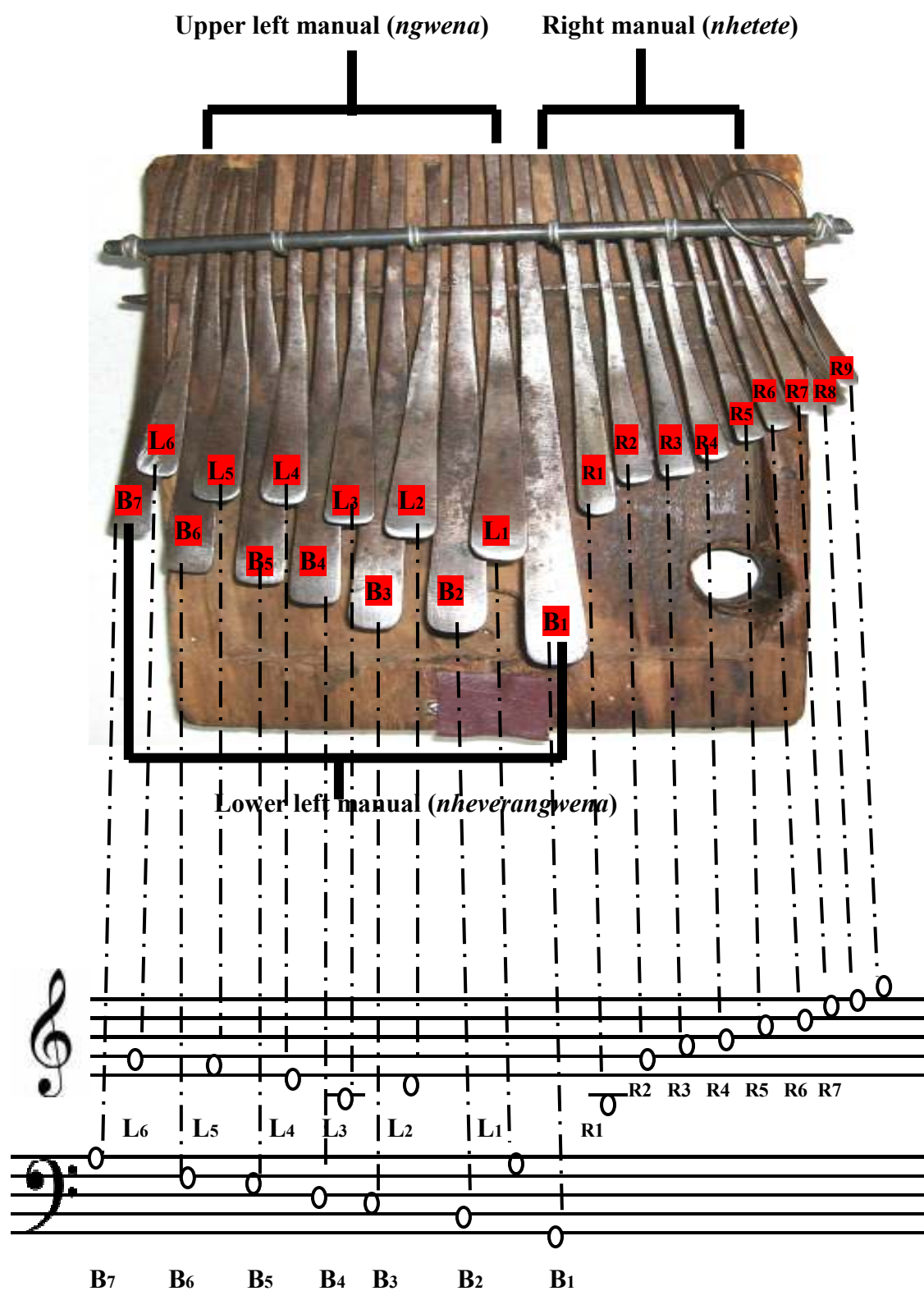


Figure 10. Pitch layouts of the three manuals.

3.2.1 Top left manual, *ngwena* or *nheuri*

These keys are played with the left thumb starting with one with highest pitch on the extreme left, L₆ or L₇ to the one with the lowest pitch on extreme right, G (L₁). The keys are normally six or seven in number. Some of the keys are an octave higher than those of the lower manual. For example the following pairs are one octave or two apart; L₁ and B₁, L₂ and B₄, L₃ and B₃, L₁ and L₆, R₁ and B₂, R₁ and L₁ as well as L₄ and B₅ as shown on the stave below. The double headed arrows point at keys with an octave or two apart and their letter names are marked with the same colour.

It is interesting to note that most of the progressions of the modes that are played on *nhare* make use of jumps of octaves or fifths and the keys that form these octaves or fifths are positioned in such a way that the movement of the thumb will slide downwards on the left hand side (*Figure 3.5*). For instance a *mbira* with an overall key of G the mode *nhemamusasa* has the following phrases: (1) C-C E-E E-E (2) C-C F-F E-E (3) D-D F-F E-E (4) C-C E-E D-G. In each case the darker key is an octave lower than the first key with the exception of D-G which a fifth, refer to *Figure 11*

Keys with the same colour have an interval of an octave apart.

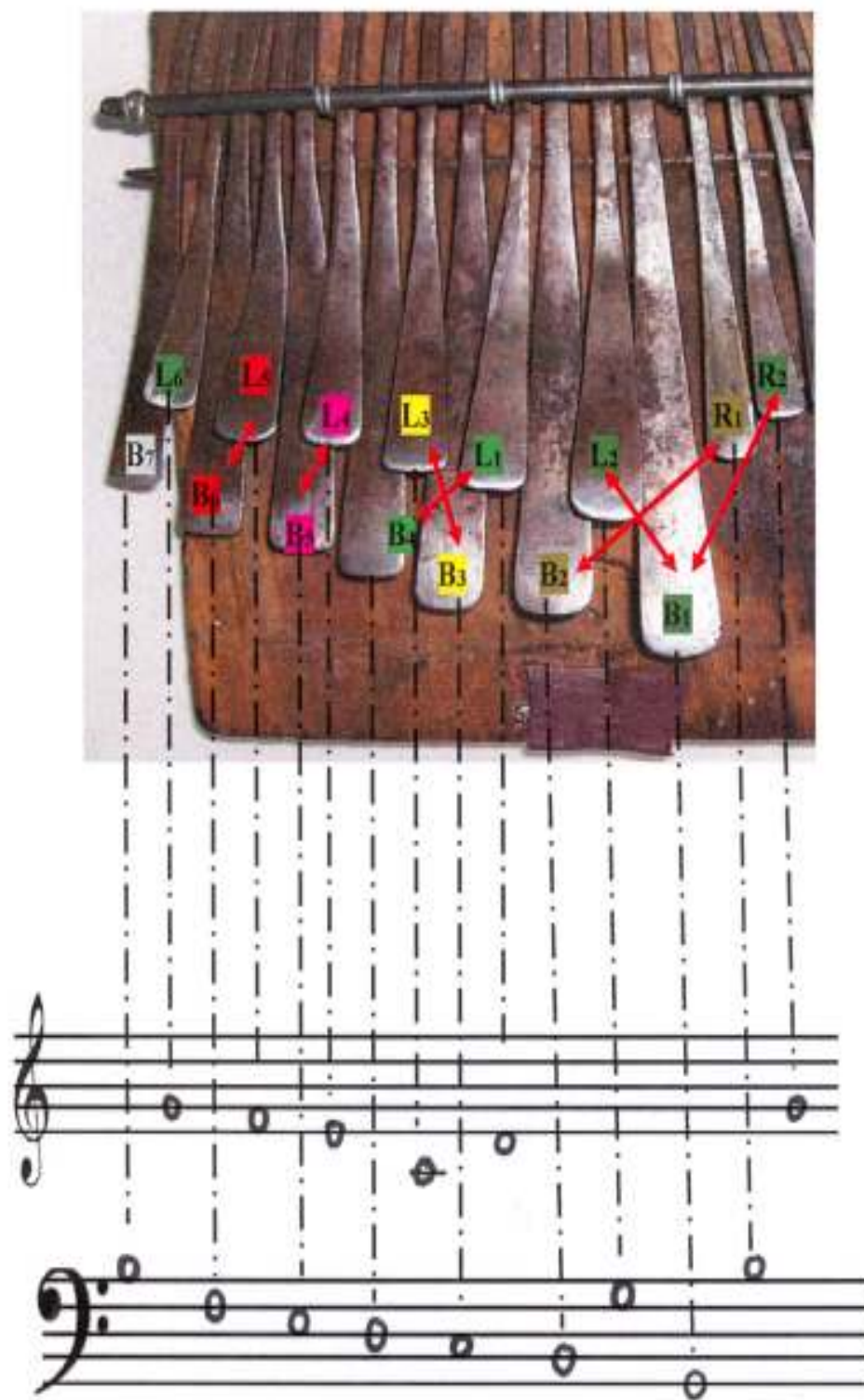


Figure 11. Octaves formed by the top and bottom manuals.

3.2.2 Lower left manual, *nheverangwena* or *mazembera*

The entire bottom left manual keys, B₁ to B₇ are called *nheverangwena* or *mazembera*. *Nheverangwena* means coming after the crocodile and *mazembera* means bass-like. They are also played with the left thumb and are seven, eight or nine in number. The keys of this manual belong to the lowest register. They resemble the deep voices of the men and respond to the lead produced by the top right manual, and the rhythm produced by the top left manual, *ngwena*. The combination of the *ngwena* and *nheverangwena* produces the basic pattern of the mode which most *nhare* players refer to as *kupfura*. This basic pattern is the one which a beginner plays using the left thumb only.

3.2.3 Right manual (*nhetete*)

The right manual is divided into two groups, *nhendure*, R₁, R₂ and R₃ and *nhetete* R₄ to R₉. The word *nhendure* has nothing to do with the sound of the keys but simply refers to the position of the keys. The word is derived from the Shona word *nhendeshure* which means “coming before”. In this case the *nhendure* come before the *nhetete* and are played by the right thumb. The *nhendure* keys are the ones played by beginners before attempting the *nhetete* keys. *Nhetete* is another Shona word derived from the word *kutetepa* which means thin. The word describes the thinness of the keys which is associated to the high sound they make. The keys are played from below using the right index finger, *munongedzo*²⁸. The function of both the *nhendure* and *nhetete* is to play

²⁸ *Munongedzo* is the pointing finger. The word *munongedzo* means that which points.

the lead, *kushaura*. In other words when the *nhetete* are played by advanced players they can imitate the high voice of the lead singer. Below is the picture showing the right manual and the fingering.

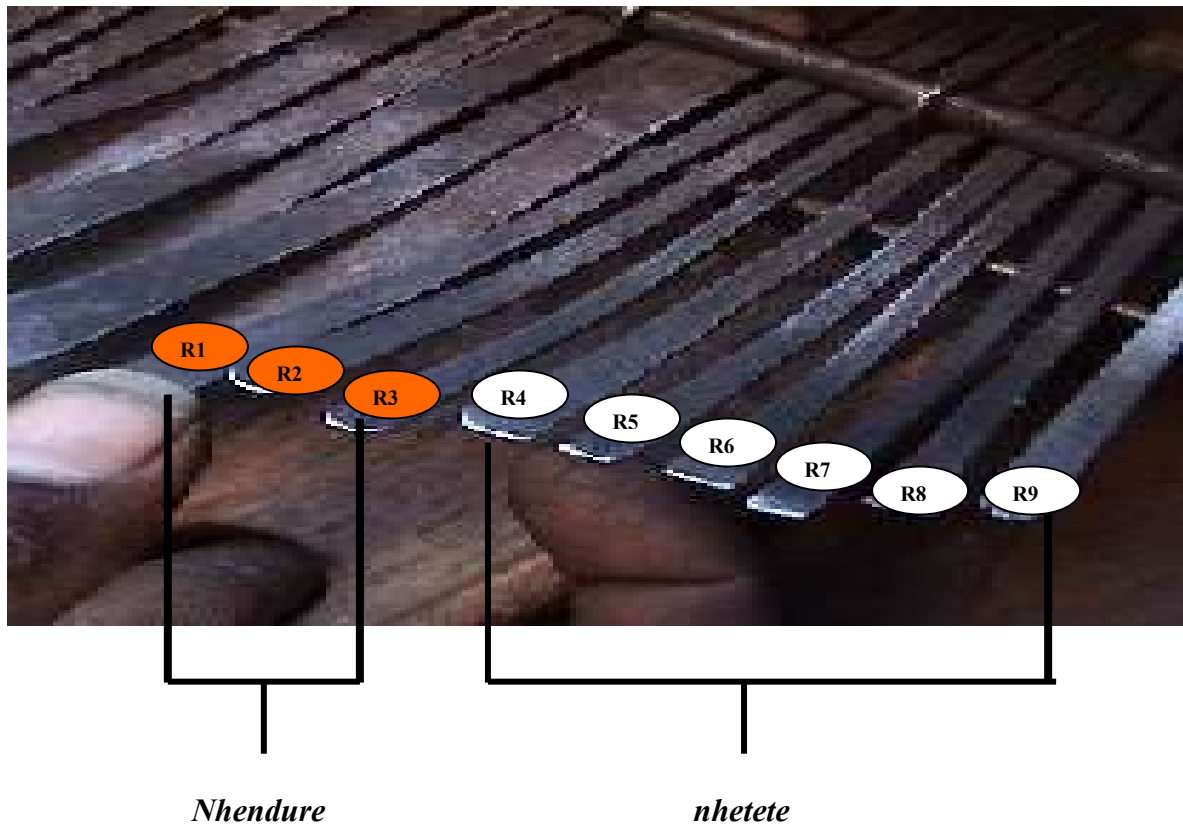


Figure 12. Distributions of keys on the right manual

The *nhendure* keys and *nhetete* interlock with the *ngwena* and *nheverangwena* to produce polyphonic and polyrhythmic music called *ngoma yembira* that is capable of evoking spirits in spirit mediums. The right thumb and the finger play the keys either by alternation or chordal technique.

It is important to note that generally there are one or two pairs of notes with the same pitch on either side of *mbira dzavadzimu*. These are R2 of the *nhendure* and L6 of *ngwena* and in some cases R3 on *nhendure* and the L7 of *ngwena* on *mbira dzavadzimu* with an additional key on left top manual. According to Berliner (1993:56) *mbira dzavadzimu* musicians call these same pitched keys

hwindimbi,²⁹ meaning having the same voice, *izwi*. Such keys are common in a *mbira* tuned in *dongonda* tune in which all the keys of the right manual have the same pitch with some corresponding keys in the top left manual (*Refer fig 4.23*).

Some *mbira* players give names to individual keys. The names vary from region to region but however they all depict the function of the key in relation to its pitch, *izwi*. (*Figure 3.7*) illustrates Mujuru's system of naming the keys and (*Figure 3.8*) illustrates that of Bandambira as given by Berliner (1993:57). Note that not all the keys were named. The subject could only remember a few.

3.3 Names of *mbira* keys on *mbira dzavadzimu*

Classification of *Mbira Dzavadzimu* keys according to Samuel Mujuru

Keys	Names in Shona	Explanations
R ₂	<i>Nzwanzwe</i> (loudness of sound)	Refers to the brightness of the keys, the dominance in sound. It is one of the keys played by those who are learning to play the instrument using the their right thumbs only.
R ₃	<i>Nzwanzwerano</i> (Agreeing in sound loudness and quality)	Follows R ₂ in brightness and pitch level, suggests the effect of polyphony,
L ₁	<i>Raso repamusoro</i> (Upper projector)	<i>Raso</i> is a word derived from <i>kurasa</i> meaning throwing away. Upper sound projector signifies the dominance of the key and is also the tonal centre for songs like <i>nyamaropa</i> , <i>mahororo</i> , <i>karigamombe</i> , <i>chipemberere</i> , <i>taireva</i> and <i>bhukatiende</i> .
B ₁	<i>Raso repasi</i> (lower projector)	It serves the same purpose as <i>raso repamusoro</i> L ₁ but only that it is an octave lower. It is the lowest key on the <i>mbira</i> .
L ₃	<i>Raso repakati</i> (middle projector)	Projects sound that is taken to be lying between L ₁ and B ₁ and is the tonal centre of songs like <i>nhemamusasa</i> , <i>kuzanga</i> , <i>mbiriviri</i> , <i>nhemakonde</i> and <i>bangiza</i> .
B ₆	<i>Taendesa</i> (from the word <i>kuendesa</i> , the end)	It is the one that ends phrases of most of the songs. From a musicological point of view it implies a key forming the cadence that connects phrases within a mode.

²⁹ *Hwindimbi* implies the echoing sound that is produced by two keys of the same pitch played one after the other in alteration.

Table 4 Names of the keys according Mujuru.

