AN EXPOSITION OF MUSICAL ARTS EDUCATION IN MALAWI

ALINANE MILDRED LIGOYA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAGISTER MUSICAE DEGREE IN THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ODEION SCHOOL OF MUSIC, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

JANUARY 2013

Promoter: Professor Gregory Barz

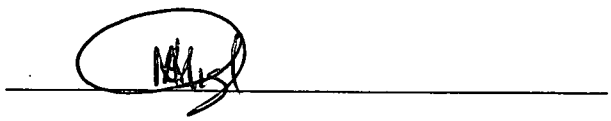
Co-promoter: Mme Gerda Pretorius

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Lord and saviour Jesus Christ who has given me more than I could ever deserve. Thank you for your extravagant grace. This also I did by your power and to your glory.

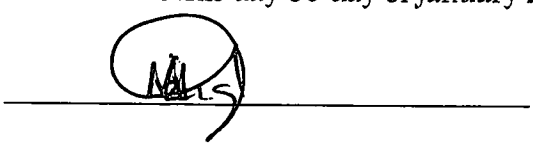
Statement of originality

I declare that the dissertation 'An Exposition of Musical Arts Education in Malawi' hereby handed in for the qualification Magister Musicae at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work for a qualification at/in another University/faculty.



Concession

I, Alinane Mildred Ligoya, do hereby concede copyright of this work to the University of the Free State on this day 30 day of January 2013.



Acknowledgements

All praise and honour belongs to my Lord Jesus Christ for all he has done for me. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

My sincere gratitude to the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, for having sponsored me throughout my studies.

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Gregory Barz for challenging me to do my best and believing in me. I have learnt much that I will always carry with me and use academically and personally. I am honoured to have worked under your superior tutelage.

My co-supervisor Mme Gerda Pretorius, since I came to the Odeion School of Music(OSM), you have been with me through all the stages, this is one more stage that we have come through together. I will never forget you. Thank you.

Professors Nicole Viljoen, Professor Martina Viljoen, and all the staff of the Odeion School of Music, many thanks. I will always be proud to have studied at this institution. Rev Grant Nthala you have known me since I was just beginning. Thank you for your support and invaluable insight. I am indebted to you.

Much thanks to my family for supporting me. My parents and siblings you have always made me want to aim higher and be better. My husband Kondwani Mphande you were there every step of the way, Thank you my very own hero. I could not have a more wonderful man to share my life with. Kenalemang Nthlokoa, my perpetual sounding board and muse. Thanks for the long talks and encouragement.

To all other who played a part in my studies and wellbeing, I thank you. I could not have done this without you. May God bless you all.

TABLES OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH OUTLINE

1.1 Background and rationale

Just as there are different languages, there are many different musical systems (Erin Hannon and Laurel Trainor 2007:466). That nearly all societies make music implies that there are also a myriad of ways of teaching and learning music within a variety of music education systems. Each society also has unique systems of knowledge, skills, competences, and behaviours deemed necessary for or indicative of a "well-educated" musician in that society, an ideal of what a successful product of the music education system should know and achieve. The indigenous musical arts in Malawi in South-Central Africa are no different. A "well-educated" musical artist represents the embodiment of the ideals of a given (musical) educational system, producing a fully musically enculturated and functioning member of the society.

This research will describe, document, and analyse the indigenous musical arts education system in the Jali area, Zomba District, Southern Malawi. In particular, the research attempts to accomplish the following:

- explore the music education system in Jali area in terms of conceptualization, objectives, teaching and learning techniques, and processes involved in musical development and learning such as enculturation.

- explicate what constitutes a "well-educated" musical artist in indigenous musical arts; explore the relationship between the musical arts education/acquisition, and the indigenous knowledge that is believed to permeate and influence the musical arts or simply put, the culture.

The compound term Musical Arts commonly refers to the amalgamated performance and plastic arts disciplines of music, dance, drama, poetry, prose, sculpture, and costume arts which are seldom separated in creative thinking and performance practice in sub-Saharan African contexts. Additional musical practices in Malawi include *makwaya* (choral music) and contemporary reggae, rhythm and blues, Afropop, jazz, and hip hop to name a few. However, in my research I opt to focus on indigenous or local musical arts, although other musical practices are also valid for study and consideration.

According to George Dei (2002:339), indigenous knowledge is that knowledge which is unique to a given culture or society characterized by the common-sense ideas, thoughts, and values of people formed as a result of the sustained interactions of society, nature, and culture. Indigenous knowledge is, therefore, closely linked to the people and their way of life and may be understood as a people's own unique way of thinking, acting and understanding life. Indigenous knowledge is contrasted with knowledge that perhaps has its origin in other cultures or social contexts and has not, over time, become integrated into a people's way of life. Each community in Malawi, for example, has deep-seated values and beliefs, ways of thinking, knowing, and looking at the world that inadvertently permeate influences and direct life (including the musical arts) in the community. The musical arts are known as *magule a makolo athu* (dances of our forefathers/ancestors), or *magule a chikhalidwe chathu* (dances of our way of life), or simply *magule* (*gule* is singular). Throughout this dissertation, *magule* is used synonymously with musical arts

Musical arts are such an important part of everyday life in most sub-Saharan African societies because they embody, express, teach/transmit, provide a means of correcting contravened collective values, and keep alive the beliefs and values of those societies. Therefore, for a comprehensive understanding of the musical arts and their education

within the specific context of Malawi, the beliefs and values of the society cannot be ignored but are, in fact, central to this understanding. This is especially true when studying the educational system that supports indigenous musical arts, which are inextricably linked to culture and everyday life in any given community.

The locality or context[1], however, of any given learner cannot be ignored. Although music-making is perhaps a universal phenomenon, the practices, purposes, and aesthetics of musical activities are varied and intricately connected to cultures and identities. Musical values are understood by Wayne Bowman as situated and culturally determined; humans in different social, cultural, historical, and musical settings employ different beliefs, preconceptions, and perceptual predilections, and that these would often be incommensurable in certain respects and varying degrees (1998:9).

I employ the term musical enculturation throughout this thesis to refer to the processes by which individuals acquire culture-specific knowledge about the music they are exposed to through everyday experiences (Hannon and Trainor 2007:466). According to Patricia Shehan Campbell (2002:65), enculturation is a natural, holistic, lifelong process that begins in childhood. In her exhaustive study of childhood musical enculturation, Campbell explains that the central tenets of musical culture—including values, timbres, musical forms, melodic and rhythmic patterns—are directly and often intentionally passed on to children. Furthermore, children come to understand the role of music in their culture in and through the music they hear and in which they participate.

[1] Context is often challenging to describe as it is not static and the boundaries are not rigid, as Frankel (cited in Mouw and Griffioen 1993:144) remarks, "there is no telling *a priori* where a context begins or end". However, despite the challenges it is still worthwhile, even necessary, to discuss context. Context implies situating or locating an entity or phenomenon within certain conditions particular to itself at the time and place it is being considered, towards differentiation.

The relationship between music and context is crucial particularly in relation to the well-being and identity of the learner. Stig-Magnus Thorsen (2002:18) regards the child in relationship to different groups (communities) and directly to a society because this takes into consideration, cultivates awareness, and ultimately develops the child's identity. He sees a child's authenticity as being embodied and coded within musical experience to a large extent (*ibid*.). Thorsen states that the learning process of music is connected to time and place within a natural or cultural context which equips learners with socially sensitive musical knowledge and practical attainments.

Otto Laske (1976:271) asserts that the particular domains of human knowledge that are considered as "musical knowledge" vary greatly in different cultures depending on the ways in which music is conceptualized within a particular culture. Conceptualization of the musical arts, therefore, is crucial to understanding the musical arts and the transmission of tradition that occurs within the coterminous processes of teaching and learning. How the musical arts are perceived in terms of their nature, purpose/function, relationship to the society and individuals, aesthetics, and other related ideas constitutes what is understood in this thesis as the conceptualization of the musical arts. The objectives of indigenous arts education are understood as the overarching as well as more specific desired outcomes in terms of knowledge, skill, competence, attitudes, and behaviour. Strategies of teaching and learning include methods, teacher-learner relationships, and assessment methods and standards. The aforementioned objectives in indigenous arts education are also closely connected to conceptualization and directly influence teaching and learning strategies and content. Conceptualization, objectives, and teaching and learning strategies of an education system answer the questions why, what, and how respectively in regards to local practice.

1.2 Personal motivation, projected impact and utility of study

On a personal level, this research has afforded me the opportunity to learn more about the country I was born and grew up in but did not always know as much as I would have liked about. In my life, I lived in the cities of Blantyre and Mzuzu, and smaller towns like Mzimba and Malamulo/Makwasa in Thyolo where I was exposed to *magule* in various ways and they secured a meaningful place in my life. Later, as a music educator, my particular interest in the indigenous music education system has compelled me to carry out this research. Apart from the above stated objectives, this research allowed me to connect with and gain a deeper understanding of not only the musical arts and their education but the people and country of Malawi.

This research is intended to contribute to the body of knowledge on Malawian expressive culture, indigenous musical arts practices, and education systems, towards their emphasis and perpetuity. Documenting and analyzing aspects of indigenous musical arts education will provide insight into and promote awareness of a variety of aspects of indigenous musical arts and their education that are either unknown, taken for granted, or have not yet been explored academically, making possible their conscious and deliberate consideration and application in music education in the local classroom.

As more research on music education systems in particular parts of the globe is conducted, knowledge about music and its variations in nature, meaning and relationship to other aspects of life increases. Such research also underscores the commonalities and dissimilarities that may exist among different musical traditions. Researchers and organizations wishing to work with music, culture, and education in Malawi will benefit from the insights of this research into the everyday lives, beliefs, values, and teaching and learning practices of the Malawian people.

The findings of the research that follows provide a resource that can be used to inform an ethnographic approach to music education in Malawi's schools. An ethnographic approach to music education is one that is informed by prevailing local musical knowledge and practices. This approach facilitates the development of pedagogies and philosophies that would lead to an efficient transmission of tradition within a culturally embedded modality. The findings of this research provide a resource for researchers, education specialists, and policy makers and will potentially benefit formal music education in terms of curriculum planning and review, content, and pedagogy. Magomme Masoga (2006:11-12) states that for education to be effective, "it is wise to start with the knowledge about the local area which students are familiar with, and gradually move to the knowledge about regional, national and global environments" (from the known to the unknown). Campbell (2002: 68) views learner's "earlier and concurent pathways" as a foundation and motivation to a more thorough understanding of what schools proffess to teach, and therefore recommends that teachers find ways to make associations with what the learners already know. Knowledge of local music-making traditions outside the formal classroom affords music educators insight into their learners' activities and knowledge, needs and interests; allows them to adjust their teaching in order to acknowledge, incoporate, complement, and supplement prior and concurrently developing knowledge and skills from their lives outside of the school setting.

It is hoped that this research will stimulate further research on the music of Malawi and other places, particularly in relation to education. As research yields more information, theories can be proposed based on commonalities among research findings; a greater fit can be achieved between formal classroom music education and the communities it serves through the development of ethnographically enformed curricula; some regional cultural patterns may begin to emerge that enrich the world's understanding of sub-Saharan Africa.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research explored, documented, and analysed indigenous musical arts in Malawi, described the educational system with a focus on conceptualization, objectives, teaching, and learning. A discussion of local conceptualization, objectives, teaching, and learning methods provides answers to the specific questions of "why," "what," and "how" of the indigenous musical arts education systems in Malawi.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions were addressed:

- What music transmission (teaching and learning) techniques are carried out in indigenous musical arts or *magule*, specifically in the area of Jali?
- What processes are involved in the indigenous musical arts education in the Jali area?
- What constitutes a musically successful, enculturated, and functioning member of the community or a "well-educated musical artist" in this locality?

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study employs multiple methods as follows: face-to-face interviews, ethnographic research, participant observation, and audio-visual documentation and analysis. This approach is selected because it provides a holistic approach which is deemed fitting due to the holistic nature of African life and the rich variety of music-making practices that attend (Nzewi 2007b: 64).

Ethnography as an approach focuses on human society and culture (Sharan Merriam 2009:27). Tony Whitehead describes ethnography as a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems, and the socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within cultural systems (2004:5). The ethnographic approach is thus well suited for this study of *magule* which are a significant part of the life and expressive culture of the Jali area, and the musical arts education system there. The ethnographic approach allowed me to gain insight into the lives of the people and understand the significance of the musical arts practices in the area.

Margeret Le Compte and Jean Schenshul (1999:12) write that an intimate involvement in the community of study and the people is a hallmark of ethnographic research. This involvement, they suggest, allows the researcher to more accurately represent the views, explanations, and interpretations of the research participants (1999:1-2). According to Le Compte and Schenshul, ethnography assumes that we must first discover what people do and the reasons they give for doing it before we can interpret their actions (*ibid*.).

As explained by Sharan Merriam (2009:15), the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in qualitative research. Merriam (2009:29) declares that it is not enough to describe the cultural phenomenon; the researcher also depicts his or her understanding of the cultural meaning of the phenomenon. For this reason, the auto-ethnographic approach was selected. Observations and experiences during the research, personal observation and insights, as a Malawian and music educator, provide additional depth to the analysis of musical arts in terms of the stated foci. It is acknowledged, however, that this vintage point is inavoidably prone to both valuable insight as well as bias. The researcher endeavors to minimise the latter by paying careful and primary attention to the research findings. My two positions, partial cultural insider on the one hand and academic scholar

and researcher on the other, are consistently juxtaposed and interposed, placing me in a unique and valuable position in regard to this research study.

Due to the nature of the data sought to support this thesis, face-to-face interviews in Malawi were selected since they created opportunities for rapport to develop between researcher and research respondents; allowed for more in-depth information, given in the research respondents' own words; allowed the nature of data found and the respondents' responses to influence the direction of interviews; and allowed the researcher to get to the answers more specifically and efficiently. A set of open-ended pre-composed questions were administered to all research respondents, but additional follow-up questions ensued depending on the answers received. A written questionaire was deemed to be inappropriate since illiteracy is high particularly in the rural areas. [2]

Respondents for this study included traditional leaders and teachers (*ngaliba*), performers, children, and other members of the community. Thirteen adults including three drummers, Group Village Headman Jali, village headman Jali 1, two *ngaliba*, three leaders of the three musical arts groups (*magule*), and three randomly selected people were interviewed. Fourteen children between the ages of six to thirteen were interviewed and observed. The interviews were conducted in Chichewa, a national language in Malawi since 1968 (Kayambazinthu 1994:2).

I spent six weeks in the Jali area, Zomba district, Southern Malawi, at one or two week intervals. This was done in September 2011 for four weeks and thereafter for two separate weeks in January and April 2012. While in the field I observed, shared in, personally learned various musical arts as performed in the community, analysed how teaching and learning occurs, and interviewed various actors and key persons. This was accomplished in

[2] According to Chilora [2000:9] illiteracy in Malawi is at 58%.

order to allow me to get involved in and therefore have better understanding of the indigenous musical arts and the people of the Jali area.

Audio-visual footage—digital photographs, video, and audio recordings—of musical performances and field interviews was gathered throughout the duration of this research and form the basis for the analyses that follow.

1.6 Scope and Delimitations

There is a need for context specific, ethnographic, academic study of the music education systems in Malawi. The research presented in this thesis is aimed at contributing to this need, with a specific focus on the indigenous musical arts education system, while acknowledging that much work will still need to be done to achieve the goal. A broader, more extensive and thorough approach than is included herein, or indeed possible, in just this one geographically limited research study is required. Concerted research efforts over time that compare data from a variety of areas will create a sufficient amount of data to form a more comprehensive picture of the musical contexts in Malawi.

There are ten main ethnic groups in Malawi and over sixteen languages spoken (Chilora 2000:1), representing a diversity potentially challenging to meaningful consolidation. According to Meki Nzewi (1997, cited in Agawu 2003:3), without denying the existence of highly nuanced regional varieties, placed alongside other world music cultures, the African difference is immediately palpable and internally coherent. As Elizabeth Oerhle and Lawrence Emeka point out, "the way of culture in traditional African cultures has been, and really still is, 'unity in diversity'. That is why the richness and vitality are so great" (2003:40). This research attempts to focus on the coalescing similarities among Malawians

(rather than the differences) that arise from belonging to a sub-Saharan, Bantu-speaking cultural area of Africa, and to Malawi—a specific geographic and socio-political territory. Angulu Onwuejeogwu (1975:9) defines a cultural area as "a geographical territory occupied by peoples whose culture exhibits a significant degree of dissimilarity with the cultures of others." The Jali area of Malawi displays just such a unity in diversity which may be viewed as an exemplar or microcosmic representation of the concept.

CHAPTER 2

Malawi

Introduction

Chapter two gives information on the area of study to place the study in context. This information includes some basic information on Malawi in section 2.1. A short historical account of music education as reflected in existing literature is outlined in section 2.2 with the headings pre-colonial and post-colonial era, contemporary music education (challenges and interventions). Some geographical and socio-cultural particular are given in section 2.3 with sections on the *Amang'anja, Yao* and *Lomwe* people. The last section discusses in some detail the results of the past and continued socio-cultural interactions in Jali and their effects.

2.1 Malawi. General information

Malawi is a country in South-East Africa bordering Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zambia. It is 118,484 square kilometres (22,000 square kilometres of which is water). There are 28 administrative districts divided into three regions: The Southern, Central and Northern regions. The people of Malawi include the *Chewa, Mang'anja, Lomwe, Yao, Tumbuka, Ngonde, Tonga, Ngoni* and *Sena* ethnic groups. English and Chichewa are the official languages, although other languages are spoken. The main religions are Christianity and Islam. Malawi has an agro-based economy. It is one of the poorest countries in the world. About 53 per cent of the population live below the poverty line of USD 1.25 per day according to World Bank data[3]. 80 per cent of the estimated 16 million Malawians live in the rural areas.

[3] http://data.worldbank.org/country/malawi

2.2 History of Western music education in Malawi

2.2.1 Colonial and post-colonial era

Little is known about education prior to the colonial period in Malawi. Based on knowledge of the nature of African cultures, it is speculated that indigenous knowledge was transmitted by rote. Methods of indigenous education such as song and dance, proverbs, storytelling, and initiation were used as modes of transmission. These modes of education and communication are still present in Malawi.

The colonial period in Malawi's history is from 1891, when Malawi became a British protectorate, to 1964 when attained independence. Malawi was called Nyasaland until the time of her independence. With colonialism came Christianity and missions were set up across Malawi. Missions were centres of education and Christianity as well as European style living. Music was one of the subjects taught in these mission schools.

Under this system of education thus established, indigenous knowledge systems and indigenous content were discouraged as stated by Chanunkha (2005:19-20). Emphasis was placed on western ideas and only western music was taught in the mission schools, and later teacher training colleges, in Malawi. Participation of native converts in certain musical arts was prohibited or strongly discouraged. Indigenous practices such as the *Gule wamkulu* among the *Chewa* were considered "sinful" by Europeans and some Malawian converts alike. Indigenous cultural practices were perceived as the antithesis of Christianity. Interestingly, Chanunkha (2005:60) indicates, graduates of mission schools were taught how to put vernacular text to western style music for the sake of worship services and teaching at a later stage.

The end of colonialism in 1964 brought changes to Malawi. Music education however did not change much in terms of content and overall orientation. It remained predominantly Western in content, de-emphasizing local musical traditions and methods of music acquisition. Strumpf (2001:6) reports that it was not until 1985 that efforts were made to improve music education with the introduction of a two year university level training for those who would teach music at teacher training colleges. In 1990, the curriculum for music was revised and teachers' guides developed for all 8 levels of primary school.

2.2.2 Contemporary music education

At present music is taught as part of the Expressive Arts learning area in all eight classes in primary school. In January 2007, the Primary Curriculum Assessment Reform (PCAR) was undertaken (Ministry of Education Science and Technology 2008:11). During this exercise the subjects of music, drama, dance, physical education needlework and creative arts were combined to form the Expressive Arts learning area. The combination of these subjects is reflective of the holistic nature of musical arts in Africa. There is no clear distinction between these arts in Malawi since they are complementary and are performed and acquired concurrently. However, this reform with regards to the Expressive Arts needs further scrutiny and adjustments for better implementation.

There is a music syllabus for forms three and four but none has yet been developed for the junior classes of secondary school. Although efforts have been undertaken to ameliorate music education, there are still challenges facing the learning of music in schools.

2.2.2.1 Challenges

Strumpf (2001:5) observes that challenges of lack of materials such as instruments and poorly motivated and insufficiently trained teachers were prevalent. In addition to these

challenges, Chanunkha (2005:1) observed the marginalization of music as a subject, the absence of indigenous content in the curriculum despite policy stipulating the need for it.

In 2010 I carried out research to clarify the challenges facing music education at the time. Apart from all of the above the following were identified (Ligoya 2010:52)

- Problems relating to the PCAR process of curriculum review: there was too much to be done in a short time and as a result the integration of the learning areas in terms of content and logical sequence was compromised. Some key content from component subjects was missing.
- Inadequate time allocated to the study of Expressive Arts with only one period per week. A period is 30 minutes for standard one to four and 35 minutes for the rest.
- Poor implementation of policy related to music education
- Poor supervision by Primary Education Advisors (PEA)
- Inadequate pre-service and in-service training for teachers as well as Primary education advisors (PEA)
- High teacher-learner ratio of 80:1

Due to the nature of the challenges listed above, it would probably take Malawi several years to achieve the necessary changes in music education which would have to be effected from policy level, down to the grassroots or classroom level. However, some interventions have been engaged towards the amelioration of the challenges faced in music education in Malawi. The section that follows outlines these interventions.

2.2.2.2 Interventions

Various interventions to address these challenges have been enacted. Some interventions were implemented by government and its development partners such as the PCAR project.

In-service teacher and student training programs by the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE) and Centre for Indigenous African Instrumental Music and Dance of Africa (CIIMDA) have had an impact on music education. Training in western music theory, indigenous music practices and philosophy, research methods were provided through these programs. The teachers were equipped and assisted to create their own Musical Arts Action Research Teams (MAT-cells) and carry out regional festivals for children and other similar activities. Through these interventions some of the challenges have been met significantly, but more efforts are needed before the urgency subsides. As aptly pointed out by chanunkha (2005) and confirmed in my research (Ligoya 2010), music education is (still) in crisis.

Apart from recommendations following directly from the needs presented above such as further training, recommendations by Chanunkha (2005) and Ligoya (2010) point to a need for further assessment and amendment of the music education curriculum and content to reflect indigenous knowledge and take context into consideration. The context to be taken into consideration is Malawi and all its different sub-contexts. This research will contribute to the understanding of this context, in relation to musical arts, social-cultural issues, needs, and resources available for use in music education.

2.3 Geographical and social-cultural particulars

This study was carried out in the area of Jali, in the district of Zomba in the southern region of Malawi. The area may be described as semi-rural[4] as it is some kilometres away from Zomba city. The marketplace at Jali is a bustling centre of activity for the people of Jali area and surrounding areas. On market days, many people may be seen buying, selling, and interacting with others. Although buses are available to the area and a few cars may be seen in the area, the main mode of transportation is the bicycle.

The name Jali, according to Group Village Headman Jali, originated from the first chief of the area, Saidi Chilala, who was a member of the *Yao* ethnic group. He fought in the second world war in Europe where he is said to have encountered Japanese soldiers who although short in stature were fierce, brave, and strong opponents. These soldiers were called *Jalijali.* When Saidi Chilala returned, he told stories of these soldiers and adopted the name *Jali* (a diminution of *Jalijali*) to show that he was brave and strong, and to strike fear into his would-be foes. After the name was established, the area also later came to be called Jali. Chief Jali stated that other researchers have apparently been to Jali in search of historical information concerning the name Jali. However, I have not been able to trace their names or find any published information correlating Chief Jali's account.

The *Yao* value and respect those who have travelled. The following was extracted from "The *Yao*s" by Rev. Yohanna Abdallah, himself a *Yao* man:

> So in the old days the *Yao* were great travellers, for they used to say, 'He who knows foreign parts is a man worth knowing, like so-and-so's son.' Even in the village 'place' the great subject of conversation was travel, and he who

[4] Having features of both the rural and urban

> knew other countries was always listened to with respect, the people hanging on his words delighted, all of them gazing at him, sometimes with awe, saying, 'Good lord! You are a wonder! Eh! But you have travelled!' And the people would believe anything he told them. (1919:28)

The fact that people believed anything they were told by those who had travelled, could have given way to exaggeration and falsehood to add prestige to the traveller.

Jali area is a confluence of three tribes: The *Yao/Chawa, Mang'anja, and Lomwe.* A brief historical description of each of these groups is given in the sections below. This is done to provide insight into the social cultural context of the study. A section on the similarities and convergence of these groups in terms of cultural practices is included below to highlight the homogeneity among them. A discussion of this homogeneity enforces the legitimacy of the findings of the study as representative of the area in terms of the cultural and educational practices of the people found there.

The languages spoken in Jali area are *ChiYao*, *Chichewa* which is a national language of Malawi; and distinct *Chilomwe*-influenced and *ChiYao*-influenced dialects of *Chichewa.* No mention was made of *Chilomwe* being spoken although there are *Lomwe* people living there. This could be indicative of the wider trends among the *Lomwe* people in Malawi since *Chilomwe* is mostly spoken by a few older people and is therefore considered to be in decline.

2.3.1 The *Amang'anja*

The *Amang'anja* people are a group of the *Amaravi*[5] (Phiri 1972:7). Nchombo (unpublished, cited in Nthala 2010:54) gives an account of how the name *Amang'anja* emerged. The different groups of the *Chewa* people were referred to according to where they settled. *Anyanja*, or "lake-people" settled near the water. Nchombo explains that the Portuguese has encountered other groups such as the *Xhosa* who referred to themselves as the *AmaXhosa*. When the Portuguese encountered the *Anyanja* in present-day Mozambique, they "modelled their terminology" on the morphological structure of the names of the tribes they previously encountered (Banda 1974, cited in Nthala 2010:54). Because phonologically the palatal-nasal sound *ny* in Portuguese was nasalised to *ng*, the *Anyanja* came to be called the *Amang'anja*.

Today the *Amang'anja* are located in most of the southern region of Malawi where they hold many chieftaincies. In 1978 in Nsanje district for example, the *Amang'anja* held all seven chieftaincies (Mandala 1978:6). According to Mandala in the lower Shire valley[6], immigrants groups such as the *Sena* were barred from positions higher than village headman (1963:6). As explained to me by chief Jali 1, the higher levels of the traditional system of authority in the area of Jali comprised *Amang'anja* and that Group Village Headman Jali was the first *Lomwe* in his position in living memory.

Wishlade states that as of 1945, the *Lomwe* in Mulanje district were also barred from positions higher than village headman although they constituted 71 percent of

[5] The term *"Maravi"* covers a variety of related ethnic groups known today as *"Chewa"* in Malawi and *"Nyanja"* elsewhere. The distinctions between the various groups are minor and the use of different nomenclature is meant primarily to indicate geographical rather than cultural distinctions (1979:48).
[6] The lower Shire valley refers to the Southern-most tip an extension of the great African rift valley located in the of the rift valley system and the country of Malawi. The river Shire flows out of Lake Malawi and through this valley on its way to the Zambezi. This area includes parts of the districts of Nsanje and Chikwawa.

the population (Wishlade 1961:38). I was informed by the incumbent Traditional Authority *Nsabwe* in Thyolo district, all but one of the traditional authorities (TA) in this district are of *Mang'anja* dissent. There is only one *Lomwe* TA, despite Thyolo being known as *Lomwe* territory. The TA hinted that this trend could have been reinforced by President Kamuzu Banda's regime during which traditional authorities were handpicked by the president. It is speculated that the *Amang'anja*, a branch of the *Chewa*, were in these positions during the dispensation because Kamuzu Banda, a *Chewa*, wanted *Chewa* dominance in Malawi as a measure of political control. This is evidenced by the exclusion of all other indigenous ethnic languages in favour of *Chichewa* on all print, public broadcasting and schools (Mkandawire 2010:26-27).

2.3.2 The *Yao*

The *Yao*[7] are reported by Yohanna Abdallah, to have originated from a place called *Yao* in modern-day Mozambique (1919:7-8). *Yao* is also the name of a treeless and grass-grown hill such as where the *Yao* people came from (*Ibid*). Zomba is in what is now referred to as the *Yao* belt, which encompasses the districts of Mangochi, Machinga, and Zomba. The *Yao* are believed to have originated from east of Lake Malawi (present Mozambique) and historically migrated into the area which was originally populated by the *Mang'anja* (Marjomaa 2003:414). Northrup records *Mangochi* and *Machinga* as two groups of *Yao* people, which although identified as different groups, their differences are basically geographical (1986:62).

[7] The *Yao* are also known as the Achawa.

The *Yao* are predominantly Muslim. The interaction with Islam can be traced back to the pre-colonial era, before they migrated to present-day Malawi. Trading along the coast of Mozambique gave the *Yao* access to Arab traders whom they begun to emulate in dress and eventually in religion (Rangeley 1963:25).

2.3.3 The *Lomwe*

The *Lomwe* were also known as the *Anguru*[8] until 1943 when they officially ceased to be referred to as such (Lindeg White 1984:541). The *Lomwe*, just like the *Yao*, are believed to have originated from the present Mozambique. Several small groups came to be known collectively as the *Lomwe*. *Lomwe* (the largest group), *Khokhola, Muhavani, Thakwani, Marenje, Ratha, Nyamwero, Makua, Gwirima, Malata, Manyawa, Metho, Nahara,* and *Nikhukhu/likukhu* (Colson and Gluckman 1968:297).

Although smaller contingents of *Lomwe* immigrated prior to the period between 1890s and 1945, according to Chirwa (1994:528) many *Alomwe* immigrated to Malawi to work in tea plantations in the border districts of Mulanje and Thyolo during this period. The *Alomwe* are now found in these districts as well as Zomba, Chikwawa, Blantyre, and Chiradzulu.

---

[8] The name "*Anguru*" was given to them by the indigenous *Amang'anja* and *Ayao* communities, colonial officials, missionaries, and settlers. With the passage of time, the word "*Anguru*" had no direct relationship with ethnicity. It was synonymous with "native colonists" and "alien labourers" or immigrants (Chirwa 1994:527). The name *Anguru* as used herein is not intended to be derogatory of the group.

2.3.4 Confluences, Socio-cultural issues

Of particular interest in Jali are the few apparent lines of separation among the people along tribal lines. It was not easy for an outsider to tell who was *Lomwe, Yao* or *Mang'anja*. This is underscored by the fact that there is only one boys' initiation rite. It is normally expected that different groups will hold their own initiation owing to the significance of the initiation rite to group identity. Initiation is perceived as a means of perpetuating culture. The values and beliefs held by a particular culture are deliberately imparted to those transitioning from childhood. As such, to have one initiation is significant of a new identity forged as a result of the meeting and melding of these groups.

The *Lomwe, Yao* and *Mang'anja* in Jali, as well as other places, display a measure of cultural homogeneity. This homogeneity can be traced as far back as 1945. Wishlade (1961:36) reports that the groups were so well knit that in Mulanje district, even the smallest family units were often tribally heterogeneous. There are several possible explanations for this apparent homogeneity. One explanation is based on common roots. Rangeley (1963:9) asserts that it seems beyond dispute that the *Ayao* were formerly one of the *Anguru* (*Lomwe*) tribes, and that they altered more rapidly than their neighbours because of their contacts with the east coast of Africa. Though the two groups are linguistically different, this information implies similarities.

Marjomaa (2003:415) recounts that before their immigration, the *Yao* had developed strong ties with their *Man'ganja* and *Lomwe* neighbours. After their exodus, Marjomaa elaborates, the *Yao* adopted many cultural elements from local *Man'ganja*, including to some degree even their language while the *Mang'anja*

adopted the *Yao* tribal markings making accurate differentiation difficult (2003:431). Northrup (1986:68-69) explains that once the *Yao* had established themselves in southern Malawi, the similarities of custom between the *Yao* and the *Amang'anja* made it possible for both to accommodate the other. Both of these groups are matrilineal, uxorilocal[9], shared similar social organization and often intermarried (Stuart 1979:48; Northrup 1986:70; Wishlade 1961:36). Furthermore, Northrup states that politically the *Yao* and *Mang'anja* shared similar, largely decentralized systems consisting of a land chief who controlled a defined territory which was divided into villages each of which had its own headman (1986:70). The *Mang'anja* system was basically the same, although it included a further level of centralization. This system still prevails[10] in Jali area which falls under the Traditional Authority (TA) Mwambo who would be equivalent to a land-chief according to Northup's explanation. TA Mwambo has ten group village headmen under his authority. The Group Village Headman Jali has nearly twenty villages[11] under his authority. Some of the village headmen under chief Jali are Jali 1, Jali 2, Ntokota, Khovinda, Vetuwa, Ntihiwa, Kumpasa, Chande, Malemba, Chavula, and D. Malikebu.

The present chapter has given some information to locate the research within a geographical and socio-cultural context. A Brief history of the *Man'ganja*, *Yao* and *Lomwe* people has been given. The unique socio-cultural dynamics of the Jali area

[9]Uxorilocal, also known as matrilocal marriage, is a tradition in which the man, after marriage, moves to the woman's home to live.

[10] Zomba District has one Paramount Chief Chikowi and one Senior Chief Kuntumanji. Four traditional authorities (T/As) Mwambo, Malemia, Mlumbe, Nkumbira and also four Sub-traditional authorities, Mbiza, Ngwerero, Ntholowa and Nkagula who traditionally govern the district.

