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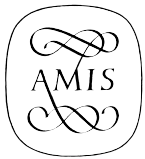

Musical Instruments and Ritual: A Systematic Approach

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RITUAL IS A WORLDWIDE HUMAN PHENOMENON in which music and musical instruments play an essential role. Although many scholars have written about musical instruments in the context of rituals, they have generally referred to instruments only in passing as accessories to ritual; concentrated on the description of physical, behavioral or musical aspects of a ritual; or addressed themselves to questions of historical, psychological, cultural, ritual, or musical theory. Little attention has been directed toward developing a theory for musical instruments and ritual.

The purpose of this paper is to distinguish the modes of participation of musical instruments in ritual and to present models—conceptual frameworks illustrated with specific examples—for their study. It is hoped that these models, the cornerstones of the systematic approach presented here, will lead to an awareness of the possibilities for further research on musical instruments and ritual, both within specific cultures and cross-culturally.[1]

There appear to be two primary modes in which musical instruments can participate in ritual,[2] the "receptive mode" and the "transitive mode."

This is an expanded version of a paper with the same title that was presented on November 6, 1987 at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I am very grateful to Ter Ellingson and Hugo Zemp, who read an earlier version of this paper and provided me with many as yet unpublished examples of rituals surrounding Newar and 'Are'are instruments, rituals that either represent "life cycle" stages for which I have found no other examples to date or that exemplify an unusual type of ritual procedure for instruments. I would also like to thank Lois Anderson, Fredric Lieberman, R. Anderson Sutton, Roger Vetter, Elizabeth Tolbert and Nora Yeh, who offered suggestions or clarifications, or provided examples from their particular areas of expertise.

1. During the course of my research for a paper on ritual and the harps of Africa for an African Studies Association meeting, I realized it was likely that harps and other African instruments which are so essential to rituals may themselves, at times, be the focus of rituals, ceremonies, or ritual procedures, and that makers and musicians are likely to be the practitioners of these rituals. When I found frustratingly little information on the subject (and that little scattered) I realized that the issue of musical instruments and ritual needed to be systematically and cross-culturally addressed. The models are therefore illustrated with examples concerning instruments from African, Asian, and Pacific cultures.

2. The definition of ritual is a major theoretical issue in the social sciences and other disciplines and highly debated. My definition is intended to match dictionary or common sense definitions while allowing for the accommodation of more specialized ones.

In the receptive mode, the instrument is the focus of the ritual; that is, a ceremony or ritual procedure is performed on or for the instrument itself, or perhaps more properly, for the spirit embodied in the instrument. The rites of the receptive mode occur at different stages in the "life cycle" of an instrument, proceeding in time from creation through birth, life and death—from construction and first use through its period of useability and the time after its last use.

In the transitive mode, the instrument is not the focus of the ritual; instead, it is an active agent in ensuring the efficacy of a ritual performed on or for a person, place or thing, whether seen or unseen, other than the instrument itself. In this mode, an instrument can be seen to participate in ritual in two realms, that of its voice and that of its body.[3] In the transitive mode an instrument often symbolizes the worldview of a culture as expressed in the ritual context.

The Receptive Mode

No single instrument has been found that is honored by rituals in all stages of its life cycle, just as no single culture honors people at all the points in the human life cycle that we see honored when we look cross-culturally. Nor is it the intention here to suggest that one is likely to be found; in fact, in some cultures, only a few stages may be represented. The purpose here is to point out systematically the stages during which an instrument is *likely* to be honored, and what form these rituals might take. For this reason a model was created with a symmetry that leaves room for examples that have not yet been found.[4]

In the receptive mode the life cycle of an instrument can be divided into twelve stages which are diagrammed along a time line (fig. 1). These stages can be defined as 1) before construction, 2) during construction, 3) after construction, 4) before first use, 5) during first use, 6) after first use, 7) before each subsequent use, 8) during each use, 9) after each use, 10) before last use, 11) during last use, and 12) after its useful life. The "each use" stages can, of course, be repeated many times and are thus diagrammed as

3. The assignment of such categories, in both modes, will remind us that the anthropomorphizing or zoomorphizing of musical instruments—for example, in the naming of instrument parts or in associations of instruments with animals, persons and spirits—is a nearly universal phenomenon.

4. Ter Ellingson and Hugo Zemp, who have already filled in some of these stages with their own unpublished examples, have encouraged me in this.

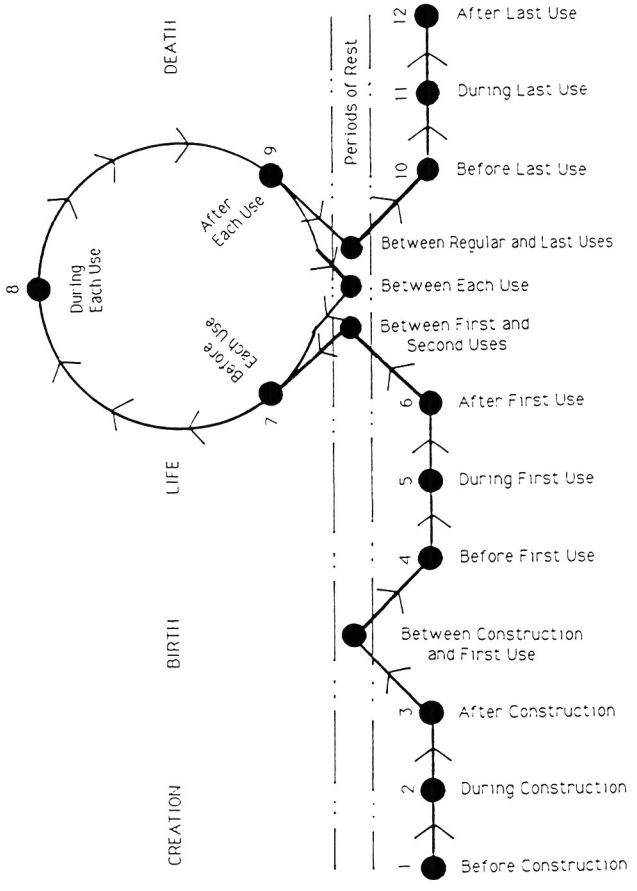

FIGURE 1. The life cycle of musical instruments, from creation to death, posited for the receptive mode for instruments in ritual.

a loop. The distinction between first and last use of an instrument and each regular use appears to be important, since it may be found that a special ceremony or procedure marks the birth or death of an instrument.

These twelve stages fall into four phases: construction, first use, each subsequent use, and last use. Joining these phases, one to another, is a set of four periods designated "between use." (The category "after use" is distinguished from "between use" because these two could be quite different: "after use" may require a specific treatment or procedure, while "between use" implies a period of rest or inactivity, perhaps involving special housing or storage for the instrument.) The individual "between use" periods are distinguished from one another in order to address the possibility that they might entail different procedures. These periods are 1) between construction and first use, linking stages three and four; 2) between first and second uses, linking stages six and seven; 3) between each use, completing the cycle of uses that links stages nine and seven; and 4) between the final regular use and the last use, linking stages nine and ten. Because an aim of this paper is to foster future research in which rituals for instruments are noted, several examples are presented for each stage, whenever possible, to point out the varying kinds of rituals that one might find in the course of research.

The Construction Phase

Stage One: Before Construction

The first stage in the life cycle of an instrument in which a ritual procedure of the receptive mode can occur is the one before construction. In some cultures offerings are made to the spirits of the raw materials that will be used to make musical instruments. For example, Kakraba Lobi of Ghana informed me that before he begins to construct a *gyilli* xylophone, he finds a Nera tree that is dying but still full of sap. He then leaves a food offering for the tree at night and returns in the morning to see if the offering has been accepted by the tree's spirit. If it has, he can then cut the tree down and begin the long process of xylophone making.

Magic and special prayers are performed in the forest before construction of the *'o'o,* the slit drums of the 'Are'are of Malaita in the Solomon Islands, processes which may not be witnessed by women. Unlike the offering in the preceding example, these prayers are not made to the spirits of the components of the instruments. Instead they are directed to the persons and tools that allow the drums to be made. According to Hugo Zemp,[5]

5. Unless otherwise specified, the sources for these and all following 'Are'are examples are written communications from Hugo Zemp, the last dated May 3, 1988.

prayers are said to the ancestors and to the cultural hero who invented the stone tools that permit the construction of drums and of houses as well as agricultural work. Magic is then performed while the blades are bound to the wooden shafts of the axe and the adze. It is interesting to note that even though the blades are no longer made of stone (nowadays they are steel), the prayers and invocations are still addressed to the cultural hero who introduced stone tools to human beings.

