

“Diffusionism” and its Effects on Traditional Music (A case study of Contemporary Traditional Music by Victor Kunonga).¹

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Abstract

As the world is fast becoming a global village due to technological advancement, musical elements among other things have ceased to solely belong to their cultural proponents. Different musical cultures are merging in a process of diffusionism thereby forming rainbow musical cultures – musical hybrids representative of cultures of origin and the contexts of their adaptation. Worldwide, different factors drive the process of diffusionism among them colonialism, media, industrialisation, education, technology, religion and migration. In Zimbabwe, colonisation inaugurated diffusionism, driven by technology and industrialisation, two processes which are closely related to it. Hence musicians like any other artists have had to strike a balance between adapting to the changes brought about by colonialism at the same time retaining their original identity and sense of self. Colonisation led to the adoption of certain elements of western music such as four-part singing, instrumentation and performance context, and commerce into traditional music performance; which resulted in a hybrid music style popularly known in Zimbabwean music circles as “contemporary” traditional music. I contend that although diffusionism has impacted traditional music styles, they remain the anchor which informs the basis on which contemporary traditional music is made.

Key Words: Diffusionism, Identity, Colonialism Acculturation, Technology, Hybridisation, Globalisation, Contemporary Traditional Music.

Introduction

Since time immemorial, music has remained an integral element of African culture and is expressed both as and in culture. It plays a pivotal role in the people’s culture and is inseparable from their’ everyday lives (Darden 2004, Nketia 1964). The article shows how diffusionism has impacted traditional music performance and given rise to contemporary traditional music - a term used locally in reference to

the hybridisation of Zimbabwean traditional and western styles and instruments as well as cultural practices.² It analyses contemporary traditional songs composed and performed by Victor Kunonga – a renowned Afro-jazz musician who is following closely in the footsteps of the legendary Oliver Mtukudzi affectionately known to his fans as Tuku. The songs selected and analysed in this study are identified by the dance styles associated with the music and they reveal the centrifugal cultural images of Zimbabwe.

Methodology

I defined the word observe contextually to explain its applicability in the context of this paper. Powell (1996) defines observation as information gleaned from watching and noting. Observing therefore means being able to look and listen for particular information in order to gain insight into a given situation. Powell (*ibid.*) further says that analyzing means separating something into its parts to find out their nature or value. In this paper the term refers to the examination of the documents as and the observations of contemporary traditional music to see its constituents and establish the effects of diffusionism on Zimbabwean traditional music. The analysis of the data gathered through observations of the band rehearsals and live performances and documents is based on the recorded version of the very same songs that Kunonga performs at his live shows. At this stage I employ critical listening to address sonic aspects of diffusionism in terms of vocals and instruments (Starr and Waterman 2003:2-3). Trying to separate recorded music from live performance would be repetitive; hence the columns are bunched and collapsed as in quantitative research with comparisons inherent in the analysis (Cone and Foster 1993). Also the issues under analysis in these two documents are the same as they both deal with the hybridisation of traditional music with western music elements which resulted in its contemporary versions. I therefore had to analyze the data from the observations and the documents at the same time.

I could have observed many rehearsals. Yet due to power cuts I only managed to observe two rehearsals and two live performances scheduled at the time of data collection. So this particular analysis and interpretation encompasses comparison with the findings from interviews and questionnaires which are the other data collection instruments I used. I have had to observe live performances as the studio-recording environment is different from the live performance settings to necessitate triangulation and data validation. The differences I noted as the effects

of diffusionism are presented in the sections on dances, technology and instruments.

