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The Guitar and the *mbira*: Resilience, Assimilation, and Pan-Africanism in Zimbabwean Music

Ernest D. Brown

Abstract

In the 20th century, the guitar and mbira have been the most important musical instruments in Zimbabwe, and they symbolize a dichotomy of values, culture, and consciousness—urban-rural, European-African, and modern-traditional. This dichotomy has become an important part of the social experience of Africans in Zimbabwe, and its resolution is a recurrent theme in Zimbabwean music history. At certain times, the resolution of this dichotomy has been expressed musically by a preference for one instrument over the other, while at other times elements of mbira or guitar music have been blended with each other, creating a continuum of musical choices between the extremes.

In addition, the resolution of this dichotomy in particular periods has been strongly influenced by the interaction of three cultural tendencies—resilience, assimilation, and pan-Africanism. For example, because of pressures to assimilate, Africans began to abandon the mbira for acoustic guitars in the 1940s, although the guitar style that developed showed the resilience of traditional African music because it was influenced by mbira music. In the 1950s, under the pan-Africanist influences, guitar styles from Zaire, South Africa, and Afro-America began to replace the mbira-influenced guitar styles which were too rural to express the aspirations of an African population undergoing rapid urbanization. Mbira music went into a severe decline. The new guitar styles, which were at first acoustic and later electric, were undeniably urban, modern, and associated with rising social aspirations, but they were derived from other African or African-American cultures. As such these styles offered Africans an urban, modern alternative to assimilated European music and to mbira-influenced music. These complex cultural interactions continue to shape the development of guitar and mbira music today.

In Zimbabwe, the guitar and the *mbira* represent a dichotomy of values and cultures. The guitar has been the most important musical instrument in urban music since the 1940s, being used to express an evolving, urban, modern African sensibility. Guitar music is a graph of life, documenting social experience and changes in consciousness, as a result of rapid social change in this century. The

guitar is associated with contemporary, urban, Westernized life. On the other hand, the *mbira* (lamellophone) has been one of the most important instruments in rural music for many hundreds of years, being associated with a traditional consciousness and an ancient, rural way of life. For the Shona people of Zimbabwe, the *mbira* holds such importance that they identify themselves on the basis of which of the five major types of *mbira* they play (Berliner 1981:43). The music of any of the *mbira*, but especially that of the *mbira dza vadzimu* (the *mbira* of the ancestral spirits; see Figure 1), is a favored song style, much like the guitar in Spain, that seems to symbolize a people and a nation.

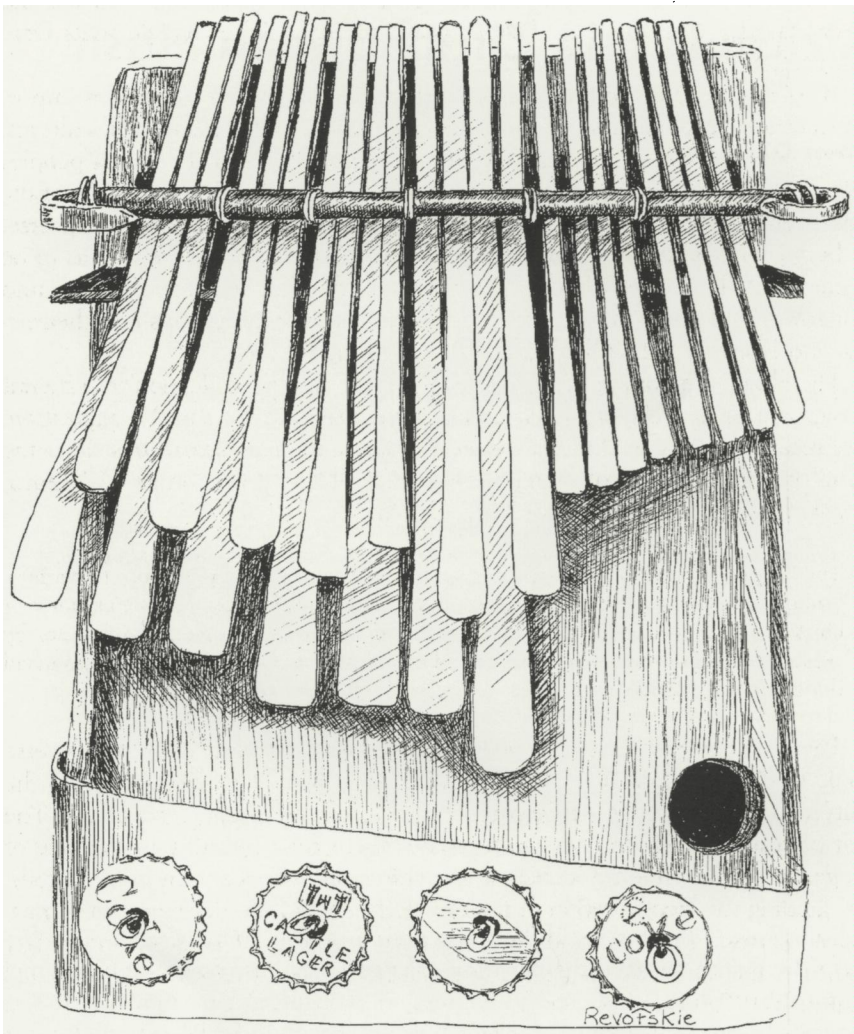


Fig. 1. The *mbira dza vadzimu*. Drawing by Susan Revofskie

Although they can be studied separately, in this analysis, the *mbira* and guitar are discussed in relationship to each other for several reasons. Many musicians play or have played both instruments. There is some continuity of social function and musical style between the instruments. Guitar and *mbira* music have been the most important outlets for African cultural expression in Zimbabwe in the 20th century. The choice to play the guitar or the *mbira*, the development of new guitar or *mbira* styles, and the changing functions of guitar and *mbira* music reveal a great deal about the way in which Zimbabweans have reconciled the tensions between rural and urban ways of life and the consciousness associated with each. The interaction between guitar and *mbira* music has helped shape a contemporary Zimbabwean culture which takes elements from both rural and urban, African and European sources.

Before proceeding with this analysis of music and social change, it is important to establish some basic information about traditional Zimbabwean cultures. By “traditional cultures”, I mean the pre-colonial cultures of the Shona peoples (75% of the population) and to a lesser extent those of the Ndebele (15% of the population). These traditional cultures are dynamic, not static; they are diverse, not homogeneous; and they have the capacity to initiate change, as well as to be affected by it. Thus, the Ndebele, an off-shoot of the Zulu who moved north into Zimbabwe from South Africa, absorbed Tswana and Sotho groups into their armies and intermarried with conquered Shona groups.

The Shona are not ethnically one people, but rather a collection of different peoples who speak related languages and adhere to a similar social organization. They received the label, “Shona”, during the colonial era. Before this time, the Shona did not conceive of themselves as a single entity but rather as Zezuru, Manyika, Karanga, Kalanga, Korekore, or Ndau:

The history of the Shona peoples has been one of movement in response to warfare, political and social conflict, and the exigencies of subsistence. Any community or chiefdom or cluster of them has been inhabited by persons of diverse origins, i.e., by persons who have shed local loyalties and taken on new ones or whose ancestors had done so (Nelson 1983:96).

The continual movement of people and contact between ethnically diverse people has made Shona and Ndebele cultures resilient. Resilience refers to the ability of a culture to absorb change and reassert its essential character. The spirit of resilience within these cultures is a force for continuity in the face of change. In the Shona and Ndebele music cultures, resilience is an internal compass, guiding the incorporation of foreign elements and the development of new musical genres: “Perhaps, tradition is not the opposite of change, but in fact constitutes the qualities that persist in a culture through the process of change” (Kauffman 1970:191).

In this century, in addition to being characterized by resilience, traditional cultures have been affected by two kinds of cultural borrowing that have af-

fectured guitar and *mbira* music. These are assimilations of European music and musical pan-Africanism. In this case, assimilation is forced “borrowing.” It is colonialism in the cultural sphere. The ideology of assimilation pressured Africans into dependence upon European institutions, training and the imitation of European cultural models (including ways of making music) because they would lead to social progress.

Pan-Africanism is African/African-American solidarity in response to colonialism and racism. In Zimbabwe, musical pan-Africanism arose as Africans struggled with those two evils, encountered other African or African-derived musics and discovered a resonance¹ between their own and these African or African-American traditions. This link between Zimbabwean and other African or African-American musics helped inspire new guitar styles which counterbalanced assimilationist pressure and expressed contemporary African social experience and consciousness. In this paper, I am going to focus on the way in which the resilience of tradition, assimilationist pressures, and pan-Africanism have interacted, transforming pre-colonial musical traditions played on the *mbira* into urban guitar music and then transforming urban guitar music into an approximation of rural *mbira* music. These changes highlight the conflict between rural and urban values and consciousness in Zimbabwean music.

I. The Rural-Urban Dichotomy and Double Consciousness

The guitar and *mbira* symbolize different cultures—the urban and the rural—that have interacted with each other, shaping much of Zimbabwean music history in this century. Each of these cultures has a different social reality, set of values, and consciousness associated with it.

”Rural” and “urban”, “country” and “city” are powerful words in the experience of the African people of Zimbabwe. The rural area is where they originally came from—the traditional village. ... Around the word ‘rural’ is gathered the idea of a natural and primitive way of life; of simple virtue, or peace, tranquillity, innocence and contentment (Kahari 1986:135).

In reality, however, rural life was not idyllic. Under colonialism, its reality was “bittersweet”. Africans were confined to less than 50% of the countryside, and they lived on the least productive land. Over-crowding and poor land transformed the rural areas (the former Native Reserves or Tribal Trust Lands) into labor reserves for the cities and dumping grounds for those who were not employable. Today, the legacy of the past still exists, and African landlessness is a major social issue. Nevertheless, the rural areas are associated with the ancestors, religion, and the *mbira*.

The *mbira* has a rich history. The first historical mention of the *mbira dza vadzimu* is in the accounts of 16th-century Portuguese explorers who visited the

Great Zimbabwe (a series of stone complexes that functioned as a Shona court and ritual center). This *mbira* is played to invoke a spirit medium's possession by ancestral or regional spirits in rain-making, thanksgiving ceremonies, or divination. Shona spirit mediums are guardians of the land and of the best interests of their people, especially after the institution of the chieftainship was co-opted and corrupted during the colonial era. Therefore, *mbira* music has political as well as ritual importance. It is a fitting symbol of rural life.

Just as the term "rural" has special meanings in Zimbabwe because of its history, so too does the term "urban". For an African, the experience of urban life in Zimbabwe also has a "bittersweet" quality which finds expression in guitar music. During the colonial era, urban life was attractive because of the improved social services and employment available, but the colonial pass laws, lack of adequate housing, and other restrictions constantly reminded Africans that the benefits of modern life were only temporarily theirs. Today, high rates of unemployment keep the dream out of reach for many:

The urban areas are linked with the idea of knowledge, sophistication, the administrative base of the capital city, new religious centres, markets, military barracks, industrialism, politics, ambition and discontent. ... "The urban area" includes the small mining town and areas occupied by the White farmers, while "the city" refers to Salisbury (now Harare) and at times Bulawayo. The arrival of the White man immediately and dramatically transformed the land they occupied into urban areas and the remainder into rural areas (Kahari 1986:135).

