

**PERFORMANCE OF MHANDE SONG-DANCE: A CONTEXTUALIZED AND  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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## ABSTRACT

### PERFORMANCE OF MHANDE SONG-DANCE: A CONTEXTUALIZED AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This thesis is an investigation of the significance of Mhande song-dance in two performance contexts: the *Mutoro* ritual of the Karanga and the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition. In addition, I undertake comparative analysis of the structure of Mhande music in relation to the structure of selected genres of Shona indigenous music. The position of Mhande in the larger context of Shona music is determined through analysis of transcriptions of the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic elements of *chizambi* mouth bow, *karimba mbira*, *ngororombe* panpipes, *ngano* story songs, game, hunting, war, and love songs.

Mhande is an indigenous song-dance performed for the *mutoro* ceremony, the annual rain ritual of the Karanga. The Mhande repertoire consists of distinctive songs and rhythms used for communicating with the *majukwa* rain spirits. The rain spirits in turn communicate with God (*Mwari*) the provider of rain, on behalf of the Karanga. Mhande song-dance is performed exactly the same way in the annual Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competitions as in the ritual context of the *mutoro* ceremony. However, in the context of the Competition, it is used for the expression of joy and as a form of cultural identity. The Competition is a forum in which Karanga song-dance traditions such as Mhande, compete with other Shona song-dance traditions such as *mbakumba*, *shangara* and *chinyambera*.

I contextualize and analyse Mhande song-dance by using the 'Matonjeni Model', which in terms of Karanga epistemology, is culture specific. This Model is grounded in description, interpretation and analysis; the primary methods in my research process.

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I owe a special debt of gratitude to my co-supervisor, Prof. Andrew Tracey, whose extensive research into and published works on Shona music have greatly supported the analytical part of my thesis. Prof. Tracey's expertise in transcribing African music in pulse notation cannot go without mention. His patience and ear for African music were well demonstrated in his editing all the 24 song transcriptions contained in this thesis.

My consultants, Chief Chimombe and Nhema, Sub-chiefs Manganda and Penduka, rain spirit medium Tazivei and rain priests Furusa and Munamba have been central to my research and understanding of the significance of the performance of Mhande song-dance. The technical support and assistance offered by Stanford Khola, Elijah Madiba, Selene Walters and Laina Guboresumba was crucial in shaping the presentation of this thesis.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 Mhande song-dance performance: An introduction

#### 1.1 Background information

This research is a direct outgrowth of my BMus honours dissertation (1998), “Karanga Mhande Music: An Insider’s Analysis and Transcription.” The aim of my honours research was to collect and transcribe as many Mhande songs as possible for the preservation and use as teaching materials. In my honours dissertation I transcribed and analysed the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of thirteen songs; ten from my field recordings in Bikita and Chivi Districts in Masvingo Province, and three from the International Library of African Music (ILAM) archive.

This thesis broadens my honours research by documenting Mhande music in its performance contexts and analyzing the musical structure of the Mhande song-dance genre. The research for this thesis is both ethnographic (descriptive) and analytical. It will contribute to the scholarship of Shona music in three ways: (i) contextualization of Mhande song-dance in its indigenous context of the annual *mutoro* rain ceremony, (ii) and the secularized context of the annual Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition; and (iii) analysis of the structure of Mhande songs in relation to the structure of other Shona song-dance genres.

The ethnographic research for this thesis addresses the questions: “What is the significance of Mhande music in the ritual context of the *mutoro* rain ceremony?” and “What is the significance of Mhande music in the secular context of the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition?” The analytical research of this thesis addresses the question, “How does the structure of Karanga Mhande music compare with the structure of other Shona song-dance genres?”

Thus this thesis will present ethnographic data on Mhande music as it is performed in ritual and secular contexts, both of which have been documented through field research. It will also present a comparative analysis of the structure of Mhande songs in relation to other selected song-dance genres representative of the larger context of Shona indigenous music.

## 1.2 Personal background

The fact that I am of Karanga descent gave me exposure, during my youth, to Mhande song-dance performance for the clan ceremonies (*biras*), which venerate the family/clan ancestral spirits. These were held regularly in my rural home in Bikita District in Masvingo Province. Mhande performance involves singing, drum playing, handclapping, dancing and ululation. I memorized the Mhande rhythm played on the lead drum easily because it is one aspect of the musical performance that can be well heard from a distance.

When I was about 15 years old, I heard Mhande music performed while looking for our stray cow in the bush, about two kilometers away from my home. As I walked in the direction of the sound of the music, I met an elderly man who ordered me to change my route because I was too young to witness the ceremony for which the music was being performed. I obeyed the command and continued my search until I found the cow and drove it home. This experience of being denied the opportunity of observing Mhande performance in the *mutoro* rain ceremony at close range motivated me to want to learn more about *mutoro*.

While we sat by the fire in the evening of the following day, I asked my father whether he attended the ceremony that had taken place the previous day. Looking surprised as to how I had come to know about it, his response was (paraphrased as I remember it):

*Ndakanga ndiripo pamutambo iwoyo unonzi mutoro unoitwa kamwe pagore iri nzira yokukumbira mvura kuMusiki. Uyu mutambo mukuru unoremekedzwa zvikuru saka unotambwa nevabve zera.*

I took part in that annual rain ceremony called *mutoro*, which is a way of asking for rain from the Creator (*Musiki/Mwari*). This is an important and respected ritual that only mature people take part in.

My father's response to my question made me realize that it was going to take me a long time before I could directly witness Mhande song-dance performance of the *mutoro* ceremony. I had hoped that my primary and secondary school education was going to furnish me with information about the *mutoro*, but this was not the case. The limited knowledge I gathered about Mhande from my parents, relatives and other people I had

interacted with before I studied ethnomusicology, was that it is a song-dance form used to venerate the family ancestral spirits and invite them to care for the living.

Years later while I was walking in Mkoba Township of Gweru where I worked and lived in August 1989, I was attracted by the Mhande music played by the Chachacha Burial Society members gathered at House number 1750, in Village 6. Chachacha is the biggest Rural Service Centre, also called the Growth Point of Shurugwi District in the Midlands Province. As I approached the house, I was welcome by an elderly man who greeted me with a big smile. After I had introduced myself to the man [Mr Alexander Furusa] who was to later become my research consultant, he realized that he had mistaken me for someone he knew. However, my mistaken identity eased interaction with Mr Furusa and the Society members who invited me to join them in performing what they referred to as “*nziyo dzeZame*”, meaning songs for Zame. Since it was the first time I heard the term *Zame*, I asked for its meaning, which was given as Matonjeni. I was familiar with Matonjeni as some place in Matebeleland South Province where the Karanga would go and ask for rain before the start of the rain season. By making specific reference to performance of Mhande songs, the Society members made me realize that they had recontextualized the music. My conversation with Mr Furusa and other members of the Society informed me that *mutoro* rain ceremonies were consistently held in Shurugwi District.

Mr Furusa was employed with the Ministry of Agriculture as an Agricultural Extension (Agritex) Officer. He told me that he was the rain priest (messenger sent to Matonjeni) for the indigenous *mutoro* rain ceremonies conducted in his rural home in Mupangayi village in Shurugwi District before his transfer from Gweru to the Mount Darwin Agritex Office in Mashonaland Central Province. Because of his relocation and job reassignment, Mr Furusa had over the past five years found it impossible to serve as the rain priest of his community.

My involvement in the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competitions as an adjudicator in 1996, 1997, 2001 and 2003, gave me further exposure to Mhande song-dance performance in the staged, secular context of the traditional dance competition. The Pasichigare Traditional Dance Group from Zvishavane was the only Mhande dance group that participated in all the competitions I judged, which were at the Midlands

Province level. The Pasichigare Group performed Mhande song-dance (foot movements, drum patterns, melodies and words of songs) for the Competition in exactly the same way as they perform in the *mutoro* rain ceremony. I observed that the dance movements of Mhande, such as stamping the ground by slightly lifting the feet in alternation are not as elaborate when compared with the other dances against which they were being judged. Due to their less ostentatious performance, the Pasichigare Dance Group was awarded third position, their best ever, at the Gweru 2001 Midlands Provincial Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition.

Among the many things I learnt in the ethnomusicology course for my BMus honours degree, was the unitary approach to ethnomusicological research where the study of any music should be contextualized and the sound itself analysed. Thus I have grounded the research for this thesis on the performance of Mhande song-dance in its ritual context of the *mutoro* rain ceremony and in its secular context the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition.

### 1.3 Location of Research

There were three locations of field research for this thesis: Shurugwi District in the Midlands Province, Gutu District in Masvingo Province and the Matonjeni cave shrine in the Matopo Hills, also known as the Matopos of Matebeleland South Province.

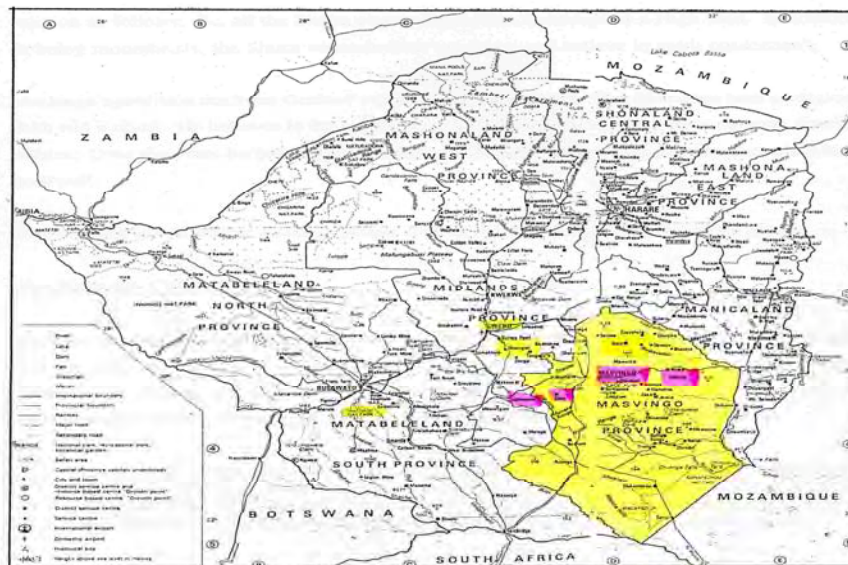


Fig.1 Provincial map of Zimbabwe

Shurugwi District was chosen for two reasons. This District is inhabited by people who have maintained the tradition of the performance of Mhande song-dance in the context of the *mutoro* rain ceremony. The District, 50 kilometers of surfaced road from my residence in Gweru, was also selected for its proximity and accessibility.

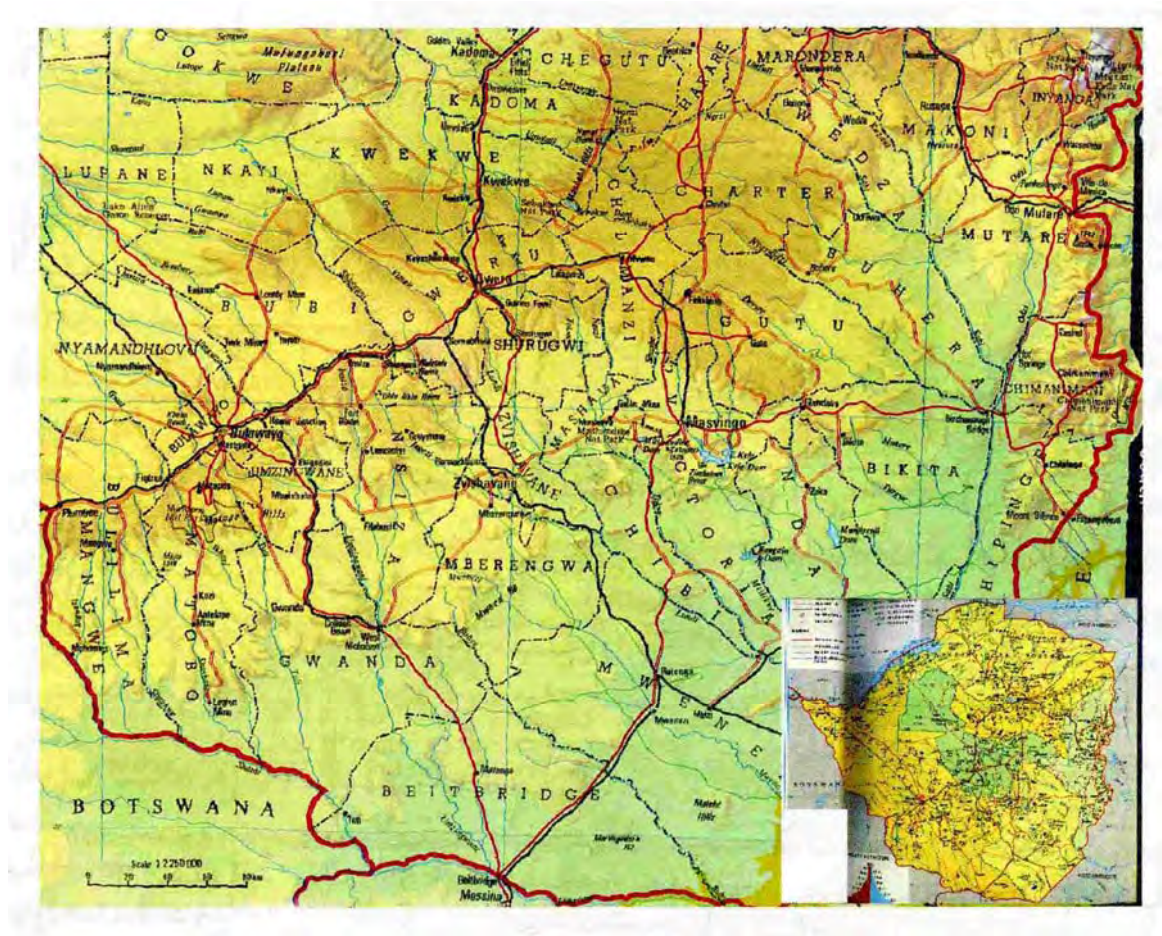


Fig.2 Map showing Shurugwi and Gutu Districts

Gutu District, 145 kilometers from my residence, was chosen as one of my field research locations because it is the district nearest to my residence where I found a rain spirit medium. The presence of the *jukwa* rain spirit medium in Madondo village in Gutu confirmed its residents' active involvement in the *mutoro* rain ceremonies.

The *mutoro* rain ceremony is the indigenous Karanga ritual of the *Mwari* cult. The Matonjeni shrine in the Matopo Hills is the Karanga indigenous religious site where the *mutoro* ceremony is centrally organized. A visit to the Matonjeni shrine was necessary to

this research because this shrine is an important centre for the pilgrimage aspect of the *mutoro* rain ceremony.

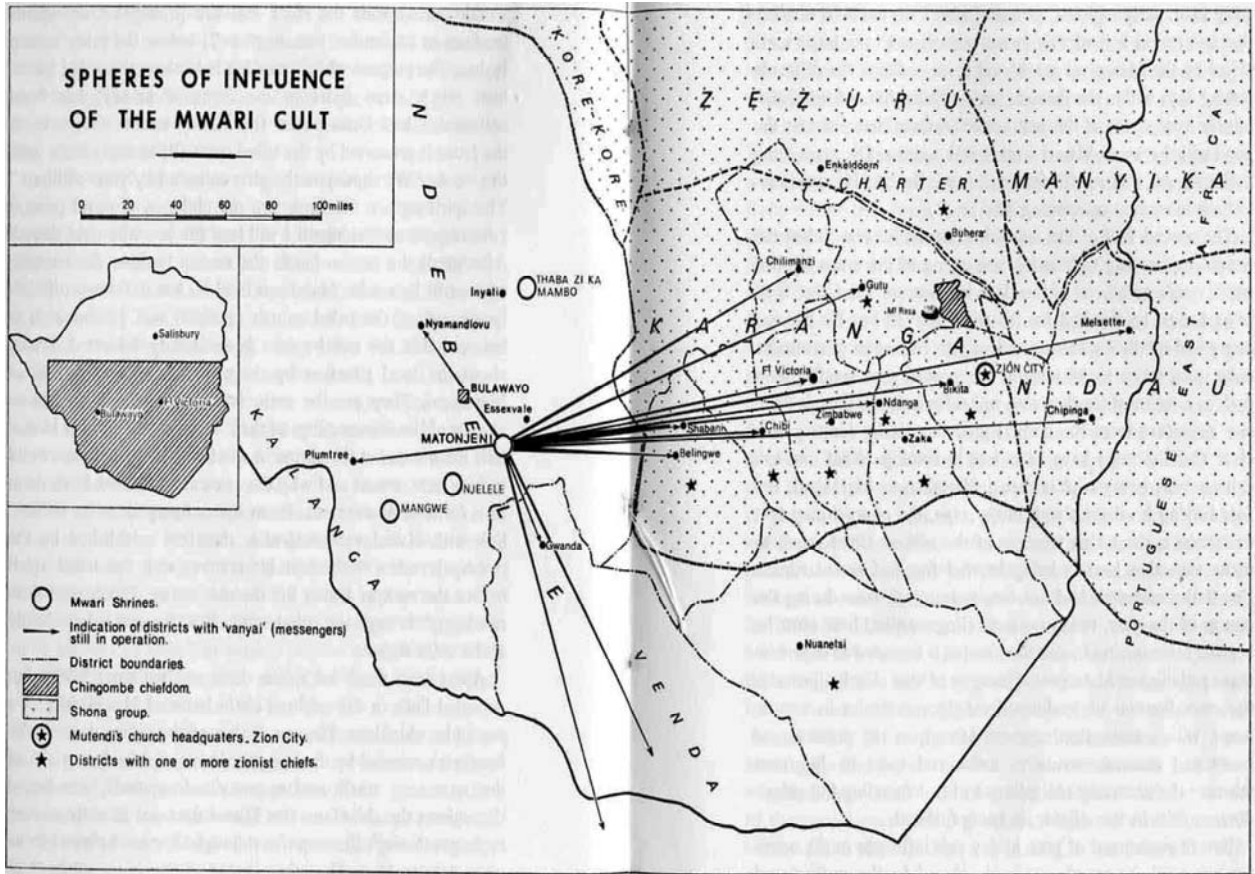


Fig.3 Spheres of influence of the Matonjeni cave shrine [From Daneel, 1970:56-57]

On 19 November 2004 I accompanied Chief Patrick Nhema of Shurugwi District, one of my research consultants, on his pilgrimage to present the offerings and prayers of his community at the Matonjeni shrine. This visit was unusual in that the Chief 's prayer included reporting on the particular case of Juliana, a *mhondoro* spirit medium, from Mashonaland Central Province who imposed herself as the *jukwa* rain spirit medium for Shurugwi District. A description of Juliana's interference with the conduct of the *mutoro* ceremonies in Shurugwi District under Nhema's chieftaincy, as reported to me by Chief Nhema, is presented in Chapter 2. Ranger also makes reference to the story of Juliana (c.f. Ranger, 1999:284).

#### 1.4 Research Consultants

My field research consultants were drawn from Shurugwi and Gutu Districts. Chief (*Mambo/Ishe*) Patrick Nhema, Sub-chief (*Sabhuku*) Moses Penduka and rain priests (*vatumwa*) Alexander Furusa and Cuthbert Munamba were the consultants from Shurugwi.



Patrick Nhema  
(Chief)

Moses Penduka  
(Sub-chief)

Alexander Furusa  
(Rain priest)

Cuthbert Munamba  
(Rain priest)

Fig.4 *Shurugwi consultants*

Through interviews held with the consultants from Shurugwi, I established that they had not had a rain spirit medium in their community since the death of Mr Ndawana in 1982. Given that I intended to have at least one rain spirit medium as a consultant for my field work, I realized that I had to find a District that had a rain spirit medium, either in the Midlands or Masvingo Province. Godfrey Chambwera, one of my ethnomusicology students in 2004 at the Midlands State University directed me to Mr Jairos Tazivei, the rain spirit medium for Gutu District. With the help of Mr Tazivei, two other consultants, Chief Sepudzai Chimombe and Sub-chief Jephrey Manganda, were added to my list of consultants.



Sepudzai Chimombe  
(Chief)

Jairos Tazivei  
(Rain spirit medium)

Jephrey Manganda  
(Sub-chief)

Fig.5 *Gutu consultants*

Chief Chimombe and Sub-chief Manganda were chosen because of their role of coordinating *jukwa* ceremonies that are held at Mr Tazivei's home prior to the *mutoro* ceremonies conducted in different communities in Gutu District.

### **1.5 Methodology**

Participant-observation, full participation, interviewing, audio and video recordings and were utilized in data collection for this thesis. I have employed the classic ethnomusicological approach involving two kinds of work, field research and desk work. Nettl says, "Fieldwork denotes the gathering of recordings and the first hand experience of musical life in a particular human culture, while desk work includes transcription, analysis and the drawing of conclusion" (1964:62). The ethnographic research for this thesis is moreover informed by Barz and Cooley who say:

By ethnography we mean the observation and description or representation of culture. Fieldwork is the observational and experiential portion of the ethnographic process during which the ethnomusicologist engages living individuals in order to learn about music culture (1997:16).

By engaging my consultants who hold special positions in the *mutoro* ceremony, I observed their behaviours and experienced the atmosphere of this indigenous practice. This experience resonates with Jeff Todd Titon's definition of fieldwork as quoted in Cooley, "An epistemology for ethnomusicology in which fieldwork is defined as knowledge of people making music, an experiential, dialogic, participatory way of knowing and being-in-the-world" (1997:15). The fieldwork I carried out among the people of Shurugwi and Gutu Districts furnished me with experience of the Karanga history and religion, as embodied in and perpetuated through the performance of Mhande song-dance. Detailed descriptions of the *mutoro* ceremony, obtained from my fieldnotes, are presented in Chapter 2.

The field research which portrayed the significance of Mhande music in the ritual context of the *mutoro* ceremony was conducted among the Karanga of Gutu and Shurugwi Districts. This research comprised interviews that I conducted with individual consultants at their homes. An audio cassette recorder was used to document the interviews in Shona, which were then translated into English. Mhande song-dance performance at the *mutoro* ceremony was documented with video recordings at

Marishongwe village in Shurugwi District with the assistance of Mr Stanford Khola, a videographer.

My analysis of Mhande songs, which have been transcribed into pulse notation, addresses the question, “How does Karanga Mhande music structure compare with the structure of other Shona song-dance genres?” The repertoire for Mhande songs and songs from other transcribed and analysed Shona genres is made up of a total of twenty four songs. Ten Mhande songs are compared with fourteen songs selected from other Shona music genres. The genres chosen for comparison are: *chizambi* (single string mouth bow) - one song; *karimba mbira* – one song, *ngororombe* (panpipes) - one song, *ngano* (story song) - two songs; game - three songs, hunting – two songs, war – one song, wedding – one song, social comment – one song, and love - one song. Prof. Andrew Tracey assisted me in processing and producing the transcriptions and analyses of all the songs presented in this thesis.

