

Bridging Ethnomusicology and Composition in the First Movement of Justinian Tamusuza's String Quartet *Mu Kkubo Ery'Omusaalaba*

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INTRODUCTION

In their book *Music Since 1945: Issues, Materials and Literature*, Elliott Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey (1993, 196) note that “after 1945 the search beyond Western art music intensified, and among the most important participants were those whose music was shaped both by conventional Western practice and by their own non-Western roots.”

Similarly, twenty-first century African art music composers are preoccupied with the search for new musical idioms. Through experimenting with their indigenous and Western musical idioms, they have created a contemporary music aesthetic that does not subscribe to either territorial boundary. They have quenched their thirst for new sonorities through immersion in field research, which has led to the expansion of their creative approach to the composition of art music.

For many African art music composers, engaging in fieldwork and transforming field data into compositions have entailed appropriation under the umbrella of what composer and scholar Akin Euba (1989, 121–23; 1995, 2) has previously referred to as “creative musicology” and later as “intercultural music.” For Euba, the latter approach begins with the gathering of field data and ends with its application into creative large-scale compositions. As recent as its inception is, the roots of “creative musicology” can be traced back to Hungarian scholar and composer Béla Bartók, who, according to Kofi

Agawu (2011, 51), has been a “role model for African composers in general.” It seems that Bartók’s creative approach stimulated a new wave of thinking, owing to the fact that its engagement with the field expanded possibilities of approaching composition and enhancing the understanding of traditional music materials on which creativity in African art music thrives. Bode Omojola’s (1994, 1995, 2009) discussion and analysis of Ayo Bankole’s works, Nigerian art music, and Fela Sowande’s compositions are exemplary bodies of scholarship that not only probe the compositional creativity of composers, but also unveil intersections between ethnomusicology and composition. Similarly, Paul Konye’s (2007) approach to the study of African art music in Nigeria further strengthens the intersections of ethnomusicology and composition through the lens of political, social, and cultural dimensions behind the development of art music.

In East Africa, Ugandan composer Justinian Tamusuza is one of Bartók’s descendants who has similarly engaged in fieldwork and attempted to use field data to articulate musical performance techniques of the Baganda. In working through the lens of creative musicology, Tamusuza has composed art music that merges Western and Ganda musical idioms. Using the first movement of his string quartet *Mu Kkubo Ery’Omusaalaba* (In the Way of the Cross),¹ I examine how Tamusuza’s approach to creative musicology bridges composition and ethnomusicology. I pay specific attention to how Tamusuza evokes and employs Ganda musical sonorities and processes in order to demonstrate the importance of interaction to performances involving Baganda musicians.

¹ *Mu Kkubo Ery’Omusaalaba* is featured on the fourth track of the 1992 Kronos String Quartet CD titled *Pieces of Africa*.

JUSTINIAN TAMUSUZA'S FIELD

As a participant-observer in the late 1970s, Tamusuza served as an assistant organist and conductor in the Catholic Centenary Memorial Choir (CACEMCO), a sacred choral choir in Kampala, Uganda's capital city. At this time, it never occurred to him that he would use field data as materials for his future career in composition (Tamusuza, interview, May 25, 2012). However, while studying composition with Kevin Volans at Belfast University in the United Kingdom ten years later, Tamusuza felt the need to revitalize the Ganda musical idioms that had been part of his enculturation since childhood. Not surprisingly, this was the time when he started reinterpreting field data and consequently syncretizing it with Western musical idioms in order to compose art music rooted in Ganda and Western musical practices.

As Gymah Labi (1994, 2) notes, "the outward manifestation of the experiences of an individual composer ... ultimately affect his or her output." As such, in order to understand Tamusuza's quartet, it is imperative to have a background of *baakisimba* music, dance practice, and ensemble that serves as the backbone of the compositional style in his string quartet.

