

African Musicology: Towards Defining and Setting Parameters of the Study of the Indigenous African Music

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KEYWORDS Ethnomusicology. Folklore. Musicology. Post Colonialism. *mmino wa setšo. Dinaka. Dipela*

ABSTRACT This paper is an attempt to define African musicology as a standalone discipline. The study of indigenous African music is, in the main, assumed to be the competency of ethnomusicology. That ethnomusicologists are musical anthropologists suggests that they, like anthropologists, labour at presenting the image of the African to the European as well as the American institutions for a plethora of reasons and purposes. This explains a sense of reluctance when coming to addressing the need to fashion an alternative discipline designed, to unravel the intricacies of indigenous African music for the benefit of the African processes of knowledge making. Since the efforts of one Kwabena Nketia fifty years or so ago, African musicology has not succeeded in entrenching itself. By asserting itself, African musicology could stand to benefit the study of African music, let alone its own disciplinary development into the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

The study of African music is more than 70 years old. Then ethnomusicologists claimed authority on the music, despite Kwabena Nketia's contentions in his 1962 paper titled; *The Problem of Meaning*, which in essence was weary of the steamrolling effect and the ramming down of 'invented meanings' on African music; as African music did not have meaning of its own. Since then, 50 year or so ago, African musicology still compels the likes of Agawu (2001) to coin titles such as *An Understanding of African Music*. Arguably, African musicology can claim disciplinary maturity and independence, thereby privileging African thought into the 21st century.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this paper seeks to:

- ♦ explicate the historical foundations of the study of African music
- ♦ argues for the enthronement of African musicology by essentially distinguishing it from (ethno)musicology, and to
- ♦ propose a disciplinary definition and proffer practical examples to prove its efficacy

Meeting these objectives illustrates that African musicology can exist as a standalone discipline in alliance with musicology and ethnomusicology.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Foundations of the Study of African Music

The concept *indigenous African music* interchangeable with *indigenous music* or *African music* refers to an aggregation of regionally, customary, culturally and ethnically constituted African musical practice. At the centre of this phenomenon are communities and cultural practitioners whose laborious efforts, despite the onslaught of the forces of colonialism and imperialism, have maintained its philosophical, spiritual and intellectual integrity. Encountered through the travels of early explorers and missionaries, indigenous African music had emerged as one of the key mediums through which insight into the culture and religiosity of Africa(ns) was achieved (Mapaya 2012). Then, it was notated, documented, and used mainly for its sociological, ethnological and anthropological properties. In this vein, earlier studies of indigenous African music saw it mainly as a means to some other ends. For its resilience and service to a plethora of these and other '-ologies' though, the indigenous African music warranted a somewhat dedicated stand-alone field of study.

Eschewed by mainstream musicology, which neglects or ignores what the West relegates to folk or popular music (Connery 2009), the study of indigenous African music found residence

within the then new discipline known as comparative musicology (Merriam 1977; Nettl 1991; Waterman 1991), which later evolved into ethnomusicology. It was ethnomusicology, to its credit, with the benefit of the groundwork already laid by disciplines such as anthropology, which presaged an era of scholarly interest in the music for its sake. Even so, ethnomusicology was never intended to deal exclusively with African music. Instead, it was, borrowing from the anthropological way of perceiving the world, designed to deal with non-European musics (Conrery 2009), for the pleasure of Euro-American audiences. Put differently, ethnomusicology is a tool that deals with other than European music. Even at that, the study of the music is shrouded in other non-musical interests. As such it would be misleading to define it as the study of indigenous African music. African music, along with many music styles from other parts of the non-European worlds, happens to form one of the main selling tickets for ethnomusicology. African music can benefit from a discipline whose focus is simply the study of indigenous African music.

