

## Tanzanianisation and Practice of Indigenous Music Traditions in Church Worship in Dar es Salaam

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### Abstract

*This article concentrates on the Tanzanianisation process and the practice of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions used in church worship in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It shows that the Tanzanianisation of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions takes place when musical sounds from one ethnic culture is appropriated and is embraced by many cultures outside the original ethnic domain. This transformation involves many musical aspects including performance, performers, venues, musical instruments and musical attributes. In this process, the transference of musical sounds from one ethnic culture to other multi-ethnic cultures until the music assumes a national dimension. The article argues that migration affecting all ethnic groups in Tanzania has facilitated the Tanzanianisation of hitherto localised traditional music traditions identified with a particular ethnic group to become multi-cultural and become part of church music. Such Tanzanianisation that facilitates multi-cultural practicing of indigenous music traditions during church worship helps also to foster the preservation and promotion of Tanzania music traditions.*

**Keywords:** Tanzanianisation, Practice, Indigenous music traditions, Tanzanian music, Tanzanian church music.

### 1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, the use of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions in Church worship in Tanzania has been on the upswing more than ever before. This development has been abated by increased awareness of Tanzanian's indigenous music traditions in various activities, including church worship (Mbunga, 1963). It is also a manifestation of the Tanzania government's concerted efforts to promote indigenous cultures which started after attaining independence from Britain in 1962. In other words, the country's resolve to revive Tanzanian culture, including traditional music, marginalised and often treated with contempt during the colonial period is yielding dividends. From the political platform engendered by the first President of Tanzania (Tanganyika then) Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who formed a Ministry of culture and Youth in 1962 whose primary mission was to build national culture (Askew 2002: 171), the spirit spread all over the country and finally entered the church where indigenous Tanzanian music traditions had largely remained on the periphery. Since the advent of European Missionary-based Christianity in Africa, African music had largely been marginalised because the missionaries, out of ignorance, had regarded it as the evil. As a result, African converts were required only to sing Western-derived hymns during worship. This pattern was almost the same all over Sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria (see Olaniyan, 2004), Zimbabwe (see Turino, 2000), Ghana (see Kwasi Weredu, 1992) and Tanzania (see Sanga, 2001; Mkallyah 2005, Mbunga 1963). On the whole, this dismissal of indigenous African music from the church premises arose mainly due to colonial mentality, arrogance and sheer ignorance of the value of African traditions. However, things have changed for the better since then. In fact, what can now be described as the Tanzanianisation is a development that emerges from a turn in fortunes as indigenous African music traditions take root in church worship.

### 2. Theorising Tanzanianisation Music

I build on Thomas Turino's (2000:7) construing of cosmopolitanism as "a specific type of cultural formation and constitution of habitus that is translated in preview" define Tanzanianisation, which thrives on the concept of cosmopolitan music, and refers to appropriation of a music tradition from one ethnic culture by many cultures outside the original ethnic domain to make it part of a new cultural identity. As a result, musical sounds from different ethnicities and locales in Tanzania are given a new context in a new home (Sanga, 2010:63).

The basic characteristic of Tanzanianisation of ethnic sounds is the localisation of ethnic sounds in the new context whereby the new context (locale) accepts these cultural formations. The process of Tanzanianising sounds involves cultural and musical attributes, including rhythm, melody, musical instruments, music making and music performances. Under this multi-cultural practice, musicians draw from diverse indigenous Tanzanian music traditions and use them in church worship. In consequence, cultural and musical attributes travel endemic in one ethnic culture traverses to become part of a multi-ethnic and national identity within the set-up of the church, which is traditionally non-ethnic based.

It is against this backdrop that this article, first, interrogates the nature of Tanzanianising indigenous music traditions that take place in church worship in Dar es Salaam. Then, second, it examines the types of indigenous music traditions that have become Tanzanianised in Christian church worship in Dar es Salaam. In the discussion I will show how various music elements become transported from one particular locale to another locale and assume a more embracing identity by maintaining and developing the original cultural and musical elements. Finally, I examine various responses people have raised in relation to this Tanzanianisation process. The article opens by providing a brief description of Tanzania's indigenous music traditions.

Tanzania's indigenous music traditions, now part of the Church music genre, entered the church music traditions since the late nineteenth century initially on a rather negligible scale. Prior to being integrated in Christian worship, the indigenous music traditions constitute old music traditions performed by Tanzania's ethnic groups for a long period, dating back to the pre-European intervention period, and are still being practised in the rural areas, the bastion of indigenous African cultures. In many of Tanzania's societies, indigenous music traditions are known in Kiswahili as ngoma (dances) or nyimbo (songs) and are performed by Tanzanian ethnic groups using musical elements of a particular ethnic group. Tanzania's indigenous music traditions, therefore, are music traditions that can be identified with the culture of a particular people. In short, indigenous music traditions constitute local music that originated as ethnic music of Tanzania. Normally, this type of music is built upon Tanzanian-derived rhythms (Merriam, 1981:141), hence presenting an identifiable Tanzanian sound in form of diverse Tanzanian ethnic traditional dances and songs that traditionally used to accompany rituals, story-telling and recitations.