Traditionally, the *baakisimba* ensemble uses four drums (see Figure 1). The tallest of the four drums is the *ngalabi*, whose head is covered with a python or monitor lizard skin. Positioned between the performer's legs and struck with both hands, the drum produces a percussive and rhythmic effect that adds color to the ensemble's music. At times, such as whenever *baakisimba* drums accompany dancers, it provides the foundation for motivic gestures. *Nankasa* or *namunjoloba*, a small and high-pitched drum, is played with two sticks and mainly serves to signal motivic transformations for musicians and

Figure 1. Shown left to right: *ngalabi*, *nankasa* or *namunjoloba*, *mpuunyi* and *mbuutu*



dancers. The *mpuunyi* is a low-pitched medium drum played with one hand to provide a central beat, usually on every first and second count. It acts as the temporal reference to which all the other instruments relate. The largest of the four drums is the *mbuutu*, whose player uses both hands to play repetitive and cyclical rhythms based on word simulations. For a long time, *baakisimba* performances have involved body and motivic interactions among musicians. In this case, non-verbal rhythmic gestures have been simultaneously performed with body motion, the summation of which generates an interesting and visually interactive episode. For Jamil Kabuye, one of the genre's leading exponents, "it is very important not to play for the sake of playing, but having your entire self involved in what you are playing so as to realize a complete artistic practice"

(interview, 2001, Makerere University, Uganda).² As is clear from Kabuye's remark, the union of the body and sound defines the driving force and medium of interaction among *baakisimba* musicians. In his string quartet *Mu Kkubo Ery'Omusaalaba*, it is this performance practice that Tamusuza evokes. Before we turn to the analysis of how this interaction works, it is important to illuminate how fusion serves as the basis of the aesthetic in Tamusuza's quartet.

THE MEETING POINT: GANDA IDIOMS IN A WESTERN STRING QUARTET

Fusion in Tamusuza's quartet occurs when he simultaneously uses Ganda and Western musical idioms. Whereas these two musical worlds are founded on opposing musical sonorities and characteristics, their interaction results in a unique hybrid, giving birth to a novel musical aesthetic. But two questions arise: What remains Ganda or Western in this new aesthetic hybrid and why would Tamusuza work within a Westernized musical territory to convey Ganda musical processes? To answer these questions, I draw inspiration from Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*; in doing so, I can provide a useful framework from which to unearth the "ever-expanding *context*" that Thomas Turino (1990) espouses in his study of the Aymara-speaking peasants of Southern Peru. For Turino (1990, 400), complexity is embedded in the ever-expanding "metaphorical notion of *context*," and the expanding *contextual* dynamics are the result of what he calls a "series of concentric rings" with crossing and connecting pathways.

Accordingly, he argues, the lens through which we view the context and structures of a

² Translation of "ky'amakulu nnyo obutamala gakuba bukubi wabula okugezaako okulaba nga omubiri gwonna gukolera wamu ne byokuba osobole okufuna ekintu ekya wamu." This interview with Kabuye took place when I was an undergraduate studying the indigenous performance practices of the Baganda. Kabuye was my primary instructor on the Ganda eight-stringed bow lyre and twelve-slab xylophones.

given performance practice should be expanded to take into account the interplay of individual opinion and practice. With this in mind, I discuss three factors—social, political and economic—that account for the changing *habitus* in Tamusuza’s string quartet; or, as could be argued, as the “ever-expanding *context*” through the lens of Turino.

During an interview conducted in June 2012, Tamusuza brought to my attention that he had been exposed to traditional Ganda music at an early age. In addition to brewing local beer, his late father hosted parties during which traditional Ganda music was played. Tamusuza also commented on his string quartet during this interview, attesting that “[he] wanted to compose in a style that represented his social and cultural background.” I would argue that the representation of such a background in his composition is also the reproduction of an internalized “structured [musical] system” of his *habitus* as a Muganda.³ In addition to reproduction, however, these internalized systems of musical structures are expanded beyond the Ganda structures in order to accommodate various circumstances in which the piece was written. For instance, Tamusuza composed his quartet three decades after Uganda acquired political independence from Britain. After 1962, the year of independence, there was a need to recapture traditional practices that had disappeared for two main reasons. The first was due to external influences of colonialism, while the second was due to internal political conflicts that saw the 1966 attack of the Baganda’s main court (i.e., the 1966 crisis), the subsequent exile of their king (Kabaka Mutesa II), and the 1967 demise of traditional political institutions. Prior to these events, the court and kingship had been the major custodians of Ganda musical practices. Thus, what followed the independence of Uganda

³Muganda is a person from south central Uganda and is the singular form of Baganda.

in 1962 was the quest for nationalism, which inspired Tamusuza to evoke Ganda sonorities and musical processes in his string quartet. I argue that this extramusical dimension provided him with yet another basis for the expansion of his musical *habitus* or contextual thought beyond the Ganda musical system, the result of which was his use of Westernized idioms to articulate a sense of nationalism beyond Uganda.