## **1.6 Literature Review**

The published sources most closely related to this thesis are presented in the categories of cultural history, religious ritual, and analysis of sound structure.

### **1.6.1 Cultural history**

Since the history of the Shona people in general and the Karanga in particular was presented in my honours dissertation, it will not be repeated here except for specific information related to the *mutoro* rain ceremony. The majority of the people in Zimbabwe, including the Karanga, depend on agriculture to sustain their lives. There are two agricultural seasons in the year: the wet, rainy season from November to April, and the cold, hot and dry season from May to October. The success of any agricultural activity is dependent on the amount of rain received over the rainy season each year. People, animals and plants depend on a constant supply of water. Rain is a communal matter because it is of widespread concern. Droughts are stressful to people whose livelihood is based on agricultural produce. Through their religion of the *Mwari* cult, the Karanga have managed to prevent droughts by persistently holding the annual *mutoro*

rain ceremonies. In his essay on the *Mwari* cult in Zimbabwe entitled, “The God of the Matopo Hills”, Daneel says:

Of all the southern and eastern African tribes the Southern Shona have the most elaborate cult for worshipping and consulting the Supreme Being. For centuries they have believed in Mwari as the final authority behind their ancestors, a High God who was perhaps less directly involved in the affairs of individual lives than the ancestors but who could be consulted on matters of communal import. Far from being a remote deity, Mwari was believed to control the fertility of Shona occupied country, to give rain in times of drought and advice on the course of action in times of national crisis (1970:15).

The Karanga people are what Daneel refers to as the Southern Shona. The origin of the term, *Mwari*, according to Shona tradition as stated by Daneel, dates back to the time when the Mbire tribe (Karanga) from whose ranks came the rain spirits, migrated from the Tanganyikan (Tanzanian) lake regions. The “*Mwali*”, who continues to reside in the vicinity of the Kilimanjaro mountain, designates God as the ‘sower’ and therefore as the God of Fertility (ibid:16). The historian, Bhebe, in his essay entitled, “The Ndebele and Mwari before 1893: A Religious Conquest of the Conquerors by the Vanquished”, comments:

One of the manifestations of Ndebele – Shona cultural fusion was the Ndebele adoption of Mwari. The Ndebele did not completely displace the Shona in the area they occupied, - - - all of whom had for many centuries lived in what became known as Matabeleland, were fairly interspersed with the Ndebele. Much as the Ndebele quickly grasped the importance of the Mwari institution as an intelligence system during their raiding activities against the Shona, it took some time for them to incorporate it into their religious thought (Bhebe 1999:288).

Richard Werbner, in his book, “Ritual Passage Sacred Journey: The Process and Organization of Religious Movement” (1989) and Terence Ranger’s “Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopo Hills of Zimbabwe” (1999), reaffirm Bhebe’s assertion of the influence of the *Mwari* cult on other cultures by making specific reference to the *Mwali* cult of the Kalanga of Matabeleland. *Mwali* is the Kalanga term for the Karanga term, *Mwari*. The Kalanga language uses ‘l’ in place of ‘r’ in the Shona/Karanga language. Werbner says:

Southern Africans seeking the favour of God Above, *Mwali*, in Kalanga, go on sacred journeys to distant cult centers. This quest takes them, in due season and at certain times of personal suffering, on sacred ascension, which they speak of as 'going to *Mwali*' (1989:7).

Drawn from Werbner's quotation cited above, the Kalanga, together with the Ndebele adopted the *Mwari* cult for two reasons. The Kalanga do not have a specific term for a ceremony linked with their *Mwali* cult while the *mutoro* rain ceremony is specific to the Karanga *Mwari* cult. The Karanga have always consulted *Mwari* on matters concerning rain by holding annual *mutoro* rain ceremonies, whereas the Kalanga go to *Mwali* 'at certain times of personal suffering' as referred to by Ranger.

The *Mwari* cult, which Bhebe (1999:288) refers to as an 'intelligence system', utilizes the *mutoro* rain ceremony as a practical dimension of defining the Karanga culture. The *Mwari* cult is the physical and spiritual worldview located in the minds (thought processes) and hearts (feelings) of the Karanga. According to Clifford Geertz:

The concept of culture is essentially a semiotic one. Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore, not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (1973:5).

By interpreting Mhande song-dance performance in the context of the *mutoro* rain ceremony, I develop the meaning of Mhande by unpacking webs of significance in the *mutoro* process. Through such an analysis I shall depict the specificity of the Karanga culture expressed in the ritual process.

### **1.6.2 Religious ritual**

*Ritual is the medium chosen to invoke those ordered relationships that are thought to obtain between human beings in the here-and-now and in non-immediate sources of power, authority and value. The fundamental efficacy of ritual activity lies in its ability to have people embody assumptions about their place in a larger order of things* (Bell, 1997:xi).

The *mutoro* ceremony is a religious rite of the *Mwari* cult, which incorporates pilgrimages to the Matonjeni shrine by the rain priests in order to present offerings and prayers to the rain spirits, who intervene with *Mwari*, the giver of rain. Bourdillon considers religion as a part of everyday life and religious rites as actions which achieve

an effect (1990:3). The *mutoro* ceremony is a Karanga indigenous religious rite at which the rain spirits are asked to intervene with God to provide rain. The sacred journey to the Matonjeni shrine, as an essential component of the *mutoro* ceremony, embodies the transfer of what Richard Werbner calls “qualities of life” (1989:2). By keeping away from wrong doing, and in offering sacrifices such as *rupanga* (thanksgiving) and ceremonial beer (*doro remvura*) to the rain spirits, the Karanga receive from *Mwari*, rain, fertility of their land, peace and security.

Many authors (Aschwanden 1989, Daneel 1970, Ranger 1999, Schofeleers and Mwanza 1978 and Werbner 1989) have referred to rain shrines in the Matopo Hills where rain ceremonies were centrally organized. These shrines are presented below:

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ETHNIC DESIGNATION CONTROLLING LINEAGES</b>	<b>CONDITION 1968</b>
<b>Within Matopos</b>		
Dula	Venda	active
Magubu	?	active
Manyankwa	Venda (others not known)	active
Wirirani	Mbire/Kalanga	active
Njelele	Venda/ rozvi	dormant
Mashuguyumwa	?	dead
<b>Outside Matopos</b>		
Dali	Venda	unknown
Inyathi	?	dead
Luvimbhi	Venda (others not known)	dead
Mangwe	? Kalanga	dead
Ntaba zi ka Mmbo	Holi/Rozvi	dead
Zimbabwe	Mbire/Rozvi	dead

Fig.6 *Table of central shrines and their status*  
(From Schofeleers, 1999[1978:299])

The shrine named Wirirani in the table above is what is popularly known as Matonjeni. Out of the twelve shrines, the Matonjeni shrine has been mentioned in the literature on the Matopos shrines (Aschwanden 1989, Daneel 1970, Schofeleers and Mwanza, 1978) more than the rest. Current research on the state of the twelve shrines has confirmed that only four, one of which is the Matonjeni shrine, are functional. (Schofeleers, 1999:300).

While Aschwanden (1989), Bourdillon (1990), and Werbner (1989) have written much about what is involved in the *mutoro* rain ceremony, they make no mention of one of the most important elements of this ritual, the music. This is their shortcoming and my challenge. By researching the significance of performance of Mhande in the process of the *mutoro* ritual, this thesis adds to existing scholarly studies of rain ceremonies.

### **1.6.3 Analysis of sound structure**

By considering Mhande song-dance performance in the context of the Karanga *mutoro* rain ceremony, this research mirrors Thram's (1999) study of Dandanda song and dance in Zimbabwe in three ways: approach, context and meaning. Thram's use of ethnography of performance, in determining the therapeutic dimensions of communication in the performance process of Dandanda, is similar to my ethnographic approach to determining the significance of the performance of Mhande in *mutoro*. Thram documented Dandanda in the ritual context of the *chipwa*, the annual rain ceremony she documented among the Zezuru; and the secular context of the annual Chibuku Neshamwari Festival at the 1998 Chegutu National Chibuku Neshamwari Competition. I also considered Mhande in its ritual and secular contexts of the Karanga *mutoro* rain ceremony and the annual Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition. "Dandanda is a Shona ritual dance with its own song repertoire and distinctive *ngoma* (drum) and *hosho* (gourd rattle) styles," (Thram, 1999:vi) and in like manner, Mhande is a Karanga ritual dance with its own song repertoire and distinctive *ngoma* and *magagada* (leg rattles) styles. Dandanda and Mhande are music systems and each of them is a product of the cultural history of its exponents.

With reference to Eric von Hornbostel together with his contemporaries who took an interest in the music of Africa, Blum comments, "The musics of Africa and their transformations proved to be difficult subjects of inquiry for early ethnomusicologists

working in Europe, the United States, the Caribbean, and (beginning in the 1920s), Africa itself (1991:3,10). Blum goes on to cite Robert Lach's questions related to music system:

How does a scale originate? How did the human spirit - in various lands, various times, among various peoples and races - succeed in constructing its musical system, i.e., the sequence of individual scale degrees, according to various schemata, or "systems of tonal crystallization," so to speak, which differ so fundamentally from one another - as is evident from the various scales and tone systems? (1924:8).

While Dandanda and Mhande have a lot in common, their systems of tonal crystallization by which they are identified, differ. In his reference to music structure, Nketia says, "Although the songs of an African society share a common structural framework, they may vary in the emphasis they give to particular tones in certain positions or to particular sequences of interval" (1974:153). The transcriptions of Mhande songs presented herein in pulse notation are focused on the regular equi-spaced pulse, grouped into guide beats or dance beats, length of song cycles, melodic lines for the lead (*shaura*) and response (*bvumira*) parts, phrases and chord sequences. I follow Tracey who says, "A transcription should reveal the shape of the song so that it looks on the page as much as possible like the song sounds" (1990:1). Following Agawu's assertion of the value of analysis, the inclusion of an analytical component in the form of transcriptions in this thesis, is intended to provide the reader with a reflection of the Shona's musical mind (2003:196).

## 1.7 Theoretical Framework

*We can no longer study music as a thing in itself when research in ethnomusicology makes it clear that musical things are not always strictly musical, and that the expression of tonal relationships in patterns of sound may be secondary to extra-musical relations which the tones represent* (Blacking, 1976:25).

My consultation of the scholarly literature on the *Mwari* cult and the *mutoro* rain ceremony, together with my field research observations on the role of the performance of Mhande song-dance in the *mutoro* ceremony, have informed me that the significance of Mhande to the *mutoro* is analogous to that of the Matonjeni shrine to the *Mwari* cult. Before I present my research model for this thesis, I will make specific reference to performance theory.

By conceiving performance as the actual execution of an action, Bauman says:

All performance, like all communication, is situated (events set up and prepared for in advance), enacted (bounded within a defined beginning and end) and rendered meaningful within socially defined situational contexts (performed in a symbolically marked off space) (1992:46).

Following Bauman, and perhaps echoing Geertz's proposal of the webs of significance, Erlmann states, "Performance is considered both as a web of meaning to be read from its surrounding context and as a form of communicative praxis in which meaning is always emergent" (1996:16).

Drawing together ideas from Geertz (1973), Bauman (1992) and Erlmann's (1996) proposals of utilizing human behaviour (action/performance) in determining its contextual meaning, and at analytical level, Nketia's (1974) and Andrew Tracey's (1962, 1972, 1888, 1990) research into African music and Shona music respectively, I formulated the "Matonjeni Model" for interpreting performance of Mhande music in the context of the *mutoro* ceremony. The Model is diagrammatically represented below:

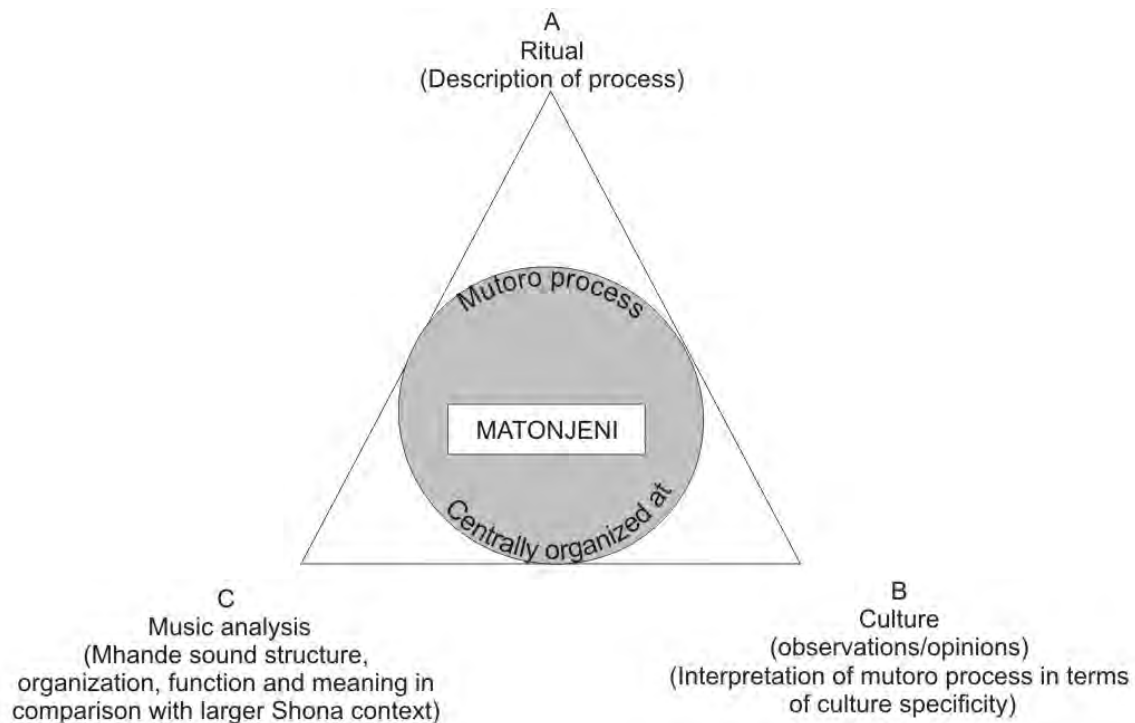


Fig.7 Matonjeni Model

The Matonjeni Model satisfies my desire to determine the meaning of Mhande in the context of the *mutoro* rain ceremony. Since musical expression is both culturally determined and culturally encoded with meaning (Miller and Shahriari, 2006:13), the description and interpretation of Mhande song-dance in the ritual context of the *mutoro* ceremony and in the secular context of the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition, as represented by the two arms of the Model: A, Ritual and B, Culture respectively, presents a fuller understanding of Mhande music. In addition, the analysis of the structure of Mhande music for the purpose of comparing it with the structure of other song-dance genres, as represented by the third arm: C, music analysis, of the Model, is used to determine the position of Mhande in other Shona music traditions.

The Matonjeni shrine is the focal point of the *mutoro* process much the same as Mhande music is to the *mutoro* ritual. The Matonjeni shrine is a symbol of the bond between the natural and the spiritual worlds while Mhande music is used as a vehicle for cementing communication and relationships between the Karanga and the rain spirits (*majukwa*).

Granted that none of the authors of the existing literature on the *Mwari* cult and the *mutoro* ceremony, nor any of my consultants had defined the term ‘Matonjeni’ as is the case for *mutoro* and *Mwari*, I have used my knowledge of the Shona language to determine the meaning of Matonjeni. The word *matonjeni* is made up of two words: *mato*, which is the short form of *matope* (wetness, singular-*dope*, dew) and *njeni* (newness). Thus the pilgrimage to the Matonjeni shrine as a ritual passage is a purification process that ushers in a new lease of life, brought by the rain necessary for survival.

People from different communities of Karangaland, who make sacred journeys for the *mutoro* ritual, converge at the Matonjeni shrine. The shrine draws people together for a common cause much the same as Mhande music does its musicians. The Matonjeni shrine is where the human and spiritual realms co-exist like Mhande music exists in both human and spiritual beings.

The prayers that are offered at the Matonjeni cave shrine are connected to Mhande in four ways: (i) The dignified movement of the rain priests as they walk to and from the entrance to the cave shrine mirrors the Mhande dance pattern as performed in

the *mutoro* ceremonies. (ii) The spoken words for the prayer offered to *Mwari* by way of the rain spirits at the cave shrine, and the voice from the rocks in the cave (*mabweadziva*) constitute sounds (an abstraction) produced by *mabweadziva*, the rocks (symbol of spiritual being) likened to the human voice in performance of Mhande music (iii) The conversation between the rain priests and the rain spirits at the Matonjeni shrine is organized in the same way as Mhande music is structured. The communication with the rain spirits follows the typical African song procedure. The rain priest speaks first, leads the conversation by appealing to the highest authority, who then gives the final word in response. All Mhande songs employ the lead (*Shaura*) and response (*Bvumira*) pattern of singing. The lead melody is pitched higher than the response line, which provides the second and final phrase for the two-phrase cycle form of Mhande music, and (iv) The words of the *mutoro* prayers are likened to the Mhande song texts that the rain spirits are familiar with.

I will develop (A) the ritual aspect of my Model through description of the *mutoro* ceremony, which constitutes part of Chapter 2. Using the approach of unpacking meaning from cultural context as implied in (B) the culture aspect of my Model, the interpretation of performance of Mhande song-dance in the indigenous context of the *mutoro* ceremony complements the description of the ritual and reveals its full meaning. Chapter 3 presents the discussion of the significance of performance of Mhande music in the secularized context of the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition. This helps to confirm that music stays in people's hearts and minds wherever they live and whatever they do. Chapter 4 follows (C) the music analysis aspect of my Model where Mhande song and drum transcriptions are analysed in order to determine the meaning of the music in relation to the culture it represents. In Chapter 5, the position of Mhande in the larger context of the Shona music traditions is presented by way of comparing the structure of Mhande music with the structure of music of other Shona song-dance genres. Conclusions for this work constitute Chapter 6 of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.0 Mhande song-dance performance: *Mutoro* process

The description of the *mutoro* process is here presented in two sections: Definition of *mutoro*, and Elements of *Mutoro* - Significance of Mhande music. The aspects that constitute the term *mutoro* are presented and analysed in two ways: defining a culture specific interpretation of *mutoro*, and identifying and describing elements (webs of significance) of the *mutoro* process.

#### 2.1 Definition of *mutoro*

The definitions of *mutoro* are presented in Shona/Karanga and translated into English. The attention of the reader is drawn to the fact that the Shona/Karanga express themselves in a way that may appear to leave gaps of information to people who are not familiar with their manner of speech. The definitions of *mutoro* provided by my consultants and presented herein are drawn from my field notes.

In his attempt to define *mutoro*, Aschwanden says, “*Mutoro* is derived from *kutara*, to lift a heavy load off the head or heart” (1989:239). Drawing from my knowledge of the Shona language, I will point out that the verb that corresponds to his definition is in fact *kutura*, not *kutara* (which means to draw/mark). ‘Off-loading’ implies, by extension, surrendering one’s burden to another, which is part of the contents of the prayers offered at the Matonjeni shrine. Aschwanden also mentions two other aspects of *mutoro*: thanksgiving (*rupanga* in Karanga) and *mutoro* as a place (*mapa*) (ibid:226-7).

In his definition of *mutoro*, Chief Chimombe says:

*Mutoro kukumbira mvura pane nzvimbo dzinoera dzakangosarudzwa nevakuru, dzanga dziripo.*

Mutoro is a way of asking for rain at sacred places that were designated by our elders.

*Zvaiti kana mvura yangononoka kunaya saikozvino, paindokumbirwa mvura zvonzi chiendai mundoisa zviyo muguvi kusina mvura, yanaya yokunyika mumera iwoyo vanhu vozoita mapemberero okuti vatende.*

It happened that when rain did not fall in time, like the present time, they would go and say prayers for rain and it will be said go and put millet grain (*rapoko*) into a rock depression when there will be no rain, (and) when it rains, soaking the

*rapoko* for malt, people would then hold a ceremony in gratitude (Interview by author: 10/11/2004).

Chief Chimombe's expression, *kukumbira mvura* (asking for rain) implies the prayers offered at the *mutoro* place (*mapa, nzvimbo dzinoera*). The idea of burden is implied in the second sentence of his definition where he refers to the delay in rain (*kana mvura yanonoka kunaya*), which worries people. In addition to Aschwanden's definition of *mutoro*, Chief Chimombe mentions two other aspects: counseling, *chiendai mundoisa zviyo muguvi* (go and put millet grain into the rock depression), and *mumera* (malt) for preparing *mutoro* ceremonial beer. The counseling is in the specifications of how the participants are to carry out the given tasks.

By way of defining *mutoro*, Sub-chief Penduka says:

*Mutoro ndiko kwatinoti ndiko kunobva mvura. Tinoti kana mvura yoda kunaya sezvino totarisana naGumiguru, totarisira kuti tiise mbeu pasi, tinotanga tamanya kuenda ikoko kundokumbira mbeu nokuisawo rupanga rwedu ikoko kutenda zvatinenge takawana.*

*Mutoro* is where we say rain comes from. We say when rain is to start falling like this time we are approaching October, when we look forward to sow seeds in the ground, we first run there (Matonjeni) to ask for seeds and also offer our token of appreciation there as thanksgiving for what we had reaped (Interview by author, 18/08/2000).

In comparison with Aschwanden's and Chief Chimombe's definitions, Sub-chief Penduka's definition of *mutoro* not only mentions place (*mapa*) and thanksgiving (*rupanga*) as aspects of *mutoro*, but it attaches to them other meanings as he states, "*mutoro ndiko kunobva mvura, tinotanga tamanya kuenda ikoko*" (*mutoro* is where rain comes from; we first run there (Matonjeni), that is he equates Matonjeni with *mutoro*. Since they receive rain from Matonjeni, Penduka says they reciprocate by offering *rupanga* (thanksgiving), which is acknowledged by a receipt of the seeds they ask for (*kundokumbira mbeu*) from Matonjeni.