Zimbabwe Traditional Dances

Cross fertilization between music and dance is a unifying theme in the traditional African cultures (Chernoff 1969 in Gioia 1997) because of the functionality of both concepts in the day to day life of Africans. Chernoff (*ibid.*) further argues that for an African, understanding a certain type of music means knowing the dance that accompanies it. This denotes the inseparability of dance and song which according to (Kahari 1986: 57) cannot be separated from the drum. In Shona culture, there is hardly a dance that goes without the accompaniment of a song (*ibid.*). Kahari is supported by Rormer (1999:45) who argues that music and dance have been an integral part of everyday life in Zimbabwe. Consequently, contemporary music performed by Kunonga is grounded in traditional music, although its context changed from traditional to cosmopolitan with hotels, clubs and pubs becoming the hubs of its performance. Herbst et.al (2003:8) contends that naming musical genres often entails ascribing social function; meaning that performance is integrated into the social fabric as needs it must fulfill (Gioia 1997). In his music, Kunonga made use of some Shona traditional dance styles to depict society's current needs though the circumstances are different from those under which traditional music is made. Consequently, each of the dances I identified with Kunonga's music traditionally serve specific social functions. The drumming patterns identify the origins of the dances and their performers. Additionally, as determined by the lyrics that accompany each of the songs I analysed, the music addresses the immediate concerns of the context of Kunonga's performances.

Whereas traditional music would be performed to appease the spirits of the deceased among other traditional music functions, Kunonga, like many other popular musicians, performs the music to earn a living and to cater for the current needs of his fans. The commercialisation of traditional music has seen people paying for the entertainment it provides. This phenomenon is far removed from the original purpose of the traditional music; hence an aspect of Western music traditions fused with Zimbabwean traditional music. Pongweni (1982: i) says that music is the barometer of the mood of our people through its expression of themes such as exhortation, defiance, supplication, appeasement and celebration. In the same vein, a lyric song portrays a single definite mood or event which can be moralizing, political, patriotic, religious, or humorous (Milton 1996). Although the context of performance has changed Kunonga's music still serves an integral purpose in society

in that it addresses the problems which bedevil the people in their day to day lives as illustrated by the analysis below.

Given this background to traditional music and dance, below are the four dance styles which were identified with the songs Kunonga performed and chosen for the purposes of this study from his two albums “*Ndanyengetedzwa*” and “*Uyo*”.

DINHE (KATEKWE): *Mayidarirei* (Why Did You Do That?).

Dinhe also known as *Dandanda* is a Korekore ceremonial dance originally performed at religious rites and ceremonies but has been recontextualised to joyful occasions (Encyclopedia Zimbabwe 1987: 102).³ Kunonga performs *Dinhe* in a cosmopolitan context as a contemporary popular music genre fused with foreign ingredients such as western instruments and voices. Kunonga and his drummer told me during my interviews with them that *Dinhe* is their home ground from which all the other drumming styles emanate.⁴ Kunonga is Korekore by origin and his pursuance of Korekore traditional music in a popular music performance arena is an expression of his culture as music. Kunonga therefore reduces African culture to music (Johns 1959).

Mayidarireiyee

Why did you do that?

Tsotsi mairivanzireiyee

Concealing a crook/cheat/social misfit

Mochitongwa kubata bata vana

You are being charged for molesting children

Mochitongwa mujere

You are charged in jail.⁵

The song addresses social propensities prevalent among most local traditional families whereby heinous offences committed by family members are not disclosed as doing so is tantamount to displaying dirty laundry in public which is believed to tarnish the family name and image. Given the cosmopolitan context of his music performance, Kunonga queries the silence. He is asking why such social misfits as those who molest children are protected at the expense of the violated vulnerable victims. Through this song, Kunonga warns society that the law eventually catches up with lawbreakers and jail is their final destiny. The prevalence of the HIV/AIDS scourge plagues the Zimbabwean society with adverse consequences. Child headed families is one such a scenario, hence children are rendered vulnerable to both physical and emotional abuse by close and distant relatives and friends.