In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's indigenous music traditions now being performed as part of church services cover a wide range of traditions, some of indigenous usage, often called "traditional", used over many generations and more frequently performed in rural communities, and some of more current, urban-based, often called "contemporary/popular". Mapana (2007a), Mbunga (1963), Sanga (2006a) and Kubik (1987) note that indigenous Tanzanian music traditions used in churches, include Tanzanian dances, storytelling and ritual songs, as well as recitation and work-activity songs. Generally, there are many music traditions deployed in Christian worship in Dar es Salaam churches, mainly because Dar es Salaam is a cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic city that receives people from all over country. In consequence, Dar es Salaam represents a melting-pot of different cultures and music traditions which have been integrated to good effect during Christian worship. This music is used during weekly church services as well as during special Christian occasions.

As part of liturgical music, varied Tanzanian music traditions are used as part of Christian worship. These music traditions, organised and performed by choirs, also help church members to pray. Some of these traditions are indigenous, some newer, some with greater foreign influence than others. In fact, these diverse traditions account for varied musical attributes. The variety also represents the number of both local and foreign cultural influences. Some were formerly used as Tanzanian entertainment music; others were originally used in traditional rituals or celebrations; and there were those with roots in foreign entertainment that have become popular in Tanzania and, consequently, have been absorbed into the local music traditions. During Christian church worship, music is organised and performed by church members who are led by a choir. The choir also leads churchgoers during prayers, and serves as a connection between the Gospel, the priest, and the churchgoers. In Dar es Salaam, choirs, just like elsewhere, play a significant role in the life of the church. In fact, their repertoires and nice melodies have been known to attract people to the sermons in droves. The choir helps to identify the church through its performances (Barz, 1997: 138-143). Furthermore, the choir preaches the Gospel through music repertoires, thus helping to attract new converts into the Christian fold.

Many churches in Dar es Salaam have more than two choirs that perform every Sunday. At Kinondoni Lutheran Church, for example, there are four choirs that serve the mass.

These are the main congregation choir (*Kwaya Kuu*), Sayuni Evangelical Choir, Children's or Sunday School Choir, and the Women's choir. Similarly, there are four choirs at Manzese Roman Catholic Church. In the first mass, St. Cecilia Choir sings whereas St. Yuda Thadeo Choir participates in the second mass. In the third mass, it is St. Francis Choir's turn to perform, and St. Anne choir winds up the day's events by participating in the fourth mass. The children's choir serves the children mass. Both male and female are at liberty to take part in any of these choirs, with the exception of the women's and children's choirs.

### **3.0 Tanzanianising Indigenous Music Traditions in Church Worship in Dar es Salaam**

The effectiveness of the use of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions in Christian worship has been noted and discussed by many Christian church leaders, including Roman Catholic Bishop Kilaini (2005) of Dar es Salaam, Roman Catholic Archbishop Mayala of Mwanza, and Lutheran Bishop Kolowa<sup>1</sup>. These have noted the diverse indigenous Tanzanian music traditions in use during church worship and have noted how worship services can be "Tanzanianised" to help swell the ranks of members of the congregations. They have also noted the advantages that using indigenous music traditions have over Western traditions when it comes to motivating African congregations in their Christian worship.

In the Tanzanianising music process, there are music aspects that help the music from one culture to become transported to new context. Rev. Mbunga (1963) said that indigenous Tanzanian music can be used effectively in Christian churches if the melody, rhythm, text and musical instruments are appropriated from specific ethnic tunes and integrated into Christian teachings. In fact, Rev. Mbunga discourages the mixing of Tanzanian music traditions and foreign music elements, noting that it was the colonial mentality that resulted in the denigration of African cultural expressions as unworthy, barbaric, hence unsuitable for use in the holy communication and communion with God.

Drawing from Mbunga's point-of-view, I understand that music sounds from one culture—melody, rhythm, musical instruments and cultural performances—are major characteristics behind the Tanzanianising of indigenous music traditions. I call this process "comprehensive Tanzanianisation," the process that allows for the appropriation and adoption major music aspects from one culture specific to one ethnic group in the new multi-ethnic context. Therefore, Tanzanianising sounds is the localisation of sounds derived from the particular in the new context to assume a national identity without necessarily losing elements of the particular culture.