Broadening Sub-chief Penduka's definition of *mutoro*, Mr Munamba, the rain priest, says:

*Saka mauya pano nokuda kwezivo yemutoro. Mutoro inzvimbo dzinoera, kana maizogona kutevedzera kuera kwezvinhu izvozvo zvinenge zvarehwa nokuti upenyu uhu tanga tichihwana kuMatonjeni. Ndiko kwandakandoitwa kuti ndizive*

*kuti chinonzi mutoro zvinorevei uye kuti zvakamirira chii. Zvakamirira isu kuti tiwane mvura tigogona kurera vana vedu zvakakanaka.*

So you have come here because of the *mutoro* system of knowledge. *Mutoro* are sacred places, if you were going to manage to adhere to the sacredness of those things that will have been said, because this life we were getting from Matonjeni. That is where it was made clear to me to get to know what *mutoro* is and what it means. It means us getting rain so that we can look after our children well (Interview by author, 31/08/2002).

Mr Munamba's reference to *mutoro* as a system of knowledge echoes Bhebe's (1999:288) understanding of the *Mwari* cult, perpetuated through the *mutoro*, as an intelligence system. Mr Munamba admits in his definition that he obtained from Matonjeni his vision and understanding of *mutoro* as a receipt of rain and as a system of knowledge and life. This was the result of his involvement in *mutoro* ceremonies as the rain priest of Marishongwe village in Shurugwi District.

Elsewhere, the *Duramanzwi Guru ReChishona* (Shona Dictionary) contains two definitions of *mutoro*:

*Mutoro inzvimbo inoitirwa mitambo yakakosha sekupira mudzimu.*

*Mutoro* is a place where sacred ceremonies like praying to the ancestral spirits are held

*Mutoro idoro rinobikwa vanhu vachizorishandisa kukumbira mvura kuvadzimu.*

*Mutoro* is the beer that is brewed and people will use it to ask for rain from the ancestral spirits (Chimhundu, 2001:42).

The two aspects, place and ceremonial beer that are contained in the dictionary definitions of *mutoro*, have also previously appeared in other definitions. However, there are three misrepresentations of the definitions in the dictionary that need correction. There is only one sacred ceremony held at the *mutoro* place, and not many ceremonies (*mitambo*), as stated in the first definition. Further in the first definition, the use of prayers offered to ancestral spirits (*kupira mudzimu*), as an example of sacred ceremonies, is a misrepresentation of the ritual aspect of the *mutoro*. Rain spirits (*majukwa*) are not the same as ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*). *Mutoro* ceremonial beer is an offering (Tazivei's invocation presented under *Kukumikidza*, Interview by author

13/11/2004) and not a prayer for rain rain (*vachizorishandisa kukumbira mvura*), as is presented in the second definition of the dictionary.

When merged, all the definitions of *mutoro* cited above comprise seven aspects: place (*mapa*); prayer (*kupira/kukumbira*); thanksgiving (*rupanga*); ceremonial beer (*doro remvura*); counsel (*dzidziso/yambiro*); system of knowledge (*zivo*); and rain (*mvura*). *Mutoro* as place and specifically referred to as Matonjeni by Mr Munamba, is the only aspect that appears in each of the definitions. Given that the *mutoro* ritual is a rain ceremony centrally organized at the Matonjeni cave shrine, where it is believed rain comes from (Munamba), any definition of *mutoro* that makes no mention of the shrine will be incomplete. Conspicuous by its absence in all the definitions is any mention of performance of Mhande song-dance, which plays an important role in the *mutoro* process. The Matonjeni Model, defined in Chapter 1, has been developed and used in this thesis to correct the lack of attention to Mhande performance.

The following observations are drawn from all the definitions discussed in the foregoing paragraphs: none of the definitions reference *Mwari* as the giver of rain (with which *mutoro* is associated) by way of the rain spirits, referred to as *vadzimu* in some definitions; all definitions of *mutoro* except one (Mr Munamba's) fail to identify the *mutoro* place by name, which makes it appear as if *mutoro* does not belong to a specific culture, and not only are the definitions of *mutoro* presented in more than one statement, but the aspects contained in the different statements are not crystallized into a single clear definition of *mutoro*.

Following the observations made on the definitions of *mutoro*, I developed a precise definition:

*Mutoro izivo yemvura inopiwa naMwari nemajukwa eMatonjeni vanotendwa nokuvikwa, ivo vachipavo yambiro inodavirwa nokukumikidzwa kwedoro remvura nokutambwa kweNgoma yeMhande, zvinokwezva mvura kuti inaye.*

*Mutoro* is a system of knowledge about rain given by *Mwari* by way of the rain spirits at the Matonjeni shrine; to whom thanksgiving and prayers are offered. The spirits respond by giving counsel, which is reciprocated by the dedication of ceremonial beer and the performance of Mhande music to attract rain.

## 2.2 Elements of *mutoro* – Significance of Mhande music

The *mutoro* ceremony is a process with defined stages from beginning to end (Bauman, 1992:46). Considering the performance of Mhande song-dance in the *mutoro* ritual as a musical occasion, I draw on Marcia Herndon who says:

The musical occasion, then, may be regarded as an encapsulated expression of the shared cognitive forms and values of a society, which includes not only the music itself but also the totality of associated behaviour and underlying concepts. It is usually a named event, with a beginning and an end, varying degrees of organization of activity, audience performances, and location (1971:340).

The *mutoro* ritual embodies the Karanga world view in which music is used as a vehicle for communication between the human and the spiritual beings. In order to achieve the intended goal of receipt of rain, there are well defined stages in which this communication occurs in the *mutoro* process. Drawing from my research data, I have developed a hierarchical way of representing the order in which the activities for the process take place. This follows the step by step approach taken by the *mutoro* adherents leading to achievement of the goal of the ritual. It is important to note that while the elements appear as separate entities when presented in diagrammatic form on paper, in practice there are other activities that occur in between the stages, herein after referred to as elements.

The description and interpretation of the performance of Mhande song-dance in the *mutoro* process therefore focuses on: 1) *Kuparura* (Initiation); 2) *Kuvika* (Prayer); 3) *Kukumikidza* (Dedication), and 4) *Kuturura* (Bringing down) as illustrated below:

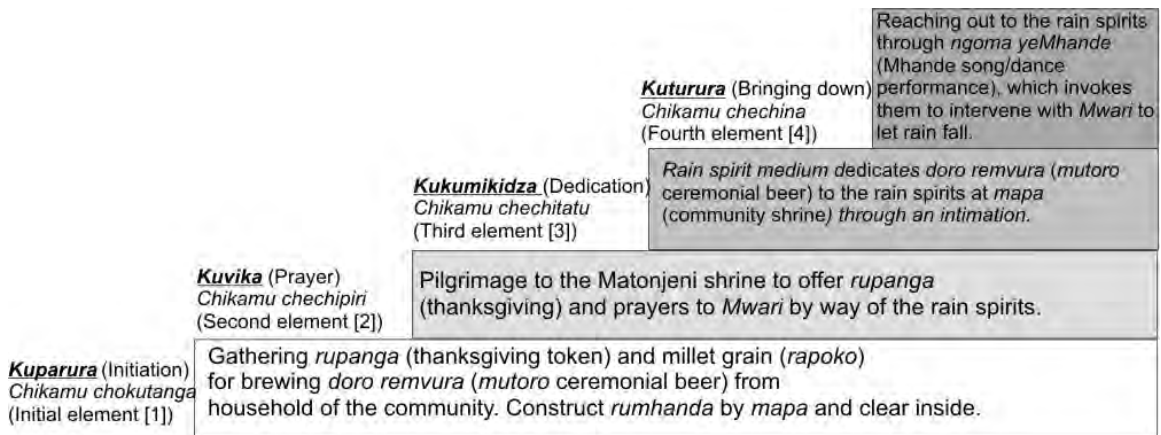


Fig.8 Elements of the *mutoro* process

### 2.2.1 Kugarura (Initiation)

The *mutoro* process is initiated by the gathering of donations of millet grain (*rapoko*) from every household in the community for brewing ceremonial beer and to carry out *rupanga* (money to be given to the rain spirits at Matonjeni as a gesture of thanks). Sub-chief Penduka says:

*Tinoti kana tatarisana naGumiguru mvura yoda kunaya ndinotuma mutumwa wangu Munamba kuti awunganidze rupanga pamwe chete nezviyo zvokuzobikisa doro remvura kubva kumhuri yoga yoga yemudunhu mangu.*

What we do when approaching October when rain is about to fall, I send my messenger (rain priest) Munamba to gather *rupanga* and *rapoko* for brewing rain beer from each household in my community.

*Chatinoti rupanga zvinofanana nezviya zvinoitwa mumachechi zvinonzvi chegumi. Tinenge tichindoisa chegumi chedu ikoko, rupanga rwedu ikoko kundotenda zvatinenge takawana.*

What we call *rupanga* is like that which is done in church called tithe. We will be going to give our tithe there, our *rupanga* there to give thanks for good harvest (Interview by author, 18/08/2000).

In his explanation of *rupanga*, Mr Penduka indicates that it is meant to be taken there (to Matonjeni), thereby showing the connectedness between the first and second elements of the process. Before the *rupanga* is taken to Matonjeni, Mr Penduka sends Mr Munamba to Chief Nhema who authorizes that the process be continued. At this juncture, four activities: preparation of the community shrine (*mapa*); preparation of the ceremonial beer (*doro remvura*); pilgrimage to the Matonjeni shrine, and performance of Mhande music, will run concurrently.

With reference to the preparation of *mapa*, Mr Tazivei says:

*Pamapa panovakirwa rumhanda rwakapoteredza Muchakata, pokurwa mukati nevana kana chembere.*

At the *mapa* shrine a hedge is constructed around the *Muchakata* tree, the inside area is cleared by children or elderly woman (Interview by author, 10/11/2004).

The picture of the *Muchakata* tree and the Marishongwe village shrine (*mapa*) is presented below:



Fig.9 *Muchakata tree and mapa*  
(Mr Munamba at the Marishongwe *mapa* shrine under construction)

The men who take part in the construction of *rumhanda* are those who live in accordance with the norms, values and beliefs of their community. The women who clear the inside area of the *rumhanda* are those that also brew the ceremonial beer and are past child-bearing. Children are allowed to take part in clearing the shrine because they are considered not to have done any wrong. Through this practice too, the Karanga transmit the norms and values of the *mutoro* ritual to future generations.

As people work on the shrine, they sing Mhande songs that remind them of the behaviour expected of one who participates in the *mutoro* process. Mr Furusa gave an example of such songs, *Haiwa yowerere* (see clip 2 DVD):

*Haiwa yowerere, mwana muduku kunyengwa ramba, unozotsika mimba murima*

Oh no (*yowerere* – sound of crying) young lady say no to proposal for love, you will conceive in the dark (Interview by author, 16/09/2001).

The Shona/Karanga normally emphasize the positive (expected behaviour) by attacking the negative (unwanted behaviour) as is clearly illustrated in the words of the song supplied by Mr Furusa. The ill behaviour of coercing young ladies into having premarital sex with them is what the words of the song imply. This, according to Mr Furusa, is promiscuity, which has caused the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the cause of most deaths in his community. It is believed that when people do not observe the counsel given by the rain spirits, they will have droughts.

In his response to why *Muchakata* is preferred for a *mapa* (shrine), Chief Chimombe said:

*Muchakata muti unoponesa vanhu pazhara nokuti unobereka muchero wakawanda (chakata) saka unokudzwa uyezve unoita bvute rakakura.*

*Muchakata* is a tree that helps people to survive in times of hunger because it bears a lot of fruit (*chakata*). So it is honoured and provides a lot of shade (Interview by author, 10/11/2004).

The most important feature of the *mutoro* shrine (*mapa*) is the *Muchakata* tree, which signifies the “white shadow of the person” (Aschwanden, 1989:241). The white shadow of a person (*mweya womunhu*) is the invisible spirit of the dead. The *Muchakata* tree bears life in that it does not shed its leaves and it provides food in times of hunger. This tree is associated with the rain spirits in that they support human life. Thus the *Muchakata* tree symbolizes the bond between the natural and spiritual worlds.

The hedge around the *Muchakata* tree (*rumhanda*) is constructed out of the *Mutondo* tree. Mr Penduka said:

*Mutondo woga ndiwo muti unobvumidzwa kushandiswa pakuvaka rumhanda rwacho pamapa nokuti unononoka kutunga mashizha. Unotunga nguva iyo tinogadzirira kunaya kwemvura saka unofambirana nemavambo emutambo wemutoro.*

*Mutondo* is the only tree that is permitted for constructing the hedge at the shrine (*mapa*) because it does not grow new leaves early. It puts on new leaves at the same time that we prepare for the coming of rain, so this process occurs together with the initial stage of our *mutoro* ceremony (Interview by author, 18/08/2000).

The preparation of the *mapa* is done in conjunction with the brewing of the ceremonial beer where the men who construct *rumhanda* also fetch the wood for women who clear the shrine and brew the beer. This is about the time that the rain priest embarks on his sacred journey to the Matonjeni shrine. Mr Furusa says:

*Doro remvura rinogadzira panguva iyo mutumwa anosimuka kupinda murwendo rwokuenda kuMatonjeni rwaichitora vhiki kufamba kuenda nokudzoka, iro dorowo richitora mazuva manomwe kuti riibve. Samazuva ano kwava nezvifambiso zvinosanganisira mabhazi, mutumwa anogona kusimuka mazuva maviri kana matatu doro ravambwa.*

The *mutoro* ceremonial beer is prepared at the point when the messenger (rain priest) gets on to the journey to Matonjeni. It used to take one week to walk to and

fro while the brewing of the beer also takes seven days. Nowadays where there is transport, including buses, the messenger can start off two or three days after the beer making commences (Interview by author, 16/09/2001).

In Karanga culture, the task of brewing the *mutoro* ceremonial beer is the responsibility of elderly women. When asked to provide the criteria used to select people who brew the ceremonial beer, Sub-chief Manganda said:

*Chembere idzi (vachivatendeka) dzisingachazivi varume ndidzo dzinogadzira mumera nokubika doro kusvika vatiudze kuti doro riya raibva.*

These woman (pointing at them) who no longer have sex with men are the ones who prepare malt and brew the beer and inform us when it's ready for consumption (Interview by the author, 13/11/2004).

The day I interviewed Mr Manganda at his home in Madondo village, Gutu, there were three women: Makumbi Madondo; Chochorai Madondo, and Munowenyu Madondo who were brewing ceremonial beer (*doro remvura*) in his home. As they sat in the shade watching their pots of brew on the fire, the three women sang softly in order not to interfere with the ongoing interview. When I asked them to sing to me, they were so shy that they could not do it, and I thought perhaps it was not proper for them to sing before their Sub-chief. They, however, told me that they were singing Mhande music. Mrs Chochorai Madondo was the supervisor. She ensured her counterparts brewed the ritual beer in accordance with the requirements for achieving the goal of the ceremony. Her role may also represent a system of tutorship and apprenticeship which might guarantee continuity of this ritual practice.

Aschwanden, writing about the preparation of *doro remvura* among the Karanga of Zaka District in Masvingo Province says, "The ceremonial beer for the festival must be prepared by women who no longer have an active sexual life, so that there is no contact with dirt" (1989:227). What Aschwanden calls festival is what in this thesis is referred to as the *mutoro* ceremony. Following Aschwanden's assertion of 'purity' as the criteria for one's involvement in brewing the *mutoro* beer, Mr Munamba, viewing it from his own perspective as a rain priest, said:

*Zvinotora kuzvipira zvikuru kuti munhu umiririre nyaya dzemutoro nokuti zvikasadaro hapana chimuko mazviri. Kuzvipira uku kunosanganisira kusagoverana bonde nomudzimai wangu kubvira pandinoparura mutoro dzamara mutambo wopera. Zvozoti zvakare kana ndichitora rwendo rwokuenda ikoko*

*takasarudzirwa kuti unobva wakapika wakazvipa zvizere kuti zhora  
isakumonyorokera kana wave mukati mayo.*

It takes a lot of commitment for one to spearhead *mutoro* matters because if it is not so then there is no expected outcome. This commitment includes not sharing the mat (not having sex) with my wife from the time I initiate the *mutoro* process right through to the end of the process. And again when I take the journey to go there (*ikoko* - Matonjeni) it was determined for us that we start off by making a vow and fully commit oneself so that the way will not have too many obstacles (Interview by the author, 31/08/2002).

It is evident from the foregoing quotations that the people who play central roles in initiating the *mutoro* process are expected to be 'pure' in order that this level of the process is acceptable to the rain spirits at the Matonjeni shrine. Mr Munamba is also responsible for coordinating the preparation of the shrine (*mapa*) of his community.

It may be noted that four activities: gathering of thanksgiving (*rupanga*), gathering of millet grain (*rapoko*) for brewing ceremonial beer; preparation of the community shrine (*mapa*) and the ceremonial beer, and performing Mhande music, all take place in strict observance of the rain spirits' standards, which accord with the *mutoro* ritual. This *kuparura* (initiation of the *mutoro* process) is likened to the idea of leveling the ground, not only for the rain priest to successfully accomplish his sacred journey to the Matonjeni shrine, but for the whole ceremony to achieve the intended goal, which is the receipt of rain.

### **2.2.2 Kuvika (Prayer)**

The description of this element comprises three sections: (i) Introduction to Chief Nhema; (ii) Pilgrimage to Matonjeni, and (iii) Welcome back in Shurugwi.

#### **(i) Introduction to Chief Nhema**

In May 2000, I visited Mr Alexander Furusa, whom I had met in Gweru, at his rural home in Shurugwi. I asked him to introduce me to the authorities of the District. I needed to obtain permission to do my fieldwork in their community. Mr Furusa introduced me to Mr Munamba, the rain priest of their community. Mr Munamba introduced me to sub-Chief Penduka who granted me permission to conduct my field research in his community. Mr Penduka asked Mr Munamba to take me to Chief Nhema at a later stage. This was to inform him about the purpose of my visit to the District. In

the company of Mr Munamba, I made my first visit to Chief Nhema in July 2001. After Mr Munamba had introduced me to Chief Nhema, the Chief indicated his support for the research I was undertaking by saying:

*Ndafara zvikuru mwana wangu nokuuya kwako pano kwandiratidza kuti unofarira kudzidza nezvetsika yedu yemutoro. Sezvo uri mudzidzisi, ndinovimba uchaita kuti zvaunenge wadzidza ugozvapakurirawo kuvazhinji vasina zivo iyoyi.*

I am very pleased by your coming here my child. You have shown me that you are interested in learning about our *mutoro* culture. Since you are a teacher, I hope you shall ensure that what you will have learnt you pass on to many who do not have this knowledge.

*Kana waizokwanisa kuwana nguva, ndaizoenda newe kuMatonjeni uko ndinoda kundovika ndichisanganisa nenyaya ya Juliana. Ndanga ndichitarisira kuti gore rino risati rapera ndinge ndabudirira kusvikako.*

If you were going to find time, I was going to ask you to accompany me to Matonjeni where I want to go and offer thanksgiving and prayers for rain including Juliana's case. I had hoped to get there before the year came to an end (Interview by the author, 25/07/2001).

When asked to explain what *kuvika* means, Chief Nhema said:

*Kuvika kutaura kwatinoita nemajukwa eMatonjeni zvinofananidzwa nokunyengerera kunoitwa mumakereke. Zvingave zvimwe chete nokupira asi zvinopesana pakuti kuvika kwakanangana nokutaura nezvemvura kumhepo dzemajukwa chete, asi kupira kunosanganisa kutaura nemidzimu muzvizhinji zvatintarisira kuti vatibatsire muupenyu hwedu.*

*Kuvika* is the talking we do with the rain spirits at Matonjeni, and is likened to prayers done in churches. It appears the same as *kupira* but the difference is that *kuvika* focuses on talking about rain to rain spirits only while *kupira* includes talking to ancestral spirits on many things we expect them to assist us with in our lives (Interview by author, 25/07/2001).

After explaining the meaning of *kuvika* to me, Chief Nhema told me he was planning to visit the Matonjeni shrine to offer the prayers for rain, and also seek advice on the Juliana case. The Juliana Chief Nhema refers to is mentioned by Ranger, in '*Seeing the Matopos in the 1990s*':

In 1992, however, a differently conceived ecological movement, originating at Dzilo itself, swept across southern Zimbabwe. This was led by the prophetess, *Mbuya* Juliana, whose professed aim was to restore the balance of humanity and nature. In her vision, the Independent Churches, with their drumming on sacred

mountains and their direct challenges to the *Mwali* cult, were largely responsible for ecological crisis (1999:284).

*Mbuya* Juliana arrived in Shurugwi District in 1999. She told Chief Nhema that she was a *mhondoro* spirit medium from Mashonaland Central Province. Michael Gelfand says, “*Mhondoro* spirits are those which are concerned with tribal matters, whether social, political, medical, or economic. For example, those spirits control succession to chieftainships” (1965:342). In her research, moreover Thram says that, “Peo Murungweni insisted the *makombwe* (rain spirits among the Zezuru) are not the same as the clan spirits called *mhondoro*” (1999:63).

Granted that *Mbuya* Juliana is not a rain spirit medium, her stay in Shurugwi District under Nhema’s chieftaincy, from 1999 to 2002, interfered with the residents’ conduct of the *mutoro* ceremony in two ways: moving *chisi* (Lord’s day, Aschwanden 1989:250) the day of the week when people rest, from Thursday to Wednesday, and gathering *rupanga*, without Chief Nhema’s authority. In 2000 and 2001, Mr Munamba went to Matonjeni without *rupanga* because *Mbuya* Juliana had already collected it and had indicated that she was taking it there. Mr Munamba reported to Chief Nhema that *Mbuya* Juliana never took the *rupanga* to Matonjeni.

## **(ii) Pilgrimage to Matonjeni**

The developments that took place over the period of *Mbuya* Juliana’s stay in Shurugwi, as alluded to above led Chief Nhema to make a pilgrimage to the Matonjeni shrine *kundovika* (to offer thanksgiving and prayers for rain) and also bringing up Juliana’s case, which cast him into the role of a rain priest in this expedition.

Before presenting a detailed narration of the pilgrimage, I have inserted a picture showing the physical features by the entrance to the Matonjeni cave shrine. The entrance is by the big tree between two big rocks surrounded by small stones on the left hand side and a big rock nearly covered by trees on the right hand side. The village settlement for the cave shrine lies in the east of the shrine, that is, in front of the shrine, but out of the picture. Following is the picture of the entrance to the cave shrine:



Fig.10 *Picture of entrance to the Matonjeni cave shrine*  
(From Schofeleers, ed. 1999: 298)

On 19 November 2004, I drove Chief Nhema, Mr Manamba and Mr Mucheni, the blind Chief's assistant, from the Chief's home in Shurugwi to the Matonjeni shrine, a distance of about 260 kilometers. On arrival at the shrine village, we were welcomed by a guide who took us to a room where there was a woman named *MaNcube*, a rain spirit medium. The guide instructed us to leave our shoes outside the entrance to the room and we accompanied him in clapping hands as we entered the room. Chief Nhema was directed to sit on an animal skin mat placed in front of the rain spirit medium while the rest of us sat on the sides of the room with our backs against the wall. After the Chief and the rain spirit medium, *MaNcube*, had exchanged greetings, Chief Nhema went on to introduce the rest of us. The Chief presented his *rupanga* (thanksgiving, amounting to ZWD\$ 20 000) to the rain spirit medium. He proceeded to make a special request on my behalf as to whether it was permissible that I record the proceedings of his *kuvika*. The answer was that a recording of that event was not allowed.