Moreover, America's renowned Kronos Quartet commissioned Tamusuza to write a string quartet that reflected the composer's indigenous musical practices. Tamusuza responded to this call bearing a financial reward, a factor that further facilitated the amalgamation of Ganda and Western musical idioms. But this fusion resulted in the erasure of "authentic" Ganda sonorities (through simulation), thereby giving birth to new sonic aesthetics within a Ganda musical framework. What is most important to note here is the role the economic factor played in contributing to the composer's changing musical *habitus*. I contend that these social, political and economic dimensions can be regarded as "rings" that expand the context through which we can understand Tamusuza's string quartet. Against this background, I will examine how the composer's internalized Ganda-musical structured systems are articulated in a re-contextualized medium of expression. But to understand the processes involved, it is important to look first at the main thematic material that forms the backbone of the entire movement.

THE QUARTET'S MAIN THEME AND ITS CHANGING *HABITUS*

The main thematic material in Tamusuza's quartet is borrowed from Ugandan composer Joseph Kyagambiddwa's (1964, 20) *African Oratorio*, whose twenty-two songs are dedicated to each of the twenty-two Ugandan martyrs slain by King Mwanga between

1885 and 1889 for their allegiance to the teachings of Christianity. In honor of their determination, Pope Paul VI canonized them in 1964 in Rome during a mass in which the *African Oratorio* received its premiere by CACEMCO, the Ugandan choir mentioned previously. According to Michael Mukisa, the long-time choral conductor of CACEMCO, the style of Kyagambiddwa's *African Oratorio* is deeply rooted in Baganda musical style (Mukisa, interview, June 2012). Some characteristics of this style include the use of call-and-response patterns, the pentachordal pitch-class set, the use of Luganda text, and *ebiggu* and *baakisimba* drum grooves as the supporting accompaniment to the vocals.⁴ In addition, Mukisa mentioned that although Kyagambiddwa notated the work for publication purposes, Western notation never impeded the use of *ggonno*, a Ganda vocal ornament, under his direction. This is because, in addition to shaping the Ganda vocal tone, *ggonno* defines phrase shapes. For Mukisa, "it was natural to sing in a Gandalized way just as the performance notes clearly spelt out" (ibid.).⁵ Similarly, Tamusuza simulates this ornament as a way of articulating the phrase structures of the main thematic material in his quartet.

Given the above musical processes, I argue that Kyagambiddwa's *African Oratorio* was a reproduction of some internalized Ganda-musical systems on which Tamusuza based the expansion of his creative horizon. Upon hearing Kyagambiddwa's oratorio under the composer's direction, Tamusuza was captured by the thirteenth song of the oratorio, entitled "Mu Kkubo Ery'Omusaalaba," from which he borrowed ideas. Not

⁴*Ebiggu* refers to Ganda drum grooves played mainly in simple duple time to accompany songs that evoke spirit possession among other functions.

⁵*Gandalized* is used here to mean the localization of the notated songs in Kyagambiddwa's oratorio in conformity to the vocal practices of the Baganda.

only did he retain the song's title, he also appropriated its material to formulate the main theme of his string quartet. But in order to honor the work's roots, Tamusuza employed Ganda musical practices. For instance, he creatively used simulation to reinvent codes that would later re-emerge in a re-contextualized performance space and medium. These codes (call-and-response patterns, pentachordal pitch-class set, simulation of the *baakisimba* ostinato motifs, and non-verbal interaction) account for the composer's reproduction of internalized Ganda musical structures. With this in mind, we examine the original theme as a song in the oratorio, transcribed in Examples 1 and 2, and how the theme later changed when Tamusuza adapted it.⁶

Example 1. The main thematic call phrase

Mu Kku-bo e ry'O-mu-saa- la - ba Tu - go-bee - re ra O-mu-ka-ma Ye- zu e ka - li - va - li - yo na - ffe O-ku - ti-bwa nga