According to Samuel Mujuru all the *mbira dzavadzimu* keys have names but he can only remember six of them. Among the six there are the most important keys *raso repamusoro* and *raso repakati*. These keys are the ones that are used as starting points of all the modes. These names were passed on to him by his grandfather Muchatera Mujuru. According to Samuel Mujuru the keys describe the function of the keys in the production of songs.

Classification of *Mbira Dzavadzimu* keys according to Bandambira

Keys	Names	Explanations
L ₁	<i>Benzi</i> (mad person)	Means madness. It frightens, makes one feel awake, is used to start modes like <i>nyamaropa</i> , <i>mahororo</i> , <i>karigamombe</i> , <i>chipemberere</i> , <i>taireva</i> and <i>bhukatiende</i> , makes the heart feel wild or excited, makes one want to dance, has sharp voice capable of leading the <i>mbira</i> .
B ₁	<i>Gadzanga</i> (derived from the word <i>kugadza</i> , to be in a stable state)	Means settlement, controls the excited feeling of <i>benzi</i> , controls high pitches and cools the madness of L ₁ to normality, brings the modes played on <i>mbira</i> to settlement and holds it together, has the lowest voice, bears the efficacy of <i>mbira</i> music.
B ₂ R ₁ R ₄	<i>Shumba</i> (lion)	The three keys are likened to a lion in which powerful spirits, <i>mhondoro</i> live. The three keys appear in the same chord. Their sound has an evoking effect on <i>mhondoro</i> spirits.
B ₃ L ₃ R ₅	<i>Zanga zanga</i> (Swaying side ways like a person in a trance)	They are taken to be the mother of all the keys, makes people shake, <i>kuzuzuma</i> during possession or trance, the three are an octave apart with L ₃ one octave higher than B ₃ and R ₅ two octaves above B ₃ , L ₃ is the starting point of modes like <i>nhemamusasa</i> ,

		<i>kuzanga</i> and <i>muroro</i> .
B ₄ L ₂ R ₆	<i>Mvundura</i> (derived from <i>kuvhundura</i> meaning to stir up)	The keys make one's heart complete, make one dance, stir up performers, bring some odd feelings in one's blood, and can cure stress related diseases.
B ₅ L ₄ R ₇	<i>Nhiura</i> (big drum)	Shake the body, maintains the steady pulse of the music, sound like a big drum, the three keys 58 have intervals of an octave apart with L ₄ an octave higher than B ₅ and R ₇ two octaves above L ₄
B ₆ L ₅ R ₈	<i>Tida</i> (idiophone representing sudden fall of sound)	The sounds are considered to be a shout from far away, loud voice, make one sing, encourage the <i>mbira</i> player to raise the sound of the voice when singing.
B ₇ R ₃	<i>Duri</i> (an instrument used to crash grain, mortar)	Has the feeling of a mortar pounding millet,

Table 5. Names of keys as given by Bandambira (Berliner 1993:57)

According to Bandambira the names are praise names. They also describe the function of the keys in the whole production of the music and their relationship to each other. (Berliner 1993:57) Keys with same pitch but with an interval of an octave are given the same name just like in the Western way. For Bandambira only L₁ and B₁ were given different names although they have an octave apart. The reason for this is not given. Drawing from Samuel Mujuru and Bandambira's labelling of keys, there appears to be no standard way of naming the keys of the *mbira dzavadzimu*.

3.4 *Mbira dzavadzimu* Tuning Systems

The overall arrangement of the three manuals of the keys constitutes the tuning system of the entire instrument. From the interviews conducted during my field work there was a 100% agreement that *Mbira* players prefer different tuning systems as individuals. The tuning systems are differentiated by the highness or lowness of the entire instrument and the differences in the tuning systems are attributed to environmental factors, heredity as well as personal or group

preferences. It is up to the individual *mbira* players or spirits of the area to decide on the highness or lowness of the tuning system.

According to Samuel Mujuru each tuning system has to fall under low voices or high voices. In his words he says, “*Chuni yembira inogona kuve mazingizi kana kuti kanyuchi uye zvinoenderana nezvinoda muridzi wembira. Mazingizi imbira dzine mazwi epasi anorira se mazingizi uye kanyuchi dzine mazwi epamusoro senyuchi.*” Literal translation “The tuning system can be called *madzingizi* or *kanyuchi* depending on the *mbira* player’s preferences. *Mazingizi* has high voice and *kanyuchi* has low voice.”³⁰ (Refer to Film Scene One). What he means is that the overall tuning system on the *mbira* can either be high or low depending on the player or the spirits’ preference. The low voice of *Mbira dzavadzimu* sounds like an insect called *zingizi* which makes a low sound when flying. The high voice is akin to the sound of bees. On the other hand Zambuko confirms that some of the tuning systems and modes are handed over to *mbira* players by their ancestors as part of inheritance when he says, “*Ini ndakadzidza kuenzanosa mazwi kubva kuna sekuru vangu VaZambuko.*” Literally translation, “I learned the levelling of voices from my grandfather called Zambuko.”³¹ Meaning that he learned how to make and tune *mbira* from his ancestors. Because of this genealogy the tuning systems help in evoking the ancestral spirits when played during *mapira* ceremonies because the ancestors own the both the music and the tuning systems.

Samuel Mujuru describes a tuning system as “*enzaniso yemazwi maererano nemaimbiro ayo ayinoita*”³² Literally, “levelling of voices according to the way it (*mbira*) sings.” (Refer to Film Scene One). The implication is that the tuning of individual keys has a bearing on the modes to be played. He says that “Levelling of voices is what we call tuning and this is derived from the modes played on the *mbira*.” He refers to pitch as *izwi rembira*, whereas Remigious Gwama and Zambuko use the word *pangiro* which means to allocate a fixed standard of sound. The two words, *pangiro* and *yenzaniso yemazwi* used for

³⁰ Interview on 10 July 2008 in Glendora, Harare

³¹ Interview on 15 July 2008

³² Interview on 10 July 2008 in Glendora, Harare

tuning by these *mbira* players mean the same thing. According to Samuel Mujuru's words, "...*tinokuti izwi rembira...*" literally meaning the voice of *mbira*. There is agreement between what Mujuru says and Berliner's findings that "The *mbira* player distinguishes the chuning of his own instrument from others by its fullness of sound, its ringing quality, its relative highness or lowness (that is, the absolute highest pitch and the absolute lowest pitch in the *mbira*'s three-octave range)" (1993:61). To a greater extent the choice of tuning system by *nhare* player is determined by the mode and the tuning system preferred by the spirit to be evoked.

Most of *mbira dzavadzimu* are tuned using the traditional method of using modes to tune individual keys. Samuel Mujuru confirmed that he as a *mbira* maker uses the modes *karigamombe* and *mahororo* to tune his *mbira*. In his words he says, "*Kuti ndienzanise mazwi embira ndinoshandisa muimbirwo werwuyo rwacho.*" What he means is that after making the keys of the *mbira*, he plays the mode and tunes the keys so that they are tailor-made to play the mode. (Refer to Film Scene One). Some of the tuning systems inherit their names from the mode used to tune the *mbira*. After completing the tuning exercise it is interesting to note that the *mbira* will be able to play other modes other than the one used for tuning the *mbira*. Samuel Mujuru has this to say, "*Kunyangwe mbira ikachunwa nenhemamusasa chuni unogona kuridza dzimwe nziyo asi iyo akaenzaniswa kuti aridze nhemamusasa.*"³³ Literal meaning, "Even if a *mbira* is tuned in *nhemamusasa* you can still play the other songs but it will be meant to play *nhemamusasa*." Samuel Mujuru's position echoes the same sentiments that some of the tuning systems are derived from modes played on the *mbira dzavadzimu*. Samuel Mujuru goes on to say that whilst a *mbira* can have a tuning system inherited from a certain mode, the entire instrument can have a generally low or high pitch which Berliner refers to as, "absolute highest pitch and the absolute lowest pitch in the *mbira*'s three manuals" (1993:61). For Mujuru *mbira dzavadzimu* can be tuned in *mahororo* tune but with low voice thus becoming *mahororo* in *mazingizi* or *mahororo* in *kanyuchi*³⁴, high voice. It is up

³³ Interview on 10 July 2008 in Glendora, Harare

³⁴ *Kampuchea* means a small bee. The high sound of *mbira* is associated with the buzzing of a small bee.

of the *mbira* player or the spirits to go for *mazingizi* or *kanyuchi*. (Figure 3.10) summarizes different tuning systems identified by the different subjects³⁵ that the author interviewed during his field work. The period given is approximated based on the history of the Shona people.

Tuning system	Spirits evoked	Approximate Period when first used
<i>Mavembe</i>	<i>Makombwe</i> spirits family spirits.	10 th Century
<i>Bangiza</i> (Show or reveal)	<i>Makombwe, mhondoro</i> and family spirits	14 th -16 th Century
<i>Mahororo</i> (Victory)	<i>Makombwe, mhondoro</i> and family spirits	15 th Century
<i>Nyamaropa</i> (Meat and blood)	<i>Makombwe spirit</i> , family spirits	14 th Century
<i>Dongonda</i>	<i>Makombwe</i> spirit, family spirits	16 th Century
<i>Karigamombe</i> (Taking the bull by the horns or undefeated)	<i>Makombwe, mhondoro</i> and family spirits	18 th Century
<i>Nhemamusasa</i> (Cutting branch shelter)	<i>Makombwe, mhondoro</i> and family spirits.	19 th Century
<i>Chakwi</i> (Disorder)	<i>Mhondoro</i> and family spirits	16 th Century
<i>Nemakonde</i> (Of the aloes)	Family spirits, <i>mhondoro</i> spirits and <i>makombwe</i>	16 th Century
<i>Taireva</i> (We used to tell you)	<i>Mhondoro</i> and family spirits.	16 th Century
<i>Dambatsoko</i> (Where monkeys play)	<i>Mhondoro</i> spirits, family spirits	14 th Century
<i>Mazingizi</i>	All the spirits	14 th century
<i>Kanyuchi</i> (Bees)	All the spirits.	19 th Century

³⁵ Samuel Majuro, Abraham Zharare, Remigious Gwama, Chizema, Zambuko, George Nyahwedekwe, Cecilia Nyahwedekwe and Champkin Muringani

<i>Katsanzaira</i> (Soft rain drops)	Family spirits.	19 th Century
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Table 6 Tuning systems and spirits that are evoked.

From the table it can be noted that different spirits prefer different tuning systems derived from modes but falling under either low or high voice. Their preferences are determined by the tuning systems and modes the individual used to enjoy before dying. Such an understanding becomes the bases of the relationship between the tuning systems and modes of *mbira dzvadzimu* and the spirits.

3.5 Notation used for transcriptions of modes and tuning systems.

Transcription of *mbira* modes has been brought about by the need to teach the instrument in a formal way as well as the need to transcribe the music from audio to visual for reference and preservation. Tracy (1994:7) in Dutiro and Howard has this to say that:

I would argue that notation is important...When traditional music is taught outside normal context, as is sometimes attempted in schools and colleges; one problem is that the learner does not already know the music internally and therefore has to be introduced to its whole aesthetic as well as to the specific parts he has to play...To deal with these situation new conceptualizations, methods, standards, need to be applied, with the use of all possible aids and media, including notation for one. That these methods and media are largely missing in Africa is to the blame of musicologists who have not provided them, educationalists who relegate music to the bottom of all lists of priority, and to musicians who believe that traditional music will look after itself, in the old style. It does not (Dutiro and Howard 2007:51).

In line with Tracy in Dutiro and Howard (2007:52) sentiments several *mbira* players and researchers designed different kinds of notations each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Dutiro and Howard present different kinds of notation designed by *mbira* players and researchers which are Berliner's staff and

pictorial notation, Tracy's staff notation, Fred Miller's system, Dutiro's *chara* and row notation, Pott's system, and Ziyenge's system

The notation that the researcher will use to transcribe modes and tuning system in this thesis is a hybrid of Berliner and Tracy's notations. The researcher has modified Berliner's method by employed Tracy's pulse system in which each vertical line is a pulse and most of the modes have forty-eight pulses comprising of four phrases each with twelve pulses. The lines are numbered one to twenty-four. The top line of notes with open circles³⁶ represents the highest register which is identified as *nhetete* played by the right hand (RH). The middle line of black dots³⁷ represents the middle register (*ngwena*) and the bottom line with circles with tails³⁸ represents the lowest register (*deverangwena*) both played by the left hand (LH). A circle with a tail but bracketed³⁹ stands the first note on the right. In order to avoid a lot of ledger lines and spread of keys on the stave, the note for the lowest register are transposed an octave higher than the actual sound. The note with a tails but in brackets represents the note R₁ which belongs to the bottom register but played by the right thumb. The tonal centre G will be called *raso repamusoro*, literally meaning upper starting point and tonal centre C will be also call *raso repati* meaning middle starting points. These Shona names for tonal centres are the home keys (*mavambo*) of the modes (*muridziro*). On the left of the stave the abbreviations LH and RH stand for left hand and right hand respectively. For each mode only one cycle is transcribed with some repeat signs but however the repeat can be done several times depending on the duration of the performance. The player is free to improvise as he/she repeats the cycles. It must be also be noted that the keys of the left bottom manual are transposed an octave higher than they sound on the *mbira*.

3.5.1 Transcription of each tuning system.

³⁶ Stands for high voice (*nhendure and nhete*) played by the right hand (RH).

³⁷ Stands for middle voice (*nheuri/ ngwena*) played by left hand (LH)

³⁸ Stands for low voice (*Mazembera/ nheverangwena*) played with left hand (LH)

³⁹ Stands for the first note on the right played by (RH)

The tuning system can be classified into three categories, those that imply highness or lowness, those that are derived from modes and one that involves the arrangement and relationship between the keys of the instrument. The first category comprises tuning systems like *mavembe* (low voice), *dambatsoko*, (low voice), *mazingizi* (low voice), *katsanzaira* (high voice) and *kanyuchi* (high voice). To have an idea of the highness and lowness *figure 3.10* shows the tuning systems and their relative key ranges.


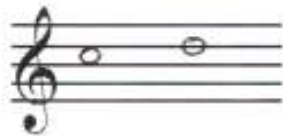
Tuning system by voice level	Tuning systems by range number	Overall voice level's arbitrary key ranges.
<i>Dambatsoko</i>	1	F-G 
<i>Mavembe</i>	2	G-A 
<i>Mazingizi</i>	3	A-B 
<i>Katsanzaira</i>	4	B-C 
<i>Kanyuchi</i>	5	C-D 

Table 7 Tuning systems and their relationships.

The second category comprises of the tuning systems that make use of the melody of modes to tune individual keys so that they are tailor-made to play the mode. These tuning systems may have high or low voice too. Below are transcriptions of these tuning systems. The first group comprises mode whose tonal centre is C (*raso repakati*) and the second have tonal center G (*raso repamusoro*). Note that the transcription of tuning systems differs from that of modes in that only the left hand side notes played by the left hand are shown.

1. *Nhemamusasa* tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

The musical notation for the *Nhemamusasa* tuning system (*pangiro*) is presented on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The notation is divided into two sections, I and II. Section I contains measures 1-12, and Section II contains measures 13-24. The notes are written in a simplified notation with stems and dots, and some are marked with Roman numerals I, II, III, and IV. The tonal center is C (*Raso repakati*), and the tempo is 1 pulse per line.

2. *Kuzanga* tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

The musical notation for the *Kuzanga* tuning system (*pangiro*) is presented on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The notation is divided into two sections, I and II. Section I contains measures 1-12, and Section II contains measures 13-24. The notes are written in a simplified notation with stems and dots, and some are marked with Roman numerals I, II, III, and IV. The tonal center is C (*Raso repakati*), and the tempo is 1 pulse per line.

3. *Mbiriviri* tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

Diagram showing musical notation for a tuning system. The notation is presented on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The top staff features four positions labeled I, II, III, and IV. Position I is on the first line, II on the second line, III on the third line, and IV on the fourth line. The bottom staff shows the corresponding notes for each position. The notes are represented by black dots on the staves, with some notes having a small circle around them. The notation is in a simplified form, likely representing a specific tuning system or scale.

4. *Shumba* Tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

Diagram showing musical notation for the *Shumba* tuning system. The notation is presented on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The top staff features four positions labeled I, II, III, and IV. Position I is on the first line, II on the second line, III on the third line, and IV on the fourth line. The bottom staff shows the corresponding notes for each position. The notes are represented by black dots on the staves, with some notes having a small circle around them. The notation is in a simplified form, likely representing a specific tuning system or scale.

5. *Bangiza* tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

Diagram showing musical notation for the *Bangiza* tuning system. The notation is presented on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The top staff features four positions labeled I, II, III, and IV. Position I is on the first line, II on the second line, III on the third line, and IV on the fourth line. The bottom staff shows the corresponding notes for each position. The notes are represented by black dots on the staves, with some notes having a small circle around them. The notation is in a simplified form, likely representing a specific tuning system or scale.