As the conversation between MaNcube and Chief Nhema drew to an end, the guide, who had been instructed by the rain spirit medium to go and put on his attire for escorting people to the mouth of the cave shrine, came back to the room where we were and invited us to follow him. We walked bare foot, in single file, for about thirty metres, along the path leading to the cave. As we approached the cave entrance, the guide started to clap his hands and we all joined in the clapping, turning around facing the direction from which we had come and sitting down with our feet crossed. While we went through these motions I felt a sensation as of a magnet lifting my hair. As we sat, the guide said the following as I recall it:

*Takutsikai zvakare Tovera, ndini muzukuru wenyu ndauya nevana venyu vanoda kunzwa inzwi renyu pane zvavauya kuzovika kwamuri. Tinotenda (achiuchira).*

We have stepped on you again Tovera, I am your nephew I have come with your children who want to hear your voice concerning what they have come to present to you. Thank you (while clapping hands).

After a brief moment of silence, as Mhande music performed in the distant village filled the air, Chief Nhema went on to recite his prayer. The following was his prayer as I documented it soon after we had left the cave shrine when I asked him to repeat it to me and as I recalled the conversation:

*Ndini Mambo Nhema vekuShurugwi ndauya kuzovika zvedunhu rangu kwamuri.*

I am Chief Nhema of Shurugwi I have come to say prayers for my district to you.

*Chokutanga ndinoda kutenda zvikuru nemvura yamakatipa mwaka wapfuura tikakohwa zvakana.*

First, I thank you very much for the rain that you gave us the last rain season we harvested well.

*Ndakanga ndavhiringika musoro nenyaya yaJuliana nezvechisi saka handina kuzokotsva rupanga zvakana, zvisinei ndine pashoma pandauya napo kuzokutendai napo.*

I had had my head mixed up because of Juliana's issue and your day of rest so I did not gather the thanksgiving as expected, however, I have the little I brought to thank you with.

The guide told the rain spirit in the cave shrine that Chief Nhema had brought \$ 20 000 as *rupanga* (thanksgiving) from his community. Chief Nhema continued his prayer:

*Kunyangwe pane kupokana pamadzishe okudunhu kwangu, ini ndasimukira kuzotenda zvandakaitirwa gore rapera, ndine vimbo yokuti rinotevera richabuda zvakana.*

Even though there is some misunderstanding among my sub-Chiefs, I have come over to give thanks for what was done to me last year, I have hope that the coming year will come all right.

*Zvino tatarisana nemwaka uno, ndine chichemo chokukumbira mubwe kuti kana mvura ichiuya isaita mabhanan'ana anotyisa vana.*

Now we are facing this season, I have a request to ask of the one being prayed to that when rain comes it should not have lightning and thunder that scares children.

*Zvakare ndinokukumbirai kuti udyi huite hushoma kana kusavepo zvachose kuitira kuti vana vagowana chokudya chakakwana.*

In addition, I ask you that pests be few or not to be there at all so that children can get enough to eat.

*Ndiwo mashoko andauya nawo Tovera (vachiuchira nesu tose tichibatsirana navo).*

These are the words I came with Tovera (clapping hands all of us helping him).

Tovera is said to be the name of a rain spirit who resides in the Matonjeni cave shrine. According to the guide's explanation, addressing the rain spirits by name not only shows that one has full knowledge of the one he or she is praying to, but it also accords the spirits the respect they deserve.

The following is the remembered response of the voice from inside the rock caves (*mhinduro kubva mubwe*):

*Nhema ndinotenda nerupanga rwako nemashoko ako awauya nawo pano, zvirambe zvakadaro.*

Nhema I thank you for your thanksgiving and the words that you brought here. Keep on like that.

*Zvichemo zvako zvatambirwa. Zvose zvaunoshuvira zvichazadziswa.*

Your requests have been accepted. All you wish for will be fulfilled.

*Ko Juliana ari kupi asati ambosvika kuno mwaka inokaroita mitatu yapfuura?*

Where is Juliana who has not been here for about the past three rain seasons?

Chief Nhema responded to this question by indicating that he had no idea where Juliana was. He went on to inform the rain spirits that one of his reasons for approaching them was to find out whether or not Juliana had been depositing the *rupanga* she collected in the past two seasons. He thanked the spirits for the information about Juliana by clapping and pleading to continue with his prayer. When permission was granted, Chief Nhema said:

*Ndanga ndichikumbirawo zvekare kuti muite kuti vanhu vanditeerere pave nokugarisana kwakanaka mudunhu rangu.*

I am asking again that you make it that people listen to me so that there is staying together well in my district.

*Itaiwo kuti zvirehwa rehwa zvaiveko makare kare zvionekwe nhasi uno kuti vanhu vagowona nekunzwisisa simba renyu pamwe nokukuremekedzai.*

Make it that the beliefs that were there some time back be seen nowadays so that people can see and understand your authority and venerate you.

*Ndinokumbirawo zvakare kuti vana vane chido chokutsvakurudza nezvechikaranga chedu nechinangwa chokuzviisa muzvinyorwa zvinozodzidzwa nevana muzvikoro, vakaita saRutsate wandauya naye pano vabudirire mune zvavanodokwairira.*

I also ask again that, children who have the desire to research into our indigenous Karanga culture with the aim of documenting it for use in learning by children in school, like Rutsate who I brought here succeed in what they long for.

The rain spirit's voice responded to Chief Nhema's pleas in these remembered statements:

*Nhema ndafadzwa nokuti unoziva kunobva simba rohutongi hwako zvichisanganisira kuchengetedzwa pamwe nokuyananiwa kwevanhu vaunotonga.*

Nhema I am pleased that you know where your authority to rule comes from including protection and harmony of people under your rule.

*Chienda zvako ufambe zvakakanaka uchiziva kuti mutoro wako uchareruswa.*

You can go and travel well knowing that your concerns will be made light.

It is clear from his prayer to the rain spirits that Chief Nhema was not requesting rain since the *mutoro* ceremonies in his district had been held in the previous month of October. The request presented above focused on five issues: the manner in which rain was supposed to fall; the protection of crops against destruction by pests; the spirits ushering in harmony among Chief Nhema's people so that their conduct of *mutoro* ceremonies would bring rain to all communities in his district; an affirmation by the spirits of the Chief's authority over his people, and the success of work carried out by researchers including Rutsate himself.

Chief Nhema's prayer was made in the context of *Mbuya Juliana's* arrival in Shurugwi in 1999 when she asked Chief Nhema for a place to stay. Chief Nhema declined her request for land to build her house as he did not know much about her. However, Ndanga, one of Chief Nhema's sub-Chiefs, accommodated her in his community. Having been informed by sub-Chief Ndanga that Shurugwi District did not have a rain spirit medium since the death of Mr Ndawana in 1982, *Mbuya Juliana* told sub-Chief Ndanga that since she was a *mhondoro* spirit medium, she could play the role of a rain spirit medium, which is not applicable to Shona/Karanga indigenous ritual practices.

After Sub-Chief Ndanga authorized her to serve as a rain spirit medium for his community, *Mbuya Juliana* changed *chisi* (the day of the week when people are not supposed to work in their fields) from Thursday to Wednesday, claiming that this change would bring more rain. She also assumed the responsibility of gathering *rupanga* (thanksgiving), which is normally the rain priest's duty. Upon hearing these developments, Chief Nhema did not approve of what *Mbuya Juliana* had done, but because of the tension between him and his sub-Chief Ndanga, arising from the fact that Ndanga had accommodated her without his authority, Chief Nhema instructed the rest of his sub-Chiefs to maintain a Thursday as *chisi* and ask their rain priests to gather *rupanga*, leaving Ndanga and his community to go *Juliana's* way.

For two consecutive rain seasons after *Mbuya* Juliana assumed the role of a rain spirit medium, the people of sub-Chief Ndanga's community had poor harvests such that they had to get most of the grain for their food from Chief Nhema and their neighboring communities who had received adequate rain. Thus the people of sub-Chief Ndanga's community kept asking Chief Nhema to help them out of their impending problem with hunger. This could only be done by solving the difficulty presented by Juliana. First, Juliana, as a religious person, was looking for personal success by exploiting the people's beliefs. Secondly, the depth of the spiritual beliefs of the Karanga of Shurugwi ultimately did not allow them to be taken in by an imposter. Finding a solution in the Juliana case was the main reason Chief Nhema undertook his pilgrimage to Matonjeni. His pilgrimage, I believe, resolved the difficulties created by *Mbuya* Juliana.

### (iii) Welcome back in Shurugwi

On our way back from Matonjeni to Chief Nhema's home as we arrived at Chachacha, we noticed that it had rained hours before we got there because the ground was very wet. As we approached the Chief's homestead, we were met with a crowd of people who were awaiting their Chief's return from '*Mabwe adziva, Matonjeni*' as they shouted and surrounded the car, waving and clapping their hands while singing the Mhande song entitled *Dziva remvura*.

*Dziva remvura*

SH  
Wa-rio-na dziva remvura

BV  
Hero wa-rio-na dziva remvura tenda

*Wariona dziva remvura?*

Have you seen the pool of water?

*Hero wariona dziva remvura, tenda!*

There it is have you seen it, give thanks!

It took ten minutes to travel only fifty metres to the Chief's doorstep. Upon opening the door of my car, part of the crowd surrounding the car whisked me away to a larger crowd gathered under a big tree, *padare raMambo* (by the Chief's courtyard) where people were singing, drumming, clapping and dancing Mhande. As I joined in the dancing some people lifted me high into the air in gratitude for transporting the Chief safely. Chief Nhema later came out of his house to meet his people and told them the nature of his trip.

### **2.3 Kukumikidza (Dedication)**

The *mutoro* ritual of dedicating the ceremonial beer to the rain spirits (*kukumidza doro remvura kumajukwa*) is conducted after the rain priest has returned from Matonjeni. All the people (qualified participants of generally mature age) of the community gather in the home of the sub-Chief or Chief on the morning of the day when the beer is dedicated to the rain spirits (*majukwa*). They will make a procession by marching in single file to their community shrine (*mapa*). The procession is headed by a woman carrying a pot of beer (one of the women who brewed the beer), followed by the Chief, sub-Chief, rain spirit medium, rain priest and the rest of the women and the men. The rain spirit medium, Mr Tazivei said:

*Pakuenda kumapa tinoenda tichiimba pfuko yedoro yakatakurwa.*

When we go to *mapa* we go singing and carrying the small pot of beer.

*Tasvika ini ndini ndinotanga kupinda mukati merumhanda nechembere inenge yakatakura pfuko yedoro.*

On arrival, I am the one who first goes into the hedge surrounding the shrine together with the elderly woman who will be carrying the pot of beer.

*Vamwe vazhinji vanozopindawo vogara vakandikomba ndipo pandinokumikidza doro riya nenhetembo inoti:*

Many of the rest will also come in and sit surrounding me thus when I will dedicate the beer through an invocation saying:

Shona/Karanga	English translation
<i>Kunemi mose vari pasi nevari kumhepo</i>	To all of you who are on earth and in the air
<i>Tazivei mwana wenyu VaMakwanya ndave pano</i>	Tazivei your son Mr Makwanya (rain spirit who possesses Tazivei) I am here
<i>Ziboshwe rangu kwamuri ndotambanudza (vachidira fodya pasi)</i>	My left hand I stretch to you (while pouring snuff onto the ground)
<i>Kukwazisa imi nevari pamusoro penyu</i>	To greet you and those above you
<i>Kusvikira kuna ivo vari kumusoro soro Mwari Musiki</i>	Reaching out to the one at the topmost God the Creator
<i>Mushumo wandauya nawo pano pamusha penyu ndomukumikidza kwamuri</i>	The pot of beer I brought here at your home I dedicate to you
<i>Anova iwo manyanga pahuro enyu</i>	Being that which softens your throat
<i>Mapedza nyota yenyu neyeduwo zvekare</i>	That which quenches your thirst and ours too
<i>Kubudikidza nerutope, dova rinobva kwamuri</i>	Through the wetness, dew that comes from you
<i>Ndizvo mbeu dzedu dzigowana pundutso</i>	So that our crops can receive health
<i>Gamuchirai chirango chenyu (vanotaura vachitsvatika doru muhuro yepfuko)</i>	Receive this beer for your taste (he speaks as he pours beer bit by bit round the neck of the pot of beer)
<i>Ruwomba rwenyika rwoyeredzwa kwatiri</i>	Fertility of the land is let to flow down to us
<i>Ndizvo tazadzisa chirevo, toringa denga</i>	By this we have fulfilled the command, we face the sky
<i>Tsoka dzedu kudzimwa kwadzo totambira</i>	The erasure of our foot prints we welcome
<i>Kunge Ngoma yenyu yarira, mhururu nemheterwa tsvete (vachiuchira)</i>	When your drum sounds, ululation and whistling abound (while clapping hands)
<i>Mazorodze chiuya! chiuya! chiuya! (mutinhimira weNgoma)</i>	Peacemaker (rain) come! come! come! (Mhande drum pattern)

I documented Mr Tazivei's invocation on audio cassette tape on 13 November 2004, while interviewing him at his home at Madondo village, in Gutu District. When I asked him whether he used the same words each time he dedicated the *mutoro* beer, he replied:

*Kwete, mazuva haafanani uye mavara mazhinji anoreva zvimwe chete.  
Chakakosha kukwazisa mhupo (jukwa) nezita, sezvandati VaMakwanya,  
nokuvapa fodya yavo nedoro ravo uchisevenzesa mutauro wepasichigare. Ivo  
vanokusvikira vanokupa mavara kana wava pabasa ravo.*

No, days are never the same and there are many words that mean the same thing. What is important is to greet the *jukwa* spirit by name, like I said VaMakwanya, and giving him his snuff and his beer using the language of long ago. The one who possesses you will give you the words when you are at his work.

Most of the words used by Mr Tazivei in his invocation are not part of everyday speech among the Karanga. After transcribing his invocation, I asked Mr Tazivei to explain the meanings of all the words and phrases in it that I was not familiar with. Mr Tazivei's depth of understanding of the words he kept on referring to as "*mavara*", determined by the clear meanings he attached to them, not only helped me grasp the terms, but I also found it easy to translate them into English.

It is important to note that the first thing Mr Tazivei did in his invocation, dedicating (*kukumikidza*) ceremonial beer (*doro remvura*) was to address the ancestral spirit by his name, Mr Makwanya, the same as the guide and Chief Nhema had done at Matonjeni when they addressed the rain spirit by the name Tovera. This shows that the Karanga venerate and offer their prayers to known spirits.

The use of *ziboshwe* (usually *ruboshwe*-left hand) has a special significance. The prefix '*zi*' means huge implying the authority of *majukwa* (rain spirits). The right hand holds *gonan'ombe* (container for snuff made from animal horn) which it pours onto the left (the receiving hand), which in turn pours it onto the ground. The right hand represents Mr Tazivei with his pot of beer (*gonan'ombe*) passing it on to the rain spirit. The left hand is used sparingly as rain spirits are only consulted once in a year. The significance of the left hand throwing snuff onto the ground is that of the rain spirits' release of rain to fall to the ground.

The hierarchical structure of the Karanga spiritual realm is evident in Mr Tazivei's invocation. This can be illustrated thus:

*Mwari Musiki* (God the Creator)

*Majukwa eMatonjeni* (Territorial rain spirits at Matonjeni)

*Majukwa ematunhu* (Regional rain spirits)

*Midzimu yemisha* (Family/clan ancestral spirits)

All *jukwa* spirits are rain spirits, which are concerned with rain, a communal matter. Family ancestral spirits address issues affecting individual families and family clans. This means that, while family ancestral spirits belong to the Karanga spirit realm, they are not invoked at the *mutoro* ceremony, which begins at the level of *majukwa ematunhu* (Regional rain spirits).

The orderliness of the spiritual hierarchy for rain spirits is replicated in the order of the ritual activities in the *mutoro*. With particular reference to the *kukumikidza* (dedication) element, rain does not fall unless the rain spirits are officially informed by the recipients of rain that they will be ready to make good use of it. Mr Tazivei confirms this fact through a number of his invocative statements: *Mushumo wandauya nawo pano pamusha penyu ndinomukumikidza kwamuri* (The pot of beer I brought here to your home I dedicate it to you); *Ndizvo mbeu dzedu dzigowana pundutso* (So that our crops receive health), and *Ndizvo tazadzisa chirevo, toringa denga* (By this we have fulfilled the command, we face the sky).

Mr Tazivei expressed hope of receiving rain by using the following statements: *Mapedza nyota yenyu neyeduwo* (That which quenches your thirst and ours too); *Ruwomba rwenyika rwoeredzwa kwatiri* (Fertility of the land is let to fall down to us), and *Tsoka dzedu kudzimwa kwadzo totambira* (The erasure of our foot prints we welcome). Overcome with such hope, Mr Tazivei ends his invocation with an invitation to musicians to play the drum pattern for *Mhande* - which he imitated by saying, *chiuya!*

*chiuya! chiuya!* - as people left the *mapa* and went back to the home where the ceremonial beer was brewed.

#### **2.4 *Kuturura* (Bringing down)**

At the heart of the *mutoro* process is the *kuturura* (bringing down) element which is constituted by the performance of Mhande song-dance (*kutamba Ngoma yeMhande*) and the drinking of the ceremonial beer. Mr Tazivei said:

*Tinozondopedzisira mutambo wedu wemutoro pamusha wakabikirwa doro ratinenge tandokumikidza kumapa. Ipapo ndipo patinoimba varidzi vengoma vachidzidandaura, vamwe vachidzana, vamwe vachiuchira, vamwewo vachipururudza, zvose izvi iri Ngoma yeMhande, yaMajukwa. Doro ratinenge tichimwa ndiro rinotiwedzera simba.*

We will go and finish off our *mutoro* process in the home where the ceremonial beer, which we will have dedicated at the shrine, was brewed. It is there where we sing, drum players playing their instruments, some dancing, some clapping hands, others ululating, all this is Mhande song-dance performance, *Mhande* music of the rain spirits. The beer that we will be drinking is what supplements our strength (Interview by the author, 13/11/2004).

While Mhande song-dance is performed in every stage of the *mutoro* process, when performed during *kuturura*, it also constitutes its own stage, which marks the climax of the ritual. In his answer to the question “*Sei Ngoma yeMhande ichishandiswa kupeta mutambo wemutoro?*” (Why is the performance of Mhande used to conclude the *mutoro* ceremony?), Chief Chimombe said:

*Ngoma yeMhande ndiyo yatinoshandisa kuturura mvura nayo. Ndiyo Ngoma yaMajukwa inoti kana yarira vanotekenyedzwa vosunungura dena ravo*

Mhande music is what we use to invoke rain. It is the music which, when performed, invokes the rain spirits to open the sky (Interview by the author, 10/11/2004).

Through the performance of a range of activities, as enumerated by Mr Tazivei, the *kuturura* (bringing down) stage of the *mutoro* engages all participants in music making. These activities are meant to achieve the common goal of receiving rain. *Ngoma yeMhande* (Mhande music) is interpreted as follows: *Ngoma* is the playing of the drum pattern, while *yeMhande* is the *Mhande* songs, the singing of the melodies and words of the songs, and the foot movements danced for the *mutoro*. It is the sounds of Mhande

music that adherents believe the *majukwa* spirits hear and recognize. Songs such as *Mvura ngainaye* (cf transcription on page 57 and clip 1 DVD appendix) and *Haiwa yowerere* (cf transcription on page 59 and clip 2 DVD) are used to appeal for rain while *Madzura uswa* (cf transcription on page 60 and clip 3 DVD) and *Gudo rakwira mawere* (cf transcription on page 61 and clip 4 DVD) are an expression of hope for receipt of heavy rains resulting in harvests enough to feed people and both domestic and wild animals. The musicians' gestures are essential in setting up a mood that is appropriate for invoking rain. Since the musicians perform such an important and essential task in the *mutoro* rain ceremony they are highly regarded by participants.

Thus the performance of Mhande music is an essential component of the *mutoro* ritual process because it is the method of achieving contact between the performers and the *majukwa* spirits; it brings the performers closer to the *majukwa* spirits they are invoking and it effects communication between human and spiritual beings.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 Mhande song-dance performance: Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition

Mhande music, which is used to invoke the rain spirits in *mutoro* ceremonies among the Karanga, is performed as an art form by dance ensembles in traditional dance competitions organized by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ). These competitions are sponsored by the Chibuku Brewery, which brews *chibuku*, a commercial opaque beer that resembles home-brewed beer (*doro*).

The following two quotes from my consultants indicate that the performance of Mhande song-dance in the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition is the same as it is performed in the *mutoro* ceremony. In his explanation of the present and future status of the *mutoro* rain ceremony, Mr Munamba said:

*Maonero angu ndeokuti isu takarashika mukuraira vana vedu. Zvimwe zvinokonzerwa namachechi adai kuwanda. Njere dzava muvanhu dzinosanganisira dzidziso inopiwa muzvikoro nemumakereke zvakaita kuti vanhu tisakwanisa kubata pamwe chete pazvinhu zvechivanhu chedu zvinosanganisira mutoro. Zvichida ndizvo zvakonzera kuti tinge tichipiwa mvura shomana munguva yanhasi tichienzanisa nemakare kare.*

The way I see it is that we (parents/adults) have misdirected our children. Probably it is caused by churches that are so many. The knowledge that is in people comprising what is taught in schools and in churches has made us to fail to work together on matters to do with our indigenous culture such as *mutoro*. Otherwise this might have caused us to receive less rain presently when compared to the past (Interview by author, 31/08/2002).

Mr Furusa's comment on people's participation in the *mutoro* ritual was:

*Vanhu vakawanda vanosevenza kumadhorobha vavakugara nemhuri dzavo ikoko kwavasinga kwanisi kurarama upenyu hwedu hwechivanhu. Chivanhu chedu chinosanganisira mutoro chinofanira kuti chiremekedzwe. Asi tava kutarisira kuti vana vachengetedze tsika dzedu isu vakuru tichidzirasha. Tava kungoita somutemo kuti vakuru vaiiti tisingazvizadzikisi. Isu vakuru tisu tinofanira kuti titange kutevedzera nokuremekedza mutoro kuti vaduku vagotevera.*

Many people (Karanga) who work in towns live with their families there where they are not able to lead our indigenous life. Our indigenous culture which includes the *mutoro* should be respected. But we expect children to preserve our traditions while we the adults (parents) discard them. We take it for a rule to point out what our elders used to tell us without fulfilling it. As elders, we should get

involved in and respect *mutoro* so the children can follow (Interview by author, 16/09/2001).