[11] Some respondents said there were 19 villages, others 17 villages.

resulting from their interactions have been explored. The following chapter build on this information by further describing the context, that is, the nature of *magule* and their role in the transmission of tradition in the Jali area.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF *MAGULE* AND THEIR ROLE IN THE TRANSMISSION OF TRADITION IN JALI AREA

Prelude

Two young girls hurry along the path towards the clearing in the centre of the village. One says to the other: "*Iwe fulumira gule wayambatu*" (Hey! hurry up, the *gule* has already begun). Their steps quicken as they approach, reeled in by the heady drumming and singing. When they arrive, there are people everywhere! The mood is exhilarating and the excitement almost tangible.

The *Malangalanga* is already in full swing, and a fine cloud of dust is being stirred up by the dancers as they move anticlockwise in a circular formation. They are singing a song advising young men to marry from the Jali area because the women are well behaved. The two girls sing along: *Iwe mwana'nga simiyoni, ukwatila kwa Jali ee*! (Simon my son marry a girl from Jali). Soon the *gule* rises to its climax, at which point the women stop singing and moving in a circle. They dance in one spot, showing off their dance skills, each in her own way according to how she feels the drumming. Spontaneous ululation[12] and whistles fill the air as the dance heats up.

Tupoche is one of the best dancers in the village. She has a cloth wrapped around her hips as she expertly wriggles her waist and moves her feet in perfect time to the lead drum; her face expresses enjoyment. Every time she does so the crowd exclaims in appreciation and enjoyment: "Eeeh!"

[12] Ululation is a wavering, high pitched trilling sound made by moving the tongue up and down or side to side. This sound can be made as fanfare and to express joy and enjoyment during community activities such as wedding and musical arts performances.

Later, the five and six years old girls tie their own cloths around their waists and imitate Tupoche's movements, imitating the accompanying drumming with their voices. When they are old enough they will be allowed to join in the dancing inside the arena, but for now they must be content to sing and dance on the side.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I described the area of Jali. This chapter presents the musical arts performed in the area. I commence by discussing what musical arts are and what they are there for. In section 3.1 the nature and conceptualization of musical arts or *magule* is explained by highlighting the selected characteristics and principles of function, polarities, complementarity, balance, and repetition—circles and cycles. This list is not, by any means, exhaustive but refers to some characteristics particularly pertinent to this research.

The nature, conceptualization, and role of the musical arts or *magule* in Malawi form the basis and rationale for the object of this study, the contemporary musical arts education system in the Jali area of Malawi. The transmission of musical arts knowledge would be meaningless without the traditional structures and cultural practices that sustain and inspire the musical arts into being. Members learn *magule* so that the community may participate meaningfully both individually and collectively in the knowledge and performance of local musical arts, and ultimately their culture. Indeed the activities connected to musical arts education find their meaning in the conceptualization of the *magule* that prevails and social events they signify. To study the ways in which people learn, teach, and practice *magule*, therefore, is to have access to a window into the lives of the people of Jali to whom the *magule* are an aspect of culture and identity.

In section 3.2 below I describe in some detail three different examples of musical arts *Manganje, Malangalanga,* and *Mganda.* These three *magule* were selected because they

were explained to me to be the most popular, indicating that the people in Jali were actively engaged in maintaining the position of these *magule* and implying that the transmission of these musical arts is very much alive and could therefore be efficiently studied and documented.

Whatever musical arts knowledge and skills learners acquire are largely contained in and connected to the *magule* in the community, which are exemplified and represented by *Manganje, Malangalanga,* and *Mganda* in this research. The three types, in turn, are contained in and connected to the culture and everyday lives of the people of Jali. Therefore, to learn the musical arts in Jali area is to learn critical aspects of how and why the culture and everyday life of the community is both informed and re-formed. Conversely to know the culture and everyday life of Jali is to know something about the community's contemporary musical arts.

The three *magule* that I discuss in this chapter are each an expression of the conceptualization and manifestations of the characteristics of the musical arts that are expected to be learned and understood by enculturated and participating members of the community. To a large extent the learning and execution of the musical arts is accomplished during actual performance of the individual *magule* and is related to the role that the performances play in the lives of the people of Jali.

As in other educational systems, the musical arts education system in Jali has specific objectives and outcomes, modes and methods of learning and teaching, activities and local assessment standards and procedures. In the Jali area, all of these are intimately connected to the lives of the people who perform, teach, and learn musical arts as a collective cultural expression and individual or personal expression.

A description of the nature and performance *Manganje, Malangalanga,* and *Mganda* therefore provides a critical context for the unique learning and teaching processes that occur within the community and contains the bulk of the contents of learning and teaching. Ultimately, the musical arts and their education are aimed at serving the community, and musical arts activities are more often than not, community or social events with specific reasons for performance, deeply related to the people's lives and culture. As such, the musical arts as well their education are understood as embedded in the community and finding their purpose in the same.

3.1 What are *magule*?

Throughout this thesis the term *magule* will be used synonymously with musical arts types. In Malawi the musical arts are referred to as *magule a chikhalidwe chathu* (dances of our way of life) or *magule a makolo* (dances of our ancestors) or simply *magule* with the rest of the term implied.

The musical arts in African cultures, as mentioned in Chapter One, refer to the concurrent and complementary performing and plastic art disciplines that are, in Western terms, typically conceptualized as separate. Meki Nzewi (2003:13) explains that these disciplines—music, dance, drama, poetry, prose, sculpture, and costume arts—are seldom separated in creative thinking and performance practice in African contexts. Each branch resonates and reinforces the logic, structure, form, shape, mood, texture, and character of the other. The musical arts support, complement, inform, enhance, and give meaning to each other. The term musical arts is therefore broader and more inclusive than the generally understood meaning of the term music. While musical arts are understood as described above in sub-Saharan Africa, *magule* is the name locally understood,

conceptually and practically, to mean the musical arts in Malawi. Nzewi describes the components of musical arts as follows:

- music is structured sound from sonic objects
- dance is the aesthetic/poetic stylization of body motion
- poetry and lyrics are measured stylization of spoken language
- costume and scenery are symbolized text and décor embodied in material objects
- prose (narrative) which usually takes the form of storytelling and the related art of the proverbial saying or wise saying which has a corresponding story illustrating its meaning (*ibid.*)

Language plays a significant role in the conceptualization and understanding of musical arts. The absence of a word meaning "music" is common in sub-Saharan African languages. *Ngoma* is a word that is often used, though variably, in relation to music in sub-Saharan Africa, whether in reference to the total performance, to dance, as a general name for drums or a specific name for a particular drum. Gregory Barz notes that while it is not used universally, for many the proto-Bantu term *ngoma* functions as a cover term for "traditional music performance" (2004:4). This understanding of *ngoma* indicated by Barz is conceptually comparable to musical arts and *magule*. Despite its prevalence as a musically related term elsewhere in Eastern Africa, *gule/magule* rather than *ngoma* is used for "traditional music performance" in Malawi. The word *ngoma* or *ingoma* refers to a particular musical art or *gule* of the local *Ngoni* people In Malawi. The word *ng'oma* (ŋo/ma) refers to the drum in most Malawian languages, as does *ngoma* in other Bantu-languages such as Kiswahili.

There are names for various (musical) activities as detailed below in the Chichewa language:

A song	*nyimbo* (singular and plural)
To sing	*kuyimba* (the action), *mayimbidwe* (the art of singing)
A dance	*gule* (singular) or *magule* (plural)
To dance	*vina* (to dance) *kuvina* (dancing), *mavinidwe* (the art of dancing)
Storytelling	*kuyimba nthano* (singing stories)
To drum	*kuyimba ng'oma* (singing the drum)

Storytelling is called *kuyimba nthano* indicating the close link between storytelling and singing, which is often a part of the storytelling. Many stories have corresponding songs, encapsulating the moral of the story and used as a mnemonic or memory device for the children. Instruments, the drum for example, are spoken of as sung rather than played. The word *kuyimba* (singing) was consistently used for all instruments encountered during this research.

Musical art items are referred to as *nyimbo* (songs) while the performance is referred to as *kuvina gule (*dancing the *gule).* It taken for granted that movement or dance is a natural response to song and it is therefore expected that when people sing, they usually dance. Singing and dancing, verbal expression and movement, are conceptualized as two sides of the same coin in terms of musical arts performances and discussions thereof. For example, below are some statements that were heard at a musical arts event in Jali:

Tayambitsani nyimbo tivine (Start singing the song so we can dance).

Tiyeni tivine nyimbo yakuti (Let us dance to song x)

Such statements imply that dancing ought to be accompanied by song or that there needs to be a song for the people to dance. Song and dance are also commonly learned

simultaneously. The above discussion emphasizes the relationship between components of the musical arts, in this case song and dance.

In the sections that follow I highlight selected characteristics of the musical arts in sub-Saharan Africa in general and the area of Jali in particular by focussing on the following characteristics: function, polarities, complementarity, balance, and repetition- circles and cycles. This list is by no means exhaustive, but refers to some characteristics particularly pertinent to this research.

3.1.1 Functionality

The musical arts in traditional African societies are an integral part of the total life of the society and individuals and are more than a past time, entertainment, or amusement. Community life and the musical arts are intimately connected. The musical arts play a role in everyday life in the community while culture informs the musical arts in terms of beliefs, values, content, and context. The musical arts inform and prescribe for people how they are to live, and conversely, the way people live informs the musical arts in terms of content, purpose, and function. The relationship between the musical arts and culture, therefore, is a cyclic one. Both the musical arts and culture are dynamic in nature, often undergoing alteration, deletions and additions. Due to their connectedness, dynamism in either aspect effects change in the other to varying degrees, with varying expediency, different rate of infiltration and permanence.

People living in communities are expected to act according to rules of conduct which are arrived at by consensus or tradition. The musical arts are a vehicle for communicating and reinforcing these rules of conduct and correcting those that subvert them. There is also a

cyclical relationship between society and the individual. We experience ourselves as members of society and yet society cannot exist without the people that comprise it. For this reason in the case of the Malawian, to be human is to know how to live with others in such a way that respects and acknowledges them (*Umunthu)* while seeking to satisfy one's personal goals. In helping others, people help themselves because that which benefits the community ultimately benefits the individual. It is considered selfishness or lack of *Umunthu* and *khalidwe* (moral behaviour) when satisfying personal desires disadvantages others or opposes the collective good. *Umunthu* and *khalidwe* encapsulate the collective knowledge and aspirations of the people and are emphasized and reinforced through the musical arts.

The socialization of individuals in Malawi, encouraging them to be productive members of the society is typically carried out and reinforced using the musical arts. The type of content, context, and objectives of the musical arts is reflective of the philosophy of the society of its origin: their goals, aspirations, organization, morals, and history. There is an inextricable link between the philosophy of life as summarised in the principles of *Umunthu* and *khalidwe* above and the culture of which the musical arts is a crucial part and conduit.

The *magule* in the Jali region of Malawi, as is the prevailing trend in other regions of Africa, are primarily functional. This means that *magule* are performed at times when the performance plays a significant role in the community's activities and ultimately contribute to its well-being. Musical arts are also performed for entertainment and catharsis. An example of the cathartic role of the musical arts can be seen at funerals all over Malawi where people sing at the home of the deceased throughout funeral proceedings. This is a means of showing communal solidarity with the bereaved, and gives the bereaved a chance to express their sorrow through the songs sung. The members of the family or close friends

of the deceased may sing along, start a song that expresses their emotion or weep openly while verbalizing their emotions in a kind of monologue or descants to the songs being sung.

In Jali, the musical arts are intertwined with and are an indispensible part of events such as weddings. For example one respondent named Mrs Chikonga suggested that "A wedding is not a wedding without Nganda" (*Ukwati siungakhale ukwati opanda Mganda*). As explained in the section describing *Mganda*, it accompanies, signifies, or heralds the various events involved in wedding proceedings. In the context, *Mganda* and weddings are perceived as synonymous. The value of incorporating or rather interweaving musical arts with events in society is for more than just the sake of preservation of tradition. *Mganda* remains a living and meaningful part of the proceedings of a wedding.

Another occasion where *magule* are present is the installation of chiefs. This is known as *kudzodza ufumu* (anointing a chief) or *kuveka ufumu* ("dressing" a chief). References to dressing a chief is suggestive of the clothing that is placed on the chief during the ceremony. Musical arts are also used to honour incumbent chiefs or visitors of note. The chief is a culturally significant person as is evidenced in Jali by the constant mention of the Group Village Headman Jali in the musical arts. Song texts confirm praise and approval for the wisdom and leadership of chief Jali who is noted to be kind and understanding. This reflects the general tendency for members of a community to comment publicly on issues concerning them, either in approval or disapproval, encouragement, or censure.

The songs performed at different events are often directly related to the nature of the event. Existing songs suitable for the event are sung, existing songs are altered to fit the event, or new ones are created specifically for the event. Often the rearrangement of existing songs is done collectively and spontaneously. Spontaneous composition and improvisation is a

feature of *magule*. During a performance of the *Manganje* dance that I documented as part of my field research, for example, a group of boys created chants either approximating the melodic-rhythms of the lead drum with phrases or contrasting them. Since Chichewa is a tonal language, some drumming patterns are suggestive of logocentric phrases. There is creativity involved in this process as well a manifestation of the close link between the expressive media of musical arts and language.

3.1.2 Polarities, complementarity, and Balance

Seeming polarities are common in the conceptualization of African life and yet these do not result in opposition, but present a holistic picture. Two phenomena may appear divergent in nature but neither can stand without the other. They are thus called polarities in so far as one is perceived as representing some aspect of what the other is not. Reality is perceived and explained in terms of a unity of seeming polarities. An example is daylight and night time which may be considered polarities but are in fact the two parts that make up a full day. There is thus a balance that exists through the complementarity of seeming opposites. These seeming polarities or dichotomous relationships are counteracted by the complementary and holistic way in which they are perceived and manifest in life. Other examples are wet and dry season, male and female, or individuality and community. This understanding also manifests in the musical arts. Examples are similarity and variation, high tones and low tones, slow and fast rhythms, on and off beat, homophony and heterophony, tension and release, high and low body orientations during dance.

Balance, therefore, is a central artistic concept and a desired end, while excess and/or extremes are considered undesirable. Coexistent polarities, by mediating each other, provide the needed balance which is acceptable to the Malawian and allows for

communities to maintain unity in diversity. Extremes, gravitation towards or alignment with one polarity are frequently met with disapproval since they are a threat to the balance that ensures the continuity of life as people know it in Malawi. There are, however, social checks and balances in place to address these extremes, often communicated and reinforced by the musical arts. An example of such a situation would probably have resulted in the *Mganda* song *"Amayi aphika thelere"* or *"siizo"*. The song presents a story about a woman who cooks okra and meat, but she gives the okra to a child who is not hers while the rest of the family eats the meat. The song is a reprimand against such behaviour that is considered selfish and unkind. Generosity and fairness, on the other hand, are implicitly encouraged in this song. The song is discussed in greater detail under section 3.2.3—*Mganda*.

Values related to the principle of holism[13] such as unity in diversity, complementarity, balance, tolerance and generosity are passed on formally and informally, intentionally or unintentionally. Perpetuity of such holistic values is ensured by various processes engaged by the community. For instance, when I enquired as to the instruments used in *Manganje*, I was informed that there was a empty metal bucket played using stick (*chiminingo*) along with two drums: *pelemende*[14]*/ng'oma yaying'ono/ng'oma ya mau aang'ono* (a small/high pitched drum) and *awelamo/ng'oma yayikulu/ng'oma ya mau aakulu* (a big/low pitched drum). I was told that these two drums are considered as complementary—just as male and female are complementary. Both, I was informed, are needed to create the right sound or balance for *Manganje*. Without either, the *gule* just would not be *Manganje*.

[13] Holism is the theory that parts of a whole are in intimate interconnection, such that they cannot exist or be understood independently of the whole. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. 2009. Houghton Mifflin Company (accessed from http://www.thefreedictionary.com/holism).

[14] According to Nthala (interview 24 November 2012) *pelemende* is the name for a man who is bald. Perhaps the drum is thus names because the flat hairless top of the drum and the hairy sides resemble a bald man's head.

3.1.3 Repetition, Circles and cycles

The musical concept of repetition or recurrence can be traced back to nature where cyclic principles are omnipresent. Revolution (in the form of the seasons) and rotation (such as experienced in day and night) are repetitive and cyclic. However, just as each rainy season is a recurrence of the cyclic nature of rainy seasons, so too every repetition in a given musical arts event is both the same and different. Each repetition of a musical event is essentially a new cycle based on previously articulated principles.

African music-making is generally a celebration of the present, of being in the moment. Who Africans are, what we are doing at that present moment, and the music that we make speaks of our lives, values, hopes, and dreams. John Collins identifies a certain "timeless" quality to many of the African musical arts (2005:128). This is based on the understanding that life and the cycles within it are perpetual. The timeless quality and the cyclic nature of musical arts are crucial to the understanding and cultivation of the distinct musical sensibility that characterises African music, especially in terms of rhythm. In his seminal text on African rhythm, John Chernoff notes that a distinct orientation to life and the musical arts is central to the African musical arts sensibility (1979:92). Everyday activities such as sweeping, soothing a crying baby, or pounding using mortar and pestle express and inculcate this rhythmic sensibility. The sensibilities of the musical arts are a fundamental aspect of the education system and are directly related to the relative success or failure of the learner[15].

There are internal cyclic relationships present in the musical arts. In the *magule* studied in Jali area, there is an underlying rhythm which is characteristic and common to all *magule*. It creates a kind of metrical background on which the lead drumming, singing and dancing

[15] Musical arts sensibility is a theme that recurs, albeit at times implicitly, throughout this dissertation.

are interposed and juxtaposed. Differences in the tempo of the underlying rhythm and the distinct lead drum styles is what distinguishes and identifies the musical arts type or *gule* as either *Manganje, Mganda,* or *Malangalanga.* This characteristic rhythm is played repeatedly, and each repetition may be understood as a distinct cycle. Each cycle is a unique expression. Indeed, it would be challenging to find an exact repetition even within the same performance. Each time a rhythm or melody is performed it is new, even if by virtue of occupying a different space in time alone. Each cycle in combination with other patterns is integral to the development process of the total performance. Each complete performance, in turn, may be viewed as a cycle on its own. And so the concept of concentric circles (circles within circles), interlocking and overlapping with other circles begins to emerge. The ability to participate in the creation of this system of concentric cycles in performance and understand the implicit meaning imbedded therein is at the core of the music arts education process.

3.2 *Magule*: Three musical arts practices in Jali

In this section I discuss three musical arts practices *Manganje, Malangalanga,* and *Mganda* as practiced in Jali area. These *magule* were chosen for their popularity within the local community. *Magule* or *magule amakolo* refers specifically to indigenous musical arts types and usually involves drumming and dancing. These three *magule* are discussed in some detail in order to provide the necessary background to facilitate an understanding of their transmission. These *magule* thus provide a framework and exemplification of aspects of teaching and learning in Jali area.

These three *magule* are significant in the lives of the people of Jali. People deliberately make the effort to dance together whenever they can, as well as ensure that the quality of their

performances is good. Women involved in *Malangalanga* and *Mganda* have practice sessions at least once a month. This guarantees that the women are ready when called upon at anytime, to perform. Such meetings allow the women, whether intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or subconsciously, to teach each other and create an environment where they can express themselves while being creative. These teaching sessions also facilitate the strengthening of social bonds between the women, by creating opportunities to interact and build togetherness through participating and a sense of belonging.

3.2.1 *Manganje*

Prelude

Today is the day of the *Jando* graduation. It is easy to spot the parents whose sons are graduating today. They wear broad smiles and are being congratulated by friends and relations. *Bambo*[16] and *Mayi* Mlele sit in anticipation ...Today their son is no longer a child. Today, their son gets a new name. Today their son gets to dance *Manganje* before the community.

Bambo Mlele remembers his own *Jando* graduation, many years before. His parents had bought new clothes for him and sat with the same pride waiting for him to be presented with the other young men. He hopes his son has learned all that he must and can show it through his participation in the *Manganje* and his conduct thereafter. Eventually all will get to dance, but firstly the Manganje of the *zilombo* then the initiates must be presented. After the initiates perform to the scrutiny and

[16] *Bambo* and *mayi* are titles equivalent to Mr and Mrs which also shows respect.

enjoyment of the community, then everybody will dance. The young and old, men and women alike will join in a dance that unites them. Swaying bodies and stomping feet will dance to the throbbing *awelamo* and the constant *pelemende* drums. At that moment everybody will know they belong and by participating in *Manganje*, will show their unspoken allegiance to their community and the way of life they treasure.

Manganje, I was told, is the most popular *gule* in Jali district and it elicited the most participation from the young to the old. I was informed that *Manganje* was "their dance" and none other could compete with it. *Manganje* events have been known to last all night long because of the *gule*'s appeal. Unless there is a specific reason to stop, *Manganje* performances continue until the participants are exhausted. This is one of the reasons frequently given for the need for the song leaders and drummers to have physical strength and endurance. The masked *Manganje* dancers were agile and seemed untiring throughout the performances I witnessed during my field research in Jali.

What follows is a description of the history, function, participation, style, and instrumentation for *Manganje* as observed in the Jali area.

3.2.1.1 History, function and participation

I was told by the song leader of *Manganje*, Shaibu Kafonsi, that it is an old dance "from our forefathers or ancestors" and has been passed on from generation to generation. However, no one was able to inform me as to the exact origins of *Manganje*.

Performances are more frequently held in the dry season after harvest when people are not busy with farming activities. This *gule* may be performed during the day or night. *Manganje* is typically performed during and after the male initiation rite known as *Jando*

and after the female initiation rite known as *Nsondo*. However, *Manganje* may sometimes be performed during events involving the whole community, such as a celebration in the community, or simply for recreation and entertainment when people feel like coming together to enjoy themselves. Whatever the occasion or purpose of *Manganje*, there is always the element of enhancement of social cohesion in performance.

There are two versions of *Manganje* in the Jali area. The distinguishing characteristic is the presence or absence of masked and costumed dancers. Thus, these two versions will be referred to as the masked *Manganje* and the unmasked *Manganje*, or simply *Manganje*. The masked version of *Manganje* is reserved for the graduation ceremony of the *Jando* boys' initiation ritual, a significant occasion in the community. The masked *Manganje* was performed during this research only at the special request of Group Village Headman Jali for the express purpose of this research project.

Participation in *Manganje* is open to all, male or female, who have been initiated and are no longer considered a child. These people will have already danced *Manganje* during their initiation and so have practical experiences regarding the *gule*. Children who are potential initiation candidates, approximately eight years old and older, are also allowed to participate. However, the primary reason given for this exclusion was that they are at risk of injury due to their small size and tend to disturb the dance due to their inexperience. When the dance gets "hot" the children may be stepped on or may fall.

There is no specific attire adopted by the *Manganje* dancers, although the song leaders tend to cover their heads with colourful pieces of cloth (*duku*) tied in the front and *zitenje*[17]. They are, in fact, dressed like women as shown on page 45 picture below. The explanation

[17] *Chitenje* (sg.)/*zitenje* (pl.): cloth worn by women over the clothes on the lower part of body, and secured at the waist. Wearing *zitenge* is traditional seen as modest attire, appropriate especially for adult women.

given amid smiles is that this adds to the entertainment value of *Manganje*. I could see that the people derive pleasure from the inclusion of this comical element to *Manganje*.

In contrast, the masked *Manganje* is not danced by everybody, only the *zilombo* (animals/beasts) and older women. The masked dancers are reverently referred to as *zilombo* because they are believed to be manifestations of spirit beings, not mere mortals. The *Zilombo* are supposed to be given a wide berth and for this reason participation in the dance is not free to all. The name *zilombo* and the wearing of a costume that conceals identity is reminiscent of the masked dance *Gule wa mkulu* among the *Chewa* predominantly of the central region of Malawi. It is unclear as to whether the masked dancers' identity is common knowledge or whether they, as it is in *Gule wa Mkulu*, are supposed to ever reveal their true identity. However, it was revealed to me that the leaders of the boys' initiation, *Jando*, are the ones who wear the masked costume (*zilombo*).

The costume for masked *Manganje* is shown in photographs below. The men wear colourful red and blue costumes, with headgear and beards made out of long chicken or guinea fowl feathers and sisal. Various shaped patches such as crosses are made on the costume (red patches are observable in the photograph on the headgear). The dancers' faces are painted to disguise their identity, since they are no longer consider to be people when they perform, but rather spirit beings or *zilombo* (beasts/animals). Sometimes small packages that resemble pillows are hung unto the costume or carried singularly or in bundles attached to each other by string or cloth. The small pillows are, according to the masked *Manganje* dancers, simply for *Manganje* embellishment, although they bear a marked resemblance to those used in traditional medicine called *zithumwa* which are said to contain powerful magic for various purposes.

3.2.1.2 Styles and instrumentation

The instruments used in *Manganje* are as follows

- *Chiminingo/chiwaya*: An old metal bucket played with sticks as shown on page 46.
- *Pelemende/Ng'oma ya ing'ono/ng'oma yaying'ono mau*: A single membrane, open-ended, medium sized cylindrical drum as shown on page 46.
- *Awelamo/Ng'oma ya yikulu/ng'oma yayikulu mau/ng'oma yotsogolera*: A single membrane, open-ended, large cylindrical shaped drum with a small base as shown on page 47.
- *Mawezulo*: Whistles

These instruments are generally played only by men, although women may be allowed to play all apart from the lead drum if they show interest and talent. The reason given for the lead drum being played by only men was that it required stamina that the women would likely not have. It is played for long periods of time, sometimes all night and it was indicated that most women could not manage this. Another source later revealed to me that since the drums are played by placing them between the legs, women were discouraged from playing them as this may compromise their modesty by exposing the legs or making them sit in a manner that might be easily considered disrespectful to themselves (women are typically expected to sit with their legs together within Malawian cultures). Furthermore, it was reported to me that many of the drummers attach magical charms on their drums to enable them to play well and protect them from counter-charms by competitors or enemies. The strength of these charms might be compromised if placed between the legs of a woman, since women are considered ritually unclean due to the fact that they menstruate.

Similar research was conducted earlier by Robert Chanunkha (1999) in the Mpili area of the Machinga district, also in the *Yao* belt. In contrast to these findings, "Music learning and

acquisition among *Yao* children," Chanunkha explains that girls were not allowed to play or even touch any instruments in the *Manganje* of that area (1999:14). He reported that there were also *Lomwe, Mang'anja,* and some *Ngoni* people living in this area with the *Yao* and that this influenced the culture there. Although there were many similarities, differences between practices in Jali and Mpili areas indicate that musical arts practices and norms may differ from place to play even among the same groups of people.

As mentioned already, the two drums—*pelemende* and *awelamo*—are perceived as being so characteristic of *Manganje* to the degree that without either's presence, the *gule* would not be identifiable as *Manganje.* Children learn to appreciate the drums' interplay and interdependence early in their musical development through listening and internalizing their coextensive sound as well as their independent roles in the performance. They are said to belong together by virtue of balancing each other. *Pelemende* has a higher pitch while *awelamo* has a low pitch. It was explained that these two are like male and female. Although the *awelamo* is the lead drum, its role is dependent on the presence of the *pelemende* drum and the underlying rhythm played by the *chiminingo.* These two drums represent two ends of the tonal spectrum but it is only when both are played that the music is said to be "sweet" or good.

Masked *Manganje* is danced in a linear formation since there are a fewer number of dancers involved. But *Manganje* is danced in a circular formation and in an anticlockwise motion[18]. Drummers play from their location in the middle of the circle. *Manganje* includes a dance formation of circles within circles: the dancers make circular movements around each other as they move in an anticlockwise manner. The dance starts in a group circular

[18] It is not known whether this is the case for *Manganje* at all times or whether it was incidental to the instances observed or even limited to the area of Jali. Although Collins (2010:143) notes that there is a typical bias in the direction of African dances, for the circular dances are invariably anticlockwise.

fashion and the smaller circles commence later in the performance. At each turn, each dancer ends up making a figure-eight shape. The general dance movement of *Manganje* is a combination of regularly spaced flowing and stopping movements. Staccato movements are made by dancers' entire bodies in unison and on the accent of the drum, while they make smooth circular movements around each other in the figure-eight shape.

Performances include sections where there is only dancing and drumming as described in the prelude to this chapter. This is locally called "the chorus" of the dance. This terminology is common to all *magule* in Jali and elsewhere in Malawi. The chorus is when there is only drumming, the dancing intensifies and ululation, whistles, clapping, and shouts may be heard. In many ways the level of participation and engagement, the prowess of the dancers and drummers and the derived enjoyment defines the success of a performance. After such a performance of *Manganje* in Jali area, many people were heard declaring *Manganje anakoma* (the *Manganje* was sweet) or that *gule anali bwino* (the *gule* was good).

A *Manganje* song-leading team in Jali is typically comprised of two men. A third may respond to them in a call-and-response manner. Mr Shaibu Kafonsi was the main song leader at the time of my research. Mr Jackson Kafonsi (nephew to Kafonsi) and Mr James Kalungwe interchangeably played the role of song-leading partner or responder. Mr Shaibu Kafonsi continues to lead in *Manganje* because he is the recognized leader of the *Jando* boys' initiation. Apart from embellishment, the second leading voice participates by filling in the silence between phrases and may complete the linguistic sense of the song by interjecting with words. By harmonising with distinctive notes characterising the tonality, the second song leader cements the tonality. Mr Jackson Shaibu explained that the subtle ways in which the two leading voices interact produces a result that is *zosangalatsa* (pleasing) to the people of Jali. The more harmonically and rhythmically complicated sections are combined and contrasted with simpler sections. This kind of elaborate musical

combination elicited much ululation and looks of approval from the participant audience. The responses to this song-leading by the group may be performed in unison with all voices singing together or in harmony.

The *Kungwe* is a special call-and-response between song leaders, and the dancers and the participant-audience as given below

Leader(s): Iyeee!

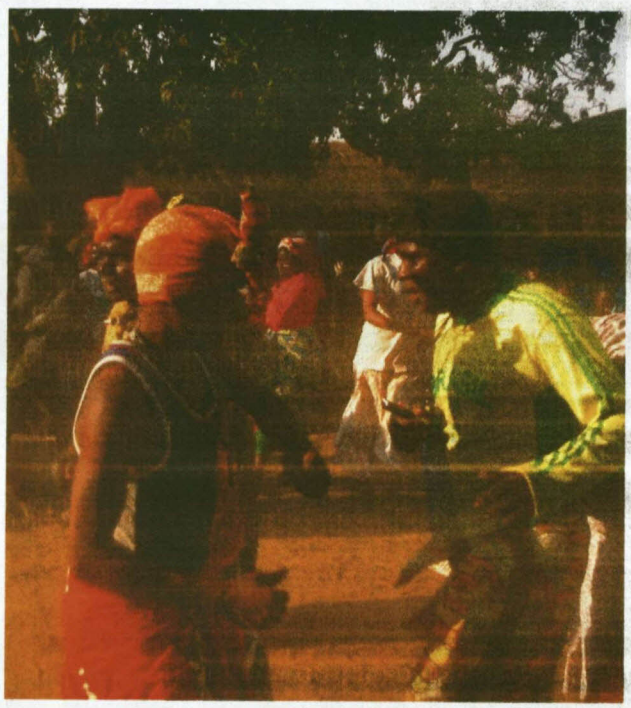
All: Wooooo!

Before beginning a new song, the *kungwe*[19] is performed as detailed above. The *kungwe* is performed in the two characteristic voices used to lead songs in *Manganje*. After a couple of times of giving the *kungwe*, the song leaders launch into the song. For this reason, it may be understood as a means of preparation for the song leaders, akin in its role to the characteristic 5-6-7-8 count used by Western dancers before they begin to dance.

The *Kungwe* serves multiple functions in *Manganje*. It is performed to herald the start of another song, and it signals to the instrumentalists to cease drumming so that changes may be made corresponding to the new song. This discontinuity allows the new song to build up its own momentum separate from the previous. In the performance of *Manganje* I observed, the *kungwe* had to be done as a signal to stop the dancing which, it seemed, would otherwise have continued unabated for some time. Normally *Manganje* will go on as long as the people feel like it must. If one of the drummers tires, he is replaced by another mid-song so that the continuity of the dance is unaffected. In this way, it is easy to see how *Manganje* can go on all night, as I was informed.

[19] According to research in Mpili area, Machinga district by Malawian scholar Robert Chanunkha (1999:7) *Kungwe* refers to a category of songs sung during the boys' graduation from initiation camps.

The drummer least likely to be replaced is the lead drummer or *awelamo* player. Every lead drummer has a distinct style. This, according to *awelamo* drummer Mr Macheso, is considered a specialised skill and when people are pleased with the player, they are unlikely to allow a switch, since that will change the sound of the entire performance. As a result, Mr Macheso often ends up playing throughout the entire event, with only short breaks in between.



Zilombo. Masked *Manganje* dancer

Chiminingo. Empty metal bucket played with sticks

Pelemende/ng'oma yaying'ono. The medium sized cylindrical drum used in *Manganje*

Awelamo/Ng'oma ya yikulu: The larger cylindrical lead drum used in *Manganje*

3.2.2 *Malangalanga*

3.2.2.1 History function and participation

According to Chief Jali 1[20], *Malangalanga* came with the arrival in Jali of former First Lady Calista Mutharika, who was then member of parliament for Zomba district, Likangala constituency prior to her marrying the late president Professor Bingu wa Mutharika in 2010. Mutharika asked for and was granted land to build and settle on in the area of chief Jali. Thereafter, people from Traditional Authority Mwambo's area near Lake Chirwa, from where the former first lady hails, came to teach the women from the area of chief Jali *Malangalanga* at her request. However, when I spoke to the leader of *Malangalanga,* Mrs Gunda, she informed me that this

[20] This is a title given to one of the village headman underGroup Village Headman Jali, presiding over an area near the Jali trading centre or market. Chief Jali 1 is Mrs Kasipa. There is also a chief Jali 2. These two village headmen are differentiated from theGroup Village Headman Jali who is simply called *a Jali* or *Agulupu* (from the word group)

dance was "*wamakolo*," that is it was from the ancestors. This signified that it had been passed on from generation to generation.