According to Kahari, areas formerly reserved for Europeans are, in a broad sense, urban. Then most of Zimbabwe is urban and has been for most of this century because the colonial division of land designated most of the land for European use. In this analysis, what is significant about the urban areas is not whether they are cities in the conventional sense, but rather the social relationships, consciousness, and music that were created within them. In Zimbabwe, urban areas are any places where whites drew Africans into capitalist relations of production and created a large African working class. The components of the music culture were fundamentally different from those of the rural, traditional music culture, which focused on religious rituals, life cycle ceremonies, and work songs performed with drums, *mbira*, or the voice.

Africans in the urban areas played new, industrially-produced (as opposed to homemade) musical instruments such as the guitar, heard live music in different social settings (e.g., beer gardens, nightclubs, and train stations), and listened to recordings of music on phonographs and the radio. Music in urban areas plays a much more important role as entertainment than it does in the rural areas, where it is more functional and more integrated with everyday activities (Kauffman 1970:200). The social realities, values, and consciousness of rural and urban music cultures in Zimbabwe have often been diametrically opposed. At times, "Africans associated the *mbira* with the poverty of the reserves and

with things 'unChristian' and 'old-fashioned,' while the guitar represented the wealth and glamour of the cities and things 'modern' and 'Western'" (Berliner 1981:241).

The tension between rural and urban ways of life caused Africans in Zimbabwe to develop a bi-cultural, double consciousness which constantly mediated between two antagonistic worlds—the rural and the urban, the traditional and the modern, the African and the European. This double consciousness is like that described by DuBois in "The Souls of Black Folk" as "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (DuBois 1976:17).

According to DuBois, one of the most peculiar aspects of this double consciousness is the African-American's sense of always seeing himself through the eyes of a hostile white America, while at the same time seeing himself through his own eyes. The attempt to gain control over these perceptions, to reconcile them, to find a true self-consciousness that integrates both parts of one's being (rural-urban, African-European, traditional-modern) has occupied Zimbabweans (as it has African-Americans) for most of this century.

In Zimbabwe, this struggle is expressed in the changing relationship between the guitar and the *mbira*. The musical solutions to the dilemma posed by this double consciousness have been different at different times, reflecting the relative strength of assimilationist pressure on the one hand and resilience and pan-Africanism on the other. Although the musical solutions have differed, the questions posed have remained remarkably constant.

2. From the *mbira* to the Guitar

The spirit of resilience in Zimbabwean music is symbolized by the *mbira dza vadzimu*. If *mbira* music is important in a given period in Zimbabwean history, then traditional, rural culture is likely to be valued highly. If Zimbabwean musicians and audiences believe that guitar music is a more effective means of expressing their social experience, then urban culture is probably valued more highly, although, as we shall see, some guitar styles are affected by *mbira* music.

Mbira music manifests all of the important features of rural, traditional Shona musical style. Therefore, it is important to describe this music in some detail so as to afford comparison with guitar styles. In this section, I will describe the main characteristics of *mbira* music and those of the first guitar styles, comparing and contrasting the two as an indication of the balance between rural and urban consciousness in the 1940s.

The twenty two keys of the *mbira dza vadzimu* cover three octaves and are tuned to a heptatonic scale which varies considerably from instrument to instrument. With such a large number of keys and a wide range, this instrument is ca-

pable of great rhythmic and melodic variety. Most *mbira* songs consist of extensive improvisations over a basic melodic and rhythmic pattern. Example 1 below transcribes the basic pattern of “*Nhemamusasa*”, an *mbira dza vadzimu* song on the album, “Africa: Shona Mbira Music” (Berliner 1977). The transcription is based on my knowledge of this song as an *mbira* player:

The image shows a musical score for two parts of a mbira instrument. The top part is labeled 'Kushaura' and the bottom part is labeled 'Kutsinhira'. Both parts are written in 12/8 time. The Kushaura part consists of a series of notes with stems pointing up, while the Kutsinhira part consists of notes with stems pointing down. The two parts are interlocking, creating a complex rhythmic pattern. The score is divided into four measures, each containing two staves. The first measure of each part starts with a rest followed by a quarter note, then a quarter note, and then a quarter note. The second measure starts with a quarter note, then a quarter note, and then a quarter note. The third measure starts with a quarter note, then a quarter note, and then a quarter note. The fourth measure starts with a quarter note, then a quarter note, and then a quarter note. The notes are mostly eighth and quarter notes, with some accents.

Ex. 1. “Nhemamusasa”

Like “*Nhemamusasa*”, most *mbira* songs consist of a 48-beat cycle divided into four phrases of twelve beats each. In Example 1 this cycle is transcribed as four measures in a 12/8 time signature.² *Mbira* are usually played in pairs and play different parts. The first part, *kushaura* (“to start”), contains the main melody of the song, while the second part, *kutsinhira* (“to follow”), consists of interlocking melodies that provide rhythmic and melodic contrast to the *kushaura* part.

Interlocking rhythm is very important in *mbira* music. The parts played by the right hand and left hands of each *mbira* player interlock with each other, as do the parts played by the two *mbira*. In the transcription, the right hand parts have note stems pointing up while the left hand parts have note stems pointing down, so that the interlocking of parts between the left and right hands of each *mbira* is clear. Aurally, the parts played by the left and right hands of each instrument are differentiated from each other by the placement of accents, melodic contour, and melodic motion. For example, the right hand *kushaura* part has an undulating melodic contour and more conjunct melodic motion, while the left hand is more disjunct in melodic motion and descending in contour. Also, the accents of the two parts differ, with the right hand accenting the first, third, and fifth quarter note in each measure, while the left hand accents the sec-

ond, fourth, and sixth quarter note. When played together, the effect is of two independent but interlocked melodic and rhythmic patterns. Not only do the left and right hands of each *mbira* interlock with each other but also the *kushaura* and *kutsinhira* parts interlock with each other.

The 48-beat length of this rhythmic cycle accommodates both duple and triple meter, two against three polymeters being very important in Shona music. In this example, the *kushaura* part is in triple meter while the *kutsinhira* part is in duple meter. In addition to polymeter and interlocking rhythms, polyphony is an important concept within Shona style. When two expert *mbira* players improvise, a kaleidoscopic complex of rhythm and polyphony results. Shona listeners appreciate the independent parts as well as the resultant melodies that are created.

Each *mbira* piece has a particular harmonic structure which usually divides the piece into four phrases. Improvisation takes place over this repeated harmonic progression. Speaking of the *matepe mbira* whose music is similar to the *mbira dza vadzimu*, Tracey states:

It is possible to divide [*mbira*] music into a number of harmonic segments in each of which there is a distinct and different harmonic feeling. During the playing of any one segment only a limited number of notes are used. These are primarily a pair of notes, a fifth apart (or any of the inversions or octave transpositions), and a less prominent subsidiary note which is the third between this pair. This is substantially the same as a western "triad," with the reservations that the tuning of the notes is different...; that at no time, on any one instrument at least, is a full triad played simultaneously, and that these chords do not function as western triads (Tracey 1970b:39).

The *mbira* ensemble is completed by a pair of rattles and by the voice. Each has a characteristic style of performance which, when it appears in other ensembles, is evidence of *mbira* influence. In an *mbira* ensemble, one rattle plays an even duple pulse on the beat (as a Westerner would hear it) while the other plays a triplet pattern which subdivides the beat. This playing style is transferred to the drum set in some guitar bands, as we shall see later. Some guitar ensembles are accompanied by singing that is derived from *mbira* ensembles, although guitar bands usually do not use the full range of *mbira* singing techniques.

Kauffman describes Shona singing style as follows:

The voice is not only used for singing, but for producing a wide variety of sounds, all of which have vernacular terms. ...For purposes of understanding *mbira* music we must distinguish between *kutema*, a high text-bound singing style; *kudzvowa*, a low, harmonically-oriented vocable style; *kutetemba*, a fast parlando style in free-speech rhythm; *mbeterwa*, a highly rhythmic dental whistle; and *kuedzerera*, rhythmic onomatopoeic sounds. The free use of these various vocal techniques can add a tremendous amount of variety to the development of a piece. The *kutema* and *kuzvowa* styles are used more frequently than the others, and often the singing will alternate from one to the other (Kauffman 1970:105–6).

The guitar began to replace the *mbira* among many urban Zimbabweans in the 1940s. The development of guitar music and an urban music culture was fueled by labor migration and is inseparable from that phenomenon. The guitar has become the instrument of choice since the 1940s, but the first urban musicians were labor migrants who played the zither in the mid-1930s. Some of them migrated to South Africa to work or played on white farms. The style of these musicians may have influenced early guitarists: "By the late 1930s, the banjo, harmonica and accordion were being played by a growing number of folk singers. Most of these musicians were itinerant, wandering from village to village, farm to farm and town to town. Some performed in trains, making the long rides bearable to passengers" (Sayce 1987:262).³

By the mid-1940s, folk guitarists, playing conventional, acoustic instruments, joined these musicians. This was a period of rapid urbanization:

By the beginning of 1946, [the migration of Africans to the cities] had reached the proportions of a human stampede. It was as if my people were running away from some kind of a plague that had visited the peace of their reserves. ...Vast numbers of the Shona and Ndebele people were being forced out of their lands to make way for new immigrants and local ex-service white Rhodesians. And so the townward march from the countryside became a continuous human flood (Vambe 1976:163).

These new urban residents looked for a new music to give voice to their experiences, concerns, and values as labor migrants in transition from rural to urban life. Folk guitarists filled this niche as the titles of their songs suggest—for example, Josiah Hadebe's "Telephone", George Sibanda's "Thief", and William Msanje's "*Chikuru Chiyi, Mari ne Mwana?*" ("Which is More Valuable, A Child or Money?"). The following songs were among the most popular in the 1950s—Jairos Chingwaru's "*Ukaramba Mukadzi*" ("If You Divorce Your Wife"), Chingwaru's "*Ukabara Mwana Asinababa*" ("To Have an Illegitimate Child"), and Daniel Makunha's "*Bhurukwa Rako Rinechigamba*" ("There's a Patch on Your Pants")(Sayce 1987:262). These songs document an emerging urban consciousness and changing values.

For a time, *mbira* players co-existed with folk guitarists, providing music for new urban residents and demonstrating some continuity in social function between the two musics, as the quote below illustrates. Eventually guitars replaced *mbira* and came to dominate the urban music culture of the lower classes from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s:

Before the advent of Shona radio broadcasts in 1954, *mbira* players, and later guitar players, would wander through the streets collecting people as they went. When the crowds became large enough, they would gather in a home to continue playing while drinking beer. Societies were sometimes formed to promote such musical activities. When the South African broadcasting units would visit Salisbury, they often recorded such guitar players (Kauffman 1970:202).