Kunonga singles out child molestation or rape - a double edged form of abuse which destroys children at both physical and psychological levels. Kunonga

identifies fathers and uncles as perpetrators because men popularly commit this type of crime, although cases of women who molest young boys and men are on the rise locally. Currently, women are on record in the print media raping men and society makes a lot more noise about it than it does when females and minors are molested by men. Nonetheless, the bottom line is that rape is wrong and not addressing it on an open forum is unacceptable as it perpetuates moral decadence. Kunonga advocates for transparency, justice, love, responsible parenthood and guardianship.

The theme of this song suits the modern-day cosmopolitan context as its lyrics do not apply in the proper traditional ceremonial context of *Dinhe*. I call this conflictual impact in that the meaning of the text and original purpose of the dance clash. My observation confirms the evolutionary nature of music which Waterman describes as not static (Campbell 1996). Culture changes as new ideas are adopted and this is evidenced by the changing roles of the traditional dance herein (Jones 1992). Kunonga cited technology as one sure way of keeping abreast with globalization. He stressed that it is acceptable that traditional music be adapted to the urban setting to remind the current generations who are based in cities and towns, of who they are as well as link them with their past. His bassist said that music needs to move with time.

The acoustic guitar introduces the song backed by the drum kit. The acoustic guitar is an instrument with so many personalities and moods, evidenced by its versatile expressiveness versatility and can be manipulated to depict different types of themes, be it excitement or sadness (Gioia 1997). In *Mayidarirei*, Kunonga used it to depict the somber mood and sadness which surrounds the rape of minors. All the instruments in this song responded to the lead by the acoustic guitar, which plays the melody, emulating the human voice, an ability central to jazz (*ibid.*). This led some of the questionnaire respondents to say that Kunonga plays jazz music which he confirmed adding that he fuses it with traditional music, particularly, *Dinhe* drumming style with jazz vocal techniques.

Instead of African traditional drums, the percussion instruments which comprised the complete western drum kit, which comprised membranophones and idiophones in the form of cymbals and chimes, the congas and the guitars played the multiple rhythms. All these instruments formed the rhythmic base in this song where rhythms were alternated and syncopated spontaneously as dynamic devices (Kreinbiel cited in *ibid.*). African traditional music performance requires cooperation and accuracy (Anderson 1981) since discord in the African sense means 'disagreeing' or rather going against the rest of the group and distorting the smooth

flow of a performance. This means that one's playing becomes a cause for concern only when it does not complement the rest of the group. Most questionnaire respondents said that Kunonga's music keeps them on their feet dancing the night away due to its irresistible rhythmic pull. The audience imitated the traditional *Dinhe* dance moves and swayed remorsefully to the song.

The purpose of the live performance was both social and commercial since Kunonga and the rest of the band members all agreed that they are professional musicians. They concurred that music was their source of livelihood, hence the fans paid for the entertainment. The form is lead and response, narrative and poetic by nature dominated vocables which were effectively utilized as the backing vocalists imitated mourning female voices throughout the song. These are African musical elements which Kunonga fused with western four part vocals harmonized with the rest of the western and traditional instruments as the lead vocals overlapped with the backing vocals. The keyboard programmed violins ends the song with an orchestra touch.

MTAKUMBA: Munyamai? (What bad luck?).

Mbakumba originated among the *Karanga* used to celebrate good harvests but now essentially performed for social purposes (Zimbabwe Encyclopedia 1987:102). It is a celebratory dance performed at weddings, beer parties and other joyful occasions. There is contextual change in the function of the dance in that Kunonga incorporates it in a cosmopolitan social context, where contemporary traditional music is performed before a paying audience. In its original traditional setting the dance served the function of celebrating bumper harvests where patrons did not pay for the entertainment. I discovered that in most cases live performances are scheduled for the weekends when the fans are free to visit their favorite pass time places for relaxation.