Malangalanga dancers with the author (second from left) as she learns how to perform. Note the characteristic cloths around the hips.

While at face value, these accounts might seem to be conflicting, it is nevertheless possible for both to be accurate. Mrs Gunda could be accurate in that *Malangalanga* had existed for generations and probably does not consider it new although people in the particular area of Jali only recently learned it.

Malangalanga is typically performed at community events such as celebrations, the installation of new chiefs or the honouring of incumbent chiefs, and for recreational purposes when the people just feel like coming together to celebrate life. *Malangalanga* may be danced by both men and women, but is at the moment danced by females only. I observed that this dance did not include very young girls. All the girls were older than twelve years old. The dance is generally, but not strictly, for *nchembele*—women who have borne children. Others may join in the official *Malangalanga* group, but there are strict

rules followed. According to Mrs Gunda, the average age at which young dancers are allowed to join in is nineteen years old, and only during school holidays if they are still studying. Younger girls are not allowed to participate in the *Malangalanga* group as this might distract them from their duties or school.

The women wear the traditional *zitenje*, which are considered modest and appropriate for adult women. In *Malangalanga*, an additional *chitenje* is rolled up and tied around the hips. This is done to constrict the buttocks and thus accentuate the movements the women make as they dance. Sometimes the women wear costume. In the picture above, the women chose to wear white blouses and the same design of *zitenje* (as observed on the first and last dancer) for uniformity and easy identification as *Malangalanga* dancers. Others wore *zitenge* in dark colours, as close to the uniform code as possible.

Mrs Gunda is the main song-leader of the group and the recognised leader of the women should they travel to perform. This group of women have gained popularity and are sometimes invited to participate in and perform at celebrations away from Jali. I witnessed them performing at Malawi's Independence Day celebrations this year, which was aired on the national television station Malawi Broadcasting Cooperation (MBC).

3.2.2.2 Style and instrumentation

Malangalanga uses four instruments:

- *Ngongongo*: hoe
- A large cylindrical drum
- A smaller drum

- *Mawezulo* whistles[21]

According to the dancers, the whistle was added to the ensemble only recently. The *ngongongo* (hoe) is played using a piece of metal so that the sound carries far. This instrument plays a similar role in *Malangalanga* as the *chimininго* does in *Manganje*: it provides a metrical accompaniment and together with the smaller drums in each case provides the characteristic rhythm for each *gule*. The drumming of *Malangalanga* is rapid and the dancing is energetic.

The primary physical movements employed in the dancing of *Malangalanga* are centred in the waist and hips. The waist-wriggling action is called *kuduka or kudula*. The word *kudula* normally means cutting and it is unclear as to why this is used in reference to this type of dancing. There is no strict uniform movement as long as the dancer moves the waist and moves in time to the music. This gives the women a chance to display their prowess and flexibility. This is especially true when the music comes to the "chorus," the term used for when there is no singing, only drumming and dancing. At this point the dancers cease their anticlockwise movement and dance in one spot. Both the drummers and the dancers, in synchronization and complementarity, showcase their skills.

Although the basic dance movements are the same, each woman renders an individual performance following the drumming patterns. As the Chichewa saying goes, "*Umavina ng'omayo mmene ukunvela*" ("You dance to the drum [rhythm] the way you hear it"). This statement underscores unity in diversity, and individuality in conformity. The drumming and dance movements are rapid in comparison to those of *Manganje* and *Mganda*. However, the underlying drumming pattern of the smaller cylindrical drum is similar to both *Manganje* and *Mganda*.

[21] These whistles are purchased. They are often made of plastic but sometimes they are metal.

When beginning the *gule*, the drumming begins before the song-leaders start singing. Unlike in the case of *Manganje*, the song-leaders in *Malangalanga* allow the drummers to set the tempo, volume and mood of the performance, then start singing accordingly. Due to the rapid pace of playing, the drummers need to coordinate their playing before the singing, which may cause them not to hear each other's playing, begins. It was explained to me that if the song-leaders started to sing before the drumming begun, they would find it difficult to coordinate the two parts. This would also hinder both song-leaders and drummers from singing and playing with confidence.

3.2.3 *Mganda*

Mganda is a *gule* also performed in other districts of Malawi, although the style and conceptual origins are different. There appear to be two kinds of *Mganda*: the military influenced type and the non-military influenced type. The type practiced in Jali is the non-military influenced *Mganda*. Mitchell Strumpf states that the military-influenced version of *Mganda* is performed in Dowa, Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Salima, and Lilongwe districts in the Central Region of the country (1999:119). *Mganda* may also be found in Ntchisi district in the central region of Malawi according to Malawian scholar Grant Nthala (2010:113).

The section that follows describes the history participation and function of Mganda in the Jali area.

3.2.3.1 History, function, and participation

I was informed that *Mganda* in Jali area has been passed down from generation to generation, received from the forefathers. This is all that is known of its origins by those interviewed. However, owing to the non-military nature of the *Mganda* in Jali area, it may be surmised that it has a relatively recent origin, since the first known origins of *Mganda*

are military influenced. Soldiers who went to war during the colonial period of Malawi's history originated this *gule* in imitation of military parades and the army in general. Non-military types of *Mganda*, therefore, must have morphed from the military types, adapted to conditions peculiar to the Jali area.

Although I was informed that men may participate, there were no men doing so during the initial portion of the performance of *Mganda* that I documented. A few men joined in as the dance progressed, however. When inquiry was made into the reasons for this, it was indicated to me that it was purely coincidental and was not a true reflection of the usual practice. The respondent stated that joining in the dance is by choice and if one did not feel like participating, it was not forced upon him or her unless that person played a key role without which the dance could not proceed. There was no reason given by the other respondents beyond "*basi*" which most accurately translates in this context means "just". I took it to mean that the men simply did not wish to participate that day.

Mganda is a vibrant part of life in the community of Jali. According to chief Jali 1, Mrs Kasipa, a wedding is not a wedding unless there is *Mganda*. *Mganda* accompanies, signifies, or heralds the various events involved in wedding proceedings. Mrs. Chikonga commented that "A wedding is not a wedding without *Mganda*" (*Ukwati siungakhale ukwati opanda Nganda*). *Mganda* and weddings are therefore perceived as synonymous. Marriage is perceived as being between two people only but also their families and by extension their communities. As such *Mganda*, apart from fulfilling the roles already given, also serves as an agglutinating agent between the now unified parties. *Mganda* usually goes on all night on the eve of the wedding.

One of the processes during weddings in Jali is *maliyeliye* which I was informed means "dance and ask". During this process *Mganda* dancers, and whoever is interested, go from

home to home performing *Mganda* and receiving whatever goodwill offering people have to contribute. This offering typically takes the form of maize floor and other food or money. This is done in the morning. After *maliyeliye*, the group will return to a central location in order to cook and eat what they have been given.

Maliyeliye provides an opportunity for the young in the community to learn *Mganda* through listening and observation. The texts of the songs sung in various ways communicate the values associated with marriage and traditionally acceptable behaviour for married people and their families. Young children follow the *Mganda* wherever it goes and get the rare opportunity to participate since they are normally not allowed to do so.

3.2.3.2 Style and instrumentation

The instruments used in *Mganda* are:

- *Bacha*: large double-barrelled drum played using beaters. This is made of a cylinder cut from a metal drum. The membrane is made from cattle hide, goat skin, or python skin bound together by strips of sisal or leather.

On the occasion I observed, however, the *bacha* drum was not available and was substituted by the *awelamo* drum used in *Manganje*. An example of a drum similar to the *bacha* given above is used with permission from Nthala (2010:59). This is an example of the *gunda* drum as played among the *Chewa* people of *Ntchisi* district in their version of *Mganda* and in *Chimtali*.

- *Ng'oma yaying'ono*: smaller drum
- *Chingongongo*: farming hoe played using a piece of metal. The *ngongongo* in *Mganda* is played similarly to the *chimininingo* in *Malangalanga*. Mrs Chikonga informed me that the difference is, or course, that the instruments used and the manner in which they are played are different.
- *Makherere/wizulo*: whistles

The general dancing style of *Mganda* is similar to *Malangalanga* but, in the words of Mrs Chikonga, the movements are more "dignified" (*wodzilemekeza*) in that the waist movement is not as provocative in nature. *Mganda* is danced in a circular formation with the song leaders and drummers inside the circle. On an occasion where the number of dancers is large, a smaller circle may be made inside the outer circle as was in the cases observed. In the beginning, all dancers stand facing into the circles. Once they start dancing, they turn and begin to move anticlockwise. The song is started by with the song leaders within the inner circle, before it is taken up by the outer circle. The dancing also follows the same sequence: the inner circle starts to dance and the outer circle follows suit. As is shown in the picture, the inner circle has already begun to sing and dance while the outer circle is only just beginning. Some dancers are still in the starting position and have not yet begun to move anticlockwise and dance.

When people desire a *Mganda* performance for a wedding for instance, it must be "ordered". This means *Mganda* is requested accompanied by monetary incentive. It is up to the people desiring the *Mganda* to decide from which place they want to order it depending on preference. Prolific and experienced drummers are the most difficult to find since drumming is a specialised skill. Therefore, when people order *Mganda* in Jali, it is essentially the drummers who are being requested for and paid.

Mganda dancers as they begin to dance in two circles

3.3 Conclusion

The musical arts in Malawi are referred to as *magule a makolo* (dances of our ancestors), *magule a chikhalidwe chathu* (dances of our way of life), or simply *magule*. *Magule* have the characteristics of functionality, complementarity and balance, repetitions (cycles within cycles). They comprise several concurrent and complementary performing and plastic art disciplines. Meki Nzewi (2003:13) explains that these disciplines—music, dance, drama, poetry, prose, sculpture, and costume arts—are seldom separated in creative thinking and performance practice in African contexts. Though there is no term conceptually congruent to music as it is understood in the western sense, there are various term for activities performed during *magule* such as *nyimbo* (song) *kuvina* (dancing) and *kuyimba ng'oma* (literally singing the drum). Emphasis is on performance and practical aspects of the musical arts as opposed to abstract concepts.

Malangalanga, *Mganda* and *Manganje* are the *magule* performed in Jali area. Performances of these *magule* are communal events and serve to articulate and transmit the culture and values of the people of Jali. To learn the musical arts in Jali area is to learn critical aspects of how and why the culture and everyday life of the community is both informed and re-formed.

CHAPTER 4

THE INDIGENOUS MUSIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion of the indigenous musical art education system in the area of Group Village Headman Jali in Zomba district, Southern Malawi. The musical arts principles, methods and processes outlined in this chapter are descriptive of Jali and arise from an analysis of the performances, interviews, my observation, and my learning experiences while in Jali.

This research applied multiple methods of qualitative research and is auto-ethnographic in nature. This analysis is presented with acknowledgements of my unique position as one who occupies the emic as well as etic[22] position of self in this research. My accumulated personal experiences and knowledge living in Malawi and Zomba district in particular, participating in learning and observing various musical arts types, and my insights into learning from a teacher's perspective will feature in this analysis. This represents my emic position. My etic position is represented in that I am a scholar and a cultural outsider to the immediate research area of Jali. However, I have endeavoured to present the findings of this research as accurately as possible by balancing the two variables of my position.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the cultural area that this research finds its context. As such there are some similarities with other sub-Saharan African localities. As argued in the first chapter, while not ignoring differences that exists in this cultural area, the cultures in the geographical area of sub-Saharan Africa exhibit adequate cultural similarities and

[22] Emic: relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied.
Etic: Relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who does not participate in the culture being studied (Creswell 1998).

adequate dissimilarity to other cultures to be considered a distinct cultural area (Onwuejeogwu 1975:9). In spite of the great diversity of African musical styles and idioms, Christopher James explains, a number of common characteristics exist (1999:7). The common features and characteristics are coalescing to musical arts in sub-Saharan Africa. In section 3.1 some of these features and characteristics are described which also apply to the Jali area as will be seen throughout this chapter.

The intention of the chapter is to focus on how general features of culture and musical arts teaching and learning manifest, particularly through three musical arts types or *magule*, namely *Mganda*, *Manganje*, and *Malangalanga*, in the area of Jali. The approach of this chapter therefore is to analyse and discuss specific aspects of the educational system showing how these display in the three *magule* and in everyday life in the community. To facilitate this analysis, particular examples of observed and narrated events, and individual experiences will be given as is applicable.

The musical arts education system in Jali, like elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, is mainly informal and sometimes formal. Initiations and apprenticeship have strong elements of formality in that the roles and responsibilities of teacher/expert and learner/apprentice are clearly defined. The goals and methods of these processes are also predefined and assessment is strict with regards to these goals and methods.

Ruth Paradise and Barbara Rogoff state that informal learning is commonly taken to be "natural" in that everyone engages in it by virtue of being human, and is so compatible with every day cultural life that it becomes "second nature" (2009:102). The authors' description of informal learning in what they call traditional communities is highly compatible with the findings of this research. The two are so congruent as to make it reasonable to state that the

musical arts education system in Jali is a sub-category and perhaps even an exemplar of the category Paradise and Rogoff refer to as informal education in traditional society.

Section 4.1 presents basic assumptions and premises of this education system as extracted through analysis of data gathered in this research, and research by others scholars in this particular geographical and cultural area. These basic assumptions although closely related are, for the sake of delineation, discussed separately under the headings nature of the leaner, nature of content, and nature of the teaching and learning process.

Section 4.2 outlines the overarching and specific objectives and outcomes, and assessment standards and methods of the indigenous musical arts education system as it exists in Jali. Overarching objectives include community and character building, and cultivating attitudes. Specific competences and skills include singing, dancing and instrumentation. This section concludes with a discussion of assessment standards and methods, which will finally be discussed in light of the particular competences and skills.

The section 4.3 deals with techniques of learning. I examine agency intention and motivation as themes running throughout the discussion. Agency refers to the motivated action and efficacy of individuals towards an intended goal that the individual perceives as beneficial. Intention and motivation are central to agency and provide impetus for learning. Techniques are the means by which a learner achieves the intended learning goal. Techniques as distilled from the researcher's observation and as narrated by the people of Jali are observational learning, trial-and-error, play, peer education, and cooperative learning.

Observational learning, also known as modelling, is a process by which a person acquires knowledge and skills by observation and/or imitation. Trial-and-error is often discussed as a problem solving technique through which several options are explored in order to find

the best option for the problem. In this case, the learner has an ideal of music arts performance that he or she aims to achieve. The learner goes about doing so through multiple attempts using different methods until the ideal is attained. Play denotes a recreational activity that is often spontaneous and marked by free flowing exploration and expression. Peer education as used here refers to learning that occurs in groups through interaction of people of the same age and/or social group. Cooperative learning refers to learning carried out in groups and through collective effort. Peer education and cooperative learning tend to occur concurrently and are therefore discussed as a single technique.

Section 4.4 highlights the teaching and learning processes of enculturation, apprenticeship and initiation rites. The personal accounts of individuals are used to illustrate these processes. Enculturation[23] is a lifelong process of learning by which individuals become members of a community by acquiring the norms of the cultural group, and internalizing behaviour and cognition patterns. Apprenticeship is a specific process undertaken between a highly skilled person (expert) and one willing to learn (novice) for a certain length of time towards transference and refinement of particular skills. Initiation is a rite of passage in which young people are instructed in aspects of culture in a formalised learning situation largely through the musical arts.

Section 4.5 is a summary of a well-educated musician in Malawi. Section 4.6 is the conclusion on the foregoing discussion of the musical arts education system in the Jali area of Zomba in the southern region of Malawi.

An education system, whether it is called that overtly or not, has a purpose for existence and objectives which it seeks to achieve and see exhibited by products of the system. The

[23] Enculturation is used synonymously with socialization, and acculturation when defined as the adoption of behaviour patterns of the surrounding culture or the totality of knowledge values shared by a society (www.thefreedisctionary.com/acculturation)

purpose determines both short and long term objectives and outcomes of the education process. Assessment procedures ascertain whether these objectives and outcomes are being attained. While the people of Jali do not necessarily refer to all they teach and learn relating to *magule* as an educational system,[24] the perpetuity of *magule* in Jali, and the unity of what is done towards this perpetuity demonstrates that an educational system exists.

There are assumptions and premises underlying the education system which although rarely verbalized have a significant impact on the education system and its operations. The next section summarises the assumptions and premises underlying the music education system in Jali.

4.1 Basic assumptions and premises

The basic assumptions and premises of the musical arts education system in Jali are rooted in their culture just as the musical arts are rooted in the culture. Life in Jali is community oriented and all undertakings including musical arts find their deepest meaning in their realization of the culture's fundamental principle of community. All premises and assumptions are directly or indirectly related to or based on this cultural principle.

Assumptions and premises influence the way musical arts transmission proceeds, the activities and methods engaged, and type of interaction utilised. They also influence how people think about, process, interpret and respond to events relating to the musical arts and related interactions. In other words, the assumptions and premises influence theory of mind.

[24] A system is defined as a set of principles or procedures to which something is done; an organised scheme or method or as a set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network (*Oxford Dictionary* 2010). An education system therefore is a system according to this definition, geared towards teaching and learning.

A theory of mind is how one explains the nature of the human mind and behaviour, and deciphers others' states of mind and intentions. Carol Miller explains that a theory of mind, like language, develops over time building from foundational skills to a sophisticated understanding of interaction (2006:143). Culture plays a significant role in the formation of individual theories of mind and accounts for similarities among members of the same cultural group. These similarities aid social cognition and allow people to function well socially. These cultural similarities in theory of mind facilitate the process of teaching and learning in the musical arts, and minimise the likelihood of erroneous conclusions of intention and states of mind. The process of transmission is assisted where people share the same assumptions concerning human interaction and the musical arts. According to John Blacking, musical elements such as tonal systems, scales, and rhythmic patterns are constructed and interpreted by individuals with the same cognitive equipment as other features of a socio-cultural system (1985:66).

The basic assumptions and premises may alternately be understood as fundamental tenets of the education system that are in turn embedded in the principle of community. The section that follows gives assumptions and premises that emerge from my analysis. These are grouped according to whether they are related to the learner, the content or learning process for the sake of convenience and clarity although they are not as easily divisible in practice.

4.1.1 Nature of the learner

The following assumptions and premises are based on my analysis of the research conducted in the Jali area. In some cases, these assumptions and premises arise from direct information from interviews or statements made by members of the community. In other

cases they are inferred from observations and the totality of collected data. The first assumption below is an example of this type of inference.

It is a general assumption that human beings are born latently capable of being artistic, of learning and engaging in the musical. While individual differences are acknowledged, the assumption is that no one is completely artistically or musically incapable. John Blacking observes that Africans assume that all normal people have some musical ability (1973:34). All children are therefore treated as capable of both performing and learning how to be musical. Put differently, everybody has musical potential. This assumption is evidenced by the fact that no one is exempt from participation in the musical arts on the basis of inability. When dealing with me as a researcher and outsider in Jali, people did not stop to inquire whether or not I was capable of dancing and singing but simply began to encourage my participation and to instruct me when necessary.

In an attempt to find out more about identification of ability I asked respondents what the process was for getting people involved in different musical roles. I was informed that individuals are exposed to and participate in different aspects of the musical arts until they find their own place in the total performance. The possibility of one being completely devoid of artistic ability never arose. When asked of this possibility Mr. Gunda promptly indicated with a smile that there is no one who does not know how to do anything (in the musical arts). Everybody can do something *(palibe amene siamatha chilichonse. Aliyense angathe chinachake*). Another way in which individuals are identified for various roles is during initiation. Those who do particularly well in specific roles are praised to their parents and peers both during and after the initiation, as was also discovered by Chanunkha (1999:19).

People realise their artistic potential through exploration. In so doing people figure out what they are good at, and must be willing to apply effort to horn their skill. According to remarks by some respondents, they believe that the difference between those who are exceptionally skilled and those that are average is divine benevolence[25] and effort. According to Bester Saidi, even if two people are equally gifted by God with a particular artistic skill, only the one who applies effort will be excel. Lack of effort therefore is seen as ingratitude for God-given ability.

It is assumed that every learner possesses some inculcated skills and knowledge going into a learning experience. The mind is not completely blank at the time of a learning experience. Through the process of enculturation, children accumulate knowledge and sensibilities that facilitate the learning process at an older age. Even though children younger than eight or nine years of age do not participate in the adult performances, they are exposed to the musical arts and internalise the sounds and other skills displayed. Sometimes the children imitate what they observe using trial-and-error and thus further ingrain the knowledge. All this information comes to the fore at the time they come to the age when they are allowed to participate with the adults.

Learners are assumed to be developmentally and culturally ready to learn and participate by the age of eight or nine when they are allowed to participate in the adult performances. It is also by extension assumed that the learner is compliant to the cultural norms that are being espoused through the practice and teaching of musical arts, more so because musical arts are so meaningfully woven into the lives of the people as already indicated.

Openness to learning is perceived favourably by the people of Jali. A learner must be open to learning from others with an attitude of humility. "No one knows everything" (*palibe*

[25] It is common to attribute exceptional talent, wisdom, wealth and other positivity to the benevolence of God.

amadziwa zonse) is a statement that was repeated on several occasions by respondents during interviews. This attitude applies to the musical arts as well as other spheres of life in the community. John Chernoff states that this attitude is common among many African cultures. He adds that this is why we need to rely on others since no one can claim to know everything there is to know about something. There is always something that someone else knows and therefore always a need to keep learning (1979:96). These sentiments are present in proverbs such as this *Yao* example: *Ujika wangalikunda kunyuma* (being alone does not scrub your back) (Ian Dicks 2006:118).

4.1.2 Nature of content

This section continues to outline the assumption and premises as relates to the nature of the content based on analysis of the data obtained in the Jali area. The prevailing culture determines what is to be learned or taught. What the people value and what is desirable in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes is what is perpetuated. *Umunthu* and *khalidwe* (way of life) are concepts that encapsulate all of these aspects.

While interviewing some children in the Jali area, I asked them why they participated in musical arts performance. They responded that because it is good and they enjoy it. They also indicated that it is their culture and their parents want them to grow up knowing how to perform. When I asked them why this is so, one boy by the name of Hilary indicated that this was to make sure they were also able to teach their children. Another, Chikumbutso, added that when they know how to perform with others they will not be left out of events. From these remarks, perpetuity and cultural belonging (implying community and character building) are motivation for participation for children. In other words, what they learn and participate in is seen as valuable culturally and personally both to the child and by the adults.

A basic premise is that everyone is connected to everyone else. What affects one person ultimately affects the whole community. In the same way, everything is connected to everything else in one way or another. Changes occurring in one aspect affect other aspects of life in a community. A proverb[26] that best summarise this is *chadza pano nchatonse* (whatever comes is for all of us/whatever comes here befalls all of us). The holistic nature of the musical arts mirrors this sentiment.

In the musical arts, knowledge of the different aspects is interrelated. Knowledge of and attention to other aspects is necessary for the successful performance of any one particular aspect. In order for one to dance well, for example, one must pay attention to the drumming and song patterns and must exhibit the corresponding dramatic elements to effectively communicate the message of the performance. The learner is expected to perceive the aspects as being related and to be able to learn and perform them holistically.

4.1.3 Nature of teaching and learning

In this community as well as elsewhere in Malawi, it is considered normal and a responsibility for adults to instruct the young in ways in which to live. All adults can teach and correct children. However, it is those who are the accomplished, have learned adequately, and have more experience than the one learning who teach. In some cases those that are more experienced are peers.

Responsibility for the teaching and learning of skills and knowledge is corporate in the sense that everyone is, to some extent responsible for and concerned with the cultural learning of others in the community. The community can scrutinize the processes at work particularly in the more formalised instances of learning and may call to order those hindering learning.

[26] In *Yao* oral literature the proverb is called a *Chitagu* (pl *yitagu*) and the proverbial story *adisi* (Dicks 2006:12)

As far as the community is concerned, responsibility rests on the leaders, teachers, adults or eldest and most experienced of the learning situation depending on the nature of the particular learning situation. These people are supposed to know better and are therefore expected to pass on their knowledge and skill to those younger, less knowledgeable or experienced. In the case of observed lack of knowledge or skills, the assumption is that at some time, someone did not teach what they should have taught. Should the teacher or oldest be beyond reproach, the blame is then shifted to the learner. The possible explanations for this, particularly in the case of formalised learning for example during initiation, could be the lack of effort or motivation, lack of respect for authority or elder (and therefore lack of effort), or lack of capability in that order. In all these circumstances, particular attention is given to the learner to address the lack of knowledge and skill until it is rectified.

A basic assumption is that a teacher or elder is capable of teaching or transmitting information and that the learner is obedient. Competency is assumed until proven absent. From the conduct and remarks of respondents, this did not seem to be in question. It is simply taken for granted. People teach as they learn or are taught. This ensures the continuity of not only the culture but the essential methods and techniques of the musical arts education system.

Learning is part of everyday life and occurs wherever the conditions are favourable, with few strict rules as to the particulars of place and time. For example chores such as washing clothes or collecting firewood together can present an opportunity for one to learn a song from another. Whenever it is culturally acceptable for a musical arts activity to be undertaken, teaching and learning may also occur.

Much learning is done through discovery and exploration. In children discovery often takes the form of individual as well as group play. Imitation, trial-and-error, and play are some of the learning techniques of this musical arts education system. Hearing a song on several occasions is considered grounds to assume that the song is known by the hearer whether the hearer actively participated or not.

Participation in performance is necessary for learning. The learner may engage or participate actively as well as passively, intentionally or unintentionally towards acquisition of information and knowledge, skills and competences. All such engagement leads to acquisition of knowledge of the culture and the musical arts. Interaction is learning and learning is interaction.

There is an immediate manifestation of an acquired skill in performance, behaviour and attitude, and verbally articulated knowledge. In other words, learning is practical and its purpose is towards practicality. Assessment therefore is immediate and within the immediate context of learning. The correct learned experience is manifested as soon as it is acquired. Incorrect action is also corrected expediently and immediately. While being taught a *Mganda* song I watched while they performed the dance then I was asked to join in. My teachers then assessed me by watching me dance together with them. It did not take long for them to point out my incorrect posture. A detailed account of this lesson is contained in section 4.4.3. Methods of assessment are discussed in section 4.2.3. Section 4.2 below contains the objectives of the educational system in Jali from the overarching objectives and outcomes, specific competences and skills, to assessment standards and methods for these objectives and outcomes.

The basic assumptions and premises covered in the three preceding sections are foundational to the entire musical arts system and are implicit in all other aspects to be discussed in this chapter.

4.2 Objectives and outcomes

Prelude

> As I clap my hands, sway my body, ululate and sing, I become part of something bigger than myself. A timeless experience of the "I" inside the "we": I lose myself in the music as I find myself at the same time. The whole experience lets me know that I belong and that I am a necessary part of the event, and that everyone else around me is too. This is how I learn to acknowledge others from the drummers to those watching and know that they matter as much as I do. Without each of our input, the performance would be the poorer for it. We are all connected, part of this place, this culture, this dance...

Introduction

The principle objective of musical arts education is cultural transmission and perpetuity through the inculcation of appropriate musical skills and knowledge, attitudes and sensibilities. On the whole, the aim of traditional systems of education in Africa according to Mosunmola Omibiyi is to produce effective and functioning of members of the society (1972:88). Throughout this discussion this objective should be seen as motivating every other objective. However, this principle objective may be unpacked into more specific objectives which are being referred to as overarching objectives.

4.2.1 Overarching objectives

Two overarching objectives, character building and community building, are focal points for musical arts in Africa and certainly for the Jali area. The most significant role of musical

arts is to contribute to the social event they signify or are related to. In other words the musical arts are functional in nature and are valued primarily as such. Thus it seems natural that the objectives related to this functional characteristic be perceived as being of primary importance.

4.2.1.1 Community and character building

The objective of character building is related to and complementary to community building and, paradoxically, emphasizes and contrasts it simultaneously. As has been noted by Mellitus Wanyama, African society and way of life is firmly rooted and expressed in the community (2006:20). Despite the focus on community, the individual is not sidelined or forced to ultimately give up individual good for the sake of the collective good. Rather the inverse is true: individual good is realised when the collective good is realised. The individual realizes selfhood[27] by participating in the collective. It is by being part of a community that a person achieves humanness (*kukhala munthu*). It may thus be concluded that in this setting, the objective of community building of necessity implies character building.

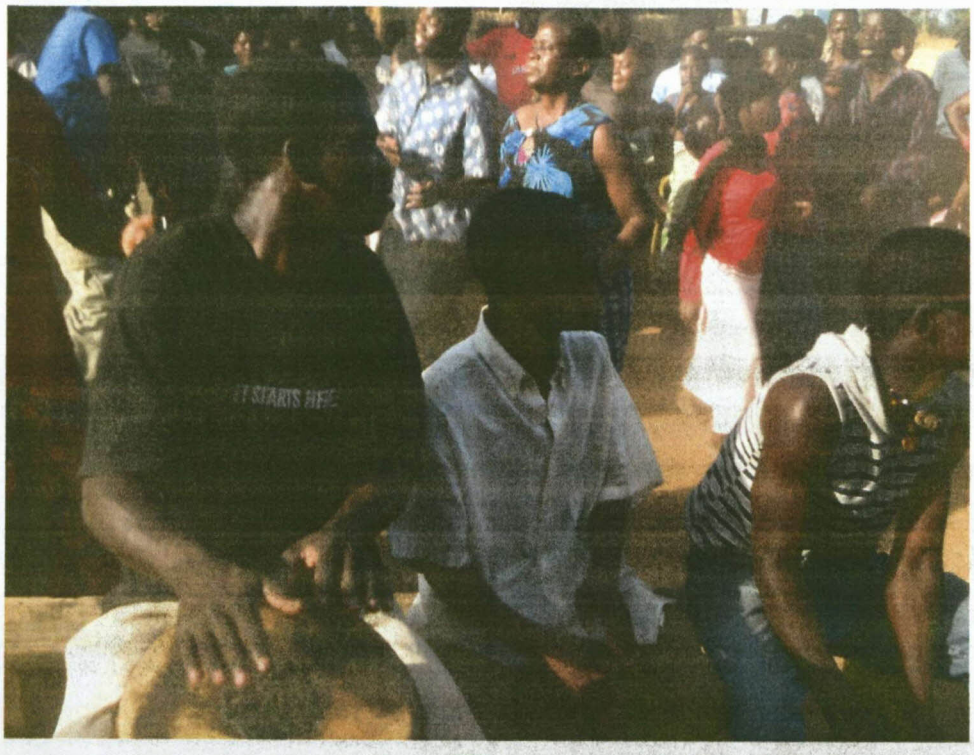
The proverb *ali yenkha ndi chinyama, ali awiri ndi anthu* translates "he who is alone is an animal, those that are two are people". There is something about the presence of another person that makes us realize our own personhood. In other words, the most complete sense of self is realised in the presence of other humans or in community. In the sub-Saharan context and in Jali, personhood is considered developmental in that it builds up over time concurrently with and as a result of the process of enculturation. This process is synonymous with Meki Nzewi's humanning process (2007c:39).

[27] Personhood refers to the overall combination of all characteristics that make the self.

The term humanning as put forward by Nzewi means to make "human" and prioritise humane wellbeing by nurturing a non-discriminatory attitude and practices which ensure "what is good for all humans" (2007c:60). John Chernoff explains that an individual learns how to be "human" and manifests that humanness by behaving appropriately during participation in the musical arts (1979:164). A musical arts performance therefore is an exercise in personhood and humanness. It may thus be concluded that in this setting, the objective of community building necessarily implies character building. In fact, John Blacking explains, people could receive and feel personal power through a shared, culturally prescribed action (1985:66).

The interplay between these two objectives manifests in different ways. In Jali I observed that *Manganje* dancers maintained the same basic side-to-side movement within the circle of dance, yet still added their individual flair and interpretation to the movement. There was a balance between the agreed-upon movement of *Manganje* and the interpretation and contribution individuals brought to the performance. The individual interpretation did not interfere with the quality of performance of the *gule* but added to it by creating variety and interest. The balance between restraint and freedom allows the individual to explore and express his individuality while staying within the bounds of the performance.

The mutual enjoyment and harmony of movement and musical expression, concurrently expresses community and individual identity and makes the musical arts potent in imparting the values of community and unity in diversity. It is as though they are saying, *yes we agree that we are a community and this is how we show it.* In the same way there is flexibility that allows people in the community to express themselves while maintaining the structure of rules and norms.



Instrumentalists listen to and look at the *Manganje* song-leaders during a performance. Lead drummer Mr Macheso (left), Mr Bester Saidi on the smaller drum (middle), and unknown substitute *chiminingo* player (right)

Khalidwe[28] is a word that summarises the values of the society and its expectations of its citizens in terms of principles and conduct. The word literally translated means "the way of living". One can either be referred to as exhibiting good or bad behaviour-*Khalidwe la bwino* or *khalidwe lo yipa*. The objective, for parents and caretakers therefore, is to raise a child who has *kha*lidwe *la bwino* or simply just *khalidwe* which is understood to imply good behaviour.