Musically, the folk guitarists bridged the gap between rural and urban, transferring some elements of *mbira* playing style to the guitar and expressing the consciousness of the first generation of urban migrants. Because of its transitional nature, this music provides ample evidence of the resilience of rural musical traditions:

Most guitar players seem to play their instruments similarly to the *mbira* in terms of the relationship of the parts. In other words, a basic pattern generates a variety of decorative cross patterns with the voice improvising a text in relationship to the guitar tonal and rhythmic mosaic. Ngwaru Mapundu is especially skilled at this type of guitar playing. Even his melodies and rhythmic patterns are traditional. (Kauffman 1972:53).

Examples 2 and 3 below transcribe songs from two well-known Shona folk guitarists of the 1960s—“*Mutema!*” (“He’s Dark Skinned!”) by Ngwaru Mapundu and “*Mombe Mbiri*” (“Two Cattle”) by Taurayi Uzumba. These examples represent two styles of folk guitar playing—a finger picking style using standard tuning and a bottleneck style using open tuning. These recordings were released as 45 rpm singles in the late 1960s, when the folk guitar style was near the end of its popularity. Both Mapundu and Uzumba recorded in one style on one side of a record and in the other style on the opposite side.

The development of these two guitar styles is best understood within the context of labor migration and musical interchange between Zimbabwe and South Africa. In South Africa during the 1940s, two Ndebele guitarists and labor migrants from Bulawayo, Josiah Hadebe and George Sibanda (mentioned above), popularized a South African chord-strumming guitar style, *ukuvamba*, that helped shape the development of guitar music in South Africa (Coplan 1985:186). In the late 1940s, John Bhengu, a Zulu guitarist influenced by Hadebe, developed a new finger picking style (*ukupika*) which became popular in South Africa (*ibid.*) and may have influenced the finger picking styles of both Shona and Ndebele guitarists in Zimbabwe.

Another South African style, played by *stokfel* guitarists using open tuning (Eyre 1988:85), may have influenced the open tuning, bottleneck style played by Zimbabwean folk guitarists. The *stokfel*, “a working class rotating credit association with entertainment, social, and economic functions” (Coplan 1985:270), operated *sbebeens*—illegal bars—where guitarists played. Zimbabwean folk guitarists played in a similar social setting.

“*Mutema!*” (“He’s Dark Skinned!”)(Example 2) illustrates the finger picking style. The guitar plays a two-phrase ostinato consisting of two interlocked melodic patterns. The bass pattern outlines the harmonic structure of the piece (chords built on the first and fourth degree of the scale in phrase one and chords built on the first and fifth degree of the scale in phrase two; see measures two and three in Example 2). This ostinato is repeated with variations throughout the piece.

There are several parallels between this guitar style and *mbira* music. The form of many *mbira* songs is similar to “*Mutema!*”—a two or four-phrase structure repeated with melodic improvisations. The finger picking style of the guitar may also be derived from the *mbira*. The motor patterns of thumbs and forefingers used in *mbira* playing are similar to those of guitar finger picking. In this example, the singing style is similar to that of *mbira* music. The voice uses the *kutetemba*, *kutema*, and *kuzvowa* singing styles discussed above:

Intro (Rubato)

The musical score is presented in five systems. The first system is the guitar introduction, marked "Intro (Rubato)". It features a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes. Chords F and B^b are indicated above the staff. The second system continues the guitar part, with chords F and C indicated. The third system shows the guitar part with a triplet. The fourth and fifth systems show the vocal line, with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature, mirroring the melodic patterns of the guitar.

Ex. 2. "Mutema!" ("He's Dark-Skinned!") by Ngwaru Mapundu

"*Mombe Mbiri*" ("Two Cattle") (Example 3 below) illustrates the bottleneck style which bears many similarities to *mbira* music. The piece consists of repetitions of a two-bar A section (measures one and two) that is repeated with variations throughout the song. The first measure moves from the tonic to the fourth while the second measure moves from the tonic to the fifth. This harmonic progression is repeated throughout the piece and melodic and rhythmic improvisations are built on top of this framework. Much the same procedure is followed in *mbira* music as we have already discussed. Rhythmically, this piece features triplet subdivisions of a duple meter, which is not true polymeter but nonetheless gives a feeling of metrical ambiguity and tension that enlivens the performance. The beginnings of the bass and treble melodies do not coincide, and they overlap each other (as do *mbira* melodies). The tone quality of the guitar is very me-

tallic and buzzy, like the tone quality of the *mbira*. Both the voice and the guitar have a rough tone quality like that of the voice and *mbira*. The guitar is possibly a *dobro* (a metal guitar) or a steel stringed wooden guitar that is played in open tuning. A metal slide or bottleneck is worn on the guitarist's fourth finger and is slid along the strings to provide the characteristic slide guitar sound. The sliding bottleneck technique used in this example invites comparison with African-American blues playing styles from Mississippi. The origins of this style awaits further research. Although I have suggested above that it seems to have South African roots, there may also be an African-American connection:

The musical score for "Mombe Mbiri" by Taurayi Uzumba is presented in a system with five systems of staves. The top staff is labeled "Voice" and the bottom staff is labeled "Guitar". The key signature is two sharps (D major) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins with an "Intro" marked with a "1" above the first measure. The guitar part features prominent triplet patterns and a sliding bottleneck technique, indicated by slurs and the number "3" above the notes. Chords A and D are indicated below the guitar staff. A note at the bottom right of the score reads "Everything else is a form of this."

Ex. 3. "Mombe Mbiri" by Taurayi Uzumba

The texts of “*Mutema!*” (“He’s Dark Skinned!”) and “*Mombe Mbiri*” (“Two Cattle”) reflect the double consciousness of people moving between two cultures and trying to resolve the antagonisms between them. The text of “*Mutema!*” (“He’s Dark Skinned!”) follows:

<i>Ndichasara ndichita nharo, ndoenda.</i>	I shall remain here and argue this one.
<i>Ndichiti Mapundu mutema!</i>	I say Mapundu is dark skinned!
<i>Wamwe vachiti mutsvuku.</i>	Others will argue he is light skinned.
<i>Mutema!</i>	He’s dark skinned!
<i>Mutema!</i>	He’s dark skinned!
<i>Masese chumi iwe igumi repondo</i>	(Untranslatable).
<i>Mwana asiya ngoma ichirira.</i>	The child left before the party was over.
<i>Ndosare ndichiita nharo ndoenda.</i>	I will stay behind and argue.
<i>Ndichiti Mapundu mutema!</i>	I say Mapundu is dark-skinned!
<i>Wamwe vachiti mutsvuku</i>	Others will argue he is light skinned
<i>Mutema!</i>	He is dark skinned!
<i>Mutema!</i>	He is dark skinned! (Murungu 1994).

Like *mbira* songs, this guitar song is difficult to interpret because it is topical and regional. One interpretation is that this song represents a strong reaction against assimilationist pressure. Colonial authority pressured Africans to believe that to be light-skinned (*mutsvuku*) was better than to be dark-skinned (*mutema*). In singing about himself, however, Mapundu reverses this color game, denying that he is light-skinned, even though most people say he is! In his own eyes, he is dark-skinned. This song seems to be about a specific incident in which Mapundu was involved: “The line about the child leaving before the party was over is indicative of the argument being so heated and prolonged some people left before the party (the argument) was over” (Murungu 1994).

This is typical of the indirect, metaphorical quality of *mbira* song texts and illustrates that a knowledge of the literal meanings of the words is not sufficient to adequately interpret these songs. The singer uses the term “*ngoma*” which means “drumming” or “dancing”, in other words, a party, but he is really talking about the argument. He says that a child (*mwana*) left the party, when he is really talking about the people who were observing or participating in the argument with him. Is he putting down his opponents by calling them children? This song expresses the assertiveness, Black pride, and nationalist consciousness of Africans in Zimbabwe in the 1960s.

“*Mombe Mbiri*” is another topical song which offers advice and guidance much as *mbira* songs do. It is an example of rural consciousness within an urban music genre. Its text is as follows:

<i>Mombe mbiri nemadhongi mashanu</i>	Two cows and five donkeys
<i>Sevenza nhamo ichauya</i>	Work hard, hard times are coming.

<i>Mombe!</i>	Cattle!
<i>Mombe!</i>	Cattle!
<i>Ini ndoti sevenza nhamo ichauya.</i>	I say work hard, hard times are coming.
<i>Ndoti sevenza nhamo ichauya.</i>	I say work hard, hard times are coming

(Murungu 1994).

Below Murungu explains the text of this song, a famous song sung in the rural areas to encourage people to do agricultural work:

Cattle play an enormous role in the Shona culture. Up to this day, in some areas of Zimbabwe, a man's wealth is measured by how many cattle he has. They are used for all sorts of things—to plough the fields, to pull carts of goods, [to provide] beef for food, [to make] sacrifices to appease ancestral spirits, [and to make] *lobola* [bride price] payments during marriage arrangements. The fewer cattle you have, the poorer you are. The next best thing to having cattle is to have a donkey. Thus, cattle and donkeys sort of separate the men from the boys, to put it the western way. In this song, the man, who owns more donkeys and only two cattle is getting advice that he should work hard, to get more cattle as hard times are coming (Murungu 1994).

This song shows that, at least for some Zimbabweans, rural consciousness remained a part of urban life for many years. Today, many Zimbabweans move between these two worlds, maintaining a house in the city and a small farm in the country (Wermter 1987:12–3; Kabweza 1987:12). Folk guitarists appealed to the working class who were minimally educated and close to rural traditions. Rural consciousness was also bolstered by the performance of traditional music in urban areas. Traditional music existed in the cities partly because of the sensibility of labor migrants who had grown up in rural areas and partly because colonial authorities encouraged ethnic separatism and the preservation of rural ethnic consciousness (i.e. “tribalism”) to counterbalance a developing pan-ethnic, urban, nationalist consciousness. The apartheid regime in South Africa pursued the same policy, but a pan-ethnic, urban, nationalist consciousness grew, nonetheless, in both countries.

An important test of the emerging nationalist consciousness was the nationwide general strike of 1948:

For the first time since the 1896 Rebellion, white people were compelled to swallow their pride and wash their own dishes, cook for themselves, empty their own dustbins, do their own shopping and collect their own letters. Meanwhile their black employees paced up and down the streets and loudly jeered at them (Vambe 1976:244).

If traditional music and dance might “keep the natives happy” and avoid such strife, it was well worth it. While white authorities ignored folk guitarists (because they were a transitional step toward urban culture), they provided venues and instruments for traditional rural ensembles:

[In the 1940s, T]ribal dances were the predominant form of entertainment and they displayed incredible variety: from the Shona, with their hectic *ngororombe* [panpipe], drum and *mbira* ensembles, to the Mazungendava of Nyasaland [now Malawi], with their extraordinary pipe bands. These performances used to take place in the open-air at the Musika market on Sunday afternoons (Vambe 1976:212).