Stage Two: During Construction

There are two ritual procedures that are practiced on the Mandinka *kora* during construction, the second stage in the life cycle of an instrument. Susan Pevar, writing on the making of a *kora* (a twenty-one-string harp-lute) by musician and craftsman Bai Konte of Kombo Brikama in Gambia,[6] describes them. Before the gourd resonator of the *kora* was covered with its hide sound table, the instrument was consecrated with the blood of a goat slaughtered especially for this purpose. The blood, collected as it gushed from the goat's freshly slit throat, was sprinkled inside the calabash resonator while a blessing was said. The liver of the animal was immediately cooked, salted and served to the *kora* maker and his apprentices. The rest of the meat was cut up, cooked with rice and later served to the whole compound. Another ritual procedure took place just before the cowhide sound table was stretched over the calabash resonator. Bai Konte and his male apprentices gathered in a circle around the cowhide that lay flat on the ground. Then Ma Lamini Jobate, Bai Konte's adopted son, held the calabash, mouth downward, and bent over three times, touching the lip of the calabash to the hide and uttering a short blessing which acknowledged both the goat and the cow whose deaths had been necessary in order to complete the *kora*. Jobate then bent over a fourth time and the men moved in, lifting the edges of the hide and wrapping them around the curved back of calabash.

An important ritual procedure during construction that must be mentioned here is the "freeing of the voice" of an instrument. Steven Feld notes that the inside of an *ilib,* the drum of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea, is carved out from both ends, leaving a bridge about two inches thick between the two hollowed halves.[7] Work then stops while a *tibodai* bird is hunted and

6. Susan Gunn Pevar, "The Construction of a Kora," *African Arts* 11 no. 4 (1978): 69–71.

7. Steven Feld, "Sound as Symbolic System: The Kaluli Drum," *Explorations in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of David P. McAllester,* ed. Charlotte Frisbie, Detroit Monographs in Musicology 9 (1986): 151–53.

captured. Its feathers are plucked and placed inside the drum, and in what Feld calls "the most dramatic aspect of the process," the throat and tongue of the bird are placed on the bridge inside the drum. Then, while softly reciting a magical saying, the maker cuts through the bridge. Feld states that this process insures the sonic character of the drum; he offers it as one of many pieces of evidence demonstrating that bird sounds and sound categories are powerful mediators linking sonic patterns with Kaluli social ethos and emotion.

A similar process is explained by Phillip Lewis in regard to the construction of a friction block he collected at Amba, New Ireland in 1970.[8] The carving of the *lounuat* was completed except for the freeing of its three tongues; this was then accomplished in a secret ritual that had to be preceded by fasting and the avoidance of contact with women, garden produce and garden dirt. The tongues were previously partially cut through with a knife, but the actual freeing of them was done by sawing through the wood at what would become the tips of the tongues "using a string twisted of the fibers of a plant called *penibe*." All informants, according to Lewis, said the friction block "represented a bird, in its cry, and in its visible form." This recalls the bird associations of the Kaluli drum.[9]

Stage Three: After Construction

The 'Are'are *'o'o* offers examples of rituals that take place after construction, the third stage in the life cycle of an instrument. When the slit drums are completed, Zemp reports, a ritual takes place in the forest to cancel the food and sexual taboos which were necessary during the construction process. This is followed by a small feast in the forest after which the *'o'o* are beaten in the forest to announce that their construction is completed. They are then carried into the village. This drum announcement of their completion is not considered their official first use, which is surrounded by its own set of ritual practices (see below, Stage Four).

8. Phillip H. Lewis, "Notes on a Friction Drum Collected at Amba, New Ireland, in 1970," *Abhandlungen und Berichte des Staatlichen Museums für Volkenkunde Dresden* 34 (1975): 584–89.

9. Further evidence of bird associations is found in the names of the instruments. The term *lounuat* is a generic one for friction block, according to Gerald Florian Messner, "The Friction Block *Lounaut* of New Ireland: Its Use and Socio-Cultural Embodiment," *Bikmaus* 4 no. 3 (1983): 50. He reports that the instruments, a family of three sizes, are given the names of night birds of different sizes in nearly all of the languages of the area, though in one case the smallest blocks are named for a lizard, and in another, a small brown frog.

Between Construction and First Use

These 'Are'are examples of ritual procedures unique to the "after construction" stage are the only ones that have thus far been found. While no examples of special storage, housing or other ritual procedures have come to my attention that are specific to the period "between construction and first use," the reader is reminded that this period is included in the model, as are others for which no examples have as yet been found, to retain the symmetry and function of a system intended to serve as a reminder of the *possibility* of the existence of rituals for instruments at any point in the life cycle. There may, of course, be many cases where ritual procedures conducted in the "after construction" stage and during the period "between construction and first use" are the same as those performed after and between each regular use.

The First-Use Phase

Stage Four: Before First Use

Stage four includes rituals and ritual procedures conducted before the actual first use of an instrument as well as those performed before the first use for a special purpose.

An example of a ritual procedure before first actual use is the one practiced on Kiganda xylophones in Uganda. Klaus Wachsmann tells us that before the first performance a cock or a goat is sacrificed, and its blood, along with mouthfuls of beer, is splashed across the keys of the xylophone.[10] Wachsmann sees the ceremony as "an apt symbol of the respect in which the instrument is held."

Hugo Zemp relates several ritual procedures surrounding the first official use of the 'Are'are slit drums. A special feast is prepared for the inaugural performance of the drums. The man ("Big Man") who commissioned the making of the instruments provides all the food, including many pigs for roasting. He makes a ritual payment to the carvers known as "the price for the magic of the blades" and says special prayers before the slit drums are first played in the village. He holds a sacred coconut over the largest drum and attaches a bundle of sacred *areca* nuts to it. He then makes an invocation to the cultural hero, with magic, to insure that there

10. Klaus Wachsmann, "The Sound Instruments," *Tribal Crafts of Uganda*, pt. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 317.

will be plenty of shell money and food when the drums are sounded. After the prayer, he cuts an areca nut in half and places the halves inside the slit drum.

While there are no rituals connected with the construction of *'au* ('Are'are panpipe ensembles) or with their first playing to check the tuning, Zemp reports ritual procedures including magic that take place before their first playing in a festival. The panpipe tubes are subjected to a ritual washing to ensure prosperity, the earning of sacred shell money, and the magical power of the male musicians over the audience, especially over women. In addition, sacred areca nuts are placed in the lower end of the longest tube.

Stage Five: During First Use

During their first use, the fifth stage in the life cycle, the 'Are'are drums are put on special stands, atop cushions of dried herbs that permit free vibrations.[11] These stands are higher than those used for subsequent performances. Moreover, both these stands and the instruments themselves are placed inside a little house without walls built especially for the first performance and later destroyed. A specific piece, used only for the official inauguration, is beaten eight times on the 'Are'are slit drum ensemble (the number eight having the symbolic meaning of "completeness, entireness").

Stage Six: After First Use

No examples have as yet been found for the sixth stage in the life cycle of an instrument, namely, rituals specifically and only performed after its first use. It is likely, however, that many rituals performed after subsequent uses are also performed after the initial use of an instrument.

Between First and Each Use

As is the case with stage six, no ritual procedures peculiar to the period between the first and each regular use of an instrument have been found. Again, there are probably many cases in which the same procedures that occur between each use also occur between the first and each subsequent use.

Instruments may be subjected to a variety of initiatory rites of passage in addition to the kinds discussed above. One significant example is personal

11. Daniel de Coppet and Hugo Zemp, *'Aré'aré: Un peuple mélanésien et sa musique,* Collection les jours de l'homme (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 85. The rest of the information in this paragraph comes from personal communication with Hugo Zemp.

name giving, which, though it may not always occur during the first-use phase, is likely to take place sometime early in the life or use of an instrument, much like the naming of a baby.

Naming instruments is an ancient practice, one that can even be found as part of the mythological process. For example, in the *Mahābhārata,* Kṛishṇa blows his divine conch trumpet, Pānchajanya, during the final Great Battle to assist the Peṇḍavas in their victory over the Kauravas.[12] The trumpet, whose sound had the power to "annihilate the unrighteous," is named after Panchajana, the sea demon who lived in a conch shell. Kṛishṇa had plunged into the waters and killed Panchajana for carrying off the son of Sāndipāni, and then used the monster's shell as a trumpet.