Example 2. The main thematic responsorial phrase

Ee ee ee nsi eno wee - la - ba nga

It should be noted that Kyagambiddwa's original text had several rhythmic and intonation errors that may have accrued either from contrast in the use of speech and musical figures, or from his intention to articulate the singing mood of the dying martyrs,

⁶ The call-and-response phrases were transcribed from the available recording of the *African Oratorio*, performed by CACEMCO between mid-2001 and mid-2002 under the direction of Michael Mukisa.

as I will later elaborate. Because of intonation errors, some words or phrases in the song were stripped of their syncopating nature in speech. One such example is the word “Kkubo” (road), whose rhythm should have consisted of a sixteenth note for the syllable “Kku,” followed by an eighth note for “bo” and “e,” the latter syllable subsumed in the former syllable. Also, according to the correct speech rhythm of “Tugoberera” (We follow), the rhythmic sequence should have four sixteenth notes for the syllables “Tu,” “go,” “be,” and “re”; and an eighth note for the last syllable “ra.” Similarly, the correct speech rhythm of the phrase “Yezu e Kalivaliyo” should have two eighth notes for “Ye” and “zu,” with “e” subsumed in “zu,” followed by two sixteenth notes for “ka” and “li”; and an eighth note, sixteenth note, and a dotted eighth note for syllables “va,” “li,” and “yo,” respectively. From my own interpretation, and in view of the context of his oratorio in mind, Kyagambiddwa may have intended these errors as a way of signifying pain that the twenty-two Ugandan martyrs underwent as they sung along their way to martyrdom at Namugongo. Because they had been tied to ropes and beaten along the way, I contend that the textual errors signify the loss of life, a journey during which they gradually lost their senses (such as speech), as they neared the very end of their lives.

Structurally, while the call phrase has four lines of text, the second phrase has two. Also, the opening perfect fourth and its reoccurrence between the second and third lines in the call phrase forms a memorable intervallic code. The triadic, melodic, and at the same time, rhythmic nature of the response phrase forms similar and contrasting structural codes with the call phrase, to which interactive relations could be drawn. The same melodic structure (with intonation errors) is appropriated as the theme in Tamusuza’s quartet in order to capture Kyagambiddwa’s intended purpose. The following table shows

intonations of each of the four phrases as they appeared in Kyagambiddwa's version, with English translations for each phrase and the corresponding vocal levels of intonation. This table is followed by an elaborative discussion of how, despite some minor rhythmic and intonation errors, Luganda played a role in influencing the overall intonation of the song to a great extent.

Table 1. Text and intonation levels of the call phrase⁷

Line	Text	Translation	Level of Intonation
1	Mu Kkubo Ery'Omusaalaba	In the Way of the Cross	Medium, High, Low
2	Tugoberera Omukama	We follow the Lord	Medium, Low
3	Yezu e Kalivaliyo	Jesus at Calvary	High, Medium, Low
4	Naffe Okuttibwanga	Even us to be executed	Low

The three intonation levels in Table 1, high, medium and low, serve as internalized codes that influence the vocal melodic contour if the literal meaning of the text is to be realized. As Peter Cooke (1970, 62) has noted in his study of Ganda xylophone music, no “musicologist can study Ganda instrumental music practice for long, if he lives in that region, before discovering that all instrumental pieces he hears are in fact rendering vocal compositions ...[and are] inseparably bound up with songs and other forms of speech communication.” In addition, A. M. Jones (1959, 246), Lazarus Ekwueme (1974, 349), Kwabena Nketia (1974, 187), and Kofi Agawu (2001, 16) have noted a similar relationship between song and instrumental genres among various African music practices. To use Bourdieu's (1977, 72) words, these levels of intonation are “structured structures” and “internalized dispositions” upon which contrary intoned alterations produce new codes of intonation and meaning.

⁷ This table is from Lwanga 2012, my theory/composition dissertation.