6. *Nhemakonde/Chipembere* tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)

1 pulse per line

I **II**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

LH

III **IV**

LH

LR

7. Muroro tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)

1 pulse per line

I **II**

LH

III

LH

IV

LH

8. Bhukatiende tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)

1 pulse per line

I **II**

LH

III **IV**

LH

9. Nyamaropa tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)

1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for a 10-pulse piece in Mahororo Tuning system (pangiro). The notation is written on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bottom staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation consists of notes and rests, with some notes marked with a 'p' (piano) or 'f' (forte). The piece is divided into two sections, labeled 'I' and 'II'. Section I contains 5 pulses and Section II contains 5 pulses. The notation is written in a style that suggests a specific tuning system, with notes and rests placed on the lines and spaces of the staves.

10. Mahororo Tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)

1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for a 10-pulse piece in Karigamombe tuning system (pangiro). The notation is written on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bottom staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation consists of notes and rests, with some notes marked with a 'p' (piano) or 'f' (forte). The piece is divided into two sections, labeled 'I' and 'II'. Section I contains 5 pulses and Section II contains 5 pulses. The notation is written in a style that suggests a specific tuning system, with notes and rests placed on the lines and spaces of the staves.

11. Karigamombe tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)

1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for a 10-pulse piece in Karigamombe tuning system (pangiro). The notation is written on two staves, both labeled 'LH'. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bottom staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation consists of notes and rests, with some notes marked with a 'p' (piano) or 'f' (forte). The piece is divided into two sections, labeled 'I' and 'II'. Section I contains 5 pulses and Section II contains 5 pulses. The notation is written in a style that suggests a specific tuning system, with notes and rests placed on the lines and spaces of the staves.

12. Taireva tuning system (*pangiro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

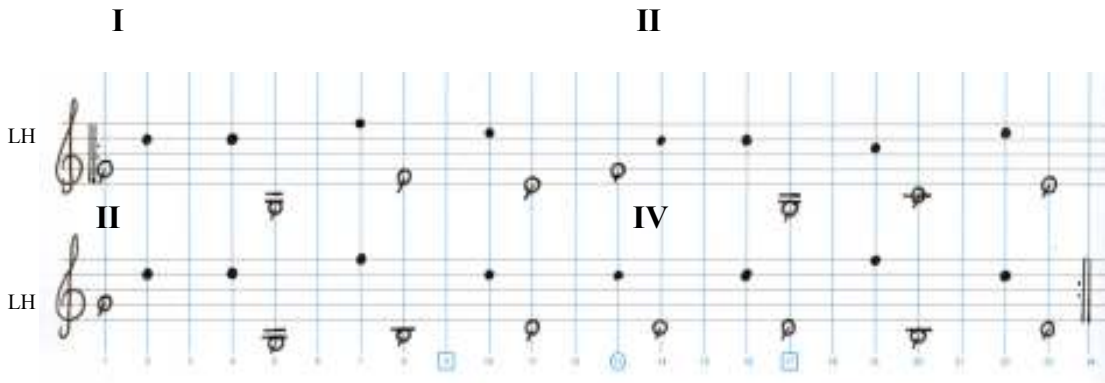


Figure 13. Transcriptions of tuning systems.

From the data presented in table 8 it can be noted that *makombwe* spirits are evoked by very old tuning systems like *mavembe*, *bangiza*, *mahororo*, *karigamombe*, *chakwi*, *nhemamusasa*, *nyamaropa* and *dongonda*. *Makombwe* spirits being the oldest find sameness with very old tuning systems. The sameness is in that the tuning systems belong to the ancestors and whenever a *mbira* tuned in any of these old tuning systems is played in a traditional *bira* ceremony, the ancestors quickly identify themselves with the modes. *Mhondoro* and family spirits are evoked by the most recent tuning systems like *katsanzaira* but they can still be evoked by the old ones in the absence of the most recent ones.

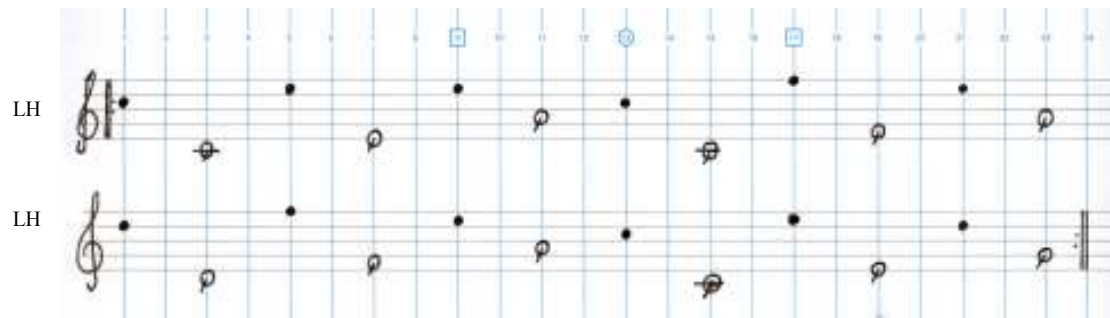
3.6 Modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu*

Mbira songs are derived from what *mbira* makers and players call *ngoma*. According to the Zezuru *mbira* players like Samuel Mujuru the word mode refers to the core structure of the songs played on *mbira dzavadzimu*. From these modes *mbira* players create different variations. The core structure resembles the tuning system of the *mbira* which is articulated by the left hand using the top and bottom left keys as show in the above transcriptions. However the same name can be used to mean a tuning system, song and core structure as indicated earlier

in chapter one. Below is an illustration of how the word is used to mean the three different things.

Nhemamusasa tuning system (pangiro).

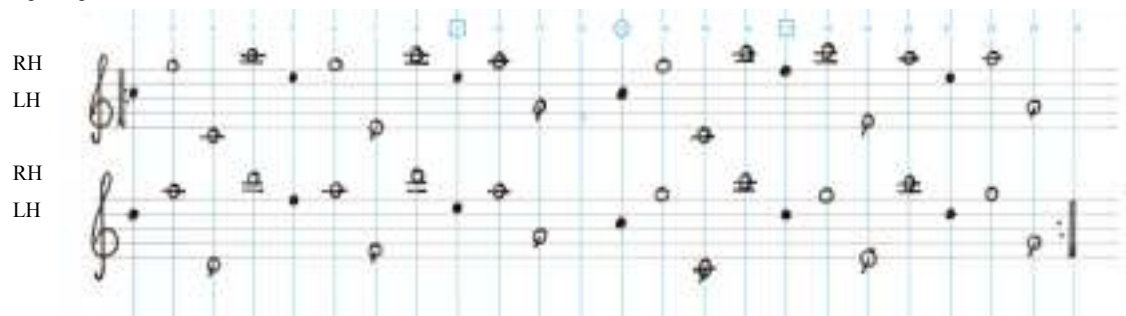
Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line



Nhemamusasa mode (muridziro)

The idea of *muridziro* is employed in the improvisations applied on the tuning system. It involves different playing techniques that combine the left notes and the right top notes of the *mbira*. Different *mbira* players improvise on the core structure of the song by applying their own playing techniques.

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line



Nhemamusasa Song (rwiyo)

Lead voice
kushaura

Response
kubvumira

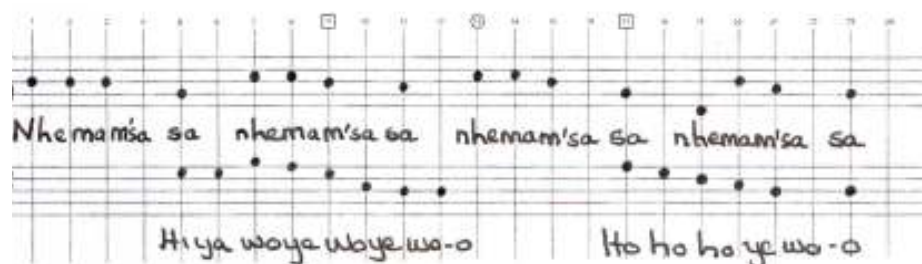


Figure 14. Transcriptions of song, mode and tuning system *nhemamusasa*.

During my field work there was a 100% agreement that all the modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* belong to the ancestral spirits. Their perpetual existence has been made possible through inheritance. That is, the modes have been passed from generation to generation either by oral means or through dreams. According to the Zezuru the modes are part of their heritage (*nhaka*). This is confirmed by Hugh Tracy when he says, “The instruments and their music are handed down from father to son with the inheritance, the *nhaka*” (1932:79). The Zezuru create several songs, *nziyo* from these modes which they use during traditional ceremonies. In other words there is a lot of freedom in the text to be sung on any of the modes although a few like *taireva* and *nhemamusasa* have texts that have been attached to them and the modes are handed over together with the texts. Text that has been attached to the tuning systems and the modes are handed over together with the text. When two *mbiras* are played together one plays the lead (*kushaura*) and the other response (*kutsinhira*). The combination of the two produces what Berliner calls inherent rhythm (1993:99). Table 9 summarizes the modes their meanings:

Mode	Phrase structure	Inclined meaning
<i>Nhemamusasa</i> (Cutting a branch shelter) Transcription 1 fig 3.10	Four phrases with twelve pulses each	This mode is one of the oldest modes and is associated with hunting experiences in which hunters engage in what Remigous Gwama call “... <i>kutema musasa</i> ...” which to build a temporary shelter using branches of of trees.
<i>Bangiza</i> (Show us or reveal to us) Transcription 4 fig 3.10	Four phrases with twelve pulses each	The mode <i>bangiza</i> is one of the oldest modes associated with the early Shona people of Dzimababwe, Masvingo. The mode dates back to 14 th to 16 th century. It is regarded as a very ancient spiritual mode. It literally means to show. The Zezuru people ask the ancestors to show them whatever they want know.
<i>Mahororo</i> (Victory)	Four phrases with	<i>Mahororo</i> mode is a war mode. It

Transcription 9 fig 3.10	twelve pulses each	talks about the victory of fighters. The word <i>mahororo</i> is derived from the word <i>kuorora</i> which means defeating. The mode motivates fighters to fight harder next time. It goes on to encourage people to work hard in order to achieve their set goals. After a defeat they would play the mode to celebrate their defeat. It is a derivation of <i>nyamaropa</i> .
<i>Nyamaropa</i> (meat and blood) Transcription 8 fig 3.10	Four phrases with twelve pulses each	<i>Nyamaropa</i> is believed by Abraham Zharare to have been played on <i>mbira dzavadzimu</i> since the creation of the <i>mbira</i> around the 14 th century. <i>Nyamaropa</i> means meat and blood. <i>Nyamaropa</i> mode signifies the meat and blood of animals hunted by hunters. <i>Nyamaropa</i> mode is believed to be the mother of all the modes as will be discussed later on in the thesis.
<i>Karigamombe</i> Transcription 10 fig 3.10	Four phrases with twelve pulses each	<i>Karigamombe</i> is also an old song and is associated with bravery. The word <i>Karigamombe</i> is formed by two words <i>kuriga</i> which means destroy and <i>mombe</i> for cattle. The combined words literally mean that which destroys the cattle signifying great strength and courage. The mode encourages people to be brave when hunting or attempting to achieve their goals in the society. It is derived from <i>nyamaropa</i> and its phrase structure is same as <i>nyamaropa</i> .
<i>Kuzanga</i> (to thread beads) Transcription 2 fig 3.10	Four phrases with a total of nine pulses in each phrase. It has the shortest cycle.	It is a mode which talks about an old woman who stays in the forest alone, making beads for her ancestors. The duty of making beads for the ancestors is such a Good honour for the woman.
<i>Taireva</i> , (we used to tell you) Transcription 12 fig 3.10	Four phrases with twelve pulses.	<i>Taireva</i> is mode that is translated in many ways. One way is that it means “we used to tell you” or “we shall speak” or “do not say I did warn you” In other words the mode is a warring mode.
<i>Nhemakonde</i> (Of the	Four phrases with	Is also one of the oldest modes that

aloe) Transcription 5 fig 3.10	twelve pulses.	talks about bravery of hunter. Some give it the name <i>chipembere</i> meaning rhinoceros. A rhinoceros is a brave and fierce animal.
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Table 8 Different mbira dzavadzimu modes.

All the subjects interviewed confirmed that the major modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* are *nhemamusasa*, *mahororo*, *taireva*, *bangiza*, *nyamaropa*, *nhemakonde*, *kuzanga* and *karigamombe*. These modes are considered to have been with the *mbira* since its creation around the 10th Century. Below are transcriptions of some of the modes collected during my field study. Only the lead (*kushaura*) of each mode in its simplest form is transcribed. It provides the skeleton of the mode marking the pitches sounded on each pulse. However there are variations to each of these generic outlines.

3.6.1 Transcriptions of modes

1. *Nhemamusasa* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

2. *Kuzanga* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

3. *Shumba* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for the *Shumba* mode (*muridziro*). The notation is arranged in two systems, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) staff. The RH staff uses a treble clef and the LH staff uses a bass clef. The music is written in a 12-pulse system, with vertical lines indicating the pulse positions. The notation includes various note values (half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes) and rests. The piece is divided into four measures, labeled I, II, III, and IV. Measure I is the first measure, II is the second, III is the third, and IV is the fourth. The tonal center is C (*Raso repakati*), and the tempo is 1 pulse per line.

4. *Bangiza* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for the *Bangiza* mode (*muridziro*). The notation is arranged in two systems, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) staff. The RH staff uses a treble clef and the LH staff uses a bass clef. The music is written in a 12-pulse system, with vertical lines indicating the pulse positions. The notation includes various note values (half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes) and rests. The piece is divided into four measures, labeled I, II, III, and IV. Measure I is the first measure, II is the second, III is the third, and IV is the fourth. The tonal center is C (*Raso repakati*), and the tempo is 1 pulse per line.

5. *Nhemakonde/Chipembere* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for the *Nhemakonde/Chipembere* mode (*muridziro*). The notation is arranged in two systems, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) staff. The RH staff uses a treble clef and the LH staff uses a bass clef. The music is written in a 12-pulse system, with vertical lines indicating the pulse positions. The notation includes various note values (half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes) and rests. The piece is divided into four measures, labeled I, II, III, and IV. Measure I is the first measure, II is the second, III is the third, and IV is the fourth. The tonal center is C (*Raso repakati*), and the tempo is 1 pulse per line.

6. *Muroro* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical score for the *Muroro* mode (*muridziro*). The score is written on three systems of staves, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) part. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The score is divided into four sections labeled I, II, III, and IV. Section I is the first system, Section II is the second system, Section III is the third system, and Section IV is the fourth system. The tonal center is G, and the pulse rate is 1 pulse per line.

7. *Bhukatiende* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical score for the *Bhukatiende* mode (*muridziro*). The score is written on two systems of staves, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) part. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The score is divided into four sections labeled I, II, III, and IV. Section I is the first system, Section II is the second system, Section III is the third system, and Section IV is the fourth system. The tonal center is G, and the pulse rate is 1 pulse per line.

8. *Nyamaropa* mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical score for the *Nyamaropa* mode (*muridziro*). The score is written on two systems of staves, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) part. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The score is divided into four sections labeled I, II, III, and IV. Section I is the first system, Section II is the second system, Section III is the third system, and Section IV is the fourth system. The tonal center is G, and the pulse rate is 1 pulse per line.

9. Mahororo mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for the Mahororo mode (*muridziro*). The notation is arranged in two systems, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) part. The RH part is written on a treble clef staff, and the LH part is written on a bass clef staff. The notation consists of circles (notes) and vertical lines (pulses) on a grid. The modes are labeled I, II, III, and IV. The tonal center is G (*Raso repamusoro*), and there is 1 pulse per line.

10. Karigamombe mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for the Karigamombe mode (*muridziro*). The notation is arranged in two systems, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) part. The RH part is written on a treble clef staff, and the LH part is written on a bass clef staff. The notation consists of circles (notes) and vertical lines (pulses) on a grid. The modes are labeled I, II, III, and IV. The tonal center is G (*Raso repamusoro*), and there is 1 pulse per line.

12. Taireva mode (*muridziro*)

Tonal center: G (*Raso repamusoro*)
1 pulse per line

Handwritten musical notation for the Taireva mode (*muridziro*). The notation is arranged in two systems, each with a Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH) part. The RH part is written on a treble clef staff, and the LH part is written on a bass clef staff. The notation consists of circles (notes) and vertical lines (pulses) on a grid. The modes are labeled I, II, III, and IV. The tonal center is G (*Raso repamusoro*), and there is 1 pulse per line.

Figure 15. Transcription of mbira dzavadzimu modes.