Traditional music must reflect the concerns of the society in which it exists (Karolyi 1995). Consequently, the theme of this song is functional in both the traditional and contemporary contexts because in both instances people experience bad luck in their lives. In the traditional setting, some would seek the intervention of their ancestors by holding cleansing ceremonies or if they are Christians some consult prophets who would get rid of the bad luck for them or resort to prayer and fasting. However, it is common to find the so called Christians resorting to traditional means of solving the bad luck problem after all else fail such that some are forced to perform traditional ceremonies even if they are Christians by orientation.

Here are the lyrics of the song in which Kunonga bemoans his bad luck:

<i>Ndaswerera ini ndaaa</i>	I took me the whole day
<i>Munyamai wandaita?</i>	What bad luck have I experienced?
<i>V: Ndozvibvunza ndaiteiko</i>	I ask myself what I have done
<i>Ndachera (x2)</i>	I have dug
<i>Ndazunza masanzu</i>	I have shaken the soil off the grass
<i>Zuwa riiyee iyeie</i>	The day
<i>V and B Vs: Ravira hapana chandawana (x3)</i>	[The sun] is setting but I have not got anything
<i>Ndozvibvunza ndaiteiko</i>	I ask myself what I have done
<i>Ndatema</i>	I have cut [trees]
<i>Ndasimudza matanda</i>	I lifted logs
<i>Ndozvibvunza ndaiteiko</i>	I ask myself what I have done
<i>Ndatema (x2)</i>	I have cut
<i>Ndasimudza matanda</i>	I lifted logs
<i>Chorus: As above.</i>	
<i>Ndatema, ndachera, ndasimudza matanda</i>	I have cut, I dug, I lifted logs
<i>Munyamai wandaita</i>	What bad luck have I experienced
<i>Male B Vs: Haa tendere ha tendereee (x3)</i>	Going in circle
<i>Ndaswereraaaa</i>	I took me the whole day
<i>Hapana chandawanaa</i>	I did not get anything

Whereas the purpose of *Mbakumba* is to celebrate as mentioned above, Kunonga employs it to mourn his bad luck. There is what I refer to as conflictual impact whereby the theme of the song does not agree with the original purpose of the dance. I think Kunonga chose the *Mbakumba* style for its original celebratory purpose so that as his fans relax in the context of the clubs and bars where he performs, they reflect on their lives. Kunonga communicates the problem most people face in their lives as they find themselves failing to succeed in every endeavour they undertake.

Music is every society's vehicle of communication of values central to its people (Hammond-Tooke 1974). The text of the song prompted the questionnaire respondents to label the song a social commentary. *Munyamai* is a song in which someone who has tried it all in life but to no avail laments. Kunonga says that he has tried cutting trees and probably selling the logs as firewood but the sun sets before he realises his dues. Even if it rains and he grows crops, his harvests are inconsequential. Kunonga's songs mirror what people in society go through hence his compositions are representative of his folk (Pongweni 1982). The band members responded that their clientele wanted educative lyrics and this song is testimony to that. Kunonga said that he composed this particular song after realising that bad luck affects people indiscriminately be they traditionalists or Christian converts.

Kunonga's instrumentation in this song prompts one to stamp the floor with their feet in time with the *mbakumba* rhythm inherent in it. The flute used in the song *Munyamai* imitates the human voice at the same time projecting a sound normally produced by some wild bird deep down in the forest. The atmosphere created by the sound of the flute complements the theme since the person is 'hunting' for survival, and sounds hopeless as if lost in the jungle. The tone of the flute creates a melancholic and solitary atmosphere normally associated with emotional distress and hopelessness. During the observations, the highly percussive rhythm kept the audience on their feet as they shook their heads to the groove during the live performances. The shakers, *mbira*, clapping, the lead guitar plays the melody imitating the lead voice and the acoustic guitar responds with a laidback presence which took centre stage.

SAMBA: Mandirasa (You have neglected me)

The song is introduced by the acoustic guitar which is then joined by keyboard programmed violins which gives the introductory part of the song a western orchestra music feel.