One can even talk about "miniature Tanzanianisation" used in music performances, which I define as outlining the basic characteristics of this music process with regard to its structural organisation. In this process the music draws its materials from one culture with the exclusion of musical instruments. This type of Tanzanianisation encourages the adoption of tunes or melody from one culture in the new context. Moreover, Tanzanianisation of music encourages the "mixing" of music aspects we witness in church worship. This blending process draws its materials from two different cultures. During music performances, music materials from one culture and musical instruments from another culture are blended to form a new whole.

In fact, there are many indigenous Tanzanian music traditions used in church worship in Dar es Salaam. In this regard, Mkallyah (2005:74) asserts that different traditional dances and songs that were used previously to accompany rituals, storytelling, recitations, and other cultural events are currently successfully being used in Christian church worship. The music traditions that have made the transition effectively include *linduku* of the Matengo, *ling'oma* of the Nyakyusa, *mdumange* of the Sambia, *sekei* of the Maasai, *mbeta* of the Safwa, *hiyari ya moyo* of the Nyamwezi and *nsimba* of the Fipa in Rukwa.

Mchome (1992), Barz (1997, 2000, 2005), Sanga (2001, 2006a) and Mkallyah (2005), who all specialise in ethnomusicology, have all confirmed the significance of Tanzanian music traditions in church worship. Barz (1997), for example, demonstrates how the missionaries eventually realised that the use of Tanzanian music tradition would actually benefit the church in Africa. In fact, the post-colonial period in Tanzania initiated significant changes among Tanzania's Christian churches. Barz notes that *kwaya* music in Tanzania bridges two dissimilar and often conflicting social systems, and often serves as a significant tool in facilitating and enforcing enculturation. Moreover, some post-independence publications deliberately encouraged the inclusion of more indigenous African melodies in liturgical and worship services. On the whole, the use of Tanzanian music traditions in the church services tends to bring about solidarity and unity among churchgoers.

### 3.1 Findings on Tanzanianisation of Indigenous Music Traditions in Church Worship

During the field study in Dar es Salaam, choirs from different denominations were observed. The repertoires of these choirs were then grouped in the following genres: indigenous music, popular or modern music, and foreign music. All these choirs use musical instruments, either foreign or/and local. The use of music instruments depends on the nature of the music tradition being performed. In indigenous music traditions, African traditional music instruments such as the drum, kayamba, manyanga, filimbi and njuga are used. Western music performances tend to deploy Western instruments. In popular or modern music, both African and Western instruments are used. However, Western instruments are also used in some of the modernised indigenous musical performances. In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, a keyboard with local drums accompanies the music performances. In the, Anglican, Lutheran, Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal churches guitars tend to accompany indigenous music traditions. They do not find any problem with using the keyboard or guitars when performing indigenous church music. The keyboard is considered holy in the church. As Mary Macha (35) explains,

The keyboard has been an instrument used in the church for a long time and it revealed the holiness of God. Even today, any song used in church must be accompanied by a keyboard even when other traditional music instruments such the drums and shakers are being used. This is due to the belief we have adopted from European with regard to the sanctity of God associated with the keyboard. In truth, however, all music instruments are the same. (In personal communication held on 12 February 2009)

As a result, the use of the keyboard in performing indigenous Tanzanian music is believed to have helped elevate Christian music to a level of the holiness associated with the church. Generally, there is no holiness in the musical instruments themselves; any instrument has its own function in a particular music. Still, the use of foreign instruments in indigenous music changes the music flavour and performance in general. Venant Mabula (38), one of the respondents and a Roman Catholic teacher of St Yuda Thadei Choir at Manzese, states that a Sukuma song can usually be identified as a Sukuma melody if it is sung traditionally with Sukuma music instruments such as ndono, ngoma, njuga and filimbi; however, if it is accompanied by foreign music instruments such as the keyboard, the song changes in terms of the time signature, rhythm, tempo, instruments and body movements.

During the study, it was established that Tanzanian indigenous music involves improvisation, body movements and it is often performed freely with emotions when it is accompanied with Tanzanian rather than European musical instruments (Makoye, 1996; Mapana, 2007). In this sense, the use of European instruments in indigenous Tanzanian music traditions tends—to some extent—to undermine the beauty of indigenous music. As Sanga (2006:252) points out:

Using traditional music materials in the context of popular church music is a way through which local music aesthetics interact with foreign music aesthetics....transfers the music from its original cultural context into a new cultural context, transforms not only the music but also the context and people's experiences of the context.

Basically, church music can be grouped in three categories depending on the music used in church services. The first group refers to the monophonic musical chant forms introduced and performed by the Roman Catholic missions. Here the Roman Catholics use single melodic lines accompanied by the harmonium or keyboard. "People were trained in seminaries and other educational institutions to play the keyboard that used to accompany congregational singing in Roman Catholic services," said Methodius Kilaini (In personal communication held on 29/11/2008). Later, the Roman Catholic Church also adopted the polyphonic musical form and used both during church services. The second category has to do with multi-part singing used by African ethnic groups. The singing under this tradition is indigenous in Africa in general and Tanzania in particular.