Since all these modes and tuning systems are handed over to the present generation by the ancestors, it implies that the ancestors find sameness with the songs. Whenever these songs are played the spirits recognize them and are able to associate themselves with the modes since they used to listen and play these

modes. What happens is that when such modes are played, the spirits enjoy them through the spirit medium as he/she listens and dances to the music and this leads in the possession of the medium by the spirits. From the information the author collected from a *gombwe* spirit on the 26th of June 2008 during a healing ceremony, it can be noted that different levels of spirits are likely to be evoked by different modes. *Makombwe* spirits are likely to be evoked by very old modes like *bangiza*, *nhemakonde*, *mahororo* and *nyamaropa* especially when played on *nhare* tuned to *mavembe* tuning because *mavembe* is believed to be the oldest tuning system which had very low sound as evidenced by the spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi who said she prefers *nyamaropa* mode played on *mavembe* tuning system (*Refer to Film, Scene Two Appendix 1*).

Mhondoro spirits are likely to be evoked by modes that have something to do with everyday life experiences. Examples are modes that talk about hunting, motivation and counselling. The modes are *taireva*, literally meaning we used to tell you, which talks about the consequences of not listening to advice from the elders. *Muroro*, meaning prodigal, talks of the prodigal children who disappoint their parents and run away, only to come back when they want help. *Bhukatiende*, meaning wake up and let us go, is a mode about the historic experience of migration. During the early 14th Century when the Shona people were nomadic, they moved from place to place hunting and extracting minerals. So the song encouraged them to wake up early for the next journey. *Chipembere*, meaning rhinoceros signifies the fierceness of the rhinoceros. This is one of the dangerous animals they met during their hunting expeditions.

Family spirits, *mudzimu yemusha* are likely to be evoked by the most recent modes like *muroro* - prodigal, *marenje* - meaning forests, *chipindura* - give us the reply, *shumba-lion*, *taireva* - we used to say it and *chaminuka ndimambo* - *Chaminuka* is the king. However the love of *mbira* music is the driving force behind possession of hosts by ancestral spirits. According to Zambuko "...kana mudzimu wasvika unogona kukuti ndiridzire ruyo rwakati..."⁴⁰ Literally he meant that after possessing the host, the spirit may demand a certain type of

⁴⁰ Interview on 24 October 2008 at Mawire village in Hwedza District.

mode of their choice to be played. This implies that the spirits have their own preferences in form of modes and tuning systems.

The transcriptions of the tuning systems above show that 56% of the collected tuning systems are derived from modes, 37% have something to do with highness and lows of the voice of *mbira* and only 7% have to do with the relationship of the pitch levels on the keys. The implications are that in the majority of cases the Zezuru *mbira* players and makers depend on the modes to tune their instruments. This goes a long way in preserving the modes themselves. When modes are used to tune the *mbira*, then there will be some efforts to maintain the perpetual existence of the modes. *Mbira* modes and tuning systems will continue to unite the living and the dead.

3.7 Conclusion

From the data discussed in this chapter it can be concluded that tuning systems, modes and spirits are inseparable because the modes and tuning systems belong to the ancestral spirits. In other words the modes, tuning systems and the spirits do not perish but continue to live eternally. The perpetual existence of the modes and tuning systems is maintained through inheritance. On the other hand the spirits' perpetual existence is maintained through possession. The spirit identifies a member of the family to inhabit as it continues to look after the living. The strong bond between the spirits and modes is enshrined in Neher's 1960 theory of auditory driving which outlines the relationship between music (*mbira* modes and tuning systems) and possession in general. Consequently the tripartite relationship between modes, tuning systems and the spirits are enacted in the context of a *bira* ceremony in which *mbira dzavadzimu* modes are played to evoke spirits in spirit mediums. This implies that there is a strong relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes, tuning systems and the Zezuru "Midzimu" ancestral spirit possession. Each level of spirits, *midzimu*, *mhondoro* and *makombwe* spirits are evoked by modes as well as tuning system of their choice. However in the absence of their choices the spirits can be evoked by any *mbira* mode in any tuning systems but may later demand their choices. If the *mbira* players fail to play the demanded choices, the spirit may scold them.

CHAPTER FOUR

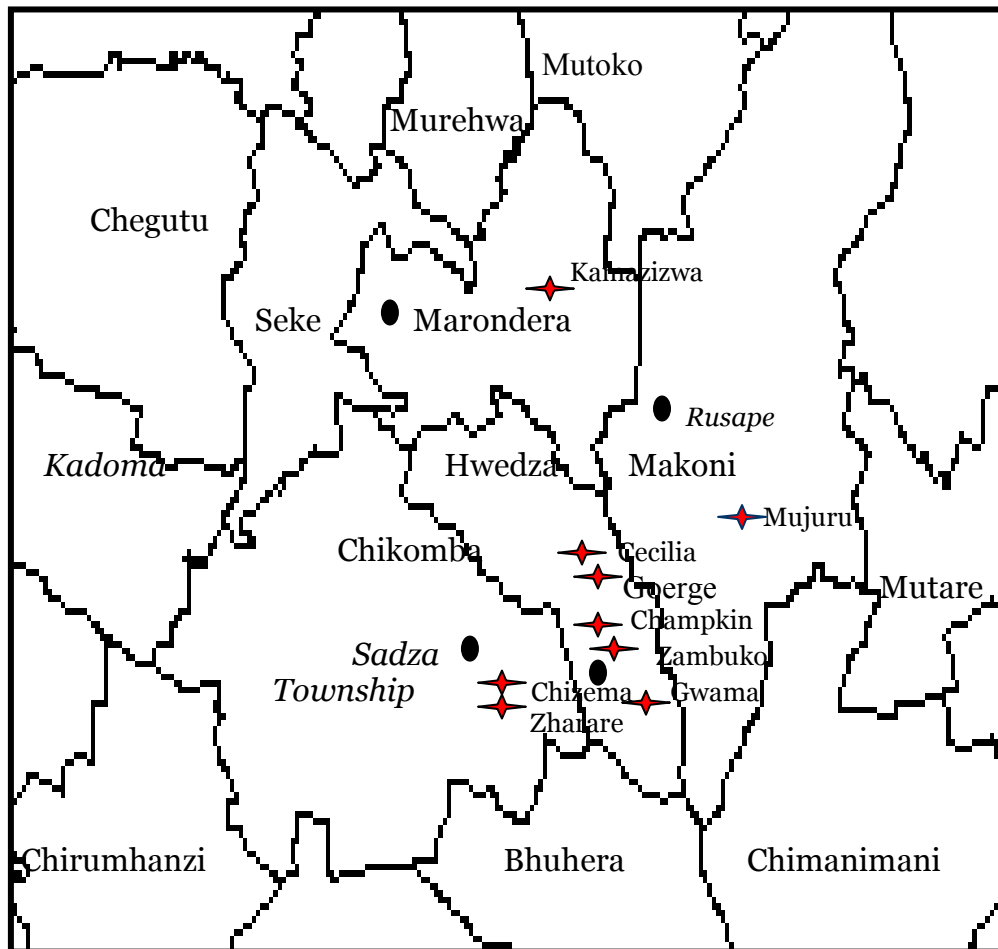
4.0 Current views on *Mbira dzavadzimu* modes, tuning systems and Zezuru spirit possession

4.1 What *mbira* players, makers and spirit mediums say about modes, tuning systems and Zezuru Spirit Possession.

The data for this thesis was collected from *mbira* players, *mbira* makers and spirit mediums introduced earlier in chapter one. The map below reminds the readers of the location of the subjects in the districts of Zimbabwe. Although some of the *mbira* players stay far away from each other, several similarities were noted in the tuning systems, modes played and their feelings towards the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and spirit possession. However there are some slight variations in naming keys on *mbira dzavadzimu* as well as on the names of the tuning systems.

For the purpose of analysis the researcher will make use of field notes to present the views of each player and provide a table that summarizes their modes, tuning systems and experiences in spirit possession. The researcher will adopt Gregory Barz's method of writing field notes in which different fonts are used to represent field notes.⁴¹ The following fonts will be used; agency FB for my voice in the field or experiences in present tense, *tunga* for reflective voice in past tense and Bodoni MT for my interaction with my field notes. The researcher adopts this style because it makes his documentation more engaging and reinforces his narrative reflexive paradigm.

⁴¹ Barz's method advocates for the use of different fonts for three voices; the experiences of the researcher in the field, reflective voice, the analytic voice of the researcher and the researcher's interaction with his/her field notes.



Map 5 Location of the subjects in Hwedza, Chikomba, Marondera and Makoni Districts. Map by Umali http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_

4.1.1 *Mbira dzavadzimu* tuning systems and modes according to Remigious Gwama

It is the morning of the 17th of June 2008. I approach Remigious Gwama's home which is not very far from the mission school where my family lives. I find him near his garden ready for the interview. As usual I greet him in the Shona customs using his Netambo totem⁴². The shona have a very strong connection with their ancestors in such a way that whenever they address each other they use the family totem more frequently than the real name.

⁴² The Shona people respect a person's totem which is an animal that is associated with a family's genealogy. It is meant to prevent relatives from marrying each other while also maintain the concept of oneness, *unhu* or *umuntu*. (Gelfand 1987:114)



Figure 16. Remigious Gwama. Photographed Rapako village on 17 June 2008

The belief is that when one greets someone using their totem, the greeting goes beyond the living and is extended to the ancestors. It is a sign of respecting the identity of the person thus confirming Tempels' theory of cosmology. It is also meant to avoid incestuous practices among group members of the same lineage. Having worked with Gwama in my previous research on the role of text in the Zezuru traditional life, I had created good rapport and because of this, I was received with open arms. I look at the list of questions from my note book and double checked all the settings on my video camera before commencing with the interview. I switch on my camera and the interview starts. My questions were centred on his experience in *mbira* playing, *bira* ceremonies, tunings systems, modes and the relationship between modes and spirit possession.

Remigious Gwama is a peasant farmer who lives in Rapako resettlement village in Hwedza District. He is of the Netombo clan. He is around sixty years of age. He has been playing *mbira dzavadzimu* since the age of twenty. He learned playing *mbira* through dreams. It is a Zezuru common practice that the ancestors communicate with the living through dreams (Gelfand 1987:127). The dreams can be on any social issues that the ancestors would like to transmit to their people. The same goes for the transmission of modes from the ancestors to the people.

A *mbira* learner can dream hearing a totally new mode and he/she tells the elders. Under such circumstances the elders will know that the ancestors want the individual to be a *mbira* player who will help in perpetuating their music. The elders then make sure that they provide the individual with a *mbira*. The *mbira* player will then transfer the mode on to the *mbira*. I as a Zezuru personally experienced this when I learned modes like *mbiriviri* and *bhukatiende*. The first day I dreamt hearing a *mbira* mode but I did not see the person playing it. I woke up thinking that someone was in the room playing *mbira* but to my surprise there was no one. I went back to sleep, again I dreamt hearing the same song for the second time. When I woke up the following day the music was still fresh in mind. I took my *mbira* and then tried to play the song and without any problem I managed to play it. I only knew the song was *kuzanga* after being told by my father. I learned *bhukatiende* the same way. This is a true testimony that *mbira* players can receive modes from ancestors through dreams. To confirm this method of learning Berliner (1993:136) has this to that, “*Mbira* players usually attribute their mastery of *mbira* to two sources: the spirit, through dreams and their colleagues through direct or indirect teaching”.

The method of learning modes through dreams can be better illustrated using Seeger’s (1987) theory of metamorphosis which explains how songs and musical sounds originate from the forest and get to people. In this case the songs and musical sounds are the modes, the forest is the dwelling place for the ancestral spirits and the man without spirit is the *mbira* player. This can be shown in form of a flow diagram as follows:

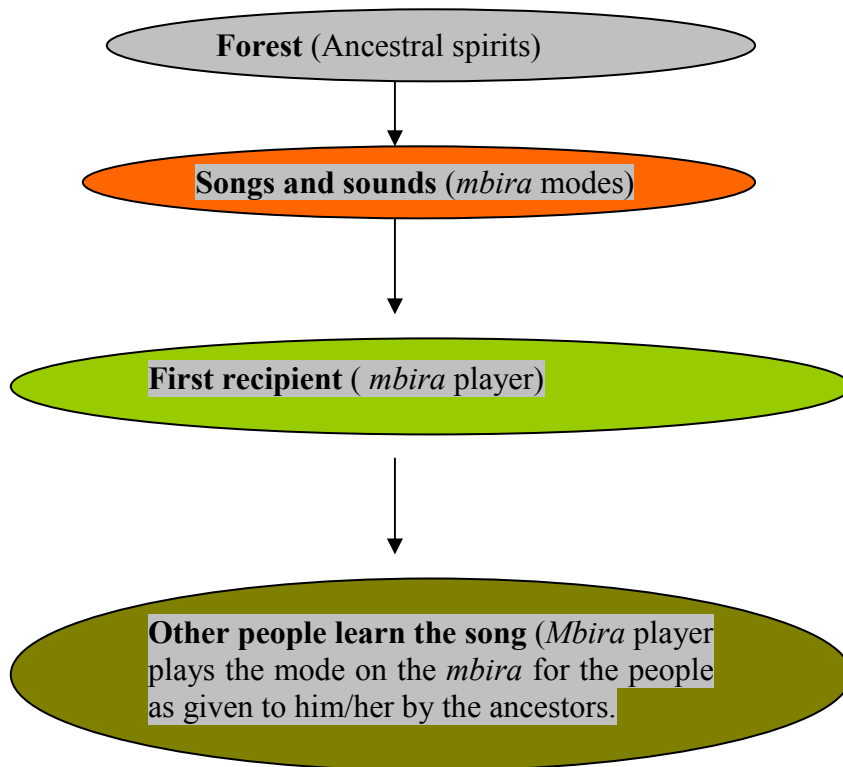


Figure 17. Illustration of the theory of metamorphosis

Corresponding with this point of view Berliner (1993:87) refers to a story told to him by Muchatera Mujuru which is entitled *Zimba Risina Musuwo*, a house without a door. The story has this to say that *mbira* modes first belonged to the spirits, who later taught them to the people.

Remigiuous Gwama has played in several *bira* ceremonies as a solo, *nyanzvi*⁴³ or as an ensemble, *mhuri*.⁴⁴ He prefers playing *mbira* tuned in *mahororo* number 3.⁴⁵ According to him he finds this tune to be easy to sing to and he finds it being capable of evoking spirits easily since the tuning system belongs to the spirits themselves. The other reason he gives is that the tuning system has slightly high voice that can be heard by everyone even those outside the hut. In his words:

⁴³ *Nyanzvi* is any person who has a reknowned expertise in solo performance not only in *mbira* playing but also in any activity practiced in the society.

⁴⁴ The word is used to refer to a group of *mbira* players normally of the same family. The name of the group may be the family name. The idea of *mhuri* is in line with the Shona practice of oneness *unhu*, *umuntu* or *humwe*.

⁴⁵ Number 3 is approximately in key A above middle C in western sense.

Mbira with average voice like number three is the one that evokes the spirits easily because they are loud enough to be heard by everyone even the spirit mediums outside the hut will end up coming inside to enjoy the music. (17th June 2008)

The musicological reason he gives is that *mahororo* tuning system's tonal center A or B and its phrase structure makes it sound similar to other tuning systems like *nyamaropa* and *karigamombe*. The home note which is also the starting note is the tonal center. All the three modes' tonal center is G as given in the transcriptions in chapter 3. They all have a four phrase structure and an equal number of twelve pulses in each phrase and they share the same harmonic and thematic structures. This follows that all the spirits that are evoked by *nyamaropa* or *karigamombe* will still be evoked by *mahororo* because of its similarity to the other two modes.

Apart from *mahororo* tuning systems Remigious Gwama knows other tuning systems like *nhemamusasa*, *bhukatiende* and *bangiza*. He learned these tuning systems juxtaposed with modes presented to him through dreams. The implication is that once one masters a mode, then he/she automatically masters the tuning system derived from that mode. The only tuning systems whose names are not names of modes are *ndongonda*, *mavembe*, *katsanzaira*, *kanyuchi* and *mazingizi*. Gwama can play the following modes: *mahororo*, *nyamaropa*, *taireva*, *dangurangu*, *karigamombe*, *nhemamusasa*, *muroro*, *dande*, *shumba* and *nhemakode*.

4.1.2 Musafare Kamazizwa the spirit medium and *mbira* player's testimony.

It is now the 19th of June and I have travelled to Marondera district where I meet a spirit medium and also a *mbira* player by the name Musafare Kamazizwa. I double checked my notes from the previous interview and wondered what other information I was going to get. Thought I should ask him more on issues concerning possession since he is a spirit medium. Since this was my first interview with a spirit medium, I was a bit nervous. I could feel that there was not enough rapport established

before this interview, nonetheless the subject was very calm and welcoming.