Example 3. (a) ‘Road,’ (b) Distorted “Either of Them,” and (c) “Either of Them”

(a) Kku-bo (b) Ku bbo (c) Ku bbo

For example, the word *kkubo* in Luganda could have different meanings depending on how it is intoned. If the word “road” (on which we walk) is intended, the intonation has to descend from high to medium, with the rhythm maintained as in Example 3(a) above; however, if the intonation is altered the opposite way, it produces a distorted intonation “either of them,” as in Example 3(b), whose rhythm and syllabic stress would be as exemplified in Example 3(c). Although Tamusuza is aware of internalized speech intonations, he maintained Kyagambiddwa’s pitch logic/intonation as call-and-response materials. Examples 4 through 7 outline the original call phrase (with rhythmic/intonation errors), with each of the four lines aligned with its respective appropriation in the instrumental version of Tamusuza’s quartet.


Example 4. Line 1

Mu Kku - bo e ry'O - mu-saa - la - ba Mu Kku - bo e ry'O - mu-saa - la - ba

Example 5. Line 2

Tu - go-bee - re - ra O - mu-ka - ma Tu - go - be - re - ra O - mu-ka - ma

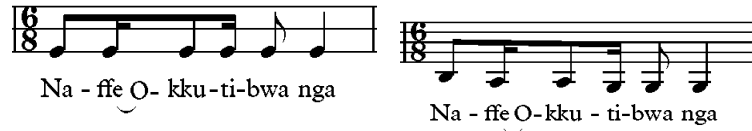
Example 6. Line 3



Ye - zu e Ka - li - vaa - li - yo

Ye - zu e Ka - li - vaa - li - yo

Example 7. Line 4



Na - ffe O - kku - ti - bwa nga

Na - ffe O - kku - ti - bwa nga

In retaining Kyagambiddwa's original pitch logic, Tamusuza reproduces "Mu Kkubo Ery'Omusaalaba" as he internalized it when he was a singer and the director of CACEMCO. Again, while he is aware of the intonation errors in the original song, he reproduces the melody in his quartet as he internalized it in order to reinvent it in a manner that could be easily recognizable even when it is stripped of its text. In the instrumental version, the thematic contour bears intoned melodic codes that shape the internalized melodic structure of the song and, thus, the signifiers of the muted text, especially to those who are already familiar with the song in question.

Additionally, recalling the use of *ggonno* in providing ornamenting clues in Ganda vocal music, it should be noted that these clues are microtonal in nature and are specifically executed at the close of specific phrases. In Example 8, the last rhythmic cell of each of the first three short phrases exemplifies the way Tamusuza strives to create the presence of *ggonno*. As a strategy, the second beat of each of the three measures in question is split into two independent cells, the second of which mimics the effect. Thus, the simulation of *ggonno*, the transposition of the theme a perfect fifth lower from its

Example 8. The opening four-measure thematic material in Tamusuza's Quartet



original D (home center) to G, the instrumentation, and the underlying textures render the thematic material a new aesthetic quality in the quartet.

INSTRUMENTATION AND GANDA STYLISTIC SIMULATION

Although we previously noted that the *ngalabi*, *nankasa* or *namunjoloba*, *mbuutu*, and *mpuunyi* drums provide one of the contextual inspirations for the way Tamusuza treats the quartet, a one-stringed bowed *ndingidi* (tube fiddle) provides the basis of the melodic sonorities played by the two violins and the viola. I believe that Tamusuza successfully negotiates the timbre of the above Ganda instruments on Western instruments through simulation, a simultaneous process of erasure and reinvention. By erasure, I mean loosening of the “authentic” sonority and the reinventing of a new sonority that is not exactly that of the indigenous instrument simulated, but one that is somewhat similar. Hereafter, the effect of simulation will refer to both sonority and playing style since the former is the result of the latter.

In simulating the *ndingidi* sonority in his quartet, Tamusuza uses a *sul ponticello* effect whenever the two violins or viola play a melody. In the absence of text, these string melodies carry codes of internalized vocal-intoned systems, easily identifiable by those who are familiar with the practice of the *habitus*. Since these codes are rooted in the vocal nature of Luganda language, these melodic materials become functional substitutes to the text. And whenever they are used in any imitative manner, they signify individual

musicians as characters taking into play their interactive nature. Bearing this in mind, contrasting sonorities within the piece enhance the appreciation of imitative melodic codes as signifiers of musicians as individual characters performing together.