Ch'in, Chinese zithers with a history of nearly 3000 years, have often been given names in the form of hyperbolic phrases praising the sound of the instrument.[13] The finest and oldest *ch'in* in existence, dating from the Han dynasty (202 B.C.–220 A.D.), is according to Van Gulik called "Jade from the K'un-lun," reflecting "Taoist ideas of value and rarity."[14] Its name evokes the sound of chimes made of the rarest and finest jade, which comes from the K'un-lun mountains. Nora Yeh reports that the *p'i-p'a,* the Chinese short-necked lute, may also be named. In the Nanguan tradition in Taiwan, of which she is a student, *p'i-p'a* are named either by the owner/commissioner of the instrument or, upon request, by a respected elder master teacher. The name, written in three or sometimes two Chinese characters, is then often inlaid in the back of the instrument in mother-of-pearl. *P'i-p'a* names, such as "Wind Coming through Bamboo," are similar in genre to those given to *ch'in.*[15]

Throughout Java, gamelan ensembles, whether their sounding parts are bronze or iron, are also named. In Central Java, where gamelan, especially old bronze ensembles, are revered, the names frequently include the title *Kyai* ("Venerable Sir," sometimes preceded by *Kangjeng,* "Honorable") or, rarer, *Nyai,* the female equivalent. Gamelan names are said to be inspired by metaphysical and/or physical notions. Although the particular tuning and the overall sound quality of a gamelan is usually taken into account, and some names evoke it, sometimes deeper philosophical consider-

12. Maria Leach and Jerome Fried, eds., *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (1980), 842.

13. Robert Hans van Gulik, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute,* 2nd ed., revised and enlarged (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1969), passim.

14. Ibid., 211.

15. I am most grateful to Nora Yeh for sharing this information from her field work via personal communication, February 12, 1988.

ations, such as the power invested in the sound of the gamelan, inspire the name. Jaap Kunst lists gamelan in the principalities named with phrases such as *Guntur Madu* (Thunder of Honey), *Kanyut Mesem* (Tempted to Smile), *Lipur tomba neng* (Consoling Remedy Giving Mental Peace), *Pamiwalkung* (He Who Makes Us Forget Even Amorousness), *(H)arjanagara* (The Welfare of the Country), and *Pusparana* (Flower of the Battle).[16]

Individual important instruments within a gamelan, especially *gong ageng,* in which the spirit of a gamelan is said to reside, may also have names. In fact, a gong may be held in such reverence that it bears the same name as the gamelan of which it is part. For example, one of the two *pusaka* (venerated heirloom) gongs in the ancient type of three-tone ritual gamelan called Kodok ngorèk, seen in the Kraton of Yogyakarta, Central Java, is named *K. K. [Kangjeng Kyai] Mahesa Ganggang* (Most Venerable Fighting Buffalo), as is the gamelan itself. The other *pusaka* gong in this gamelan is named *K. K. Sima* (Most Venerable Tiger).[17] Most unusually, *K. K. Surak* (Venerable Battle Cry), a slendro (five-tone tuning system) gamelan in the Yogya Kraton has four *pusaka* gongs with individual names, one of them bearing the same name as the gamelan.[18]

Gamelan names can be part of a common vocabulary shared by design motifs in batik, patterns carved on gamelan stands and resonators, and the titles of gamelan compositions.[19] This can be illustrated by *Kyai Mega Men-*

16. Jaap Kunst, *Music in Java,* 3rd ed., enlarged, ed. Ernst Heins (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 253. For the honorifics specific to each gamelan, see Kunst, 245. Because the names of the gamelan listed here and in the next paragraph are taken from Kunst, they are given his spellings. Roger Vetter, "Music for 'The Lap of the World': Gamelan Performance, Performers and Repertoire in the Kraton Yogyakarta" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1986), 117, notes that the gamelan named "Pusparana" is no longer in the Kraton of Yogyakarta and was not mentioned by his informants. Thus its present location is unknown. For an excellent description of the gamelan in the Yogya Kraton, including the meaning of names and the change of instrumentation over time, see ibid., 114–44.

17. Kunst, 261–62. Beliefs surrounding this gamelan raise an important issue, namely, the consequences of *not* performing rituals that honor musical instruments and their spirits. Kunst, 262 n. 2, reports that if those who were responsible for the maintenance of this gamelan failed to take all possible care of it, more especially, if they forgot to bring incense and flowers to the gong "K. K. Sima" on a day when two of the Javanese calendric cycles coincide (*Jumahat-Kliwon,* the day on which the weekday *Jumahat* and the market-week day *Kliwon* fall together), they will "suddenly come face to face with a tiger."

18. I am most grateful to Roger Vetter who provided this information from his field work in a personal communication, May 22, 1988.

19. Sue Carole DeVale, "A Sundanese Gamelan: A Gestalt Approach to Organology" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1977), 161–62.

dhung (Venerable Rain Cloud), an old gamelan from Cirebon, West Java (the oldest court city of Java) now in the Sana Budaya Museum in Yogyakarta. *Mega mendhung* is the name of the esteemed Cirebonese batik design that provided the cloud pattern for the carving on all the stands and resonators of this gamelan.[20] There is also a *gendhing bonang* (one of the oldest genres of the repertoire) featuring the gong chimes (*bonang* family) of the gamelan, that is called *Mega Mendhung.*

A gamelan is named during a ceremony, either by a *dhalang,* a master of shadow or rod puppetry, or a revered, elder master musician who has spent considerable time (often several weeks) contemplating and meditating on the gamelan, its sound, and other considerations. The naming of the community-owned gamelan belonging to Friends of the Gamelan (FROG), Inc., an American gamelan group in Chicago, will serve as an example. Their gamelan, made for them in Surakarta, was named at Roosevelt University on May 19, 1984, the day they accompanied a *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet play) there performed by Sri Djoko Rohardjo, a seventh generation dhalang and Fulbright scholar from a village near Surakarta. Sri Djoko had worked periodically with the group, beginning in the previous November, in preparation for the wayang performance, and had agreed to name the gamelan on that day.[21]

The ceremony took place before the performance in a large, comfortable lounge and was followed by a *slametan,* a community ritual feast[22] in which the musicians, their families, and members of the Indonesian Consulate participated.[23] For the ceremony, a large, nearly square white cloth was spread on the floor (fig. 2).[24] In its center was placed a smaller square batik tablecloth. Special foods and other offerings were set on the center

20. This particular cloud pattern is shared and highly esteemed throughout most of the Buddhist art world.

21. To prepare FROG members for the wayang, Sri Djoko made several trips to Chicago from Madison, where he was in residence at the University of Wisconsin.

22. For complete descriptions and explanations of a variety of slametan, including the symbolic meaning of the foods, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java.* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960), 30–85.

23. The food was prepared by consular wives Mrs. Sri Nasir and Mrs. Ameer Noor along with other members of the Indonesian Ladies Club in Chicago.

24. Because a gamelan is revered even when it is taken out of Java, the naming ceremony must remain essentially the same as one conducted in Java. Thus the ritual content of the Chicago ceremony was specified and performed by Sri Djoko Rohardjo just as he would do it in Java. The ritual description was given to me by Sri Djoko and other informants who were present. A complete set of photographs of the ceremony was provided by Constance Segur, a founding member of FROG and a gamelan performer since 1978.

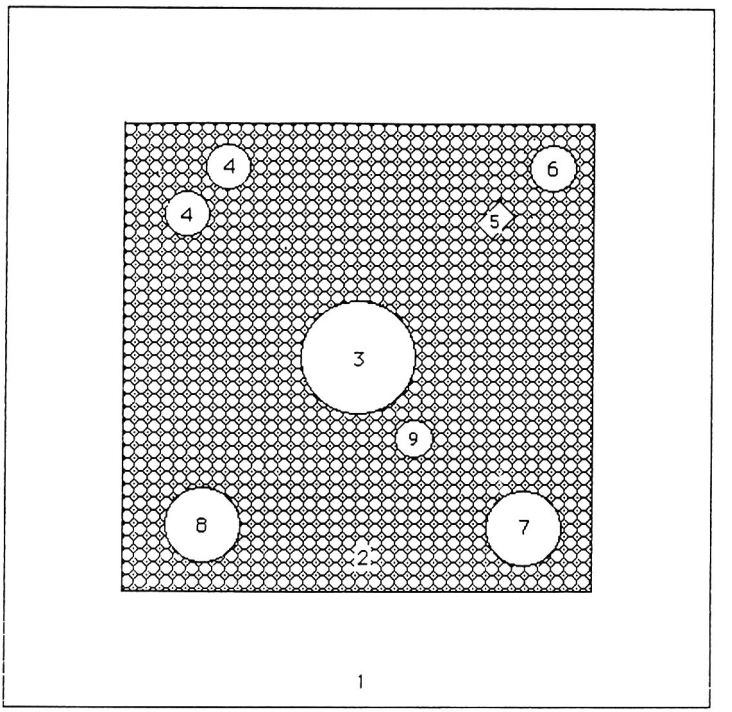

FIGURE 2. Layout of offerings for the naming of *Nyai Panjang Sari:* 1) large white cloth; 2) batik cloth; 3) rice mountain; 4) vases of flowers; 5) clove cigarettes; 6) pineapple; 7) basket of fruit; 8) plate with cooked chicken; 9) small vase of flowers with two incense sticks.

and four corners of the batik.[25] In its center was a flat basket tray containing a rice mountain representing the cosmic volcanic mountain at the center of the world. The mountain consisted of four graduated round tiers of rice, like tiers on a wedding cake, topped by a cone of rice. The rims of the tiers were edged with fruits, vegetables and hard-boiled eggs. The cone was

25. Alit Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, "On the origin and Nature of Larangan: Forbidden Batik Patterns from the Central Javanese Principalities," *Indonesian Textiles,* ed. Mattiebelle Gittinger, Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1979, Proceedings (Washington, D.C.: The

topped with a red pepper cut into strips, but with its base intact so that the strips could be splayed outward in circular fashion to represent erupting lava. On one corner of the cloth were vases of flowers; on its opposite corner, a basket of fruit. Between them on the other two corners rested a whole pineapple and a cooked chicken decorated with vegetables. Between the pineapple and the rice lay a package of *kretek,* Javanese clove cigarettes; and next to the rice mountain, two sticks of incense stood in a small vase with flowers.