Figure 18. Musafare Kamazizwa the gombwe spirit medium and mbira player. Photographed at Number 16 Nyameni suburb, Marondera on 19th June 2008

Kamazizwa is around fifty years of age. He works as an electrician for Chemhanza Mission in Hwedza but he comes from Marondera. Marondera is a district which borders with Hwedza to its north. He has been playing *mbira* since the age of fourteen. He learned *mbira* through dreams just like Remigious Gwama. He has also been a spirit medium for the previous ten years. He prefers playing *mbira* tuned in *mavembe*⁴⁶ and the spirit on him can be evoked by modes like *karigamombe*, *nhemamusasa*, *bangiza* and *nyamaropa*. The reason he gives is that these modes have been with *mbira* since its creation. He believes that the *makombwe*⁴⁷ spirits own these modes. Whenever the modes are played he says “I feel my blood flowing faster.” He says the modes he enjoys are the same modes enjoyed by the *gombwe* spirit that possess him. For him the spirits enjoy *mbira* music through their mediums. This is the reason why during a *bira* ceremony the spirit medium has to listen and dance to *mbira* music first before getting possessed.

⁴⁶ *Mavembe* is one of the oldest tuning systems associated with ancestral spirits characterized by very low voice and has additional keys on the left lower manual.

⁴⁷ *Makombwe* is the plural of *gombwe* which means the clan spirits. The word *gombwe* is derived from *kukomba* which means surrounding. In this case a *gombwe* spirit medium is surrounded by several spirits (Refer to Section 4.1.3)

Kamazizwa says that his first name Musafare (do not be happy) has something to do with his calling. He narrates his story which I translated as follows:

My name is Musafare because during the early days of my childhood I died and then resurrected. When I resurrected people celebrated but my father told them not to be happy then gave me the name Musafare which means do not be happy. As I grew up there were some indications that there was a spirit dwelling in me. I became ill and could not get a job. I used to resist this understanding until the elders confirmed that I have a *gombwe* spirit on me. *Bira* initiation ceremony was organized and then I became a spirit medium.

From his story it can be noted that the ancestors choose their host as early as childhood. It is a common practice that the symptoms of the presence of the ancestral spirit in a person include physical, social and mental problems. Physical problems include headache that are persistent and can not be cured by doctors. Social problems include misfortune, isolation and in extreme cases mental illness. The ancestors are believed to be responsible for these illnesses. They cause them so that they draw the attention of the elders who will in turn organize an initiation *bira* ceremony. From Musafare's explanation it can be noted that there is a common trend that the Zezuru people follow from the early stages of calling up to the graduation of the spirit medium. The following stages summarize the whole process as explained by Musafare and confirmed by Cecilia Nyahwedekwe another spirit medium to be presented later in this chapter:

I. Calling

The ancestors choose a family member as a host by considering the behaviour and the righteousness of the host. People who are promiscuous and adulterous are regarded by the spirits as impure. They are not suitable for housing the spirits. The next thing is that the spirits appear to the host through dreams telling them what they want or warning people about coming dangers.

II. Signs

The chosen member becomes unwell. Medication fails to cure some of the illnesses. This eventually draws the elders' attention.

III. Confirmation, *Gata*⁴⁸

The elders visit other spirit mediums or traditional healers, *n'anga* to confirm the cause. The traditional healers or other spirits will advise the elders on how to organize an initiation ceremony for the first possession and what material things to buy for the spirit. These may be snuffbox, walking stick, cloths, knife and traditional hat or *ngundu*.

V. Sourcing relevant materials

Elders buy required materials in consultation with the other spirit mediums or what the host is advised to acquire by the ancestors through dreams.

VI. Beer brewing (*hwahwa* or *doro*)⁴⁹

The elders will organize beer and food for the ceremony and invite other spirit mediums.

VII. Possession *bira* ceremony

This is an all night ceremony in which *mbira* or drum music is played. The host will get possessed and the elders will ask the spirit to introduce itself, *kukonya*⁵⁰. The spirit will show its manifestation in different ways which are akin to what the owner of the spirit used to do before death. This corresponds with Janice Boddy who say that "...the symptoms of possession are associated with hysterical conversion disorder, smoking snuff, dancing, drinking animal blood and alcohol, drinking tobacco and demanding certain type of cloths and head gear" (1994:138). Boddy's symptoms are also common in the Zezuru spirit possession. The researcher noted some of these symptoms on Cecilia

⁴⁸ The Shona people do not only consult ancestors on problematic issues but they also visit traditional healers (*gata*) who have the ability to help the people by healing them or advising them on cultural issues.

⁴⁹ *Hwahwa* or *doro* is traditional beer. Traditional beer plays a very important role in making people remain high spirited throughout the ceremony. More so it is nourishment for the ancestors.

⁵⁰ *Kukonya* means interrogate the spirit. This is done to prove the authenticity of the spirit. Sometimes it is possible for an evil spirit, *ngozi* to pretend to be the family spirit.

Nyahwedekwe as will be presented in the next section of the chapter. The symptoms indicate the embodiment of the living body by the spirits, Cecilia bearing the body to be possessed by ambuya Mudevairi's spirit.

4.1.3 The *gombwe* spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi speaks out.



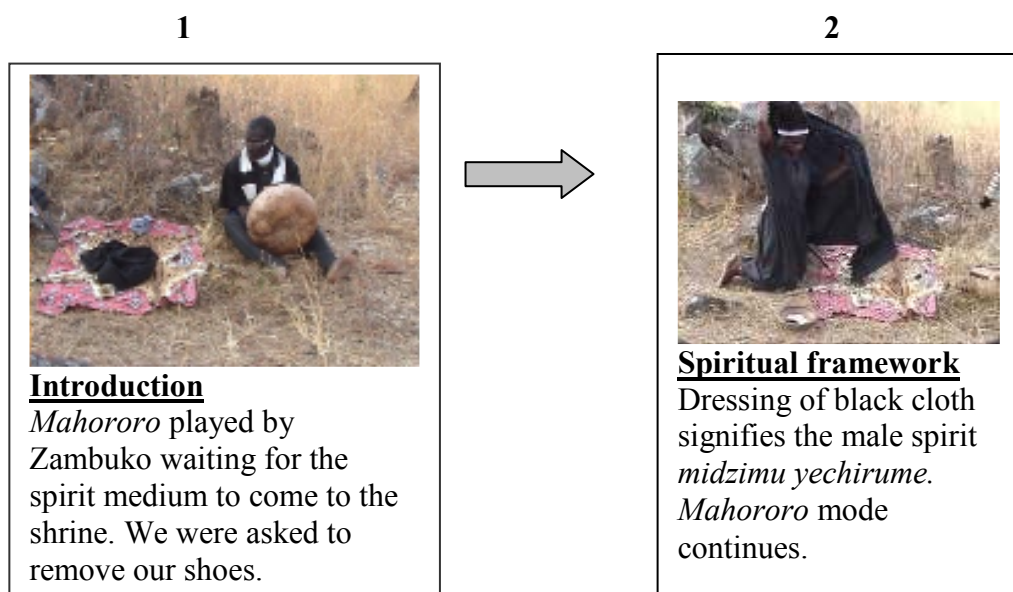
Figure 19. Picture of the spirit medium getting prepared for the ceremony. Photographed at Mawiri village Hwedza on 26th June 2008.

It is on the 26th of June, in the company of Cosmas Zambuko we arrive at Cecilia Nyahwedekwe's home. I needed Cosmas Zmabuko's compay for two reasons, as the aide to the spirit medium he would help in introducing me to Cecilia. He would also play *mbira* to evoke the spirits in Celia Mudevairi. As we approach the home Zambuko orders us to take off our shoes. It is normal practice that when conducting ritual activities people should remove their shoes because it is believed that the shoes separate people from direct contact with the earth thus making it difficult for the ancestors to possess the hosts. Instead of going home we go to a small bush about three hundred metres away from the home because the medium's hut (*banya*) is under construction. We arrive at a temporary *banya* and sit on stones. After some few minutes Cecilia arrives and greets us. Zambuko introduces me to Cecilia. Cecilia remembers me because I once visited her with Zambuko again in 2005 when I was carrying a research on innovation on *mbira*. In a way this created a good rapport. Nyahwedekwe is a mother of five. She is forty-eight years old. She is a *gombwe* spirit medium who lives in Mawiri resettlement. She is

possessed by five spirits, two *makombwe* spirits and three *mashavi* spirits. The two *makombwe* are her grandmother and her grandfather. The *mashavi* are *dona*, *zungu* and *njuzu*. She has been getting possessed by these spirits for the past fifteen years. In this staged ceremony, Cecilia was possessed by the rain spirit of ambuya Mudevairi.

Zambuko explains the purpose of my visit and Cecilia says we have to get permission from the ancestral spirit themselves after possession. This worried me a bit. Were the ancestral spirits going to allow me to use the camera? If they do not allow me then what will be the alternative? Is it possible for me to take the film from a distance while zooming in? Cecilia goes back home to collect her attire. In the meantime Zambuko plays *mahororo* mode. Cecilia comes back and dresses as Zambuko continues to play *mahororo* mode which leads us into a prayer or *kupira* process. I am a bit scared and unstable. Should I start recording? If I do not then will I not miss this important stage? Should I wait until the spirits give me permission? In that confusion I look at Zambuko. He understands my worry and nods his head as a sign that I should go ahead and take that film. I am happy now, I take out my camera very quickly and my eye is behind the viewfinder. Cecilia prays while kneeling in front of some rocks. She asks for permission from the ancestors to allow me to use the camera, which she called *madzangaradzimu*. Zambuko keeps on clapping his hands.

The rest of the proceedings are summarized by the following possession model, (*kusutswa*):





4



piritual framework,
zvipfeko

Mahororo is played as the host adds the dressing for the *gombwe* Spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi and hold her rod, *tsvimbo*

3



Prayer, kupira

The host asks for permission from the ancestors to bless the ceremony, punctuated with hand clapping. *Mbira* music stops to give room for prayer.



5



Generation of trance
state, kunyaunya.

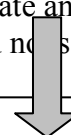
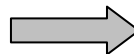
Cosmas Zambuko resumes playing *mahororo* and the host concentrates holding her rod, *tsvimbo* on her shoulders.

6



More seriousness and a
tenser atmosphere

Mbira music becomes more polyphonic and singing added, player absorbed in a trance state and host closes eyes and nods to the music.



8



Trance state

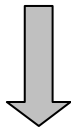
The host and *mbira* player, go into trance, more nodding to the music by the host, slight change in the face, eyes still closed, more music without singing and more roaring and movements

7



More spiritual framework

Snuff taking by the host and the tension in the atmosphere increases, *mbira* music more polyphonic as the performance approached the climax.

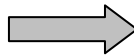


9



Total possession framework- Breakthrough!

Mahororo + Total possession, host's body shakes, eyes Closed, change of voice, change of face, more movements, *mahororo* mode sounds continues with more high notes, a feeling of a new experience, I sweat.

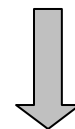


10



Relationship between *mbira* modes and the spirit

The spirit and *mahororo* mode find sameness, the spirit dances to the music, the whole context becomes highly spiritual, we are all existing in past, the past has been brought to the present. The spirit embodies the medium.





Entering the Spiritual World

The spirit speaks, music stops and the spirit is with us. The spirit greets us all and there is now direct conversation between the living and the dead. Zambuko, the aide has a dialogue with the spirit about the arrangements of building the traditional hut (*bwanya*) and the poor quality of snuff. It is quite a good experience to witness a living person talking to the spirit of the dead. It is also important to note how Cosmas Zambuko could assume different roles and perform them effectively. His transition from a *mbira* player to spirit aide was quite interesting. Zambuko introduces me to the spirits by referring to my totem *Musiyamwa* and explains the purpose of my visit and further apologizes for using the camera before getting permission from the spirits. The spirits accept everything. I switch off the camera to greet the spirits. I am now comfortable and I ask the spirit about the modes and tuning systems used long ago and how the modes evoke the spirits in order to compare what the spirit will say with my hypothesis that *mbira dzavadzimu* modes are responsible for evoking spirits in spirit mediums. The spirit takes more snuff on intervals as our discussion goes on. The ceremony ends with *mahororo* mode played by Zambuko. The spirit leaves the host and we are back into the world of the living.

Figure 20. Flow chart for possession. (Refer to film Scene Two Appendix 1)

This model applies to any possession ceremony in which *mbira* music is used to evoke the spirits. What may differ is the mode played, the tunings system, the type of the spirit and the context. During the interview the spirit confirmed that the *mbira dzavadzimu* they used to listen to during their time were tuned in *mavembe* tuning system and some of the modes played during that time, *gore ragocha nhembe*⁵¹, (the year of roasting skin clothes) were *bangiza*, *nyamaropa* and *mahororo*. The spirit has this to say that “The tuning systems that are used now are slightly different from those we used to know. However because there is some resemblance here and there, the modes played on the current tuning systems can still evoke us.”⁵² This implies that whenever the spirits hear modes from *mbira* especially those that the spirit used to listen to before leaving the earth, they are compelled to come back to the people to enjoy the music and at the same time solve people’s problems.

Spirit possession occurs under different conditions and varied reasons. In Cecilia’s case *mbira* performance was enough to evoke the rain spirit of ambuya Mudevairi to possess her. A spirit possession ceremony embraces activities that include *mbira* playing, use of traditional objects, singing, dancing, rattle playing, clapping and ululation. These activities are coordinated and interspaced so as to facilitate the embodiment of the spirit medium. Ambuya Mudevairi says, “*Kana maridza dzedu dzatinoda kunyange tiri kure kwatinenge tichifura tinouya nekuti tinenge tanakidzwa nengoma.*”⁵³ Meaning that if you play the modes that we enjoy, we will come even if we are very far grazing, we will come because we want to enjoy the *mbira* music. The interview carried out appeared to be slightly different for the rest of the interviews conducted with the other subjects in that the medium did not allow me chance to ask follow up questions. The spirit answered the questions in such an elaborate manner that some of the detail she provided did address my research problem. (*Refer to film Scene two Appendix I*)

⁵¹ The Shona people did not use date in terms of years instead they refer to a period with particular event. *Gore ragocha nhembe* which literally means the century of roasting skin clothes is the century in which people started putting on cloths rather than skins.

⁵² This information is part of what was discussed through the medium when in trance.

⁵³ Discussion with the spirits through the medium when in trance.

4.1.4 On the hill top with Abraham Zharare.



Figure 21. Picture of Abraham Zharare sitting on a stone up the hill. Photographed on 30th June 2008

Abraham Zharare is a retired farm worker who is now a peasant farmer in Chingwa village in Chikomba District. Chikomba District is adjacent to Hwedza District (See map 2). The two districts are separated by Save River. Abraham is of the *mhazi*⁵⁴ totem. He is around fifty years of age. He started playing *mbira* at the age of fifteen. He learned playing *mbira* through dreams and from friends within the same village. He had played in several *bira* ceremonies within Chikomba and the surrounding districts.

It is around 9.00 am the 30th of June. As I arrive at Abraham Zharare's home, sweat poured down my body as if I was rain soaked because of heat. I have been walking for the past two hours from my home to Abraham Zharare. I am greeted by a dog that is barking furiously. Is it that it is hungry or it does not entertain visitors? Abraham gets out of the hut shouting in order to stop the dog from advancing towards me. I am escorted into the round thatched hut where I meet the rest of the Zharare family. I am lucky to find food ready. We are served with *sadza* and *mufushwa* or dried vegetables. Abraham will soon want to go and milk his cow, so the interview must be conducted as soon as possible.

⁵⁴ *Mhazi* is a totem and another word used refer to a lion.

In single file we walk up a hill to the shrine where Abraham normally practices his *mbira*. Trying to keep my balance as I select the stones to step on at the same time trying to keep in pace with the other two, I carefully cling on to my bag with the camera to avoid it from dropping or breaking if I happen to fall. Surprisingly enough it is Abraham himself who slips and falls. It is really a pity because he hurts his left knee and left small finger. I began to wonder whether the ancestors of Zharare are willing to let him talk about their heritage. Anyway I am his nephew I can claim a share of the heritage. Apparently my mother was born in this family so there is strong maternal relationship according to the Zezuru people. Finally we make it. I sit on a stone opposite Abraham, a bit uncomfortable, and start by writing brief notes on what happened as we climbed up the hill.

The interview is opened by a nice song called *mahororo* followed by Abraham providing his biography. Abraham says that the *mbira* players prefer different tuning systems. Some prefer *nhare* that has a high voice, *izwi repamusoro* while others prefer *nhare* with low voice, *izwi repasi*. His *mbira*'s tune is *karigamombe* number three because it is between high and low absolute pitch. The other tuning systems can be number one, two, four or five.