Alternatively, it is said of an individual without *Khalidwe* that they are inhumane or that they act like an animal. It is often heard in conversation that so-and-so *si munthu/alibe Umunthu*-is not a human being/has no humanness. As indicated by Placide Tempels, it

[28] Also known as nkharo in *Chitumbuka* a language spoken in the northern part of Malawi.

would be a mistake to translate *munthu* as man. Although *munthu* possesses a visible body, it is not the body that is the *munthu*. Tempels holds that the word *munthu* inherently includes an idea of excellence or plenitude (1959:37, 67). The understanding is that to be a person is more than a biological fact, for every human being outwardly resembles other members of the species. But not everyone is worthy of the meaning of the word *munthu* based on whether he/she has cultivated *Umunthu* (humanness). Having *khalidwe*, therefore is equated to being "genuinely" human. *Umunthu* therefore is understood as a qualitative distinction.

What makes a person human is knowing how to live (*kukhala*) peaceably and morally with other human beings and essentially to be able to operate well in a community. Adherence to values and beliefs of the society has the effect of character-building, and in Malawi the completion of the process of character building results in a person with *khalidwe* or *munthu*. *Umunthu* is an inner state of being while *khalidwe* is the outward manifestation of *Umunthu*, much like an attitude is an inner state that may be deciphered from outward action. Based on a continuous process of comparison between the culturally acceptable markers of *Umunthu* and the actions of an individual, it may be surmised that one is *munthu* or not.

Primos explains *Umunthu* as follows:

> *Ubuntu/Umunthu* is a prevailing spirit in which everyone acknowledges their existence only in terms of oneness with others. It is deep-seated in all traditional rooted Africans and creates a unique unity of persons across the continent. The way in which they make and use music closely reflects this *Ubuntu/Umunthu*. Everyone brings their personal contribution to the whole musical fabric and united event, be it in a leading role or as part of a group interaction. (2003:2)

The musical arts therefore are presented as both an expression and means of cultivating *Umunthu*. I surmise from Primos' sentiments that the musical arts are part of the 'unique unity or persons across the continent' and in the area of Jali. Chanunkha, based on his research among the *Yao* people in Mpili in the Machinga district of southern Malawi, states that the *Yao* believe music helps them to develop the entire personality, wisdom and emotions. Chanunkha further states that they believe music opens and disposes their minds to traditional values (1999:3).

Meki Nzewi originates an eight-part summary of the objectives and logic of musicianship education in musical arts Africa (2003:36-37). He tabulates it based on life stage versus against the intended objective (page 169-172). Nzewi's model is developmental as it traces the progression of the objectives over the lifespan. The life stages are early childhood, later childhood, pre-marital status, adulthood, and old age. The objectives are:

- performance of self
- social cohesion
- originality in conformity
- engendering social security
- Inculcating societal ethics and mores
- Imparting knowledge of theoretical content and presentational theatre
- enabling acquisition and performance expertise
- Artistic-aesthetic effect and affect.

This research has identified community building and character building as overarching objectives in the musical arts educational system in Jali. Nzewi's objectives seem to fit into either community building or character building or a combination of both. The findings of

this research will be compared to the model and any additional information emerging will be included in section 4.5.

One way in which the overarching objectives of community and character building are realised is through the cultivation of the necessary attitudes. The section below briefly outlines through example how this may be achieved in everyday life and through the musical arts.

4.2.1.2 Cultivating attitudes and consequent behaviour

Appropriate attitudes are cultivated, demonstrated, encouraged and censored in the learner during everyday interaction. There is a direct link between these attitudes and the practice and purpose of the musical arts (that is cultural perpetuity and expression, and community and character building). The same attitudes that are considered culturally necessary for the children to learn outside of the musical arts are taught and reinforced through the musical arts. An example of an incident that occurred at the home of Chief Jali is given. This example will illustrate how the process of cultivating and nurturing culturally acceptable attitudes and resulting behaviour occurs outside the musical arts. This example focuses on the attitude and behaviour relating to visitors[29]. Thereafter, through another example the role of attitudes will be revealed as necessary for the working of the musical arts education system. This will be accomplished with a discussion of the ways in which the same attitude concerning visitors can be seen in musical arts performance.

While visiting the Group Village Headman Jali, I was seated on a bench under some mango trees waiting for the chief to speak with me. Two young boys approximately four and five years old were playing nearby. When their game got noisy and they raised some dust, their

[29] The word for visitor in Chichewa is *alendo*. The same word is used for anyone who comes to the home, whether known or unknown to the homeowner.

mother firmly said "*simukuwona kuti pali alendo pamenepo?*" (can you not see that there are visitors right there?). The boys quickly went to play on the veranda behind the house. There was no explanation offered to these young boys as to the inappropriateness of their behaviour except to state that there was a visitor there. The boys were meant to understand that visitors were to be treated with the utmost respect (*ulemu*) and consideration. Furthermore, as children they would be considered disrespectful to an adult if they made too much noise or raise up dust close to where adults are seated.

Upon reflection, it emerged as a common phenomenon to say little and "mean" much: a short statement is packed with many implications and says more than what is actually uttered. Sometimes the information is abridged, masked or coded so that only those who are meant to understand it do so. A cultural outsider therefore is likely to miss the wealth of meaning in such statements. This practice of saying little to mean much begins right at home when children are young as is illustrated in the present example. This cultivation of attitudes and resulting behaviour manifests in the processes of teaching, learning and performing of the musical arts as is illustrated further in this section when I give examples revealing the significance of cultivation attitudes in this musical arts education system. This is intended to demonstrate the close connection between the musical arts and the cultural life in this community.

After the children left, the wife of the chief turned to me and said "*anthu akukuakulu mukhala mukukambirana pamenepo, iwowo adzisokosa choncho? Ana opanda ulemu*" (you adults will be discussing there and they want to make noise like that? Disrespectful children!) I smiled and said that they were still children and that they would soon learn as they grew up (*ayi, Asiyeni poti ndi ana, adziphunzira pang'ono pang'ono).* In hindsight, it struck me that it was expected of me to make some kind of response to show understanding of her action and of theirs. Silence would have made the offence grow in magnitude in her

eyes, since it could have indicated displeasure on my part. My response was not only reassurance that I was not upset but also indirectly affirmed her as a responsible mother and as upholding the ideals of respect for elders and visitors. It was meant to reassure me that my visit was regarded highly enough for her to wish to keep the environment visitor-friendly as per tradition.

In contrast to the behaviour of the two boys, I observed that upon my arrival, an older girl of about thirteen years of age had immediately moved some distance away after greeting me. It was my understanding that the girl already knew the behaviour expected of her. Younger children are expected to observe and emulate their older sibling's behaviour. In ways such as this, in the day-to-day lives of children, they learn to internalize principles of conduct as deemed appropriate in the culture and thus build corresponding attitudes.

This knowledge of principles of conduct provides a readiness for the children to interact in other spheres such as musical arts events and forms the basis of their theories of mind. The principles of conduct thus learned are applicable to all aspects of life in the community. It is these very principles which must come into play during teaching, learning, and participation in musical arts events. As indicated before, these principles are in summary referred to as *chikhalidwe* (way of life) and one is expected to exhibit *khalidwe la bwino* (good behaviour) at all times and in all aspects of life. These are taught formally during initiation, but as shown in the example above, are imparted through various ways to the young. Initiation is discussed in greater detail in section 4.4.3 of this chapter. Appropriate attitudes facilitate learning. The musical arts information thus acquired becomes even more relevant to the context by addressing issues relating to commending those with the desired attitudes and censuring those lacking in these attitudes. The learning and internalisation of these attitudes ultimately result in and are indicative of *Umunthu* and *khalidwe*. Much of this teaching is done through the means of the musical arts.

A positive, welcoming, respectful and cheerful attitude is expected and cultivated in youth from an early age. Much of this attitude is learned by example from parents or caretakers through observation and verbal instruction. An attitude towards visitors and the behaviour of welcoming and treating them well is a value shared by the people of Jali, and from personal experience, Malawians in general. This attitude is traceable to early *Yao* culture as recorded by Yohanna Abdallah. Visitors were given free lodging, good food, gifts upon departure and no matter how long they stayed, they were not called upon to work unless they volunteered. He writes that visitors brought honour to a home and people looked upon numerous visitors as a sign of the homeowner's generosity and open-handed nature (1919:14).

The first two *Yao* proverbs (*chitagu*) documented by Ian Dicks (2006:91-92) below indicate this culture's attitude towards visitors. The basic message of the first two proverbs is that visitors should be treated well. The third proverb relates to how a visitor should behave. Chichewa versions of the same proverbs are also given.

Yao Version/Chichewa version	Literal translation	Meaning
Mlendo ni mangame/ Mlendo ndi mame	A visitor is dew	A visitor does not stay long. Therefore one might as well make them feel as welcome as possible. If the visitors are for some reason undesirable, then people need only put up with them for a while since they will soon leave.
Mlendo ni	A visitor	Visitors could bring a much needed solution or

jwakusayika ni kalwembe kakutema/ Mlendo adza nkalumo kakuthwa (See appendage...for accompanying story/*adisi*)	comes with a sharp small knife	beneficial new ideas. This proverb presents an aspect of mutual benefit. The visitor benefits from all the hospitality while the household/community benefits from whatever the visitor has to offer.
*M'musi mwasyene mwangasinjala singwa**	In someone else's village, a wreath cannot be threaded. (*Singwa*: wreath used for carrying heavy things on one's head)	A person does not have total freedom to do what he or she wants and thus over-step boundaries while in other people's villages. By the time someone makes a *singwa* they have probably also overstayed their welcome. This proverb provides moderation for the visitor's behaviour ensuring that relationship between the hosts and the visitor remains intact.

* No Chichewa equivalent found

I experienced first-hand, the hospitality of the people of Jali in the way they welcomed me, but also in their *magule*. Not only did the lyrical content reflect a positive and welcoming attitude towards me, but the people also invited me to dance with them. Given that musical arts performances are community affairs and participation is significant the people of Jali symbolically showed a willingness to welcome me into their community by welcoming me into the performance. The three *magule* I studied in Jali offer free participation to all who qualify. Restrictions are only enforced where the person is either too young or for another

reason is not allowed to participate in the particular *gule* or ceremony. I was invited to participate in all of them.

Apart from lyrics changing, a particular song may be used in a situation other than its original or usual context and thus change the meaning of the song. In such cases the context determines the meaning of the songs. During a demonstration by students at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, funeral songs were sung to communicate the depth of students' grief at their loss of certain privileges. *Lirani anzanga lirani* (cry my friends, cry!) was the title of the song. When the song was started by one of the students, the response from the crowd was instantaneous. The song was quickly taken up even by those who were not singing prior to its commencement. They all seemed to understand the significance of the song in the context and were sure the authorities would as well. Funeral songs are rarely sung outside of the context of a funeral and doing so is generally frowned upon as it is seen as making light of sorrow or the dead. However, in this case it was deemed appropriate through consensus and communicated through the lack of censure to those who begun the song. The extent of the students' complaints was considered serious enough for the song.

From the above example of lyrical adaptation, a quality of flexibility is apparent. While there are certain things that are considered taboo, many musical arts songs can be reinterpreted in different contexts. Flexibility is also considered a good attitude for a person to have especially in relation to interaction with other people.

The connection between the overarching objectives and corresponding cultivated attitudes, and the musical arts will display while discussing other aspects of the musical arts education system in Jali.

4.2.2 Specific skills and competences

Artistic objectives and outcomes are a natural focus for musical arts education. The learner is expected to achieve certain landmarks in skill, knowledge and attitude at various levels. Gy□rgy Ligeti argues that if our purpose is to describe music transmitted by oral tradition, we must obviously make musical material itself central (in Arom 1991:*xxi*). Even though, as discussed in the foregoing section, community, character and attitude building are of paramount importance, this does not undermine the artistic objectives. As propagated by Meki Nzewi, the musical arts are staged for purposes beyond, but not excluding, the artistic-aesthetic interests (2007a:117). The skills and competences gained in and through the musical arts are valuable towards these ends, but musical arts events are, after all, about musical arts performance.

During this research it was at times challenging to obtain specific information concerning skills in Jali because the common answer to the question of how certain things were done was frequently "we just do it". It was common for people simply to begin to demonstrate rather than give a theoretical or conceptual explanation. Because of the mainly practical approach to musical arts education, people would often know how to perform successfully but would not always be able to articulate their actions verbally. Rose Omolo-Ongati explains that African music is learned in a form of practical knowledge or knowing in action. She adds that Africans believe that true knowledge comes from actual experience and through interactive music-making (2009:8). It is my experience that Omolo-Ongati's observations hold true for the Jali area.

Many of the skills and knowledge are acquired tacitly and internalised so well that it is challenging for an outsider to grasp some of them other than by participation. Much of their practical knowledge remains in the tacit realm. More emphasis is placed on knowing

how to do things well rather than explaining how they ought to be done. It also appears to be taken for granted that one who possesses a skill (whether tacitly or not) can also pass that information on. Faced with the challenge of minimal theoretical explanation on the part of the respondents, I found it easier in many cases to simply begin to do the activity and where possible abstract the processes and techniques involved. The modes and techniques of learning employed towards this end are given in section 4.3.

In some cases, particularly where a more formal approach to teaching and learning is taken, there is more verbalised instruction and information concerning the activities. But often the questions of the "what" and "why" of the activities is necessary only to cultural outsiders since the participants already understand these aspects. Verbal instruction is always coupled with the practical approach explained above. An example of this dual technique is my own learning experience of *Mganda* as documented in section 4.4.3

The nature of this education system is such that participation and activity are central. This is supported by the fact that it was necessary for me to participate in order to understand and learn some things. In discussing African music, John Chernoff asserts that there cannot be any meaning without participation (1979:33). This participation may take the form of actual activity during the performance, or by being actively engaged in the music as a participant-audience. A participant-audience is thus called because of the audience's participation in the culture and in the musical arts performance through sharing in the meanings, emotions and cultural significance of the event. The absorption with which the people watch the proceedings, their constant response to all that occurs in the arena through clapping, shouting, whispering and ululating make the audience truly a part of the performance. It is also easy to get actively involved in activity and to build rapport with others in this manner. This helps reinforce the overarching objective of community building.

Mosunmola Omibiyi states that it is widely accepted that traditional music is an expression of the thoughts, emotions, aspirations and experience of the people by whom it is created (1972:90). It is therefore hardly surprising that musical arts performances engage the body and the mind, the emotions, as well as the spiritual-in other words, the entire person. While discussing the affect of music on human beings, Anthony Palmer states that there are deep and elusive qualities of music that are difficult to identify and discuss. Many times it is above our ability to assess other than to say "we know it when we experience it" (2006:144-145). The reality of the spiritual aspects of the musical arts is palpable to the one experiencing it. I certainly found it to be so when I participated in musical arts performance in Jali. I was completely submerged in what was going on. I felt joy and enjoyment and a deep sense of acceptance and belonging

Musical arts performance allows an individual to explore and express different aspects of self and is therefore an exercise in personhood. Personhood refers to the overall combination of all characteristics that make the self. There is a direct relationship between exhibited behaviour and the character of an individual. Who a person is manifests in what they do. David Elliott asserts that "doing" is not removed from "thinking" but are conjoined. It may be stated, as "what a person does reflects who he or she is essentially" (1991: 2). In the context under study Elliot's statement could be revised as what a person does reflects whether or not they are humane (*ndi munthu/si munthu*).

It is not just the fact of participation in the musical arts that matters but the nature or manner thereof. This point is worth noting since the manner of participation may matter even more than the exhibited skill level of a participant. In colloquial terms, 'the spirit of the performance' is more telling of a person's involvement and contribution in building and expressing a sense of community. An excellent drummer, for example, who cannot live peacefully with others in the community and thus shows lack of *Umunthu* is met with

disapproval. People in Jali would rather have a less-skilled drummer who has good behaviour (*Khalidwe la bwino*). This information was offered with conviction by Samuel Akileni one of the drummers for *Manganje* when I inquired of how important the character of drummers is to the people of Jali. The other drummers present nodded their agreement to this statement. Samuel Akileni added that it is important for the people to know that you are a good man who is well behaved. That way you can all celebrate/enjoy together[30]. This implies that the people's level of comfort and enjoyment during performance is affected by the character of the person playing, perhaps even more than what the person is playing.

The skills and competences here presented may be seen as having two hierarchical levels: the basic level and the specialised level (*ukatswiri*[31]) at which one is referred to as *katswiri*. The more internalized and refined the skills and competences, the greater the *ukatswiri* and the higher in esteem the person or group is held. Most people in the community operate at the basic skill level for most musical arts skills. All knowledge, skills and competences gained are meant to serve the community as well as the individual. Even the *katswiri* are continually learning from others and from repeated performance. As is noted by John Chernoff, knowledge (including musical knowledge) is not a monopoly and should never be sought with the intention of selfish accumulation. People simply learn all they can from others through interaction, emulation and engagement (1979:96).

There are other specific skills and competences in the musical arts worthy or exploration, but only three selected ones will be discussed in the section below: singing, dancing, and instrumentation. These are selected because of their relatedness to each other and their prevalence as the basic aspects of a musical arts performance in Malawi. Although these

[30] *Pamafunika anthu adzikudziwani komanso kuona kuti muli ndi khalidwe la bwino. Choncho mumatha kusangalala limodzi popanda vuto.*

[31] Ukatswiri: specialised advanced skill/expertise. Katswiri (*sing, akatswiri pl*): skilled musical artist. This is equivalent to a master musician or mother musician in other places.

activities often occur simultaneously with each other they are being discussed separately for the sake of clarity.

4.2.2.1 Singing and song leading

Singing is the most ubiquitous form of music-making in the community of Jali as in other African communities. Singing is often accompanied by dancing and the two are taken for granted as belonging together. Singing, dancing and instrumentation emphasize and enhance each other. As previously stated all the aspects of the musical arts are complementary, and give logic and meaning to each other (Nzewi 2003:13).

Based on information gathered through interviews, observation and participation in the Jali area, a good singer is expected to achieve the following skills and competences:

- Learn and remember the different parts of a song accurately
- Individuals are required to know how to lead and how to respond. Most songs I encountered in Jali were in the call-and-response style. One or two people would sing first and the rest would respond in chorus, dialoguing with the song-leaders.
- Understand the immediate meaning of the song, the deeper meaning and cultural significance of the *gule*. This understanding is expected in accordance to the individual's age group
- Embellishment: creativity and improvisation is expected and applauded
- Start the song at a pitch that is 'comfortable'. Sometimes a song may be pitched too high or too low. A good song leader knows how to avoid or correct this. Songs generally do not have an established starting pitch. This is left to the discretion of the song leader.
- Sing with confidence. *Ngati munthu wayamba nyimbo mokayika, ifenso timayankha mokayika* (when a person starts a song without confidence, we also respond in like

manner). This statement was made by Mrs Chikonga when asked how important it was that the song leader is chosen well.

- Sing with involvement so as to set the mood and rally the correct response from the rest of the participants. Each performance whether at a funeral or at play has a mood which must be carried from the start of the song and tends to build up as the song progresses.
- Lead songs with correct volume so as to be heard. If a person starts the song too weakly he or she may be asked to start again or another person who can sing more audibly may take over. Mrs Gunda, song leader for *Malangalanga* stated that a song-leader must do their job well so that people know how to follow.
- Perform their role in synchronization with other aspects such as the dance and instrumentation.
- Observe correct starting points for example after the 'chorus' part of a song when there is just dancing, instrumentation, people enjoy themselves and show off their individual dancing skills. A song leader must know how to bring the singing back in at the right time because should this be missed, the mood of the whole performance is disrupted.
- I observed that the song leaders in all three *magule* observed in Jali, especially *Malangalanga* and *Manganje* were animated. They included gestures, facial expressions, costume and other dramatic elements. This is expected since due to the holistic nature of the musical arts, an accomplished singer is also an accomplished dancer, dramatist, and instrumentalist (Nzewi 2003:13).
- A song may be lyrically altered to fit the occasion. All singers are expected to adjust and remember the alterations during performance. Often the song-leader is also an

accomplished arranger and/or composer, particularly at the specialised or *katswiri* level.

According to local cultural expert Bernard Kwilimbe[32] (interview 2010) a good song leader is one who can sing in time, sing in tune (tunefully) and in a free manner that is expressive. Kwilimbe adds that a good song leader must also be a good dancer since singing and dancing go hand in hand. All the information presented in Jali and by Kwilimbe resonates with me personally as I often led songs in school and in *magule* performed while a student at the Fine and Performing Arts department at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. It was often noted that I brought energy to the singing and because I so obviously enjoyed what I did, I inspired others to express their enjoyment.

4.2.2.2 Dancing

To respond to music through movement in the form of dance is considered natural. John Chernoff explains the link between music and dance: One who 'hears' the music 'understands it with a dance', and the participation of the dancer is therefore the rhythmic interpretation which we have described as the aesthetic foundation of appreciation, the essential foothold on the music so to speak. Chernoff adds that dancing gives the rhythms a visible physical form (1979:143).

When asked if they usually dance when singing, one of the dancers of *Manganje* replied in a matter of fact way: "How can one sing and not dance? This is how it is, when you make music, you dance especially when the song gets to its climax. You cannot just stand like a tree."

[32] Bernard Kwilimbe is also an accomplished musician and choreographer. At the time of the interview was deputy director of Arts and Crafts in the Ministry of Culture. He is recognised by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a cultural expert for Malawi.

Dance is defined as an agreement of movement ideas accepted by the people of one culture (Christopher Kamlongera, Mike Nambote, Boston Soko & Enoch Timpunza-Mvula 1989:3). Dance is the visual manifestation or expression of rhythm using body movements. The nature of the African music is generally that it is rhythmically[33] complex with syncopated rhythms. The rhythms resulting from multiple layered and interlocking rhythms are heard as a unified whole. An inculcated rhythmic sensibility allows participants to make, identify and respond to these rhythms through dance. The dancing is expected to be complementary to the characteristics and mood of the music. In *Malangalanga,* for example, the rhythms are fast and energetic, and the dancing reflects the same attributes.

What follows is the skill set expected of a dancer:

- A dancer is expected to be able to perform the basic or characteristic dance movements of the *gule,* as well as the agreed upon "styles" of particular songs. He/she is expected to give these basic or characteristic movements, individual expression and flair. Creativity and improvisation is therefore expected. The general movements are the backdrop upon which is superimposed their individual interpretation.

  Rebecca Sachs Norris notes that the process of learning movements or positions and the process of learning associated feelings both necessarily take place within a social and cultural context, that is, a community (2001:111). To learn the basic movements and positions of a particular musical arts type or *gule* is therefore to participate in community in a way. To add personal flair and creativity to the basic movement is to

[33] Rhythm in relation to music in sub-Saharan Africa is often discussed, and yet as noted by Gerhard Kubik, there is no term that has been isolated in any African language whose semantic field would be congruent with the Western notion of 'rhythm' (1979:5). I have also found no congruent tern in Jali. Therefore the use of the word rhythm throughout this thesis is for conceptual ease and clarity of reference in the minds of the researcher and the reader, but is not a concept of indigenous origin.

juxtapose the individual with the community. In other words, it is a practical manifestation of the overarching objectives of community and character or individual building.

- Flexibility and ease of movement mark a good dancer.
- In order to become a good dancer, one must dance often, practicing and refining his or her skill through trial-and-error. By the time he or she has mastered the movements and positions for the *gule*, the basic movements are so well engrained and well practiced that the dancer can perform them with confidence and little effort. That way, the dancer can focus on the finer details or quality of execution. The same is true for the other skills in this section.
- An accomplished dancer has the ability to enhance and articulate other aspects of the musical arts performance such as the instrumentation and mood by creatively interpreting and expressing their elements. When a good dancer performs, others are either easily enticed into participation or watch and applaud the skilled dancer.
- A dancer is often involved in dramatisation through the manner in which he or she executes the dance, through gestures, and through facial expression. The meaning of a performance is often unfurled through the "story" told by the dancers, which in turn often corresponds to the context and lyrical content.
- The ability to isolate and articulate an aspect of the rhythm either by mimicking it, or contrasting it. This is particularly effective where syncopation is involved. This aspect often lends itself well to the comical element of dance.

4.2.2.3 Instrumentation/percussion

The most common instrument in Malawi is the drum. In Jali the drum more often than not accompanied by instruments such as the *ngongongo* (hoe hit with metal rod) *chiminingo*

(crushed metal bucket hit with sticks) and *makherere* (whistles). Instrumentation ensembles I encountered in Jali comprised of different drums and these percussion instruments.

The characteristics of ensemble instrument playing mirrors the organization and dynamics of the unity in diversity of community life. In *Manganje* for example, the three instruments used are the *awelamo* (a large cylindrical drum), *pelemende* (a smaller cylindrical drum) and a *chimimingo* (a metal bucket played with sticks). The three instruments play three distinct rhythms which by themselves are fairly simple. However when they are played simultaneously in an interlocking, contrasting, and complementary manner, thus creating and diffusing tension, a new whole emerges. The whole is what is heard, not the individual parts. Although the lead drummer playing the *awelamo* drum may be seen as outstanding, the rhythms he plays are supported by the other rhythms. In fact, the rhythms the *awelamo* player makes find their origin in the way they compliment, contrast, and dialogue with the other instruments. His skill is only able to stand out because it has the background of the other instruments and can interact with what they play to create a single product. The proverb *Mutu umodzi siusenza denga* (one head cannot carry a roof) points to the fact that a person always needs others regardless of how skilled or important he or she is. Just like it takes many people to hoist a thatched roof over a house, it takes many people to make life good. In the same way, even though a lead drummer is a *katswiri* or expert, he never looks down on the efforts or contributions of others. What they create is a kind of unified whole. The accomplished drummer is nothing without the others in the ensemble.

All drums were prepared for performance by heating the drumheads either in the sun or near a fire. When inquiry was made, it was explained that the drums are thus heated, *kuwamba,* in order to make the skin on the drums taut. This gives off the best sound from the drum—a kind of tuning. Some drums were "smoked" near a small fire made of twigs and leaves. This was done because some drums require the smoke to sound good. Mere

kuwamba would not do for such drums. From time to time, the drum would be tested by hitting it with varying degrees of intensity.

I was informed by Chief Jali that the drums have to be monitored carefully because if they are not heated enough or heated too much, the sound from them is affected negatively. However, I was not informed how they know it is time to remove from the heat source. What was apparent is that there is a particular point when the drums are declared ready: the drummers tested them from time to time by playing them. A startling, quick but strong sound was made and only then was the drum removed from the sun. The tuning was complete. By the time the drums were removed from the heat, I was able to hear the drum clearly, even though I was some distance away, even when they played the low tone softly. Low tones are made by hitting the centre of the drum while high tones are made by hitting the edges of the drum.

Drumming, particularly lead drumming, is a specialised skill in the Jali area. Lead drumming and master musicianship are not ubiquitous to all African contexts. For example John Blacking reports that there are no real lead drumming parts in Venda music and states that this is a distinctly Central African trait (1985:71). However, both lead drumming and master musicianship are present in the Jali area.

Although I was informed women could play some instruments if talented, the instruments are more commonly restricted to men. I saw no women playing instruments during my time in Jali. For this reason, the description below refers to the drummer as a male player.

- Be able to play consistently within the temporal framework.
- Be able to identify the pulse. This is paramount in African music (Omolo-Ongati 2009:21)

- Be able to hear the underlying rhythm even when it is not being played and play according to it.
- Be able to hear the gap in another rhythm and fill it with his own rhythm
- Be able to compliment or contrast another rhythm.
- Be aware of the sound being created not only by his playing but also how his individual part contributes to that final product.
- Play with precision. Drumming requires gestural flexibility[34] and accuracy.
- Play with confidence
- A drummer must know all the different possible sounds and techniques for example an open and closed position of the hands when striking the drum. This helps create a repertory of sounds to be used creatively in performance. The lead drummer for *Malangalanga* placed his elbow in the middle of the drum then released it immediately after stricking the side of the drum to create a most stirring sound. This was greeted by cheers from the crowd and the dancers.
- Be able to inspire as well as compliment the singing and dancing.
- Creativity and improvisation are crucial
- Accomplished drummers can normally play for different *magule* and know the corresponding subtle differences in style that must be there in their playing. The lead drummer for *Manganje* said that he could play the drum for all the other dances as well but that the other players would still struggle to play the *Manganje* drum. This indicates to me that he believes *Manganje* (lead) drumming to be more challenging or at a higher level of achievement or competency.
- A lead drummer should know how to play all the other instruments and know how they should sound so as to have a mental referent for his playing at all times.

[34] Chernoff refers to it as gestural timing (1979:155)

- Smoothness and fluidity are characteristics of excellent drumming in order for the music to be interesting and danceable.
- An attitude of commitment to excellence is desirable. Laziness in performance is seen as disrespectful and a poor reflection on the person and the community. An involved, energetic and creative performance received many accolades.

4.2.2.4 Language, meaning-making and interpretation

Ethnomusicologist John Blacking posits that music can communicate nothing to the unprepared and unreceptive. Blacking elaborates that things do not automatically happen to people because sound reaches their ears. Organized sounds affect only those that are predisposed to them and have acquired certain habits of assimilating the sensory experience. Blacking adds that musical performance is a way of knowing, and the performing arts are important means of reflection and relating inner sensations to the life of feeling of one's society. (1985:64-65).

In line with Blacking's arguments above, this section explores the ways in which meaning is made and interpreted using language in the area of Jali and the larger area of sub-Saharan Africa. Since music is always a social fact (Blacking 1985:66) it must be understood within the context of society. It follows that the nature of a society and resulting human interactions impact the musical experiences in a society. This is particularly true in African cultures where the link between musical arts and culture is so strong because of the role of the musical arts in culture.

Emily Akuno observes that an understanding of music involves discovering meaning in that which is heard, made possible by considering its role in the life of the people who use it (2001:3). Chernoff's statement above supposes that for one to be prepared, there has to be a process allowing the person to be able to grasp the meaning the music signifies. It may

therefore be concluded that an involvement in the life of the people in the community, and a participation in the culture is necessary for a good understanding of the musical arts. This further implies that the values, ideals and practices of the people have been grasped. This is what prepares one to be socially, mentally, and emotionally receptive to the meaning in the musical arts. Language may be viewed as one literal and figurative way in which the values, ideals and practices of a people are embodied, transmitted and understood. Thus the vocabulary used in reference to music-making can offer insight into the conceptualization of music-making in the indigenous Malawian setting and the immediate meaning of the song.

One interesting phenomenon that is often noted in many sub-Saharan Bantu speaking countries is the absence of the word music (Barz 2004:4). The term musical arts is used to signify what Barz refers to as traditional music performance (*ngoma*) in many parts of East Africa. Musical arts types are called *magule* in Malawi. Despite a lack of a congruent term for music, words for activities of music-making such as dancing and singing are readily available. This is an indication of the practical focus of the music-making experience in these cultures. It emphasizes musical arts as a 'doing' thing and a participatory activity. It also subtly points to the holistic nature of music-making in the sense that even though the words are not used, the enculturated members of these groups understand that these and other art forms are present.

In the paragraphs that follow below, I will isolate a few words from Chichewa and Chi*Yao*, which are languages spoken in the Jali area. These will be discussed in an attempt to expound on the prevailing understanding of these words cognitively and practically. Thereafter a discussion of the meaning and understanding of proverbs will be used to exemplify the various levels at which meaning is made and interpreted in the culture. Lastly all these shall be discussed in light of the musical arts.

The Chichewa word *kutha* has two meanings. One meaning is "to finish" and the other "to be able to do or execute". The latter meaning is most directly relevant to the musical arts, although the earlier meaning could relate to finishing the process of learning the skill. When it is said of a person *amatha*, it means that person knows how to, or possesses the skill for the exercise in question. *Alinane amatha kuyimba* means Alinane is able to sing or possesses the singing skill.

While one may be able to sing in general, he or she may not be able to sing a particular song yet or at all, nor can he or she do it. In such a case, the question *mungathe kukwanitsa kuyimba nyimboyi* (are you able to sing or play this particular song?[35]) could be asked. The word *kukwanitsa* implies a skill level. Edwin Gordon uses the words musical aptitude to mean the potential one has to learn musically. For Gordon musical achievement refers to the actual skill level that one achieves, based on their potential. It is possible for one to achieve below his or her aptitude, but achievement is limited by the aptitude that one possesses. Musical aptitude is static after the age of nine, while musical achievement can still be influenced (2003:41-44). The word *kukwanitsa*, therefore is similar to Gordon's musical achievement in the case of a yet-to-be-successfully-executed performance and musical aptitude implied in the case where the person is not at all able to do the task. In other words, the word *kukwanitsa* hints at limitations both immediate and terminal as contextually determined.

From the preceding discussion it emerges that there is an understanding of different skill levels in the musical arts, both developmentally and as an overall potential, loosely called talent. The Gordon Institute for Music Learning reports that a majority of the population in its study fell under the average aptitude category and only a few had very low or very high

[35] Song refers to a musical arts item. Drums and other instruments, dancing and all that would go into a performance

aptitudes (Dalby 2012:5). If this finding is indeed reflective of the distribution in all human beings, then it follows that a large percentage are musically capable, whether potentially or in practice. A similar assumption seems to be made in Jali as people are assumed to be musically capable and are treated as such. This assumption is discussed under the heading basic assumptions and premises earlier in this chapter.