The sound colors of the *mbuutu* and *mpuunyi* are generated through rhythmic and pitch manipulations in the cello part, as is shown in Example 9 (mm. 98–101). In some instances, *mbuutu* simulations are reinvented as transformed timbre variations in the viola part, as is shown in Example 10. Reinvented sonorities in these two cases are arrived at through *pizzicato* effects. Particularly with the cello, a G (in the first, second and fourth sections) or C (in the third section) on every first and second beat of each measure simulates the *mpuunyi*. These same notes are then doubled alongside other rhythms to form the *mbuutu* rhythmic codes whose sonority is reinvented through the vibration of strings rather than the membrane of the drum.

The rhythmic and percussive effects of the *ngalabi* are simulated when two violins and viola players are asked to gently slap the bodies of their instruments at different times. Of course, the percussive sonority of a python skin would sound different from that of a

Example 9. *Mbuutu and mpuunyi* simulations in the cello part (mm. 98–101)



Example 10. *Mbuutu* simulations in the viola (mm. 17–20)



body of a violin, or a viola for that matter. But most interesting is the reinvention of the percussive sound world of the *ngalaba* within its rhythmic world as constituted in the drum's internalized codes. To this end, Example 11 shows the second violin taking its turn in executing the *ngalabi* simulation.

Example 11. *Mbuutu* simulations in the viola part (mm. 28–31)



The *nankasa/namunjoloba* is simulated with a *pizzicato* effect whenever its two two-beat patterns of simple time are juxtaposed against six eighth-note measures. In the quartet a staggering effect is created when the second violin (mm. 17–26) and the viola (mm. 225–232) execute *nankasa/namunjoloba* patterns after a sixteenth-note rest on a strong beat. By employing simulation, therefore, Tamusuza's internalized sonic world is reinvented as the basis on which he articulates the interactive nature of *baakisimba* music and musicians in a re-contextualized medium.

RE-CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE INTERACTIVE GANDA PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

In articulating the interactive performance practice of *baakisimba* musicians, Tamusuza employs Ganda vocal and instrumental procedures in the compositional process of his quartet. One of these is “call and response,” a highly common stylistic element within and beyond Africa. During this process, the two roles may overlap depending on the song and process in time. Without the presence of overlapping, however, this process

is comparable to a normal verbal conversation during which each participant responds to the other in a sensible manner. To articulate this process in the first movement of his quartet, Tamusuza used a four-measure call phrase, as illustrated in Example 8, to which a five-measure viola excerpt responds (see Example 12).

Example 12. The five-measure responsorial phrase in the viola part (mm. 76–79)



In contrast to the four-measure call phrase that makes use of a major second, minor third, and perfect fourth intervals to shape the melodic line, the first and third phrases of the response are triadic, with the second and fourth phrases retaining a strong pitch and rhythmic link to the call phrase. In addition, this response is a five-measure phrase because of the sustained G, which relaxes the descending rhythmic cell of the fourth measure. Important to note is that the thematic call and responsorial material is in many cases broken into interactive fragments identified by range, sonority, as well as rhythmic codes.

The use of countermelodies beneath the main melodic theme is a very common gradual process in Ganda vocal and instrumental music. By gradual I mean that a countermelody does not occur immediately, but may occur within a process that involves prior announcement, then followed by juxtaposition through an additive rhythmic process depending on the song. Resultant harmonic intervals of this process are usually major or minor thirds, major seconds, major sixths, perfect fourths and fifths. Of these,

countermelodic singing in the Ganda context is dominated by the perfect fourth and perfect unison, with the major second, third, and sixth functioning as interruptions to the perfect fourth in moments where an ascent or descent occurs in the melodic contour. In order to elaborate such overlapping harmonic parallelism, Tamusuza employs a predominant countermelody juxtaposed either beneath the main theme as seen in Example 13, or sometimes beneath the secondary theme in moments of building contrasting textures.

Example 13. Countermelody in violin 2 overlapping the call phrase in m. 73

The musical score for Example 13 consists of four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is in 6/8 time. Measure 72 is marked above the first staff. Violin 1 plays a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp* and the instruction *arco, senza vibrato*. Violin 2 plays a countermelody with a dynamic marking of *p*. Viola and Violoncello parts are also shown, with the Violoncello part starting with a dynamic marking of *p*.