Drawing from the contributions by Mr Furusa and Mr Munamba on the present and future status of the *mutoro* rain ritual, which stem from the fact that the number of people participating in the *mutoro* had been diminishing with each ceremony, I observe that their quotations both express a problem and suggest a solution. While Mr Munamba blames schools and churches for contributing to the reduction of numbers of people taking part in the *mutoro* ceremonies held in his community, he believes that the solution to this problem lies in parents who should teach their children the indigenous culture they learnt from their own parents too. In his reference to the same problem, Mr Furusa also blames the adult Karanga, particularly those in towns who talk about what their parents used to do without themselves engaging in their indigenous cultural practices such as the *mutoro* ritual in order that the children follow their example. By this, both Mr Furusa and Mr Munamba supported the performance of Mhande song-dance in contexts other than the *mutoro*. These contributions, which are focused on raising the level of participation in the present and future *mutoro* ceremonies, are targeted at the adult Karanga, regardless of where they live, to get involved in the *mutoro* as a way of perpetuating it and showing their respect for it. Thus the performance of Mhande song-dance in the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competitions in the same way as it is performed in the *mutoro* ceremony appears to me as a solution in part towards uplifting the status of the *mutoro* ritual. The groups that compete in these dance competitions comprise adults only. The traditional dance competition for schools is called the Jikinya Festival, which is not discussed in this thesis.

In this Chapter, the performance of Mhande music in the secular context of the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition, herein after referred to as the Competition, is presented in five sections: background of Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition; personal description of the Competition; content of the Competition; adjudication of the Competition, and significance of Mhande in the Competition. Information about the content of the Competition contained in this Chapter was obtained from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, which administers the Competition.

### **3.1 Background of Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition**

The history of traditional dance competition in Zimbabwe dates back to 1966 when the Salisbury (Harare) African Traditional Association was formed and the first government sponsored traditional competition was held in Harare for the residents only. The first nationwide competition sponsored by Chibuku Breweries was held in 1978. In 1988 the name of the Association organizing the competition was changed from Zimbabwe Traditional Association to the present Zimbabwe National Traditional Dance Association (Thram, 1999:254-5). The name Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition follows the sponsor, Chibuku Neshamwari, a brewery of opaque beer that is a subsidiary of the Delta Corporation Pvt Ltd.

### **3.2 Personal description of the Competition**

My personal description of the Competition hinges on my motive of developing my knowledge of Mhande song-dance performance as stated in Chapter 1. Between 1990 and 2003, I gathered information about the conduct of the Competition particularly at the Midlands Province level. Over this time period I made observations on the performance of Mhande in the secular context of the Competition by attending the annual event, and subsequently I participated more directly by adjudicating the Competition four times between 1996 and 2003.

The first time I attended the Competition was in September 1990. This was the Midlands Provincial Competition which was held in Mtapa Hall in Gweru. I had a hard time to follow the dance performances that were presented in the hall because of the poor acoustics of that venue. I was one of the few people among the audience, who struggled to witness this event to the end. I had to bear with the difficult conditions because I wanted to observe the performance of Mhande song-dance, which appeared at the end of the Competition. There were two Mhande urban based ensembles, Chinyakare from Kwekwe and Pasichigare from Zvishavane, both dressed in sky blue uniforms. Both groups performed Mhande song-dance in the same way that it is performed for the *mutoro* ritual. The positions that the Mhande groups took in the Competition and indeed

those for many other groups too were not announced because there were three prizes and only the names of the groups that took positions 1 to 5 were read out.

While I had hoped to speak to the organizers at the end of the event and present my concern for their poor choice of venue, I failed to do so. This was because the members of the majority of the groups that had staged their dances crowded around the chief organizers and administrators of the Competition registering their complaints for the mismanagement of the Competition which led them to be dissatisfied with the results. As I was leaving the Hall, I by chance walked beside Mr. Chiwara who told me that he was one of the Provincial Association Committee members responsible for organizing the Competition. When I asked him to supply me with information about the Competition, Mr. Chiwara referred me to Mr. Chinhoyi, the Acting Provincial Administrator for the NACZ. I visited Mr. Chinhoyi a few weeks later on at his office in Gweru and we spent about an hour reviewing the Competition which had taken place at Mtapa Hall.

I told Mr. Chinhoyi that I was very keen to assist both the Provincial Association and his organization, the NACZ, by giving suggestions on the management of the Competition. In order for me to give the assistance, I asked him to provide me with documents containing information about the Competition. From 1990 to 1994 I did not receive the documents with information on the Competition. Among several reasons that Mr. Chinhoyi gave me was that the documents were only given to committee members of the Provincial and National Associations for Traditional Dance. He then said that he would supply me with the information I wanted if I promised to serve as an adjudicator of the Competition. I was not in a position to commit myself to participate as an adjudicator to the Competition because I wanted to make an input that would assist in judging the Competition.

The appointment of a new administrator, Mrs. Zozi to the post of the Midlands Provincial Administrator for the NACZ in 1995 helped me to better understand the Competition and contribute to its development. When I met her for the first time, Mrs. Zozi told me that she had heard about me from Mr. Chinhoyi. Before his transfer to the Bindura office, Mr. Chinhoyi had told Mrs. Zozi that he had misunderstood me and thought I wanted to take up the Administrator's post by pretending to support him. That

is, when I understood why Mr. Chinhoyi was not willing to accommodate my requests and suggestions for improving the Competition.

Mrs. Zozi was quite pleased to know that I was interested in promoting the performance of traditional dances, particularly Mhande. The document containing information about the Competition that she gave me first in 1995 was the Syllabus. In the Syllabus, the dances were divided into ten categories: (i) Multi-Shona; (ii) Multi-Ndebele; (iii) Multi-Malawi; (iv) Multi-Zambia; (v) Multi-Mozambique; (vi) Ritual spirits (vii) Traditional; (viii) Ceremonial; (ix) Ensemble, and (x) Others. Mhande belonged to the Multi-Shona category comprising a variety of dances.

This Syllabus helped me to understand why the Mhande groups never won any prizes at the Midlands Provincial Competitions that I had attended from 1990 to 1994. The performance of Mhande song-dance in the *mutoro* ritual is dignified, and the Mhande groups staged their performance at the Competitions in this manner, which is less elaborate when compared to the other dances it was judged against. By 1995, the Chinyakare Mhande Dance group had stopped participating in the Competition leaving one group only, Pasichigare, which managed to continue taking part mainly because of the support it received from the Zvishavane Mining Company which provided it with bus transport to the Competitions and meals.

When I requested a meeting with Mrs. Zozi to discuss the Syllabus she had presented to me, she on her own accord convened a meeting for the Provincial Association Committee members, which was held in her office in November 1995. I was invited to attend this meeting in order to present my ideas for improving the Syllabus. After she had introduced me to the members present, Mrs Zozi asked me to lead the discussion of the Syllabus. I began by asking those present to explain the rationale behind the categorization of the dances as found on the Syllabus that we were to consider. The Chairman of the Association, Mr. S. B. Maposa explained that the categories were meant to be distanced from ethnicities by avoiding using names of dances linked to groups of people such as Tonga, Nda, Korekore or Karanga because it was felt that the idea of some groups dominating others would influence the conduct of the Competition. In response, I used Mhande as an example to show that it remains a Karanga song-dance despite its categorization under Multi-Shona. I went further to explain that in itself,

Mhande could constitute a category with the different contexts in which it is performed, such as the *mutoro* rain ceremony, the *biras* and the Competition utilized as its sub-units. After a prolonged discussion of the syllabus, the meeting resolved that the Association members were going to review the categorization of the dances.

In May 1996, Mrs. Zozi invited me to join a panel of adjudicators at the August Provincial Competition. I accepted the invitation since I had witnessed three Competitions that were held outdoors. I then requested details of the participating groups. She gave me the new Syllabus with thirty three categories of dances. In this Syllabus, the names of the dances including Mhande are categories. Mrs Zozi told me that at a National Traditional Dance Association meeting held in Harare at the beginning of that year both the Dance Association and the NACZ members present restructured the categorization of dances to benefit the participants and the sponsor. The use of names of dances as categories created more categories and by this the sponsor would be urged to increase the funding of the Competition resulting in many if not all participating groups receiving some prizes for their efforts. The numerous traditional dances in Zimbabwe constituting a large number of categories would give the sponsor more mileage in terms of business from participants, and this would help the new Syllabus to be readily accepted.

By the time the 1996 Competition was held, many people did not know of the new developments pertaining to the use of the names of dances as categories and the improved distribution of prizes as an incentive to performing groups. This information was announced to people who attended the 1996 Midlands Provincial Competition held in Zvishavane. Thirteen groups participated in this Competition, which I and two others adjudicated. The dances staged were Chioda, Chimutali, Gure, Mbakumba, Shangara, Mhande, Isitshikitsha and Chinyamvera. Just like in 1995, Pasichigare was the only group that performed Mhande. The group's performance was representative of Mhande as it is performed in the *mutoro* ceremony, but the gestures were not well refined. While the Pasichigare group did not win any of the three major prizes, it received a consolation prize. Out of the three adjudicators, I was chosen to give the general comments of our observations at the end of the Competition. Given that all the song-dance performances were judged in accordance with culture specific standards, I emphasized the point that all

three of us had noted: the performers were supposed to share their cultures as portrayed in original dances and display their abilities to improvise in secular dances

The 1997 Midlands Provincial Competition had a record turnout of twenty five groups. This Competition, at which I was an adjudicator, started at 10 am and ended at 6 pm. While previously, groups were allowed 10 to 15 minutes of performance on stage, the programme organizers reduced the duration of the groups' performances regularly throughout the Competition until the last two groups were only allowed 8 minutes each for their performances. This was done to ensure that all the groups were judged before the end of the day. The Pasichigare group took 5<sup>th</sup> position and walked away with ZWD \$500 prize money. The group performed Mhande in a satisfactorily dignified manner by singing and dancing as dictated by the ritual context of their dance.

From 1998 to 2000 I did not participate in the Competitions. I came back to the panel of adjudicators for the 2001 Midlands Provincial Competition. Twenty two groups participated in this event. I learnt at this Competition that rule number 8 on the duration that each participating group was allowed to stage its performance had been reduced from a maximum of 15 minutes to 8 minutes. In this Competition, Pasichigare was again the only group which performed Mhande. In their usual sky blue outfit, but this time smarter, perhaps because their uniform was new, the group's performance was more polished than when we judged it in 1997. The Pasichigare group took 3<sup>rd</sup> position with \$1 000 prize money. I believed that the idea of reducing the time for staging a performance from maximum 15 to 8 minutes could have worked in Pasichigare's favour in that, since their dance is not as 'showy' as others, the time was adequate for them to demonstrate the typical song-dance style. Also the consolation prizes they received between 1997 and 2000 could have motivated them to intensify their presentation of the song-dance and refinement of performance skills by holding more rehearsals in order to present the best of their culture.

When I adjudicated at the 2003 Provincial Competition, the number of participating groups had dropped from twenty two in 2001 to fourteen. The major reason for this drop in numbers was the economy of the country that was declining and forcing people to focus on the basics of life. When compared with the other Competitions I had attended previously, I observed that the mood of the performers and the audience at this

Competition was low. Again, among the fourteen groups that staged their performances was the Pasichigare group, whose standard of performance had dropped in comparison to that of 2001. For this reason, the group won only a consolation prize.

Drawing from my eleven years experience of participating in the Midlands Provincial Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition, I have made four main observations. People in Zimbabwe are very keen to perform their dances as evidenced by the large number of groups that compete in each Competition; therefore, scholars can utilize these Competitions as an ideal context for generating field research on traditional dances. The same sponsor, Chibuku Neshamwari Breweries, has funded the Competition for more than forty years showing its preparedness to promote traditional dances on the one hand and their product on the other. The administration and organization of the Competition should not be left to the NACZ and the Dance Association members, but all people that have a stake in traditional dances should offer suggestions for developing the Competition. The Pasichigare Traditional Dance group has done well in continuing to stage the performance of Mhande as it is performed in the *mutoro* ceremony; however, Mhande performance can be broadened by encouraging groups to demonstrate the way it is performed in *biras* (rituals for venerating family/clan ancestral spirits) as well.

### **3.3 Content of the Competition**

The five aims of the Competition as they appear in the documents obtained from the NACZ are: (i) To promote musical and dancing talent and encourage a love for folk music and traditional dancing amongst the people of Zimbabwe; (ii) To improve the standard of singing and dancing and foster a sense of musical appreciation and the development of all ethnic traditional dance disciplines in Zimbabwe; (iii) To promote greater understanding between performing artists and encourage them to maintain and preserve all good values of their cultural heritage; (iv) To demonstrate and encourage participation in folk singing and traditional dancing by the younger generations of the country, and (v) To discover and identify the various forms of song and dance from the different regions of the country and to record the songs and histories of the dances for permanent preservation. (Extract from NACZ documents). A discussion of the aims

follows the presentation of the Syllabus of the Competition. Although this is the official syllabus, note that it is not free of mistakes.

The Syllabus of the Competition is made up of thirty three dance categories presented as follows:

Category	Type of Dance	Ethnic origin
1	Dandanda - Svikiro/Vadzimu Ritual	Multi-Shona
2	Chibiya Gonani Ngoma	Angoni-Malawi
3	Chimutali (Women) - Malawi	Multi-Malawi
	Chimutali (Women) - Zambia	Multi-Zambia
4	Muganda ceremonial dance	Chewa-Malawi
	Humbekumbe Traditional	Gorekore-shona
5	Malipenga Ceremonial Dance	Tonga-Malawi
6	Mafuwe-goteka (Drums and clappers)	Tete-Mozambique
7	N'anga Ritual Spirits Dance	Multi-Shona
	Isangoma Ritual Spirits Dance	Multi-Ndebele
8	Gure-Wamukure Nyawo- Malawi	Malawi-Chewa
	Gure-Wamukure Nyawo-Zambia	Zambia-Nyanja
9	Ngororombe-Machikunda (reeds)	Tete-Mozambique
10	Dinhe	Korekore-Shona
11	Ngororombe/Kwayira	Karanga-Shona
12	Shangara (with or without instruments)	Zezuru/Multi-Shona
13	Mhande Masvingo, Midlands etc	Multi-Shona
14	Muchongoyo-Kuemeso (upright)	Ndau-Chipinge
	Muchongoyo-Zvingomana (Acrobatic)	Ndau-Chipinge
15	Chiodha (Women)	Tonga-Malawi
16	Domba/Njada/Madzukwa Traditional	Multi-Shona
17	Mbakumba/Dzavakuru	Karanga-Shona
18	Mbende/Jerusarema (Drums and Clappers)	Murewa/Uzumba-Shona
19	Tsotsa - Rain Dance	Budya-Mutoko
20	Chiwayawaya - Traditional	Budya-Mutoko
21	Amabhiza/hoso	Kalanga-Plumtree
22	Baile/Valimba Dance	Kilimani-Mozambique
23	Pfonda/Cheukuri/Mapadza	Shona-Manicaland
24	Nambya Circle Dance	Nyambya-Hwange
25	Chinyamusasura Dance	Korekore-Shona
26	Beni Ceremonial Dance	Malawi/Zambia
27	Isitshikitsha Traditional	Ndebele
28	Chinyamvera Traditional	Karanga-Shona
29	Zwinimbire Traditional	Budya-Shona
30	Mbira Ensemble Dance	Multi-Shona
31	Bikuba	Mozambique
32	Ihosana	Ndebele
33	Mabhacha	Mozambique

Extract from NACZ documents

This Syllabus reflects misconceptions of the dances and misrepresentations of their ethnicities. Given that the Competition is on traditional dances, it is misleading to refer to

some dances as "traditional", "spirits" and "ceremonial", while others are simply identified by their names. It is a misrepresentation to consider a particular dance, like Mhande, as having originated from Multi-Shona, and to use the name of a country such as Mozambique for the ethnic origin of Mabhacha. While the idea of streamlining dances into categories is appropriate for the Competition, I believe that the dances should be categorized into three groups: (i) Religious ritual dances; (ii) Social ritual dances, and (iii) Social secular dances. Structuring the syllabus in this manner complies with the formulation of the aims of the Competition. Following this approach, the performance of Mhande song-dance will occur in each of the three categories where its evaluation will be based on the context in which it is performed.

Just as the content of the syllabus of the Competition is not clearly presented, neither are its aims. While the syllabus is silent on folk music, the aims mention this music genre. This is no doubt because the aims have not been revised since they were originally written before Independence in 1980 when traditional music was referred to as folk music. However, using a term such as 'folk' to describe an indigenous Zimbabwean dance has now been dropped, since it is not a term used to describe music or song-dance traditions in Shona culture. In addition, none of the aims reference those aspects of the dances that should constitute the criteria for judging them, which is the essence of the Competition.

Out of the seventeen Rules of the Competition, I have isolated five which require discussion. They are: (i) All dance performance should reflect some authentic traditional aspects of a particular ethnic group or clan (indigenous or non-indigenous) and these may be ceremonial, general purpose or exhibition dances; (ii) All events will be run as a competition to obtain the best performing groups from each category stipulated in the Syllabus, hence all performances will be judged; (iii) All dance groups will be restricted not to exceed 8 minutes of performance time from start to finish. Performers are therefore strongly advised to select and present only their best dance routines for competition purposes, and (v) The marks awarded to groups will determine the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize positions with the best overall prize being awarded to the group with the highest mark of all the category positions.

The first rule listed above is dichotomous in that it blends extremes: authenticity (indigenous dances) on the one hand, judged against creativity (exhibition dances), on the other hand. The streamlining of dances into categories helps in isolating aspects that constitute religious ritual dances (authentic), distinguishable from those comprising the secular social dances (exhibition). The duration of the performance of a dance should be informed by what the dance comprises and not what the organizers and/or administrators prefer to suit their schedule, as I observed at the three occasions I adjudicated the annual Midlands Provincial Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competitions.

### **3.4 Adjudication of the Competition**

The following are the nine items listed on the adjudication sheet for the Competition: 1) Name of dance; 2) Origin of dance; 3) Type of dance; 4) basic instrumentation; 5) Presentation format; 6) Basic costumes and props; 7) Basic variations. Rhythms etc; 8) Vocals (dominance, males, females or both), and 9) Prominence of dancers (males/females or both). (Extract from NACZ documents). Each group is expected to announce the name, origin and type of their dance when it takes the stage.

The first three items on the adjudication sheet refer to the background information about the dances, which is not awarded marks. The use of the word 'basic' in items 4, 6 and 7 implies that there is no dance that is judged according to its own worth as an individual art form. On the whole, the criteria for adjudicating traditional dances comprise aspects that are too general for the specific dances constituting the thirty three categories of the Competition.

The following six items may be considered for respecting indigenous norms for adjudicating traditional dances: (i) Gestures – movements (choreography, improvisation), utterances/signals, use of props; (ii) Correlation between sound and gesture; (iii) Formation – hierarchical, circular, leader and follower; (iv) Participation – gender equity, equality; (v) Visual effect, and (vi) Aesthetics as culturally defined. This criterion can be utilized in all the three categories of the Competition: religious ritual dances; social ritual dances, and social secular dances by proving specific details to match the context to which the dance belongs.

### 3.5 Significance of Mhande in the Competition

My participation in the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition, both as an observer and as an adjudicator, has developed in me an appreciation of the song-dance traditions in Zimbabwe in general and a much deeper appreciation of Mhande song-dance in particular. Through my direct involvement in the Competitions from 1990 and 2003, I was exposed to many song-dance genres, some of which I had never heard of and others I only had known by name. The groups that staged performances at the Competitions shared the values of the different ethnic groups of the people they represented. Miller and Shahriari support this idea when they say:

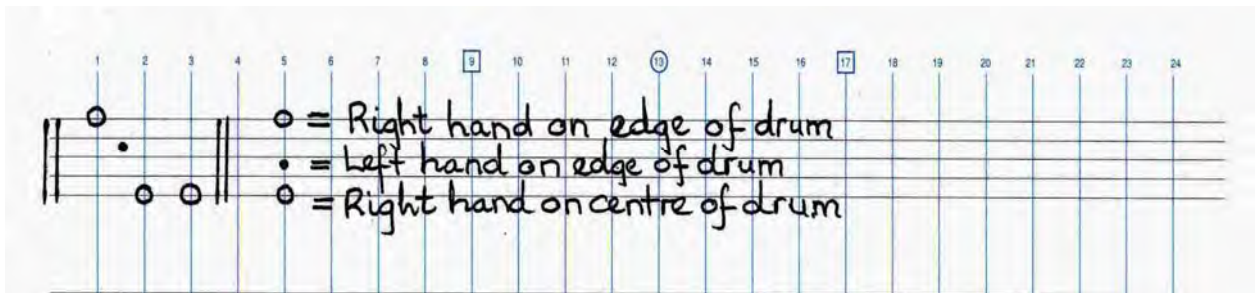
No music exists in a vacuum, free from social context, even if it primarily lives on concert stages or in recordings. All music manifests itself within a ‘culture’, however defined, and has meanings for those who create, perform or consume it that go far beyond the sounds themselves (2006:47).

In song-dance performance such as Mhande, the dance is perceived in relation to the *mutoro* cultural experience and the musical pattern is accompanied by words that specify the *mutoro* ceremony. As Nettl and Bohlman say, “Even the most elementary musical structures are humanly ‘significant forms’ that have been created and assigned some meaning in culture” (1995:36). Several people I interacted with confessed that they learnt about what Mhande song-dance is and why it is performed when they witnessed its performance at the Competitions. This means that the Pasichigare group plays a very important role in exposing the Mhande song-dance to the general public and also transmitting the Karanga culture.

Performing Mhande music in the Competition is a form of entertainment for both the performers and their audiences. Through the dances they perform in the Competition, the adherents share their cultures with their audiences. In addition, the performance of Mhande music is a way by which participating groups can earn money in the form of prizes that are awarded at both the Provincial and National levels of the Competition. Participation also contributes to the performers’ retention of drum patterns, song melodies, words of songs, and foot movements for the dance.