Kudziwa directly translates as "to know". *Kutha* and *kudziwa* do not have the same nuance of meaning. *Kutha* is more skill-oriented and therefore more practically oriented. *Kudziwa* has a nuance of conceptual knowledge or "knowing that," and would therefore cover factual information as well. However, since learning in this educational system is mainly practical, the word more commonly used is *kutha*. *Kudziwa* is often rather used for people to refer to whether one knows who he or she is. *Kudziwana* (knowing each other) is when the two parties know each other and implies interaction. When people perform musical arts together, they get an opportunity to know each other (*kudziwana*) through interaction and on a higher level by acknowledging each other as human beings and members of the same community.

Mundu jwa lunda is synonymous with *Katswiri* or expert. This *Yao* term is used for someone who is well accomplished in doing something, or someone with exceptional skill. It is interesting to note that the word *lunda* is also the word used to mean intelligence or wisdom as used by Ian Dicks (2006)[36]. This seems to indicate that technical or practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge are considered congruent and that theoretical knowledge is useful only in as much as it can be put to practical use. In the same vein, one who knows (*kudziwa*) ought to know how to do (*kutha*).

[36]Dicks' book is entitled *Lunda lwa wandu wa ChiYao*: Wisdom of the *Yao* people

On another level, meaning is made and interpreted linguistically through the use of figures of speech, metaphors, *zining'a* (satire), proverbs (*miyambi* in Chichewa, *yitagu* in Chi*Yao*). These are understood only by those who have knowledge of their meaning. Language is the vehicle for expression of ideals, ideas, concepts, values, needs, hopes and dreams. A common language allows the communicating and understanding of all the above. The peculiar way in which language is structured in terms of the use of metaphor, proverbs, and even coinage and assimilation is as unique as the people who speak it.

Much of the meaning in musical arts derives from the context of the performance. Each performance is situated in a particular social or cultural phenomenon and finds its most authentic meaning in how it contributes to the particular situation. Meaning therefore is not static but fluid and changes according to the context used. One song could mean several different things according to context, even if the song words remain the same.

This phenomenon is similar to the use of proverbs in which we find their deepest meaning by taking into consideration context. David Mphande defines proverbs as short sayings that contain the wisdom and experiences of the people of old. The truths and advice given in proverbs are not always stated in plain language, but in figures of speech, metaphors and images. As such there is need for training and practice in order to discern and use proverbs (2001:6). In order to understand meaning in the musical arts, a person must be conversant with the different ways of communication and meaning in the culture, and have knowledge concerning the specific context. Meaning is not separate from the context, but rather it is contingent on context as previously explained.

Levels of understanding proverbs are proposed below starting with the least knowledge and therefore least reflection of the context, to the most knowledge and therefore most consideration of the context. These levels also communicate how interpretation is done by

people at these levels, and are related to what developmental stage a person is and how deeply a person is entrenched in the prevailing culture.

The levels of meaning and interpretation given below are based on my observations and supported by observation made concerning proverbs by Joyce Penfield and Mary Duru (1988), and Mphande (2001). There are five levels of meaning and interpretation as far as proverbs are concerns:

> At the first level the literal meaning of the proverb is only partially understood, if at all. This is usually the position of the complete cultural outsider and supposes that the person does not speak the language well if at all. Very young children who have not acquired language fit in this level.
>
> At the second level there is some understanding of the proverb. This is the position of someone who speaks the language, but does not understand the meaning beyond the literal. Penfield and Duru call this level lateralization where the meaning of the proverb is taken literally (1988:123). Mphande calls this the primary meaning (2001:6). Some proverbs cannot be literal in their meaning and understanding them this way is often humorous or confusing.
>
> At the third level the person is familiar with the proverb but does not know the story behind it. He or she has an understanding of the proverb but may miss the subtle nuances of meaning it carries because he or she does not know the story behind it. Since some proverbs are less cryptic and more self explanatory, this level may be adequate in some situations. This level, according to Penfield and Duru, represents partial lateralization, or partial understanding of the deeper meaning (*ibid.*).

Knowledge of both the proverb and the story behind is at level four. The knowledge of the story behind the proverb opens the person up to understanding more subtle nuances of meaning as details in the story might shed more light. This allows the person to be able to apply the proverb in more varied ways. This is what Mphande refers to as the real or deeper meaning begins to emerge at this level (2001:6).

The highest level of understanding of a proverb is where the person knows the proverb, the story behind it, as well as the details of the context in which the proverb is being used. When applying as well as understanding a proverb, this is the most ideal level. The philosophical principle behind the proverb is well understood at this level. Mphande states that for a proverb to be appropriate when cited, the situation depicted in the primary as well as the deeper meaning must match the context and situation being applied to (2001:6). This level also allows the person to relate other similar proverbs that are applicable to the situation.

Penfield and Duru explain that for a child to understand a proverb, they must understand the similarity or analogy between the literal meaning and the interactional context. Furthermore, the child must come to understand the social structure and social relations which define the complex nature of the situational roles being enacted through the use of proverbs in daily discourse. The child must also learn that the same proverb can have very different contextual meanings and illocutionary acts yet maintain the same deep philosophical meaning (1988:122). Penfield and Duru's explanation is analogous to the levels of understanding I propose above.

These levels of proverb meaning are developmental. The more one is enculturated and integrated into the culture, the more likely the tendency to reach levels four and five in the levels of proverb meaning. Old people are understood as knowledgeable and wise and are

more often than not at level five of understanding proverbs. As children develop, they also go through all these levels and the process culminates in old age and the accompanying status. They start with level one before they have a full comprehension of language, much like a cultural outsider. Next the child learns the language but still doesn't know the proverbs. Then gradually, proverbs are introduced to the child and the accompanying stories told. Practice by using them with their peers and younger children and hearing them beings used in various contexts is necessary to cement the memory of proverbs. An enculturated member of the culture is then able to communicate using proverbs and understand situations to which proverbs are applied.

Children start hearing proverbs used early in life. The proverbs are used toward the children themselves as well as others around being that proverbs are a prominent feature of language and cultural expression. As a result, children in Jali grasp and develop the ability:

- to abstract concepts and principles from a situation, experience, or story. This is also noted by Penfield and Duru (1988:119).
- to apply concepts and theories across situations, and cross from concrete to theoretical and from theoretical to concrete smoothly.
- to use the proverbs as needed and understand meaning at higher levels when proverbs are used
- to receive and own cultural heritage by expressing this deeply rooted repository of accumulated cultural knowledge and experience. As Mphande articulates, the (accumulated) thought, beliefs, and values of an African people can be discerned from their proverbs (2001:7). Penfield and Duru also point out that the children are socialized into the 'ways of their culture' using proverbs (*ibid.*).

Kuyankhula mwachikulu (speaking in an elderly manner) is a cultural phenomenon in which older people communicate using the above given modes of cultural expression. The speech is rather cryptic, indirect and abridged. This is also done so as to make sure those who should not know what is being communicated do not grasp the intended meaning but only those for whom it is meant understand. The older the person the more likely he or she is to speak in this manner. Elders (*akuluakulu*) are respected as bearers of cultural knowledge. They are admired, emulated and treated as an ideal. Often before quoting a proverb for example, people will say *akuluakulu anati* (so said the elders). Mphande explains that this is a way of according proverbs authority and asserting that they contain experience, wisdom, and valid counsel which are to be acknowledged by all (2001:6). The correct and effective use of proverbs and other linguistic cultural expressions are a sign of maturity and wisdom.

Similar to proverbs, meaning in the musical arts stems from the understanding of the role the musical arts are playing, the general as well as specific contextual factors at play. Children may sing musical arts songs but may not know the intended meaning behind it. Only those that have the necessary knowledge understand fully the meaning behind the song. Usually this understanding comes to a head at initiation and grows throughout life. Proverbs, satire, metaphors and figures of speech are features of language used in cultural expression and are therefore indispensible to understanding the musical arts which are so deeply steeped in the culture.

People create emotional associations to expressions, musical arts types and even sounds. It is on these associations that the affective elements of performance are hinged. The role of musical arts for social commentary affords further opportunities to exercise language expressions for meaning-making and interpretation. New associations are constantly being formed, particularly as meanings are progressively understood and communicated to

others. New experiences yield new potential for meaning-making and interpretation in the musical arts. My own experience in Jali has left lasting emotional associations to the people and sounds I encountered there. The joy I felt at sharing in the musical arts performance and the openness of the people left a lasting impression on me. I was in Jali only for a few weeks. I imagine that a lifetime of being involved in the musical arts would allow for many associations that add meaning to each performance and *magule* as a total experience.

Malcom Floyd, who spent some time among the Samburu and Turkana people also experienced associations between the musical arts and the social and emotional. The people were not overly concerned with his lack of technical skill, though they were eager to see improvement. They just wanted him to join in their richest experience and experience the essence of inclusion. Floyd intimates that he was allowed to become part of a community as it expressed its fears, hopes, humour and aggression through music. This, he explains, gives individuals a strength and significance through shared communal aspirations and articulation in an art form that perhaps is the closest to people's heart (1996: 24).

Just like there are five levels of understanding the meaning behind proverbs, so too there are varying levels of comprehension and involvement in the musical arts. Due to the practical nature of learning in this context, the process of grasping the levels of meaning may vary from fairly rapid and concurrent, to gradual and sequential. The rate of comprehension varies based on the extent of prior knowledge and experience, interest and individual learning differences. This process is applicable to particular songs as well as overall assimilation into the musical arts.

Someone who has not yet begun to grasp the "syntax" of the musical art type (*gule*) being performed, would be at level one. In terms of the learning process, this is the observation stage, when a person accumulates information which he or she processes towards imitation.

The individual begins to get a sense of the pulse which Meki Nzewi explains is the foundation of the energy and flow of African musical arts (2007a:49).

Level two represents a grasp of the most basic aspects of the *gule*. This level would be where the individual begins to imitate what is observed. This would include coming to terms with the basic or underlying rhythm[37] of the *gule*. In Manganje it would be represented by the combined rhythm of the *chimininingo* and the *pelemende* drum.

At level three the person begins to comprehend how the various parts work together and understand the complementarity and interdependence of the parts. The individual is capable of basic successful participation in the *gule*. In terms of text or song words, the meaning is still being grasped at the literal level.

Level four requires the person participates with an added personal flair and is better able to anticipate the rhythm and other aspects of the performance. Improvisation emerges. The next level is the highest level of understanding and participation. The individual is able to participate with complete understanding of the various aspects and the context.

Through the brief discussion of terms, and the use of the proverb, I have attempted to give an idea of the kind of role language plays in the conceptualization of musical arts and the socialization of people through the musical arts. Such aspects of the culture in Jali is what prepared the people to comprehend the meaning in musical arts alluded to in Blacking's sentiments at the beginning of this section.

4.2.2.5 Aesthetic considerations and creative logic

[37] The basic, continuous rhythm played by one or two instruments in an ensemble, which is characteristic of the musical arts type. It has also been called this by Christopher James (1998:12). In *Manganje* the underlying rhythm is played by the *Chimininingo* and *pelemende* drum, while in *Mganda* it is played by the *khasu* (hoe-head).

Although questions such as "what is beauty" are considered universal, the answers are not universal or uniform. These answers, Innocent Onyewuenyi notes, are different from culture to culture (1999:396). Below are some of the responses I got from people chosen at random from the audience during a musical arts performance in Jali. My question was: *kodi nyimbo yabwino ndi yotani?* (What is a good song like/what makes a song good?)

Nyimbo ya bwino ndiyosavuta kuyimba nawo
A good song is easy to sing along to

Nyimbo ya bwino ndi nyimbo yovinika
A good song is danceable

Nyimbo idzikhala yogwirizana ndi zimene zikuchitika
A good song corresponds with what is going on

Ndikanva nyimbo yabwino ndimanva bwino
When I hear a good song, it makes me feel good.

Nyimbo ya bwino siyichedwa kudziwika
A good song doesn't take a long time to get popular/be known

Nyimbo ya bwino imakhala yonzuna
A good song is sweet

From these words we can see a hint of the aesthetics relating to *magule* in Jali. The two words, sweet and good are often used in relation to musical arts performance. Inanimate aspects of the *magule* that are passively rather than actively involved may be said to be *chokongola* in Chichewa or *yakusalala* in Chi *Yao* meaning beautiful. For instance, costume

like *zitenje*,[38] or a drum may be said to be beautiful however, more often than not, the word *yabwino* will still be used. An overarching term for the aesthetically pleasing therefore would be *bwino* (good).

It is interesting to note that active elements are referred to as either good, implying a moral stance, or sweet implying an affect or emotion. I conclude then that the value and quality of the musical arts is gauged on the basis of how well it reflects this goodness or sweetness. Alternately stated a performance is judged based on how well it serves its intended purpose or function[39]. When it is pleasing to listen to, dance to and watch; and when it evokes the desired emotions, physical and spiritual states.

Another aspect of a good song is that it is danceable. The rhythm must be appealing to the people, causing them to respond through dance. In fact, lack of people dancing to a particular song could very well indicate its lack of potency and therefore popularity, or suitability to the immediate context. An answer to the question what is aesthetically pleasing in the Jali area therefore would be: what is good and sweet. To unpack these elements would require protracted and in-depth research focused specifically on these aspects. This research only caught glimpses of the meaning attached.

To improvise is *kukometsa nyimbo* (making the song sweet) or in the local slang which the youth use, *kubebetsa*, meaning to enhance or make better. Participants in a musical arts performance seek to make the song sweet and participate in a good performance. The particular criteria for deciding this might be different from situation to situation. A funeral song, for example, can be "sweetened" in a different way from a children's play song. The

[38] A piece of fabric worn by Malawian women wrapped over clothes around the waist. It is thought to be modest or respectable clothing for women. Women wear *zitenje* when they perform *magule* (see chapter three, page 27 for example).

[39] This research has identified the ultimate purpose of the musical arts to be community and character building, transmission and expression of culture towards perpetuity and group, as well as individual well-being.

context of the performance or the event determines what is perceived as appropriate "sweetening" of a song.

Embellishment constitutes aspects of the performance that can either be added or altered to enhance the total performance. Examples of embellishment of a performance range from costume, to a particularly creative execution of a dance style; from alteration of melodies, to syncopation of rhythms. In Chichewa these kinds of changes are referred to as *zokometsela,* which literally means "things that sweeten". Ululation and whistles express enjoyment and add to the perceived quality of the total performance and are thus also embellishment.

John Chernoff discusses improvisation with particular reference to drumming. He writes that improvisation is a matter of being able to hear the underlying rhythm and hearing the gaps in the music which can be filled to create tension and release, complementary rhythm to another or as a kind of embellishment over the rest of the composite rhythm being played (1979:111). Chernoff states that the most important issues of improvisation, in most African musical idioms, are matters of repetition and change (*ibid*). One has to be well versed in what is common practice so as to be able to repeat and contrast it. Each repetition allows participants to connect with, and understand cognitively and through movement the essence of the musical arts song. Each song carries a meaning, whether on the surface or hidden, explicitly or implicitly as alluded to in the previous section. Each repetition allows people to mentally and emotionally process the meaning therein and share in it, in as far as it has social and cultural significance. Chernoff writes that each repetition reveals the depth of the musical structure (1979:112). In addition repetition also reveals the beauty of the structure and each individual performer's interpretation of the beauty through aspects of the performance such as dance.

I noted some methods of improvisation or expressing creativity to "sweeten" a song. Some improvisations or composition in performance were as a result of dialogue between parts of the performance. These improvisations will be illustrated using the example of a *Manganje* performance.

Sometimes new creations emerge during performance. A vibrant example occurred during a large performance of *Manganje* in which approximately 50 people participated. Due to the big number of participants, smaller groups formed in the dance arena. Some groups were made of teenage boys only while other were made up of mixed members from young to old. I noted three boys' only groups, which later merged into two. During the chorus of the part where singing ceases and dancing intensifies, both boys groups created their own chants.

On one side of the arena, the one group of boys took up a chant: M*usayisiye, mpaka titope*! (Do not stop until we get tired). The boys would occasionally face the direction of the drummers deliberately, making the recipient of their message clear. Their chant did not imitate or echo, but rather compliment by contrast, the combined rhythm of the *pelemende* and *awelamo* drums. The lead drummer thereafter seemed to use the rhythm of the boys' chant as a theme or referent and complimented it with what he played. I noted no disturbance was caused to the performance by the chanting. On the contrary, it took the whole performance to a higher level. Ululation and whistles multiplied. The chant slowly ebbed, but the dancing continued.

The second group of boys, closer to the drummers near the centre of the dance arena started to chant "*apa*" meaning here, in time to their movements. This appeared to enhance their enjoyment. This chant continued until another one emerged, being started first by one boy, then taken up by others. The boys had picked up on a rhythm resulting from an incidental

"rhythmic conversation" between the *pelemende* drum and the *awelamo* drum. The boys interpreted the drumming logocentrically into the question *watotani kodi heh?* (What is wrong with you huh? or what is the matter with you huh?)[40]. The phrase is in the *Lomwe*-influenced dialect of Chichewa. When the drummers realised what the boys were doing, they proceeded to emphasize the rhythm and thus created a new rhythmic motif. I found myself giggling when I recognised the source of the chant. I too heard the question in the drumming. I will never forget the joy that I felt at being able to connect with the boys and the drummers, and ultimately the entire performance. This, I believe is the power of participation in the musical arts, whether directly or as a member of the participant-audience as I was.

Music creation is an inspired activity that finds its way into the thinking of a performer. The performer manipulates and rearranges units of a given vocabulary [...] These creators of music use available language tools in order to produce their music activities (Nthala 2010:32). Creators[41] in the musical arts strive to contribute in such a way as to emphasize the complementarity and interdependence of the musical arts. A creator-improviser has to show awareness of his dependence on other players in the performance as well as the positive feedback of the audience as a whole (the audience here also includes other performers). The musical offering of each individual must be complementary to the performance as a whole.

Creativity manifests in composition, and arrangement which usually takes the form of lyrical adaptation during which the words of a song are altered to make them applicable to a particular situation or context. In some cases the melody and rhythm of a song are adapted to a new context. Other times the song is transplanted from its usual context

[40] Whereas the mainstream Chichewa dialect would have stated *watani*, the boys used *watotani*.
[41] The word creator is used to denote anyone who is involved in a creative act in the musical arts, whether composer, arranger, instrument player, dancer, or singer. The roles often overlap.

unaltered into another. In this case, the adaptation is dual in that song's words are adapted together with the original meaning of the original song words intact.

Mrs Gunda, the leader of the *Malangalanga* group, explained that she composes songs (*kupeka nyimbo*). She informed me that she composed some of the songs that were sung by the *Malangalanga* group. She made a fundamental distinction between composing and arranging or lyrical adaptation. She explained that sometimes she has to change the song words to suit an occasion (*nthawi zina timatha kusintha nyimbo kuti igwirizane ndi zimenezikuchitika*).

Creativity is understood as a mixture of talent and hard work. When asked what is needed for one to be a drummer and song leader of note, both Luis Macheso and Mrs Gunda highlighted these two elements. The two respondents are considered the best at what they do in the Jali area. Another feature considered necessary is a well-developed cultural and musical sensibility that allows the individual's contribution to be culturally and contextually relevant. Creativity also resides in the ability to manipulate existing idioms and sanctioned means of expression to bring out a unique performance.

Social commentary is a key feature of musical arts. Musical arts lend themselves well to social commentary. In the African context, the composer is permitted to comment on any issues affecting the wellbeing of the community, using traditionally sanctioned means. Some of these sanctioned means include using metaphor, *Zining'a* (satire and irony) and *miyambi* (proverbs) in the composition. Creativity is displayed in the way that these are put together to create a musical arts item commenting on relevant and current issues. People find unique ways of communicating their intended message. Such creativity not only exhibits their individual creative capacity but also the total cumulated cultural knowledge and creativity.

The section that follows describes the assessment standards and methods in general and specifically for the skills and competences discussed in the present section.

4.2.3 Assessment standards and methods

Assessment in this musical arts education system corresponds to its overarching and specific objectives. The overarching objectives of community and character building, the cultivation of culturally desired attitudes, are of paramount concern. A good performance is one that serves the functional purposes of the event and enhances or articulates these purposes. Skill and excellence of execution are, or course, important. However, a technically excellent performance is not favourably assessed if in its rendition it does not satisfy the overarching objectives of the musical arts education system.

The question that arises, therefore, is whether a person is actively engaged during participation as opposed to participating only a superficial level. As previously noted, the manner of participation matters, not just the mere fact of participation. Ultimately, engaged participation implies that one is willing to be counted as one of the community and get involved in the activities that are significant to the community. It also implies the ability to work with others in a group, a characteristic that is favoured and prized. This in turn implies humility and a pleasant disposition, both of which are considered necessary traits to cultivate and nurture by the people of Jali.

Assessment in Jali is communal or accomplished by the audience-participants all of whom express their approval or lack of it using established means filtered through consensus about what is and what is not a good performance. This is possible, Meki Nzewi explains, because all enculturated members are capable participants and critics of the merits of the holistic performance and can evaluate the quality and effect of each artistic branch

(2003:13). There are skills tenable by all members of the community, and there are specialised skills which are thus specialised by virtue of difficulty or by design.

In situations where there is an element that is not contributing positively to the performance, efforts are made to change it. This is usually done immediately, especially if the element is highly disruptive to the performance. An example of such a disruption occurred in Jali during a *Malangalanga* performance. Once all are ready, the sequence of the performance in *Malangalanga* begins with the drummers, followed by dancing, the song leaders which are subsequently answered by the chorus. The drums are played in the following sequence: The *chiminingo* is played first, followed by the *pelemende* and *awelamo* drums respectively. The song leaders follow the tempo, volume and mood set by the drummers. The song leader does not begin to sing until the drumming "catches fire" (*ng'oma zikakolera/zikagwira).* In contrast, Grant Nthala (2010) records the order of a typical Chewa dance performance as follows: song, handclapping, drumming, and then dancing. Sometimes the handclapping starts, before the song, but both precede the drumming. In this way, he explains, the drummer drums to the singing and handclapping, while the dancer dances to the drumming. The two examples from Jali and the Chewa though different, underline interdependence of parts in the musical arts. This interdependence in the musical reflects and has its basis in the interdependence of people in the community. Failure to exhibit this interdependence in the musical arts is poorly assessed.

In *Malangalanga* should there be a problem with the drumming the dancing and/or song-leaders do not begin until it is rectified. Such a scenario occurred during a performance in which the drumming was too slow and the song leaders did not begin to sing. There was immediate non verbal communication between the drummers and song leaders. The song leaders stood still and showed no signs of preparing to sing and dance. They looked

pointedly at the drummers to get their attention. Simply looking intently at the drummers indicated the song leaders' discomfort with what was being played. After eye contact was achieved between the song leaders and drummers, the main song leader said *sizili bwino* (things are not good). Immediately the drummers turned to look at each other, ceased drumming, and then recommenced at a faster pace. This was greeted with smiles from the song leaders and exclamations of approval from a few of the women, and the singing then began.

The song leaders and instruments players, play a leading role in *Manganje*. If the people taking a leading role in a performance of *Manganje* are not performing according to the satisfaction of the dancers and participant audience, the feedback is normally immediate. In the same token, appreciation for a well-led performance is also palpable. The performance is normally assessed as a whole and when one element is not acceptable, the whole performance suffers. People show their approval by increased participation through dancing or song response, ululation and whistling. Disapproval is shown by decreased participation and a lack of ululation and whistling. Sometimes people will stop altogether and restart the song, silently correcting or replacing the problematic element in the performance.

A musical arts performer is assessed in terms of how well he or she performs both the uniform and the creative or individually expressed aspects of the performance. Such a balance between similarity and diversity shows that the performer is at once part of the community and an individual. The balance between community and individuality is echoed in the balance between similarity and variation in improvisation.

Drumming is a specialised skill particularly in the case of lead drummer. There is constant communication between the song leaders, dancers and drummers. Some of it is verbal by way of a kind of call and response exemplified in *Malangalanga* as follows:

Lead drummer: *Eya*! *Eya*! *Eya*! *Eya*! *Eya*!

All : *Eya*! *Eya*!

The call-and-response noted above is a chant. The lead drummer's call is performed freely and rhythmically but has a definite end and fits into one cycle of the song which is typically four repetitions of the characteristic rhythm. The response is always *eya!* twice but the lead drummer's call can vary in rhythm and number of repetitions. The starting point of the call may be staggered or syncopated but the response of the dancers always comes immediately after it finishes. Whenever the lead drummer stops, the dancers respond by chanting *eya* twice.

This calls-and-response has multiple roles. It enhances the mood of the performance and builds rapport between the lead drummer and the dancers. In a way, the lead drummer is the focus, though not the only means, of expressing the community's values in the musical arts. Without the right lead drummer, a performance is not successful. This is due to the role that he plays in bringing all the different elements of the performance together by enhancing, and dialoguing with them by complimenting and contrasting them. Therefore, when a lead drummer makes this call, it is as though he is asking: "Am I representing you well?"

On a more specific level, the *eya!* chant serves as a means of assessment. The drummer in this way asks for confirmation as to whether or not his drumming is pleasing to the people, and meeting the demands of the present event. He gauges his performance from their response. A strong enthusiastic response shows pleasure and approval. The drummer also

exhibits his rhythmic sensibility and creativity through this chant. The response from the performers, therefore, serves as an assessment of his skill and sensibility shown through both the drumming and call. It may also serves as communication between the drummers and song leaders to end the song or the whole performance.

Assessment in this musical arts education system does not lead to elimination or removal from the entire system. It is meant to inspire better performance, and/or placement of individuals in roles best suited for their skills and talents. Thus, instead of removing the individual completely, he or she may simply be moved to another role, corrected immediately, or taught again later. In the formal setting of initiation and other rites of passage, the assessment is stricter. In the case of *Jando* and *Nsondo* in Jali, the initiates are thoroughly examined and given further instruction as needed. The essence of the musical arts education system is inclusion, participation and interaction and all assessment is aimed at making these a reality.

4.3 Techniques of teaching and learning

Techniques of learning as I observed and was informed by the people in the Jali area are observational learning, play, trial-and-error, peer education, and cooperative learning. These techniques are employed by the learners in regards to their own learning. In current educational theory, these techniques are classified as informal and are considered as typical of the leaner-centred[42] approach to learning.

[42] Learner-centred learning is focussed on the learner's needs and enables leaner's autonomy. The focus is on the learning. Teacher-centred learning focus is on teacher instructing the student. The learner is not the focus. Teaching is the focus and a set curriculum followed

J. W. Astington describes the teacher in indigenous African music as fluctuating between and balancing out the effects of a teacher centred and learner-centred approaches. He views the interplay between learner and teacher centredness as reflective of an inclusive approach as espoused by African philosophy where the balance is maintained by utilizing seeming opposites to create a kind of equilibrium - a complementarity (1993:2). As noted in the discussion of the characteristics of the musical arts, complementarity is manifested in different ways in Malawian indigenous life, both explicitly and tacitly.

In this section, agency is being treated as a theme underlying the discussion of learning. A similar approach is taken by Sidsel Karlsen who presents musical agency as a lens through which he undertakes the investigation of music as an experience. Agency, as aptly indicated by Karlsen, has different connotations and implication depending on the chosen focus or particular field of study (2011:108). For the purpose of this undertaking the following is the chosen definition: Agency refers to motivated action of individuals towards intended goals that are perceived as beneficial to the individual. Agency is understood as synonymous with musical self-efficacy. Learning techniques as used in this thesis are the means by which the intended goals of musical arts agency are achieved.

Intention emerges as a theme in this discourse as it drives and determines the level of agency, and by implication, the chosen techniques of attaining goals. Motivation determines intention. Both motivation and intention are central to agency and provide impetus for learning. The level of agency is directly proportional to the amount of motivation. The more motivated the learner, the higher the agency. Learners who view their ability to realise a goal positively, and perceive the goal as achievable and worthwhile, are more likely to engage in the activities towards realizing the goal. This explanation owes much to Albert Bandura's insights in his theory of self-efficacy (1992).

Musical arts learning by children in this locality, is often done at the will of the learner rather than enforced by other (except in particular situations such as initiation). The motivation to learn resides in the individual. In other words, learners are self motivated. The children all responded to the question of who taught them musical arts by saying: "We taught ourselves". Overall agency may therefore be said to be high in this musical arts education system. Children observe the exhibited behaviour of knowledgeable others during social and cultural events and take for granted the relevance of what they observe on the basis that all culturally significant information is relevant or beneficial for them to learn. Gy□rgy Gergely and Gergely Csibra suggest that individuals who possess cultural knowledge are naturally inclined not only to use, but also ostensively to *manifest* their knowledge to (and for the benefit of) those without knowledge. The unknowledgeable in turn acquire such knowledge by actively seeking out, attending to, and being especially receptive to the communicative manifestations of knowledgeable others (2006:238).

The motivation underlying most cultural activities is towards developing *Umunthu* and displaying *khalidwe* and thereby fostering the emergence of fully enculturated and productive members of the community. This must be understood as primary motivation driving intentions and the consequent actions in general in the community and in the musical arts in particular. Specifically, the value of learning the musical arts is to allow for participation in social, cultural events of significance to the lives of the people. Although children listen to and participate in other kinds of musical activities, it is clear that the musical arts remain pivotal to their everyday life. The music-based motivation is not to be discounted. The enjoyment derived from musical arts is obvious on the faces of those participating in musical arts performance. I too experienced enjoyment when I participated together with the people of Jali. Apart from enjoyment, a sense of community and the concurrent realization of one's individuality results from and through the performance of

musical arts together with others. Dave Dargie writes that the impetus to learn musical arts or incentive is a burning desire to be able to share in the life of the village or community (1996:34).

Both teaching and learning may occur intentionally or unintentionally. A child may pay attention to something and remember what he or she observes without necessarily having the intention to learn in mind. Paradise and Rogoff explain that for children this process is also key to learning in traditions of learning through participation aimed at contributing to community. Children learn from ongoing awareness of rhythms and patterns of activities that take place repeatedly, in a manner resembling osmosis (2009:110). Other times a child will observe and commit to memory with the express intention of learning, towards emulation and imitation. In this case, the child views the observed action or behaviour as beneficial and desirable to him or her, and is therefore motivated to learn it.

A teacher may fill this role intentionally or unintentionally. In other words, unintentional teaching is done incidentally while seeking to achieve other ends. But by virtue of the child's interest, he or she observes with attention and remembers the observed. Conversely, in order to intentionally teach the teacher must be aware of the presence of attentive learners and of his own actions as being a source of information for the learner. Musical arts performers in Jali are not intentional teachers, except in the context of initiation or apprenticeship where the roles of teacher and learner are clearly defined. Both intentional and unintentional teaching and learning are not only possible but active in musical arts learning in Jali.

Through the techniques given in this section, the child learns how to learn throughout childhood, thus becoming an accomplished learner, equipped to handle different learning experiences/situations. This entire self-motivated, high-agency learning experience is

thereafter coupled with the intentional, formal teaching and learning experiences such as initiation rites. Whatever deficits emerge from the former learning process are addressed during this official tutelage where a direct interaction with the "expert" is possible. Thereafter the child is well equipped to become a teacher whether unintentionally during performance while others observe and learn, or intentionally and through verbal instruction.

Kamlongera *et al.* indicate that rehearsal or practice for performance is where learning, correction, encouragement or discouragement, much communication, and interaction take place. Furthermore, rehearsals are the input and creative phase where both individual and collective creativity manifests towards performance (1989:10). Trial-and-error is employed by all participants during rehearsal to establish particulars of the performance. A performance is really a collective creative enterprise is reflective of the rehearsal process. A successful performance is satisfying to participants partly because it is the culmination of a creative process and is accompanied with feelings of collective success.

During my research I had an opportunity to spend an afternoon interacting with children between the ages of seven to thirteen from the Jali area. I observed the children interact among themselves. I spent some time getting to know the children, asking them questions and allowing them to volunteer information. After I thought we had established adequate rapport, I asked the children to perform for me. I allowed them to choose a musical arts type of their choice and they picked *Manganje*. The learning techniques discussed in the sections that follow are based partially on this interaction with the children as well as on other observations made during this study. Existing scholarship is supplied where necessary to support the findings and arguments made.

4.3.1 Observational learning

According to scientific research, children from a young age observe and imitate others around them (Criss 2008; Jones 2007; Gergely and Csibra 2006; Meltzoff and Prinz 2002; Meltzoff 1999). From facial expressions to sounds and action, children soak in the world around them and reflect it back with increasing accuracy and understanding. Children exhibit a natural curiosity that is instrumental in their learning. During early childhood the efforts of the child towards imitation and learning are applauded and thus encouraged (Criss 2008:43, Nzewi 2003:36). Ellen Criss declares that even though human babies do not possess many survival skills when born, naturally they rely on their ability to learn by mimicking others. Ultimately a baby is the most avid and efficient learner (2008:44).

As they get older, other skills come into play, as higher order cognition[43] is attained, and children's individuality or personalities emerge. Jaco Kruger and Liesl Van Der Merwe recommend a constructive and learner-centred approach to music education as the best strategy for developing higher order thinking. In their approach, the authors further suggest that learners construct meaning for themselves through social interaction, which accordingly involves strategies such as action learning, cooperative learning and problem-based learning. To develop higher order thinking, there is need for a lived experience of social significance related to the situation of learning (2012:65).

