The analysis of Ethiopian traditional music instrument through indigenous knowledge (kirar, masinko, begena, kebero and washint/flute)

Girmaw Ashebir Sinshaw (M.Ed.)
Masters Art Education in Theater) and
Lecturer, Ethiopian Language(s) and Literature-Amharic,
Director for Public relation and communications directorate,
Debremarkos University, Gojjam, Amhara, Ethiopia

Abstract:
This article aims to explore and analytics about Ethiopian traditional music instrument through indigenous knowledge (kirar, masinko, Begena, kebero and washint/flute). The researcher would have observation and referring the difference documentations. Kirar, and masinko are mostly have purposeful for local music including washint, the others which is Kebero, Begena have use full in the majority time for church purpose. Ethiopia has extended culture, art and indigenous knowledge related to original own music. Their studies have qualitative research design that has descriptive methodology to more exploring the traditional music’s free statement descriptions. Its researcher mainly has providing the descriptive information about the Ethiopian traditional music instrument as analytical finding out.

Kay words; Kirar, Masinirqo, Kebero, Washint, Begena, Traditional, Music, Instrument

1. Introduction
Folk music includes both traditional music and the genre that evolved from it during the 20th century folk revival. The term originated in the 19th century but is often applied to music that is older than that. Some types of folk music are also called world music. "Traditional folk music" has been defined in several ways: as music transmitted orally, music with unknown composers, or music performed by custom over a long period of time. It has been contrasted with commercial and classical styles.

Starting in the mid-20th century a new form of popular folk music evolved from traditional folk music. This process and period is called the (second) folk revival and reached a zenith/highpoint in the 1960s. This form of music is sometimes called contemporary folk music or folk revival music to distinguish it from earlier folk forms.

Smaller comparable revivals have occurred elsewhere in the world at other times, but the term folk music has typically not been applied to the new music created during those revivals. This type of folk music also includes merging genres such as folk rock, folk metal, electric folk, and others. While contemporary folk music is a genre generally distinct from traditional folk music, in English it shares the same name, and it often shares the same performers and venues as traditional folk music. Even individual songs may be a blend of the two.

Ethiopian music uses a distinct modal system that is pentatonic, with characteristically long intervals between some notes. As with many other aspects of Ethiopian culture and tradition, tastes in music and lyrics are strongly linked with those in neighboring Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan. The music of the highlands uses a fundamental modal system called qenet, of which there are four main modes tezeta, bati, ambassel, and anchihoy. Three additional modes are variations on the above tezeta minor, bati major, and bati minor. Some songs take the name of their qenet, such as tizita, a song of reminiscence.

When played on traditional instruments, these modes are generally not tempered (that is, the pitches may deviate slightly from the Western-tempered tuning system), but when played on Western instruments such as pianos and guitars, they are played using the Western-tempered tuning system. Music in the Ethiopian highlands is generally
monophonic or heterophony in certain southern areas, some music is polyphonic. Dorze polyphonic singing (edho) may employ up to five parts; Majangir, four parts.

Ethiopia has a long and at times tormented history. With that it has an equally long and fascinating history of arts and culture. To write about Ethiopia’s traditional music in one article such as this may not do justice to everyone nor reveal the complete and true picture of the situation. This text should thus simply serve as a launch pad for further study for anyone who would like to venture deeper into the country’s traditional music instrument.

The music of Ethiopia is a reflection of all the historical and social episodes, such as the patriotic campaigns that various warlords or chiefs had to launch. The music is about war as well as patriotism, songs of victory, songs that incite support for a certain movement. And it’s also about love, with wonderful melodies and poetic lyrics.

The Orthodox Tewahido Christian church spirituality of Ethiopians is expressed in the form of music. All these types of tunes and melodies are prepared and performed using various traditional instruments. In the follow part will be discussing the brief character of information about Ethiopian folk music traditional instrument. But in this study have concerned only the five instrument which is kirar, masinko, begena, kebero and washint.