Despite limited successes in dealing with the indigenous African music, ethnomusicology has rightly attracted fierce criticism from some scholars precisely because of its pretence to be beneficial to African music. As far as African music is concerned, ethnomusicology stands accused of being exogenous in nature and stance. Like anthropology, it looks at a culture from an outsider's perspective. This is corroborated by Steady (2004) contends that ethnomusicology, like anthropology, helps to develop the image of the 'savage'. However rationalised, ethnomusicology is seen as the "institutionalisation of an epistemological double standard; examination of social interaction which generates musical experience [which is] specific to the study of 'other's musics'" (Kingsbury 1997: 284). Furthermore, ethnomusicology is seen as a second-class grade type of a discipline compared to musicology. By Wachsmann's account (1969: 164), "musicology by itself is bad enough; but in conjunction with the prefix "ethno" it offends many people." Why do other peoples' sciences have to bear a prefix 'ethno-'? Clearly, ethnomusicology is less prestigious compared to musicology, and its legacy of being an anthropology's 'stepchild' and 'a second class citizen in the society of the social sciences and the humanities' continues to haunt

it (Rhodes 1956: 457), manifesting in what Agawu (1992) refers to as a crisis of identity. According to Agawu we cannot be sure whether it is a subfield of musicology, ethnology, anthropology, sociology or a stand-alone discipline. Moreover, its exogenous nature means that it cannot garner enough sympathisers from the so-called non-Euro-American scholars, especially those that have awakened to forms of post-colonial theories. And for this, and other reasons, unfortunately, ethnomusicology cannot escape the postcolonial backlash.

Amidst the criticisms, ethnomusicology continues to breed new generations of ethnomusicologists¹; professors continue to graduate younger ethnomusicologists who go on to perpetuate its ideals. It is, therefore, on this account that it is deemed a thriving discipline; not based on its service to African music or its practitioners. But insofar as the study of indigenous African music is concerned, what good is ethnomusicology if it cannot; for instance, contribute to the growth of the indigenous African music repertoire? What good is it if it cannot educate students towards African culture-sensed and culture-sourced performative practices? Ethnomusicology in the African context seems to produce elitist writers sponging on information gathered from cultural practitioners. Ethnomusicologists seem disinterested in the centering of the African worldview and thus the advancement of indigenous African music, and by extension, the wellbeing of African practitioners. It was not surprising that the widow of one of the most prominent *dipela*² icons, Ernest Rammutla and, of course, many other so-called 'informants' are distrusting when researcher after researcher enters and exit their homesteads with stacks of data but not bothered by the appalling conditions surrounding the so-called 'informants' or 'subjects'. In fact, the poorer the picture from the research site, the 'sexier' the narrative of the ethnomusicologists.

Furthermore, ethnomusicology has failed to distil content from African performative practice for classroom purposes. Conclusively, therefore, ethnomusicologists could be seen as careerists whose involvement with the study of indigenous African music cannot be divorced from their own insatiable quest for individual professional advancement. They, therefore, stand accused of prying on the African heritage while cultural practitioners receive very little benefit out of the en-

counter. For these and other reasons, scholars such as Agawu (2008), Connery (2009), Kidula (2006), Kingsbury (1997) and Rhodes (1956) deem ethnomusicology less than ideal for the study of indigenous African music even though it has, in some way, laid the foundation. To deny it this credit, would be disingenuous of African scholars. Suffice to say, ethnomusicology is not an African music specific mode of inquiry. Rather a better mode of inquiry dedicated to the study of African music is required.

Engendering African Musicology as a Discipline

From within ethnomusicology, the post-colonial urge necessitated the germination of an orientation dedicated to the study of African music, to be christened 'African musicology'. From its inception around the 1960s, and owing to its suffocation by ethnomusicology, African musicology was never allowed to explicitly define itself even though it was discernible in the works of African scholars, particularly the writings of a Ghanaian scholar, Kwabena Nketia.