The Pasichigare group stands out as an example of people who hold fast onto their indigenous culture even under difficult and discouraging situations such as their geographical location in urban centres isolating them from their rural folk. In addition, this group continues to compete against groups performing dances that are different from their own even if it does not win because Mhande dance is less elaborate when compared with other dances. I observe that the Pasichigare group may believe that their staged performances of Mhande song-dance perpetuate the *mutoro* ritual practice. It also stimulates interest in those who would have distanced themselves from this ritual to engage themselves in their indigenous culture of the *mutoro*. By so doing the attention of the young is drawn into the cultural traditions of their elders.

Because the performance of Mhande song-dance in the Competition, just as it is performed in the *mutoro* ritual, strongly differs from the dances it is judged against, many people in different towns around Zimbabwe are quick to identify it when they hear its melodic-rhythmic pattern as illustrated below, observe its slow tempo and also view its



performers staging it (cf clips 1 – 4 DVD). Thus the popularity of Mhande raises its status and this might urge its exponents to want to participate in its performance in the ritual context of the *mutoro* ceremony.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.0 Mhande music: An analysis

The analysis of Mhande music is presented in four sections: Note on the transcriptions; Transcriptions of Mhande songs for the *mutoro* ritual ceremony; Transcriptions of Mhande songs for family/clan *kurova guva biras*, and Analysis of the structure of Mhande music.

#### 4.1 Note on the transcriptions

All the transcriptions in this thesis are presented in pulse notation. In this system of notation, designed for African music, the rhythmic element of the music is conceived in regular, equi-spaced small units of time called pulses, which are represented on paper by equidistant vertical lines. Its purpose is to clarify rhythmic relations which are not governed by the principles of Western music. In African music it is more important to specify the exact point of entry of a note than to know its duration, therefore note-heads indicating duration, as in staff notation, are not used (Tracey, 1988:44). The pulse notation sheet, designed by Tracey (1972, ILAM) used in transcribing African music has 24 pulses across the page as illustrated below:

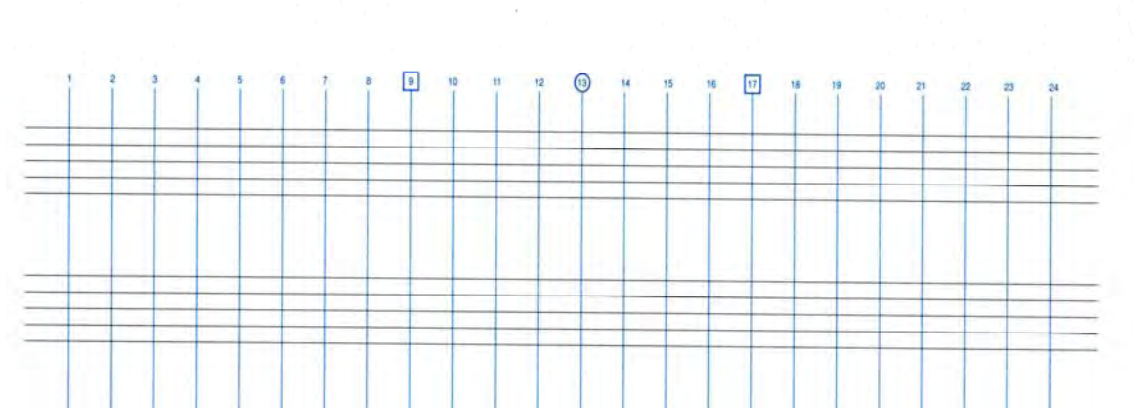


Fig.11 *Pulse lines*

The pitch element is represented by the five-line staff as in staff notation. However, the pulse notation system does not use clefs. All the transcriptions presented herein are written as if in key G of the treble clef in staff notation. The key G seemed the most

suitable key in order to fit the Mhande music range of notes for the voices into a treble staff, and is also the key chosen to represent the music of the ‘*karimba and dza Vadzimu mbiras*’ whose music is related to Shona music in general and to Mhande music in particular (Tracey, 1962:49). The Shona tonal system uses notes that are close, but not always identical to the Western notes represented by the five-line staff (Hugh Tracey, 1958:16).

The transcriptions presented comprise the following structural aspects of the music: (i) meter – guide beat and length of cycle; (ii) melodic notes in the scale typical of Shona culture (iii) harmonic – intervals and basic chord sequences; (iv) phrasing, and (v) extra-musical ideas – translations of words of songs and meanings of songs.

The metric system of Mhande music is based on a regularly accented triple beat, referred to as the guide beat, which groups three pulses per beat. This is the beat which most people, when clapping simply, will clap, and it is also the basic, that is, most simple, dance beat. For this reason it can be referred to in Karanga as ‘*mhande*’. The guide beat is marked by an ‘x’ as illustrated below:

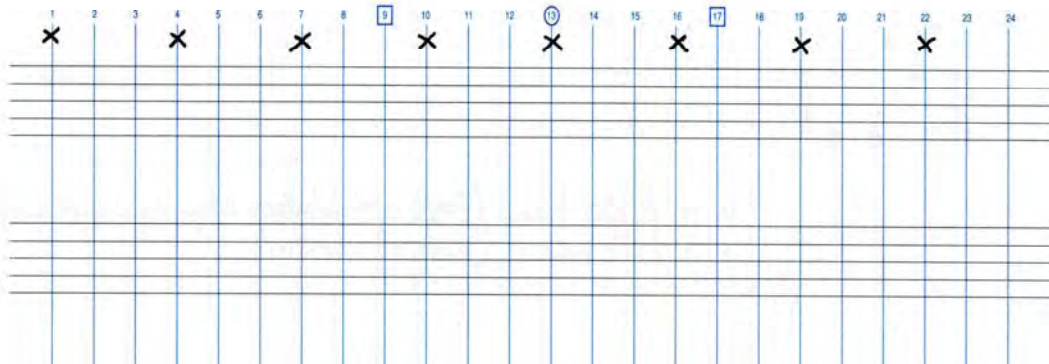


Fig.12 *Mhande guide beat*

The length of a song cycle is the product of the guide beats and the pulses per beat, for example, a song comprising 8 guide beats (triple) will be 24 pulses long, as is the case with the majority of Mhande songs.

In all the song transcriptions, the main melodic notes of the music are indicated by a dot •. Square brackets [ : : : ] are used in instances where the melody is represented by two lines that are equally important. The notes written in parentheses such as (•) or (•

• • ) represent alternatives or variations to the main melody lines (Tracey, 1988:45). Each song comprises two melody lines: the lead, indicated at the beginning of each line as ‘Sh’ (*Shaura*), and the response line indicated by ‘Bv’ (*Bvumira*). By ‘range of notes’ I mean the space between the highest and the lowest notes of the song. This I use to determine the scale of the music.

The most common intervals used in Shona/Karanga indigenous music are unisons, thirds, fourths and octaves (Jones, 1959:227). These intervals follow fixed sequences of chords. The concept of chord in Shona, and indeed many other Southern African musics, implies two notes a fifth (or a fourth in inversion) apart, and should not be confused with the Western concept of a 3-note triad. Thus ‘G’ will mean a chord consisting of G and D, in the heptatonic scale used by the Shona. The most basic chord sequence, and thus probably the oldest, is a two chord sequence, referred to by Tracey as G - E, linked to the two fundamental tones that are produced on many of the musical bows played in Southern Africa, when these produce two fundamentals approximately a minor third apart, one of the intervals commonly found. Shona musical principles based on the *chipendani* (single string mouth bow) and the *karimba* (8 – to multiple key mbira) employ the melodic chord sequence, G – B – E – G – B - D. There may be some variations in the order and number of chords in sequences utilized by the different composers, but the basic shapes of G - E and G – E – G - D underlie many of the songs (Tracey, 1972: 85).

The chord symbols used in the transcriptions for this thesis are letters of the alphabet to be interpreted as follows: a chord in capital letters, for example E is definitely an E chord (E with B). A chord in parenthesis (E) implies that it is probably an E chord although one note is missing so it could be doubtful. A chord with a question mark such as E?, could be an E chord, or functions as an E chord. Passing chords are represented with small letters, for example ‘e’ or ‘f’ because these chords do not have important structural function in the music.

The description of phrasing is presented under the analysis of the structure of Mhande music. The words of the songs are written within the transcriptions and they are also presented with their English translations immediately below the transcriptions. The actual meanings of the songs follow the word translations.

The fundamental Mhande drum pattern for all the Mhande songs presented is as illustrated below:

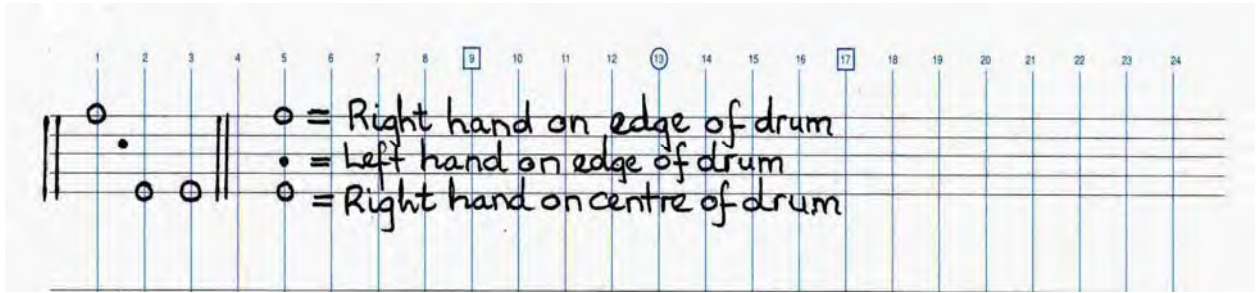


Fig.13 Mhande fundamental melodic-rhythmic drum pattern

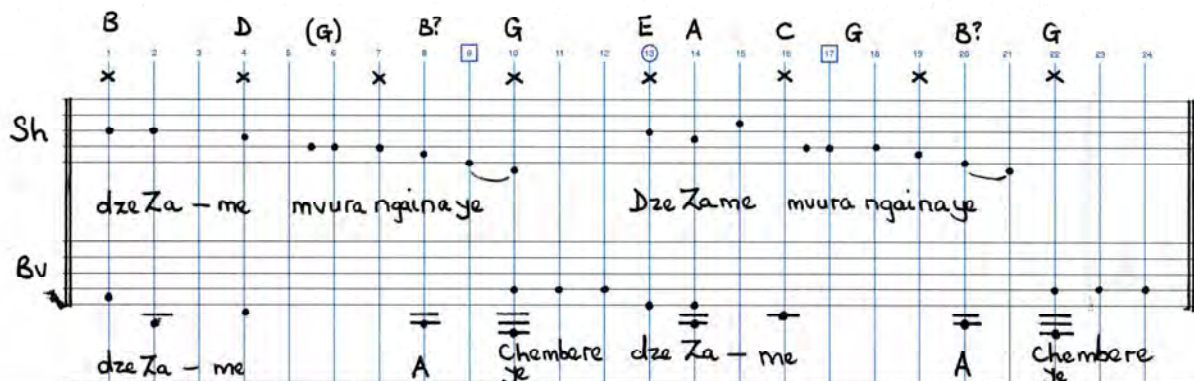
The description of Mhande melorhythmic drumming and the tempo of the music is presented as the meter of Mhande music.

#### 4.2 Transcriptions of Mhande songs for the *mutoro* ceremony

The transcriptions of the four Mhande songs that were documented at the *mutoro* rain ceremony at Marishongwe village in Shurugwi District are presented below:

Track No. 1 **Mvura ngainaye** Performers: Marishongwe village Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Stanford Khola  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: October 2004  
 Length of cycle: 24 pulses  
 Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – E – A – C – G – B – G – B –  
 D – G – B



*Chembere dzeZame mvura ngainaye*  
Elderly women of Matonjeni let it rain

### **Meaning of song**

The women of Matonjeni are called *mbonga* in Karanga. Mr Furusa described *mbonga* as follows:

*Mbonga munhukadzi asingarovorwi nhando nhando. Munhukadzi anenge ari mbambo yorudzi saka haazvitsvakiri murume. Zvose zvinoitika pakurovorwa kwembonga zvinondovikwa kuMatonjeni. Kuwanikwa kwayo kuri maererano nechivanhu nokuti tinovimba kuti Zame ndiyo inenge yamudziurira kuti ngaawanikwe kwakati. Asi hazviitiki kuti ingowanikwa mumhuri mune vanhu vanoupenyu husina kunaka.*

*Mbonga* are young women (virgins) dedicated to the rain spirits. They are responsible for fertility and do not get married like other women. She is a woman who is the backbone of her clan so she does not find a man for herself. Everything that takes place at the *mbonga*'s marriage is offered in prayer at Matonjeni. She gets married according to our indigenous culture because we believe that *Zame* (Matonjeni) would make it possible for her to get married to a selected family. But it never occurs that she marries into a family whose members' personalities are not right.

The song is an appeal to the rain spirits by way of the *mbonga* that they let the rain fall. This manner of presenting a request is typical of day to day Karanga life in that all requests are channeled to the father through the mother who is closest to him. It is a way of presenting a request from a position of strength to guarantee success, that is, receipt of rain.

Track No. 2 **Haiwa yowerere**

Performers: Marishongwe village Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Stanford Khola

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: October 2004

Length of cycle: 24 pulses

Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)

Basic chord sequence: G – C – A – G – A – D - G

Handwritten musical score for a song. The score consists of six staves. The top staff is a guitar fretboard with 24 frets, showing chord diagrams for (A), (G), A, (D), (G), G, and C. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "wa yo-we-re-re e hai - wa yo-we-re Hai-". The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "ha ha ha ha". The third staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Mwana mudu-ku kunyengwa ramba". The fourth staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Uno -zo-tsika mimba murima". The fifth staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Mwedzi muchena wandi-pa-ri-ra". The sixth staff is empty.

*Haiwa yowerere*

These are vocables portraying the idea of pleading for mercy

*Mwana muduku kunyengwa ramba*

Young lady deny proposal for love

*Unozotsika mimba murima*

You will conceive in the dark

*Mwedzi muchena wandiparira*

The bright moonlight has created a problem for me

*Wandikonjera kurara panze*  
 It has caused me to sleep outside

**Meaning of song**

There are two dimensions to the meaning of this song. First, the song is meant to denounce the bad behaviour of the people in the community, which has caught up with the young men and women who indulge in premarital affairs and hence sleep out of their homes. Such behaviour is believed to prevent rain from falling, thus causing droughts. Secondly, the *haiwa yowerere* is a cry to the spirits for mercy, informing them that the adherents are aware of the unacceptable behaviour of some among them. They look forward, however, to the coming of rain.

Track No. 3 **Madzura uswa** Performers: Marishongwe village Mhande musicians  
 Recorded by: Stanford Khola  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: October 2004  
 Length of cycle: 24 pulses  
 Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – B – E – G – B – E – D – E

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song 'Madzura uswa'. At the top, a sequence of chords is written above a staff of 24 pulses: E (1), D? (4), (E) (7), (G) (9), (B) (12), E (15), G (17), and (B) (24). Below this, a staff labeled 'Sh' contains notes and lyrics: 'Yo - na madzura uswa'. A second staff labeled 'Bv' contains notes and lyrics: 'ha', 'mvu - ra yo - na madzura uswa', and 'mvu - ra'. Chord symbols A, G, and B are written below the notes in the 'Bv' staff.

*Mvura yona madzura uswa*  
 The rain that uproots grass is falling

**Meaning of song**

This is a praise song to the spirits for their provision of rain that falls so heavily that it washes away the soil and the grass. The song also warns people to protect their crops against soil erosion by constructing and/or repairing storm drains in their fields in readiness for the rain season.

Track No. 4 **Gudo rakwira mawere** Performers: Marishongwe village Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Stanford Khola  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: October 2004  
 Length of cycle: 24 pulses  
 Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – D – F – E – D – C – G –  
 F – E – D – B

Handwritten musical notation for 'Gudo rakwira mawere kongonya'. The notation is on two staves: 'Sh' (Soprano) and 'Bv' (Bass). Above the staves, a sequence of chords is written: (G), f e D, B? (G), (D), D f e D, C, E. The 'Sh' staff has notes and rests corresponding to these chords. The 'Bv' staff has notes and rests corresponding to the lyrics: ra - kwira mawere kongonya Gudo ra - kwira mawere kongonya Gudo. There are also some handwritten annotations like '(+)' and arrows.

*Gudo rakwira mawere kongonya*  
 The baboon has climbed up the cliff in style

## Meaning of song

The people are sharing with the rain spirits the image of crops ripening and baboons coming down the mountains to feed on them. When the baboons have fed well they walk in style (*kongonya*, i.e. how the baboons walk) up the cliffs at the end of the day. Thus the people are looking beyond the provision of rain to the kind of harvest that should enable them to feed both their livestock and wild animals.

The structure of Mhande music for the *mutoro* rain ceremony is represented in tabular form below:

Track no. and Title	Length of cycle	Scale	Basic chord sequence	Phrasing
1 Mvura ngainaye	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GEACGBGBDGB	2 overlapping
2 Haiwa yowerere	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GCAGADG	2 responsorial
3 Madzura uswa	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GBEGBEDE	2 responsorial
4 Gudo rakwira mawere	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GDFEDCGFEDB	2 overlapping

### 4.3 Transcriptions of Mhande songs for the family/clan *kurova guva biras*

The transcriptions of the six Mhande songs documented at the staged performances for the *kurova guva* ritual ceremonies by Bikita and Chivi Districts musicians are presented below.

Track No. 5 **Tora wuta hwako** Performers: Bikita Duma Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: July 1998  
 Length of cycle: 36 pulses  
 Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – F – E – G – C – E – D – B –  
 D – B – D – G

Handwritten musical score for two stanzas of a song. The first stanza has 24 measures with chords B?, (D), G, G, f, e, G, (c), E. The second stanza has 10 measures with chords (D), B?, D?. The lyrics are: 'Va-she vashe woye hwa-ko to-da kuenda' and 'nyu-chi dzino-ru-ma'. The lyrics are written on a staff with a Sh (Soprano) and Bv (Bass) clef. The lyrics are: 'ma (D) To-ra wuta hwa-ko to-da kuenda dzi-no-ru-nyu-chi dzino-ru-ma'.

*Vashe woye nyuchi dzinoruma*  
 Hey Chief bees sting

*Tora wuta hwako toda kuenda dzinoruma*  
 Fetch your bow and arrow we want to go they sting

### Meaning of song

Since the ceremony is about bringing back home the ancestral spirit of the dead person, which is normally that of the father or Chief (*Vashe*), the Karanga believe that when they conduct such a ceremony they have to ensure that everything is done according to what the ancestral spirit in question would expect. In order to receive counsel from the ancestral spirit, the adherents have to consult with an *n'anga* (indigenous doctor) as an initial stage in preparing for the ceremony. If they wrong the ancestral spirit, they will risk the loss of protection once the spirit does not come back home. This therefore is a song that warns people that holding a *kurova guva* ceremony can be likened to a hunter who should be protected against the attacks one may encounter in the bush.

Track No. 6 **Avo ndibaba** Performers: Bikita Duma Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Jerry Rutsate

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: July 1998

Length of cycle: 24 pulses

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l t)

Basic chord sequence: G - B - E - G - E - G - B - D

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the track 'Avo ndibaba'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a guitar staff with 24 pulses numbered 1 to 24. Chords are written above the staff: G (pulse 1), B? (pulse 4), E (pulse 5), G (pulse 14), E (pulse 16), G (pulse 19), B? D? (pulse 22). There are 'x' marks on pulses 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, and 22. The middle staff is a vocal staff with lyrics: 'A - vo ndiba - ba' on pulse 1, 'na' on pulse 2, and 'Tava-o-na a - vo ndibaba ve-du ta-va-o-' on pulses 14-24. The bottom staff is another vocal staff with lyrics: 'Tavao-na nebhachi ra-vo' on pulse 1 and 'Tavao-na nengundu yavo' on pulse 2. The notation includes notes, rests, and ties.

*Avo ndibaba*  
There is the father

*Tavaona avo ndibaba vedu tavaona*  
We have seen him that's our father we have seen him

*Tavaona nebhachi ravo*  
We have identified him by his coat

*Tavaona nengundu yavo*  
We have identified him by his hat

## Meaning of song

The return of the ancestral (father's) spirit back into the home is confirmed when one of the sons or grandsons gets possessed by the spirit and behaves in the same manner that the father or grandfather behaved while he was alive. This is the signal for a successful ceremony, which is celebrated by singing the song *Avo ndibaba*.

Track No. 7 **Mudzimu wababa** Performers: Bikita Duma Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Jerry Rutsate

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: July 1998

Length of cycle: 24 pulses

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l t)

Basic chord sequence: G – E – G – E – D – B – D

The musical notation consists of a staff with 24 pulses. Above the staff, chords are indicated: E (pulses 1, 3, 5, 7), G (pulses 2, 4, 6, 8), E (pulses 9, 11, 13, 15), (D) (pulses 10, 12, 14, 16), B (pulses 17, 19, 21, 23), D (pulses 18, 20, 22, 24), and (G) (pulses 21, 23). The Shona lyrics are 'U-no-u-ya wo-ga' (pulses 1-8) and 'U-no-u-ya wo-ga' (pulses 9-16). The Ndebele lyrics are 'ngwi' (pulses 1-2), 'wo-ga' (pulses 3-4), 'm'dzim'wa baba' (pulses 5-8), 'he ha hau-te-' (pulses 17-24).

*Unouya woga mudzimu wababa*

The father's spirit comes on its own

*Unouya woga hautengwi*

It comes on its own its not bought

## Meaning of song

This song is an expression of hope that the spirit of the father will be willing to come home and not because there is something unethical that might have been done. The purpose for singing such a song is to denounce the wrong that some members of the

family or clan might do by inviting the ancestral spirit into their immediate family secretly. This is usually a source of misunderstandings among family and clan members, which is discouraged at all costs.

Track No. 8 **Mudzimu dzoka** Performers: Bikita Duma Mhande musicians  
 Recorded by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: July 1998  
 Length of cycle: 24 pulses  
 Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – B – D – G – B – E – D – G

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is labeled 'Sh' and contains the lyrics 'Va-she mudzimu dzoka' and 'he he mudzimu dzoka'. Above this staff are chord symbols: (B), (D), (G), (B), E, (D), (G), and (G). The second staff is labeled 'Bv' and contains the lyrics 'Changami-re', 'ha hi he re', and 'kwaziwai'. The third staff is labeled 'Sh' and contains the lyrics 'VaChangami-re mudzimu dzoka'. The fourth staff is labeled 'Sh' and contains the lyrics 'A ye-re mudzimu dzoka'. The score includes a 24-pulse cycle with various rhythmic markings and a key signature of one flat.