Using the criteria Kruger and Van Der Merwe suggest above, the musical arts education system in Jali facilitates higher order thinking. The education system in Jali is learner-centred and practically oriented. It employs the techniques of action learning through observation and imitation, cooperative learning, and problem based learning such as trial-and-error. The performance of *magule* is significant when it adds to or elaborates on the meaning or function of the event (social significance and lived experience). Participation

[43] Higher order cognition or thinking is a highly contested term with various definitions from different perspectives. For the sake of this thesis I adopt the description of higher order thinking offered by Kruger and Van Der Merwe. It is quite simple creative problem-solving (2012:64).

and interaction feature prominently in the education system. Based on these fulfilled criteria, the musical arts education system in Jali is shown to facilitate the development of higher order cognition.

Observation and imitation remain as learning techniques in children as they grow and may be used to a larger or lesser extent depending on the individual child. Mosunmola Omibiyi expresses the view that through demonstration and imitation from early childhood to adulthood, children develop the skills and cognition of the essentials of their culture (1972:88). Omibiyi points out that total introduction and complete absorption are guaranteed by the traditional methods of formal and informal education in African communities (1972:90). Observational learning therefore is natural to children and remains the key method of learning in the context.

The musical arts system in Jali is a cultural tradition that Paradise and Rogoff refer to as "intent community participation". The authors describe this system as being one where children observe ongoing events keenly in the process of involvement in family and community activities, or anticipation thereof. They then begin to participate as they become ready or as needed (2009:104). Children "store" information and practice until it is time to participate.

Observational learning is also called modelling. This is when learning occurs through a process of observation and imitation. The learner observes by listening and watching and in so doing commits to memory what is observed. The learner thereafter attempts to emulate what was observed. The memory of the observations is used as a reference during imitation. In most cases, this method of learning works well when acquiring motor and behavioural skills, and is therefore suited for learning the musical arts. The skills thus acquired include singing, dancing, instrument playing, dramatization, costuming and other specific

behaviours related to the musical arts. Mrs Gunda the song leader for *Malangalanga* recounts her experience of learning singing and song leading as being highly influenced by observation. She states that as she watched and listened to her parents who were very active in the musical arts and imitated them.

Modelling may be intentional or unintentional based on whether the demonstrator or actor in the process intends the action to be a learning experience or is performing the action for other reasons. Similarly, a person may also acquire information intentionally or unintentionally. Meltzoff claims that babies imitate even more when they are not deliberately being taught (1999:2). It is not clear whether this trend carries on into later stages of development and into adulthood, or indeed if this is accurate for all instances of learning. However, in the later stages of a child's development, because of increased awareness and improved cognitive and motor skills, and an increased sense of efficacy, intentional learning may yield better results. The learner applies attention and commits to memory more aspects of the performance with understanding, especially if he or she is able to act them out towards better retention. It also implies that the learner is interested and otherwise engaged with what he or she observes. This method of learning requires much agency from the leaner. In the end, however, both intentional and unintentionally acquired information is necessary when called upon to execute the action regardless of the mode of acquisition.

In Jali the children are exposed to musical arts in the community from an early age. From the time they are babies strapped to their mothers' backs they hear and see people in performance. Even though the process of imitation may be delayed relative to the observations, the memory of the observed musical arts is kept. Sometimes accurate imitation is not yet possible due to the development of the child in terms of motor coordination and verbal articulation. This memory comes to the fore when the child starts to imitate. Since

observation is recurring, the learner is constantly building on previous information and creating a more comprehensive picture of what they observe. This creates what Wilfried Gruhn and Frances Rauscher refer to as mental representations (2002:447). The mind later organises these into coherence and can reproduce or execute in the form of action and attitudes. This is the process of internalization. This process consists of committing to memory what is observed and the cognitive processes that aid this, thus creating a coherent picture of information related to the observed action or behaviour.

Through repeated exposure to the musical arts, the child also has opportunities to correct erroneous impressions and to cement the information acquired and commit it to long term memory. However, exact reproduction of observed behaviour is not the goal of this process. Rather memory retention aims at creating a framework for creating future performances (Kathy Primos 2003:2).

According to Antony Bandura who originated the term modelling, there are four conditions for a person to successfully model the behaviour of someone else (1992):

- Attention: listening rather than merely hearing, and observing rather than merely seeing. Attention implies a cognitive engagement or involvement with what the senses capture.
- Retention: committing to long term memory what is observed in a form that is accessible for reproduction.
- Motor reproduction: observer must have the motor skills needed to reproduce the action. Retrieval of the retained data and putting it into practice aimed at close approximation.
- Motivation and opportunity to put what has been learned into practice.

When interviewing children, all consistently replied to the question of how they learn how to perform by saying: "We watch then do". This technique of learning requires that the

learner be motivated in order to imitate what is observed. The motivation for the children in Jali is influenced by the fact that they are not yet allowed to participate in the musical arts performances. They observe the obvious enjoyment and involvement of the performers and desire to experience it for themselves.

One of the boys brought a younger sibling, of about nine months of age, to our interaction. He seemed to be a good baby sitter, attending to the child's needs. However, this did not hinder his participation to too great an extent. He was able to contribute ideas and when the time for performance came, he placed the child near me without a word and went to join in the dancing. I experienced first-hand an instance when a child has an opportunity to become immersed in a musical arts performance. The child was listening and watching, but at times was absorbed with playing with an empty plastic cup she has discovered nearby. The baby at times would look up towards the older children as they danced and bounce her body rhythmically to the music. At this stage, according to Daniel Kohut (cited in Criss 2008:43), the child was creating a mental image. Kohut elaborates that children learn through the following process: Observe; form a mental image; imitate; trial-and-error; and practice.

Ellen Criss uses the example of learning how to walk to illustrate how this works. Children observe people in their world walking, and they develop clear mental images of what it is to walk. This is followed by imitation, as children try to copy the model they see. Finally, the learning process involves trial-and-error, as the behaviour is imitated and the young adventurers attempt to match the model until they get it right (*ibid.*).

It has been noted that Malawian musicians lack originality and creativity because there is a lot of "wholesale" copying of musical ideas (Kalua 2004, Ligoya 2004). Imitation and the implied lack of newness were seen as a weakness. However, in light of the findings in this

research, what was presented as a challenge may very well be the jewel in the crown of this musical arts education system. From the time the people are born, they imitate as a way of knowing. Imitation therefore shows a willingness to expand repertoire and to express artistic potential. After such imitation comes an internalization and integration of the new ideas into the musician's creative memory. If imitation is not seen in isolation but as a step in a process, it then becomes a strength, where it was once considered a weakness.

The following section demonstrates two methods by which the children "do" what they observe in the form of trial-and-error and play.

4.3.2 Play and trial-and-error

Play is a natural tendency in children. Whether individually, or with others, children derive pleasure in play. It affords children an opportunity to have fun, be creative, share laughter and create bonds of friendship. Play time afford children the opportunity to explore through trial-and-error either individually or in a group. Lisa Huisman Koops and Cynthia Crump Taggart report that researchers have found play to be an ideal way for young children to learn from early in life (2011:55). According to Jerome Bruner play leads to growth. Play is often characterised by problem solving, provides a medium for inventions or creativity and is by nature fluid or flexible. Play allows the child to experience either an "epiphany of the ordinary" or an "idealisation of reality," that is, reflection on what is or creating what the child thinks ought to be respectively (1983:60-61).

Kusewela is the Chichewa word for the act of playing. Children spend a lot of their time playing. In Jali children play during the day, as well as on moonlit nights. The children in Jali play a wide variety of games, many of them involving body movement, rhythm and other musical and artistic elements. An example of a game is *chipako* in which one person chases all the other children until he catches or otherwise touches another child. The child

that he or she touches must then chase others until he or she touches or catches another child and so on.

In order to decide whose turn it is to chase the others first, a singing and chanting game is played. There are many variations in terms of songs and procedure. *Balinkede* was the name of the game demonstrated to me by children in Jali. Games such as *Balinkede* are used to decide by elimination which child plays which role in many other games apart from *Chipako*.

In *Balinkede*, the children stand in a circle comprised of three children at a time. They hold hands and chant the word *ba-li-nkede* swinging their arms twice, first outward then inwards. At the last syllable, each places his or her hands either palm up or palm down, on top of each other. Whoever is the odd one out of the three is eliminated and safe, and is then replaced by another child. The children derive great pleasure from the unpredictable or surprise element of the game, especially when it means they are safe. This continues until only three children are left. Another child stands in to help make up the desired number of three, although he or she is already considered safe. The game is repeated until one of the other two children performs the odd action out of the three. The remaining child is the one who must chase first. Should there be many children in the game, the last two children chase the others instead of one. The children informed me that nobody complains if they have to chase first because no one can cheat when they use *Balinkede*.

A game of *Chipako* can end at any time, either because the children are tired, bored, have found something more interesting to do, or have to go home. At the end of a game of *Chipako*, the children sometimes taunt the last child whose turn it was to chase with chants and songs. One favourite chant, which I also performed as a child says *chamutsalira chipako Alinane* (the *Chipako* has clung to or stayed with Alinane for example). The

children dance and clap their hands to this chant. The rhythm of the chant is altered to accommodate the syllables of the name(s) of the children. This allows the children to practice rhythmic improvisation. I recall making up fillers such as "eh! eh!" and other vocables, creating extra rhythmic patterns with my hands and feet to embellish the simple chant.

Robert Chanunkha notes that playtime allows children to actively participate in music practices and learn the techniques of music creation through observation and participation (2005:41)[44]. *Magule* are a part of play in the Jali area and the children engage freely in them. I was struck by the similarity between play and the musical arts performances I witnessed. The ease, obvious enjoyment and unity in diversity that group play exhibits may be seen in the *magule* of Jali area. When the children attempt to recreate the musical arts performances they observed, they do so during playtime and in the spirit of play. They improvise the different aspects of the performance such as the drums and costume. This calls for creativity and fluidity of action and thought. From their choice of percussion instrument to their execution of dance styles, much of what the children do in musical arts play is by trial-and-error.

There is no external pressure from adults for the children to meet a particular standard of performance. The standards that the children try to match are those observed during performance. Individually or in groups, children attempt, through trial-and-error to approximate what they observed according to their level of development and proficiency. Children are capable of doing this well. Even though the adults do not interfere in the children's activities, one adult respondent noted that sometimes these imitations of performance are good enough to be compared to the adults'. She stated that sometimes if you are not paying attention you would think it was not children performing.

[44] Page 41 of chapter 4

Both play and trial-and-error denote high agency, exploration or discovery. Both of these methods are particularly prominent during early childhood before children can get verbal and formal instruction in the musical arts in Jali. Before the age of either eight or nine years of age, the children are not allowed to participate in community performances. This same age is also when the children may be initiated in *Nsondo* for girls and *Jando* for boys. Interestingly, nine is also the age by which the child's musical aptitude is set for life according to Carl Seashore (1938) and Edwin Gordon (2007). In other words, the musical potential of a child is established by that age. What the child can achieve thereafter is dependent on this potential.

Trial-and-error is usually employed when confronted with new phenomenon or problems. Therefore trial-and-error is often discussed as a problem solving technique. Through exploration of available option usually through multiple attempts, one arrives at the option that best addresses the problem and results in the desired end. In the case of musical arts this end is a successful and skilled performance. The learner aims to emulate with the closest approximation what he or she has observed being performed.

The more children play together the more they seem to settle into patterns of behaviour and methods of doing things together. I was surprised at how quickly the children were able to organize themselves for the performance. They formed groups easily and roles were smoothly distributed. The negotiations that took place for the selection of songs proceeded fairly quickly with minimum friction. I perceived this as indicative of behaviour resulting from repetition.

The more trial-and-error is applied to a particular situation or problem, the less likely it is to be needed in the same way the next time around. This is illustrated by the fact that the two children who were playing the percussion already knew what was likely to work as

substitution for the *Manganje* instruments. Both children got milk powder tins to use. The children seemed to have, through trial-and-error, identified the best kind of object to use—a hollow object with a flat surface and could be crushed. The boys went about searching for things that fit the criteria. One child proceeded to crush the metal tin a little then lay it on its side the way a *chiminingo* is normally placed. He had already found the two sticks with which to play the improvised *chiminingo*. Twice, this young boy tried playing the *chiminingo* but not being happy with the sounds he crushed the tin a bit more each time until she got the desired sound. The other child turned his tin over so that the bottom was exposed, set it between his knees like I had seen the drummers do, and played it with his fingertips. The tin surface was too small for him to play with his entire hand.

I observed the two sons of chief Jali as they made up songs and chants to accompany their play. Sometimes they sang songs that I recognised while other times it was apparent that the songs were complete or created on the spot. One such short song that one of the young boys sang was repetitive and had a seemingly random structure. However after a while, I was able to decipher a melodic line. As learning techniques, play and trial-and-error are flexible and encourage the child to be creative. These techniques, together with the others outlined in this chapter, are thus particularly suited for the musical arts.

4.3.3 Peer education and cooperative learning

Peer education and cooperative learning usually occur simultaneously and thus are being discussed together. Both occur within a group setting and the presence of and interaction with others is a crucial factor. A peer is someone who is of equal standing to another. This equal standing could be the same life stage and age group, and level of musical knowledge. Peer education is therefore learning that occurs among and by means of people of the equal standing. Cooperative learning is used as an umbrella term for

learning that occurs within a group setting where members of a group rely on each other for the successful learning and execution of tasks. David Johnson, Roger Johnson and Karl Smith describe cooperative learning as a process where learners work together to maximise their own and others learning (1991:12). Due to the communal orientation of the culture and the musical arts education system, cooperative learning emerges an apt method of learning.

Cooperative learning has five central elements as identified by David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Edythe Johnson Holubec: Positive interdependence (a sense of unified goals and linked success); individual accountability (every team member has to learn and contribute); Interpersonal social skills (communication, trust, leadership, decision making, and conflict resolution); face-to-face (promotive) interaction and group processing (team reflection on how well the team is functioning and how to function even better) (1991). All these elements were present in interaction of the children of Jali as will be shown in this section.

I observed interactions among children between the ages of seven and thirteen in Jali, and I noted that peer education was a major method of learning. Not only did the children teach and correct each other they also affirmed and recognized each other's achievements. For example, when I inquired who was capable of playing drums, I was promptly informed that one boy knew how to drum. Steven promptly indicated that yet another boy also knew how to drum. Common intention, akin to positive interdependence, was on display during these interactions. The children were driven by common intention but most actions, based on given or chosen roles, were executed individually. They agreed on a goal and decided on a means of executing it. The means of execution may be already established and culturally founded or immediately devised using culturally acceptable means.

When I asked the children with whom I interacted in Jali area to perform for me, they quickly organised themselves into groups according to roles. Although they worked together, it was apparent that one boy of about 10 years of age was leading in charge. After consenting to perform for me, one boy went in search of something to substitute for a drum while another searched for sticks with which to hit the improvised *chimininga*[45]. The other boys and girls arranged themselves in a circle and began to plan the song they were to sing and decide who was to lead it. Interestingly, there was no debate concerning who was responsible for the drumming. Both the two boys, and the other children, understood that the percussion was to be handled by the two boys. I took this to mean that the two boys had already been identified as having interest and capability in the area of percussion.

As the children discussed, there was lively chatter and some signs of minor conflicts which were quickly and amicably resolved. The children quickly negotiated the song choice on the basis of expected enjoyment or popularity of the song, and confidence of execution. The children's confidence of execution depended on how well they knew the song words and the availability of someone competent in leading the song. Suggestions were brought forward either by two or three children after briefly conferring with each other, or an individual. Suggestions were responded to by the other children who expressed either approval or disapproval of the choice. Some suggestions were ignored altogether and not given any attention. The reasons given in three instances where suggestions were rejected were related to the enjoyment they expected to obtain from performing the suggested song, and the appropriateness of the song for the situation. Below is an example of negotiation highlighting reasons for disapproval on the basis of enjoyment and appropriateness.

[45] A *Chimininga* is a percussion instrument made of an old metal bucket that is deliberately misshapen and slightly crushed. It is played using two sticks.

Conversation A[46]

Child 1: *Tiyeni tiyimbe 'ambalule'* (let us sing the song '*ambalule*')

Child 2: *Ayi imeneyo ayi* (no not that one)

Child 1: *Chifukwa chani?* (Why?)

Child 2: *Aaah ndi yosabeba.* (Aaah it is just not going a good choice/is not to enhance our performance)

Child 3: *Eya imeneyodi siyimakoma ndi anthu ochepa.* (He is right. That song is really not going to work with so few of us)

Child 1: *Oho! Ndiye tiyimbe chani?* (Ok so what do we sing instead?)

Once a suggestion was rejected, as in the conversation above, the search for an appropriate song continued. The children seemed not to be bitter if their suggestions were rejected as exemplified by child 1 in the above example who was the first to suggest that another song be chosen.

In reference to song selections, Chanunkha write that the Yao believe in beauty of appearance which refers to melodies, styles, rhythms and textures that are pleasing to hear within the confines of Yao musical arts. He argues that this leads them to select music that causes pleasant feelings to the sense and whose tune is rich in melodic ornamentation and capable of attracting, holding and directing the interest (1999:10).

In other cases a song was rejected because the children lacked the expertise to execute it, particularly in the song leading aspect. Two songs were thus rejected. Below is an excerpt of the children's conversation. When a suggestion was put forward by two girls, the other children responded with enthusiasm.

[46] The naming of the children in the conversations is sequential (1, 2, 3) based on the order in which the children contribute to the conversation. Thus, child 1 in conversation 1 and 2 is not necessarily the same child.

Conversation B

Child 1: *Nyimboyi ili bwino. Koma akuyambitsa ndi ndani?* (This song is good. But who is going to lead the song?)

Child 2, 3 and 4: *Iweyo* (you!)

Child1: *Ayi!* (She shakes her head emphatically) *sindingathe. Sindimayidziwa bwinobwino.* (No! I cannot do it. I do not know it well enough)

Child 3: *Angathe ndani?* (Who is able to do it)

Brief Silence

Child 5: *Basi tiyeni tisankhe yina* (let us just choose another one).

It is clear from my observations (and from the conversation above) that child 1 already showed signs of having interest and ability in song leading. The three children answered "you" as if it was the most natural thing for child 1 to lead the song. However, when child 1 indicated that she could not manage it, no one emerges in the group that can. It appears that as far as song leading is concerned, child 1 possessed the most skill. The brief silence that follows the question by child 3 as to who will lead the song confirms what the children already suspected. I note, with interest, that a chance was still given for anyone who felt capable to step up and lead the song. The possibility of someone in the group being able to manage was not ruled out. The question opened the door for anyone with the skill and a good grasp of the song to lead. This indicates both a flexibility of practice and openness to allowing children to explore their abilities in the group context. This finds its roots in the same attitude prevalent in the culture in Jali.

In the manner similar to the two conversations outlined above, the children eventually decide on a song that satisfies their criteria. When the choice is finally made, the majority of the children agree on the song choice by saying yes, smiling, clapping their hands and

moving to take their places in the dance circle. The question of who would lead the song did not arise upon this suggestion. The children know who would begin the song and so does the song leader herself. It so happened that the song leader was child 1 in conversation B, who is the principal though unspoken song leader among the children. This further emphasizes the observation that this child has already shown interest and ability in song leading, and this was acknowledged by the group. The absence of protest from the song leader indicates consent and implies ability to execute.

The children gave a short performance of a *Manganje* song entitled "Shaibu". Shaibu is the name of the incumbent boys' initiation (Jando) leader, who also leads the masked *Manganje* dancers in Jali. The children were unable, or perhaps unwilling, to tell me the meaning of the song they sang, although they derived much pleasure from singing and dancing to it. I put this down to the fact that those that are initiated were not at liberty to disclose the hidden meaning which is privileged information. The fact that the group comprised of both boys and girls further diminished the chances of my being told the meaning.[47] This supports the point that apart from other skills, initiates are taught discipline during initiation and how to keep the true meaning of songs and not share them with the uninitiated. If they had explained, the younger uninitiated (*mbalule*) members of the group would have heard.

During the performance, some children were clearly not at par with their peers in terms of certain skills. Motor skills necessary for the execution of the fluid yet staccato motion of *Manganje* seemed to be missing in some younger children. Those who were knowledgeable taught their peers through demonstration and verbalization. During the performance, I heard a child say to another "*chonchi*" which means "like this". The performance of some children who struggled improved, while two children voluntarily withdrew from the

[47] What the boys and girls learn in initiation camps is supposed to be remain hidden to the uninitiated (*mbalule*), but also to the opposite sex. Even if the boys were inclined to tell, they would never tell a woman. The girls in turn would never tell in the presence of the boys, even if they were willing to.

performance although they continue to sing along and remain involved. All the children including those who were not particularly skilled in the dancing, showed enjoyment and seemed at ease.

The two children who had taken charge of the percussive element of the performance found empty milk powder tins which one played with sticks and the other with his finger tips. Both children has yet to develop expertise in drumming but the child who played with his fingertips not only played more consistently but appeared more at ease in his role. I was able to identify that the child who played with sticks aimed at imitating the sound and rhythm of the *chimiringo* and the other a drum. Even though the drummers faltered occasionally, the dancers did not miss a beat, but continued to dance until the drummers commenced again. The dance ended when both drummers faltered and did not start playing again. During the performance, minor errors were corrected by their peers or by the children themselves through observing others. However the performance ended when the children perceived a breakdown of the whole performance. The children learned that when an aspect of the performance is disrupted or disruptive to the entire performance, and is not immediately correctible, the *gule* must be discontinued as its quality had been compromised. It would have to be restarted or ended altogether. Together they ceased to dance and sing, thus showing unity of action and purpose.

Peer education and cooperative learning aids in creating group cohesion. Unity is fostered in people of the same age group and life stage. The skills that the children acquire through these techniques are useful to them throughout their lives. The children gain the following skills and attitudes from participating in peer education and corporate learning.

- Children learn how to learn from others
- Learn how to be corrected by others

- To negotiation or compromise with others
- Learn how to navigate interactional issues surrounding performance
- Learn how to being able to listen to and integrate different ideas into musical arts performance
- Children develop their creativity
- Develop their felt sense of group identity and cultural belonging

A picture of some of the children as they negotiated song choice.

Children find their individual voice in the group setting and learn how to allowing the group voice to be heard through the individual's actions. This, after all is what the musical arts are meant to do: express and foster character building in the context of the community. The musical arts are, by their very nature, character-building tools. Peer education and cooperative learning are significant aspects of the way in which the musical arts build character.

Cedric Taylor describes cooperative learning as being central to indigenous African education in the pre-colonial era of African history. During this era, a traditional or indigenous educational system existed rooted in the social, cultural and physical environment (1995:240). Although Taylor places this educational system in the past, the educational system in Jali is proof that it still exists, and cooperative learning still emerges as an important part of the musical arts education system in the Jali area.

Taylor contrasts cooperative learning in the indigenous setting to the classroom or western style education. He claims that there has been no historic development of cooperative learning outside the classroom because of missionary and colonial influences (1995:239). However, this assertion discounts the fact that outside of the school environment, much of the original culture and objectives of the indigenous education system remained intact to varying degrees. Cooperative learning also remained intact as this is a major way in which cultural knowledge in the form of the musical arts is transmitted. Yet Taylor's assertion may be accurate in as far as written documentation is concerned. He notes, for example that with the exception of Ethiopia, no written records exist of education prior to colonialism and the advent of Christianity and Islam in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on Taylor's observations, there is a gap in research in cooperative learning in the informal setting in Africa.

4.4 Teaching and learning processes

Enculturation is understood as the process of learning one's own culture. Enculturation involves the transmission of culture in the form of knowledge, skills and wisdom which constitutes the accumulated body of experience and knowledge of a people. It is a lifelong education process beginning before birth. The results of enculturation are that an

individual is moulded into an acceptable, functional and useful member of the community as per the criteria of that particular group.

Acculturation[48] is the process of acquiring from an external culture. Processes of acculturation are a natural part of culture, which is not static but dynamic. The dying of traditions and emergence of new traditions is a common cultural phenomenon. This brings to the fore issues of continuity and authenticity in indigenous musical arts. From these observations cultural change and continuity are apparent in Jali area. Acculturated aspects are assimilated into the culture over time. Thereafter they are acquired through enculturation.

An example of acculturation among the *Yao* is *Beni*, a *gule* that has become synonymous with the *Yao* culture. During the colonial period, the *Yao* formed the main source of recruits for the King's African Rifles Nyasaland (Malawi) battalions and were identified as the "martial race" (Marjomaa 2003:413). In the service the soldiers were able to travel and were exposed to a variety of cultures. On their return to Malawi, their newfound experiences, previous experience in the musical arts, coupled with the influence of army parades led to the creation of *Beni*.

I was informed by chief Jali that he made sure that the dances displayed for my benefit were the most authentic versions available: *wa makolo weniweni*. The chief further indicated that this would include complete costume rather than everyday clothing. The fact that he made reference to the costume hinted that the versions that were performed without the costume were considered, not *weniweni* or the real thing. The chief's words could further imply that there are other versions, perhaps some modern versions, which have recently developed. This indicates the process of cultural change that occurs over time.

[48] Some scholars use acculturation synonymously with enculturation. However for the purposes of this work, it shall be understood as described above.

Another illustration of change occurring over time was given by chief Jali 1[49] who explained that there were some dances she observed when she was younger which are no longer there in Jali today. She recounts that she performed *Mganda, Manganje, Jiri* and *Likwata* when she was younger. However, only *Mganda* and *Manganje* remain vibrant while *Likwata* and *Jiri* are no longer there. It was intimated that these dances died because there were no longer people who could perform them and teach them to others because people had forgotten how to perform them. Although *Jiri* and *Likwata* seem to have been forgotten in this area, they are still performed in other places such as Thyolo and Mulanje. Chanunkha reports that as of 1999 *Likwata* was still performed among the *Yao* in Mpili village in Machinga district (1999:1). Other dances such as *Malangalanga* have been introduced. It was explained that some new dances came to Jali through people who have migrated to the area whose dances became assimilated into the local culture.

Below is a section on enculturation as exemplified through the experiences of Mrs Gunda, song leader for *Malangalanga* in Jali.

4.4.1 Enculturation: Interview with Mrs Gunda, song-leader for *Malangalanga*

This section comprises an interview with the song leader for *Malangalanga*, and a discussion thereafter. The song leader's experience exemplifies and communicates some specific aspects of (musical) enculturation as it occurs in the Jali area. Mrs Gunda, narrated her story as to how she became a noted singer. Below is an excerpt of the interview I conducted with her. The interview was conducted in Chichewa, but is presented in English.

When asked how she came to acquire her skill as song leader and composer/arranger for the Jali *Malangalanga*, Mrs Gunda's response was as follows:

[49] Chief Jali 1 is a title given to one of the village headmen underGroup Village Headman Jali. There is also Chief Jali 2. Chief Jali 1 is Mrs Kasipa.

Mrs Gunda: (begins in a shy manner[50]) It is just that I have been given a great opportunity, a talent. (Her husband who is present chimes in and says: *anawadalitsa*—she has been blessed. She nods her agreement).

My interest in what my parents were good at really helped me. My parents were gifted in *magule* and were often participating through singing and dancing in events in our community as well as in other communities. I was quite young when I started to accompany them to these events. I observed what they did and wanted to do it too. I used to try and do as they did whenever I was along or with my friends.

One day when I was a young girl, I asked my parents if I could lead one of the songs, but they refused saying I was too young and would not be able to do it right. But I knew that I could. When we got home, I remarked to my parents that I really could have done it although they remained sceptical.

On another occasion, I tried again to ask to lead a song. It was at a time when a woman invited other people in the community to socialize at her house. Although it was a risk for my parents because they did not really know if I could do it well, they allowed me to. They asked me if I was sure I would not embarrass them and I assured them that I would not.

(She smiles) It was a wonderful day! I did a great job! It was so good that I got a hundred Malawi Kwacha[51], which at the time was a lot of money. People marvelled at how a child like me could get that money.

[50] To speak with shyness or lack of showiness is considered a sign of humility, particularly when the person is receiving praise or accolades.

[51] It is common practice to give a monitory token of appreciation or encouragement to someone who is playing their role especially well in *magule*.

I kept leading songs and dancing until my parents fully approved of my skill and were no longer worried about me embarrassing them. I became confident and was not afraid of any crowd whether in the village or in town. I can sing anywhere.

Alinane Ligoya: So are there young girls who follow you and try to learn from you in the community?

Mrs Gunda: Yes there are. (I keep silent to allow her to elaborate, but she chooses to stop there. I let it go and asked her again at another time. She then volunteers other information)

There are times when I have invited people to come and lead songs with me. They did, but sometimes they were intimidated by the crowds and I ended up leaving me to do the leading alone.

Alinane Ligoya: During the performance, there were three of you who seemed to be leading the songs.

Mrs Gunda: Yes. But there are really only two of us. We are usually together leading the songs at various events.

Alinane Ligoya: So does that mean you know each other so well, that you can anticipate each other and complement each other well?

Mrs Gunda: (Smiling) That is correct.

Alinane Ligoya: Do you practice a lot?

Mrs Gunda: Well, not really. It is just that when a person has experience and knows what to do, it is not necessary to practice so much. But my partner had problems in the beginning, especially at functions where microphones were being used. She would leave the microphone to me so that only my voice was captured. When I asked her why she did that,

she said she did not realise she had to be close to the microphone. I explained that I did not want people to hear only me. I wanted them to know that I have a friend who sings with me and "answers" me when I sing (*kucheulira*). *Kucheulira* is when the other lady sings a lower answering part that goes together with what I sing.

I was able to gather from Mrs Gunda's responses and remarks that observational learning was in effect during her early years. She was with her parents around musical arts events and learned through observation and imitation how to sing, lead songs and dance. She describes an early desire to take up the particular role of song leading and worked towards it. When she felt she was ready, she sought an opportunity to put her skill into practice in an actual performance. She went through self-assessment, and I suspect, peer-assessment that led her to believe that she was ready.

During the course of the interview I sought to establish if there were young girls who followed her as she followed her parents. I hoped to discover if she was aware of continuity in the trend of learning like she learned from her parents. In the first place, Mrs Gunda gave a short confirmation but did not elaborate. She gave what at first seemed to be a completely unrelated comment concerning inviting others to sing with her. Later I realised that she probably desired to give others the opportunity she has so desired as a young girl to participate in an actual community performance. She seemed unsatisfied with the efforts of those she invited. However, it is also clear that, whether of her volition or at Mrs Gunda's request, one woman has been identified with whom she now partners in song leading.

Later on, when I asked Mrs Gunda again if there were any young hopefuls who would follow her, she told me that all young people got a chance to witness *magule* and it was up to them if they wanted to learn how to sing. This answer reflects the nature of learning as outlined in the previous section where a performer simply performs his or her role and it is

up to interested learners to learn at will from what they do. Even though Mrs Gunda could not pinpoint any particular people, she was certain there were those who followed her as she once followed her parents and learned from observing them. I took this to mean that she was indeed aware of continuity and acknowledged that the way she learned was how others learned. She also showed an awareness of the need for a chance to perform and was open to providing it, which she showed by offering the chance to some. However, she did not say what her criteria for approaching these people were. It appears that she no longer approaches people, as she spoke of this in the past tense. I can only assume that this is because she has now found a partner to lead with.

Song leading appears to be a specialised skill and good song leaders are esteemed in Jali. However in order to become a song-leader, Mrs Gunda informed me, one needs to have interest (*chidwi*), talent (*luso*), and be hard-working (*kulimbikila*). She attributes her success to these, but ultimately as she notes in the interview above, she was *given* the talent. Her husband commented that she was blessed. Mrs Gunda's nod of agreement indicates that she also saw her skill as a divine endowment.

4.4.2 Apprenticeship. Luis Macheso

Luis Macheso was fascinated by the drum from an early age. He told his friends that one day he would play the drum for all the *magule* in the village. At first his friends laughed at him, but with time, as his interest and ability emerged, the laughter stopped. He earned respect amongst his peers who gave him opportunities during play to practice his skill. The young boy grew up to fulfil his dream and is at present, considered the best drummer in Jali, especially in *Manganje*.

Macheso followed his uncle, a drumming expert, as often as he could. He sat close by watching and listening, as his uncle played the drum. In Chichewa, the act or making music

with a drum is called *kuyimba ng'oma*-literally "singing the drum". The times when he followed his uncle as he "sang the drum" was an opportunity for him to internalize what he heard. He, in his own words, 'got used to the sound of the drums', particularly the lead drum in relation to and concurrently with the other drums and other elements of the performance. He found that he could "sing" his own improvisation in his head. The smile on his face as he said this indicated to me a satisfaction and enjoyment of the activity. Later he was taken under the tutelage of his uncle as a drumming apprentice which led to Macheso becoming the prolific drummer that he is.

By the time Macheso entered apprenticeship, he already possessed some skill. It was this skill and his interest that were the criteria for choosing him as an apprentice. Macheso was to learn from the *katswiri* or expert all that it takes to become one. Unlike the learning Macheso has experienced prior to this, apprenticeship is more formal with prescribed methodology and clearly defined roles and goals. Furthermore, Ruth Paradise and Barbara Rogoff describe apprenticeship as emphasizing on modelling, a learner's capacity to observe, as well as learner-generated motivation (2009:105). This shows that the skills acquired and used prior to apprenticeship are still in use during the process of apprenticeship.

Below is a description of the process that Luis Macheso went through to become a respected drummer. When asked how he got to learn to play the drum so prolifically, the master drummer stated that his education went as follows:

- Interest and observation: Listening and watching as drummers played for the dancers as a young boy. This led to retention of what he observed. He would make mnemonic sounds corresponding to different drumming patterns.
- Practice and Trial-and-error

Imitating the drummers and practicing when alone on improvised instruments such as empty cans or whatever he could find. Whenever he got the chance he would play the actual drum.