The folk guitarists discussed above illustrate the resilience of Zimbabwe's traditional music cultures and the links between rural *mbira* and urban guitar styles. However, the antagonism between rural and urban values and consciousness was only temporarily resolved in this music. The same problem of balancing rural-urban tensions and developing a new African music, symbolizing a new urban culture, continued to be grappled with by other musicians and audiences, and their answers to this problem were not necessarily the same. At times the pendulum swung toward more African solutions to the dilemma, and, at other times, it swung toward more European ones. In another context, Herskovits observed aptly: "Africans, to the extent they were free agents, accepted innovations within the full frame of their own cultures and where they were not free, they maintained these traditions as best they could, reconciling them with their new ways of life when they were able to do so" (Herskovits 1962:428–9). African assimilation to European music occurred when Africans were not free agents. In these cases, the pendulum swung more toward European solutions.

3. Assimilation

With its 80-year history of colonial rule, assimilation is a major cultural trend in Zimbabwe, affecting both guitar and *mbira* music. In fact, the resilience of traditional African music discussed above is remarkable given the pressures for assimilation which began with the establishment of colonial rule by the British South Africa Company in 1890. Intense pressure to assimilate came from Christian missionaries. Early in this century, Christian churches built schools and hospitals, but they made conversion to Christianity a precondition for access to these services. Until independence, churches played a major role in providing education and health care for Africans, and their influence in these areas today remains strong. As an example of assimilationist pressure, consider the following comments from an African journalist describing his village in the 1920s: "Living under missionary control at Chishawasha, the tribe was now subject to pressures from the white religious Fathers, which had the cumulative effect of rendering them less and less able to decide upon anything for themselves, even the simplest details of everyday life" (Vambe 1976:2).

This culture of dependence and the coercive role of foreign institutions in African culture makes the phenomenon of assimilation qualitatively different from other forms of cultural borrowing. Africans did not adopt Western music

influences because they were interested in them. Africans adopted these influences because Christian churches and the colonial government pressured them to and suppressed traditional African culture, especially *mbira* music.

Early in this century, churches organized church choirs and brass bands at schools as alternatives to traditional music for Africans. One source includes a photo taken in 1910 of such a band (Douglas 1984:165). Another source (Vambe 1976:39) indicates that brass bands were an important training ground for military and police bands. Brass bands of all types served as training grounds for the dance band musicians I will discuss in the section on pan-Africanism below. While not directly relevant to the development of guitar music, brass bands and church choirs are indirectly important to the history of guitar music because they increased Africans' familiarity with European music theory and instruments and provided an alternative to traditional music (e.g., *mbira* music), thus facilitating the process of assimilation.

In order for the process of assimilation to succeed, it was necessary to develop musical alternatives that could take the place of traditional music. From the 1890s until the 1930s, when the first urban African music was created, traditional music and Christian music were in direct competition with each other, providing "most of the entertainment in the townships, villages, and farm and mine compounds" (Sayce 1987:261).

Brass bands and church choirs were part of a Christian cultural onslaught against traditional music and rural culture. In the 1940s, Hugh Tracey wrote of this onslaught which soon reduced traditional African musical instruments to the status of museum pieces with little relevance to the daily lives of most Zimbabweans:

The African who comes into contact with European music does so at great disadvantage. ...He is persuaded, moreover, by the minor exponents of this foreign music that his own culture is barbaric and insignificant and should be jettisoned in favour of the European style which has so strong an associative power in the minds of his teacher (Ellert 1984:60).

Assimilation became such a powerful force among Africans that by the 1940s and 1950s, when the folk guitarists were at their peak, the *mbira* tradition was dying because younger players were not interested in the instrument. "Those individuals who showed musical skill gravitated toward the guitar rather than the *mbira*" (Berliner 1981:241). The folk guitarist's choice to play that instrument rather than the *mbira* is partly a by-product of assimilationist pressure and partly a result of the need for new modes of expression to symbolize changing social realities.

Today, church music is still a formative influence for many Zimbabweans. For example, Lovemore Majaivana, an Ndebele singer and guitarist who is one of Zimbabwe's most important contemporary musicians, grew up hearing both traditional and Christian songs:

His father was a priest and his mother led the women's church choir. When he was 15, he also began to sing in his father's church. ... When Beatlemania reached Zimbabwe, Lovemore decided to become a singer. He also knew that kind of thing would not auger well with his puritan parents. He started frequenting youth clubs where youngsters fiddled around with plain box guitars. He and some boys formed a group which they called "The Youth Club Band". A benevolent black doctor bought them electric instruments and Lovemore's long road to fame began (Chinamhora 1986:20).

In addition to introducing Africans to Christian hymns and music theory, church music also paved the way for the acceptance of secular European or white American music. Country western music has enjoyed considerable popularity in Zimbabwe because of the popularity of country stars, such as Jim Reeves, Johnny Cash, and others, among whites for whom country music was "in sync" with a frontier mentality. Some African musicians assimilated white tastes and adopted the country style. This is not a uniquely Zimbabwean phenomenon. Traveling in Kenya and Zambia in the 1970s, I was surprised at the popularity of country music among Africans.

One Zimbabwean group that performs in this style is "The Family Singers" whose "*Tarira Nguva*" (from the compilation, "Take Cover: Zimbabwe Hits", recorded in the 1980s) conveys a Christian fundamentalist message sung in Shona in a country music style (see Example 4). The meaning of the song as presented in the album notes is as follows: "All Christians must work hard to uphold Christianity as the devil is working hard to destroy us. No one can save us but Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (anon. 1987):

Intro

The musical score is arranged for five parts: Voice, Rhythm, Lead, Bass, and Drums. The first system is labeled "Intro". The Rhythm part features a pattern of eighth notes with accents, starting on a C major chord and moving to a G7 chord. The Lead part plays a melody of eighth notes. The Bass part provides a steady accompaniment. The Drums play a simple pattern. The second system shows the vocal melody starting on a C major chord.

Melody

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Melody' and is in 4/4 time. It begins with a C major chord, followed by a series of eighth notes, then a half note, and finally a quarter note. The bottom staff is in 4/4 time and shows guitar accompaniment. It starts with a C major chord, followed by a G7 chord, and then a C major chord. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, along with rests and accidentals.

Ex. 4. "Tarira Nguva" by "The Family Singers"

In the 1960s, the assimilationist trend reached a peak with Zimbabwean guitar bands covering (i.e. imitating as precisely as possible) the latest pop records from the USA or the United Kingdom. For example, James Chimombe, guitarist with the Harare Mambos and OK Success, says:

"For us then, the Beatles were our inspiration. We faithfully copied their music and tried to sound like a Harare version of the Liverpool Sound." [According to Chimombe,] ... nearly every singer ... on the local scene started from this same background (anon. 1986:37).

It is easy to over-estimate the European impact on Zimbabwean music. As Kubik has observed:

It is characteristic of every cultural encounter and transculturation that those involved tend first to recognize in the "hybrid" forms the cultural traits of their own group, as they are familiar with them. ... What European listeners feel to be "Western" often really coincides with traditional structural traits in the African realm and is experienced by African musicians as distinctly African (Kubik 1974:14).

Furthermore, European and white American music are not free from outside influence. Some of what Europeans or white Americans may perceive as "Western" is actually African-American, reflecting the impact of Black music from the United States on white American and European music beginning with the minstrel troupes of the 1830s. For example, Zimbabwean guitarist Fred Zindi states:

[In the 1960s,] the Beatles were the hottest band in that part of Africa. ... I remember members of my first band, who were all much older than me, commenting about the similarities between the popular Beatles music and the *marabi* which was the early form of traditional recorded Zimbabwean music. I did not take any of these comments seriously because I couldn't see any kind of link between the two musical styles. ... It wasn't until the early seventies that I saw the link between most types of Western music and African music (Zindi 1985:1).

The link between the Beatles and *marabi*—a South African dance music—is African-American music from the United States which influenced both. The

same is true in the above example, “*Tarira Nguva*”, where both European and African or African-American influences are present. The European influences, to my ear, predominate. The loud electric bass guitar establishes the 4/4 time signature by playing a typical country western pattern with strongly accented quarter notes on beats one and three and occasional quarter notes on all four beats for variety. Johnny Cash’s “I Walk the Line”, for example, contains this pattern (Cash n.d.). Unlike “*Mutema*” or “*Mombe Mbiri*” above, there is no suggestion of triple vs. duple meter or triplet subdivisions of a duple beat in this song. It is unequivocally in 4/4 time with only minor syncopation in the lead guitar and vocal. These features seem to indicate strong European influence. In addition, some features of this selection seem to symbolize a strong urban identification within this music. The use of an English name, “The Family Singers”, seems to represent an urban, non-ethnic identity, perhaps, as an indication of modernity and assimilation to European norms. The use of electric versus acoustic instruments by “The Family Singers” (and other guitarists discussed below) seems to suggest an identification with urban life, since electricity is rare in rural Zimbabwe. Most Zimbabwean guitarists quickly adopted the electric guitar when it became available in the 1960s. The acoustic guitar continued to be played only by a second generation of folk guitarists whose music soon lost popularity, perhaps, because of its identification with rural life.

However, this example also contains several features reminiscent of African or African-American music. The rhythm guitar, for example, strums on beats two and four (as in reggae music) or plays arpeggiated patterns beginning on beat two over which the lead guitar improvises. These off-beat patterns seem to be derived from African or African-American music. Much the same style can be heard in Cash’s recording. The syncopated placement of the rhythm guitar is an element that probably came into country music as a result of African-American influence, likewise the playing of the snare drum on beats 2 and 4. The I, IV, V chords of “*Tarira Nguva*” are found in both country music and blues. While some aspects of this selection are assimilated to a white American aesthetic, other aspects of this selection reflect African-American or Caribbean influence.

Furthermore, certain aspects of this performance resonate with an African sensibility. The rhythm guitar part taken together with the bass and the unsyncopated, fixed, quarter note pattern played on all four beats of the cymbals by the drummer resemble the supporting drums in a traditional ensemble. The voice and lead guitar improvise against this background as a lead drummer might. The lead guitar answers the voice, supplying a kind of chorus that would otherwise be absent from this example since there is no vocal chorus. The timbre of the electric guitar is the high twangy type favored by Zimbabwean guitarists which may be derived from South African groups like the “Dark City Sisters”. Polyphonic textures are used both in this example and in traditional Shona music. The female singer sings in a high falsetto which contrasts strongly with the prominent bass line. This kind of strong contrast in pitch, range and

timbre is common in South African vocal groups (e.g., the “Mahotella Queens”). The singer also sings in Shona, not in English. All of these features indicate that “*Tarira Nguva*” is not completely assimilated to European norms. Assimilation is one kind of cultural “borrowing” in which Zimbabwean guitarists have engaged. Pan-Africanism is another.

4. Pan-Africanism

Originally the term, “pan-Africanism” referred to a political movement among African-Americans in the United States and the Caribbean which stressed a common African identity and solidarity among Africans and people of African descent in the struggle for their liberation and advancement. As I am using the term in this paper, it refers to a kind of cultural borrowing that is different from assimilation in that it is voluntary and arises out of the perception on the part of Africans in Zimbabwe that they are not merely Shona or Ndebele but belong to a wider Black world (i.e. Africa and its diaspora) to which they can turn for inspiration or for solace.