Usually, this form has two parts: the call and response. The "call" can be used either by the leaders or soloists and ends with an imperfect cadence. Sometimes, it ends with perfect cadence but it also needs to be completed by the second part. The "response" is the part that completes the first part with the ending of a perfect cadence. The multi-part singing is also characterised by the improvisation in one of the two parts—the call and the response. Sometimes both parts involve improvisation. The third category or source of church music is the homophonic vocal music introduced by Protestant missionaries. This form of singing is also known as the multiple voice parts singing whose melody is supported by other voices (Barz, 1997; Gunderson, 1999; Mapana, 2007; and Agawu, 2003). Generally, Tanzanianising sounds is a process of appropriating sounds from one culture and using them in another locale and should often be accompanied by musical instruments from that particular ethnic group.

Tanzanianising sounds does not only involve performing music from appropriated from one ethnic culture, that is in form of music sounds, its instruments, rhythm, harmony, performers and costumes but also involves performing the music without accompaniment.

In Dar es Salaam, many choirs meet in the evenings, three or four times every week. Although each choir has its own activities, generally all the choirs do prioritise basic church activities, primarily the mass (liturgies) by singing. They also run different projects such as music recordings and sale of records or CDs. These choirs also engage in sports, Bible study, and festivals. As Kennedy Lwiza (35), a teacher of Kwaya Kuu at Kinondoni Lutheran Church, narrated:

Our choir engages mostly in singing during church services. We also study the Bible [together] and engage in various sports activities... Economically, we record our songs and sell [the recordings]. Every year we participate in music festivals and singing competitions organised by our diocese (In personal communication held on 10 December 2008)

For the choir engaged in singing different pieces of ethnic music, the function of Tanzanian music traditions is also rooted in transmitting the knowledge of a particular cultural heritage as well as social identity from one generation to another (Nketia, 1997:69). Moreover, its lyrics or message also helps to educate people on diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Using such music, church members also cover economic as well as political issues. Furthermore, the choir also helps to bond people in social rites such as marriage, birth and death. At the Kinondoni Lutheran Choir, for example, “when a person marries/gets married each member of the choir participates fully as if it is his/her own wedding,” said Kennedy Lwiza (35), a teacher (In personal communication held on 10 December 2008). In all these activities, indigenous Tanzanian music traditions help to bring people together and become aware of community problems such as poverty and illiteracy. Generally, the choir is a community that helps people to come together, share different ideas and provide emotional support to one another, raising awareness and letting the members of the congregation be close to their God through singing (Barz, 1997).

Catholicism in Tanzania, and East Africa in general, was primarily brought by the Franciscan missionaries who first settled in Mozambique in 1506<sup>2</sup> and travelled to Zanzibar frequently to establish a Catholic mission there. On Mainland Tanzania, or Tanganyika, the Christian faith was introduced mainly in the eighteenth century by various missionaries who established different Christian denominations (Baur, 2005). British, Italian and German missionaries were some of the nationalities of missionaries from Europe who brought the Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic Church denominations. In addition, American missionaries also contributed to the growth of Christianity in the area by using different societies such as the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), Evangelical Mission Society for East Africa (EMS) and the American Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC).

Also, the White Fathers and Holy Ghost Fathers Corporation played a significant role in spreading Christianity in Tanzania and other parts of East Africa. In 1868, the Holy Ghost Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church settled in Bagamoyo, hence bringing the Roman Catholic Church to the Tanganyika Mainland. Due to the great number of Roman Catholic missionaries, the church started to spread its tentacles to different parts of the country. In 1952, the first African bishop, Bishop Laurian Rugambwa, was ordained (Baur, 2005) and Pugu later Dar es Salaam (St. Joseph cathedral) was the Headquarters. Although Roman Catholic missionaries, as other missionaries in Africa, used western hymns in church worship but they also started deploying eventually indigenous Tanzanian music traditions during worship. Understanding the history of the church also provided a framework for the use of indigenous music traditions. In fact, the more widespread a denomination was, the more likely it was to adopt more traditional tunes appropriated from indigenous Tanzanian music traditions. What follows is a discussion of the types of performances that benefited from indigenous music in Christian worship.

Just like in the traditional societies, many of the indigenous music traditions adopted in church worship tended to tally with the original function. Indeed, during Christian worship it was observed, for example, that some of the music performed had its roots in ceremonies related to the birth of a child. The church used this music because of its power to arouse emotions and generate happiness among church members. As the birth of child is an important event in society, many Tanzanian societies have music for the birth of a child. In Wasukuma society, when a woman gets a child or twins, the Mbina ya Mabasa dance is used to celebrate the event (Gunderson, 1999; Nketia, 1979). The Mbina ya Mabasa is usually performed by women at the home of twins.