2. Traditional instruments
The most well-known Ethiopian instruments are the krar (ክራር) and the masinqo (ማシリን). But, since everyone and their second cousin is probably already familiar with these, we’re going to mix things up a little bit and introduce some of the lesser-known instruments first. (If you are not familiar with krar and masinqo, don’t worry, I will also introduce them in due time.

Ethiopian traditional music is best expressed with its musical instruments, besides the contribution of the renowned vocalists. The most characteristic and widely used instruments are the masinko, the krar, and in the church mostly useful washint, begena, kebero, and the tom-tom. All are instruments originated by Ethiopian in Ethiopia. No adaptation and free from any of modification.

So let’s discuss one by one the different types of Ethiopian traditional music instrument.

A. Masinko (ማシリን)
The masinko is a single-stringed instrument that is used in many parts of the country in Ethiopia by several people, including the Amara, the Tigreans and Oromo. The masinko as it is a kind of fiddle made from the tail of horses and a piece of hide. It is relatively easy to make and is played by rubbing a bow made of a string against the fiddle. People in the Ethiopian highland areas learn to play the masinko at a very early age, particularly in the north around Gondar. Verses are typically created by the vocalist and player of the instrument or as is the tradition, the audience suggests poems or lyrics and the vocalist just repeats them word for word.
The *masinko* is one of the most popular traditional music instruments used throughout Ethiopia and one of the fixtures in Ethiopian music and culture. Although it looks simple, the *masinko* can, in the hands of an expert musician, produce a wide variety of melodies.

It is often played by wandering singers, as well as professional musicians, particularly at traditional restaurants even local and local bars called 'Bunna Bet'. The singer is known in the word 'Azmari', it is derived from the Geez word 'Zemmari', which means “one who sings”.

The masinqo is a well-known instrument throughout popularly central and northern Ethiopia, and you hear it frequently in Amhara and Oromo music. It is a one-stringed fiddle and is the instrument of choice for the *azmari*, solo singers who often work in bars and are exceptionally talented at improvising lyrics and melody on-the-spot. It is also a core instrument of cultural bands that work in government theatre houses and cultural restaurants. Things to note in the recording: extensive use of ornamentation, the masinqo doubling the vocal melody when he sings, lack of equal-tempered tuning, and use of harmonics. This aesthetics are quite typical of music in these regions.

Therefore masinqo have a construction of designed as the square or diamond shaped resonator is made of four small wooden boards glued together, then covered with a stretched parchment or rawhide. The single string is typically made of horse hair, and passes over a bridge. The instrument is tuned by means of a large tuning peg to fit the range of the singer's voice. It may be bowed by either the right or left hand, and the non-bow hand sits lightly on top of the upper part of the string.

### B. Krar (ክራር)

The krar a bowl-lyre with 5-6 strings is another well-known instrument in both Ethiopia and neighboring Eritrea. The krar is also a core member of the cultural band and is an instrument of many variations. The electric krar is now standard fare in many urban settings, as well as the bass krar (which sounds much like an electric bass.) Playing technique also varies. However, in urban settings, when I see players utilizing instead a variety of strumming techniques, muting strings with their fingers in order to obtain a defined melody. Also, some people are starting to add strings to the krar.
Clearly, it is a bit difficult to discuss the “standard” krar and its playing technique with so many variants proliferating in Ethiopia at the moment. Generally, however, it is played with the left hand, and it is tuned pentatonic (and must be retuned if the player is switching to a different kignit/rhythms) If the krar has 6 strings, the remaining string is tuned in an octave to the tonic note which is that in tizita rhythm, it would be C D E G A C.

C. Begena (በጫና)
Known as the Harp of King David, this instrument has 10 strings and a distinctive buzzing sound created by the string vibrating against the instrument body. This instrument is almost exclusively associated with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and is used for personal meditation and prayer. These songs are known as mezmur, an Amharic language term used specifically for religious music as opposed to zefen, which refers to secular music.