Only recently, scholars agree that the most important work by an African scholar insofar as African musicology is concerned, is Nketia's 1964 publication titled *The Music of Africa* (Agawu 2003). This work signalled the dawn of a self-empowering kind of musicology typified by Nketia's quest to refine in scholarly terms and to share the understanding of the music of his own culture, African music, and specifically Ghanaian music. Agawu further identifies Francis Bebe's book *African Music: A People's Art* (1975) as a close second to Nketia's. In addition to these books, Nketia in particular continued to author many papers and conference papers that epitomised what was to become African musicology. Much later, a tribute in the form of a collection of essays titled, *African Musicology: Current Trends* (1992) edited by Jacquelyn Djedje was published. This collection featured contributions by esteemed scholars such as Mensah, Mosunmola, and Omibityi-Obidike, all paying homage to Nketia's contribution to this new field. Nketia himself has made some of his work available in a collection of his own essays and conference presentations titled *Ethnomusicology and African Music Collected Papers, Vol. 1* (2005). Considering the amount of writing he has done, it was envisaged that other volumes would follow.

Despite the unfortunate formulation of the title of Nketia's collection of essays, his work has come to represent African musicology. It could be argued that a decisive point in the history of the study of African music has been reached. Increasingly musicologists of African descent continue to develop interest in their own music.

Regardless of these positive developments, African musicology is yet to define itself in clear terms as a distinct field of study alongside musicology and ethnomusicology. It is only recently that some African scholars, especially in the eastern part of Africa, took a decisive action of enthroning African musicology as more than just a sub-field of ethnomusicology (Kidula 2006). The formation of the Bureau for the Development of African Musicology (BDAM), crowned by the launching of the iconic *African Musicology Online Journal*, is one such act, and more still need to happen. The founding of a *Society for African Musicology* is overdue, for instance. Necessarily, for African musicology to graduate from being the little delinquent or black sheep of ethnomusicology or a distant cousin of musicology, it should boldly define itself independent of these two. Beyond just creating a research conduit, and perhaps founding a society, it is momentous that African musicology should mount study programmes en route to becoming a stand-alone discipline.

Telling African Musicology Apart from Musicology

Assuming that the controversies surrounding ethnomusicology as an honest mode of inquiry appropriate for indigenous African music are put to rest, it is logical to turn our attention to musicology and its potential benefit to the study of African music. In designing the programmes and perhaps establishing the discipline appropriate for the study of African music, lessons could be drawn from the positive aspects of this predecessor discipline, since it has the most established regime of content and scope. Expectantly, African musicology, as a new discipline, should find within the criticism of musicology an opportunity to fashion itself fittingly.

Moving from this premise, African musicology is bound to inherit musicology's strengths, as well as drawing lessons from its flaws. If musicology, for instance, is said to be "what we do

musically when we put our instruments down, when we stop singing, when we stop composing” (Helm 1976); or accused of being mainly concerned with the performance aftermath, as in scores, programme notes and history (Cook 2005), then African musicology must transcend these defects to become a mode of inquiry capable of interfacing with African music in the heat of the moment. Not abandoning some of the traits of musicology, African musicology must become a model that harmonises the best of both approaches. There is a general perception that musicologists are not particularly strong in musical performance, and as such have attracted to themselves the label “failed musicians” (Kerman 1985; 18; Roper and Deal 2010). Here, once again, a methodology accommodative of the live nature of performances and performers should be fashioned. Apart from being performative, indigenous African music is also ritual bound (Mapaya 2010), and rituals occur in environments generally shunned by the educated elite. African musicologists should brace themselves for participating in such musical environments. Rethinking, repositioning or reinventing the study of African music should not be too difficult a call to make, since African musicology will mostly be drawing from the African worldview. Its agents should largely comprise Africans who have, at some stage in their lives, and also through normal processes of socialisation and belonging, gone through some of the rituals themselves; or have knowledge of their existence and the understanding of requisite protocols. Lastly, indigenous African music is language bound. Even what is passed as instrumental music, is actually vocal in its origination. A study of *dinaka*³, for instance, reveals that even though the reed pipes provide what is perceived as melody, the actual melody is sung tacitly, or lingers in the minds of the performers. The title of such a piece or song-dance compound and its implicit narrative properties provide the strongest indication of the ‘vocality’ of what is deemed instrumental music (Mapaya 2013). Accordingly, the new discipline should invest in the language of the phenomenon, especially the lexicon of indigenous African music performance.