However this method of naming tuning systems involves classification of *mbira* tuning systems according to the highness and lowness of the voice of the entire instrument. The classes range from number one to five. Number one has the lowest voice, followed by number two, then three, four and number five has the highest voice. According to Abraham the numbering system is not always accurate but it simply suggests degrees of highness and lowness of the instrument. In addition to this Abraham says that the keys of the *mbira* are tuned by making use of modes like *mahororo*, *nyamaropa* and *karigamombe* depending on the player's preferences. In other words one's *mbira* can be number one but tuned in *mahororo*. Thus the *mbira* has a high voice but is tuned using *mahororo*. This follows that the tuning of *mbira* involves two important elements which are the highness or lowness of the voice and the mode used to tune individual keys of the instrument. Below is a table that shows the classes and the possible corresponding keys in the Western sense.

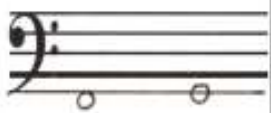
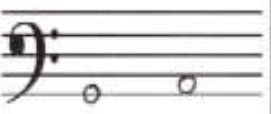
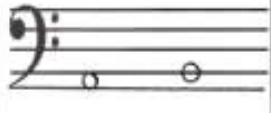
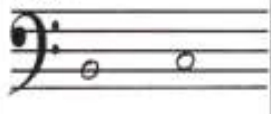
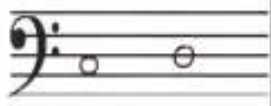
Tuning System	Approximate range	Key	Highness or lowness	Modes used to tune
One	F to G 		Very low	<i>Taireva Mahororo, nyamaropa, karigamombe, chipembere</i>
Two	G to A 		Low	<i>Taireva Mahororo, nyamaropa, karigamombe, chipembere</i>
Three	A to B 		Average	<i>Taireva Mahororo, nyamaropa, karigamombe, chipembere</i>
Four	B to C 		High	<i>Taireva Mahororo, nyamaropa, karigamombe, chipembere</i>
Five	C to D 		Very high	<i>Taireva Mahororo, nyamaropa, karigamombe, chipembere</i>

Table 9 Tuning systems and modes used.

Abraham demonstrated how to play modes like *nhemamusasa*, *nyamaropa*, *mahororo*, *taireva*, *bangiza*, *bhukatiende*, *dande* and *kuzanga* although he can play many other modes. Abraham says that although he can play *mbira dzavadzimu* tuned in any tuning system, he prefers to play a *mbira dzavadzimu* tuned in *nyamaropa* tuning system but with a voice of number three. He prefers

this tuning system because it has an average voice in terms of highness or lowness. Furthermore it can quickly provoke the spirits because of its brightness in sound.

Abraham feels that modes like *mahororo*, *nyamaropa*, *bangiza* and *kuzanga* can evoke both *mhondoro* and *makombwe* spirits, the reason being that these modes have been with *mbira dzavadzimu* since its innovation (Around 10th century). This implies that these songs have been passed from generation to generation but still belong to the ancestors as well as maintain the core elements. Therefore when the modes are played the ancestral spirits are evoked easily by the modes they once played or listened to. According to him whenever any of these modes is played during a *bira* ceremony, they are likely to connect with the ancestral or *makombwe* spirits. On explaining his experiences on what happens when possession is about to take place in a *bira* ceremony Abraham has this to say:

When it is about to occur the *mbira* becomes easy to play, you do not miss the keys, and also the sound will be harmonized when you play as an ensemble. It will be one thing. In his words:

*Kana zvichinge zvavakuda kuitika mbira idzi hadziome kuridzwa kwadzo, haudzipotsi, uye dzinengedzanyatso urungana mazwi pamunenge muchiridza kana muri vaiviri kana vatatu. Chinenge chava chinhu chimwe chete*⁵⁵.

According to Abraham Zharare during a *bira* ceremony when the medium is about to be embodied the presence of the spirit enables *mbira* players to present a polished performance. In other words when the spirits come they fill the whole context and also control the *mbira* players' proficiency. The implications are that if the ancestral spirits hear a familiar mode from a *mbira* tuned in a tuning system they like, they descend and fill the whole performance resulting in many people including the *mbira* players getting into a trance. Such a context becomes conducive for spirit possession thereby confirming the strong bond between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and the ancestral spirits.

It is almost eleven o'clock and we can all hear the cow in the kraal mooing for its calf. Abraham has to go and milk the cow. Otherwise there will not be milk for tea tomorrow. I pack my material but again I

⁵⁵ Interview on 30 June 2008 in Chingwa village, Chikomba District.

take my pen and record some important information like names of tuning systems and modes. In my mind I was asking myself several questions, did I capture everything that I wanted? Are all my questions answered? Why did my subject fall? Did I make use of the suggestions given during my lessons on how to conduct an interview using a video camera and taking field notes? I quickly run through my questions to find out whether I have asked all I want to help me check progress. Sometimes when using a camera to cover an interview there is no room for constant reference to notes and questions written down. Under such circumstances chances are that some questions will be left unasked. I bid them farewell and resume my two hour journey back home this time with new energy because the mission has been accomplished successfully.

I had to rest for two days at my home before I went back to the same Chingwa village to meet Chizema a great *nhare* player.

4.1.5 Meet Chizema the great Gwenyambira

It is early morning of the 2nd of July 2008. It is rather windy but the bright sunshine makes us feel a little bit better. Chizema is around fifty-five years. He is a peasant farmer and lives in Chingwa's village in Chikomba. He has been playing *mbira dzavadzimu* in *mapira* ceremonies for the previous fifteen years. He was taught *mbira* by his uncle Edias Chingwa. He usually plays together with his father-in-law Abraham mentioned before. Both their *mbiras* are tuned in *karigamombe* number three.

With my camera dangling under my armpits we ascend up yet another hill. As we approach the home we can hear the cackling of chickens and murmuring of people inside the grass thatched hut. We enter the hut only to discover that Chizema is not around. He had gone to pay fees for the children at Sadza Secondary School. I can not waste this day so we decide to make a follow up. On our way to Sadza Secondary School we meet Chizema on his way back. **At least I found him.** We are back at his home and the interview starts in his gum plantation behind his home. About *nhare* tuning systems Chizema concurred with Abraham Zharare. He has this to say:

About the tuning systems there is number one which is low then number two, number three has average voice, then number four

and lastly number five which has the highest voice. In *mapira* ceremonies *mbira* players normally play number three for spirit possession because the ancestral spirits like its average voice.

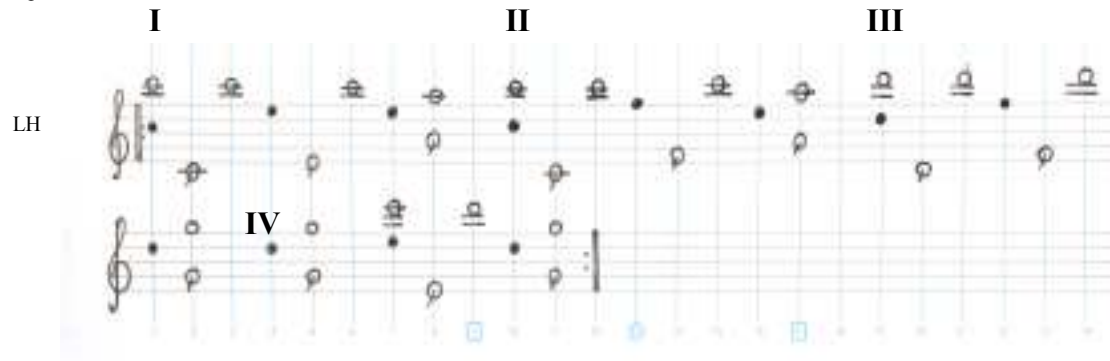


Figure 22. Tazvinga Chizema with Abraham Zharare obscured on left. Photographed on 2nd of July 2008 at Tazvinga's home in Chikomba District.

By this he means that tuning systems range from number one which has the lowest voice up to number five which has the highest voice. Number three is the one that evokes ancestral spirits during *bira* ceremonies. Number three has an overall key which approximates to the keys of A or B in the western sense. It has a voice which neither high nor low but average. This ties in with Abraham Zharare discussed earlier on with regards to the tuning systems, and is greatly attributed to the fact that they live next to each other and sometimes play together as *mhuri* during *mapira* ceremonies. Chizema identifies other tunings systems like *dongonda*, *nyamaropa*, *nhemamusasa*, *mahororo* and *gandanga*. Chizema used to play *mbira dzavadzimu* for his father who was a *mhondoro* spirit medium of Chirongamabwe. He can play modes like *nhemamusasa*, *mahororo*, *nyamaropa*, *kuzanga*, *mbiriviri*, *taireva*, *bhukatiende*, *karigamombe*, *bangiza* and *dande*. He says that his Chirongamabwe's spirit was evoked by *kuzanga* and *mbiriviri* transcribed below.

Kuzanga Mode (muridziro)

Tonal center: G
1 pulse to a line



Mbiriviri tuning system (pangiro)

Tonal center: C (*Raso repakati*)
1 pulse to a line

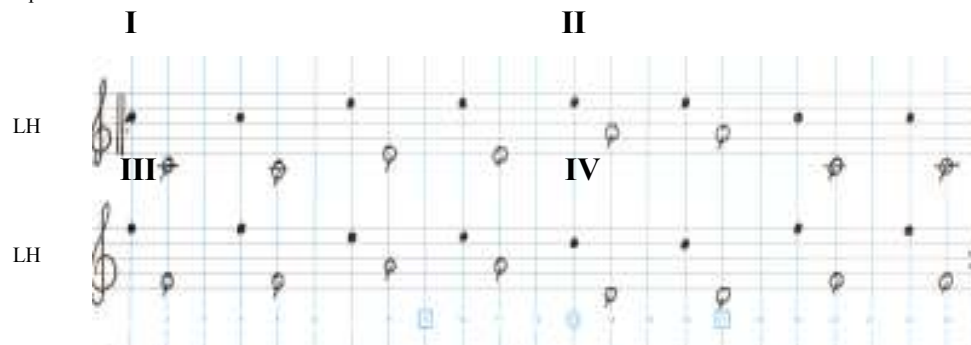


Figure 23. *Kuzanga mode and mbiriviri tuning system.*

The form and polyphony embedded in the two modes were favoured by Phenias Chizema's spirit. By analysing the two songs we can note that they are similar in that they both have the same tonal center which is C. They differ in that *Kuzanga* has 36 pulses while *mbiriviri* has 48. Chizema confirmed that when his grandfather, Phenias Chizema was still alive he used to like the mode *kuzanga*. He goes on to say if the mode is played in a *bira*⁵⁶, Phenias Chizema's spirit enjoys the mode through his host Chirongamabwe who will then get into a trance which will lead to possession by Phenias Chizema's spirit. This is in line with what Gilbert Rouget says that "Music has the secret power to trigger trance and possession." (1985: xvii) and this is emphasized by Neher's theory of auditory driving. Thus it follows that the spirit that possessed Chirongamabwe found a great degree of sameness in the mode *kuzanga* thus showing that there is a strong relationship between the modes and spirit possession.

⁵⁶ *Bira* is the singular of *mapira*, is an all-night ceremony meant for spirit possession purposes.

4.1.6 Up coming *Gwenyambiras*.



Figure 24. George Nyahwedekwe and Champkin Muringani. Photographed on 13th July 2008 in Mawiri Village, hwedza.

On the 13th of July and I find myself at Nyahwedekwe home to meet Chambukin Muringani and George Nyahwedekwe. George Nyahwedekwe and Chambukin Muringani live in Mawiri village. George is the eldest son of Cecilia Nyahwedekwe, the spirit medium mentioned earlier. The two boys are being groomed to play for the *gombwe* spirit. They normally play as a duet. They have recently started playing in *mapira* ceremonies. Champkin learned *mbira* through dreams and George learned from Chambukin. They both play a few modes like *nhemamusasa*, *mahororo*, *nyamaropa*, *taireva*, *bhukatiende*, *karigamombe* and *nhemakonde*. Their *mbiras* are tuned in *mahororo*.

The two feel that *mbira* modes have the power to call the ancestral spirit especially modes like *nyamaropa*, *mahororo* and *nhemakonde*. They agree that there is a very strong link between *mbira* modes and ancestral spirits. Champkin confirms that when the spirits are about to possess the host, as *mbira* player he also goes into a trance. In his words he has this to say: “*Kana mudzimu wavakusvika mbira dzino ririsa uye ndinonzwa muviri wangu kuti zikiriri*. This means that when the spirits are about to possess the host the *mbiras* become louder and my whole body trembles. This experience was confirmed by most of the *mbira* players I interviewed. What this implies is that the *nhare* modes have

the power to call the ancestors and when the spirits possess the hosts the whole context is spiritualized.

4.1.7 Cosmas Zambuko the spirit aide speaks.



Figure 25. Cosmas Zambuko the spirit aide. Photographed on 15th July 2008

As a *mbira* player the researcher has been interacting with Cosmas Zambuko, the spirit medium aide since 2000. I used to visit him to play *mbira* together. He also used to discuss with him issues concerning *mbira* music. Because of that, the researcher created good friendship between him and Cosmas which made Cosmas to introduce the researcher to the spirit medium, Cecilia discussed previously. It is the 15th July 2008 and I have rested enough after my field work in Chikomba and in Hwedza. I am in Mawiri village once more but with Zambuko Cecilia Nyahwedekwe's aide. I am accompanied by Remigious Gwama because I wanted them to play *mbira dzavadzimu* as an ensemble. Apparently Cosmas Zambuko and Remigious Gwama are related with Zambuko as their uncle. They occasionally visit each other to play *mbira* for entertainment or if there is a traditional *bira* ceremony. I had made an appointment with Zambuko on the day when he accompanied me to Cecilia Nyahwedekwe, the *gombwe* spirit medium. Before the interview we started by watching the film of the healing ceremony where I filmed him playing *mbira* for the spirit possession at Nyahwedekwe home two kilometres further west of Zambuko's home. As the film unfolds I watch Zambuko from the corner of my eye. I can note

the excitement as he joins his image in the singing. He is constantly interfering with the film by laughing and narrating to his wife and nephew what is happening. I could see that he has assumed authority and ownership of the film. The implication is that when a subject has a chance to watch him/her in an ethnographic film he/she is in a position to help in the construction of the film and the researcher is able to ask further question from the film. They want to correct some information or actions and that motivates them to say more which in line with Baily's intercultural field feedback method (1979). When subjects are involved in the editing of the film, they are not only fully incorporated in the research but also empowered to own the film.

We start with interviews then performance of modes. I asked him about what happened during to the healing ceremony which I filmed on the 26th of June in which Zambuko played *mbira* for the *gombwe* spirit possession of Ambuya Mudevairi⁵⁷.

Zambuko is a peasant farmer who lives in Mawiri village in Hwedza District. He is around seventy years of age. He is of the *mwendamberi* clan⁵⁸, *gwenzi rakapotera mambo*. He has been playing *mbira dzavadzimu* for the past thirty years. He plays *mbira* for the *gombwe* spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi. He plays the part of *makumbi*, meaning some one who acts as the aide to the spirit medium⁵⁹. His duties are to make sure that all the cloths, *machira* are in place before the ceremony. He also organizes the ceremonies for the spirit mediums. He is such a recognized and respected person in Mawiri village. He learned playing *mbira* through dreams and prefers playing *mbira dzavadzimu* tuned in *nyamaropa*.

According to him *nyamaropa* tuning system is one of the oldest tuning systems that belong to the ancestors. It is believed to have been passed from generation to generation together with the *mbira* instrument. Because of its association with the ancestral spirits, it becomes suitable for evoking spirits in spirit mediums and

⁵⁷ Ambuya Mudevairi is the grandmother of Cecilia Mudevairi whose spirit is regarded as *gombwe* and uses Cecilia as the host. This spirit heals people in and around Hwedza.

⁵⁸ *Mwenamberi* is a totem of the people of Gwenzi clan which means that which keeps on going.

⁵⁹ *Makumbi* is an aide to the spirit medium. What qualifies Zambuko to be *makumbi* is that he is related to the spirit and knows the historical background of the lineage of the spirit.

Zambuko finds it playing a very significant role in evoking the spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi. He played it to evoke the spirit during the ceremony I filmed on the 26th of June 2008.

For Zambuko this tuning system belongs to the ancestors. He also identifies the tuning systems according to numbers in the same way that Abraham Zharare and Chizema do. He says that he can play several modes and his playing technique makes use of the original techniques favoured by *makombwe* spirits. That is, he plays the modes in the way the ancestors used to play them and he does not add a lot of new variation. Some of the modes he plays are *nhemamusasa*, *nyamaropa*, *mahororo*, *taireva*, *bhukatiende*, *nhemakonde*, *karigamombe* and *mukaranga ane shanje*. According to him the ancestral spirits are evoked by different modes. Every spirit has its own favourite mode which evokes it whenever that particular mode is played.

4.1.8 At Samuel Mujuru's workshop.

Samuel Mujuru is the young brother of the late Ephat Mujuru one of the famous *mbira* players who was one of the key subjects consulted by Paul Berliner in his 1978 monograph *Soul of Mbira*. He comes from Makoni District. Makoni District is adjacent to Hwedza District and the two districts are separated by Ruzave River.