Musical pan-Africanism is a recognition of the resonance in musical style and/or content among the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora. It is one of the most important arenas of musical interchange in Africa and the African diaspora and helps to explain the easy acceptance and appeal of guitar or other music from one part of the African/African-American world to Africans or African-Americans in another part of this world.

Three non-Zimbabwean music cultures have contributed the most to musical pan-Africanism in Zimbabwe—South Africa, Zaïre, and Afro-America. For much of this century, there has been a strong South African influence in Zimbabwean music because of the migration of Zimbabwean workers to the mines and industries of South Africa, the cultural links between the Ndebele and the Zulu, and the subsidiary relationship of the music industry in Zimbabwe to that in South Africa over the past sixty years. South African music has had periodic waves of popularity in Zimbabwe, and because South African urban music is strongly influenced by African-American music from the United States, there is an important, indirect African-American influence in Zimbabwean music. With no recording industry of its own until the 1950s, Zimbabwe was a border zone between the South African music industry and the French-run music industry in Zaïre (as far as recorded music was concerned). Because of Zimbabwe’s colonial ties to South Africa, the South African influence was strong, while the Zaïrean influence was weak.

This changed in 1953 with the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This Federation consisted of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi). Zaïrean music was a strong influence in Zambia, since many of the peoples of Zambia are de-

scended from Zairean immigrants. The Zambezi River, the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, is culturally the border between Central and Southern Africa. When the Federation's radio broadcasting station was located in Lusaka, Zambia, this cultural border was crossed, and Central African (i.e., Zairean) music was made available to Zimbabweans to an unprecedented degree:

With its headquarters in Lusaka, the Federal Broadcasting Corporation played the regions' various types of music but none made as strong an impact on Zimbabweans as Zaire's Rumba and Cha Cha. In the late 1950s and early 1960s Zairean bands performed in Zimbabwe and their highly successful performances heralded the decline of Zimbabwe's popular music for the following 15 years. ... Rumba continued to be the popularly accepted idiom in musical entertainment until 1969, when [*simanje-manje*, another South African guitar-based music, became popular] (Sayce 1987:263).

The Zairean influence and the South African/African American influence have been the most enduring foreign influences in Zimbabwean guitar music. The South African/African-American influence illustrates three key points about musical pan-Africanism—the importance of non-ethnic, pan-African identity as a counterbalance to colonialism; the role of rising social aspirations in musical pan-Africanism; and the importance of music as an expression of African modernity. For example, in the late 1960s, *simanje-manje* (in Zulu, “now now”) music, a guitar-based urban South African music, became popular in Zimbabwe. The name of this music emphasized its connection with contemporary life. *Simanje-manje* groups “became so popular, they had to perform in stadiums as there were no halls large enough for their audiences” (Sayce 1987:263).

In the 1950s, before *simanje-manje*, there was a fad for *kwela* music from South Africa (played on penny whistles, banjos, and guitars) in Zimbabwe. In Zulu, “*kwela*” means “to get up” or “to get up on top of everybody else” (Kubik 1974:13). This and other African or African-American urban musics seem to express the rising social aspirations of Black peoples.

Similar to the word *HighbLife* for one kind of neo-traditional music in West Africa, which is associated with “high living” in a Western sense, *kwela* also belongs to a conceptual framework associated with social emancipation and increased intensity of life. We encounter here a phenomenon also widespread in other African and Afro-American cultures: the names for various “acculturated” forms of music are often associated with the ideas of rising, increased power and social status, increased life intensity (*ibid.*).

Some claim that jazz may serve the same function (*ibid.*). This may explain why apartheid authorities in South Africa frowned upon *kwela* and all the other acculturated urban African musics—*jive*, *marabi*, *mbaqanga*, etc.—as well as African-American imports such as jazz and rhythm 'n' blues. These were the musics of an African (or African-American) population that was de-“tribalized”,

urban, and determined to advance socially. These musics, as well as folk guitarists, were anathema to South African and Southern Rhodesian authorities who promoted traditional music as entertainment in urban areas because of their belief that Africans would never have a permanent place in the urban areas or in national political life.

For the opposite reasons, Africans in Zimbabwe adopted South African and (via South Africa) African-American musical forms. These musics were a more effective counterbalance to colonialism than were the folk guitarists discussed above. Folk guitarists were transitional figures straddling the rural-urban divide. Folk guitar music and traditional dances were among the least acculturated African musics available in the urban areas. However, these musics did not satisfy the musical tastes of the emerging African middle class who were more educated and had a wider range of experience than recent migrants from the rural areas. As a result, African audiences polarized along class lines in the 1940s (Sayce 1987:262). The emerging African (and “colored”) middle class was attracted to choirs that sang a cappella (or accompanied by piano) and by big bands which used pianos, trumpets, saxophones, guitars, and other jazz instruments.

The musicians who performed in these big bands had high levels of Western music training, compared to the folk guitarists, since they had passed through church choirs and police bands. Many also received musical training in South Africa. These musicians had been exposed to assimilationist pressures, and European musical instruments and training were a part of their culture. Yet these musicians were not content merely to imitate European music. They wanted to develop a new urban African music that would express and reconcile the two warring ideals contained within their Black bodies, but in rural African society there were no models of cultural achievement that could inspire this development. Thus, these musicians had to look beyond Zimbabwe to the wider Black world for inspiration.

The best of the Zimbabwean big bands from the 1950s was called “De Pitch Black Evening Follies”. In 1961, this group presented a photograph of themselves to Louis Armstrong who visited then Southern Rhodesia on a tour of Africa (see Figure 2). Although they posed without instruments in this photograph, they

used a double bass, two or three guitars, saxophone, and drums. The way was now open for other groups to be formed, such as the Mashonaland Melodians in Salisbury, the Wood Woodpeckers and the Golden Rhythm Crooners in Bulawayo, and the Jazz Revelers in Umtali. When Shona language broadcasts were begun in 1954, these groups were among the first to be recorded, and their influence quickly spread (Kauffman 1971:202).

“De Pitch Black Evening Follies” played *marabi*, a South African blend of ragtime, vaudeville, jazz, and African music, that developed in the cities of South Africa in the 1920s. The name of the group is derived from African-American



Fig. 2. The “De Pitch Black Evening Follies”, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Used by permission of the Louis Armstrong Archives at Queens College/City University of New York

minstrelsy via South Africa. This group was inspired by a South African jazz band/vaudeville choir—“Griffiths Motsieloa’s Pitch Black Follies” which recorded in the 1930s (see Ballantine 1993). Motsieloa’s group was a middle class South African band which drew upon African-American minstrel traditions, musical comedy, ragtime, and jazz popular in the United States from the turn of the century to the 1920s (see Coplan 1985:127, 131, 136, 137, 151, and 166). Motsieloa’s Follies is one of the earliest examples of the influence, via South Africa, of African-American music in Zimbabwe.

“De Pitch Black Evening Follies” was a very successful musical group holding “an unchallenged lead throughout the late 1940s and up to the late 1950s. [They] surpassed previous musicians, not only in African pop music, but also in combining their music with dramatic sketches portraying the life and culture of their people, both rural and urban” (Vambe 1976:213). The fact that this urban cosmopolitan band built its success on its musical skills and dramatic sketches of rural and urban life shows the importance of both rural and urban values and consciousness for both musicians and audiences alike. Like Ngwaru Mapundu and “The Family Singers”, “De Pitch Black Evening Follies” represent another resolution of the rural-urban dichotomy and the double consciousness that this dichotomy created.

Other big bands popular in the 1950s included the “Capital City Dixies”, the “Cool Four”, the “Epworth Theatrical Strutters”, and the “Golden Rhythm Crooners”. These bands have a great deal of significance in Zimbabwean music history. They influenced many Zimbabwean musicians, including Thomas Mapfumo (discussed below) who is currently one of Zimbabwe’s best known musicians. In his formative years, Mapfumo attended the performances of these bands and imitated their singing accompanied by a home-made banjo (Zindi 1985:25). In addition, the English names of these bands indicated a desire not to be confined by colonially-imposed “tribal” identification. These names are an expression of nationalist consciousness, pan-Africanism, and middle-class aspirations among musicians and audiences in urban Zimbabwe during this period.

The impact of Zaïrean guitar styles in Zimbabwe after 1953 has a similar explanation. The creation of multi-racial hotels and nightclubs during this period was an important departure from the rigidly segregationist social life that had previously existed. At the same time, colonial liquor laws were relaxed so that it was no longer illegal for Africans to possess or drink European liquor. The broad appeal of this Zaïrean music is connected to this loosening of social restrictions, as well as to increases in the level of education, urbanization, and middle class aspiration among Africans.

Unlike the South African/African-American influenced music of the 1940s, Zaïrean guitar music appealed to both the middle and working classes who flocked to newly opened, multi-racial hotels and nightclubs,

shunning the township beer gardens and local artists’ concerts they had hitherto patronized. Urban councils, worried about the resultant loss of revenue, started awarding contracts to local bands to perform in the municipal beer-gardens. This created fierce competition among musicians for these jobs. To survive, Zimbabwean artistes had no option but to abandon their own music and switch to playing rumba (Sayce 1987:263).

Although African aspirations for social progress and racial equality were rising and gains were being made, 10–20% of Africans in urban areas did not earn enough to support their families and of those who had two or more children, most could not provide sufficient food or clothing (Blake 1978:292). Under these conditions, it was no surprise that African nationalism emerged as a “powerful force in 1955 after nearly 60 years of comparative quiescence” (Blake 1978:313). In adopting rumba guitar music from Zaïre, Zimbabwean Africans turned to the pan-African world for inspiration and solace, creating in the cultural sphere what they had not yet won in the political sphere.

Many Zaïrean bands have names expressing rising social aspirations. For example, one of the most famous of the Zaïrean bands who emigrated to Zimbabwe was aptly named “OK Success”. Recorded in the 1980s, “*Zvingashure*” (“Bad Omen”) (Example 5), by “OK Success” tells a tale of urban life—reaching for the good times, but falling short. The translation below is taken from the album notes:

Fellows, you have let me down
You have seen and allowed me to spend all my money on women.
Now the cold has come.
I have no jacket, no jersey, no blanket.
My friend, buy a blanket.
But how can I buy one?
I have no more money left.
I am unemployed, there is no way out.
"Had I known" cannot help.
The married are wise.
They have somebody to advise them.
That is true (anon. 1983).

This group, "OK Success", began as an off-shoot from a larger group of 60–70 Zaïrean (or Congolese) musicians who, in the spirit of musical pan-Africanism, "permanently stationed small groups in the major cities of Zambia, Tanzania, and Rhodesia. The Salisbury OK Success group has put Shona words to its basically Congolese music" (Kauffman 1971:202). Example 5, "*Zvingashure*" ("Bad Omen") (anon. 1983) illustrates this blend of Shona and Zaïrean sensibilities.