Towards a Definition

From the forgoing discussion, we can fancy African musicology being more musicological

than ethnomusicological; its subject should first and foremost be the African construct; namely the song-dance compound, while simultaneously acknowledging the attendant surrogate art forms; that is, visual arts, drama and costume, that together constitute a whole. Scholars within the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE) fashion this conglomerate as *musical arts*. African musicology should have the capacity to deal with such a totality and also with the African metaphysical dimensions never before considered important by ethnomusicologists. In achieving this condition, mastery of some aspects of indigenous African languages, like Latin languages in the study of law, becomes crucial. Preliminary findings identify several distinguishing features, as well as propose adaptations to musicology to fit the African mode of inquiry, capable of simultaneously harnessing the rigor of scholarship, deriving insight from the prevalent African sensibilities to the metaphysical, as well as investing in an understanding of the African worldview expressed in terms of rituals. Most of these epistemes are encapsulated in the language of the cultural practitioners.

First, African musicology should essentially become the study of African music: currently there is no discipline that fits the description. As such, its main agents should be scholars who, despite their training, will be capable of putting the African worldview at the centre of their inquiry. Essentially these scholars should, during their undergraduate training, be grounded in musicology proper. Scholars in this category should, as some probably do already, fancy themselves more as musicologists as opposed to ethnomusicologists (Kidula 2006). Like the Afrocentric paradigm (Asante 1988; Cobb 1997; Ferreira 2007), African musicology should be endogenous, driven by the quest to enthrone the African worldview. It should look at African music through the eye of an African practitioner. Furthermore, it should seek to benefit from specific African scholarly experiences, especially with existential attachment to Africa. Accordingly, such mode of inquiry should not strive to feed the Euro-American imagination or stereotypes at the expense of the indigenous African music phenomenon’s intricacies. Second, African musicology should resist the unhelpful notion of difference insofar as the Western and African musics are concerned. After all African musicol-

ogy is musicology *per se*. There is no need to devise a new notation system, time signatures and the like. Its function should be to add where these are inadequate. Perhaps the only peculiarity of this mode of inquiry should be its accommodation of understanding sourced from surrogate arts forms, and explaining some of the concepts away using the African sensibility, which may sufficiently rest a point at the religious justification. For example, instead of measuring the child's musical talents, the African might rationalise such endowment as being an inheritance from *badimo* (ancestors), or simply the incarnation of a kin member, especially parents or grandparents' prowess. Lastly, the African musicologist should chart a new trajectory, which is perhaps distinct from the blueprint of erstwhile ethnomusicology where in the quest to carve niches, individual (Euro-American) scholars created out of African ethnic groups and/or regions 'chiefdoms' for themselves. In ethnomusicology, for instance, John Blacking is said to represent the music of Vhavenda; Veit Erlmann, Zulu a cappella music as in *ingomab'suku*; and David Rycroft the music of amaXhosa, and so on. The problem is the emergent African scholars born into these ethnic groups are reined in or contained, so to speak; with many of them succumbing to the protocols of scholarship that enjoin them to beg for endorsement by what Shih (2010: 44) calls 'foreign monks'. Rather, African musicologists should, as most of them already do, start without pretence from the music of the cradle moving outwards, thereby contributing to a continental and eventually to a global understanding of African music and the music of the world.