The begena or Ethiopian harp is an instrument mostly used for as I mention the below spiritual purposes. Among the most popular players of this instrument is some of priests in church. Spiritual hymns are mainly heard during fasting periods for Orthodox Christians when people express their devotion to God.

When all ten strings are plucked, one method of tuning the begena is to tune each pair of strings to one of the pitches in a pentatonic scale. When using five of the strings, only the first, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth strings are tuned and plucked to give sound. Finally, while playing the begena using six strings, the left hand plucks strings one, three, four, six, eight, and ten starting from the left side when facing the instrument.

The pointing finger plucks strings three and four while the other fingers are in charge of controlling one string each. The remaining strings are used for the finger rests or stops after the strings have been plucked, allowing the plucked string to vibrate. The begena may also be played using a system called girif, wherein a plectrum made of horn or wood is used to pluck the ten strings of the begena

The begena is characterized by a very specific buzzing sound, due to U-shaped leather pieces placed between each string and the bridge. The thong for each string is adjusted up or down along the bridge so that the string, when plucked, repeatedly vibrates against the edge of the bridge.
D. Washint (ዋሽንት)
The washint is an end-blown flute originally used by the Amhara and tigray people in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Traditionally, Amharic musicians would pass on their oral history through song accompanied by the washint as well as the kirar that I have mentioned in the below, a six stringer lyre, and the masinqo a one string fiddle. The washint can be constructed using wood, bamboo, or other cane. A variety exists in different lengths and relative finger hole placement, and a performer might use several different flutes over the course of a performance to accommodate different song types. It generally has four finger-holes, which allows the player to create a pentatonic scale.

E. Kebero (ከበሮ)
The Ethiopian drum or kebero is used to accompany the traditional tunes that Ethiopians play. The drum enriches most songs, which would be not as interesting to listen to without the drum beat. The double-headed kebero drum is also used in the traditional music of Eritrea and Sudan. A piece of animal hide is stretched over each end of the instrument, thus forming a membranous phone.
A large version of the kebero is also used in Ethiopian Orthodox Christian liturgical music, while smaller versions are used in secular celebrations. A special kind of drum referred to as tom-tom is used in the south-western part of the country, in Gambella Region. The beating of drums in general is very characteristic of the fast songs played in the south of the country, in different place. It’s a double-headed, conical hand drum used in the traditional music of Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia. A piece of animal hide is stretched over each end of the instrument, thus forming a membranous phone. A large version of the kebero is also used in Ethiopian Orthodox Christian liturgical music, while smaller versions are used in secular celebrations.

Conclusion
Finally, as the discussion part of this article the researcher has analysis the informative expletory about Ethiopian traditional music instrument through indigenes knowledge. The popular or of history and culture of Ethiopia have domination by orthodox Christianity. Because of that in this research finding stated most of Ethiopian traditional music has strong relation with Christianity spiritual. Ethiopia contains many distinct cultures. The most populous is that of the Christian Amhara around the capital plateau, but there are other Christian, Jewish and Muslim people, some of them remote and virtually unknown.

Masinko instrument Sung verses of poetry are a common feature in Amara. The poetry’s basic formats together with the ambiguities in phrasing have something in common with poetic forms in Yemen and serve principally to attract interest. The words they use may often have a double meaning perhaps one that is stated overtly, the other a hidden meaning. Kebero, Kirar, Washint are mostly used music and Christianity harmony song. But begena have the only holy tool of Christianity for praying and think thank for God. The researcher has a culture of those all are instruments, especially washint have a local kid music instrument.

References

[1] Falcone, Francis. 2000. “Land of Wax and Gold”. In Broughton, S. and M. Ellingham, with McConnachie, J. and Duane, O. (ed.), World Music, Vol. 1: Africa, Europe and the Middle East, p. 480–487. Rough Guides Ltd/Penguin Books.