In this example, the bass guitar plays syncopated arpeggios that outline an isorhythmic two (or four)-phrase, structure (measures one through four) that is common in *mbira* and other traditional Shona music. With one chord sounded per measure, the harmonic structure of this piece is IV, I, V, I. Zaïrean music commonly features longer bass lines that are not so clearly broken up into short, repeating, binary phrases. Both Zaïrean and Zimbabwean traditional musics share a preference for polyphony. This has made Zaïrean-inspired music popular among Zimbabweans. The harmony of the guitar parts is Zaïrean, however, not Shona. For example, when the lead guitar solos, the second guitar harmonizes in thirds below the lead part. Also the lead guitar usually plays a single line melody, but occasionally breaks into parallel thirds. Zaïrean guitar and vocal lines typically feature parallel thirds, Zaïre being an area of Africa where harmony in thirds is common. In traditional Zimbabwean music, however, harmony is in octaves, fourths, and fifths, not thirds.

The rhythmic concepts in this piece owe more to Zaïre and Latin America than to traditional Shona music. The rhythmic figure (see measure one, beat three) consisting of a sixteen note, followed by an eighth note, and a sixteenth note which is then tied to another sixteenth note and followed by a dotted eighth note recurs in all three guitar parts. This figure is related to one of the common rhythmic figures in the tango and other Latin American dances—a sixteenth note followed by an eighth note, a sixteenth note, and then two eighth notes. The drummer plays almost entirely on his cymbals, not using the bass drum or snare. He plays a fast sixteenth note pattern that subdivides each quarter note into four parts, but the unevenness of the subdivision and the accent on the third

Voice
 Guitar 1
 Guitar 2
 Bass
 Drums

B F#
 C#7 F#
 F B C#7
 6x → recap
 2nd guitar harmonizing in 3rds under solo

Ex. 5. "Zvingashure" ("Bad Omen") by "OK Success"

of the four sixteenth notes gives the pattern a swing feeling that is unlike the standard Shona approach to the trap set (see Example 6 below).

Thus, this example is a mixture of Shona and Zairean techniques, creating a modern, urban traditional music that is familiar enough to a Shona sensibility to be accessible, but different enough not to be identified with any other Shona

music. Played in a new social context, the nightclub, this syncretic guitar music became a symbol of rising African expectations. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Zaïrean and South African guitar styles discussed above were joined by rock 'n' roll, soul, and other styles, forcing *mbira* music (and all other rural traditional music) to the margins of public taste. In the early 1960s, the *mbira* tradition in Zimbabwe was largely dead, in both rural and urban areas. It was kept alive by a few players in a few families.

5. From the Guitar to the *mbira*

By the 1970s, the pendulum which had swung so far away from *mbira* music was poised to return, culminating in the creation of *chimurenga* (revolutionary) music, an urban guitar music inspired by rural *mbira dza vadzimu* music. Thomas Mapfumo is the most prominent exponent of this style. Although *chimurenga* emerges as the dominant style of guitar music in 1976, the foundation for this development was laid much earlier in the cultural revival movement of the 1960s. This revival movement was itself a product of the nationalist struggles of the 1950s.

In most of Africa, the nationalist struggles of the 1950s led to political independence in the 1960s, but not in Southern Rhodesia, which was still locked into the colonial Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. However, in the 1960s, the more progressive elements in the European-run churches and the colonial government agreed to yield in the cultural sphere the independence they were not yet prepared to grant Africans in the political sphere. In 1960, Kwanongoma College was established, with church and government blessing, as a professional school where both African and European music were taught. The ideology of assimilation was abandoned. European-run churches began to encourage the use of African music or musical instruments in worship, including the *mbira* (Berliner 1981:27). Generations of teachers trained at Kwanongoma (the place of drums) increased the interest of Africans in traditional music at schools across the country.

By the early 1970s, this revival movement had produced a dramatic shift in African attitudes toward the *mbira*, reviving its use in both urban and rural areas. Kauffman (1973:54) noted that Friday night *mbira* parties had become quite common in African neighborhoods in Salisbury (now Harare) by the early 1970s, while Kaemmer observed that, in the rural areas:

The ceremonies connected with the ancestral spirits are not declining; indeed they appear to be increasing. ... At Madziwa, many young men in 1972 had recently lost interest in the guitar or banjo and were desirous of learning to play the *mbira*. ... [Furthermore] even in the most widely acculturated area of the reserve many types of old songs are unknown, but ancestral spirit songs are still widely known and used in ceremonies even among some adherents of Christian groups (Kaemmer 1975:160–1).

This represents a major change in attitude toward rural music. Africans stopped seeing *mbira* music as an archaic remnant of a pre-colonial life that should be abandoned in the name of social progress. Instead, they began to see *mbira* music as something of which to be proud and as a cultural resource that would help Africans draw upon the most sacred part of their heritage—the ancestors—in the struggle for liberation.

Just as the revival movement was affecting *mbira* music, it was also affecting urban guitar bands, many of whom began to play re-orchestrated *mbira* music. Among the urban bands playing in this style were the “Harare Mambos” (“*mambo*” means “chief”), who played traditional music re-arranged for three guitars, drums, and vocals (Kauffman 1972:52). Berliner (1981:26) also mentions that urban bands played *mbira* pieces re-orchestrated for Western instruments in the early 1970s. Another group in this vein is “Tutenkhamen” whose “*Torai Kabadza Muchirima*” (“Take Your Hoes and Let Us Work the Land”) re-orchestrates a famous *mbira dza vadzimu* song the text of which follows:

<i>Torai mabadza muchirima!</i>	Take your hoes, let’s work the land!
<i>Kurima kwemazuwa ano</i>	To succeed on the land, you have to
<i>ndekwekushingirira.</i>	work very hard.
<i>Varume toita seiko?</i>	So men, what shall we do?
<i>Torai mabadza muchirima!</i>	Take your hoes, let’s work the land!
<i>Kusarima, hoye kusarima</i>	If you don’t work the land..., men,
<i>hoye warume hoye</i>	if you don’t work the land...
<i>Torai mabadza muchirima!</i>	Take your hoes, let’s work the land!

(Murungu 1994)

Traditionally, this song is sung to inspire Africans to work hard in planting. However, *mbira* songs typically have many levels of meaning and the main line of this song has become widely known among the Shona as a metaphor for taking up the tools of any task to get the job done. Thus,

during Zimbabwe’s struggle for independence, when Bishop Abel Muzorewa was getting frustrated with his discussions with Ian Smith, he held a news conference and said (paraphrased), “If these guys can’t come to an agreement with us, then we will *tora mapadza tichirima*,” which meant we will have to take up arms and start fighting (Murungu 1994).

Most whites in Zimbabwe did not understand Muzorewa’s meaning, but most Africans did. This kind of multi-valent, indirect speech is typical of *mbira* music and was used extensively in Mapfumo’s *chimurenga* songs as a means of making political commentary that would be understood by Africans but not whites. This incident reveals that double consciousness had reached a high level of sophistication among Africans. This double consciousness informs African actions in both rural and urban contexts.

The main melodic instruments in “*Torai Kapadza*” are the organ and saxophone (see Example 6 below). The electric guitar is heard in the six-measure introduction and later in a solo, but the guitar mainly plays rhythmic accompaniment and is overshadowed by the organ. The song has the basic hallmarks of *mbira dza vadzimu* style—including a 48-beat, four-phrase descending melody transcribed here as eight measures of 6/8 time (measures 7–14 below). Of course, Western time signatures used to transcribe this music do not have the same meaning that they do in Western music.

The metrical organization of this piece is typical for *mbira* music and features the opposition of duple and triple meters. The guitar introduction establishes a clear triple meter. The drum kit is played like the rattle that accompanies *mbira* music. The drummer plays even, duple beats on the bass drum while his hands play triplet subdivisions of that beat on the cymbals. The melody is in triple meter, each phrase consisting of two measures of 6/8 time, but during each phrase the bass drum plays four loud, even beats, establishing a duple meter—four beats per phrase, sixteen beats per cycle. The saxophone melody introduces hemiola (for example, measure 7 can be thought of as two groups of three eighth notes while measure eight is three groups of two eighth notes). When the voice enters, it superimposes a 3/4 feeling over the 6/8 feeling of the melody played by the saxophone. The metrical ambiguity introduced by these devices is typical of *mbira* music.

Melodically, the song does not have the polyphonic complexity and density of two *mbira* playing *kushaura* (the main melody) and *kutsinbira* (a contrasting supporting part which follows the main melody). This piece is perhaps more analogous to a single *mbira* playing *kushaura* with the saxophone playing a right-hand, treble melody and the guitar and organ playing left-hand rhythmic and bass accompaniment. The lead vocalist sings in Shona, using vocables and other elements of *mbira* singing style. The lead vocalist is answered by a chorus. Lead vocalists in *mbira* music are not commonly answered by a chorus, but this practice is common in other traditional music:

The musical score is arranged in five staves. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. The second staff is labeled 'Sax C' and contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 6/8 time signature. The third staff is labeled 'Guitar' and contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 6/8 time signature. The fourth staff is labeled 'Organ' and contains a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 6/8 time signature. The bottom staff is labeled 'Drums' and contains a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 6/8 time signature. The score shows a sequence of notes and rests across these staves, with various rhythmic markings and a double bar line with a slash at the end of the eighth measure.

System 1: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The system contains four measures. The first two measures have rests in the upper staves and a rhythmic pattern in the lower staves. The last two measures feature a melodic line in the upper staves and a bass line in the lower staves with chord markings D+ and C G. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with slashes.

System 2: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The system contains four measures. The first two measures have a melodic line in the upper staves and a bass line with chord markings D and G. The last two measures have a melodic line in the upper staves and a bass line with a slash. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with slashes.

System 3: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The system contains four measures. The first two measures have a melodic line in the upper staves and a bass line with chord markings D and a slash. The last two measures have a melodic line in the upper staves and a bass line with chord markings D, C, and G. The system concludes with a double bar line and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with slashes.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Torai Kapadza Muchirima". It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has five staves: a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature, and four accompaniment staves (two treble and two bass clefs). A tempo/mood marking above the first staff reads "♩ = ♩ (3/4 over 6/8 = The Feel)". The accompaniment includes guitar chords labeled 'D', 'G', and 'D'. The second system has four staves: a vocal line, two accompaniment staves (treble and bass clefs), and a bass line. The accompaniment includes guitar chords labeled 'D', 'D', 'C', and 'G', and the word 'accomp.' is written below the second staff. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature.

Ex. 6. "Torai Kapadza Muchirima" ("Take Your Hoes and Let Us Work the Land")

Overall, "Torai Kapadza Muchirima" demonstrates the re-orchestration of *mbira* music within an urban band playing guitar and other Western instruments, and it illustrates the way in which indirect, metaphorical speech drawn from rural traditions could be used to make political commentary in a urban context. This music contains all of the basic elements that define the *chimurenga* style, and it pre-dates *chimurenga* music (considered to have been created by Thomas Mapfumo in 1976) by at least five years. However, these musicians are not commonly acknowledged as contributors to the development of the *chimurenga* style. Perhaps, the reason is that these bands were eclectic, playing music in several styles, and the public's taste was similarly eclectic and not as focused on one style as it was later. Therefore, these early songs did not form a distinct genre in the minds of musicians or audiences.