The songs used in this performance emphasise taking care of children. In the church, this music is used to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ during the Christmas festive season. One of the indigenous music from Tanzania performed during the Christmas occasion is Wakindaga song.

**Figure 1: An Excerpt from Msewe Roman Catholic Church Choir's Song "Wakindaga" (My Transcription)**

♩ = 79

Le lo Ma ri a wa ki nda ga ku mi le mo zya kwe va kri stu vo se ku msu mbe la ge,

8  
Le lo Ma ri a wa ki nda ga ku mi le mo zya kwe va kri stu vo se ku msu mbe la ge,

15  
Le lo aah-- wa ki nda ga ku mi le mo zya kwe va kri stu vo se ku msu mbi la ge

This Wanyamwezi song was traditionally used during the birth of a child. The song was used to congratulate a woman who gets a child as a sign of victory in the family and society in general. During the church worship, this song is specifically performed during the Christmas festive season. *Wakindaga* (Jesus Victory) was accompanied with keyboard, drums and *kayamba*. The keyboard played the tune followed by drums and *kayamba* and later the singers joined in. The members of the congregation were familiar with or identified with the rhythmic patterns, melody, and harmony produced as evidenced by the level of excitement and enthusiastic response the song generated among performers as well as church members during the church performance of this song, transforming the church scene into a festive atmosphere. The song also helped the members of the congregation to identify with and relate to the message.

Generally, the messages of the birth-of-a-child songs adopted in church worship are based on the teachings of the Gospel. The performers, both male and female, are church members, who rely on vernacular or the Kiswahili language to communicate their message. In case of the *Wakindaga* song, the Nyamwezi language is used. The words are arranged according to the music used and dancing style is based on the culture of the ethnic group from which the song was appropriated. Explaining the changes that indigenous Tanzanian music traditions undergo when used in church worship, Venant Mabula (38), a teacher of St.Yuda Thadei Choir of Manzese Roman Catholic, said:

The traditional songs that we use in Christian church worship are being appropriated from our Tanzanian ethnic groups with their beats, rhythms, melodies, instruments and harmonies. We only change the lyrics since we use words from the bible. (In personal communication held on 10 January 2009)

In church worship, some of the birth-of-a-child songs are sung during the Christmas festive season, which under the Christian calendar marks the birth of Jesus Christ. This is true of the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations under study. On this aspect, Erasto Mark (32), a Msewe Roman Catholic teacher, comments:

For example among the Wanyamwezi the song *Wakindaga* was used to congratulate a woman on successfully giving birth. Nowadays, this song is being used during the Christmas festive season to hail the Virgin Mary for giving us Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. (In personal communication held on 10 January 2009)

This transformation allows the song to serve the new function in the church, without necessarily losing the original intention for which it was designed. In other words, the song manages to maintain the original function even under the new church setting, and is specifically used to thank God for giving humanity a sacred child. In this regard, the use of music for birth of a child in church helps to generate emotions among church members and make them to participate fully in church service.

It also emerged during the study that indigenous wedding music originally was performed in traditional societies during wedding celebrations was also used for a similar purpose during church worship. In many Tanzania societies, weddings are at the centre of human activity, knowledge, values and societal belief transmitted from one generation to another (Agordoh, 1994; Mlama, 1983). It is a coming-of-age process in which every human being in a given society is implicated.

In Wahaya society, for example, all members of society participate in wedding ceremonies. In fact, wedding music covers the whole process of marriage (Maburuki, 1998). There are songs meant for the bridegroom, and songs for the actual wedding celebration. Both of these wedding songs have specific roles to play in society. They teach young women how to live with their husbands, and men how to live with their wives. The church uses this type music in worship to generate an enthusiastic physical energy among congregational members during church performances. The songs tend to be sung in the vernacular using traditional instruments such as drums and whistles. The melodic structure of this song was based on the two parts, the call and the response. The instrumental rhythms, on the other hand, depend on the dancing style. Responding to a question on indigenous melody, Athanas Michael (35), a music teacher of Mbweni Roman Catholic choir, states:

Many traditional melodies we use in our church have two parts: the call and the response. The call part is usually sung by the leader and the answering part is sung by the chorus. (In personal communication held on 18 February 2009)

The songs are dominated by repetitions and improvisation. And, generally, everyone is allowed to participate in such performances. In many Tanzanian societies, wedding songs are usually sung in vernaculars. In Wahaya ethnic group, the lyrics depend on the occasion, and symbolic language is used (Maburuki, 1998). This helps adults to grasp the intended meanings, which the children, who also participate in the wedding, fail to get. Moreover, the appropriate dancing style depends on a particular culture.

In church where it has been adopted, indigenous music traditions serve Christian interests by helping to mobilise people to attend church services (Mkallyah, 2005). The following transcription *Shambani Mwake Bwana* (The Jesus Field) is one of the wedding songs:

**Figure 2: An Excerpt from St. Alban Anglican Church Choir's Song "Shambani Mwake Bwana" (my transcription)**

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 67. The score consists of six staves of music with corresponding lyrics in Swahili. The lyrics are: Sha mba ni mwa ke Bwa na ku --na ma vu no me ngi. me ngi, wa vu na ji ni wa cha ch ka ti ka sha mba la Bwa na ko ndoo wa me za ga a twe--- nde tu wa ku sa----- nye----- Shi ke ni nji a, shi ke ni nji a, hu ko wa li ko po te a wa nyu ku e le ke a, ku e le ke a, wa nyu mba ya I sra e li wa nyu mba ya I sra e li. Hu bi ri ni hu bu ri ni m ki se ma u fal me wa mbi ngu ni u me ka ri bi a, u me ka ri bi a----- a ma ni i we hu mu nyu mba ni i we hu mu, ka mwe ha tu o ndo ki ka mwe ha tu o ndo ki.

This Wafipa song is performed in church worship during weddings. In church, the performance of this song excites and makes people participate by singing, clapping and dancing. These wedding indigenous music traditions are also deployed during the offertory because of their power to excite and put churchgoers in a celebratory mood that makes them more generous in making their contributions. This celebratory mood associated with these songs stem from the functions for which the songs were designed and performed—a happy occasion. Weddings are a coming-of-age process in which every human being is implicated.

Also, wedding tunes play a significant role in catalysing the people’s physical responses. Indeed, the music makes many church members participate in giving generously. Figure 3 provides another traditional wedding song used during worship

**Figure 3: An Excerpt from Msewe Roman Catholic Church Choir’s Song “*Twendeni kwa Bwana*” (my transcription)**

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves (Soprano, Alto, Bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are in Swahili.

**System 1:**

- Solo:** Twe nde ni kwa Bwa na tu pe le ke ni Twendeni kwa Bwa
- Chorus:** Twendeni kwa Bwa na tu pe le ke ni

**System 2 (Measures 6-10):**

- Solo:** na tu pe le ke ni twe nde---ni twe nde---ni
- Chorus:** twendeni kwa Bwa na tu pe le ke ni

**System 3 (Measures 11-15):**

- Solo:** twendeni kwa Bwa na tu pe le ke ni vi pa ji vye tu----- tu ka m pe Bwa na-----.
- Chorus:** twendeni kwa Bwa na tu pe le ke ni vi pa ji vye tu----- tu ka m pe Bwa na-----.

The song *Twendeni Kwa Bwana* is a wedding tune originating from the Wahehe of Iringa region in Southern part of Tanzania, often used during the church offertory. The change of the context in which the traditional wedding tune was being played does not undermine the song’s effectiveness. When the tune was played during a thanksgiving church service, the performers and members of the congregation actively participated and gave to the church as much as their souls were motivated to give. They contributed money, or other possessions such as poultry, pigs, soap and sugar, just as they do in traditional weddings.



The happy feelings generated by the wedding songs facilitated the gift-giving, which translated into making contributions towards building the church during the church service. The pulling power of this song was in its tune and rhythm that compelled most of the churchgoers to participate actively during the performance. Their active participation also heightened their religious experience.

The transformation of what once were children's game songs also followed the same pattern. Since the performance had now shifted to the church, the change in venue and message of the content also changes. Performers of the children's games songs used in church service are church members regardless of gender and the language used is Kiswahili, the national language, as opposed to the original indigenous language. In fact, the lyrics used in the adopted songs are taken from the Bible and the dancing style is no longer based on the children's steps. The emergent dance style can now be choreographed. However, it has been modified and arranged as a prayer song. Its danceable rhythm tends to move people to dance. Moreover, the use of Kiswahili language in indigenous Tanzanian music traditions tends to emphasise the scriptural lyrics in the song. On the whole, the use of cultural music attributes such as rhythm, melody and instruments tends to touch people's feelings and make churchgoers feel closer to God. Usually, these modified traditional children's game songs are used in mobilising Christians in their prayers, participation in church contributions, and social mobilisation to build Christian harmony.

In many Tanzanian societies, children's songs depend on their age-group. There are songs used by children under two years, or children yet to start attending kindergarten; there are also songs used for kindergarten children, and songs sung by children in primary school. Generally, these songs are sung to fulfil children's goals (Nketia 1997). The basic characteristics of these songs are: brevity and simplicity in diction; they have the call and the response, or chorus; they are also repetitive. The rhythmic patterns of these songs depend on the children's games as well as the musical instruments in use (Finnegan, 1992). When children's game songs are used during the church service, some changes appear inevitable in terms of venue, performers and function. In church services, the song's structure such as the melody, rhythm, key and instruments are adapted to suit Christian Church worship. When a song is performed in church, many people participate by singing, clapping and dancing due to the song's tune and rhythm they are familiar with.

Dancing to these hitherto traditional children's music during the church worship brings out a negative attitude amongst members of the congregation. On this development Erasto Marki (32) explains:

Moreover, the church worship does not allow a blind-imitation of everything associated with traditional songs and dances. For example, extreme wriggling of the waist is not allowed in church because it undermines church teachings and may erode Christian morals. (In personal communication held on 10 January 2009)

In other words there has to be caution on what constitutes permissible. Nevertheless, these former children's game songs have been found useful in mobilising church-goers. As Magreth John (33), a member of Ubungo Anglican Choir, elaborates:

In church worship, traditional music helps to mobilise the people towards Christian worship. It helps people to pray, encourage the people for church offering and contribution. In other places people move from one church to another to follow the music used (In personal communication held on 11 February 2009).

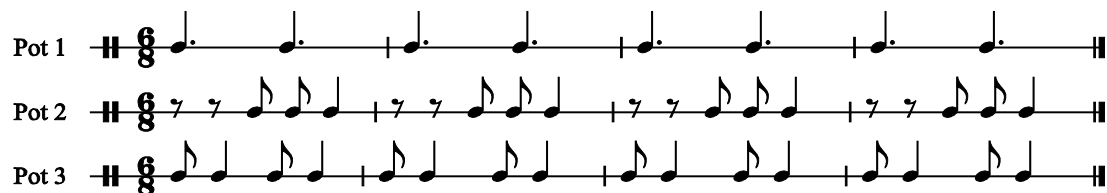
Indeed, these appropriated traditional melodies still have the call and the response parts and are repetition-dominated songs (Nketia, 1979). Improvisation was also identified as a basic characteristic of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions when applied in church worship. In addition, indigenous musical instruments were used to accompany these traditional melodies (Gunderson, 1999). The evidence submitted in this discussion suggests that different musical instruments accompany the performance of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions in church worship. These musical instruments include local ones such as drums, njuga, kayamba, vingwengwe, vikwaruzo, ndono, zeze and filimbi and foreign ones such as the electric organ, piano, electric guitars, western whistles and brass instruments. Although different instruments are used in church worship, the local instruments dominate these music traditions. These instruments make people experience their culture as well as the tunes used e.g. vingwengwe instruments. Figure 5 demonstrates the use of traditional musical instruments by one of the choirs:

**Figure 5: Members of Msewe Lutheran Church Choir Playing “Vingwengwe”(Pots) during Their Performance (My Transcription)**



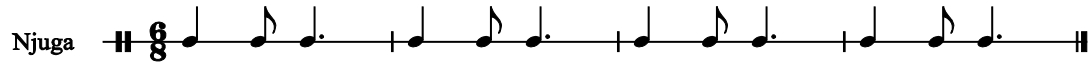
*Vingwengwe* are Wafipa musical instruments, which were originally used by the Wafipa of Rukwa when performing the *nsimba* dance. *Vingwengwe* (pots) are played together with two drums while the *njuga* (ankle bells) are tied to the legs of the performers. Moreover, *filimbi* (small flutes) are added to bring out the rhythm of this music. In church worship, different songs from the Wafipa society are used with *nsimba* dance songs. The Msewe Lutheran Choir, for example, performs the *nsimba* dance song *Shambani Mwake Bwana* (In the Lord's Garden) during Sunday services. The performance starts when the three pot-players begin playing. The first pot is called yakolechi (referred to as grandmother). This pot is played slowly and it produces a heavy sound. The second pot is called yamama (referred to as the mother) and is played at a high speed. It also produces a normal sound. The third pot yasungu (referred to as daughter) is played at an even higher speed. This pot produces a slightly high pitch. The last two drums, katutu (or babies) are added, with one drum being played fast. It produces a high pitch. The other katutu drum is played at a moderate speed to produce a low pitch; it helps to maintain the tempo. Hands play both drums. The names of these instruments relate to the way they are played and the sound they produce. All the three pots are played using vigoda, three-legged traditional African stools, which are kept on top of the inverted pots (upside down-bottoms up) as Figure 5 illustrates. The players then grind the African tools around the pots. They twist them as if steering the tools from right to left, and, in doing so, the friction emits sounds that produce rhythm. The rhythm produced by these pots can be exemplified by Figure 6:

**Figure 6: Vingwengwe Rhythmic Patterns from Msewe Lutheran Church choir's song Shambani Mwake Bwana (my transcription)**



In church music, *njuga* produces different rhythms, depending on the respective cultural influence. There is no uniform way of playing the *njuga* during the Christian church worship since this depends on the song being played. When the *njuga* used to accompany the *nsimba* dance song *Shambani mwake Bwana* the following rhythm is produced:

**Figure 7: Vingwengwe Basic Rhythmic Patterns from Msewe Lutheran Church choir's Song *Shambani Mwake Bwana* (My Transcription)**



The combination of vingwengwe and njuga rhythmic patterns in *Shambani Mwake Bwana* performances bring out the beauty of music produced by the different musical instruments used during the performance. The churchgoers participate in the church music performance by singing, clapping, nodding and dancing..