Sri Djoko sat on the cloths near the offerings, lit the incense, named the gamelan *Nyai Panjang Sari* (which he said should be translated as "[Her] Venerable Essence of Gamelan Music") and explained the legend behind the name.[26] The slametan was then held with all sharing a variety of foods, including the rice mountain. The flowers, the chicken, and additional incense were placed beside the large gong of the gamelan, where they remained during the wayang performance.

Subsequent Uses

The world is rich with examples of rituals in this category. In most cases, the same rituals are conducted for each use of an instrument, while sometimes they are done only for special uses. A range of possibilities exists for "each use"; for example, an instrument may be used daily or only once in a

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Textile Museum, 1979), 205, explains that the relationship "four plus center" has its roots in the ancient, pre-Hindu "concept of *manca-pat,* literally the Outer Four, with One as Supreme Being in the center, and Four in a circle around him at the east, west, south, and north." This concept later easily accommodated Hindu-Buddhist mandala concepts. The layout of cloths and offerings for the ceremony, like many batik designs and the regular structure of gamelan music itself, is thus reminiscent of both symbolic layers.

26. In explaining his choice of name to me, Sri Djoko said it was inspired by the attitude of FROG members. He said the name, which literally translates as "long oval wooden bowl" (*panjang*), "essence" (*sari*), expresses the meaning of a legend surrounding the first dhalang who was a woman. She was requested to perform a wayang for an important ritual occasion, but those who asked her explained they had no money to pay her. Knowing that the wayang (for which gamelan music is essential to its ritual efficacy) was necessary for the safety and blessing of all concerned, she performed it anyway. Instead of money, she was given a long wooden bowl in appreciation. She graciously accepted it and took it home, and when she awoke the next morning the wooden bowl had turned to gold.

In elucidating the choice of a female name, Sri Djoko said he was impressed with the fact that many women were involved with the gamelan and with FROG as founders, artistic directors and performers and therefore decided the gamelan should be given the feminine honorific, *Nyai.* FROG was founded in the spring of 1980 by over twenty gamelan students from the Field Museum of Natural History, about half of whom were women.

certain number of years. Seasons may mark the use of an instrument, or it may be used only for particular rituals of the religious calendar, or for special reasons such as warding off illness spreading through the community.

Stage Seven: Before Each Use

Ghanaian drums will serve as a first example of rituals performed for stage seven. Kwabena Nketia notes that "Akan drums are . . . repositories of the spirit of Tweneboa Kodua," the tree from which they are made.[27] He adds:

> It is because of this association with "Tweneboa Kodua" that drums which are otherwise not sacred objects in themselves may share in the libations or sacrifices of the festival or ritual, or may be said . . . to taboo blood jaw bones and skulls. Most state drummers . . . usually precede their performances with a brief libation to Tweneboa Kodua and ancestor drummers.[28]

The Newar *Naubājā* ensemble in Patan, Nepal, provides an unusual example of the periodic use of instruments. Ellingson reports that the ensemble of eighteen to twenty instruments, including drums, oboes, cymbals and trumpets, is played according to a ten-year cycle; that is, it moves annually to a different one of ten neighborhoods within the city.[29] As a result of this movement, the performance of the ensemble and accompanying rituals occur only once in ten years in each location. Different musicians play them in each neighborhood (except in cases where a musician needs to be borrowed from another neighborhood to complete the body of performers). Before starting rehearsals, several ceremonies are held for Nāsa:dya:, the Newar God of Music, to invoke his presence in the instruments. This allows all but three of the instruments to become multiple manifestations of Nāsa:dya:.[30]

Ernst Heins informs us that the sacred *goong rèntèng* of Lebakwangi, West Java (Sunda), is usually played only within its ritual context, an *upacara adat* or customary local ritual for particular "official occasions at which a community interest needs to be ritually purified as a safeguard

27. J. K. (Kwabena) Nketia, *Drumming in the Akan Communities of Ghana* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963), 16.

28. Ibid., 6.

29. The sources for this and all following references to the instruments of the *Naubājā* ensemble, and the *Nāsa:dya: Puja* discussed below, are personal communications from Ter Ellingson, the last on May 23, 1988.

30. The three exceptions are three drums that are considered to be the manifestations of specific gods and goddesses. They are discussed below under "Stage Eight: During Each Use."

against possible harm and misfortune."[31] These include Muslim holy days and national holidays, visits of important personages, and purification of the village. Before the gamelan is played, a *sasajèn* (food offering) is placed on the floor between the rows of horizontal gongs on the *bonang,* a tuned gong chime. One of the musicians lights incense and a religious specialist inhales its initial smoke while uttering a *mantera* (sacred formula). The plates of food are then moved and placed in front of the large gongs, which are only then unwrapped for performance. Just before the performance, a thin layer of red clay is spread on the inside of the bosses of some of the *bonang* gongs, emphasizing "the unbreakable relationship between the *goong rèntèng* and the earth."[32]

Occasionally, an instrument that is not honored with a ceremony before each use will be presented an offering before an especially important performance, as is true of Kiganda xylophones. The keys are splashed with goat blood and beer just as they are before their first use (described above).[33]

Stage Eight: During Each Use

"During each use" is meant to imply the entire performance context of an instrument, not just the period while an instrument is actually being played. This stage, therefore, also includes rituals which take place during pauses or breaks in a performance, after which the instrument is again played. The category also includes ritual procedures conducted during special uses of an instrument as well as those performed during each regular use.

In addition to sharing in the libations and sacrifices of a ritual or festival, and having the taboos mentioned above, Akan drums provide an example of a specific composition that functions as a ritual during performance. Many Akan drummers, especially those of the courts and warrior organizations, begin their performances with a drum prelude called "The Awakening," addressing the spirits of all parts of the drums in a prescribed sequence.[34] Beginning with the wood of the drum shell, the drummers then evoke the spirits of the drum's suspension pegs used to hold the head of the drum in place and support its proper tension. Next comes the elephant

31. Ernst Heins, "*Goong Rèntèng: Aspects of Orchestral Music in a Sundanese Village*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1977), 113.

32. Ibid., 115–16.

33. Wachsmann, "The Sound Instruments," 317.

34. Nketia, 11–13.

whose ear became the head of the drum; the string of the drum hoop; the cane of the hoop; and finally the drum sticks. For each one, the invocation ends " . . . if you have been away, I am calling you; they say come. I am learning, let me succeed."

Flowers and incense are offered to the *gong ageng* during most Javanese gamelan performances, acknowledging the gamelan's guardian spirit who resides there. Food offerings are also common. A cooked chicken is a frequent addition for wayang performances, as in the one that followed the naming ceremony for *Nyai Panjang Sari* described above. There are other signs that a gamelan is held in deep respect; for example, no musician wears shoes within the confines of its instruments, nor steps over any instrument, nor sits with his or her head higher than the *gong ageng*.[35]

Dan drummers of the Ivory Coast practice an unusual ritual if there is a serious rival playing at the same festival.[36] Hugo Zemp reports a competitive drummer may use magic bundles during performance to make the drum of a competing drummer sound bad. There are also antidotes, in case the same form of magic is being practiced by the other drummer. This is an interesting example of a case in which ritual magic is not done either to honor the instrument one is playing or to make it sound better, but instead to make a rival's instrument sound worse.

According to Ellingson, all Newar musical instruments, as well as books of musical notation and texts, are part of a ritual that takes place near the end of most performances.[37] Music stops for the ritual *Nāsa:dya: Puja,* an offering worship to the instruments as manifestations of the god of music conducted by members of the audience as well as by the musicians.[38] Flowers, incense, rice and money are among the various possible offerings. Drums are draped with garlands of flowers, or a blossom is laid in the bell of a trumpet. Burning incense strings are laid in front of the instruments, and money is given to the instruments through the performers. Rice grains and water are sprinkled over the instruments and the performers; and red or yellow *tikka* are made on whatever constitutes the forehead of an instru-

35. The practices described here are usually followed by gamelan musicians around the world regardless of nationality. See Vetter, 127–33, for additional practices and beliefs surrounding gamelan.