Figure 26. Samuel Mujuru at his Glennora workshop in Harare. Photographed on 10 September 2008

He is a grandson of Muchatera who was the spirit medium of *gombwe* spirit called Chaminuka. Muchatera was not only a spirit medium of Chamunika but also a *nhare* player. He used to play his twenty-five key *nhare* which was tuned in *mavembe* tuning system. In other words the spirit of Chamunika preferred modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* tuned to *mavembe* tuning system. He was taught how to play and make *mbira* by Muchatera himself.

Samuel confirms that he sometimes joins his brothers in the rural areas of Makoni to play *mbira* during *mapira ceremonies*. At present Samuel Mujuru owns a workshop where makes *mbira dzavadzimu* in Glenora Harare. When I visited the International Library of African Music on the 20th of August 2008 I was shown Muchaneta's *mbira dzavadzimu* tuned in *mavembe* shown to me by Andrew Tracy on 20th of August 2008 (*Figure 4.15*).

Samuel Mujuru is not only a *mbira* player but also a *mbira* maker. He makes *mbira dzavadzimu* and *karimba* for the local market and to export to America. He grew up in a *mbira* playing family called Mhuri *yekwa*⁶⁰ Mujuru and has been playing in for the past fifteen years. He prefers playing *mbira* tuned in *dambatsoko*⁶¹ which is almost a family tuning system.



Figure 27. Muchatera's mbira dzavadzimu, photographed at International Library of African Music on 20 August 2008. Permission granted by Andrew Tracy.

⁶⁰ Yekwa means 'belonging to'.

⁶¹ *Dambatsoko* is a word coined by the Majuro people to represent a tuning system identical to *mazingizi* with a low voice.

According to Samuel Mujuru, *dambatsoko* is a tune that adopts a *nyamaropa* tuning system but will be have low voice which makes it to be also called *mazingizi*. He says that when tuning *mbira dzavadzimu* he uses modes, which he calls *mayimbiro erwiyo*. He gave an example of the mode *karigamombe* usually named *dhongi mombe mbudzi*. Samuel has travelled overseas with his late brother Ephat to perform. He makes *mbiras* tuned in *nyamaropa mazingizi* and *mahororo kanyuchi*. He can play modes like *nyamaropa*, *mahororo*, *bhukatiende*, *karigamombe*, *nhemakonde*, *shumba*, *muroro*, *taireva*, *chakwi*, *bangiza* and *mandarendare*.

Samuel confirms that *mbira* players play modes that are wanted by the ancestral spirits. He further maintains that the modes that are liked by the ancestral spirits differ from spirit to spirit. On spirit possession Samuel has this to say that a *mbira* player has to be clean⁶² before the *bira* ceremony. If the *mbira* player is not clean the *mbira* takes time to evoke the spirits whether you play the favoured modes or not. If the *mbira* player is clean then it becomes easy for the ancestral spirits to be evoked by the modes played. The *mbira* becomes easy to play and its sound becomes even louder as if it is amplified. The implication is that purity and spirituality move hand in hand. This follows that apart from the modes and the tuning systems, purity also contributes to the spirit possession process. Other contributing factors towards arriving at the state of possession include singing, clapping, ululation, snuff inhaling, dancing and drinking of traditional beer, *hwahwa*.

According to his experiences Mujuru says that when the spirits are about to come the whole ceremony becomes highly spiritual. In his words he says that:

If the spirits are about to come and when I am playing *mbira*, I feel an emotional imbalance in my blood, *kunyaunywa*⁶³ and also the *mbira* starts to sound as if it is on an amplifier. Everything will be different even if the keys of the *mbira* will become soft and easy to play. Whenever someone gets possessed, there is a relationship between the mode I will be playing and the spirit to be evoked. *Mbira* is like a telephone;

⁶² Clean in this context means being free from evil.

⁶³ *Kunyaunywa* is the shona word for trance state.

this is the reason why *mbira dzavadzimu* are also known as *nhare*⁶⁴. I think the relationship is shown by the harmony between the strength of the spirit, *simba remweya* and the way I will be playing the *mbira*. (Refer to film scene 1 appendix 1)

Samuel Mujuru's contribution goes a long way in helping me test my hypothesis. He confirms that the ancestral spirits are evoked by different modes depending on the spirits' preferences. He also acknowledges the existence of a strong relationship between the different modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* and spirit possession.

4.2 Feedback interview

In order to collect further data about the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* and spirit possession, I employed Baily's intra-cultural field feedback method (1989) which states that the fieldworker goes back into the field to create an opportunity for the subjects to view themselves in the film and interact with their own data. The fieldworker will ask further questions and entertain more comments from the subjects. In employing this approach I revisited the field to show my subjects the footage that I had taken and then engaged in further discussions and follow up questions. This was quite helpful in that the subjects revealed more information especially information provided by Cecilia Nyahwedekwe about the calling of a spirit medium; Zambuko's contribution on other materials that contribute to spirit possession; and Samuel Mujuru on the modes and their related spirit levels. Cecilia Nyahwedekwe, the spirit medium feared to watch herself getting possessed but agreed to be interviewed further on her calling. Below is the additional data collected from three subjects.

4.2.1 Cecilia's Testimony

During my second visit to the spirit medium, I discuss with Cecilia Nyahwedekwe whether she is comfortable to watch the footage where she was

⁶⁴ *Nhare* is a shona word whose English equivalent is telephone. The word depicts the idea of communication between the Zezuru and their ancestors. Of the two names *nhare* and *mbira dzavadzimu*, the word *mbira dzavadzimu* was the first to be coined.

possessed. She indicated that she is not comfortable but she agrees to be asked about her experiences as a spirit medium. She provided me with very important information on her calling, how she was initiated and other material that contribute to spirit possession. She shares the same feelings with Musafare Kamazizwa about calling and initiation. Her story is as follows:

Indications of the presence of the spirit came to me at the early age of twelve. I used to dream of walking in mountains with Ambuya Mudevairi giving me medicine. I also dreamt of events that were going to happen. Events like the coming of hunger or war and this later happened. I used to be surprised by this. I liked to be friends with old women. Even the old women themselves used to call me whenever they perform rituals and it was very unusual for me. I was also being respected by people even those who were older than me. I favoured eating traditional diet like *chirevereve*, *tsunga*, *chembere dzagumhana* and *ndakupuka*. I then became ill with a terrible headache which the doctors could not cure. The elders consulted the other *mhondoro* spirits and were told that my grandmother's spirit together with other two *mashavi* and my grandfather's spirit were in me. They were asked to organize a *bira* ceremony and buy the different cloths needed by the spirits⁶⁵.
(Refer to film scene two appendix 1)

Cecilia continues to say that on the day of the ceremony she remembers dancing to *mbira* and then all of a sudden she saw darkness and got switched off. In other words she was possessed. She could not remember what she said under the control of the spirit but people told her that the spirit was asked to confirm and it indicated that it was the spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi daughter of Musorweyi. From that day she started getting possessed and healing people from different places around Hwedza. In addition to the above Cecilia added another dimension relating to factors that contribute towards the spirit possession during *bira* the ceremony. She says that apart from the *mbira* music, the different cloths play a very important role in attracting the ancestors. These cloths carry a semiotic function in that they signify different spirits. According to Cecilia and Zambuko there are different cloths as follows:

⁶⁵ Interview on the 24th of September 2008 at Mawiri village in Hwedza.



Figure 28. Cecilia putting on black cloth for male gombwe spirits. Photographed at Mawiri village Hwedza on 26th June 2008.

Black or black and white (*Hungwe*) are Male *gombwe* or family spirit. The black colour is for generating the spiritual power and white for cleaning the family or *gombwe* spirit



Figure 29. Cecilia putting on cloth for female gombwe. Photographed at Mawiri village Hwedza on 26th June 2008.

Blue and white (*Jira remadzimbuya*) signifies female *gombwe* or family spirit. It represents female spirits or *mhondoro* spirits for the rain. Blue is for the sky and white for the clouds.



Figure 30. Cecilia's other cloths and leopard skin. Photographed at Mawiri village Hwedza on 26th June 2008.

Red, black and white (*Retso*) is meant for alien spirits (*shave renjuzu*). It is worn around the neck by those who have the hunting spirit of *njuzu*. According to Cecilia hunting here refers even to the ordinary jobs that people do in order to get money to accumulate wealth. The black colour signifies that the alien spirit can only be functional in the presence of the family or *gombwe* spirit and white is for cleaning the spirit and red is for the blood of animals to be hunted or the wealth to be accumulated.

Spirits demand different types of skins from wild animals. An example is the skin of a leopard, second from bottom which Cecilia keeps for male *gombwe* (Figure 4.18). It is associated with hunting but she says that this is not the real skin that is required. The required one is that of a leopard. According to her the skin is a source of power and courage just like that of the animal itself. Zezuru people wore animal skins as a disguise so that animals could not recognize them easily. The cloths have a part to play in the possession process. Every spirit medium has to put on its respective cloths for the spirit to have power. The other important materials she alluded to are the snuff, *fodya* in its snuff box also called *nhekwe*. The boxes come in different forms. Some are made from horns of animals others from gourds. The snuff was given as the food for the spirits. I can remember Cecilia sniffing the snuff time and again as I interviewed her. The snuff for the male spirits is called *bute* and that for the female spirits is called *mudhombo*. The spirits require constant supply of the snuff through its host

because it helps in keeping the spirits present. They also require their rods which are called *tsvimbo*⁶⁶ made from a special tree called *musekesa*. (Refer to film scene two appendix 1) The rod depends on the spirit's preferences. She says that the rod she has is not the correct one she prefers. She prefers the one that has a head which looks like an axe. Below is a picture of a snuff box used by Cecilia figure 31 and her rod figure 32.



Figure 31. Snuffbox decorated with black, white and brown beads. Photographed on 24 September 2008 at Cecilia's home in Mawiri village.



Figure 32. Cecilia holding her walking stick. Photographed on 24 September 2008 at Cecilia's home in Mawiri village.

⁶⁶ The rod (*tsvimbo*) is a symbolic representation of the power of the spirits. By holding the rod the spirits gets their power from the rod.

Cecilia further indicated that most of *gombwe* spirits get evoked by songs like *nyamaropa*, *mahororo*, *nhemamusasa*, *karigamombe* especially when played on a *mbira* tuned in *mavembe* tune. The reason she gave was that these songs together with *mavembe* tuning system are very old and the *gombwe* spirits used to hear these modes during their time. She says that she normally gets possessed when the mode *mahororo* is played. She also brought in another important issue concerning the *mbira* players themselves. She concurs with Samuel Mujuru on that the *mbira* players have to be clean before they come to perform in a *bira* but Cecilia adds that the elders must start by giving the *mbira* player either beer, money or anything that makes them become motivated to play properly. According to her, *mbira* modes play a very important role in the possession process because *mbira* modes are part of music of the ancestors, *ngoma yepasi yavanofarira* (Refer to film Scene two appendix 1).

4.2.2 Zambuko and Gwama's corroborative views.

During my second visit to Cosmas Zambuko I was accompanied by Remigious Gwama so that I could have a combined interview. I started by showing them the film I took during my first visit in June. They were very excited and I could notice that they were motivated to tell me more and perform even better. I later asked them more questions and more information emerged. They both confirmed that there are other contributing factors that accompany the *mbira* modes during the spirit possession process. These include traditional objects like a big knife also called *bakatwa* for hunting, small axe called *gano*, walking stick, wooden plate and *ndiro*.



Tsvimbo



Chinemero



bakatwa and gano

Figure 33. Traditional objects. Photographed on 23 September 2008

Cosmas Zambuko says that these objects are needed by the spirits because they contribute to the spirit possession as previously indicated. The belief among the Shona is that the spirit gets the power to possess the medium as well as perform its duties from the traditional objects mentioned. In a way the spirit favours objects that it used to interact with when still on earth. In other words the past is represented in the present. The spiritual world is brought to earth. The objects increase the authenticity of the context. Some of the mediums dance while holding their traditional objects. Without them the context is incomplete. The spirit fails to find any resemblance to what it used to eat, wear, smoke, drink and manipulate during its daily activities.



Figure 34. Cosmas Zambuko holding his traditional objects. Photographed on 23 September 2008.

4.2.3 Samuel Mujuru talks about *ndongonda* tuning system.

During my second visit to Samuel Mujuru in October the researcher first of all showed him the film that I took during the first visit in June. He was very excited and we had a discussion about the film and its contents. This led to the revealing of more information on tuning systems. The researcher was fortunate to find him with a *mbira* tuned in *ndongonda* tuning system which is shown in the plate below. In his words he says, “The spirit medium of Chikono spirit came to me and told me that his spirit likes me to make a *mbira* whose top left manual has keys with the same pitch as the right manual and this tuning system is called *ndongonda*.⁶⁷ I had previously dreamt about someone telling me the same thing. So I made this *mbira* tune in *ndongonda* as per the spirit’s requirements.” (Refer to film scene 1 appendix 1)

⁶⁷ Interview on 26 October 2008 in Glennora , Harare

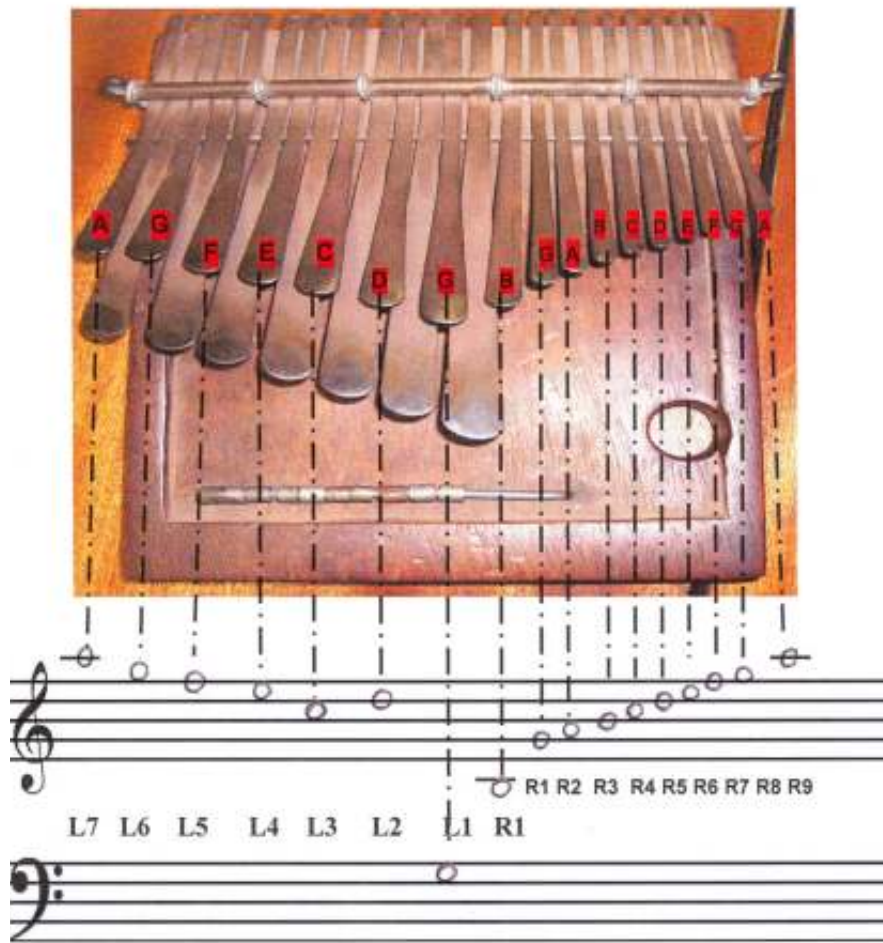


Figure 35. Distribution of top manual keys on *dongonda* tuning system.
 Photograph taken on 26th of September 2008

This implies that the spirit of Chikono prefers *dongonda* tune. In other words the *mbira* produces a lot of echoes, *hwindimbi* which makes its music unique and Chikono's spirit is easily evoked by this *mbira*'s music. From the transcribed tuning system above it can be noted that the following keys have the same pitch; L6 and R8, L7 and R3, L2 and R6, L3 and R5, L4 and R7, When Samuel played *nhemamusasa* mode on it, it sounded very fascinating. The echoing of keys of the same pitch on the left and right gave a unique flavour to the song.