Doing African Musicology

The fact that the concept *music* as it obtains in musicology is different from a somewhat similar African phenomenon such as *indigenous African music* is for scholars of African music beyond doubt (Keil 1979; Merriam 1977). Whereas music in scholarly terms has progressively evolved or degenerated (depending on one's orientation) to (the study of) the score and or forms of recording (Cook 2005), music in the psyche of indigenous African practitioners remains primarily contemplative, performative, discursive and functional. In other words, apart from perspectives, there is little separating that aspect of the indigenous African music compound,

which is somewhat amenable to the western notion of music and music, except for a few peculiarities that makes investigating indigenous African music an elusive exercise (Mapaya 2013). Some of the major peculiarities of indigenous African music, which may have implications for doing African musicology are its *logic*, *discursiveness* (or not), *contemplativeness* (or not) and its *functionality*.

Arguably, the *logic* of the two entities is different in that western music is said to be linear (Kramer 1988) and African music is, on the contrary, cyclic (Arom 1991; Nzewi 1997). My own study, however, suggests that African music is neither linear nor cyclic, but spiral. It does not go round, only to touch on the starting point again and again. Rather the next time it comes around, the corresponding point is elevated and is also in a slightly different orbit; sometimes even faster. This point, among many others, account for the perceived differences in logic and in how we should be doing African musicology.

Agawu (1992, 2009), and many other scholars of his ilk, have commented on the question of *contemplativeness* (or not) of African music, thereby sparking animated debates indeed. The veracity of Agawu's argument seems to have effectively laid to rest the ascriptions of the notion of *functionality* only to indigenous African music. Before we knew better, we thought only western music is contemplative and indigenous African music is functional. But all forms of *music* are contemplative and functional in their own right, and all can be discussed in discursive terms even though the ethnomusicologists have suggested that practitioners of indigenous African music are theoretically oblivious of the theory behind their praxis; generally tacit about what they know and what they do. Theirs, we were made to believe, is ineffable knowledge (Raffmann 1993). Believing this effectively marks the inability of scholarship to hear, so to speak, the voice of the African practitioner. The truth is the language of the practitioner and that of the scholars are incompatible. Cognisant of this fact, African musicology should be charged with the responsibility of alleviating these kinds of misrepresentations and misconceptions by consciously working towards a common understanding. This could mean teaching the scholar, amongst other things, the language of the indigenous African music practitioner. Conversely, the practitioner should be aware of the challenges the

scholar is experiencing in nudging the two knowledge systems closer to one another. Otherwise, by ignoring the reality that indigenous African music is equally discursive, we are perpetuating the pre-colonial mentality that renders the practitioners voiceless.

Discursive or Ineffable Knowledge

The forgoing section has highlighted the fact that contemplation in indigenous African music occurs, and that the presence of certain aspects in the African's scope of sensibility bears testimony to such. Whereas these aspects may not be readily observable to the non-African, it is perhaps the sayings littered in many an African proverbs and idiomatic expressions, for instance, that bring to the fore indigenous African musical thought. As communal inheritance devised through the process of contemplation, these sayings form the basis from which the cultural practitioners and the ordinary member of society make sense of musical interactions. This forms the basis for the *talkativeness* of indigenous African music.

Beeko (2005) has undertaken a study that explains how the creative process unfolds. Beeko's being the study of the Akan in Ghana, Mapaya's (2013) was conducted among Bahananwa in South Africa. The similarities are striking, and this is perhaps what leads to certain schools of thought to conclude that much as Africa is made up of many dialects and ethnic groups, it is equally a homogenous whole, only divided by political borders. Beeko speaks of how the Akan conceives of a 'composition'. In his explanation, the concept 'composition' clearly differs from the one encountered in western music. To cite one example, some African 'compositions' are gifted in dreams by the ancestors, bringing the question of spirituality into place. Besides the question of spirituality, the process of 'composing' makes for a fascinating study:

When asked if he composes his songs, Sekiba (2012), an elder and a practitioner of *dipela tša harepa*⁴, paused for a moment and then proceeded by saying:

Koša re ka thoma engwe ya setlwaedi, wa kereya hore rena he re ehlama re e tsentšha mantswi. Dikoša he re ka di thlamo di ka fihla masome a mane. Ee! Kamoka ha tšona o tlo kerekya, ka, ka, ka setlwaedi sa tlhago ba di

tseba. Dino ba makatša ka mokgwa wo di tlobo ditla ka hona

We may start a usual *koša* (song-dance), and find out that as we put it together we bring in new voices (meaning text), Our *dikoša* (song-dances) if we put them together they could be forty in number. Yes! You will find that all of them are communally known. These *dikoša* surprise people because of the manner in which they would be presented.