36. Hugo Zemp, *Musique Dan: La musique dans la pensée et la vie sociale d'une société africaine* (Paris: Mouton, 1971), 186–87.

37. Sometimes this ritual takes place at the beginning or after the end of a performance.

38. Some individuals may occasionally come up to make offerings during the actual playing of music, but this is not the norm.

ment, particularly drums.[39] For example, on a horizontally played, barrel-shaped drum, a tikka is likely to be placed near the center of its side, between the midline and the top of the drum where its "forehead" might be said to be. The ritual is usually followed by the playing of one or more short pieces which end the performance. This ritual is noteworthy not only for its nature, but also for the fact that, although it takes place in the context of performance, music does not accompany it.

Another example of a ritual that takes place during pauses in the performance context is found in the custom of supplications made by community members to *Kyai Kangjeng Nagawilaga* (Most Venerable Fighting Serpent), one of the two sacred *sekati* gamelan in the Kraton Yogykarta.[40] This ritual acknowledges the magical power associated with *pusaka* gamelan. Roger Vetter witnessed this ritual on the last full day of *Sekaten* (11 *Mulud* 1915 A.J., i.e., December 27, 1982) in the *Pagongan Lor* (northern gamelan building) of the Kraton Yogyakarta where this gamelan is kept and played. He recalls:

> Throughout this particular morning, during intervals that K. K. Nagawilaga was not being sounded,[41] there was a steady stream of people in everyday street clothes who, one at a time, entered the pagongan. They would sit on the floor at the southern end of the gong rack and present a small package to a palace religious official wearing the standard palace clothing of an abdidalem [servant]. The package consisted of incense and flower petals wrapped in banana leaf. The religious official would listen to the person's request, then place the incense in a clay pot for burning and set the banana leaves and flower petals inside the back of the gong ageng they were facing. As the religious official fanned the incense, filling the pagongan with its fragrant smoke, he would quietly pass on the person's request to the spirit of the gamelan via its gong ageng. Each request took between five and ten minutes and continued throughout the morning until the noon prayers.

39. A *tikka* is a glob or line of paste consisting of rice flour, water, colored powder, and sometimes rice grains or other ingredients. The paste is usually applied using one or more fingers. The tikka is most frequently placed on the foreheads of human worshippers and/or those of statues of the gods they worship.

40. *Gamelan sekati* have special ritual uses assigned to them. According to Kunst, 265–66, they are played during *Sekaten* week, i.e. the six days, counting the Javanese way from sunset to sunset, before the twelfth of *Mulud,* Mohammed's birthday. They are also played for circumcisions and weddings of certain royal family members. Vetter, 130, reports that this particular gamelan dates from the mid to late eighteenth century.

41. It is played in alternation, at approximately half-hour intervals, with another gamelan sekati, *K. K. Gunturmadu* (Most Venerable Thunder of Honey), located in the southern gamelan building. Both gamelan are pelog (seven-tone tuning system). See Vetter, 32–36 for a complete explanation of the performance scheduling for Sekaten week.

When I questioned the musicians as to what I had observed, they explained that people come to request the aid of the spirit of the gamelan in resolving some problem in their lives.[42]

Certain ritual procedures that may be observed during special performances do not occur for each regular use of an instrument, as in the following two examples of ritual robing or wrapping of instruments. Nketia explains that on ceremonial occasions, the heavy Akan *bommaa* drums are dressed in yellowish silk material, and a piece of white shirting is tied around each of the two *atumpan.*[43] Ellingson describes an unusual "costume" for the three *dama:khī,* one of the kinds of double-headed, barrel-shaped drums of the *Naubājā* ensemble discussed above. For special performances, they are wrapped in red or blue cloth decorated with gold, and the veiled head of a god is placed on the top side of each drum, which is suspended horizontally from a thong around the neck of its performer. The background color of the cloth is the same as that of the face of the god. On the central drum of the three is the male god Bhairava, depicted with a blue face. On either side of him are the two goddesses Kālī and Kumārī, depicted with red faces. These heads visually manifest the presence of the three gods in the drums.

Stage Nine: After Each Use

The period after each use, when a performance is over, may be accompanied by specific ritual procedures. For example, during the concluding phase of Fang Bwiti liturgy in Gabon, James Fernandez reports, four "exit songs" are sung for putting away the *ngombi* (the eight-stringed harp essential to Bwiti ritual), which is also danced from the temple to its special storage chamber at the end of the village.[44]

The Kiganda *entenga,* a tuned-drum ensemble, serves to remind us that a special procedure may take place after a specific period of usage rather than on a single-use basis. Until 1966, when national political events forced this tuned-drum ensemble out of existence, the *entenga* were found only in the Royal Enclosure of the *Kabaka,* Emperor of the Baganda kingdom. Lois Anderson informs us that the six pairs of drums in the ensemble were subjected to a ritual procedure after each ten-day term of duty of the players.[45]

42. Vetter, 132–33.

43. Nketia, 16.

44. James Fernandez, *Bwiti: An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 464, 466.

45. Lois Anderson, "The Entenga Tuned-drum Ensemble," *Essays for a Humanist: An Offering to Klaus Wachsmann* (New York: The Town House Press, 1977), 6.

The drums were raised toward the ceiling of the house in which they were usually played, and tied there with the single skins of each pair touching each other "face to face." This procedure honored the status and importance of these royal drums by protecting them from insects on the ground.[46] Ernst Heins notes that the instruments of the sacred *goong rèntèng* ensemble of Lebakwangi are wrapped in white linen blankets after each use, protecting them and both acknowledging and honoring their sacredness.[47]

Between each use

The storing of instruments between uses often involves ritual practices. The Bwiti *ngombi* is kept in its own light-tight chamber where it is placed before dawn, for as James Fernandez explains: " . . .male and female must not have sexual congress during the all night [Bwiti] ceremonies. In the same way the male orb, the sun, should not be allowed to shine upon the female principle, the harp which belongs to the moon."[48] The Sundanese *goong rèntèng* ensemble is kept in a special house between uses,[49] while the Kiganda *entenga* ensemble remains in its own house, also used for performances, between periods of use.[50] While they do not have a house of their own, 'Are'are slit drums are stored in the men's house in the village between performances.

A more startling case of special housing for an instrument of extremely high status is that of the famous *bagyendanwa* drum, part of the royal regalia of the former kingdom of Ankole. Klaus Wachsmann and Russell Kay explain the drum "had its own household complete with its own servants, herds of cattle, musical instruments and musicians," and that "the drum's 'personal' wealth was used to help those who turned to it for support."[51]

In Zimbabwe, the Shona *mbira dzavadzimu,* a lamellaphone played inside a separate gourd resonator, is considered to be holy and said to belong to the ancestors. While it does not have a specific storage place, Paul Berliner informs us that the " 'law of *mbira*' requires concern for its care. Simon

46. Personal communication from Lois Anderson, October 1987.
47. Heins, 115.
48. Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 462.
49. Heins, 115.
50. Anderson, 6.
51. Klaus P. Wachsmann and Russell Kay, "The Interrelations of Musical Instruments, Musical Forms, and Cultural Systems in Africa," *Technology and Culture* 12 no. 3 (1971): 408.

Mashoko reports that the *mbira* must be kept 'in a special way, in a safe place . . . like a precious book.' "[52]

Between Each Regular Use and Last Use

No specific ritual procedures unique to the period between each use and the last use of an instrument have yet been observed. It is probable that, in most cases, the same procedures are conducted during this period as between each use.

The Last-Use Phase

Stages Ten and Eleven: Before and During Last Use

Specific examples for these stages in the life cycle of an instrument have not yet been found. These ritual procedures are likely to be the same as those conducted during the normal usage cycles; and because the last use of an instrument may not be known in advance, rituals limited to these stages may be quite rare. An instrument may break or be otherwise destroyed accidentally. Or a musician may decide in the context of a performance that an instrument no longer sounds right and that it must be replaced, thus making that the last performance on the instrument. The use of an instrument may also coincide with the life of its owner/performer, and thus the last use of an instrument may immediately precede the death of this musician. Consequently, the last use of an instrument may be a highly unpredictable event.

Stage Twelve: After Last Use

This period marks the "death" of an instrument or the end of its life as a musical instrument. An instrument may be given a kind of burial, given a new use other than performance, or continue to be worshipped or honored even though it is no longer played.