Such a distinct genre was formed in 1976 as a result of political developments—mainly the intensification of the armed struggle against Ian Smith's white minority regime. African political parties had begun armed struggle in

1964, but the war remained a sporadic, low-level insurgency for a number of years. However, after Mozambique gained its independence in 1975, the war intensified greatly and African freedom fighters began to make significant gains. This intensification of the war led to an intensification of African nationalism and African resolve to fight and win a war.

However, instead of taking the pan-Africanist approach—looking to other Africans or African-Americans for guitar or other music that could express this consciousness—Africans in Zimbabwe looked within. They looked to the music of their ancestors played on the *mbira*. In the rural areas, the guerrillas sought the blessing of the spirit mediums, laying claim to the legacy of Mbuya Nehanda and other mediums who had been killed by the British in the 1890s in the first *chimurenga*, the fight against colonial rule.⁴ These mediums were closely associated with the music of the *mbira dza vadzimu*. In the urban areas, Thomas Mapfumo and other musicians took *mbira* music as their inspiration and created *chimurenga* music, an electric guitar-based dance music that relied on metaphor and innuendo to make political commentary.

Mapfumo describes his awakening to *mbira* music without acknowledging the role of “Tutenkhamen”, the “Harare Mambos”, or others. Perhaps, this indicates how quickly pop music can be forgotten:

Because we were colonized, everything which was going on in the country was British oriented. [T]he records we enjoyed were the white man’s songs so we couldn’t see that our own culture was something to look up to. ... I realized that I was not being myself, [I was] always imitating other people who have their own music. What is my own music? I asked myself again and again. [Eventually, Mapfumo] ... studied an old *mbira* record and found everything within that ... [However, this new music was not well received at first. Most people said] “why can’t he sing pop music like other youngsters?” ... I had to convince the people that this music was our music. As I was struggling, it seems that God came in from nowhere to sort out this problem, ... the war started ... the boys from the bush came and they fired the first gun. ... [E]verybody began to realize who he was and who she was. At the time I gave them a hit with war lyrics. Then they said, “Oh, this was what the man was trying to do for us. We want more of this music. This is our music. Forget about all the foreign stuff. We must look after our music!” (Kamba 1986:24).

Mapfumo’s *chimurenga* music has gone through two phases. The first, from 1976 through 1980, is represented by Example 7 “*Pfumvu Pa Ruzevha*” (“Hardships in the Rural Areas”) (Mapfumo 1985). The songs in this phase are *mbira*-inspired protest songs, but they are not actual *mbira dza vadzimu* songs. The text of “*Pfumvu Pa Ruzevha*” paints a picture of suffering in the rural areas. The cause of the suffering is never stated, but Africans would understand the war and the Smith regime to be the cause of most of the suffering in the rural areas when this song was recorded. It comes from a compilation of *chimurenga* songs recorded between 1976 and 1980. This particular song is one of two on the album by Mapfumo’s “Acid Band”, his first *chimurenga* group, so it likely dates

from 1976 or 1977. The word “acid” in the band’s name refers to their biting social commentary, not to psychedelic drugs. An English translation of the text of this song taken from the album notes follows:

Ah hey, you see I am now a pauper.
Have you seen the hardships in the rural area?
The hardships at home?
Ah, hey that’s why I am a pauper.

You are lucky, you who have houses with heating.
You are lucky, you who go around in your cars.
You are lucky, you who live in towns.
You are lucky, you who have hot meals.
You are lucky, you who have money in your pockets.

They have a hard life in the rural areas.
They encounter a lot of hardships at home.
That’s why I am now a pauper.

Did you know that granny is dead?
Did you know that mummy is dead?
Did you know that your brother is dead?
Did you know that there are no rains?
Did you know that your plot of land was taken?

Those are the hardships in the rural areas.
Those are the troubles at home.
That’s why I am now so poor.

You are fortunate you who have warm houses.
You are fortunate you who have hot meals.
You are fortunate you who have a place to sleep.
You are fortunate you who have pocket money.
You are fortunate you who live in the city.
You are fortunate you who are fit and well.

That is the hard experience they face in the rural areas.

Have you heard that mother is dead?
Have you heard that brother is dead?
Have you heard that father is dead?
Have you heard that the plots of land are gone?
Have you heard that there is a severe drought?

They have lots of hardships in the rural areas.
They are suffering at home.

(Mapfumo 1985)

Musically, this song shares a number of features with *mbira* music (see Example 7 below). The bass drum sounds four beats per measure with triplet subdivisions of the beat played on the cymbals as discussed above in Example 6. The electric bass plays a pattern containing six quarter notes per measure that seem to group themselves into three groups of two beats each, while the lead guitar and vocal melodies are six quarter notes long but unevenly divided. This song is transcribed in 6/4 time to capture the metrical ambiguity of this *mbira*-inspired music.

The song opens with a disjunct *mbira*-like melodic pattern (measure one) which continues without variation throughout the song. This rhythm guitar pattern is played with muted strings, imitating the tone quality of the *mbira*. Later Mapfumo would often begin his songs with similar patterns played on an actual *mbira*. This two-phrase pattern is like many *mbira* melodies in that the two phrases are nearly the same except for one or two notes, which are enough to differentiate these phrases from each other and set up call/response, question/answer patterns. The lead guitar then enters playing a contrasting rhythmic pattern so that an effect similar to that of two *mbira* playing *kushaura* and *kutsinbira* is created. At times the lead guitar joins the rhythm guitar playing muted parts, imitating *mbira* tone quality. Thus, it is clear that *mbira* music has inspired this guitar-based music, even though these early *chimurenga* songs are not actual *mbira* songs:

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves: Voice, Guitar 1, and Guitar 2. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/4. The first system shows the beginning of the piece. The second system continues the music. The third system includes a measure labeled 'b. 9' and contains annotations: 'muted' and 'etc.' above the guitar parts, and 'approx. first part' below the guitar parts.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Pfumvu Pa Ruzevha". It consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled "Voice" and contains a melody in a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. The bottom staff is labeled "Bass pattern" and shows a bass line in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. Above the bass line, the chords E, C#m, and B are indicated. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a repeat sign in the voice part.

Ex. 7. "Pfumvu Pa Ruzevha" ("Hardships in the Rural Areas")

Given the popularity of *chimurenga* music in the late 1970s, one might have thought that the style would dominate the music scene indefinitely. *Chimurenga's* resolution of the conflict between rural and urban consciousness, the *mbira* and the guitar, seemed permanent, but this was not the case. After Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, the *chimurenga* genre withered away—after all, the first government elected by the African majority was in power. What need was there for protest songs? The revival of *mbira* and other traditional music intensified, but *chimurenga* seemed to have outlived its purpose.

As in the 1950s, musical pan-Africanism pushed Zimbabwean music into the background and brought other African or African-American guitar music to the fore. Rumba, *marabi*, rock, and reggae guitar styles became popular. Of these styles, reggae was by far the most important influence.

The reggae influence began in the late 1970s when Africans heard Jimmy Cliff's protest songs (e.g. "Suffering in the Land" and "Struggling Man") and identified these protest songs with the social realities in Zimbabwe. However, other reggae artists and the term "reggae" itself were not known to most Zimbabweans until the independence celebrations in 1980 when 100,000 people saw Bob Marley perform. Marley's album "Survivor", which included the tune, "*Zimbabwe*", sold 25,000 copies within a few weeks of his performance. Marley made a strong impression because of his music and the power of his PA system—40,000 watts. Comparable PA systems are common in Europe and the USA, but had never been heard before in Zimbabwe (Zindi 1985:19). Here was a modern, powerful, internationally-recognized, African-derived urban music that addressed the struggles of the Zimbabwean people directly.

The message and prestige of reggae had a very strong appeal. For several years after independence, reggae became the dominant guitar style. In another example of pan-Africanism, a dreadlock-wearing, rastafarian sub-culture grew up among urban young people, especially the unemployed (Zindi 1985:22). Previously in Zimbabwe, the wearing of dreadlocks had been associated only with spirit mediums. These mediums had played an important role in the struggle for Zimbabwean independence, legitimizing the guerillas in the eyes of the African

peasantry. It was not difficult for young people to see rastafarians, as modern, urban guardians of the best interests of Africans, much like the traditional, rural spirit medium. Even Mapfumo grew dreadlocks and went through a reggae phase. The reggae influence peaked in 1985.

In the first five years after independence, disillusionment began to set in. The rising aspirations of Africans were not being met. Drought, political corruption, unemployment, and economic difficulties spurred new discontent. When I lived in Zimbabwe in 1987, I found that one common African response to these difficulties was to attribute them to a loss of respect for traditional African culture. The drought, for example, was attributed to the anger of the spirits of those who had died during the armed struggle, but had not been properly buried. In many conversations, musicians and friends stressed the importance of observing tradition and the role it would play in guiding Zimbabwe in the future. The ground was being prepared for a revival of *chimurenga* music, which began to occur in the late 1980s.

Thrown back upon their own cultural resources to articulate their plight, Mapfumo and other musicians revived *chimurenga*, emphasizing the re-orchestration of *mbira* and other traditional songs for guitars and other Western instruments. For example, when I saw Mapfumo on tour in the USA in the early 1990s, he performed *jeruserema* and other re-orchestrated traditional material, in addition to *mbira* songs. *Jeruserema* is a very popular, competitive, male-female Shona social dance music.

Example 8, “*Chitima Nditakure*” (“Train Carry Me”), the text of which follows, is a re-orchestrated *mbira dza vadzimu* song:

<i>Ho yarira mai wemwana</i>	It has sounded (the train?) ⁵
<i>Ho yarira muchere chere</i>	It sounds like chirping birds
<i>Ho yarira ndisina kudya</i>	It sounded before I had my meal
<i>Iye zvandanga ndaona?</i>	Oh what has befallen me?
<i>Hona bhurukwa remwana rabvaruka.</i>	See the pants, the child's pants are torn.
<i>Hona muzuwa angu asara mana.</i>	Look, I only have four days left (i.e., my days are numbered).
<i>Hona wakomana mandiregerera.</i>	My friends you let me down.
<i>Hona ndofa zvangu ndimire kani.</i>	I'll just die standing here like a pauper.
<i>Hona musikana ndanga ndichikuda.</i>	Young woman, I really love you.
<i>Hona ndakurambira mai waroi</i>	But I must divorce you, your mother is a witch
<i>Hona wano famba nezizi mutswanda</i>	She carries an owl in her head basket
<i>Hona wane mbungu inobika sadza!</i>	She keeps a black cobra which cooks <i>sadza</i> [a stiff cornmeal porridge that is a staple in African diets]!
<i>Hona nyamafungu ichivenekera.</i>	And a banded cobra which holds a lantern (so the other cobra can see inside the pot while it is cooking <i>sadza</i>).