*Vashe mudzimu dzoka*  
 Chief, ancestral spirit, come back

*Ha hi he re kwaziwai Changamire*  
 (Vocables) welcome chief

### Meaning of song

This is a welcome song for the ancestral spirit whose greatness and importance are implied in the titles *Vashe* and *Changamire*. Through this song the Karanga show the proximity of their ancestral spirit by indicating that they can stretch out their hands and greet the spirit (*kwaziwai Changamire*).

Track No. 9 **Dzinomwa munaSave** Performers: Bikita Duma Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: July 1998  
 Length of cycle: 24 pulses  
 Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – B – D – G – B – E – C – E

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song 'Dzinomwa munaSave'. It consists of two staves: a top staff labeled 'Sh' and a bottom staff labeled 'Bv'. The top staff contains a melody with notes and rests, and the bottom staff contains a bass line. Above the top staff, chords are indicated: B, D, G, (B), (E), C, E, and (G). The lyrics 'dzino - mwa muna Save' are written below the top staff, and 'Mhondoro dzino - mwa mhondoro' are written below the bottom staff. The score is numbered 1 to 24 pulses.

*Mhondoro dzinomwa munaSave*

The ancestral (lion) spirits drink from the Save river

**Meaning of song**

The Save is the largest inland river in Zimbabwe so the ancestral spirits are believed to drink water from it. By singing this song the people show that they know the places that the ancestral spirits patronize before they are brought back home to drink from the same source that the family or clan drink from.

Track No. 10 **Kamba iwe**

Performers: Chivi District Mhande musicians

Recorded by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: July 1998  
 Length of cycle: 24 pulses  
 Scale: Tetratonic (d m s l)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – B – D – G – E – G – E – G - E

*Zvandiri murombo kamba iwe ndorima nemadhongi*  
 Since I am a poor, hey tortoise, I use donkeys to plough

**Meaning of song**

This song is an appeal to the ancestral spirits who are distanced from the people they are supposed to help lead comfortable lives. There are many reasons that can lead to people’s failure to bring the spirits of their ancestors back home after their deaths. One of the most common reasons is the adoption of cultures foreign to one’s own. When this happens, the Karanga believe that it exposes the affected to various misfortunes and difficulties like having to use donkeys for tilling the land. The use of donkeys slows down the process, just as a tortoise moves slowly.

The structure of Mhande songs for the *kurova guva* ceremony is represented in tabular form below:

Track no. and Title	Length of cycle	Scale	Chord sequence	Phrasing
5 Tora wuta hwako	36 pulses	Heptatonic	GFEGCEDBDBDG	2 responsorial
6 Avo ndibaba	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GBEGEGBD	2 responsorial
7 Mudzimu wababa	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GEGEDBD	2 responsorial
8 Mudzimu dzoka	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GBDGBEDG	2 overlapping
9 Dzinomwa munaSave	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GBDGBECE	2 overlapping
10 Kamba iwe	24 pulses	Tetratonic	GBDGEGEGE	2 responsorial

#### 4.4 Analysis of the structure of Mhande music

The analysis of the structure of Mhande music as presented herein focuses on five characteristics: meter, melodic notes in the scale typical of Shona culture, basic chord sequences (harmonic nuances), phrasing, and meaning of lyrics. A summary of these characteristics as they appear in the ten song transcriptions presented above is represented in tabular form below:

Clip no. and Title	Length of cycle	Scale	Chord sequence	Phrasing
1 Mvura ngainaye	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GEACGBGBDGB	2 overlapping
2 Haiwa yowerere	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GCAGADG	2 responsorial
3 Madzura uswa	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GBEGBEDE	2 responsorial
4 Gudo rakwira mawere	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GDFEDCEGFEDB	2 overlapping
5 Tora wuta hwako	36 pulses	Heptatonic	GFEGCEDBDBDG	2 responsorial
6 Avo ndibaba	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GBEGEGBD	2 responsorial
7 Mudzimu wababa	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GEGEDBD	2 responsorial
8 Mudzimu dzoka	24 pulses	Hexatonic	GBDGBEDG	2 overlapping
9 Dzinomwa munaSave	24 pulses	Heptatonic	GBDGBECE	2 overlapping
10 Kamba iwe	24 pulses	Tetratonic	GBDGEGEGE	2 responsorial

##### 4.4.1 Meter

Nine out of the ten songs transcribed are 24 pulses long. This can be considered the standard length of the framework in which compositions are set. Thus the use of 24 pulse notation paper is ideal for the transcription of Mhande music. The lengths of song cycles are determined by the lengths of the phrases of the songs. Most of the phrases as presented in the transcriptions are short enough to be sung twice in a cycle. Some are long enough to be sung once in a cycle. The following examples confirm this point: the phrases sung twice in a cycle each are – *DzeZame mvura ngainaye*, *Haiwa yowerere*, *Mawere kongonya*, *Vashe mudzimu dzoka*, *Unouya woga* and *Dzinomwa munaSave*. The long phrases sung once in a cycle each are – *Mvura yona madzura uswa mvura yona*,

*Tavaona avo ndibaba vedu tavaona, Tora wuta hwako toda kuenda dzinoruma* (longest response lines) and *Zvandiri murombo kamba iwe ndorima nemadhongi*.

Meter in Mhande shows itself to be thoroughly typical of Shona music in general and particularly Karanga music. Every song is triple; that is, based on a triple guide beat within the 24 pulse cycle. There is a tendency in most songs to emphasize the second pulse of the three, which also tends to be the voice entry points. This resembles the pattern typical of Karanga and Shona lead drumming where the second pulse is often also stressed in contrast with the response drumming that often accentuates the first and third pulses. Each pair of dances' foot movements correspond with the two drum patterns (cf clip 4 DVD close-ups). This follows Nketia:

The conception of a musical piece and the details of its form and content are influenced not only by its linguistic framework, but also by the activities with which it is associated. In African societies, music that is integrated with dance, or music that stimulates motor response, is much more prevalent. For the African, the musical experience is by and large an emotional one: sounds, however beautiful, are meaningless if they do not offer this experience or contribute to the expressive quality of a performance (1974:206).

With particular reference to Mhande music, the Mhande dance influences the organization of the metric content of the music. Song syllables, like the drum beat accent, do not necessarily always fall on the first pulse.

Two-pulse groupings often occur in the songs, and in the clapping that sometimes accompanies Mhande music. The drumming that accompanies Mhande is strongly triple, with a typical pattern of || xxx . x . || that is, the first pulse is split into two half-pulses. The steps performed by the dancers also make much more use of half-pulses, which is made easier because of the slow tempo of Mhande. However, I am not considering this aspect in detail in this thesis.

The tempo of Mhande and much other Karanga music can be considered slow by comparison with other Shona and Southern African music, with an average speed of guide beat = MM 76. I obtained this average speed by timing the 13 songs for my honours dissertation and the 4 documented at Marishongwe *mutoro* ceremony as fieldwork for this thesis. This slow tempo indicates qualities such as seriousness, earnestness, devotion, spirituality and respect for tradition. The Karanga refer to this

tradition as ‘*chikaranga*’ (Chief Nhema, 20/11/2004). However, the tempo of other Karanga music in comparison to Mhande music is faster because of the lighter mood linked to it. This is discussed in Chapter 5.

#### 4.4.2 Melodic notes in cultural scale

Both hexatonic and heptatonic scales are commonly employed in Mhande music. The intonation of words used in *Kamba iwe* results in a tetratonic scale. Nketia says:

Whatever the scale, attention is paid as far as possible to the intonation of the text. This is because distortion of the intonation of phrases or the tones of words might create problems for the listener, for many African languages are ‘tone languages’, that is, languages in which tone is phonemic, or serves to distinguish words in much the same way as do vowels and consonants (1974:184).

Karanga is a tonal language and Mhande songs reflect the speech tone of this language. Considering the transcriptions presented above, Mhande music often moves by step as determined by the speech tone of the words of the songs. The general downward movement of the melodies follows the lowering of linguistic tonal inflections. Nketia goes on to say, “When texts in tone languages are sung, the tones used normally in speech are reflected in the contour of the melody” (1974:186). Thus all the ten Mhande song melodic contours are representative of Karanga speech tone. However, larger jumps of up to a sixth are also found where the melody jumps to the required note of the next chord in the sequence of chords for a given song. The songs *Gudo rakwira mawere* and *Haiwa yowerere* are examples where the lead (*Shaura*) lines jump by an interval of the 6<sup>th</sup> in accordance to the chord sequences linking the first lead with the second lead parts of the song cycles.

#### 4.4.3 Basic chord sequence (Harmonic nuances)

In four of the ten songs, *Madzura uswa*, *Avo ndibaba*, *Mudzimu dzoka* and *Dzinomwa munaSave*, we find a basic chord sequence G-B-D-G-B-E, exactly as it is in *karimba* and *chipendani* music, and in more developed form, in music for the mbira *dza Vadzimu*. Variations of this same basic chord sequence can be detected at the root of the other six songs that use G – E – G – D. By ‘chord’ I mean a chord of two notes a fifth apart (or a fourth in inversion) such as G and D, E and B, D and A, B and F. Variations

are possible, of course, because music is a creative art which accommodates ideas from different composers. The analogy with the *karimba* is particularly useful, as this represents a fundamental level of all Shona music, and may be an indicator of its historical development (Tracey, 2007 personal communication). Following Tracey, Berliner says, “The Shona people of Zimbabwe are among those people in Africa who place a special significance and value on the mbira. An ancient instrument, the mbira has had important function in Shona culture for hundreds of years” (1999:viii).

It is important to note that all Shona compositions, Karanga music included, belong to a basic framework of chords that revolve around the ‘G/D’ pitch or key. This concept is not one borrowed from Western music theory, but it is made concrete in the actual layout of notes in the Shona *karimba* (Tracey, 1972:88). It is a concept inherent in Shona musical thought, and it is easy and instinctive for any Shona musician to relate the harmonic structure of any song to the harmonic system of the *karimba*.

The basic chord sequence for *karimba* is in two parts G – B – E and G – B - D, often reflecting the two phrases to each song cycle. The two parts of a song cycle sometimes have a similar outline and are varied in accordance with the requirement of the chord sequence of the song. An A and/or C chord appear in some of the songs, but not in the above *karimba* chord sequence. This is a characteristic feature often found in songs of the Karanga and Ndau, that is, the southern Shona, sometimes replacing, sometimes inserted before the ‘E’ chord. This is discussed in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4.4 Phrasing**

It should hardly be necessary to state that all Mhande songs are responsorial, with a relatively fixed chorus (Bv - *Bvumira*) responding to a leader (Sh - *Shaura*) who has more freedom to vary. The songs whose phrases are almost strictly responsorial are those in which part of the message contained in the lead (Sh) line is completed by the response (Bv) line as in the four songs: *Madzura uswa*; *Tora wuta hwako*; *Avo ndibaba*; *Mudzimu wababa*, and *Kamba iwe*. The responsorial part of the song *Haiwa yowerere* gives harmonic support sung to some vocables as a way of bridging the lead lines. The songs whose lead (Sh) lines overlap with the response lines are those where the different voice parts sing the same words such that the message is clearly communicated. *Mvura*

*ngainaye*, *Gudo rakwira mawere*, *Mudzimu dzoka* and *Dzinomwa munaSave* are the songs with overlapping phrases. Note that where the *Bvumira* phrases are sung twice in the cycle like in *Gudo rakwira mawere* and *Mhondoro dzinomwa*, the two phrases usually differ by one tone, or sometimes by a minor third. This is a typical structure not only of Shona song in general, including *ngano* (story songs), but also of much other Southern African music.

#### **4.4.5 Meaning of music**

The meaning of Mhande music is determined by the context in which it is performed. This meaning is articulated in two ways: (i) the messages communicated through the words of the songs as presented above, and (ii) the gestures (foot movements for the dance) as dictated by the beat of the music. The meanings of songs portray a deep understanding of Shona/Karanga indigenous knowledge, philosophy and epistemology. In the *mutoro* ceremony, the Mhande dancers lift their feet in alternation, not lifting them high, but stamping heavily as if they are digging the ground to reach for underground water (cf clips 1 - 4 DVD). This gesture, with the use of fast-moving half-pulses typical of Mhande dance style, represents rain drops pattering on the ground. This dignified way of dancing corresponds to the seriousness of the ritual for which the dance is performed. In the *kurova guva* ceremony, the dancers lift their feet in much the same way as in walking. Given that the ceremony is about bringing the ancestral spirit back home, this gesture typifies the event.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.0 Mhande song-dance: A comparative analysis

In this Chapter, the structure of Mhande music, as presented in Chapter 4, is compared with the structure of other Shona music represented by the selected genres analysed herein. This Chapter comprises four sections: Mhande in the larger context of other Shona music; Transcriptions of songs from selected genres of Shona music; Structural analysis of music from selected genres, and Analysis of the place of Mhande in Shona music.

#### 5.1 Mhande music in the larger context of other Shona music

When I watched a film available in the ILAM archive entitled, *Dambatsoko – An Old Cult Centre*, which was documented by Prof. Andrew Tracey (ILAM) and Gei Zantzinger of the University of Pennsylvania in 1975, I learnt that the Zezuru people use the term ‘*mutoro*’ to refer to a small hut by their Cult Centre, into which the rain spirits (*makombwe*) go to pray for rain. While the footage for the film was of a special ceremony to offer a prayer for peace to the spirits during the on-going guerilla war for independence in Zimbabwe, the chief consultant, Mr Muchatera (rain spirit medium – *gombwe*) of Dambatsoko village in Rusape, Manicaland Province, himself a great rain spirit medium, explained the cultural significance of their ‘*mutoro*’ to his interviewers. In his narration of the process of their rain ceremony, Mr Muchatera said that the possessed rain spirit mediums, musicians and other people gather inside his spirit hut (*banya*) (Thram, 1999: 177) and as people gather, *nhare mbira (dzaVadzimu)* music will be performed. When the spirit mediums come out of the *banya*, the people make a procession performing music as they walk in single file to the ‘*mutoro*’. On arrival they all sit down and while the music continues, Mr Muchatera will unlock the ‘*mutoro*’ door and enter in to offer the prayers for rain to the spirits. The musicians will perform music while he is in the hut and when he comes out they all stand and process back to the *banya*.

Given that Mhande does not only reflect the sound structure of the music, but also other aspects such as the musical thought and social relations among the Karanga, these

cultural traits tend to manifest themselves in traditions other than the Karanga owing to socio-political and economic factors such as inter-marriage, war and a search for fertile land. Whichever reason is applicable to the use of the term ‘*mutoro*’ by the Zezuru referring to a hut in which they present prayers for rain to the rain spirits (*makombwe*), which term carries a similar meaning to the Karanga *mutoro* rain ceremony, this draws a connection between the Karanga and other Shona cultures. Thus a comparative analysis of Mhande music and the music of selected genres from other Shona areas will illuminate the musical connection of Shona cultures, and place Mhande in a larger Shona context.

## 5.2 Transcriptions of songs from selected genres of Shona music

The structures used in African music represent usages which are learned through participation in musical events, passed on aurally from generation to generation, and applied, modified and expanded by succeeding generations. They include melodic and rhythmic elements, both linear and multilinear, which permit limited improvisations to be made where appropriate (Nketia, 1974:111).

The 14 songs transcribed for comparison with Mhande music represent 10 genres of Shona music traditions. The genres are *chizambi* (single string mouth bow), *karimba mbira*, *ngororombe* (panpipes), *ngano* (story songs), game, hunting, war, wedding, social comment and love songs. The variety of performers and their varying ages confirms the transmission of Shona music through generations. In all this music, improvisations are permitted to the lead (Sh) parts only while the response (Bv) parts are restricted to given lines.

The musical characteristics to be highlighted in the transcriptions are: (i) Length of cycle; (ii) Type of beat; (iii) Scale; (iv) Basic chord sequence, and (v) Phrasing.

Track No.11	<b>Ndozofa</b>	Performer: Pineas Hungwe (Buhera District)
	( <i>Chizambi</i> )	Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM archive)
		Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate
		Date: 1958
		Length of cycle: 18
		Type of beat: Triple and Duple (3 – 2 – 2 - 2)
		Scale: Pentatonic (d r m s l)
		Basic chord sequence: G – D – G – E – G – E

G 2 3 4 5 D 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19  
 x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x

Sh Ndozo-fa m'isa-ngo ndisa-o-na vako-ma (ba-ba-mu-ku-mu  
 (ba-ba)

Bv Ndendere-ka nde ndendereka nde

Sh Ba-ba namai havacha-to-ndi fu-ngi

Sh Vako — ma — na ndino fira mu Bhuhera  
 (Uhitori)

Sh Musoro dengeze-ze ndonda mwiro ko kwa Mudzimu  
 mu duruma

Sh Muso-ro dengeze ze Muganda-ni ndaku-o-na

Sh Ndinozo-fa m'isa-ngo ndisao-na vako-ma

Sh Tu-ra

*Ndozofa musango ndisaona (babamukuru) vakoma, baba\*  
I shall die in the bush before I see my (father's elder brother) brothers, father.

*Ndendereka nde ndendereka nde*  
Wandering oh wandering oh

*Baba namai havachatondi fungi*  
Father and mother are no longer thinking of me

*Vakomana ndinofira muBhuhera, muVhitori*  
Gentlemen I will die in Bhuhera, Fort Victoria (Masvingo)

*Musoro dengezeze ndondo mwiroko kwaMudzimu, mwiro muDuruma*  
With my head raised I will enter into Mudzimu, Duruma.

*Musoro dengezeze Mugandani ndakuona*  
With my head raised I have seen you Mugandani

*Ndinozofa musango ndisaona vakoma*  
I will die in the bush before I see my brothers

*Tura*  
Hush (signal to end the song)

### **Meaning of song**

This is a tragic story song. The musician, who was blind, was imagining leaving behind family members as he went into an environment that would consume him. The actual meaning of the song is that often people find themselves in problems that make them wish to have their closest family members next to them, but their social situation may be that it is impossible to see each other and talk about their problems.

Track No.12 **Chirombo woye nditerere** Performer: Mugadzikwa Mwanagona (13)

<i>(Karimba)</i>	Recorded by:	Hugh Tracey (ILAM)
	Transcribed by:	Jerry Rutsate
	Date:	1951
	Length of cycle:	24
	Type of beat:	Triple
	Scale:	Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)
	Basic chord sequence:	G – B – E – G – B –D – B

**Karimba**

G B E G B D B G

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

L = 0 R = . (L - Left thumb R - Right thumb)

**Voice**

-ro o chirombo ndite'e - re vano-tambura nedo-

O ye i-ye ye i-ye i-ye

Zuva ravi-ra ndisa - pem'sana vako-manai - we

*Vanotambura nedoro chirombo nditerere*  
 They have problem with beer, spirit listen to me

*O ye iye ye iye iye*  
 Vocables

*Zuva ravira ndipe musana vakomana iwe*  
 The sun has gone down before I give my back (to the home where beer was served)

**Meaning of song**

This song is about a spirit (*chirombo* or *shavi*), in this case a spirit for beer (*chirombo chedoro*) which refers to someone who would not want to leave the home where they had

been drinking beer even if he/she would not take any more. The song is a plea to *chirombo* to listen to the advice given to him or her by the host to go back to their home.

Track No.13 **Ngororombe**  
(Panpipes)

Performers: Domboshawa School (boys)  
 Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: 1949  
 Length of cycle: 24  
 Type of beat: Triple  
 Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – B – G – E – C – A – C

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system has two staves, and the second system has two staves. The third system is a double staff. Above the first staff, measures 1-24 are numbered, and chords G, B, G, E, C, (A), C, G are indicated. Symbols above the notes indicate whether they are blown (x) or sung (o).

- = a blown note
- = a sung note

The first two lines are consecutive, played by a small group.

The double staff was played in a second take by a larger group of perhaps five.

Track No.14 **Tsuro woye**

Performers: Teachers Training College (Leader:  
Simon Mandimutsira) Penhalonga

Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)

Transcribed by: Jerry Rytsate

Date: 1951

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)

Basic chord sequence: G – B – E – C – G – B – D

The musical score is written on six staves. Above the first staff, chord symbols are placed over measures 1-24: (G) x, B, (E) x, C, G, B, D, G, (G) x. The notes on the staves are as follows:

- Staff 1 (Sh):** Notes for measures 1-24. Chord symbols are written above: (G) x, B, (E) x, C, G, B, D, G, (G) x.
- Staff 2:** Lyrics: Tsuro wo – ye tsuro wo – ye tsuro woye
- Staff 3 (Bv):** Notes for measures 1-24. Lyrics: nja njarakunja – njanja njarakunja – nja-
- Staff 4 (Sh):** Notes for measures 1-24. Lyrics: U-ya nemwa -na u-ya nemwana t'ende kumba
- Staff 5 (Sh):** Notes for measures 1-24. Lyrics: Zuva remu – no zuva remuno kuti ravira
- Staff 6 (Sh):** Notes for measures 1-24. Lyrics: Ri – no – vi – ra ri – no vi -ra semuronga
- Staff 7 (Sh):** Notes for measures 1-24. Lyrics: e wo ye e wo ye e wo ye E

Measure numbers 1 through 24 are indicated at the bottom of the staves.

*Tsuro woye, tsuro woye, tsuro woye*  
Rabbit hey, rabbit hey, rabbit hey

*Njarakunjanjanja*

This is a term that refers to someone who walks about all the time

*Uya nemwana uya nemwana tiende kumba*

Bring the child, bring the child so we go home

*Zuva romuno zuva romuno kuti ravira*

This place's sun, this place's sun has set

*Rinovira rinovira semuronga*

It sets, it sets as usual

### **Meaning of song**

This is an *ngano* (story song) about a woman who asked a rabbit to look after her child while she worked in her field. The rabbit took away the child secretly. When the mother noticed that both the rabbit and the child had disappeared, she sang this song to recall the rabbit to bring the child back so she could go home since it was end of day. The rabbit and the mother later met at a beer gathering where she eventually got her child back. *Nganos* in which animals are personified are very common among the Shona people.

Track No.15 **Gudo Shava** Performers: Jerry Rutsate and Laina Gumboreshumba

Recorded by: Elijah Madiba

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: March 2007

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Tetratonic (d m s l)

Basic chord sequence: G – E – G – B – G – B – D

*Sekuru mandikanganwa Gudo Shava*

Grandfather you have forgotten me baboon (name of person and totem)

*Kukanganwa mwana wemwana wenyu Gudo Shava*

Forgetting your child's child Gudo Shava

### Meaning of song

This is another *ngano* involving a grandchild, rabbit singing to the grandfather, baboon, reminding him of who he is. This reflects that forgetfulness increases with age and the young have to remind the old.