[2] Adie, E. U. (2019). Training Children Environmentalists in Africa: The Learning by Drama Method. International Journal of Environmental Pollution and Environmental Modelling, 122-128.

[3] Asuquo, O. O. (2006). Logical Problems of Answer Variation in Philosophy. Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy, 9(1), 1-5.

[4] Asuquo, O. O. (2010). An African Christian perspective of death.

[5] Asuquo, O. O. (2010). An African Christian perspective of death.

[6] Asuquo, O. O. (2014). Religion and social problems. Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy, 15(1), 91-94.

[7] Asuquo, O. O. (2014). The present day relevance of Paul's advice to the family in Ephesians 5: 22-25 and 6: 1-9.

[8] Asuquo, O. O. (2018). The role of mass media in church development in the twenty first century.

[9] Asuquo, O. O. (2018). The Role of the African Church Movement in Nigeria’s Independence.

[10] Asuquo, O. O. (2019). A critical evaluation of the writing methods of selected scholars of African culture and traditional religion–EB Idowu; EG Parrinder and KA Opoku.

[11] Ekpang, P. U., & Abuo, C. B. (2015). Relationship between Drug Abuse and Psychosocial Behaviours among Adolescents’ in Senior Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria-Counseling Interventions. European Journal of Business and Management, 7(36), 151-159.

[12] Godwin, M. U., Iwuchukwu, C. S., & Atsu, E. M. (2015). Human Rights, Language Use and Societal Abuse in Cross River State, Nigeria. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 6(1 S1), 210.

[13] Iwuchukwu, G. C. (2019). Re-Viewing the Mass Communication Education Curriculum. Case for Language/Linguistics, Communication Synergy.

[14] Nzeyo, G. E. (2019). Christianity, misogyny and women. Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research, 16(3), 164-181.

[15] Okoro, L. (2013). Developing African Indigenous Cartoon Series for Pedagogical Applications.
[16] Okoro, L. (2013). *Re-engineering Culture and Cultural Diplomacy in Nigeria’s Foreign Policy*. 2013 in West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies.

[17] Okoro, L. (2014). *Conducting Theatre for Development Research with People with Learning Disabilities: A methodological Perspective*.

[18] Okoro, L. (2015). *Educational Theatre Curriculum Evaluation Technique*. 2015 in West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies.

[19] Okoro, L. (2015). *Exploring the potentials of Community Theatre as a Tool for Social Change: The Participatory Communication Method*. 2014 in Journal of Integrative Humanism Ghana.

[20] Okpechi, P. A., & Ekpang Pauline, U. (2018). Anxieties Disorder and Deviant Behaviors among Secondary School Studies in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State. *International Journal of Educational Technology and Learning*, 3(1), 24-29.

[21] Udosen, E. E., Ekah, M. H., & Offong, I. J. Ibibio proverbs supportive of democratization practices.

[22] Udosen, E. E., Henshaw, A. A., & Ogri, E. U. (2019). Stakeholders Advocacy and the Campaign against Malaria Epidemic in Cross River State: A Social Change Perspective. *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, 16(2), 153-175.

[23] Udosen, E. E., Ogri, E. U., & Henshaw, A. A. Public Perception of Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria: A Study of Selected Broadcast Media in Calabar Metropolis.

[24] Ugbada, A. E. (2019). Globalization, democracy, and the news media in Nigeria: challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)*, 2(3), 85-89.

[25] Ugbada, A. E., & Ushie, A. D. (2015). Understanding Empowerment For Sustainable Development In Nigeria: A Theatre And Participatory Communication Approach. *Journal of Integrative Humanism Ghana*, 116.

[26] Bassey, S. A., & Bubu, N. G. (2019). GENDER INEQUALITY IN AFRICA: A RE-EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL VALUES. *Cogito (2066-7094)*, 11(3).