Christian lyrics are an important part of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions used in church worship. The language used in indigenous Tanzanian music traditions in church services stems from tonal languages, which include vernaculars such as Kinyamwezi, Kisukuma, Kihaya, Kihehe and Kigogo. Many songs in church worship, however, are sung in Kiswahili, the national language. Each word is divided into syllables, and each syllable has a pitch or note, which presents a certain sound. The importance of the lyrics is seen through the combination of the music as sound and language, rhythm, instruments, gestures and dancing. The relationship between language and melody is based on tone, whereby tone distinguishes words the way consonants and vowels do. On the whole, the message of the songs was constructed through lyrics which differ from one song to another. Generally, the lyrics and message of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions used in church worship are taken from the Bible. It was also noted that when the singers know the language used in the song, they performed with confidence and expressed their inner feelings. On the whole, the singing, clapping, nodding of heads and dancing that accompany these performances, hence a heightened religious experience among churchgoers, appear dialectically connected to the performers and audience members appreciating both the words and the music.

### 3.2 Perceptions on the Changing Function of Indigenous Music during Worship

Generally, indigenous Tanzanian music traditions are used as cultural expressions in terms of identifying a specific culture (Mapana, 2007). As the melody and rhythm remain unchanged, the music helps to identify the culture of that particular society. The main function of this music depends on changing needs of society (Agawu, 2003:98). Because of their forcefulness and attractiveness, indigenous Tanzanian music traditions serve the church, especially considering that the songs are modified to reflect biblical messages. The songs help the church members to know the Gospel, educate them on prayers as well as encourage and mobilise them towards building the church through tithes and other contributions. Performed in church, the indigenous music teaches church members to live as Christian believers, respecting the Christian values reinforced through these songs. As Mary John (28), a member of Ubungo Anglican Choir, noted:

The function of traditional music now has changed. Currently the main function of traditional music is to teach people to pray to God, but in the past it was used as a ritual dance or at a wedding where a girl was taught how to live with her husband. (In personal communication held on 15 February 2009)

Overall, the function of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions has changed in terms of performance place, performers, lyrics or context and musical instruments. Though church worship generally uses a blend of indigenous Tanzanian music traditions, Western and modern music, there is usually no demarcation in the way they are used. Sometimes, the mass can start with Western music and then continue with indigenous Tanzanian music traditions and finally end with modern music. Such a combination also helps to sustain the church members' varied interests in music: some churchgoers want Western-oriented music, others popular and others indigenous Tanzanian music. The music is also used in different occasions such as weddings, send-offs and kitchen-parties where the moral messages contained in the songs help to pass on the teachings from one generation to the next. When indigenous Tanzanian music traditions are deployed in church service, the basic function changes (Agawu, 2003). Instead of transmitting the values of a traditional society, these indigenous music traditions now serve the church. They also help to teach people how to pray different prayers, bring them closer to God. They additionally help to build the church by converting people; therefore, they play a crucial role in building the church as well as the society in general.

Nevertheless, traditional music also identifies the culture of a particular society from which the music was appropriated (Nketia, 1979). To large extent this music helps to change the people's behaviour through their performances, function and contents.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Through performing indigenous Tanzanian music traditions in church worship, the sounds from one culture became well known in church as well as in the country in general. The music appropriated from one locale manages to achieve similar functions in a changed multi-ethnic and multi-cultural church environment. Inadvertently, the deployment of these songs in this manner is also helping to preserve and develop cultural and musical attributes such as melody, rhythm and musical instruments of a particular ethnic group on a wider scale. One also has to take note of the four-part voices used in a unison harmonic structure. Furthermore, the lyrics drawn from the Bible in Kiswahili (Mchome, 1987) help to spread Christian teachings. Both male and female performers are church members from different ethnic groups, hence helping to promote plurality. But the dancing style is mainly based on the culture of the society from which the original music tradition has been taken. Consequently, church music in this fashion helps to identify the society in terms of music structure, music instruments, techniques of playing the instruments and dancing style. Therefore, the Tanzanianisation has been a good omen.

#### **Notes**

1. Bishop Kolowa, a former Lutheran Bishop in Tanzania, for example, says, "The church has encouraged Tanzanian musicians to put an effort into composing and thus endorsing the worthiness of African music" (as quoted in Barz, 1997:137)
2. It is also reported that in 1499 - Portuguese Augustinian missionaries arrived in Zanzibar (<http://home.snu.edu/~HCULBERT/line.htm>).

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