<i>Hona kwedu kure bandingakusvike.</i>	My home is far, I may not get there.
<i>Hona ndotokusvika mvura yanaya.</i>	By the time I get there it will be the rainy season.
<i>Hona chitima nditakure</i>	So train carry me
<i>Abiye iye re. Abiye iye re</i>	[These are vocables].
<i>Ha woye wo wakuru woye</i>	[This is mostly vocables].
<i>Ho chitima nditakure.</i>	Train, carry me.
<i>Hona muzuwa angu asara mana.</i>	Look, I only have four days left.
<i>Hona wakomana mandiregerera</i>	Look, my friends, you let me down.
<i>Hona ndofa zvangu ndimire kani</i>	Look, you are letting me die here a pauper.
<i>Hona rume guru rino shereketa</i>	Look, the big man [here the singer does not mean a large man, but one who is to be respected, i.e., a leader] is mischievous.
<i>Hona rakanditi, "Kwaziwa, Mudhuma."</i>	See, he said, "Hello, Mudhuma." [This is a line from another song, the singer of which was named "Mudhuma".]
<i>Hona bwai bwai meso ane wana</i>	Look, he [the big man] is blinking like a child.
<i>Hona kusviba kunenge kuroya.</i>	Look, he [the big man] is so dark, it is like the darkness of a witch. [This seems to fit with the idea of the big man being mischievous or doing things that he should not do].
<i>Hona randa ranga rakatsva chirimo.</i>	[untranslatable].
<i>Hona chitima nditakure.</i>	Look train, carry me

(Murungu 1994).

This song is very difficult to translate. The thoughts are disjointed and non-linear, as they are in much *mbira* music. The song includes lines that come from other *mbira* songs (such as, "I Have Only Four Days Left") (Murungu 1994). Rather than telling a single story, as in Example 7 above, this song seems to be a pastiche of thoughts arranged in four sections.

In the first, the singer seems to have the consciousness of a labor migrant, i.e., someone caught between rural and urban cultures. The singer seems to be a labor migrant who is very far from home and trying to return there. The train image resonates strongly with the experience of labor migration. Trains were used to carry African men from all over Southern Africa to work in urban areas. In the first few lines, the singer seems to be leaving on a journey to return home, but perhaps he has missed his train and will have to walk, in which case he will not get home before the rainy season. The singer worries that he might die there, like a pauper, his friends having let him down. In the second section, the leaving behind of loved ones is part of the experience of labor migrants. African men often had families in more than one place. The references to magic describe a

world that is out of joint on the personal level. This may, however, as in other *mbira* songs, be a metaphor for a world that is out of joint on the societal level. The witchcraft mentioned is clearly part of rural consciousness, but it survives in urban areas and so is part of African urban consciousness. The third section reiterates the train image. Repetition is an important part of rural music. The extensive use of vocables in this section is another element of rural music.

In the last section, the singer concludes with a series of lines that seem to be critical of a “big man” (i.e., a leader, possibly a government official) who is mischievous. Traditionally, the term “big man” is reserved for chiefs, headmen, spirit mediums, etc. Today, it could refer to a government leader. This section may be a veiled criticism against corruption in the current Zimbabwean government, or these may be traditional lines from *mbira* songs, or both. This song contains a lot of what my translator calls “deep” Shona (Murungu 1994). A literal translation of the words does not lead to understanding. Because of the use of metaphor and allusion, these songs require interpretation by someone familiar with their context. This opaqueness of meaning is typical of *mbira* songs. Compared to Example 7 above, this song text is more deeply inspired by an *mbira* sensibility and rural consciousness. Taken as a whole, this song text straddles the line between rural and urban consciousness, much as the music of the early folk guitarists did. Double consciousness is still an important part of the social experience and cultural life of Africans in Zimbabwe, many of whom live in the city, but have a farm in the country.

Musically, Example 8 (see the transcription below) is much more deeply inspired by *mbira* music than is Example 7. First of all, it is an actual *mbira* song. The piece begins with the *mbira* playing a four-phrase disjunct melody (measures one through four) which continues throughout the song. This kind of melody is typical of the left hand parts played on the *mbira*, while the more conjunct, flowing, improvisatory melody played by the guitar is like the melodies played by the right hand of the *mbira* player. The main features of *mbira* playing (discussed in previous examples), the style of rattle playing (transferred to the drums) and the style of *mbira* singing are all present in this re-orchestration of traditional music:

The musical score for Example 8 is written for five instruments: Voice, Mbira, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The key signature is D major (three sharps) and the time signature is 12/8. The score is divided into four measures. The Voice part has a rest in the first measure and a note in the second. The Mbira part plays a disjunct melody of eighth notes. The Guitar part plays a conjunct, flowing melody. The Bass part plays a steady accompaniment. The Drums part plays a steady accompaniment.

Musical score system 1, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a guitar part below. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains three measures. The guitar part has a fret number of 1. Chord labels 'E' and 'A' are present above the staff.

Musical score system 2, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a guitar part below. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains two measures. The guitar part has a fret number of 1. A chord label 'E' is present above the staff.

Musical score system 3, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs and a guitar part below. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The system contains three measures. The guitar part has a fret number of 1. A chord label 'A' is present above the staff.

Ex. 8. "Chitima Ndikature" ("Train Carry Me")

This revived *chimurenga* music is an urban guitar style that consciously refers to and draws inspiration from rural *mbira* music. It manifests double consciousness, this contemporary electric music that is inspired by traditional acoustic music. In this music, we see a rare phenomenon—an urban music that is inspired by a revival of rural values. Those who bemoaned the decline of *mbira* music as a result of the triumph of guitar music and European culture now have reason to rejoice. In this new music, the rural-urban, African-European dichotomy has been resolved in a new way by a new generation of Zimbabweans eager to create music that will express their social reality, their hopes, and their fears. This new *chimurenga* music shows that the unresolved double consciousness of which DuBois spoke is capable of resolution. Zimbabwean music has come full circle. The guitar, which once replaced the *mbira* in urban areas in the 1940s, is now playing *mbira* songs and imitating the sound of the *mbira*. In terms of inspiration, urban music has made a shift from the guitar back to the *mbira*.

That traditional music and a rural consciousness play such an important role in contemporary urban guitar music today is testimony to the resilience of tradition—i.e., its ability to absorb foreign elements, blending them with indigenous elements to shape a new musical language that articulates the condition of every-

day people in a changing society. The Shona have a proverb which states: "*Murao ndishe*" ("Traditional custom, not any man, is the ruler of the people") (Gelfand 1973:102). The new *chimurenga* guitar style validates that saying.

Dorothy Masuka, one of Zimbabwe's best known singers, expresses a similar idea. "It is difficult for an African singer to depart from traditional music. We take the old songs and update them by adding modern instruments such as the electric guitar" (Kubik 1974:14). The new *chimurenga* guitar style is updated or transformed *mbira* music.

6. Conclusion

Over the past century, the history of Zimbabwean music has taken many twists and turns, being shaped by a complex cultural dynamic. A central part of this dynamic is the basic underlying dichotomy between rural and urban cultures, which creates a double consciousness that is in constant need of resolution. This rural-urban dichotomy may also be expressed as a dichotomy between that which is African and European, African and Christian, or traditional and modern. Musically, the *mbira* and guitar have symbolized the dichotomy between rural and urban values, consciousness, and cultures. The style of the *mbira dza vadzimu* has remained constant, but guitar styles have changed radically over time, creating an ever-changing graph of life, a record of attempts to synthesize rural and urban musical sensibilities and resolve this double consciousness. We have seen different resolutions of this dichotomy in the music of Ngwaru Mapundu and Taurayi Uzumba, "The Family Singers", "De Pitch Black Evening Follies", "OK Success", and Thomas Mapfumo. The number of ways in which this dichotomy can be resolved is infinite.

Furthermore, three important cultural tendencies—the resilience of tradition, assimilationist pressure, and musical pan-Africanism—have affected the way in which the dichotomy between rural and urban musical sensibilities has been resolved. Often more than one tendency has had an impact upon a given musical style. For example, resilience has favored rural culture, including the *mbira dza vadzimu* and other traditional music. We can see resilience in the folk guitarist's use of stylistic features derived from the *mbira* in guitar music, but we can also see assimilation in the folk guitarist's preference for the guitar over the *mbira*. Assimilationist pressures have favored urban, European, and Christian musical influences. The main thrust of these pressures was to increase Africans' knowledge of European music and instruments and to encourage the development of church choirs and brass bands so that Africans would identify with European music and culture. However, assimilation indirectly encouraged a preference for the guitar over the *mbira*, encouraged the adoption of European and white American social music, such as the African-influenced or African-American influenced country western music played by "The Family Singers".

Musical pan-Africanism encouraged Africans to reach out to a wider Black world (primarily South Africa, Zaïre, and Afro-America) to find musical models to emulate. The pan-African music played by “OK Success” or “De Pitch Black Evening Follies” was urban but not European, African (or African-American) but not traditional, rural, and ethnic. Musical pan-Africanism allowed Africans in Zimbabwe to carve out a new cultural space which could express rising social aspirations and African nationalism. Musical pan-Africanism allowed Africans to escape assimilationist pressure. Pan Africanism in music is dependent upon the commonalities among African and African-American musics, but, at the same time, it is dependent upon assimilation having already occurred. For example, the musicians in “De Pitch Black Evening Follies” had already passed through church choirs and brass bands, acquiring a high degree of European musicianship, which they were then free to use in their own way.

Looking toward the future, one cannot predict what new styles of Zimbabwean music will arise, but some things are clear. African attitudes about the guitar and *mbira* and their music will continue to be central to an understanding of an evolving music culture. Furthermore, the current resolution of the rural-urban, African-European, traditional-modern dichotomy in the new *chimurenga* style is temporary and not permanent. The need to resolve this dichotomy within the context of constantly-evolving social realities and the double consciousness that is produced by rural and urban cultures will, in the future, give rise to new styles of guitar (or *mbira*) music. In that process, the resilience of tradition, pan-Africanism, and assimilation will continue to affect the music of both the guitar and the *mbira*. These and other factors will continue to interact, writing new chapters in the history of Zimbabwean guitar and *mbira* music.

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Notes

- 1 Elsewhere I have developed more fully the idea of the resonance between African and African-American musics (see Brown 1992).

- 2 Obviously, Western time signatures do not accurately reflect the pitches and rhythmic organization of African music, but this notation is used here to avoid designing a new notation system which would not be widely understood.
- 3 In Southern Africa, the term “banjo” does usually mean the American, factory-made instrument with a circular resonator and four or five strings. “Banjo” usually means a home-made instrument—sometimes called a guitar or box guitar—which uses a five-gallon rectangular tin as a resonator and a pole for a neck. Today, this banjo or home-made guitar is played only by children. Earlier it may have been played by adults as the above quote seems to indicate.
- 4 This development has been documented in Lan 1985.
- 5 The information in parentheses was provided by Solomon Murungu who translated these songs. The information in square brackets was provided by the author.

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