In this example, the respective materials in the first and second violins are functioning simultaneously, but they clearly contrast in terms of range and dynamic levels: the range of the four-measure thematic call in the first violin is higher than that of the countermelody in the second violin. As for dynamics, the melody played by the first violin is moderately soft with *vibrato*, while the countermelody is soft. The product of these contrasting sonorities is what I continue to refer to as codes that signify the invisible human interactions embedded in the hearing of the piece.

In addition to the above, a secondary theme illustrated in Example 14 is used to strengthen the interactive “call-and-response” procedure. This material is distinguished by

Example 14. Interactive call-and-response patterns in the secondary theme

The musical score shows two staves: Violin I (top) and Violoncello (bottom). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 6/8. Measure 17 is marked with a '17' above the staff. The Violin I part starts in measure 17 with a melodic phrase: a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note Bb4, an eighth note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. This phrase is marked *mp vib.* and is followed by a fermata. The Violoncello part is silent in measures 17 and 18. In measure 19, it plays a rhythmic response: a quarter note G2, an eighth note A2, a quarter note Bb2, an eighth note C3, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note E3. This response is marked *mp arco senza vib.* and is followed by a fermata.

a two-measure lyrical call phrase and a one-measure rhythmic response phrase. Unlike the main thematic call phrase that underscored the perfect fourth as a functional interval, the secondary thematic call opens and closes with a minor third, which is punctuated with a major second and perfect fourth before its closure. In addition to its rhythmic prominence and restriction to the articulation of a perfect fourth, the responding phrase draws a clear intervallic contrast to that of the call. Of more importance in this three-measure phrase (mm. 17–19) is the contrast in terms of intervallic relationship, range, and instrumentation, as well as the lyrical and at the same time rhythmical nature; this contrast strengthens the interactive dimension of the compositional process in Tamusuza's string quartet.

Moreover, most folk singing among the Baganda involves the unfolding of a narrative through a sequence of songs, with the introductory song serving as the main theme, and all subsequent songs, secondary themes. These songs could then be used as thematic or secondary thematic materials. In Tamusuza's string quartet, a secondary theme is added to Kyagambiddwa's song, thereby expanding the lyrical and narrative dimensions of the piece. In this case, the use of a contrasting theme not only provides a sense of forward motion, especially in the absence of modulation or other form-defining parameters as is the case in Western musical styles, it also expands compositional material that is later transformed into interactive codes (Example 15) when the secondary theme

interacts with other fragmented and repetitive materials.

Example 15 illustrates how the secondary thematic material is not only restricted to interaction within its territory, but also gives rise to new material within the same space. The cello, now playing a variation of the secondary theme (mm. 125–126), allows for a moment of imitative dialogue to take place when the two violins imitate its closing rhythmic cell. Imitating the closing cell at different ranges becomes an expanded variation of the responding phrase, whose nature takes on a rhythmic linkage to the call phrase, unlike the case of Example 14, when this material is introduced for the first time in the

Example 15. Secondary thematic interaction

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 15. The first system covers measures 125 to 128, and the second system covers measures 129 to 132. The instruments are Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The Violoncello part in measure 125 is marked *mf*. In measure 128, the Violin 1 part is marked *arco senza vib. mf*. The Viola part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Violin 1 and Violin 2 parts show imitative dialogue, with Violin 2 imitating the closing rhythmic cell of the Violoncello in measure 126, and Violin 1 imitating it in measure 129.

piece. Meanwhile, the percussive role of the viola in simulating the *ngalabi* role adds color to the texture.

In executing these imitative cells, Tamusuza builds imaginative sonic clues of interaction. Of course, one needs to have oriented oneself with the social and cultural background of the piece in order to make sense of the interactive notion embedded in it. It should be noted that the choreography of dancers who are accompanied by instrumental sounds in the Ganda performance context is invisible on the score and recording. However, the notion of interaction is re-contextualized through the reinvented sonorities; this is essentially what Tamusuza strives to bring to our attention. Thus, I argue that the *ngalabi*, and the imitative lines at contrasting ranges and color, form sonic codes with which we could still perceive the idea of interaction—not only of the sound world, but also of musicians as characters during the performance of the piece.