Lead: <i>Mudondo! Imo mudondo</i>	In the forest! Right there in the forest
<i>Mudondo, imo mudondo</i>	In the forest! Right there in the forest
<i>Mugomba rizere nemvura</i>	In a pit full of water
<i>Mugomba! Imo mugomba</i>	In the pit! Right there in the pit
<i>Mumoto, imo mumoto</i>	In the fire! Right there in the fire
<i>Mumoto! Mondipisa mwana wenyu</i>	In the fire! You are burning me your child
Chorus: <i>Zviri mumaziso haashi Zviri mumaziso haashi</i>	We can see that, calm down (x2)
<i>Hamuzivi ramangwana muchandisuwa imi</i>	You don't know the future you will miss me
<i>Hamuzivi ramangwana muchandichema imi</i>	You don't know the future you will mourn me
Chorus	
<i>Imo mumvura necho chimvura mabwe chondirova ini (x2)</i>	In the water the hailstorm pelts me
<i>Imo mumoto</i>	In the fire
<i>Mumoto mondipisa mwana wenyu (x2).</i>	In the fire you burning me your child
Chorus	
<i>Ohoo mandiraasa, mondipisa mwana wenyu (x2)</i>	You have neglected me, you are burning me your child
Lead: <i>Oh mandirasa, mandirasa</i>	You have neglected me! You neglected me!
<i>Hoo mandiraasa kundipisa mwana wenyu.</i>	You have neglected me, you are burning me your child

Samba is defined (online) as a lively Brazilian ballroom dance with strong African influences in four-four time. Samba is known as a contemporary type of rhythmic dance music (Gioia 1997). The third version of the definition (online) is that it is a Brazilian dance of African origin in duple time, with a syncopated rhythm. The instrumentation is highly percussive and rhythmic as was apparent during the live performance of the above mentioned song. Since the third definition says that

Samba is African by origin, this means that Kunonga is repossessing his African heritage through music, though now with borrowed robes in the form of the instruments used and the beat. I therefore concluded that the African character of samba music is the reason why the audience identifies with Kunonga's song despite the change of instruments and beat. In essence samba is a modification of African rhythms by the Brazilians who in another definition (online) are said to claim it as their own native dance, which they say, started as a street dance. The Carnival dances that became so popular in the Diaspora were associated with the African slaves in that those were the days designated for them to celebrate their own cultural activities and music was central to these occasions. Kunonga said that he listens to local, regional and international music of all types, which explains his encounter with Samba and his decision to adopt its sound to this song.

The theme in *Mandirasa* is based on a neglected offspring who feels that the ancestors are not rendering him enough protection. The offspring complains that the ancestors leave him falling into pits, getting into fire and even getting lost in the jungle. Kunonga uses metaphor whereby the jungle represents the struggles and challenges people face while on earth. The hidden meaning is that today's world has become first, the pit which people fall into if not careful and second, a jungle in which the reckless get lost. Third, the world has also become highly inflammable and volatile to those who are reckless who exercise careless conduct. This is applicable in this day and age of moral debauchery, the HIV/AIDS scourge, economic hardships, rampant corruption, rape and dishonesty/fraud. Kunonga is thus a social watchdog, a social commentator who addresses and conscientises society about daily challenges. Though the context has changed the role of the song has not, because Kunonga's songs reflect societal concerns in a contemporary context (Karolyi (1995). There is consolidatory impact between text and context because samba is a contemporary dance which addresses relevant contemporary issues.

MHANDE: Kana! (No ways!/Never!/ Impossible!)

Mhande dance is associated with the Midlands people especially the Shurugwi and Mvuma areas. It is said by Asante (2000) that traditional clothing is very important during the performance. The Zimbabwe Encyclopedia (1987: 102) defines *Mhande* as a social and entertainment dance; while Rustate (2011) defines it as an indigenous religious musical genre of the Karanga. Pure *Mhande* traditional dance uses drums; primary and secondary idiophones and hands are clapped in time with the drum rhythms. Kunonga made use of the drum kit to play the Mhande beat while the congas play the gap filling role in the entire song.