In the full extent of this interview, the relationship between the performer, *badimo*, parents and community and *dikoša* all in the form of inheritance is explained. The forty odd *dikoša* that form Sekiba repertoire are inherited and communally sourced; only he presents them in a rather not-so-usual manner. A greater part of this surprise or the fresh element is in the act of extemporisation and the addition of dramatic elements during performance.

Another example from the Bahananwa people, which equally shapes communal music occurred during one of the many recorded performances. Mamoleka (2012) who is *malokwane* (the lead singer and conductor of the performance in Sehananwa⁵ tradition), for instance, informs that at some point in the performance she was not happy with the accompaniment she was getting from group members. To address these types of situations, *O hlaba seka a dutše a opela* (she resorts to idiomatic expressions in her extemporisation) to raise her concern:

*A le nkgahle ditumedi,
Ga le etše 'nku di lela,
Di lelela mabotlana.*

You do not impress me my accompanists,
You are not like sheep crying,
Crying for their young ones.

In the above expression, the song leader registers her dissatisfaction with the support vocalists or accompanists. In the same breath, she depicts the kind of earnestness she is expecting from them. Because of the common understanding originated in the contemplative era of community, she rightfully expects corrective attitude from them.

Another aspect of language that enriches verbal expressions of musical ideas otherwise considered the *talkative aspect* of African music that greatly enhances *music-ing* about life is located within the philosophy of African proverbs (Nzewi 2007: 29-30). D'Angelo (1977: 365) defines proverbs as; "short, concise sayings in

common use which express some obvious and familiar truth or experience in striking form.” What then is the difference between proverbs and theory? Perhaps this could be a matter for further study. For now, let us briefly inspect the philosophical implications of the following instances by way of putting forth musically-inspired Northern Sotho proverbs, followed immediately by literal translations, and then an interpretation.

Sa koša ke lerole (literal translation: of a song is dust)

It is only considered a song if it is performative (implicating dance). In other words, what constitutes a song is its performance.

Koša e botse ka dila (literal translation: song-dance performance is splendid if decorated in costume and props).

African dances find their visual appeal partly through the choice of costumes, makeup and body painting together with other artefacts that complement the dressing (Masasabi 2007: 8).

Another musical inheritance, one that emerged out of thousands of years of indigenous African musical contemplation is the concept of *tolerance*. Tolerance applies to an array of musical performance elements, which incorporate dance and other aspects of human defects:

Lešaedi ga le hlokege košeng (the spoiler is usually present in musical performance)

There will always be an odd character (spoiler/the less talented) in any given performance situation.

Still speaking of tolerance, there is less emphasis on bad or good song-dance performance. Rather, the difference, if it warrants comment, would be attributable to some dialects, locality or even ethnic preference. For instance, one of the audience/commentators during the performance of *mmino wa setšo*⁶ festivals organised by the Indigenous Music and Oral History Project remarked that, *tše dinaka ga se tša gaSekhukhune; gaSekhukhune ga re penkologe gere bina* (this *dinaka* group cannot come from *gaSekhukhune* because *gaSekhukhune* we do not somersault when we dance). Although this comment could easily be considered a disapproving gesture, it does not make value judgement whether the performance is good or bad. This is the reason why Africans (in this case Northern Sotho speakers), perhaps more so compared to other nationalities, would separate *setšo* (culture) from *sebjalebja* (modernism); *mmino*

no wa baswa (music for the youth) from *mmino wa bata* (music for elders); or even *mmino wa basadi* (music for women) from *mmino wa bana* (music for men). Northern Sotho people are aware that comments that go across classifications may not be relevant and in most cases are undesirable. To comment across these categories would be to course a state of disharmony as one side would be imposing its values on the others.