In Tchad, the *galdama, direndana,* and *kolo,* the three harps of the Kotoko used for exorcism rituals, are never destroyed when they are no longer playable. Instead, Monique Brandily reports, they are taken far away from the village and laid to rest in the brush.[53] On the other hand,

52. Paul Berliner, *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 236.

53. Monique Brandily, "Un Exorcisme musical chez les Kotoko," *Musique dans la vie,* ed. Tolia Nikiprowetzky (Paris: Office de Cooperation Radiophonique, 1967), 59.

Messner informs us that the *lounuat,* the friction block of the Malanggan Cult Society in New Ireland, is considered to be a physical part of its professional performer and to share his extremely high status; thus the instrument is cremated or thrown into the sea with him after he dies.[54]

Mirlitons, sacred instruments in *Go,* a Dan secret society, are used as voice disguisers in singing and speaking. Their sound is said to be the voice of a spirit (*Gee,* a name which is also given to masked figures). When the old mirlitons are no longer used as instruments, they acquire a new use: they are put into parcels together with magical substances and relics and then used as protective magic.[55]

Instruments no longer used in performance may be connected with ancestor worship. In the first case that follows, the ancestors are the former performers on the instruments; in the second, they are the instrument makers. In northern Dan country, there is a large *glong* drum that is part of a now incomplete ensemble which is no longer played.[56] At the end of Ramadan[57], a chief performs a ritual sacrifice for the drum, invoking the instruments and recalling the ancestors who were once the performers on these drums. The chief kills a chicken, putting its blood and feathers on the drum, and says a sequence of prayers to the drum. After the first set of prayers, the chicken is cooked and the chief places three pieces of it on the shell of the drum, again presenting it formally to the drum and asking it, in return, to give good fortune, riches and children to the community. Zemp tells of a case in which the remains of old 'Are'are panpipes, which were burned during the conflagration of a house, were kept as relics of the ancestors who first constructed those panpipes.

We have seen that musical instruments may be honored with rituals in the receptive mode at many times throughout their life cycles. Even though published examples are still sparse, it is evident that these important rituals are rich in variety, and that study of them can contribute greatly to our understanding of the meaning of musical instruments.

The Transitive Mode

In the transitive mode, an instrument is an active agent essential to the effectiveness of a ritual for persons, places or things, whether seen or un-

54. Messner, 54.

55. Zemp, *Musique Dan,* 234.

56. Ibid., 199–203.

57. In a personal communication, Zemp explained that in northern Dan, there is some Islamic influence, and some chiefs are nominally Muslims. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Moslem year and a period of daily fasting from sunrise to sunset.

TABLE 1

The Bwiti *Ngombi* Categorized in the Transitive Mode of Ritual Participation

The Realm of the Voice	
Physical	***Metaphysical***
Music of the harp:	Voice of Nyingwan Mebege, Sister of God
	As such, the music: drives evil spirits out of the chapel, invites the ancestors, carries prayers to heaven, is the female voice of pity and consolation
	Music is that played by the dead in the afterworld or by angels in heaven
Strings, 8 in number	Like the eight sacred trees, the strings are locales for receiving and sending messages from the unseen
Strings: higher four, female lower four, male	Female and male intermingle in music as in ritual

The Realm of the Body	
Physical	***Metaphysical***
Whole harp:	Body of Sister of God and of each Banzie Spirits of dead may enter it as they also enter the chapel
Carved "shelf:"	Features of the Sister of God
Neck:	Backbone of the Sister of God Male potency
Tuning pegs:	Ribs of the Sister of God
Strings:	Sinews and tendons of the Sister of God: her flexibility and endurance
Resonator:	Stomach of Sister of God Womb: Spiritual Source of Life
Neck in Resonator:	Sexual union
Sound Table: left 1/2 red, right 1/2 white	Respectively: Female and male (blood and semen, as are Banzies and Bwiti chapel halves) Sin and purity Dress of harpist/guardian (white), leader (red), Banzies (both)
Soundholes, upper pair:	Breast holes: nurturance from the Sister of God
lower one:	Birth hole

seen, other than the instrument itself or its spirit. In this mode, the instrument and its spirit often function as a vehicle for communication between the living and the dead, a mediator between the human and the spirit worlds. There are many examples of such ritual participation by instruments. Anthropologists have devised a variety of schemes to understand the meaning and function of persons and objects in ritual contexts. But my purpose in treading into this mysterious territory of rituals is to devise a system of categories specifically for musical instruments, which often participate in ritual through the power of their sound as well as their material aspects.

The transitive mode thus has two realms, that of the voice (sound) of the instrument and that of its body (material aspects). In the realm of the voice, an instrument participates in ritual through its music; in the realm of the body, it may participate in its entirety and/or through any or all of its parts including soundholes, carving, painting and other decoration.[58]

There are many reported examples of the efficacy of the sound or music of an instrument which could be discussed as part of the realm of the voice. Several of those were cited above in the discussion of the receptive mode of instruments and ritual and need only be recalled here. For example, the mythological sound of Kṛishṇa's trumpet *Pānchajanya* had the power to kill the unrighteous; the *goong rèntèng* of Lebakwangi purifies the community and prevents harm and misfortune; and among the Dan, the sound of the mirlitons is the voice of the spirit, Gee.

Much less attention has been paid to the ways in which an instrument participates in ritual through its corporeal aspects. Many scholars give us the names of parts of the instruments, but do not explain their meaning in the context of the ritual. There are very few instruments for which scholars have systematically elicited and described the function and meaning of corporeal aspects in ways that explain the instrument's participation in the

58. Decoration is an extremely important aspect of participation. In working with the Sundanese gamelan from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 at the Field Museum, I found every color, carved detail and application of gold leaf to be significant, as is the gamelan as a whole, a three-dimensional depiction of Javanese concepts of the triune cosmos. This gamelan, as I believe is true of gamelan in general, can be categorized fully in this mode, but it would require a complete analysis of all the instruments of a gamelan (twenty-four in the case of the 1893 gamelan), a discussion far too lengthy to include here. For an early analysis of this gamelan's design and decoration, see De Vale, *A Sundanese Gamelan,* 100–165. See also Linda Simonson, "A Burmese Arched Harp (*Saùng-gauk*) and Its Pervasive Buddhist Symbolism," this *Journal* 13 (1987), 39–64.

realm of the body. One of these is the *ngombi,*[59] the harp essential to the Fang Bwiti rituals described by James W. Fernandez. Because it participates in Bwiti ritual through its sound and literally all of its corporeal aspects, the *ngombi* serves as the ideal example for the transitive mode.[60]

Fernandez[61] relates that one of the principle purposes of the now Christian-influenced Bwiti religion, which is rooted in the Fang ancestor cult, is "to restore the revitalizing relationship with the ancestors that was abandoned under missionary pressure. At the same time Fang Bwiti devotes itself to the powers of the universe, in particular to the Sister of God, *Nyingwan Mebege* (syncretized with the Virgin[62]), to whose life-giving benevolence the members appeal."[63] She is the power of night, her symbol is

59. The *ngombi* as defined by Klaus Wachsmann in "Human Migration and African Harps," *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 16, (1964): 84, is a classic "shelf" harp, a type found primarily in Gabon and unquestionably related in structure and performance position to the European harp. When a harp of this type is carved, a projection ("shelf") is left remaining at the back half of the top of the resonator. The neck of the harp is inserted through a hole in the front half of the top of the resonator and then tied to the projection for added support. The projection is often anthropomorphically designed, as is the case with many Bwiti *ngombi.* For a general discussion of this type of harp, its relationship to other harps, and an illustration of its internal structure, see Sue Carole DeVale, "Harps, African," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 8:213–16.

60. It was necessary to cull information from four different sources by James W. Fernandez in order to uncover the total scope of the *ngombi's* participation in Bwiti ritual as presented in this paper: "Symbolic Consensus in a Fang Reformative Cult," *American Anthropologist* 67 (1965), 902–27; *Music from an Equatorial Microcosm,* Ethnic Folkways Library FE 4214, (New York: Folkways Records and Service Corporation, 1973), liner notes, 1–11; *Bwiti: An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); and "The Argument of Images and the Experience of Returning to the Whole," *The Anthropology of Experience,* ed. Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 159–87. Some of the information on Bwiti ritual and on the *ngombi* appears in most of the Fernandez sources; page numbers are cited only for quotations and information found in only one of the sources. For illustrations of *ngombi,* see Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 538, and photographs 7–9, 11, 15, following p. 454.

61. Fernandez, *Music from an Equatorial Microcosm,* 2.

62. Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 4.