Unondidarireiko
Unondivengereiko

Why are you doing that to me
Why do you hate me

Unonditukireiko iwe	Why are you insulting me
Hunzi ndinoona	He says he is clever
Hunzi ndinofambaa	He says he travels
Hunzi ndinotuka ini	He says he is insulting
<i>Chorus:</i> Handiende kani (x3)	I am not leaving (x3)
Zirume rinorova	A man who is physically abuse
Zirume rinoponda	A murderous husband
Zirume rinoshusha iro	A nagging troublesome husband
<i>Chorus:</i> Ngariende zvaro (x3)	Let him go (x3)

The theme Kunonga addresses in this song, apply to both the traditional and the neo-traditional contexts where troublesome and abusive men are common. In the traditional culture, women were expected to persevere even their husbands abuse them because of the belief that women make the home. Kunonga uses the song to entertain the audience gathered at a contemporary social place; hence, there is consolidatory impact in terms of context, theme and text. Marriage related problems are social issues people discuss at social gatherings. The title of the song shows that the determination of the wife to save her marriage when she says 'Never!' In other words the woman is saying she will not allow herself to be driven out of the home as she says in the first chorus that she is not leaving and in the second chorus she gives the husband the option to leave the matrimonial home.

Jones (1992) says that new ideas are adopted as culture changes and so do the elements that define it. In the song *Kana!*, the wife refuses to be intimidated by her husband who is a bully, unlike the traditional context which expects women not to question men's actions or motives. She holds on to her marriage by all means even as the husband is boasting about his bad behavior. Hyperbolically Kunonga warns the men that bullying their wives is socially unacceptable because they are expected to be their guardians and look out for them. Kunonga said that the prevalence of domestic violence which is escalating daily putting the lives of women and children in danger motivated the composition of this song. The women find themselves in a dilemma when they choose to stay with an abusive husband to save their marriages. Making use of the traditional entertaining role of *Mhande*, Kunonga both educates and entertains the audience on the issues that affect them daily. Marriages are breaking on a daily basis and single parenthood is rising fast.

The instrumentation in this song is very rhythmic given the feet dragging style of dancing characteristic of the *Mhande* dance. I observed that Kunonga adopted the drum rhythms, choreography and the hand clapping aspects of *Mhande* (Rutsate 2011) to western instruments. The acoustic guitar introduces the melody of the

song playing the lead vocals before the lead vocalist sings. The lead guitar responds to the backing vocalists' response to the lead vocalist. The lead guitar, the drum kit and *mbira* play the *Mhande* beat each filling the gaps created by the others. The lead and acoustic guitars and *mbira* dominate the song throughout.

Summary of the Uses of Instruments

All the instruments used in the songs analysed above perform more or less similar roles in almost all the songs. There is an enormous variety of African instruments that range from aerophones, idiophones, membranophones and strings (Nketia 1979), a few of which are found in Kunonga's instrumentation. Namely, *mbira* and *hosho*.

The voice is another principal instrument in Kunonga's music. It is an identity factor and though tainted with four-part harmony, throughout the observations and the analysis of documents, exhibited rich traditional vocables that are characteristically African. The voices are polyphonic are executed in the renowned call and response manner which made up all the songs. This interaction according to Gioia (1997) depicts social integration. Heterophonic texture of music features a solo singer while a number of singers each sings the basic tune but with slightly different embellishments (Milton 1996). I observed these issues in both the documents analyzed and the observations. Nketia (1979) adds that traditional music is organized as a social event in which there are leaders who direct each performance. However, there should be agreement in the difference and with different entry points; the performance depends on the accuracy of each performer (Anderson 1981). In other words, the very same cultural principles which define daily life in African society form the basis of Kunonga's ensemble playing which characterised by collaboration.