In conclusion Samuel Mujuru says that the ancestral spirit get evoked by modes that are played following the original techniques which he calls *kuridza kwakare kwepasi* meaning an old way of playing. This old way of playing involves

Subject	Location	Tuning System	Modes	Level of Spirit evoked
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playing modes following the fundamental tuning system without adding variations. The tuning system acts as the basic pattern of the mode. Mujuru refers to the basic form as *mwongo wengoma*. In other words ancestral spirits prefer modes played using original tuning systems played in almost the way as they used to and in the old tuning system (*Refer to film Scene two appendix 1*). Samuel Mujuru concluded that *midzimu* spirits are evoked by songs like *bangiza*, *mahororo*, *nhemamusasa*, *taireva* and *nyamaropa* and the *gomgwe* spirits to include *mhondoro* spirits are evoked by modes like *nhemamusasa*, *bangiza*, *mutamba wakuwa*, *nyamaropa*, *mahororo*, *chakwi*, and *mbiriviri*.

From his conclusive statement it can be noted that some modes like *bangiza*, *nhemamusasa*, *mahororo* and *nyamaropa* can evoke both the family spirit, *vadzimu* and the *gombwe* spirit. He also said that the *makombwe* and *mhondoro* spirits are almost at the same level. *Mhondoro* is a special type of *gombwe* spirit responsible for the rain and welfare of a clan. This is in line with Gelfand who classifies the spirits into two, *vadzimu* and *mhondoro* or *makombwe* (1987:113) The table in (*Figure 4.24*) summarizes what the different subjects interviewed say about tuning systems, the modes and the spirits they are likely to evoke.

Abraham Zharare (50 years)	Chingwa Village Chikomba	<i>Nyamaropa</i> Number 3	<i>nhemamusasa, nyamaropa, mahororo, taireva, bangiza, bhukatiende, dande and kuzanga</i>	<i>Mhondoro and family spirits</i>
Remigiuous Gwama (60 years)	Rapako Village-Hwedza	<i>Mahororo</i> Number 3	<i>mahororo, nyamaropa, taireva, dangurangu, karigamombe, nhemamusasa, muroro, dande, shumba and nhemakode.</i>	<i>Makombwe And mhondoro</i>
Chizema (50 years)	Chingwa Village Chikomba	<i>Nyamaropa</i> Number 3	<i>nhemamusaa. Mahororo, nyamaropa, kuzanga, mbiriviri, taireva, bhukatiende, karigamombe,</i>	<i>Makombwe, Mhondoro and family spirits</i>
Zambuko (70 years)	Mawiri Resettlement Hwedza	<i>Nyamaropa</i> Number 3	<i>nhemamusasa, nyamaropa, mahororo, taireva, bhukatiende, nhemakonde, karigamombe and mukaranga ane shanje.</i>	<i>Makombwe, mhondoro and family spirits.</i>
Champkin Muringani (25 years)	Mawiri Resettlement Hwedza	<i>Karigamombe</i> Number 2	<i>nhemamusasa, mahororo, nyamaropa, taireva, bhukatiende, karigamombe and nhemakonde</i>	<i>Makombwe and family spirits</i>
George Nyahwedekwe (23 years)	Mawiri Resettlement Hwedza	<i>Karigamombe</i> Number 2	<i>nhemamusasa, mahororo, nyamaropa, taireva, bhukatiende</i>	<i>Makombwe and family spirits</i>

Table 10 Summary of modes and tuning systems.

4.3 Conclusion

The seven *mbira* players interviewed employ three different tuning systems: *mahororo*, *nyamaropa* and *karigamombe* from which about ten modes are generated and played at different spirit possession ceremonies; for example; *kurova guva*, *mukwerera*, *doro renyota* and *dira mhamba*. This means that the three tuning systems are capable of evoking family, clan and rain spirits. In addition, the different levels of tuning applied to the systems have a bearing on the spirits' pitch preferences. It is also possible to evoke the spirits by playing modes outside ceremonies mentioned above as the case of Cecilia Nyahwedekwe and Cosmas Zambuko discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Summary and conclusions

This thesis presents the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and Zezuru spirit possession, *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and tuning systems, spirit possession in a staged performance as well as the analysis of transcribed tuning systems and modes. The methodological framework embraced the following: selection of data from unpublished and published research; information gathered from my subjects; a reflexive framework together with dialogical editing methods in data collection and analysis. The results of this research indicate that there are several modes that are played on *mbira dzavadzimu* and that these modes are believed to belong to ancestors and have been passed from generation to generation. These modes are often performed in the context of the *bira* ceremony in which the ancestral spirits possess spirit mediums in order to communicate with the living.

From the literature reviewed together with the research findings it can be noted that Zezuru *mbira* music is deeply rooted in these *mbira dzavadzimu* modes. The modes have managed to survive because of the tuning systems derived from them. The researcher is therefore led to further conclude that the modes and tuning systems belong to the ancestors confirming the relationship between *mbira* modes and the spirits. Also as observed during fieldwork process there is an indication that spiritual possession is made more meaningful by diligent preparation for the *bira* ceremony; through the use of correct attire associated with specific use of spirits, traditional objects, consumption of beer, participants' involvement through *hosho* playing, hand clapping, ululation, dancing and prayers offered before the *bira* ceremony (Refer to film appendix I).

The data collected showed that each spirit, whether *gombwe*, *mhondoro* or a family spirit (*mudzimu*), has its own preferred modes. The most common were found to be those modes that the spirits used to enjoy when they were still alive. All the subjects concluded that these modes play a very significant role in *bira* ceremonies because they help in evoking spirits in spirit mediums. This was confirmed during a spirit possession ceremony the researcher attended during

my field work in which *mahororo* mode was used to evoke Ambuya Mudevairi's spirit in Cecilia (*Refer to film Appendix I*). The *mbira* modes together with the tuning systems play a significant role in linking the living and the dead by enabling the possession in the living by the dead. This is in line with Neher's theory of auditory driving (1960) in Erlmann (1981) which emphasizes the relationship between music and possession and this confirms my hypothesis which states that Zezuru *mbira* modes are responsible for evoking spirits in spirit mediums during *mapira* ceremonies.

The researcher's contribution to the scholarship on modes, tuning systems and spirituality is that he attempted to identify the different modes and tuning systems and how they contribute in the evocation of spirits in spirit mediums. Furthermore he made an attempt to transcribe some of the modes and tuning systems to enable better analysis as well as preserving the modes and their tuning systems for future reference. His documentation of the relationship between the tunings systems, and modes and spirituality creates a reliable and valuable resource of such information that is otherwise hard to come by in existing literature.

The other important contribution is that he used current methods of research which employ the use of both visual and audio instruments to collect data as a participant observer. Gathering data concerning spirituality is not an easy task considering the confidentiality and sacredness involved. His approach of creating rapport made it possible for me to obtain both audio and visual documentation about *mbira* modes and spirit possession. It is of great importance to note that this research enabled him to enter the spiritual world in which he was able to dialogue with the spirit through the host while at the same time making a video recording of the entire process, an approach which many researchers have been unable to do. Being an insider, a Zezuru by birth, a *mbira* player by inheritance and also having done a course in ethnographic video documentation, the researcher was able to gather information from subjects with relative ease and break it down into simple steps during editing (*Refer to paper edit Appendix II*) of my ethnographic film entitled "The Spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi speaks out".

It is the researcher's pleasure to acknowledge that all the still photographs and video footage were recorded by the researcher and that he also edited the ethnographic film that accompanies this thesis. The use of an ethnographic film to analyze *mbira* modes and spirit possession in their cultural context helps in allowing the readers not only to read information about the modes and spirituality in my documentation, but also to visualise the technical manipulations on the keys of *mbira*, and to witness how the *mbira* modes are used to evoke the spirits in spirit mediums. The researcher edited the film in such a way that it shows the following progression; tuning system, modes and finally entering of the spiritual world. The film goes a long way in answering my research question about the relationship between *Zezezu mbira dzavadzimu* modes and spirit possession while at the same time providing documentary evidence. More importantly the researcher managed to generate a sequence of still pictures from the film which he used in defining the steps followed during the *Zezezu* possession process. He called this *Zezezu kusutswa model* meaning *Zezezu* spirit possession model.

My use of diagrams and Shona discourse helps in representing of concepts according to the way *Zezezu* people perceive them. The method of using different fonts to represent field notes as suggested by Gregory Barz (1997) was used to present field notes. In addition the use of Stephen Feld's dialogic editing helped in involving the *Zezezu* community studied in the editing of my documentation and film (1976:191). In other words ethnographic film which accompanies the researcher's documentation is a product of the views of the *Zezezu* and my own use of deep reflexive framework.

It can be concluded that there is a very strong relationship between modes and spirit possession which justifies my hypothesis that "*Zezezu mbira* modes are responsible for evoking spirits in spirit mediums during *mapira* ceremonies." The absence of any one of them has an effect on the efficacy of whole *Zezezu* cosmology. Spirit possession is not only a way in which the *Zezezu* people communicate with their ancestors, but it is also a way in which the past is experienced in the present. It is one way of showing that, for the *Zezezu* death is

not the end of life but is a gateway to the spiritual world, Tempels' theory of cosmology (1959). The strength of this theory is grounded in the belief that for everything the Zezuru people do, they consult the spiritual world. This communication is frequently made possible by the modes played on the *mbira dzavadzimu* through which ancestral spirits descend and inhabit a host who then communicates with the Zezuru community.

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APPENDIX I

Film: The Spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi Speaks out

My ethnographic film explores the relationship between *mbira dzavadzimu* modes and Zezuru spirit possession. The film has two scenes; scene one includes the different tuning systems and modes played on *mbira dzavadzimu* for spirit possession. The film presents Abraham Zharare and Samuel Mujuru's views and demonstrations on these modes and tuning systems. It also presents performances of some of the modes by Remigious Gwama and Cosmuous Zambuko. First part of scene two covers Cecilia Nyahwedekwe's experiences as a spirit medium and how she was called to be a spirit medium. The second part of scene two includes a possession ceremony in which Cosmuous Zambuko plays *mahororo* to evoke the spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi in Cecilia. My ethnographic message in this film is that the "relationship between the Zezuru people and the world of the spirits is made possible by *mbira dzavadzimu* music and this music is embedded in the tuning systems and modes which are part of the Zezuru heritage".

Find the film on the inside of the back cover.

APPENDIX II

Paper edit

Topic: The relationship between *mbira dza vadzimu* modes and Zezuru Ancestral Spirit Possession.

Name of the film: The spirit of Ambuya Mudevairi speaks out. (**Duration 23 minutes 45 seconds**)

Scene One Tuning systems and modes And Performance.		Scene two Spirit possession.	
	Time		Time
1. Introduction -song <i>nhimutimu</i> by Abraham Zharare and his son and an establishing shot from the hill.	Tape 1 00.00-00.32	1. Calling , Interview with Cecilia	11:16 - 15:49
Tuning systems		2.Spirit possession	
3. Interview with Abraham Zharare on tuning systems.	00.32-01:34	-Song on <i>Chipembere</i> by Zambuko (cutaways established shot of the area surrounding the shrine-site for <i>banya</i> .Zambuko playing <i>mahororo</i> mode waiting for the host.	15:49 - 16:08
4.Interview with Samuel Mujuru on tuning systems	01:34-06:57		
On modes (cutaways- Songs) - <i>Nhemamusasa</i> and <i>mahororo</i>)	06.57-09:54	3.Arrival of the host and dressing	16:08 - 16:21
Performances	09:54-11:16	-Opening prayers by the host, (<i>kupira</i>)	16:21 - 16:53
5. Performance of the modes; i) <i>Nhemamusasa</i> by Remigious Gwama and Cosmas Zambuko the researcher on <i>hosho</i> , ii) <i>Mahororo</i> played by the same player with the researcher on <i>hosho</i> and Mrs Zambuko dancing, iii) <i>Nhemakonde</i> played by Gwama, Mrs Gwama on <i>hosho</i> and Chongodza on drum.		4.Prayer -Song in <i>mahororo</i> mode played on <i>mahororo</i> number 3 tuning system. -Entering the spirit word -The end (Cutaway of Zambuko)	16:53 - 22:31
	08 min	5. And Acknowledgements with	22:45 - 23:45

		performance by Zambuko and Gwama as background.	23:45 minutes
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APPENDIX III

Letters from Andrew Tracy and Paul Berliner,

Re: love of mbira

Sunday, November 16, 2008 7:11 AM

From:

"berliner" <berliner@duke.edu>

Add sender to Contacts

To:

pmatiure@yahoo.com

Dear Perminus,

Thanks for your explanation. I appreciate what you want to convey here. My own personal feeling is that it can introduce confusion into the literature when scholars markedly "re-define" conventional terminology to suit new situations.

Why not simply describe in detail (as you have below) and elaborate the different practices (instrumental and vocal) that you have observed associated with the notion of a mbira "piece" or "song," describing the structures and sounds that artists play/sing. You might also consider using a conventional term like "version" as well as "variation" if it would be helpful.

However you decide to proceed, I think it could be useful for you to discuss these research challenges/issues in representing the music, that is, the challenges of choosing appropriate terms to describe mbira performance--and explaining for readers, the choices you have made for your thesis.

Best wishes developing your thesis,

Paul

ps. Unfortunately, Muchatera didn't elaborate on his origins story during our discussion.

Paul Berliner

Arts and Sciences Professor of Music in Trinity College of Arts and Sciences,

John Hope Franklin Center for International and Interdisciplinary Studies,

and Department of Music

Duke University

fax: 919 660-3301

tel: 919 660-3322/681-4491

On Nov 12, 2008, at 1:27 AM, MATIURE PERMINUS wrote:

Dear Prof

Oh sorry! I meant Muchatera not Muchaneta. Ok I decided to use the term "mode" in my thesis instead of "songs" because from my findings I discovered that different mbira players play different song but following the same structure, you also acknowledged that in the Soul of mbira. Let me give you an example, I found out that different players play nhemamusasa differently and sing it differently. To me nhemamusasa becomes a mode and their different variations plus singing becomes a song. You may correct me here before I conclude my thesis. For instance Samuel Mujuru, grandson of Muchatera described nhemamusasa, mahororo etc as having "muimbira wembira" which can be used to tune the instrument. To him and I agree, a mode, not necessarily the way it is used in English theory would mean a co-structure that one can improvise on (maridziro)

Tell me more about Muchatera's story Zimba risina musuwo. I want to link it to Seegar's theory of metamorphosis.

Perminus.

--- On **Tue, 11/11/08**, **berliner** <berliner@duke.edu> wrote:

From: berliner <berliner@duke.edu>

Subject: Re: love of mbira

To: pmatiure@yahoo.com

Date: Tuesday, November 11, 2008, 4:41 PM

Dear Perminus,

It was good to learn that your research is behind you now and your thesis is well underway. It sounds very interesting.

You'd be very welcome to use the two pictures from Soul of Mbira you've requested for your work. (By Muchaneta, are you referring to Muchatera Mujuru?)

I was also very interested in your use of the term "mbira modes" in your letter. How are you using the term "modes" in this context? Is there a Shona word that you feel is the equivalent of the English music theory term, mode?

All best wishes,

Paul

Paul Berliner

Arts and Sciences Professor of Music in Trinity College of Arts and Sciences,
John Hope Franklin Center for International and Interdisciplinary Studies,

and Department of Music
Duke University
fax: 919 660-3301
tel: 919 660-3322/681-4491

On Nov 10, 2008, at 10:24 AM, MATIURE PERMINUS wrote:

Dear Prof

Back again. I am now writing my thesis on the relationship between mbira modes and spirit possession. i am getting a lot of information from your monography the soul of mbira. I am asking for your permission to extract two pistures from The Soul of mbira, one for Muchaneta's mbira ensemble and the other one for Muchaneta himself.

Yours

Perminus Matiure

Dear Perminus,

Of course you may use all these things, and I am very glad if you do.

The squares and the circle are just a visual device to make it easier, when you are working with this paper, to find where eight, twelve or sixteen pulses start and end, without having to count the lines every time; much African music, as you know, is built on cycles of these numbers, such as most Shona mbira music for example, built on $4 \times 12 = 48$ pulse cycles.

I know ILAM would love to have a copy of your thesis when it is ready, if that would be possible. You must have met Prof Diane Thram, the new director.

With very good wishes for the success of your thesis,

Andrew Tracey

----- Original Message -----

From: MATIURE PERMINUS

To: honbun@lantic.net

Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2008 7:54 AM

Subject: For Andrew

Dear Prof

May I ask for your permission to use the following in my thesis; your pulse lines to transcribe mbira modes, pictures of different mbira from ILAM and a map showing the distribution of mbira in and around Zimbabwe in your article The Original African mbira of 1972.

Tell me what is the significance of the squares around pulse lines 9 and 17 and circle around pulse line 13?

Perminus Matiure

APPENDIX IV

Ethical Clearance



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

15 SEPTEMBER 2008

MR. O MATIURE (207506096)
MUSIC

Dear Mr. Matiure

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0528/08M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

"The relationship between mbira dzavadzimu modes and Zezuru "Midzimu" Ancestral Spirit Possession"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully


MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc. Dr. P Opondo
cc. Mrs. L. Marriott

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville