

Words and Translations

Here are the words and translations for the songs presented on *Ngatiimbe*, a collection of field recordings made in Zimbabwe in February and March of 2011. While I was there, I worked with choirs at Seke Teacher's College in Chitungwiza and at the College of Music in Harare. In both instances, Dr. Sheasby Matiure was an invaluable help in facilitating those connections. The majority of these songs are in Shona, the language of the ethnic majority of Zimbabwe. A few—*Jesu Kwantana*, *Nodoli*, and *Kaana Kameme*—come from the neighboring countries of South Africa and Namibia. The singers seemed less concerned with strict categories than I was in my research, and so I have included these songs here because they are so enjoyable to sing. Because they are in different languages, the translations are more general, presented as the singers at Seke understand the songs. With the Shona translations I have attempted to be as literal as possible while still providing the greater, implicitly understood sense of the song. In this I have received great help from Dr. Isabella Jeso and Munyaradzi Masawi. A primer on the Shona language is outside of the scope of this project—listeners wishing to pursue their understanding of the language can find good resources through mbira.org and at learnshona.com. As a guide to general pronunciation, vowel sounds in Shona are always pure.

Kwaziwai Mose Mose *Seke Teacher's College*

Kwaziwai mose mose
Tirivaimbi vekwaSeke
Tinomukwazisai. Muzita raIshe.

*Greetings to all of you.
We are the singers from Seke.
We greet you in the name of the Lord.*

Munotuma Aniko *Seke Teacher's College*

Mwari wangu munotuma aniko?
Munotuma aniko, aniko...
Ijipita makatuma Mozisi.
Makatuma Mozisi...
A Niniveh makatuma a Jonah
Makatuma a Jonah...
A Zimbabwe munotuma aniko?
Munotuma inini, inini...

*My Lord, who would you send?
You sent Moses to Egypt.
You sent Jonah to Nineveh
Who will you send to Zimbabwe?*

Tsvimborume/ Chaminuka *College of Music*

Tsvimborume ndzino bayana handei
kumagandari

*The tsvimborume are fighting each other; let's go
gather magandari.*

A *tsvimborume* is bachelor more than 35 years old. In this song, one of these fellows goes to the forest to help the women gather *magandari*, edible larvae. After working all day, he still doesn't get a date with any of the ladies.

The second song in the medley refers to Chaminuka, a powerful spirit in the Shona tradition.

Mamutora Nhai Baba *College of Music*

Mamutora nhai Baba.
Fambai naye nhai Baba.

*You have taken him, Father. Guide him
(to everlasting life).*

Kudzidza *Seke Teacher's College*

Mwana waAmai regakutiza chikoro
Hona mangwana uchatambura

Kudzidza chiro chakanakisa
Mwanangu enda (w)o kuchikoro

Mwanangu, mwanangu, mwanangu, hona
mwanawe
Tarira, upenyu, upenyu, wakomangawana.

*Child of my mother, if you run away from school
Today, you will be in trouble tomorrow.*

*Learning is an important thing.
My child, you must go to school.*

Unity Seke Teacher's College

Unity's the power
(Ku)batana isimba

Unity is the power.

Jesu Kwantana Seke Teacher's College

Jesu kwantana tante malimu haukele murena
Haukele murena

*Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me.
In Sotho: pronounce the 'k' in haukele as a 'g'*

Chikore Congregation UCC mission, Chikore

Congregational singing during a church service

Aneni UCC mission, Chikore

Aneni Ishe wemadzishe
Aneni Ishe wekudenga
Anochengeta nyangwe nenherera
Aneni, Aneni

Anondigadzirira tafura
Pamberi pavavengi
Anochengeta nyangwe nenherera
Aneni Aneni

*He is with me, the Lord of Lords
He is with me, the King of Kings
He protects even the orphans.
He is with me.*

*He sets my table in front of my enemies.
He protects even the orphans.
He is with me*

Anouya Chete College of Music

Anouya chete, Anouya chete. Asinganonoke.
Kunamata hakunandakura

*He will come without delay.
Praying is timeless.*

Ngatimukudze Musiki College of Music

*My child, you must think about what is
important in life*

Ngatimukudze woye.
Ngatimukudze wa musiki
Haiwa, haiwa, haiwa, ndendende
Nyenye yaMwari woye.
Nyenye yaMwari yabaiwa
Nhamo imbiri woye.
Nhamo imbira vakomana.

*Let us glorify, oh, let us glorify the Creator.
The Star of God, oh, the Star of God
has been pierced.
Trouble is fame, oh, trouble is fame, young men*

Tsvimborume Seke Teacher's College

The same song as above, with Sheasby
Matiure on *mbira nyunga nyunga*.

Chigungunde College of Music

Ndiwe wega pachikweza chaMandiyanga
Chembere dzomira mira
Pachikweza chaMandiyanga
Response: Chigungunde

A song from a rain-making ceremony.
Mandé rhythm.

Tokonye Seke Teacher's College

Ndashaya anditi tokonye
Ndiwane mafambiro

Zigadzi rine godo godo
Kuti tore ichi kuti gwengwendere
Kuti paumurume kuti bha
Zirume rikati ag
Inga angu mashura

*A song about a frustrated married couple. They are
trying to provoke one another so that they can get out
of the relationship.*

Tose, Tose UCC mission, Chikore

Tose tose, Tose tose, Tose tose
Iwe neni tose tiende kudenga

Musha wedu uri kudenga

Pasi rino idandaro
Yasvika nguva iyo yekuti
Iwe neni tose tiende kudenga

Baba redu vari kudenga...
Hama yangu shingirira...
Vana rechikoro...
Hona-rana rechikoro...

Unknown

This was sung spontaneously at the end of a workshop I taught on American gospel harmony. I believe that the words are in Ndebele: I was unable to find a translation.

Gamba redu *College of Music*

Tipeiwo nguva yekuchema. Gamba redu.
Gamba raive gamba. Gamba redu.

*Give us time to mourn our hero.
This her was a hero of heroes, our hero.*

Chembere dzo mira mira *College of Music*

The same song as Chigungunde above.

No Dolly *Seke Teacher's College*

Call: Nodoli, Nodoli, Nodo— wena Doli
s'thandwa sam'

Res: Doli wena Doli s'thandwa sam'

Call: Ngikuthanda

Res: Ngikuthanda nomulele ngik'thanda
nomuvuka wena Doli s'thandwa sam'

*Doli, my love. I love you when you are
sleeping and I love you when you wake up.
Doli, my love.*

Murembo *Seke Teacher's College*

*A nonsense song. These words have no meaning
and are an imitation of English.*

Ndi Mwari Wakanaka *Seke Teacher's College*

Call: Ndiani warongasoo!
Ndiani waronga kudai
Ndiani waitaizvi!
Ndiani waronga kudai
O! NdiMwari wakanaka.
NdiMwari wakanaka.
Res: Ndi Mwari wakanaka

Call: Vamwe vanotaura taura
Vamwe vano nyeya —nyeya

Res: Ivo varipano

Call: Iwe uchamira
Res: Wega! Uchamira wega.

*Who is responsible for this? Who did this?
God made it wonderful.*

*Some people talk and gossip. You will stand and
wait alone.*

Kaana Kameme *Seke Teacher's College*

Kaana kameme yombo hololo
Hei tipomafa takamifa aishe

*Namibian: a young bride advises her sister to take
care of their parents when she moves away.*

The Singers

Seke Teacher's College:

led by Sharon Masoka, Maxwell Rafamoyo,
and Judith Ushe.

Altos

Thandiwe Muzenda
Melody Nzuwa
Ellinaj Nyakanyanga
Kudakwashe Njanike
Rosa Ndondo
Francisca Nyandoro
Evelyn Maparura
Gladys Panashe
Susan Gomondo
Evelyn Muzambi
Tandiri Raviro
Rhoda Chisango
Voice Gwariwa
Thokozile Dube

Sopranos

Pamela Musonza
Fania Maziwisa
Lorraine Matambo
Resistance Dzedze
Melody Mureka
Esther Mutikizizi

Tenors

Stewart Madziturira
Raphel Bright
Keith Murira
Walter Mujuru
Tariro Maisiri

Baritone

George Mwapenya
Jacob Murondi
Patrick Dzumbunu
Rinopa Leo Kuvarika
Prosper Fiya
Ian Rubatika

College of Music: led by Walter Mujuru and
Kudakwashe Edwin Zaranyika

Soprano

Sarah Mangundhla
Netsai Mavunga

Altos

Nothando Mhlanga
Sophia Mujokoro
Rose Joe

Tenors

Dananayi Muwanigwa
Clemence Mandizvidza
Christopher Tamburayi
Blessing Mutasa
Asape Munyanduki
Tatenda Muchiuro

Bass

Raymond Mupfumira
Pupurayi Murara
John Mathemba
Munyaradzi Mushuku
Claudius T. Nyamasoka
Tendai L. Madzviti
Farai Samuel Muchenje
Adrian Mudyiwa
Grey Greyson

The *Makwayera* Tradition

Kwayera is the English-derived Shona word for *choir*, in the same way that *taundi* means town and *ofisi* office. The prefix *Ma-* makes a word plural. The literal translation, then, of *makwayera* singing is simply choral singing. Beyond the literal, this style of singing—also known as *makwaya*—refers to Zimbabwean choral music that blends four-part western-style harmony with traditional rhythms, call and response patterns, and dance. The four-part harmony is a legacy of the 19th century missionaries who were known throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Missionaries were present in Zimbabwe by the early 1800s: we know this because when the Ndebele people came in the 1830s, pushed out of their home in what is now South Africa by Shaka the Zulu, they found missionaries already stationed in Matabeleland. As elsewhere, these missionaries established mission stations and schools, and used hymns in their proselytizing and their church services. The traditional songs of the area had a two-part harmonic structure: male and female parts, with hocketing lines of contrasting rhythms in between. It was easy leap, then, for local singers to graft the four-part structure of the hymns onto the singing they were already doing, creating the style that became known as *makwayera*. However, Shona singers preserved the parallel movement of the two-part harmonies instead of imitating the contrasting movement of Western hymns. This, combined with a call-and-response structure and traditional rhythms, lies at the heart of the unique beauty of these songs.

Makwayera blossomed in the '50s, spreading through both church and school. With the exception of a few government schools in the biggest cities, all of the schools in the country were run by the church: as more of the populace went through the schools, four-part harmony and a common repertoire of church choruses spread. Additionally, there was positive social value attached, because singing in harmony was considered to be a sign that you had been to school. By the '50s, there were frequent and large concerts in which different villages would compete against one

another and many songs in the style were composed and choreographed at this time. *Makwayera* singing is no longer as popular as it once was, though it is still being performed and taught. Dr. Sheasby Matiure, currently head of the Department of Music Education at the University of Zimbabwe, is a chief proponent and has helped keep the songs in the repertoire of teaching colleges around the country. But the broader social context has shifted to favor other musics.

In many ways, the arc of *makwayera*'s prominence is inverse to the rise of nationalism and the popularity of *mbira* music. In the '50s, when those large *makwayera* concerts were happening, fewer people were playing *mbira*, and those that were were of the older generation. In the '60s, as pan-African nationalism spread, the *mbira* tradition became associated with a national identity and with being "a son of a soil". This music—ages old—was used to fan the passions of the *Chimurenga*, most famously by Thomas Mapfumo, and to strengthen a sense of identity. With independence, this and other indigenous traditions received government support through the vehicle of the National Dance Company, among other initiatives, and continues to flourish among a younger generation of musicians. The antiquity of the *mbira* tradition, as well as its association with a belief in a system of animistic spirits, has made it appealing to a range of academics world wide, helping in its spread around the world.

But *makwayera*, because it is a blend of Western and native influences, was never taken up as part of a nationalist identity, never supported by the government, was not taken up by ethnomusicologists. And so the same vectors that made the one flourish have made the other diminish. But for me, it is precisely this blend that makes it so intriguing and so beautiful. More and more, we understand how interconnected we are and have long been. Early trade routes moved goods, languages and alphabets, science, and our genes. It seems only right that the music that resulted from this intermingling should be compelling, and should continue to be sung.

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This project would not have been possible without the help of many people.

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