He continues to use mnemonics as a reference point and a connection between what was retained and held mentally, and what he was producing which he heard in real time. He also used subsequent performances are reference to compare his own performance with those of the accomplished drummers. He kept trying repeatedly through trial-and-error, correcting and commending himself. Through the self-assessing he gained skill.

- Performance: his interest and ability was noted and among his peers he was given a chance to play percussive instruments when they performed. He also became a reference person for those who were interested in learning how to drum among his peers. Around this time, Luis underwent initiation. During his initiation, he got some instruction in drumming because of the interest that he showed. Thereafter, the adults would sometimes let him play the *chimíningo* (metal bucket played with sticks) during community performances, but mostly as a substitute in the absence of the usual players.
- Apprenticeship/mentorship: A master drummer, who happened to be his uncle, observed his interest and propensity for drumming and decided to teach him. This is when intentional demonstration and verbal instruction was given towards making him the drummer that he is today.

Paradise and Rogoff describe apprenticeship as usually being a formalized relationship between expert and learner involving a workshop or other clearly circumscribed setting where training in a specialized area of knowledge takes place. Knowledge passes from expert to novice in a relatively prescribed way, and their roles as knowledgeable expert and

learner are strictly defined. The authors note that apprenticeship shares an emphasis on modelling and a learner's capacity to observe, and learner-generated motivation (2009:105).

During his apprenticeship Macheso's lessons were either given individually or in a group. They often occurred away from the dance arena but learning-in-performance was still in effect in that the lessons were practical and other instruments were played as in a performance. During lessons, Macheso's uncle would get others selected at his own discretion to play with them. The drumming expert would instruct his nephew practically and verbally. He would play first then explain or explain first then play, if there was a need for verbalization at all. Verbalization is usually added to compliment the practical lessons or issue instructions not directly related to the skill.

Paradise and Rogoff explain that verbal teaching embedded within shared endeavours is different from providing a detailed verbal explanation independent of carrying out the process itself. When a learner is encouraged to learn by doing and to experience the activity directly, the learner is alert and takes initiative in their own learning (2009:119). Thus the method used by Macheso's uncle is seen to be effective. He did not verbally explain concepts and steps in the process of drumming but allowed Macheso to experience the drum and learn by doing and imitation. Macheso thereby gained independence of execution and expression while learning from the expert drummer.

The process described above is an instance of learning-in-performance which is common in Africa as articulated by Meki Nzewi. The author explains that learning in this milieu invariably commands practical participation and exploration. Theoretical knowledge, he explains, does not reside in passive reflection, but rather verbal discourse and instruction often supports this pragmatic and heuristic learning. In the African sense, Nzewi explains,

learning is an interactive performance experience while performance is a never-ending learning experience (2003:14).

Macheso began his training by learning how to play the basic rhythms of *Manganje* as represented by the *chiminingo* and the small drum, *pelemende*, respectively. He could only proceed to playing the lead drum after the basic rhythms were mastered. By learning how to play the *chiminingo* and *pelemende*, Macheso was able to internalise their rhythms and understand their relationship. That way he could improvise effectively highlighting and emphasizing them. Once he had mastered the other instruments, others would start to play the basic rhythms while he was expected to play the lead drum.

As he improved, his uncle would let him play during performances to assess him concurrently with the community whose approval or lack of it is usually collective, spontaneous and unmistakeable (see section on assessment standards and methods). As noted by John Chernoff, the quality of the lead drummer's improvisations depends on his ability to highlight the other drums (1979:112). Therefore, Macheso needed to play with the other drummers so as to learn and then practice the art of highlighting the other drums. Luis Macheso played with increasing frequency and soon people started asking him to play for them. He could also sit in for his uncle when he could not make a drumming appointment.

When I asked him what he had actually learned from his uncle, Macheso responded that that from his uncle is where he really learned how to drum and added: *Pamemepo ndi pamene ndinazama nayo ng'oma* (this is when I really deepened my skill of drumming/became more skilled). Knowledge gained by the apprentice through this process is difficult to quantify strictly, or fully qualify verbally in most cases. As such, the practical attainments are the only means of explicitly expressing the knowledge. Macheso

confidently but evenly stated that he can play all the drumming styles corresponding to all the *magule* performed in Jali. This, he had already proven in practice because Macheso had indeed played the lead drum for all *Manganje, Malangalanga,* and *Mganda* performances. This shows that Macheso's training allows him versatility and a wide range for expression.

I asked him how long to took to achieve his present skill level and he replied that it had taken all his life since he was twelve or thirteen years old. The drummer is now thirty years old and declares that he continues to learn from others and from each consequent performance. His period of training with his uncle started when Luis Macheso was eighteen years old. Macheso's training stopped when his uncle declared him ready to "graduate" from apprenticeship about five years later. He mentioned that this period was shorter than most because he is particularly gifted and a fast learner. It would normally have taken longer to master the art of drumming and become an expert through apprenticeship.

It is common for people to teach as they were taught. And since Macheso was taught in performance or by doing, he taught me the same way when I asked him to teach me the Manganje drum. The first thing he did after I asked him to do so was to ask if I had played before. I told him I had played a little. He then nodded and passed me the smaller drum used in *Manganje, pelemende.* The drummer found it easier to demonstrate rather than verbalise. As noted by the drumming expert under whom John Chernoff studied, the teaching with the hand is more effective than the teaching with the mouth (1979:104).

He took another drum and proceeded to place it in the correct seated drumming position. He then looked at me to see if I had imitated him. The correct position for drumming is shown in the picture below. The drum must be placed between the knees. The drum is tilted forward to allow an opening at the hollow bottom of the drum. This is where, in the words of Macheso, the drum "breathes". Holding the drum open allows for the drum to be heard

from far. After he was satisfied that I had the correct position, he instructed me that I was to copy what he did. He then proceeded to demonstrate the rhythm played by the *pelemende* drum which I attempted to imitate. He demonstrated and then observed me to see and hear if I was doing the right thing. At one point, he even reached over and played the rhythm on my drum, together with me.

Below are some skills and abilities that a drummer needs to possess to be excellent at his craft. They have been gathered from conversation with Luis Macheso and other members of the community of Jali. They have been coupled with observation and explanation by scholars in the field of ethnomusicology.

The art of drumming requires a person who has the following skills and abilities.

- A rhythmic sensibility inculcated over time through the process of enculturation.
- A good grasp of the prevailing culture of the place and the people that the musical arts serve. This includes cultural values and norms, particularly as they relate to the musical arts and their role in various social events, rites and ceremonies. In other words, he must know the heart of the people.
- Good listening and observational skills in order to perceive the dynamics of the performance and determine what kind of input he must contribute to the performance.
- An awareness of the role that he plays, yet not an overinflated sense of self. A balance is required between humility and pride in the role that he plays enough to produce the results needed. John Chernoff's statement that the lead drummer is the focus and not the basis of the music, communicates this relationship aptly. He explains that the quality of the lead drummer's improvisations depends on their

ability to highlight the other drums and similarly, without the other rhythms, the improvisation of a great drummer would be meaningless.

- Well developed motor skills in order to execute the movements needed to play the often intricate rhythms. One must also exhibit correct technique. This includes proper handling, positioning, and playing technique. The drum, for example should not be allowed to get wet and should not be played without first exposing it to heat. This aids with resonance.
- Stamina and discipline to withstand the often-long periods of playing. Musical arts events are known to go on all night long with only a few short breaks in between.
- High improvisation and creativity. This is paramount particularly to a lead drummer. The lead drummer is the one who gives life and cohesion to the drum ensemble, resulting in a gestalt when heard. The lead drummer, therefore, cannot just play the exact same thing throughout a performance. He must have a repertoire of styles and rhythmic patterns that he can combine spontaneously and be able to create new ones.
- A real love and passion for what he does.
- An ability to work well with others in the ensemble.
- Flexibility both physical and behavioural.
- There is a deep spiritual connection between the individual and the instrument and music being made. Concerning this aspect, Chernoff records the master drummer under whom he was apprenticed as stating the following: "As you are beating (the drum), it is your heart that is talking, and what your heart is going to say, you hand will collect it and play" (1979:106).
- The power of the drumming is in the person playing, not in the drum. The same drum could be played by one person and sound feeble and fail to move the crowd,

while the same drum in the hands of someone like Macheso is loud enough and stirs the hearts of the people. In order to play loudly, Macheso informed me that I must play from the wrist, and not use my entire arm. He pointed out that when the mouth of the drum is open, then it will speak loudly. However, playing loudly is not the same as playing roughly (*mwa nkhanza*). The drummer must also not play with the same intensity throughout the whole performance.

- A drummer must know when to employ the two basics of improvisation, repetition and variation, with the aim of enhancing the performance. Repetition creates a backdrop and establishes a rhythmic theme. Variation provides interest and movement in the performance. Chernoff holds that repetition is the key factor which focuses the organization of the rhythms in an ensemble. Repetition reaffirms the power of the music by locking the rhythm and the people listening or dancing to it into a dynamic open structure. In other words, Chernoff concludes, the drummer uses repetition to reveal the depth of the musical structure (1979:111-112). Christopher James elaborates that the repetitive underlying rhythm gives a clear formal design for the piece as a whole by ensures that a definite cycle is maintained (1998:12).

4.4.3 My *Mganda* lesson

During my time in Jali area, I was given a lesson in *Mganda* in which songs and dance were taught to me. There was no instrumentation available. The lesson was conducted by two women, Mrs Gunda and Mrs Chikonga. Both their husbands were present and provided support by interjecting with information and clarifications, and helping with singing the chorus part of the songs. This, in a way, mirrors the observation made earlier that teachers

in this context are multiple and that anyone with the necessary knowledge may pass it on. In other words transmission of cultural knowledge is a communal responsibility.

The lesson was conducted under two mango trees at chief Jali's house where benches were placed for us. Chief Jali's compound was the unspoken but undeniable centre for activity during my research. Even though I visited different places and homes in the community, many of my meetings with individuals and small groups took place in the vicinity of the chief's compound. The location of the lesson further demonstrated that learning can take place in all manner of setting, in a fairly unrestricted way.

The environment during the lesson was friendly and open, and therefore nonthreatening. I found myself to be perfectly at ease even when I was not performing to the best possible level. Even when they giggled at some of my mistakes, I did not feel bad or discouraged. Laughter was plentiful from all of us, and my teachers seemed pleased at my efforts. Naturally they were pleased when I succeeded, but they were not visibly displeased by my failed attempts. They were patient in showing me through repeated demonstration how it ought to be done. There never seemed to be a doubt in their minds that I would get it. My mistakes were noted and immediately corrected. Rather than making me sing and dance by myself as I learned *Mganda*, the ladies sang and danced with me. This added to my feeling of ease since I was not 'under the spotlight' but part of a performance. It was taken for granted by all, including myself that I was able to watch and learn; I was capable of doing what I observed; I was open to correction; capable of participation; and interested in the meaning behind the song.

When I asked if they could teach me *Mganda*, they did not respond verbally, but simply proceeded to stand and rearrange the benches in preparation. A similar action was taken by the children when they were asked to perform. They did not hesitate nor speak, but instead

set about preparing to do as I requested. I interpret this to be a readiness or willingness to share the musical arts as a part of their culture. It also hints at the enjoyment that was so palpable as a motivation for performance.

Mganda is predominantly a women-only dance in Jali, although men may sometimes join in. The men present assisted with the singing but remained seated and did not dance. The first step was to explain that they would begin with a song called *siizo/amayi aphika thelere* (there it is/mother has cooked okra). The women then turned to each other briefly as if to see if they were both ready. Then they started to move according to their usual style for the song. They were quickly synchronized in their movements and one lady started to lead the song. The other three people provided the chorus response. They went through the whole song once. The song words are given below. Each line is repeated twice with a melodic variation. *Siizo* is the response given after every line.

SIIZO/AMAYI APHIKA THERERE

Amayi aphika therere/ mother cooks okra

All: *siizo*/There it is (the chorus continues to respond in like manner.)

Thele apatsa mwana/she gives the therere to a child

Mwana wachilendo/a visiting child

Iwo adyera nyama/they have meat

Zoona amake a mwana/is this true mother?

All: eeeeeh! Siizo

Shuwa amake amwana/Are you sure mother?

All: eeeeeh siizo

As the song begins, the ladies' bodies are generally relaxed rather than rigid. They lean slightly forward and their arms hang loosely and are allowed to swing as they move. They are standing stationary, not moving their feet. The main movement is in the waist and I was told this is a general rule for *Mganda*. At first glance, this movement seems to be focused in the hips. However I soon learned it is rather achieved by slightly bending the knees and alternately moving one knee towards the other while holding the other relatively straight. The result is that one hip rises higher than the other. As the switch is made to the other side, raising that side instead, a waist shaking movement results. This movement is also seen in other women-only *magule* such as *Chimtali* and *Chitelera* performed among the Chewa people of Malawi.

When the song gets to the second part, the ladies stand upright, lift their arms overhead and wave their hands from side to side in time to the music, before going back to the original position. This is only done during the chorus response: *eeeeeh! siizo*. The waving of hands is done at double the tempo of the normal action.

The ladies explained that the message in the song *siizo* is one of censure. A woman who cooks meat, which is considered better relish, for her family while giving okra to a visiting child is considered immoral. A woman is not supposed to show preferential treatment towards her own children but to treat all children equally, particularly when it comes to giving. As a woman, she is expected to mother all children who come into the home and take care of all. In the story illustrated in the song, she has not only mistreated a child, but one who is a visitor. The norm is that visitors are treated with much consideration and given the best that people have to offer. This woman's actions will not only reflect badly on her, but also on the rest of the household and community. She is also setting a bad example for her children, showing them that it is acceptable to mistreat others and not honour

visitors. The song may have been created based on a real person but over time it has become didactic in nature and serves as a warning to others not to behave this way.

My *Mganda* lesson therefore did not only comprise the performance aspects of song and dance, but the social and cultural significance of the song. I left having acquired practical musical arts knowledge and cultural knowledge.

4.4.4 Initiation

Initiation is a rite of passage that is still prevalent in Malawi, particularly in the southern and central regions. It is also known as *chinamwali.* Although there are other similar rites of passage at marriage and the birth of the first born child, this section focuses on initiation upon puberty[52] focusing on the educational aspects of the process with respect to the use of the musical arts.

Munthali and Zulu (2007:158) state that there are traditional and church initiations. The church initiations are alleged to have arisen out of concerns that the traditional initiations were explicit in nature and taught young people sexual matters (*ibid.*). Christopher Kamlongera *et al.* state that the Christian version of a girls' initiation camp among the *Lomwe* in southern Malawi is more dilute compared to how it would be if no Christians are taking part (1989:18).

However, according to the *ngaliba*[53] at Jali, there is only one boys' initiation in the area. He explains that even those with reservation on religious grounds have been adequately satisfied that their initiation is suitable in content and observable results based on their

[52] The initiations discussed here are not necessarily dependent on physiological events.
[53] *Ngaliba*-the one in charge of and presiding over the *Jando*, the boys' initiation. His female counterpart is known as *nankungwi*.

children's behaviour thereafter. This is an area for possible further research as to the nature of this initiation; how all the possible pitfalls are navigated; and the impact it has on the community.

Research conducted among adolescents aged 12-19 years in the three regions of Malawi by Munthali and Zulu (2007) indicated that females showed a higher participation rate (43%) than males (33%). The rate was higher in rural areas (40%) than in urban areas (32%). The southern region had a higher prevalence of participation in initiation rites at puberty with a higher prevalence among the *Yao* (boys-73%; girls-75%) and *Lomwe* (boys-46%; girls-60% girls). The study reported higher rates of participation among Muslims (80%) than non-Muslims. It may be inferred, therefore, that due to Jali's location in the Southern region and the *Yao* and *Lomwe* population, the rate of participation in initiation is high.

The girls' initiation is called *Nsondo* and is carried out during the same period as the boys' initiation. The participants are girls who had attained puberty, usually between the age of eight and fourteen. The boys' initiation *Jando* is carried out once a year, during the months of August and September. Gerhard Kubik writes that the name *Jando* is believed to have its origins in the east coast of Africa. Furthermore, the word *Jando* is still being used in the east coast of Africa for a similar initiation rite (1983:133). The early *Yao* and the Swahili from the coast are historically known to have interacted extensively particularly through trade. The *Yao*, who are predominantly Muslim, are said to have first learned Islam from Swahili traders (Rangeley 1963:25). Risto Marjomaa explains that before British rule in Malawi, Islam advantaged the *Yao* with the Swahili traders, but under British rule Christianity was generally promoted. Many other tribal groups converted to Christianity and this led to *Yao* cultural isolation (2003:416-417). In later times to the present, *Yao* became synonymous with Islam. This may explain the strong ties that still exist between *Yao* cultural identity and practices and Islam. As noted above, even though there are traditional and Christian

initiations, there is only one boys' initiation in Jali. This fact makes the Jali *Jando* even more unique in that it appears to be able to balance Islam-influence *Yao* traditions and Christianity to the satisfaction of all.

I discovered that more research has been done on boys' initiations particularly *Jando* (Butawo 1992; Jakalasi 1988; Katayika 1994; Kishindo 1969/70; Kubik 1967, 1979) compared to girls initiations like *Nsondo* (Kachinga 1988; Sungani 1986). More information on initiation in this research was gathered concerning *Jando* as I was unable to identify someone willing to speak extensively to me about *Nsondo* during my time in Jali. The information was given in general terms and overarching principles, but I was informed that most of what is true in principle for *Jando* is true for *Nsondo*. The information that ensues, therefore, is given with this background.

To be initiated, *Kuvinidwa*, literally translates in Chichewa, "to be danced". Once again, this points to the close link between the musical arts and the initiation rite representing the transmission of cultural information. As the initiation period between July and August approaches, those who are uninitiated are intentionally made to feel separate from those who are initiated. The uninitiated are called *mbalule*[54] (singular and plural). Being *mbalule* can be the cause of some ridicule or exclusion in the community as an impetus for getting initiated. Among the *Lomwe*, Kamlongera *et al.* state that the initiated girls are called *mulukhu* (1989:23). Since Jali consists of a mixture of *Yao*, *Lomwe*, and Mang'anja people, this term is also applied there.

Another source of motivation to "be danced" is seeing the marked difference in the way the initiates are treated after graduating initiation school. They are trusted with more

[5454] *Mbalule* is recorded by Nthala (2010:34) as being one of the drums used in the *gule* wamkulu dance performed among the Chewa people. It is possible that the use of this word in Jali finds its roots in the *Manga'anja* people who are essentially Chewa.

responsibilities and are now said to be grown-up. New clothes are customarily bought for the newly initiated by their parents or guardians. The new clothes are symbolic of their new identities and show the pleasure of the parents or guardians at the successful initiation. The initiated are also usually given a new name. Kamlongera *et al.* explain that the initiates' world, in a sense, expands both by way of new knowledge acquired and by being accepted into another stratum of society (1989:16).

When initiation time comes, *Mbalule* either volunteer or are recommended by their parents for initiation. Mr Shaibu Kofonsi, leader of the *Jando (Mbalinga)* states that many of the *mbalule* volunteer. I have heard it being said of those with bad manners or lacking *khalidwe* that they have not been initiated (*wosavinidwa*). The implication of this is if one were to be initiated, he or she would not be acting in an unsavoury manner. Being initiated therefore carried some moral implication.

When it is time for the young girls to go into the initiation camp or *nsasa*, they are covered in fabric so that their identities are protected. Then, accompanied with song and dance, they are escorted by the leaders of the initiation camp and other willing initiated women. The musical arts are part of the initiation process right from the start. During the initiation period, the girls are not allowed to leave the compound. However groups of women go out into the village singing and dancing, while collecting money and gifts that are used in the initiation camp. This is done as often as needed.

4.4.4.1 Teaching and learning environments, and basic assumptions

The basic assumption of initiation camps is that the boys and girls come to learn what it takes to become responsible and respectable adults in the community. Particular gender related roles are imparted towards this end. The girls are taught how to fulfil the role of a woman and the boys how to fulfil the role of a man as defined by the community. Boys also

acquire skills like mat making and wood-carving, while girls learn how to take care of a home. The initiation camp leaders are empowered by the community to impart the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve this.

It is assumed that all are capable of performing and learning musical arts. Furthermore, once they have learnt musical arts, it is assumed that they are also able to grasp the intended meaning hidden in the musical arts. "Masking",[55] use of metaphors and proverbs, are characteristic of the musical arts. Masking is particularly common during initiation. The implication of this is that the young initiate have been enculturated adequately enough to allow them to understand the subtleties of masking, metaphors and proverbs when taught. Whatever they lack is supplemented for during the initiation period.

The learning environment of the musical arts in initiation is more formal than outside of the initiation camp. Features of a formalised learning setting are as follows

- There is a designated venue or learning environment
- A defined curriculum
- Established activities, means of achieving outcomes, and assessment
- Rules of conduct and means of disciplining those who do not abide by the rules of conduct
- Teacher and student roles clearly define

The approach used during initiation could be deemed teacher centred (Astington 1993:2). A child is neither allowed to quit nor reveal what they learn during initiation. Outside of and before entering the camp, learning is learner-centred. Learning is undertaken at the

[55] Masking is a term that refers to the use of language in such a way as to hide the intended meaning from outsiders or people who are not meant to know, but ensuring that the correct people get the message. More on this is in the section on meaning-making and interpretation.

children's will and pace. In other words there is little or no interference or assistance by adults. There are no expected consequences such as disapproval or a reprimand for failing to deliver and the children remain motivated intrinsically. Children are left to their own devices.

On the other hand, during initiation, there are specific teachers whose role is to impart knowledge and skills to the initiates. Here the children are monitored for progress and given specific tasks to do. Verbal instruction is given towards creating a cultural context for the activities the children learn. The initiates are assessed immediately and strictly according to the curriculum set by the leaders of the *Jando* and *Nsondo*. There remain areas of similarity in the way the children learn in that observational learning, peer education and cooperative learning, as well as trial-and-error are still in effect.

Lessons do not take up all the time in the boys' camp. They are given time to interact. The boys spend time chatting, practicing the musical arts activities and songs they have been taught and some of the manual skills they acquire. Both boys and girls are allowed visitors of the same sex. The only criterion is that the visitor must be initiated to be allowed inside. The elders in the camps will normally ensure that this is so using a series of questions, age, position of the person in the community, or based on their personal knowledge of the individual. I inquired from the *ngaliba* in Jali area how one may tell whether a person is initiated or not. He responded by saying it is easy. You study the person's behaviour, whether he or she is respectful (*wa ulemu*) based on how they speak, dress, sit, carry out gender specific roles and so on. It is the manner in which the person will carry and present himself or herself that tells whether they have been initiated-*Amakhala munthu* (he or she is humane). In light of this, the *ngaliba* and others probably know not just community members who are likely to have gone through the same initiation, but even those that were initiated elsewhere.

Nsondo, the girls' initiation, is done inside the village. A fence is built around a house chosen for the purpose and the girls are kept inside for the entire duration of their initiation. In Jali although in other places girls' initiations are also carried out in camps outside the village. Kamlongera *et al.* record that in the *Lomwe chinamwali* or initiation rite, the girls are taken out of the village just as the boys are (1989:19). The boys' initiation, *Jando*, takes place outside the village in a *ndagala* or *chipatala*. Since the boys' initiation involves circumcision, the name *chipatala*, the Chichewa word for hospital, denotes a place for treatment and healing. Metaphorically, the name *chipatala* could also refer to a place where the boys heal form their childish ways and bad behaviour, and emerge transformed into respectable members of the community. Using the name *chipatala* is a form of masking so that only those who know about the initiation will understand where the boys have gone, while others will simply believe they have gone to an actual hospital. The *ndagala* is a makeshift camp built specifically for the purpose of initiation and it is destroyed and burnt after the initiation is complete. Both *Nsondo* and *Jando* camps function as boarding schools with an intensive two- to three-week curriculum. The boys and girls live there for the entire duration, having food brought for the boys and the girls cooking their own food. For the girls this is part of their training in preparation for their role as women and future mothers.

Even though initiation is a regular event, permission has to be sought from the chief before each initiation. It is customary for the leader of the initiation camp to perform this role, bearing gift for the chief. In the case of the Jali area permission is sought form Chief Jali because he is senior in rank, although the village headsmen around are also informed. Only when permission is given can the *Nsondo* or *Jando* proceed. If for some reason the chief does not give his approval, there will be no initiation until the issue is resolved.

Secrecy is a big part of the initiation proceedings. The initiates are made to promise not to reveal what they have learned, particularly to *mbalule* and cultural outsiders. It is so deeply engraved in the culture that the secrecy of initiation has birthed a proverb: *Ya ku Jando yangasala* (do not speak of things that you learned at Jando) (Dicks 2006:122). A Chichewa counterpart is *za ku dambwe siaulula* (things learned in the initiation camp are not to be revealed). Both proverbs point to a need for information to be revealed only to the right people, not just to anybody.

At the end of the entire process, the initiates, both male and female, are assessed to see if they have acquired the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. They are asked to perform the songs that they were taught during their training. Once they show that they have done so, they can graduate. The graduation day is a colourful and momentous event. For the initiates, it means they have successfully passed into the next social strata. They are no longer children but young men and young women. They will now receive new names and be given new clothes. But most importantly, they will now be treated differently.

As children prior to initiation, they did not have many privileges, but henceforth they will be acknowledged and given respect. They have gone through the training that prepares them for life and shows them to be capable members of the community. The young men and women are now expected to conduct themselves in a markedly different manner from before their initiation. One significant thing is that they are no longer to play with the uninitiated children. Even if they are age mates, they are not considered senior to them. And best of all, they will now be allowed to fully participate in the *Magule*, starting with their graduation day performance. Now others can watch and imitate them, and dream of the day when they too will be allowed to be part of the *Manganje* performance in the village square.

4.4.4.2 The curriculum

The content of the learning process during initiation is determined by the overarching objectives as intended by the community and/or culture. Robert Chanunkha explains that usually musical arts are taught and learned in initiation camps as a means of achieving cultural competence. He explains that the musical arts experiences are therefore valued as tools for understanding customs. The musical arts help children to remember cultural norms and ideas, and facilitates cooperation and unity among them (1999:3).

The initiates are expected to leave the camp having acquired understanding of, respect for and a commitment to the preservation of the community's way of life. Initiation is also where the various values and attitudes are taught and reinforced through the musical arts. The following values and attitudes are instilled in the initiates during initiation: discipline, respect (*ulemu*), responsibility and a positive hard-working attitude. Corresponding behaviour change is expected from the initiates' behaviour. They are expected to be able to decode and encode using the various meaning-making strategies handed over by the leaders of the initiation camp. These are things that an uninitiated person is not supposed to know. This makes the initiated youth a member of a kind of a stratum of society marked by privileged information and a changed status in the community.

The *mbalinga* is the overall leader of the camp in the boys' initiation, *Jando*. Initiates are expected to display discipline and obedience throughout their stay in the camp. The initiates have to learn to sing and dance to some songs without which they are not considered ready to "graduate". It is up to the initiates to pay attention, listen and observe the demonstration performances given by the elders to learn and internalize these songs. Failure to learn them could lead to punishment as it is considered insubordination or lack of involvement in the process. Again, the basic assumption is that all are capable of music-making and learning

through observation and imitation. The explanations given at the failure of one to learn the songs is perceived as resulting from reasons other than lack of musical capability.

In *Jando*, the musical arts practices are taught by the *mbalinga* and his team. In the case of Jali, *Manganje* is the key *gule* or musical art type taught. The initiates must be able to successfully demonstrate the song, dance and musical instrument playing they learn during initiation. If children sing or dance well during their graduation ceremony, the teachers receive gifts as tokens of appreciation from the community which can be money, chickens and praise from the community.

I received conflicting information concerning the content of the girls' initiation. One respondent, Mrs Kasipa (chief Jali 1) indicated that the girls only learned how to take care of themselves, a home and children. She mentioned that girls also learn how to relate to others such as elder, the uninitiated and members of the opposite sex in terms of social etiquette. Chief Jali 1 denied that the girls are told explicitly about sexual things apart from being taught abstinence until marriage (*kudzisunga*). Another respondent, her daughter, stated that besides these things, the girls also learn how to please their husbands sexually when they get married. This includes some activities and songs communicating what they must know. The respondent did not tell me the exact nature of these songs and activities.

Musical arts are employed to teach young people good behaviour, including proper sexual behaviour. Promiscuity is discouraged and the preservation of honour (*kudzisunga*, literally keeping oneself) is encouraged. During *Nsondo*, the young girls are taught that they are now too old to play with boys. They are taught to say no to sex and run away, and that they can get pregnant, catch diseases, and earn a bad reputation if they do not preserve their honour. By preserving their honour, young girls bring honour to their parents and community. *Anankungwi* (initiation leaders/teachers) also get credit for a job well done

when the initiated girls are well behaved. Ultimately, initiation prepares girls for adulthood and marriage according to Kamlongera *et al.* (1989:104).

Jackson Kafonsi underscored the importance of addressing relevant social issues during *Jando* initiation. He spoke candidly on issues of sexual morality and responsibility. Initiates are taught aspect of the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Syphilis (*chindoko*) and Gonorrhoea (*ma bomu*). An example of this content is the *Manganje* song given and below.

Edzi eh! Edzi (AIDS)

Yabwera ndi a mbalule (Has come with the uninitiated)

Although the accuracy of these sentiments is not proven, the message is clear: in order to avoid AIDS, get initiated. The attitude reflected in this song is that those who are uninitiated are more likely to engage in promiscuity leading to them contracting HIV/AIDS. The content of the learning experience of initiation is therefore seen as a safeguard against some contemporary social problems such as the HIV/AIDS scourge.

I inquired as to the use of the musical arts in imparting culturally relevant information to children. The respondents agreed that this is done but more especially when children are taken to "be danced" (*kukavinidwa*) in the initiation camps. Mrs Gunda explained that this is where they are taught everything concerning their culture and traditions as well as how to behave. Some historical information is given to the boys and girls through storytelling. The things that the initiates are taught are, according to respondent Mrs Gunda, unlikely to be forgotten. Apart from the sole occurrence of initiation, another reason why they are unlikely to forget what they learned is the use of song and other reinforces for their learning. These reinforces include the novelty of experiences, reward, and punishment.

Much of what the boys and girls learn in the *chipatala* and *nsasa* respectively is new and therefore captures their interest. When children do not cooperate or when they fail to learn something, they are sometimes punished. I did not discover any examples of the forms of direct punishment administered, but I was informed that there are ways of disciplining the children. Chanunkha reports that in the area of Mpili in Machinga, boys are whipped, slapped, poked, or pricked with thorns. Sometime itchy plants are rubbed on them or a piece of prickly grass stem placed between their fingers. The girls have a roughly cut stick placed between their thighs and dance backwards in a circle, one step at a time. They are not allowed to drop the stick (1999:15-16). When a child does particularly well, they are commended and made a reference person for that activity or given some responsibility over the other children. Parents or guardians of a child who does well are given good reports.

Initiates are taught general lessons as well as lessons personally relevant to them as individuals. During the initiation period in *Nsondo*, women with grievances with any of the initiates may express them using speech, song or theatrical gestures. Sometimes the grievances are made known to the women in charge of the initiation (*anankungwi*) prior to entry into the camp. In such cases the girls are disciplined to assist them to change their behaviour. The girls are not allowed to respond nor speak at all. The intention of such exercises is to do away with undesirable behaviour that goes against the ideals of the community and cultivate good behaviour (*khalidwe la bwino*).

Chanunkha (1999:11, 12, 16) presents the structure of lessons in *Jando* as he observed in Mpili, Machinga. Although this structure can be varied from person to person, the structure of most music lessons in the *ndangala* will follow this general format.

Introduction: The children are told what they are about to do whether learn a song, listen to a story, learn historical facts or do a crafting activity. Henceforth I will use the example of a

song. Then they are told the significance of the piece they are about to do. The song could teach about respect for parents. The children are also taught how the lesson will proceed and what is expected of the children.

Demonstration: The song is sung through once. Then the children will be asked to join by responding as taught. The familiar method of observational learning is used. The initiates listen and watch, committing to memory what they observe. They practice what they have just learned with the impending assessment in mind.

The initiate's performance is immediately assessed and verbal praise is given when they do well. If they do not do well, those who have forgotten will re-learn while others who remember will be singing. Assessment in *Jando*, the boys' initiation is rigorous. Each learner is asked to demonstrate the skills acquired individually, then again either in pairs or small groups. In the case of singing, the boys are expected to lead and then respond for each song they have learned accurately. Those who fail are taught again then asked to rehearse until they get can do it correctly.

Initiation takes place in the dry season when crops have been harvested and schools are closed for a long holiday. In other words, as noted by Kamlongera *et al.* this is a recess period (1989:19). Chief Jali observed that placing the initiation during this period reflects a significant idea relating to work and priorities to the young people. If the initiation had been placed during farming time for instance, the young people might not understand the import of doing things at the right time; taking care of basic needs first; and the need for balance in life activities. Coupled with the instruction received during initiation, the young people learn that there is a proper time for everything and learn to order their activities accordingly.

4.5 Summary: A well educated musician in the Malawian context

In conclusion, the following are the shared or general qualities and attitudes expected of a learner and participant in musical arts in the Jali area.