Kunonga band comprised seventeen western instruments and African instrument: lead, bass and acoustic guitars, two congas, two bongos, an American shaker, keyboard, and a complete drum set that comprises membranophones and percussion instruments as well as *mbira*. These instruments performed roles of all the traditional instruments that they replaced or complemented. This therefore shows that as with western music the greater the number of instruments that play the same rhythm, the greater the density of the sound. As well in African music, the more the different rhythms played by similar instruments the greater the density of the sound produced (Oehrle 2000).

In the rehearsals and live performances observed, the conga drummer and the kit drummer played very different rhythms. The conga player followed the traditional beat that informed the whole performance except in *Kana*, where it filled the gaps while the drum kit which filled gaps in the other three songs played the *Mhande* beat. The conga drummer and the bassist pointed out during the interviews that the drums and percussion shared playing the rhythm. The player kept the rhythm while embellishing the performance with his percussion. This echoes what Agawu (2003) says that western music is designed as a one man's show where others are passive listeners, whereas African music provides room for audience participation at all levels of expertise (Kahari 1986).

The drum, which is the essence of African music, laid down the basic rhythms, kept time and acted as the basis upon which the other band players built their parts. The drums dominated all the songs. During performance, the kit drummer supported, commented, filled-in and signaled when the vocals came in. The kit drummer expressed the mood of the song such as the climax of the song which was heavily accompanied by a dancing. I observed that the rhythmic nature of Kunonga's music was the reason why both the questionnaire and interview respondents stressed that his music is danceable. Rhythm was the driving force behind the whole performance which prompted the listeners to dance. The keyboard, which can be programmed to play virtually all-traditional sounds and brass, brought out the mood of the performance. The bongos were not extensively used except in quieter and lighter moments.

The American shaker like the traditional *hosho* kept the time and rhythm in the songs. The lead and acoustic guitars together with the keyboard played the melody, which usually leads the song. For example in the song *Mandirasa* and *Kana*, the acoustic guitar played the lead role. Echoing Nketia (1979) who contends that some instruments perform principal roles, Kunonga pointed out that the acoustic guitar was one such instrument. The ZIMA official whom the researcher interviewed pointed out that Kunonga's acoustic guitar playing technique has a presence that can be felt while Kunonga added that he uses to express his emotions.

The music is characterized by a lot of improvisation and spontaneity (Nettl 1990). Kunonga and the drummer confirmed that they fuse more than one dance/music style, yet the dance moves have essentially remained the same though the reasons, meaning and physical shape have changed (Asante 2000). The dances I observed were not the original proper but a reflection of the fusion. The instrumentalists play

according to how they hear the overall sound of the music such that when one leads, the rest follow in the background and complementing the efforts of the leader. Kunonga and the drummer called it collaboration, which according to them applies in all spheres of music making be it instrument playing or composition or singing. The quantity and quality of the western instruments used increased the density of the sound in all performances, resulting in a full and compact sound which appealed to the audience which explains the popularity of his music. Questionnaire respondents referred to Kunonga's music as characteristically unique. Audience participation was noted in the observations made and discussed in the interviews conducted, however its intensity was limited compared to the traditional audience participation where everyone is actively involved.

Technology as an Aspect of Diffusionism

The difference between recorded music and live performance is that the studio is a place technically designed for recording music whereas performance settings are temporary stages made in venues such as clubs where Kunonga performed. These clubs are designed as social settings for beer drinking with no special attention to acoustics of the room. Hence, the recorded music differed greatly from the live performances. Yet the aspect of fusion remains in that most of the instruments played during both recording and live performance were electrified and/or amplified. The other reason is that technology is employed in both the recording and performance instances but at varying degrees under very different circumstances. In the studio, electronic effects are employed during the recording, mixing and mastering process which enhances the quality of the final product. Also, unlike live performance, recording gives room for retakes in case of mistakes. The music is again recorded, arranged under the strictest control of the engineer and producer. The software used for recording, editing, mixing and mastering as well as the blank CDs on which the music is printed contributed towards the quality and durability of the final product.