Excellence or talent is also not only attributable to an individual but to some other esteemed members of the community such as parents or ancestors. Lest the talented individual thinks he or she is better than his or her community, effectively meaning better than their own parents and ancestors.

All these in musical terms, have features of high-level contemplation, which occurred and persisted over many centuries. The present generation has little room to manoeuvre, so to speak. What the present generation is entitled to in musical terms, is music making. By music making, reference is made to *making performance* and *making musical instruments*, and still governed by the rules well contemplated, designed, processed, preserved and passed on from generation to generation. In other words, these processes of “making-” are based on the inherited blueprint from the contemplative era, about which, we the living, can do little.

The third element of doing African musicology is *talking music*. The act of talking music depends on pitting current variables of performance against the variables established during the complete stage of Indigenous African music. Without the contemplative, we would not know how to perceive the current performance along the continuum of *tolerance*, or whether by doing certain things, we are crossing the boundaries, and as such causing communal disharmony, and sowing disunity. Thus when the Akpafu women start vocalising their musical thoughts (diagnosis) about the source of an error that has just occurred, as in Agawu’s example, they have the benefit of a thoroughly contemplated musical performance legacy upon which to base their determination. The reason why corrective interference is a rarity is that performance is both *tolerated* and *respected*; concepts that evidence deep level of contemplativeness. Here to the Akpafu women:

Nyo, wui kpe ni, wui ka 'ro Oka oson dai ne kri boa moe ne.

Look, she has not fetched it, she has not finished singing it. She will sing it and go and cut it, then we will catch it. (Agawu 2001: 11)

The above passage brings to the fore a form of dynamism that is lost in scholarship. As Agawu (2001: 12) demonstrates, African musicology would privilege “the complex negotiation in which the attributes of *fetching*, *cutting*, *throwing away*, and *catching* are put in circulation in order to attain effective performance.” As illustrated in this example, imagination and innovation come together to vitalise discourse in ways only peculiar to the performative African music context.

Conclusion

In this paper the researcher has argued that the study of indigenous African music warrants a dedicated type of mode of inquiry, if the phenomenon as well as the ideation from indigenous knowledge practitioners is to be understood. The trajectory, rationale, proposed definition and examples of a proposed standalone discipline has been presented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommends that:

- ♦ The African performer’s views should be brought to bear on the discourse. In doing so, we will be evoking the African metaphysical world without which no thorough understanding of this phenomenon will ever be achieved.
- ♦ Given the fact that African scholars are now empowered to interface with this tradition, it becomes feasible to think of a truly authentic mode of the study of African music.
- ♦ African musicology, not shy of the rigor of academe, should be inaugurated as a standalone discipline.

To achieve these, African scholars who straddle both worlds, namely musicology and African sensibility, are challenged to enthrone the discipline aptly called African musicology; and this is the recommendation for a way forward.

NOTES

- 1 Progressively the concept ‘ethnomusicologist’ from an African perspective is coming to refer to a scholar of European descent whose subject of study is other than his own. Worst still, it also refers to African

scholars who have been ‘ordained’ by the same ethnomusicologist without musicological grounding mastered only through recognised undergraduate music qualification infest the field.

2. *Dipela* is a song-dance genre practiced by Northern Sotho speaking people of South Africa. It is one of the four main pillars of what is known as *mmino wa setšo* (indigenous African music).
3. *Dinaka*, also known as *kiba*, is a reed pipe musical genre practiced by Northern Sotho speaking people in South Africa.
4. Acculturated harp which is used by Basotho ba Leboa in the place of the original or traditional *dipela* instrument.
5. Sehananwa is either a language, a style, or a worldview of Bahananwa.
6. *Mmino wa setšo* is a type of indigenous African music of Northern Sotho origin

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