Also important to note is that the idea of interaction is not restricted to melodic passages in the piece. It is extended to moments where bridge passages of “pure rhythms” are used either to announce a new section, or to announce the end of a section. By “pure rhythm,” I mean passages in which the melody is neutralized, giving prominence to rhythm.⁸ Within these “pure rhythmic” passages, tonal colors are varied accordingly in order to maintain the idea of characterization in performed choreography. Each member of the ensemble takes part in this collage, contributing to the successful execution of this participatory moment. As Turino (1990, 29) reminds us, participatory practices demand concentration since each performer is “interacting with [each other] through sound and motion and on the activity in itself and for itself.” Therefore, by stripping the piece of its melodic nature as is exemplified in Example 16, the execution of contrasting interactive

⁸ For an elaboration of this term, see Arom 1991.

Example 16. A collage “pure rhythmic” Passage

65

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

sonorities evokes this complex idea as embedded in performance practice of the *baakisimba* musicians.

Previously discussed interactive sections in Tamusuza’s quartet have stemmed from the idea of using call-and-response patterns, as well as repetitively imitating patterns. Example 16, in contrast, exemplifies a different treatment. The passage is denied any melodic flavor by limiting the first violin to a B and then restricting the cello to the disjunct perfect fifth on D and G. Meanwhile, the second violin is slapped to simulate the *ngalabi*, with two repetitive rhythmic cells. Although the range at which the first violin plays around with the B note is low, its color stands in contrast to that of the cello to define the idea of individual characterization of musicians embedded in this interactive collage passage. Interaction in this scenario results in a transformation to a collective contributory role rather than the previous conversational instances.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I emphasize that the foundation of interactive functionality in Tamusuza’s piece is rooted in two important dimensions: simulation and the use of Ganda

vocal and instrumental processes. Following Bourdieu's (1977, 78) argument that the *habitus* is also a "generative principle of regulated improvisations, [which] produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle," I have argued that the reproduction of internalized Ganda-structured systems provide the foundation on which Tamusuza demonstrates compositional creativity in his string quartet *Mu Kkubo Ery'Omusaalaba*.

At the same time, social, political and economic factors engendered the "concentric rings" that contributed to the expansion of the context through which we can view Tamusuza's string quartet. Through the lens of the social factor, for instance, I have examined selected musical practices among *baakisimba* musicians who, beyond playing for the sake of playing, engage non-verbal body interactions. Further, viewing a the piece from a political dimension has enabled me to examine negotiating techniques that not only responded to the nostalgic call of revitalizing indigenous performance practices, but also the need to engage the spirit of nationalism, especially after Uganda acquired political independence. Moreover, the economic dimension and its benefits factored in forces of external influence that demanded a Western string quartet composition that was reflective of Ganda musical idioms. Working within the territories of such an instrumental language not only paved the way for creativity but also aroused tensions embedded within the question of what remains (or becomes) Ganda and what becomes or remains Western in the piece. I argue that there remains no concrete Ganda or purely Western tastes in this piece. Rather, it is more of a new aesthetic taste nurtured by the ever-expanding context that African art music composers of the era have continued to exploit.

What then is the idea of interactive codes of signification in Tamusuza's string quartet? The codes of signification in this case refer to the carefully crafted sonorities resulting from the notion of simulation. As we may remember, when simulation of Ganda sonorities was applied, the "authentic" tonal color was erased, thereby paving the way for the reinvention of new sonorities. These became the codes of interaction through four main compositional procedures: (1) the use of call-and-response patterns in the main theme and the secondary thematic materials, (2) fragmentation of these materials and their use in building repetitive imitative passages, (3) juxtaposition of the countermelodic material either below the main theme or the secondary theme, and (4) the use of "pure rhythmic" passages whose neutralizing character denied any melodic implication but, in turn, directed our attention to the contributory nature of interaction within the collage texture.

Throughout the quartet, therefore, Tamusuza strives to bring to our attention the interactive nature of *baakisimba* music and its musicians through carefully mapped out sonorities that include *sul ponticello*, *pizzicato*, as well as slapping the bodies of instruments. And to these sonorities, processes of repetition, imitation, limited harmonic vocabulary, and repetitive ostinato textures are not only employed as driving forces in the piece, but also as tools through which an interactive Ganda context is re-contextualized.

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