- Respect (*ulemu*)
- Openness
- Creativity
- Humility
- Responsibility
- Adherence to general community norms and specific *gule* discipline.
- Willingness and ability to work with others

The following technical skills and competences were discovered to be present

- Singing
- Instrumentation (drumming)
- Dancing
- Creation: Improvisation, composition, arrangements/lyrical adaptation
- Observational skills: listening, watching and remembering
- Self-regulation and self-assessment

Teaching and learning may occur intentionally or unintentionally, formally or informally. In the early stages of musical arts learning, the child learns by observing an unintentional teacher in an informal learning environment and imitating him. Agency and motivation are high and intrinsic, and this stage is therefore learner-centred. The desire to participate and

belong drives learning. The child learns at his or her own volition and no one forces the child to learn.

Later on, during initiation, the child learns from an intentional teacher within a formal setting. External motivation is present and the learning experience if mostly teacher-centred. The child is required to learn and is not allowed to quit. The desire to participate in the culture as well as the need to graduate to next life stage provides incentive for the learner.

There is a balance between the learner and teacher-centred approaches that lends itself well to the interdependence and complementarity of the musical arts in general. Both are needed to realise the kind of education needed in the musical arts in Jali area, and fulfil the purpose of producing a knowledgeable, skilful, and productive member of the community.

Learning techniques in the musical arts systems in Jali are observational learning, play, trial-and-error, peer education and cooperative learning. The learning processes include initiation, apprenticeship, and enculturation which is an overall concept.

A comparison between Nzewi's objectives and logic of musicianship education in Africa model and the findings of this research indicate that the education system is Jali is in keeping with Nzewi's model (2003:36-37). It does so in the following ways:

(a) The musical arts education system in Jali has been found to be practically oriented. Thus, the focus on musicianship education in Nzewi's model is appropriate and reflective of the Jali area. Although the focus is pragmatic, the objectives are more community oriented thus underscoring the fact that the musical arts exist for and are meaningful only in the context of the community.

(b) This research identified community and character building as overarching objectives. These objectives are interdependent and give meaning to each other. Each of Nzewi's objectives fits into either or both of these overarching objectives. Every seemingly individually oriented objective ends up serving the community and each community oriented objective serves the individual. For instance, the objective of 'performance of self' grows towards self as incarnation of the community ethos. Social cohesion and group empathy ultimately end in an individual becomes referential to the community having developed the necessary character.

(c) Although stated differently, the attitudes deemed necessary for one to have in the Jali area given above are reflected in Nzewi's model.

(d) The life stages are reflective of the various stages experienced in Jali. Significant rites or events separate each from the other. For example, between later childhood and the pre-marital status, there is the initiation rite.

(e) The development from childhood to old age is also accurately depicted. Each stage signifies a step towards the ideal sometimes realised in adulthood but more surely in old age. Old age is the life stage where everything that has been learned comes to maturity. In other words, old age is the culmination of the process of enculturation. The community at Jali looks up to its elders in the way Nzewi depicts.

(f) The nature of the learning process in Jali matches what Nzewi proposes as well. For example the learning techniques found to be operational in Jali are reflected. Observational learning, play, trial-and-error, peer education and corporate learning

may be seen all the way down the early and later childhood columns across the objectives.

Nzewi's tabulation of the objectives and logic of musicianship education in Africa is given on the next page.

Objectives and logic of musicianship education in Africa

(Meki Nzewi 2003: 36-37)

	Early childhood	Later childhood	Pre-marital status	Adulthood	Old age
Performance of self	Free experimentation with the world of sound using voice, body, objects. Adults as mirror image	Self-discovery and self assertion negotiated with peers	Self-protection and skill command in the context of group support	Perfuming self with authority	Self incarnation of community ethos
Social cohesion and group empathy	Acting self as the focus of others	Socialization into group Consciousness and discipline as leadership qualities are negotiated	Group integration and action	Group expression highlights individual	Individuality becomes referential
Originality in	Embryonic	Self-image injected into	Full induction into	Authority in	Icons of genius

conformity	exploration of cultural artistic imaginations	expression of conformity. Clarity of expression emerges	social-artistic norms. Rational approach to creative originality	manipulating conformity. Creative originality an asset	and standards. Symbolic participation
Engendering socio-emotional security	Home is the secure base for musical arts nurturing family provides emotional support.	Ad hoc, self-organized play groups at compound and community levels. Unrestricted participation in community events provide social and emotional security	Age-gender groups under community supervision provide social and emotional security	Social emotional consolidation in common interest groups	Social emotional security revered custodians of knowledge and wisdom
Inculcating societal ethics and mores	Indirect induction by older members and community	Per-induction and criticism during musical play-acting. Adult correct as well as model behaviour	Age-gender emotions and expectations formally staged and critiqued in appropriate musical	Models for and monitors of societal ethics and mores in musical arts sites. Arbiters of	Referents for ideals, and arbiters of infringement

			arts sites	infringement	
Imparting knowledge of theoretical content and presentational theatre	Not systematic or formalized	Team exploration of creative theory and cultural idioms modelled on adult standards	Systematic acquisition of theoretical standards in formal sites; systematic appropriation of new idioms	Individualistic negotiation and extension of standards of creativity; presentation selects masters	
Enabling acquisition and performance expertise	Random efforts applauded by older people	Imitating adult models in children's groups. Adult sites available to test capability.	Expertise matures in the context of performance. Special talents promoted	Exceptional genius selects experts as masters and icons of style/type. Expertise has no age limit. Respected as models of excellence and innovation.	
Artistic-aesthetic effect and affect	Not explicit	Strong peer-criticism. Effort valued over mistake	Appreciation, evaluation and approval forthright in and out of context, qualitative, proactive and quantitative aesthetic consciousness		

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter four has unfurled the nature of the indigenous music education system in the Jali area of southern Malawi. I have presented the basic assumptions and premises underlying the education system in Jali as gathered from this research. These basic assumptions and premises have been given under the headings nature of the learner, nature of content, and nature of teaching and learning.

Thereafter I have presented the objectives of the educational system in Jali starting with the overarching objectives and outcomes, specific competences and skills, and I have discussed assessment standards and methods for these objectives and outcomes. The objectives of the educational system are divided into overarching objectives, and specific skills and competencies. Under overarching objectives are community building and character building, and cultivating attitudes and consequent behaviour. Under specific skills and competencies are singing and song-leading, dancing, instrumentation/percussion, language, meaning-making and interpretation and aesthetic considerations and creative logic.

A section on techniques of teaching and learning has been given and these include observational learning, play and trial-and-error, and peer education and cooperative learning. Teaching and learning processes that were identified are enculturation and initiation. I also include a description of my *Mganda* lesson as an example of the learning process.

Finally, a summary of a well educated musician in the Malawian context, in which I compare the findings of this research and Meki Nzewi's objectives and logic of musicianship education in Malawi. I found the two to be similar as shown in the comparison.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research has analysed the musical arts education system in Jali, Zomba, in the Southern region of Malawi. The Jali area was found to be a confluence of *Yao*, *Lomwe* and *Mang'anja* people, leading to an interesting cultural dynamic that contributes to the culture and musical arts types (*magule*) performed there.

Magule and their education in Jali, as with other cultural activities, are community oriented. *Magule* find their meaning and purpose in the culture and community, and exist to transmit, express, and perpetuate the culture. The products of this educational system are ideally responsible, knowledgeable, and skilled individuals able to contribute positively to *magule* performances and the community. The highest ideal of the community is *Umunthu* (humanness) and *khalidwe la bwino* or simple *khalidwe* (good behaviour) which reults from it. A person is expected to develop and exhibit *Umunthu* and *khalidwe*, that is, to cultivate desired attitudes and exhibit behaviour demonstrating those attitudes.

Three *magule* were selected as the basis for the study because of their popularity in the Jali area: *Manganje*, *Malangalanga*, and *Mganda*. These musical arts types were studied through observation, participation and interviews. I participated in *Malangalanga* and *Mganda*, received a *Mganda* lesson and a *Manganje* drumming lesson. Adult and child respondents were interviewed to discover the nature of musical arts learning in the Jali area.

Overarching objectives of the musical arts education system in Jali are the interrelated and co-dependent objectives of community and character building. All other objectives are

hinged on these two. Other objectives include respect (*ulemu*), openness, creativity, humility, responsibility, adherence to general community norms and specific *gule* discipline, and willingness and ability to work with others. The following technical skills and competences are developed: Singing, instrumentation (drumming), dancing, creation (improvisation, composition, arrangements/lyrical adaptation), observational skills (listening, watching, remembering), and self-regulation and self-assessment. An understanding of meaning-making and interpretation, aesthetic considerations and creative logic relating to the musical arts is also expected.

A summary of the answers to the three specific questions that this research sought to address were found to be as follows: The first question was concerning the music transmission (teaching and learning) techniques carried out in *magule* in the area of Jali. I found the following practically-oriented modes of transmission for the musical arts: Observational learning/modelling; play and trial-and-error and peer education and cooperative learning. I found that children learn by observing, committing to memory, then imitating through trial-and-error, and play, alone or together with peers. Both learning and teaching can be both intentional or unintentional, formal and informal.

Another question this research sought to answer related to the processes involved in indigenous musical arts education in the Jali area. The processes involved in the musical arts education process in the Jali area are enculturation as an overall process, initiation and apprenticeship. The overall process of enculturation refers to the learning of one's own culture. Initiation and apprenticeship therefore are enculturative in nature.

Initiation is the way in which culturally significant information is passed on to children so as to allow them to grow into responsible members of the community who understand and can therefore continue the prevailing culture. *Jando* is the boys inititation while *Nsondo* is

for girls. Initiation is formal in nature and is done for a few weeks in a location away from the rest of the community where musical arts are the major method of transmitting the necessary information.

Apprenticeship occurs where a master musician trains a young man in a specific skill towards refinement and expertise over a particular period of time. The experience of lead drummer Luis Macheso is employed to illustrate apprenticeship

The final question inquired what constitutes a musically successful, enculturated, and functioning member of the community or a "well-educated musical artist" in this locality. A musically successful, enculturated member of the community or a well-educated musical artist possesses *Umunthu* (humanness) and the resultant *khalidwe la bwino* (good behaviour).

A well-educated musician in the locality is knowledgeable, skillful and capable of contributing positively to the community. He or she must be able to enhance a musical arts performance through his or her participation and exhibits the following character traits: humility, openness, willingness and ability to cooporate with others, creativity, responsibility and adherence to general community norms and specific *gule* discipline.

A well-educated musical artist possesses multiple skills relating to the all the possible aspects and roles in the musical arts. A song leader, for example, is normally an accomplished dancer, dramatist, as well as composer/arranger.

A well-educated musician is also an accomplished learner who is able to observe and imitate, explore and learn by participation and trial-and-error, execute the learned skills in a group and in performance and Continue to learn from others even if already skilled. A well-educated musical artist is a highly enculturated individual who is connected to the

culture and is therefore able to play the roles of agent of cultural expression and social commentator.

5.2 Recommendations

Research into various musical arts has been conducted, but relatively little of it has been with an educational focus. This research is intended to fill that gap. However there is need to build a larger body of research on musical arts education in indigenous Malawian settings. In particular, I have noted there is a need to fill the gap in research relating to cooperative learning in the African context, particularly in the informal setting. I therefore recommend that more research be conducted with this focus.

A better understanding the culture and values of the people of Malawi, particularly as related to the musical arts will ensue from research as outlined above. Such endeavours create broader and deeper resources for researchers working in Malawi, in the particular area of music education, musical arts and culture.

Research may also be conducted on the early stages of children's enculturation in terms of specific activities and processes related to different stages of development. This could prove invaluable with regards to understanding learners and knowing their pre-existing knowledge prior to introduction to formalised education. Such knowledge will inform primary school education in terms of curriculum and content.

I suggest that apart from the immediate benefits of this process, such research inform curriculum review in formal classroom education. The findings of the research that follows will provide a resource that can be used to inform an ethnographic approach to music education in Malawi's schools. There is much that can be learned from the musical arts education systems such as exists in Jali area. Aspects of the educational system which reflect

the culture and informal practices of Malawians could be transferred and reinterpreted for classroom use to much benefit. By looking at what works in musical arts education, music education in the classroom could stand to benefit from tried and tested methods that work for the Malawian learner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abdallah Y. 1919. *The Yaos: Chikala cha wayao.* Zomba: Government Printing Press.

2. Agawu K. 2003. Defining and interpreting African music. In Herbst A. M., M. Nzewi & K. Agawu (eds.) 2003:1-11. *Musical arts in Africa: Theory, practice and education.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

3. Akuno E. A. 2001. A conceptual framework for research in music and music education within a cultural context. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music* 2000/2001: 3-8.

4. Arom S. 1991. *African polyphony & polyrhythm: Musical structure and methodology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Astington J.W. 1993. *The child's discovery of mind.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

6. Bandura A. 1992. Exercises in personal agency through the self-efficacy mechanism. In R. Schwarzer (ed.) 1992: 3-38. *Self-efficacy: Thought control of action.* Washington DC: Hemisphere.

7. Barz G. 2004. *Music in East Africa: Experiencing music, expressing culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.

8. Blacking J. 1985. The context of Venda possession music: Reflections on the effectiveness of symbols. *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 17:64-87.

9. _____1973. *How musical is man?* Washington: University of Washington Press.

10. Bowman W. 1998. Universals, relativism, and music education. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 135:1-20.

11. Bruner J. 1983. Play, thought, and language. *Peabody Journal of Education* 60 (3): 60-69. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1492180 [accessed 14 September 2012].

12. Butawo T.O.S. 1992. *Rites of Passage - Puberty Rites - Boys' Initiation - Jando among the Yao.* Zomba: Chancellor College.

13. Campbell P. S. 2002. The musical cultures of children. In Bresler L. & C. M. Thomson (eds.). 2002:57-70. *The arts in children's lives: Culture, context, and curriculum.* Dordrecht: Kluwer

14. Chanunkha R. 2005. Music education in Malawi: The crisis and the way forward. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis – D. Mus).

15. _____1999. Music acquisition and learning among Yao children. Pretoria: University of South Africa (Unpublished Dissertation – M.A.).

16. Chernoff Miller J. 1979. *African rhythm and African sensibility: Aesthetics and social action in African musical idioms.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

17. Chilora H. G. School language policy, research and practice in Malawi. *Paper presented at the comparative and international education society (CIES) 2000 conference, San Antonio,* Texas, 8 March-12 March. Improving education quality project.

18. Chirwa W.C. 1994. Alomwe and Mozambican immigrant labour in colonial Malawi, 1890'3-1945. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 27 (3): 525-550.

19. Collins J. 2005. *African musical symbolism in contemporary perspective: Roots, rhythm and relativity.* Berlin: Pro Business.

20. Colson M. & E. Gluckman. 1968. *Seven tribes of central Africa.* 2nd edition. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

21. Creswell, J. W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

22. Criss E. 2008. The natural learning process. *Music Educators Journal* 2008: 42-46.

23. Dalby B. 2012. *About Music Learning Theory (MLT).* The Gordon Institute for music learning. http://giml.org/mlt/about/ [accessed 19 December 2012].

24. Dargie D. 1996. African methods of music education: Some reflections. *African Music* 7(3):30-43.

25. Dei G. J. S. 2002. Learning culture, spirituality and local knowledge: Implications for African schooling. *International Review of Education* 48 (5): 335-360.

26. Dicks I. 2006. *Wisdom of the Yawo people: Lunda la wandu wa chiyawo.* Zomba: Kachere Series.

27. Elliott D.J. 1991. Music as knowledge. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25(3): 21-40.

28. Floyd M. 1996. Approaching the musics of the world. In Floyd M. (ed.) 1996: 24-42. *World music in education.* Hants: Scholar Press.

29. Gergely G. & G. Csibra. 2006. Slyvia's recipe: The role of imitation and pedagogy in the transmission of cultural knowledge. In N. J. Enfield & S. C. Levenson (eds.) 2006: 229-255. *Roots of Human Sociality: Culture, Cognition, and Human Interaction.* Oxford: Berg Publishers.

30. Gordon E. 2007. *Learning sequences in music: A contemporary music learning theory.* Chicago: GIA publications.

31. _____ 2003. *A music learning theory for newborns and young children. Third edition.* Chicago: GIA Publications

32. Gruhn W. & F Rauscher. 2002. The neurobiology of music cognition and learning. In Colwell R. (ed.). 2002: 445-460. *MENC Handbook of Musical Cognition and Development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

33. Hannon E. E. & Trainor L. J. 2007. Music acquisition: Effects of enculturation and formal training on development. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11(11): 466- 472.

34. Jakalasi, L. W. 1988. *Jando: A Yao initiation rite as practised in Traditional Authority Maganga in Salima District.* Zomba: Chancellor College.

35. James C. 1999. Melodic and rhythmic aspects of African music. In Floyd M. (ed.) 1998: 7-18. *Composing the music of Africa: composition, interpretation and realization.* Aldershot: Ashgate Studies in Ethnomusicology.

36. Johnson D. W., R. T. Johnson & E. Holubec. 1991. *Cooperation in the classroom.* Edina: Interaction Book Company

37. Johnson D.W., R. T. Johnson & K. A. Smith. 1991. *Cooperative Learning: Increasing College Faculty Instructional Productivity.* Washington D.C.: The George Washington University, School of education and human development.

38. Jones S. 2007. Imitation in infancy: The development of mimicry. *Psychological Science* 18 (7): 593-599.

39. Kachinga R. 1988. *Activities carried out before, during and after the Nsondo initiation among the Yao.* Zomba: Chancellor College.

40. Kalua H. 2004. Why most Malawian music does not sell outside Malawi. Zomba: University of Malawi. (unpublished dissertation B.A.).

41. Kamlongera C., M. Nambote, B. Soko & E. Timpunza-Mvula. 1989. *Kubvina: An introduction to Malawian dance and theatre.* Zomba: University of Malawi.

42. Karlsen S. 2011. Using musical agency as a lens: Researching musical education from the angle of experience. *Research Studies in Music Education* 33 (2): 107-122.

43. Katayika R.1994. Initiation among Yao Boys: Implications for Catholic Yao. Zomba: University of Malawi (Unpublished mini-dissertation - BAH).

44. Kayambazinthu E. L. *Patterns of language use in Malawi.* 1994. La Trobe University. http://www.latrobe.edu.au/linguistics/LaTrobePapersinLinguistics/Vol%2007/04Kyambazinthu.pdf [Accessed 21 April 2011].

45. Kishindo M. F. 1969/70. *Changes in initiation ceremonies among the Yao as a Result of modern attitudes.* Zomba: Chancellor College.

46. Koops Huisman L. & C. Crump Taggart. 2011. Learning through play: Extending an early childhood music education approach to undergraduate and graduate music education. *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 20 (2): 55-66.

47. Kubik G. 1983. Report on cultural field research in Mangochi district: July 15 to August 25, 1983. *African Music* 6 (3):132-137.

48. _____1979. Boys' circumcision school of the Yao, Malawi, South East Africa. *Ethnologie* 1:3-19.

49. _____1967. Boys' circumcision school of the Yao: A cinematographic documentation at Chief Makanjila's village in Malawi. *Review of Ethnology:* 1-37.

50. Kruger J. & L. Van Der Merwe. 2012. Learning about the world: Developing higher order thinking in music education. *Td The Journal for Interdisciplinary Research in South Africa* 8 (1):63-80.

51. Kwilimbe B. 2010. Interview with the researcher on 10 June 2010. Lilongwe.

52. Laske O. E. 1976. On psychomusicology. *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 6(2): 268-281.

53. Le Compte M. & J. Schenshul. 1999. *The ethnographer's toolkit: Designing and conducting ethnographic research.* New Jersy: Altamira Press.

54. Ligoya A.M. 2010. *Towards a philosophy of music education: The case of primary music education in Malawi.* Bloemfontein: University of the Free State (unpublished mini-thesis – B. Mus Hon).

55. _____2004. Creativity in Malawian commercial music. Zomba: University of Malawi (unpublished undergraduate dissertation).

56. Mandala E.C. 1978. The nature and substance of Mang'anja and Kalolo oral traditions: a preliminary survey. *The Society of Malawi Journal* 31 (1): 6-22.

57. Mans M. 2000. Using Namibian music/dance traditions as a basis for reforming music education. *International Journal of Education and the Arts* 1 (3). http://www.ijea.org/v1n3/ [accessed on 28 February 2011].

58. Marjomaa R. 2003. The martial spirit: Yao soldiers in British service in Nyasaland (Malawi), 1895-1939. *Journal of African History* 44: 413-432. Cambridge University Press.

59. Masoga M. A. 2006. Building on the indigenous: Challenges for musical arts education in South Africa. In Portgieter H. (Ed). 2006: 40-66. *The transformation of musical arts education; Local and global perspectives from South Africa.* African Minds.

60. Meltzoff A. N. & W. Prinz. 2002. *The imitative mind: Development, evolution, and brain bases.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

61. Meltzoff A. 1999. Born to learn: What infants learn from watching us. In N. Fox & J.G. Worhol (eds.) 199:1-10. T*he role of early experience in infant development.* Skillman: Pediatric Institute Publications.

62. Miller C. 2006. Developmental relationships between language and theory of mind. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* 15: 142–154.

63. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Malawi). 2008. *The development of education: National report of Malawi.* United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

64. Mkandawire B. 2010. Ethnicity, language and cultural violence: Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda's Malawi 1964-1994. *The Society of Malawi Journal* 63 (1): 32-42.

65. Mouw R. & Griffioen S. 1993. *Pluralism and horizons.* Grand Rapids; William B. Eerdmans Publishing House.

66. Mphande D. K. 2001. Tonga proverbs from Malawi. In Kadadjie Joshua N. (ed.) *Proverbs for preaching and teaching* Volume 3. Philadelphia: The Pew Charitable Fund.

67. Munthali A. C. & E. M. Zulu. 2007. The timing and role of initiation rites in preparing young people for adolescence and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour in Malawi. *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 11(3):150-167. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25549737 [accessed 25 June 2011].

68. Norris Sachs R. 2001. Embodiment and community. *Western Folklore* 60 (2/3):111-124.

69. Northrup N. 1986. The migrations of Yao and Kalolo into southern Malawi: Aspects of migrations in Nineteenth century Africa. *International Journal of African Histories* 19 (1): 59-75.

70. Nthala G. M. 2012. Interview with the researcher on 12 November 2012. Bloemfontein.

71. _____ 2010. *The Chewa art of drumming and its influence on modern Malawian music.* University of the Free State (unpublished thesis – M. Mus).

72. Nzewi M. 2007a. *A contemporary study of African musical Arts: Informed by African indigenous knowledge systems; Illuminations, reflection and explorations.* Volume 1. Centre for indigenous instrumental African music and dance (CIIMDA).

73. _____2007b. *A contemporary study of African musical Arts: Informed by African indigenous knowledge systems; Illuminations, reflection and explorations.* Volume 3. Centre for indigenous instrumental African music and dance (CIIMDA).

74. _____2007c. *A contemporary study of African musical Arts: Informed by African indigenous knowledge systems; Illuminations, reflection and explorations.* Volume 4. Centre for indigenous instrumental African music and dance (CIIMDA).

75. _____2003. Acquiring knowledge of the musical arts in traditional society. In Herbst A., M. Nzewi, & K. Agawu (eds.) 2003: 13-37. *Musical Arts in Africa: Theory, practice and education.* University of South Africa Press.

76. Oerhrle E. & L. Emeka. 2003. Thought processes informing the musical arts. In Herbst A. M. Nzewi & K. Agawu (eds.). 2003:38-50. *Musical arts in Africa: Theory, practice and education.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

77. Omibiyi M. 1972. Folk music and dance in African education. *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 4: 87-94.

78. Omolo-Ongati R. 2009. Prospects and challenges of teaching and learning musics of the world's cultures: An African perspective. *Revista da ABEM,* 21: 7-14.

79. Onwuejeogwu A. M. 1975. *The social anthropology of africa: An introduction.* London: Heineman

80. Onyewuenyi I. C. 1998. Traditional African aesthetics: As philosophical perspective. In Coetzee P.H. & A.P.J. Roux. 1998:396-400. *The African philosophical reader.* New York: Routledge.

81. *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary: International student's edition.* New 8th ed. 2010. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

82. Palmer A. J. 2006. Music education and spirituality: Philosophical exploration II. *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 14(2): 143-158.

83. Paradise R. and B. Rogoff. 2009. Side by side: Learning by observation and pitching in. *Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology* 37 (1): 102-137.

84. Penfield J. and M. Duru. 1988. Proverbs: Metaphors that teach. *Anthropological Quarterly* 61 (3): 119-128.

85. Phiri K. 1972. Wealth and power in the history of northern Chewa chiefdoms, 1798 – 1895. University of Wisconsin. (unpublished thesis – M.A.).

86. Primos K. 2003. In Hargeaves D.J. & A.C. North (Eds.) 2003: 1-13. *Musical development and learning: The international perspective.* London: Biddles Ltd.

87. Rangeley W. H. J. 1963. The aYao. *The Nyasaland Journal* 16 (1): 7-27. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29545935 [accessed 17 March 2012].

88. Seashore C. E. 1938. *Psychology of music.* 1st edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

89. Strumpf M. 2001. Music education in Malawi and Zimbabwe. *Proceedings of the African Arts Education Conference, Grahamstown, 26 June – 1 July 2001.* United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization (UNESCO).

90. _____ 1999. Some music traditions of Malawi. *African Music* 7 (4): 110-121.

91. Stuart R. 1979. Anglican missionaries and a Chewa 'Dini' conversion and rejection in central Malawi. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 10 (1):46-69. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581025 [accessed on 20 April 2011].

92. Sungani L. 1986. *Chiputu or simba - Initiation for young girls.* Zomba: Chancellor College.

93. Taylor C. 1995. Cooperative learning in an African context. *International Journal of Educational Research, 23* (3): 239-252.

94. Tempels P. 1959. *Bantu philosophy* (English edition). Paris: Presence Africaine.

95. Thorsen S. 2002. Addressing cultural identity in music education. *Talking Drum Magazine* 17: 18-21.

96. Wanyama M. N. 2006. Music education: Unexploited goldmine in Kenya. *International Journal of Community Music* 4. C. Boules & D. Rohwe (eds.). Proceedings of music and lifelong learning symposium of April 14-16. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

97. White L. 1984. 'Tribes' and the aftermath of the Chilembwe uprising. *African Affairs* 83 (333): 511-541.

98. Wishlade R.L.1961. Chiefship and politics in the Mlanje district of southern Nyasaland. *Journal of the International African Institute* 31 (1): 36-45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1157818 [accessed 18 March 2012].

APPENDIX

Source: Ian Dicks 2006:91-92

There was once a group of people from one village who gathered together to shave each other's heads. This happened because at that place there was a funeral and the family were gathered together at the deceased's home. But there was a problem because they lacked a sharp knife. The blade they were using was blunt and the shaving was not proceeding at all well. However at that place there was a stranger who just happened to be sitting there. "Can you try my small knife?" the people received it from him and started to use it for the work. The small knife was excellent and it was very sharp, so much so that they work of shaving proceeded very well indeed.

SUMMARY

Musical Arts are a vibrant and integral part of life and culture in the Jali area, Zomba district, Southern Malawi. The musical arts types (*magule*) are a means by which culturally significant knowledge, attitudes and skills are expressed and transmitted, to ensure the longevity of the way of life in Jali.

This is a study of the musical arts education system as it exists in the Jali area. Due to the nature and intimate role of the *magule* in the culture of Jali, to learn the *magule* in the Jali area is to learn critical aspects of how and why the culture and everyday life of the community is both informed and re-formed. Inevitably, this is also a study of the culture of people in the area, giving this music education study an ethnographic approach.

I observed, documented, and participated in the performance of three *magule*, namely *Malangalanga*, *Manganje* and *Mganda*. Interviews were conducted with adults as well as children. Through these means I have attempted to discover how the musical arts education system operates.

Learning in this musical arts education system is practical and marked by high efficacy on the part of the learners. Their motivation resides in the desire to participate, and interact. A learner benefits through a combination of both informal and formal learning. *Magule* are learnt through the informal techniques of observational learning, play, trial-and-error, peer education and cooperative learning. Children observe and imitate through trial-and-error, during play either alone or with other children. Formal education occurs during initiation and in apprenticeship.

Community is the bedrock on which cultural practices including the *magule* find their meaning and purpose. This fact is well documented in the culture and language through

proverbs such as: *Mutu umodzi siusenza denga* (one head cannot hoist up a roof-to successfully accomplish a task one needs the help of others). The overarching objective of the musical arts education system is twofold: To express, communicate and embody the community; and thereby building character. Both community building and character building are geared towards cultivating *Umunthu* (humanness). Being human (*munthu*) is understood as more than a biological fact, but is a qualitative distinction. This distinction is based on whether a person exhibits attitudes and behaviour that shows values for others' wellbeing, and is able to live morally, in adhering to the society's values and beliefs. *Umunthu* is an internal state that manifests externally in *khalidwe la bwino* (good/moral behaviour). *Umunthu* and its corresponding behaviour and attitudes, which the culture deems desirable for communal wellness, are obtained through the process of enculturation and manifests in everyday life and in *magule*.

Ultimately, the learners are expected to become fully functional and productive members of the community; equipped with the knowledge, skill, attitudes and experience particular and useful to the community of Jali; able to participate fully in the performances and all that they signify. Learners are expected to posses *Umunthu* which results in *khalidwe la bwino* (good behaviour), leading to the transmission and perpetuity of the culture of Jali, specifically through *magule*.

KEY TERMS

Musical arts (*Magule*)

Umunthu

Community

Cooperative learning

Observational learning

Apprenticeship

Initiation

Character building

Participation

Enculturation

OPSOMMING

Die musiekkunste is 'n dinamiese en essensiële deel van die lewe en kultuur in die Jali-gebied, Zomba-distrik, Suid-Malawi. Die tipes musiekkunste (*magule*) is 'n manier waardeur kultureel betekenisvolle kennis, ingesteldhede en vaardighede uitgedruk en oorgedra word ten einde die langdurige voortbestaan van die lewenswyse in Jali te verseker.

Hierdie is 'n studie van die musiekkunste-opvoedingsisteeml soos dit in die Jali-gebied voorkom. As gevolg van die aard en die intieme rol van die *magule* in die kultuur van Jali, behels die leer van die *magule* in die Jali-gebied inderdaad om te leer oor deurslaggewende aspekte van hoe en waarom die kultuur en alledaagse lewe van die gemeenskap sowel gevorm as hervorm word. Hierdie studie is noodwendig ook 'n studie van die kultuur van mense in die gebied. Dit verleen dus aan hierdie musiekopvoedkundige studie 'n etnografiese benadering.

Ek het drie *magule*, naamlik *malangalanga*, *manganje* en *mganda* waargeneem, gedokumenteer en aan die uitvoering daarvan deelgeneem. Onderhoude is met volwassenes sowel as kinders gevoer. Deur hierdie middele het ek gepoog om vas te stel hoe die musiekkunste-opvoedingsisteem funksioneer.

Die leer in hierdie musiekkunste-opvoedingsisteem is prakties en word deur 'n hoë vlak van doeltreffendheid deur die leerders gekenmerk. Hul motivering lê in die begeerte om deel te neem en om interaksie met mekaar te hê. Die leerders trek voordeel uit 'n kombinasie van informele en formele leer. *Magule* word geleer deur informele tegnieke, naamlik waarnemingsleer, spel, leer-en-probeer, portuuropvoeding en ko□peratiewe leer. Kinders neem waar en boots na deur middel van leer-en-probeer tydens spel, alleen of saam met ander kinders. Formele opleiding vind plaas tydens inisiasie en tydens leerlingskap.

Gemeenskap vorm die kern waarom kulturele praktyke, insluitend die *magule*, hul betekenis en doel vind. Hierdie feit is deeglik gedokumenteer in die kultuur en taal deur spreekwoorde soos "*Mutu umodzi siusenza denga*" (een kop kan nie 'n dak ophys nie – om 'n taak suksesvol te verrig het 'n mens die hul van ander nodig). Die oorkoepelende doelwit van die musiekkunste-opvoedingsisteem is tweevoudig: om die gemeenskap uit te druk, te kommunikeer en te beliggaam, en om daardeur karakter te bou. Sowel gemeenskapsbou as karakterbou is daarop toegespits om *umunthu* (menslikheid) te kweek. Om mens te wees (*munthu*) word verstaan as nie bloot 'n biologiese feit nie, maar as 'n kwalitatiewe onderskeid. Hierdie onderskeid is gegrond op of 'n persoon ingesteldhede en gedrag openbaar wat toon dat waarde aan ander se welstand geheg word en in staat is om sedelik te leef, getrou aan die samelewing se waardes en oortuigings. *Umunthu* is 'n innerlike toestand wat ekstern in *khalidwe la bwino* (goeie/sedelike gedrag) manifesteer. *Umunthu* en die gedrag en ingesteldhede wat daarmee gepaard gaan, wat die kultuur as wenslik vir gemeenskaplike welstand ag, word deur die proses van enkulturasie verkry en manifesteer in die alledaagse lewe en in *magule*.

Uiteindelik word van die leerders verwag om volledig funksionele en produktiewe lede van die gemeenskap te word, toegerus met die kennis, vaardighede, ingesteldhede en ervaring

eie aan en nuttig vir die gemeenskap van Jali en in staat om ten volle aan die uitvoerings en alles wat dit beteken deel te neem. Daar word van leerders verwag om oor *umunthu* te beskik, wat *khalidwe la bwino* (goeie gedrag) tot gevolg het en lei tot die oordrag en ewigdurendheid van die kultuur van Jali, spesifiek deur *magule*.

SLEUTELTERME

Musiekkunste (*magule*)

Umunthu

Gemeenskap

Ko□peratiewe leer

Waarnemingsleer

Leerlingskap

Inisiasie

Karakterbou

Deelname

Enkulturasie