Track No.16 **Dendende**

Performers: Jerry Rutsate and Laina Gumboreshumba

Recorded by: Elijah Madiba

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: March 2007

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Pentatonic (d r m s l)

Basic chord sequence: G – E – G – E – G – E – G – B – D

*Sungu musorowe dendende sunga wakanaka*  
Tie round the head of the one who is good looking

### Meaning of song

This is a game song. The game is played by an equal number of boys and girls who take turns to tie some cloths or strings round the heads of their chosen partners of the opposite sex. Through this game, the players are not only socialized into proposing love, but they learn to appreciate that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder because everyone ends up with a partner.

Track No.17 **Sarura wako** Performers: Jerry Rutsate and Laina Gumboreshumba

Recorded by: Elijah Madiba

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: March 2007

Length of cycle: 16

Type of beat: Duple

Scale: Tetratonic (s , l , t , d)

Basic chord sequence: G – E – G – B – D

*Sarura wako*  
Choose yours

*Kadeya deya wendoro chena*  
Moving on beat to duple time, one with white cone-shell

### Meaning of song

Just like *Dendende*, this is a game song sung played by an equal number of boys and girls. Girls choose boys with *ndoro* hanging on their necks. The *ndoro* signifies strength, and it takes such strong men to make it.

Track No.18 **Mutiya?**

Performers: Jerry Rutsate and Laina Gumboreshumba

Recorded by: Elijah Madiba

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: March 2007

Length of cycle: 12

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l t)

Basic chord sequence: G – B – E – G – B – D

Handwritten musical score for a song. The score is written on a grand staff with two staves labeled 'Sh' (Soprano) and 'Bv' (Bass). Above the staff, chords are indicated: (D) G, B, E, G, B?. The lyrics are: 'yi? De de zengeya uyo muti -'. Below the staff, the lyrics are: 'Muto-ndo sengurudze paya tsve', 'Mukuta', 'Muzeze'. The score is numbered 1 through 13.

*De de zengeya uyo mutiyi?*  
 Guess what tree is that?

*Mutondo sengurudze paya tsve*  
 Mutondo (name of tree) lifting and placing it there

### Meaning of song

The is a competitive memory game song, which requires one singer to name trees that he/she knows immediately after the lead singer (Sh) finishes singing his or her line. Each time he/she names a tree correctly, you 'bank' it or 'mark' it (*sengurudze paya tsve*), but when you run out of names, you fall out of the game! The one who ends with the biggest number in the bank wins the game.

Track No.19 **Mai Tsvanguruwe** Performers: Domboshawa School (boys)  
 Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)  
 Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate  
 Date: 1949  
 Length of cycle: 24  
 Type of beat: Triple  
 Scale: Hexatonic (d r m f s l)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – E – G – C – A – C – E –  
 D

*Mai Tsvanguru' woye ngoma dzavadendera*  
Mrs Tsvanguruwe hey drums of hunters

*Tevera makumbo dendera*  
Follow the foot prints straight on

### Meaning of song

This is a hunting song, which makes reference to specialist hunters (*vadendera*) who track animals by following their foot prints. This is likened to someone who can tell from the sound of a distant drum where the music is coming from.

Track No.20 **Imbwa yangu Machena** Performers: Jerry Rutsate and Laina

Gumboreshumba

Recorded by: Elijah Madiba

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: March 2007

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l)

Basic chord sequence: G – E – G – C – E – D – B

Handwritten musical score for two voices, Sh and Bv. The score includes a guitar chord sequence at the top: (G), G, E, G, G, (C), e, d, (B?). The Sh voice part has lyrics: 'i-si-na munhu mugwa — ra imbwa yangu Machena'. The Bv voice part has lyrics: 'Yaenda yo — ga i-si-na munhu mugwa — ra'. The score is written on a 24-measure staff with various musical notations including asterisks, circled numbers, and brackets.

*Isina munhu mugwara imbwa yangu Machena*  
 Without someone on track my dog Machena

*Yaenda yoga isina munhu mugwara*  
 It has gone on track on its own without someone

### Meaning of song

This is a song in praise of a dog named Machena, which goes out hunting without any person accompanying it. After the hunt, Machena goes back to its owner and escorts him to the prey it will have killed and hidden in the bush. Machena is well trained to hunt and reserve the catch for the owner who gives it some of the cooked meat.

Track No.21 **Baya wabaya** Performers: Jima Shumba with Duma men and women

Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 1949

Length of cycle: 27

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m f s l)

Basic chord sequence: G – B – D – G – B – E – G – B – D –  
 G – C

*Kuwerere*

A term used as a signal for fighters to get ready for the fight

*Baya wabaya, mukono unobaya dzose*

Pierce and pierce, bull that pierces all

**Meaning of song**

This is a war song. The song is said to be from the time when the Shona were in battle with the Ndebele. *Baya wabaya* implies the use of spears, the weapons that were used in the war then. There are many variations of this song that are sung throughout Zimbabwe presently. One of the contexts in which the most popular version of this song (in duple time) is sung is at soccer matches when the spectators cheer the players. Thus a football match is likened to a war between the competing teams.

Track No.22 **Chomusikana Mandega** Performers: Domboshawa School (boys)

Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 1949

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m s l t)

Basic chord sequence: G – B – E – G – B – D – B

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song 'Chomusikana Mandega'. It consists of two staves: a soprano staff (Sh) and a bass staff (Bv). Above the soprano staff, there are 24 measures numbered 1 to 24. Chords are indicated above the staff: (G) at measure 1, B at measure 4, E at measure 7, G at measure 13, B at measure 16, D at measure 19, and b at measure 22. Measures 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, and 22 have an 'x' below the chord name. A bracket spans measures 9 to 11, and another bracket spans measures 22 to 24. The lyrics are written below the staves. The soprano staff has two lines of lyrics: 'Cho - m'sika-na Mandega' and 'To-e-nda kwedu Mandega'. The bass staff has two lines of lyrics: 'Nyara-ra cho - m'si-ka-na' and 'nyara-ra cho - m'si-ka-na'. The word '(here)' is written below the final note of the soprano staff.

*Chomusikana Mandega chomusikana here*

About you girl Mandega, about the girl (*here* – something special in this context)

*Toenda kwedu Mandega*

We are going to our place Mandega

*Nyarara chomusikana*

Be quiet you girl

### **Meaning of song**

This is a song sung when a girl with special attributes such as virginity, kindness, attractive appearance and hard working, gets married. When Mandega gets separated from her family members she cries and she is comforted by her in-laws as they sing this song to her.

Track No.23 **Tambarara**

Performers: Saimoni Mashoko and 3 women

Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 1949

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple

Scale: Hexatonic (d r m f s l)

Basic chord sequence: G – D – G – E – D – C – G

*Ndikutumbure munzwa iwe chiremba wabayiwa*  
I take out the thorn you doctor have been pierced

*Tambarara ndikutumbure munzwa iwe*  
Stretch so that I can take out a thorn in your foot

**Meaning of song**

This song is a social comment portraying the idea that everyone needs someone to help them accomplish something they cannot do on their own. The use of the term *chiremba* (doctor) needing someone to take out some thorn from his or her flesh, confirms the idea.

Track No.24 **Hangaiwa**

Performer: Domboshawa School (boys)

Recorded by: Hugh Tracey (ILAM)

Transcribed by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 1949

Length of cycle: 24

Type of beat: Triple  
 Scale: Heptatonic (d r m f s l t)  
 Basic chord sequence: G – f – e – D – B – D

functions as a B chord

*Ino deya deyawe Rudhe*  
 It goes after oh Rudhe (name of person)

*Hangaiwa inodeya deya*  
 A pigeon goes after

### Meaning of song

This is a love song about boys who search for girls (Rudhe) much the same as a pigeon flies after another. Through this song, girls are reminded to look out for boys who hang around them.

### 5.3 Structural analysis of music from selected genres

The characteristic features of the songs from other selected Shona music genres transcribed and presented above is represented in tabular form below:

Track no. and title	Genre	Length of cycle	Beat	Scale	Basic chord sequence	Phrasing
11 Ndozofa	<i>Chizambi</i>	18	Triple/ duple	Pentatonic	G D G E G E	2 overlapping
12 Chirombo woye nditerere	<i>Karimba</i>	24	Triple	Heptatonic	G B E G B D B	2 overlapping
13 Ngororombe	<i>Ngororombe</i>	24	Triple	Heptatonic	G B G E C A C	Responsorial
14 Tsuru woye	<i>Ngano</i>	24	Triple	Heptatonic	G B E C G B D	2 responsorial

15 Gudo Shava	Ngano	24	Triple	Tetratonic	G E G B G B D	2 responsorial
16 Dendende	Game	24	Triple	Pentatonic	G E G E G E G B D	2 responsorial
17 Sarura wako	Game	16	Duple	Tetratonic	G E G B D	2 responsorial
18 Mutiyi?	Game	12	Triple	Hexatonic	G B E G B D	2 overlapping
19 Mai Tsvanguruwe	Hunting	24	Triple	Hexatonic	G E G C A C E D	2 overlapping
20 Imbwa yangu Machena	Hunting	24	Triple	Hexatonic	G E G C E D B	2 overlapping
21 Baya wabaya	War	27	Triple	Hexatonic	G B D G B E G B D G C	2 responsorial
22 Chomusikana Mandega	Wedding	24	Triple	Hexatonic	G B E G B D B	2 overlapping
23 Tambarara	Social comment	24	Triple	Hexatonic	G D G E D C G	2 overlapping
24 Hangaiwa	Love	24	Triple	Heptatonic	G F E D B D	2 overlapping

The ten genres: (i) *chizambi* (single string mouth bow); (i) *karimba* mbira; (iii) *ngororombe* (panpipes); (iv) *ngano* (story songs); (v) game songs; (vi) hunting songs; (vii) war songs; (viii) wedding songs; (ix) social comment, and (x) love songs, to which the 14 transcribed songs belong, are representative of Shona musical traditions. The description of the structural analysis of the 14 songs focuses on: 1) rhythm; 2) tempo; 3) scale; 4) basic chord sequence, and 5) phrasing.

### 5.3.1 Meter

Ten out of fourteen songs are 24 pulses long. This can be considered to be the standard length of Shona music. One song, *Mutiyi?*, which is half the standard length is sung to single short phrases for both the lead (Sh) and response (Bv) parts instead of the more common twice in a typical 24-pulse cycle. A pattern similar to *Mutiyi?* also applies to the song, *Sarura wako*, which is 16 pulses long. *Ndozofa*, which is 18 pulses long, has one long lead (Sh) phrase against which a repeated response (Bv) part is fitted. This implies that the length of song cycles is influenced by the way the song phrases are structured.

*Sarura wako* is the only song out of the 14 which is represented in duple beat. This is so because what is written on paper is the vocal parts performed to duple time, but the drum played in quick triple time for the *mbakumba* dance (about MM = 120), is not represented. This is an example of much Shona music with duple-triple beats, commonly referred to as 2 against 3 beats. *Ndozofa* is an example of a song with irregular guide beats consisting of 3 and 2. The song starts with a triple beat followed by 3 duple beats and this pattern is repeated to complete the 18 pulse cycle.

### 5.3.2 Tempo

The songs that are performed to slow tempo, Mhande (about MM = 76) are *Baya wabaya*, *Mai Tsvanguruwe* and *Imbwa yangu Machena*. *Chirombo woye nditerere*, *Tsuro woye*, *Gudo Shava* and *Chomusikana Mandega* employ medium tempo (about MM = 100). The songs that are performed to quick tempo are *Dendende*, *Mutiyi? Ngororombe* and *Tambarara*. The songs performed to slow speed carry heavy messages and those with light messages are performed to quicker tempo.

### 5.3.3 Melodic notes in scale typical of Shona culture

The 14 transcribed songs employ four scales: 2 tetratonic; 2 pentatonic; 6 hexatonic, and 4 heptatonic. Nketia says:

The scales used in vocal music, having from four to seven steps, are not unlike those in instrumental music. In African musical practice, the areas of tolerance of pitch variation for particular steps of the scale are much larger than those of traditions that base their music on a fixed pitch of 440 vibrations per second for A. The structure of melodies built out of these scales is based on the controlled use of selected interval sequences. Thinking in terms of these sequences, which reflect melodic processes rather than the scales as constructs, gives one greater insight into the usages that guide performers, for the patterns formed by these sequences are used in creating new songs or varying existing materials when the situation demands it (1974:147).

This variety of scales is utilized to reflect on how the Shona organize their melodies. As stated in Chapter 4 on Mhande music, and expanding on Nketia's words above, both speech tone and the *karimba* chord sequence determine the melody of Shona music. For most of the phrases of the 14 songs, the melody moves by step as directed by speech

tone, but larger jumps appear in accordance with chord changes corresponding to the chord sequence of each song as indicated in all the song transcriptions.

### **5.3.4 Basic chord sequence (Harmonic nuances)**

The *karimba* G – B – E – G – B – D chord sequence, prevalent in Mhande songs as discussed in Chapter 4 is also dominant in all the 14 song transcriptions presented above. The significance of the inclusion of the chords A and C in *Ngororombe* and *Mai Tsvanguruwe* is a characteristic feature often found in songs of the Karanga and Ndau, that is, the southern Shona. The 6 songs in which A and/or C appear as part of the chord sequences confirm this point, particularly when considering the origin of the performers: *Ngororombe* – Domboshawa School comprises students from different backgrounds, including Karanga and Ndau; *Tsuro woye* – Teachers Training College in Ndauland; *Mai Tsvanguruwe* – Domboshawa School; *Imbwa yangu Machena* – Jerry Rutsate (Karanga); *Baya wabaya* – Duma people (Karanga) and *Tambarara* – Saimoni Mashoko (Karanga). Another possible reason for the inclusion of the C chord is that it is found in nearly all the Western music to which everyone in Zimbabwe has been exposed for over a century.

### **5.3.5 Phrasing**

The two phrase structure is prevalent in the selected Shona songs as it is in the Mhande songs. The lead (Sh) and the response (Bv) phrases for the songs are usually one tone or sometimes a minor third apart from each other.

While Shona songs are generally responsorial, there are phrases that overlap each other in songs such as *Mutiyi?* *Mai Tsvanguruwe*, *Imbwa yangu Machena* and *Chomusikana Mandega*. The lead (Sh) and response (Bv) phrases overlap more when the (Sh) employs variations to the main melody line as in the example of *Ndozofa*. In this way the texture of the music becomes more polyphonic than responsorial. This is a crystallisation of songs that tell a full story like in *chipendani*, *ngano*, hunting, war and love songs, just as it is for *Haiwa yowerere* for Mhande.

## **5.4 Analysis of the place of Mhande in Shona music**

The connectedness of Mhande with other Shona music can be considered from analysis of three basic elements common to all music: rhythm; melody, and harmony.

### 5.4.1 Meter

Mhande music like music of other African cultures south of the Sahara uses short and long triplet patterns of compound metric organization, which is referred to as a triple guide beat. All the 14 other Shona songs compared with the 10 Mhande songs presented in Chapter 4, employ a triple guide beat. The drumming that accompanies Mhande is strongly triple, much the same as for the drumming for other Shona song-dance genres for example, *dinhe*, *mbakumba*, *mbende* and *shangara*, although their tempi are quicker when compared to Mhande, and each of course has its own recognisable style. Most of the clapping patterns used are identical in all these Shona styles. Thus the rhythmic aspects that distinguish Mhande from other Shona music are: (i) its somewhat slower tempo; (ii) its variation on the Shona drum beat where the first pulse is divided in half, and (iii) the opportunity that the slow tempo gives the dancers to employ relatively more quicker-pulses in their steps.

### 5.4.2 Melody

The two phrase pattern in Mhande music as evident in the vocal parts (Sh) and (Bv), and the instrumental patterns in the two drums – one playing the leading fundamental pattern - are characteristic of all Shona music. Any Shona music genre in which the drum is played uses at least two drums to give a minimum of two parts that answer each other. The genres identified are marked by the use of two drums.

Karanga language in particular and Shona in general are tonal languages. This results in melodic contours that represent speech tones in Shona music, within the confines of the chord sequence chosen. Mhande music strongly reflects this Shona musical characteristic.

### 5.4.3 Harmony

A fundamental of Shona music may be traced to the use of mouth bows such as the *chipendani*, which produces two fundamental tones. The two fundamental open notes of *chipendani* are a fifth apart, such as G and D. *Chipendani* must have been much easier to construct and is thus possibly earlier than the *karimba* mbira, which is itself believed to be an early ancestor of the variety of mbira types in Zimbabwe (Tracey, 1972). The use

of chordal structure as a fundamental, formative musical principle in Mhande and in all other Shona song-dance genres represents the Shona musical thought that must have been adopted long ago by Shona composers, resulting in compositions that unanimously reflect on this thinking across all Shona music genres. The essential *karimba* chord sequence G – B – E – G – B – D, or the simpler G – E – G – D (four root notes) sequence, is fully utilized in shaping both Mhande music in particular and Shona music in general, as can be easily seen in the transcriptions herein.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.0 Conclusions

In this thesis, the performance of Mhande song-dance in the ritual context of the *mutoro* rain ceremony and in the secular context of the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition, together with the comparative analysis of Mhande music with the music of selected songs from other Shona song-dance genres, were presented through the descriptive, interpretive and analytical approach, referred to herein as the Matonjeni Model. The documentation of the *mutoro* ritual produced data to substantiate the significance of the performance of Mhande in the *mutoro* process. Selected data from published information and from my consultants, presented in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, show that this research has provided: (i) a fuller definition of *mutoro*; (ii) a fuller understanding of the *mutoro* process, and (iii) has determined the significance and position of Mhande in the *mutoro* rain ritual, the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition and the larger context of the other Shona song-dance genres.

The data on the *mutoro* ritual document the communicative process between the Karanga and the *majukwa* spirits, in which performance of Mhande song-dance is used as a vehicle to invoke the spirits to give rain. This Karanga view of mutual relationships between the people and the spirits (*chikaranga*) is a central value not only to its adherents but to the indigenous worldview of the Shona (*chivanhu*) in general. These relationships require respect for the spirits as demonstrated through offering of *rupanga* and dedication of ceremonial beer. Reciprocity is an embedded value in the sense that showing respect for the spirits brings a reciprocal reaction from them in their provision of the rain necessary for survival (Thram, 1999:305).

The staged performance of Mhande song-dance in the Competition is generally accepted among the Karanga, who believe that participation in the competition contributes towards raising an awareness of the *mutoro* ritual with which the song-dance is associated and hopefully drawing people (young and old) to participate in the religious practice. The Pasichigare Mhande dance group has displayed their Karanga identity to audiences at more than 16 annual Provincial Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competitions through staging Mhande song-dance performance as it is performed in the

*mutoro* ceremony. The belief that staging Mhande performance will have no bad effect on the *mutoro* ritual shows the depth of the Karanga religious belief as evidenced by the Pasichigare group's consistency in participating in the Competition in which conditions have often been difficult to bear. The depth of their belief is also shown by the way the people of Shurugwi resisted *Mbuya* Juliana's interference in their *mutoro* process. The Karanga hold on to this belief because each time they conduct the *mutoro* ceremony their communication with the *majukwa* brings rain. The categorization of dances into religious ritual, social-ritual and social-secular as recommended in this thesis is an important critique in that it has direct impact on the future shape of the Competition.

The comparative analysis of the structure of Mhande with the structure of songs selected from the larger context of Shona song-dance genres comprising *chizambi*, *karimba*, *ngororombe*, *ngano*, game, hunting, war, wedding, social comment and love songs, addressed the metric, melodic and harmonic elements of the music. I have established that metrically, Mhande music employs two aspects that are thoroughly Shona: (i) the triple guide beat, and (ii) the tendency, when drumming, to emphasize the second pulse of the three in a beat. Mhande, however, distinguishes itself from other Karanga and Shona song-genres through the slower tempo, which identifies it with the *mutoro* ceremony, which is viewed as serious and respectful.

Melody both in Mhande music in particular and Shona music in general moves in direct response to speech tone of the Shona language. The two-phrase structure, that is, the lead (Sh) and the response (Bv) reflects the 'question and answer' speech tone resulting in descending melodic contours. Thus melody often moves by step and not only where there are larger jumps of up to a sixth, the melody will largely be responding to the chord sequence of the song.

The fundamental level of all Shona music is that its compositions (songs) have a basic framework of chords revolving around the arbitrary G chord or the key of G (as explained in Chapter 4, written in G for the purpose of analysis only). The *karimba* chord sequence using G – B – E – G – B – D, or its less elaborate form G – E – G – D excluding the B chord, is the basic framework on which a large proportion of Shona music compositions are based, excluding of course the music of the larger mbiras such as *mbira dzaVadzimu*, *Njari*, *Matepe*, *Hera* etc, which use all seven chords available from the

pitches in the Shona heptatonic scale (Tracey, 1972:89-90). The preliminary research presented in this thesis points to the need for further attention to structural analysis of the music integral to the indigenous religion of the various ethnic sub-groups of the Shona in Zimbabwe.

The development of my transcriptions into educational materials for use in teaching music structures of the Karanga in particular and the Shona in general is a potential use of these transcriptions. Another potential use of the transcriptions is in supporting research on the analyses of Shona indigenous dance styles corresponding to the songs transcribed.

## APPENDIX

### 1. Sound recordings of the 24 transcribed songs on CD

Track 1 Mvura ngainaye	Track 13 Ngororombe
Track 2 Haiwa yowerere	Track 14 Tsuru woye
Track 3 Madzura uswa	Track 15 Gudo Shava
Track 4 Gudo rakwira mawere	Track 16 Dendende
Track 5 Tora wuta hwako	Track 17 Sarura wako
Track 6 Avo ndibaba	Track 18 Mutiyi?
Track 7 Mudzimu wababa	Track 19 Mai Tsvanguruwe
Track 8 Mudzimu dzoka	Track 20 Imbwa yangu Machena
Track 9 Dzinomwa munaSave	Track 21 Baya wabaya
Track 10 Kamba iwe	Track 22 Chomusikana Mandega
Track 11 Ndozofa	Track 23 Tambarara
Track 12 Chirombo woye nditerere	Track 24 Hangaiwa

### 2 Video recordings of Mhande song-dance performance documented on DVD

- **Performance of 4 song-dance at Marishongwe mutoro rain ceremony**

Track 1 Mvura ngainaye
Track 2 Haiwa yowerere
Track 3 Madzura uswa
Track 4 Gudo rakwira mawere

- **Staged performances of 6 song-dance for kurova guva ceremony**

Track 5 Tora wuta hwako
Track 6 Avo ndibaba
Track 7 Mudzimu wababa
Track 8 Mudzimu dzoka
Track 9 Dzinomwa munaSave
Track 10 Kamba iwe

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