Nettl (1983) recommends that music of the world's people must be protected, preserved, taught, and treated with respect. I discovered that Kunonga preserves his music through the use of technology which enables him to copyright his music and holds exclusive rights to it (Webster 2004). In case of infringement of his rights, Kunonga can arraign the culprit before a court of law. Technology enables preservation of music in its original form for

educational and archival purposes. The availability of the original versions necessitates fusion which creates subsequent variants. Preservation is by way of recording the music; store it on hard copies or soft copies for retrieval whenever the need arises.

Even for the purposes of study like in my case as a researcher, copyrighted music can be used upon obtaining permission from the copyright owner, much as it can be freely used for educational purposes. If anyone wants to adapt anything from Kunonga's music they have to first seek his consent. Traditional music can now be preserved as hard and soft copies and the quality keeps improving with technological advancement. If the original music, its context and text are preserved and taught, its meaning is better understood in the face of change and continuity. By so doing the cultural fiber is kept intact (Asante 2000).

Conclusion

After carrying out physical observation of two live performances and two rehearsals and analysing recorded music, I found out that technology in the form of instrumentation is the element with which Kunonga fused the traditional dances with. The influence of Western instruments cannot be underestimated. From the observations and analysis made there were ten Western instruments including a complete drum set which has eight pieces against two traditional instruments, *mbira* and clappers (*makwa*). The ratio of Western instruments to traditional instruments on its own shows that in terms of sound production, traditional instruments though distinct are far outweighed. Given the state of the art material used to make western instruments, their use therefore enhances the quality of the sound produced. I noted with interest that the western instruments did not change the functions of traditional instruments; rather aerophones, idiophones, membranophones, string as well as percussion are well catered for, for the very same roles.

Instead of two identical drums of different sizes in the traditional context, the drum set has got nine, six of which are in membranophones and three are percussion in form of cymbals. The congas and bongos combine with drum set in the rhythm section. The adaptation of African traditional sounds to Western instruments is testimony to how Kunonga hybridised traditional music. The choreography and drum rhythms of *Mhande*, *Mbakumba*, *Dinhe* drumming style

and beat are brought out by the western instruments which dominate Kunonga's music.

This development promotes change and continuity in the face of globalisation as the performance context changes in order to cater for the needs of cosmopolitan Zimbabweans in its towns and cities. The commercialisation of contemporary traditional music is another effect of diffusionism because traditional music was not originally meant for sale. It is a Western concept adopted by local musicians who are now earning a living through music performance. Overall, fusion added value to traditional music in that it has adapted the music to suit the people's current needs defined by global trends; while it continues to be a symbol of identity among its people articulating their daily struggles.

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Endnotes

¹ The term 'diffusionism' denotes the movement of cultural practices, among them, music performance from one place to another over long distance and over time (Stone 2008). In the context of this research, diffusionism is used to refer to the mixing of western musical elements and cultural practices with Zimbabwean traditional music into the performance of traditional music which gave rise to 'contemporary' traditional music, a popular music genre.

² This article is an extract from my undergraduate dissertation (2007) in which I analysed the impact of 'syncretism' on traditional music – that is, the incorporation of non-Zimbabwe musical elements into the performance of traditional music which birthed 'contemporary' traditional music. Although I selected and analysed eight of the songs Victor Kunonga recorded on his first two albums which he frequently performs for the undergraduate thesis, due to space constraints, herein I chose and analysed only four of those.

³ Mbira is a renowned Korekore ceremonial dance (Berliner 1978).

⁴ Other than Victor Kunonga himself, the interviewees are not mentioned by their names for agreed upon confidentiality reasons.

⁵ These words were randomly extracted from the song for purposes of depicting the theme not as in the order in which they are performed in the song. I could not include the whole transcriptions of the songs due to limitations of space.