63. Five main religious subcultures have influenced the development of Fang Bwiti religion: Fang Bieri, Tsogo Bwiti, Miene Mbiri (the curing cult and cult of wealth) and two forms of Christianity. In addition, there are many branches of Bwiti religion, each with their own differences and varying degrees of influence from the above religions (See Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 363–67. At times, it is very difficult to determine whether Fernandez is talking about Bwiti religion in general or about a specific branch. Fernandez tends to focus on the *Asumege Ening* (Creation of Life) branch. His references to the harp in all his work seem to fit this branch with its emphasis on male and female complementarity and on Nyingwan Mebege. In "Symbolic Consensus," 908, Fernandez has addressed the problem of symbolic consensus in Bwiti religion, noting that only the leader of the Kougoulou cult (Asumege Ening

the moon and, appropriately, Bwiti rituals are held from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. in a microcosmic cult house or chapel. Fernandez states that Bwiti ritual "suggests a whole cosmology within which the believer may be redeemed," and that the *ngombi* symbolizes "the microcosm and macrocosm of Bwiti life."[64]

In the course of the Bwiti ritual, the *ngombi* is played to provide solo interludes or to accompany song and dance. Because of the length of the ritual, several harpists are often employed to spell each other. After "cleaning out the chapel" with harp music, they begin the main body of the Bwiti ritual, the *Zen Ngombi* or Road of the Harp, divided into two parts: The Road of Creation and Birth (*Zen Abiale*),[65] and the Road of Death (*Zen Awu*).

The sound of the harp (the realm of the voice, table 1) is considered to be the sacred voice of the Sister of God. Her power is felt in its music which is used to "clean out" the chapel, driving away evil spirits, thus making it possible for the ancestors to travel between the above and the below via the cosmic tree represented by the pillar in the chapel. The harp is the female voice (*King mininga*) of pity and consolation.[66] The music played on the harp is that played by the dead in the afterworld or by the angels in heaven. The eight strings are like the eight sacred trees, for both are locales for sending and receiving blessings to and from the unseen.[67] The four higher-pitched strings of the *ngombi* are female, the lower four, male, and they are said to intermingle in harmonious ways in music as men and women do in ritual.

The realm of the body is extremely detailed. The harp, in its entirety, represents the body of the Sister of God as well as the body of each member.[68] The harp is parallel in function to the chapel; that is, the spirits of the dead may enter the *ngombi* while it is being played just as they also enter the chapel. The "shelf" of the harp, which rests against the chest of the harpist

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branch) could give "logicomeaningful integration of a high order" to the symbolism of the harp. I can only assume, therefore, that the portrayal of the harp based on Fernandez' work that is presented here fits most closely with that cult and the interpretation of its leader.

64. The first quotation in this sentence is from Fernandez, *Music from an Equatorial Microcosm, 2;* the second from Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 538.

65. It is interesting to note that in the Bwiti origin myths in the Road of Creation and Birth, Noah was the last child of Adam and Eve. He was born with the *ngombi* in his hand and grew to be the master of the harp that was to become his "main source of preternatural intelligence" (Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 442, 444).

66. Fernandez, "Argument of Images," 449.

67. Fernandez, *Bwiti,* 399.

68. Ibid., 462.

during performance, is carved with the features of the Sister of God. The neck, which points away from the harpist in performance, is both her backbone and a symbol of male potency.[69] The tuning pegs are her ribs,[70] and the strings are her sinews and tendons and represent her endurance and flexibility. The resonator is both the womb, the spiritual source of life, and the stomach of the Sister of God.[71] Thus the juncture of neck and resonator, backbone and stomach, male potency and womb, is symbolic of sexual union.[72] The sound table of the harp is painted red on the left half and white on the right, representing female and male (blood and semen), respectively, and corresponding to the halves of the temple. All participants, male and female, "are dressed in red and white flowing uniforms—white on the pure upper half of their bodies and red on the impure and passionate lower half."[73] There are only two exceptions: the leader, who takes away the sins of the members and who dances on the female left side of the chapel, is dressed entirely in red; and the harpist/guardian of the chapel, who purifies the chapel and who dances on the male left side of the chapel, is dressed entirely in white. Even the soundholes in the sound table have meaning: the upper pair are breast holes from which comes nurturance from the Sister of God, while the lower sound hole is the birth hole.[74]

In the transitive mode, an instrument participates in ritual along a physical-metaphysical continuum. This continuum exists for any one aspect of the instrument or for the instrument taken as a whole. A simple representation of a physical-metaphysical continuum can be demonstrated using some of the functions and meanings of the strings of the *ngombi* as they participate in Fang Bwiti ritual in the realm of the voice. The continuum begins at the physical level with the strings as material objects and moves through the physical, social, conceptual and communicative levels of humans, to the metaphysical levels of ancestor spirits and gods. Beginning with the strings as material objects (see table 2), next on the continuum is the physical-conceptual level of the strings considered as male and female sets. Following that is the musical-conceptual level of the male and female sounds intermingling in music as humans do in ritual, the level in terms of which the entire continuum is defined. Next is the communicative level of

69. Fernandez, "Symbolic Consensus," 908–9.
70. Fernandez, *Bwiti*, 539.
71. Ibid., 539.
72. Fernandez, "Symbolic consensus," 909.
73. Fernandez, "Argument of Images," 167.
74. Fernandez, *Bwiti*, 538.

Table 2

Physical-Metaphysical Continuum:
Functions and Symbolic Meanings of the Strings
of the Fang Bwiti *Ngombi*
in the Transitive Mode of Ritual Participation

(Physical)

The Strings

Male and Female Sets of Strings

Male and Female Sounds Intermingle in Music as Humans do in Ritual

Transmit Blessings to and from Gods and Ancestor Spirits

Voice of the Sister of God

(Metaphysical)

the strings as mediators between the human and spiritual realms, and transmitters of blessings to and from gods and ancestor spirits. Finally, at the metaphysical end of the continuum, the music of the strings is the voice of *Nwingwan Mbege,* the Sister of God.

This analysis of the *ngombi* in the transitive mode of musical instruments and ritual has shown that the harp fully participates in Bwiti ritual through the realm of the voice and the realm of the body. The power and meaning of its music is essential to the efficacy of Bwiti ritual; and each part of the instrument and each decoration expresses Bwiti belief and practice. The strings of the *ngombi* serve as an example of the way in which an instrument participates in ritual in the transitive mode along a physical-metaphysical continuum. In this mode, the *ngombi* is clearly the embodiment of the Bwiti cosmos on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels.

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, two modes of participation for musical instruments in ritual, receptive and transitive, have been distinguished; and models for their study, illustrated with specific examples, have been presented.

We have examined, via the receptive mode, the function of rituals conducted for instruments themselves during twelve stages in the "life cycle" of musical instruments. These stages have been organized into four

phases: construction, first use, each use, and last use. Separating each phase is a "between use" period during which an instrument may be subjected to ritual storage procedures.

The examples of rituals for instruments from specific African, Asian and Pacific cultures are summarized in the Appendix; all four categories of instruments (idiophones, membranophones, chordophones and aerophones) are represented. It can be seen that music is usually essential to the first and each use phases, but not to the construction or last use phases nor to the periods between use. Rituals may include food, flower and incense offerings; libations; animal sacrifice; taboos; feasts; prayers and magic; ritual payment; robing and wrapping; ritual washing; singing, dancing, and the performance of particular pieces; special housing; and cremation or burial at sea. Among their purposes are the honoring of the spirits of raw materials or those of the completed instruments and their parts; the honoring of instruments as manifestations of gods and goddesses; ancestor worship; the freeing of the voice of the instrument; the ensuring of the sonic character of an instrument or the poorer quality of a rival's instrument; and the protecting of the instrument from insects, the elements, or the light of day. Officiators are primarily instrument makers and performers and, occasionally, members of the audience or community.

In the transitive mode, we have studied the essential role of musical instruments in rituals offered for a person, place or thing, whether seen or unseen, other than the instrument itself or its spirit. An instrument may participate in the transitive mode along a physical-metaphysical continuum in two realms: that of its voice and that of its body.

The Fang *ngombi,* the cult harp which participates in Bwiti ritual through its music and all of its corporeal aspects (table 2), is the ideal example of the transitive mode. Participating through both realms, the harp is the voice and body, tissue and bone, of *Nyingwan Mebege,* the Sister of God (or the Virgin, in Christianized forms). The harp music is a medium for communication with the unseen, and it has the power to drive evil spirits out of the chapel while inviting the ancestors in. Spirits of the dead enter it as they do the chapel. The *ngombi* represents male and female in its structure, its decoration, and its strings; and its music is a metaphor for the intermingling of male and female in ritual. In its totality the *ngombi* symbolizes both macrocosm and microcosm of Bwiti life and ritual.

Since published examples for both the receptive and transitive modes are sparse or incomplete, it is my hope that this paper will stimulate further research in these areas. Through systematic study of musical instruments and ritual, we will attain a greater understanding of the ways in which peo-

ple of all cultures give meaning and significance to instruments, and they, in return, give meaning to people.

This kind of systematic approach to the study of ritual can also be applied to the study of instrument makers and musicians, for makers' rituals may coincide with construction cycles. And musicians' rituals are likely to coincide with learning, rehearsing and performing cycles and are especially likely to be found in cultures where the belief is held that spirits play an important role in the performance.[75] Finally, a systematic comparison of the ritual modes of musicians, musical instruments, and instrument makers with the ritual modes of dancers, dance masks, and mask makers, will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the meaning and function of the performing arts around the world.

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75. For example, Paul Berliner, 137, reports that special ceremonies are sometimes held for young Shona *mbira* players; and in fact, one of his own teachers made a special trip home "to ask permission" of the ancestors to teach Paul.

Appendix: summary of the receptive mode of musical instruments in ritual with examples from African, Asian, and Pacific cultures

Stage and Period	*Geographical Area and People*	*Instrument*	*Ritual Procedure*	*Purpose*	*Officiator*
1. Before Construction:	Africa, Ghana: Lobi	Gyilli (xylophone)	Food offerings	Honors Nera tree spirit, gains permission to cut it down	Maker/musician
	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are'are	'O'o (slit drums)	Prayers and magic	Honors ancestors and cultural hero who invented stone tools	Makers
2. During Construction:	Africa, Gambia: Mandinka	Kora (harp-lute)	Animal sacrifice, blood offering	Honors spirits of calabash, goat and cow	Makers
	Pacific, New Guinea: Kaluli	Ilib (drum)	Bird hunt and sacrifice	Frees the voice of instrument and ensures its sonic character	Makers
	Pacific, New Ireland: Malanggan	Lounuat (friction block)	Sexual and food taboos	Ensures successful freeing of the voice (tongues)	Makers
3. After Construction:	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are'are	'O'o (slit drums)	1) Ritual procedure (details unknown), 2) Small feast	1) Cancels food and sexual taboos 2) Celebrates completion of drums	Makers
	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are'are	'O'o (slit drums)	Drumming of special piece	Announces completion of drums	Makers

(continued)

Stage and Period	*Geographical Area and People*	*Instrument*	*Ritual Procedure*	*Purpose*	*Officiator*
Between Construction and First Use: No specific examples found. See Between Each Use, below.					
4. Before First Use:	Africa, Uganda: Baganda	Amadinda or akadinda? (xylophone)	Animal sacrifice (cock or goat) for blood and beer offerings (libations)	Acknowledges status and importance of instruments	Performers?
	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are'are	'O'o (slit drums)	Ritual payment to makers, feast, prayers, sacred food offerings	Acknowledges cultural hero, magic of stone blades	Commissioner of instruments/ owner (Big Man)
Before First Special use:	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are 'are	'Au (panpipes)	Magic, food offerings, ritual washing before first festival use	Ensures prosperity, earning of sacred money, power over audience	Performers
5. During First Use:	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are 'are	'O'o (slit drums)	Special housing, drum stands, and composition	Honors importance of drums, stands improve resonance	Performers, with music
6. After First Use: No specific examples found. See After Each Use, below.					
Between First and Each Use: No specific examples found. See Between Each Use, below.					
Naming:	Asia, India: Indian myths	Conch trumpet *Pānchajanya*	Unknown	Named after Pāncha-jana, a sea demon	Kṛishṇa

	Asia, China: Chinese	Ch'in (zither), and P'i-p'a (lute)	Unknown. Name inlaid in mother-of-pearl on instrument	Praises the sound of the instrument	Owner/musician or elder master musician
	Asia, Central Indonesia: Javanese	Gamelan, various gongs	Meditation; prayers; food, flower and incense offerings; ritual feast	Acknowledges spirit of gamelan/instrument, power of metal and sound	Dhalang or elder master musician
7. Before Each Use	Africa, Ghana: Akan	Drums	Libations	Acknowledges the spirit of Tweneboa Kadua tree (resonator material)	Performers
	Asia, Nepal: Newar	Naubājā ensemble (except three of the drums)	Several ceremonies	Invokes Nāsa:dya:, god of music, into instruments	Performers
	Asia, West Indonesia: Sundanese	Goong rèntèng: sacred gamelan at Lebakwangi	1) Food and incense offerings, mantera (prayer) said, 2) clay smeared in bonang bosses	Acknowledges: 1) spirit of gamelan, power of sound 2) relationship between gamelan and earth	Religious specialist and musicians
	Africa, Uganda: Baganda	Xylophones	Animal sacrifice for blood and beer offerings	Honors status of instruments	Peformers
8. During Each Use:	Africa, Ghana: Akan	Drums	Drum spoken prelude; shares in libations and sacrifices; taboos blood, jaw bones and skulls	Acknowledges spirits of all material components: animal and vegetable	Prelude played by performers

(continued)

Stage and Period	*Geographical Area and People*	*Instrument*	*Ritual Procedure*	*Purpose*	*Officiator*
	Asia, Indonesia: Javanese, Sundanese	Gongs	Flowers, incense, and sometimes, food offerings	Acknowledges guardian spirit of gamelan and power of its sound	Musicians during performance
	Africa, Ivory Coast: Dan	Drums	Carrying magic bundles during competitions	Makes rival's drum sound bad	Performers, while playing
	Asia, Nepal: Newar	All instruments, books of texts, music notation	Offerings of flowers, incense, rice and money; tikka	Acknowledges instruments, texts, notation as manifestations of God of Music	Audience and performers, during break
	Asia, Indonesia: Javanese	Gamelan sekati: K.K. Nagawilaga, Yogyakarta	Flower and incense offerings and prayers	Acknowledges magic power of sacred gamelan, request aid of gamelan's spirit through court religious specialist	Community members during break
During Special Use:	Africa, Ghana: Akan	Drums: 1) Bommaa, 2) Atumpan	1) Robed with yellow silk 2) Tied with white shirting	Acknowledges Twene-boa Kodua and status/ power of drums	Musicians
	Asia, Nepal: Newar	Damakhī: (3 Naubājā drums)	Robing with colored cloth and veiled head of gods and goddesses	Honors Bhairava, Kālī and Kumārī of whom the drums are manifestations	Musicians

9. After Each Use:	Africa, Gabon: Fang	Ngombi (harp)	Songs and dances for putting the harp away	Honors Nyingwan Mebege, Sister of God, of whom harp is manifestation	Bwiti harpist and participants (Banzis)
	Africa, Uganda: Baganda	Entenga (tuned drum ensemble)	Drums raised high off the floor of their house	Honors status of drums by protecting them against insects	Musicians?
	Asia, Indonesia, West Java: Sundanese	Goong rèntèng: sacred gamelan at Lebakwangi	Wrapping instruments in white linen blankets	Honors sacredness of instruments and protects them	Musicians and caretaker
Between Each Use (Special storage):	Africa, Gabon: Fang, Bwiti religion	Ngombi (harp)	Storage in its own light-tight chamber	Harp = female principle = moon; prevents male principle (sun) from shining on it	Harpist and Banzis = Bwiti members
	Asia, West Java: Sundanese	Goong rèntèng: sacred gamelan at Lebakwangi	Storage in special house	Honors sacredness of instruments and protects them	Caretaker and musicians
	Africa, Uganda: Baganda	Entenga (tuned drum ensemble)	Storage in drum house used also for playing	Honors importance and high status of drums	Musicians?
	Africa, Uganda: Banyankole	Bagyendanwa (drum)	Storage in own house; own servants, cattle, instruments, musicians	Honors importance and high status of drums	Musicians or servants of the drum?
	Africa, Zimbabwe: Shona	Mbira dzavazimu (lamellaphone)	Careful storage in musician's house; out of reach by children, etc.	Honors sacredness and its belonging to the ancestors	Musicians

(continued)

Stage and Period	*Geographical Area and People*	*Instrument*	*Ritual Procedure*	*Purpose*	*Officiator*
Between Each Use and Last Use: No specific examples found. See Between Each Use, above.					
10. Before Last Use. No specific examples found. See Before Each Use, above.					
11. During Last Use. No specific examples found. See During Each Use, above.					
12. After Last Use:	Africa, Tchad: Kotoko	Galdama, direndana and kolo (harps)	Laid to rest in the brush (form of burial)	Honors their importance in exorcism rituals	Musicians?
	Pacific, New Ireland: Malanggan	Lounuat (friction block)	Cremation or burial at sea with performer	Acknowledges instrument as a physical part of the performer	Family and cult members?
	Africa, Ivory Coast: Dan	(mirlitons or kazoos)	New use: put into parcels with magical substances and relics	Used as protective magic	Musicians?
	Africa, Ivory Coast: Dan	Glong (drum)	Sacrifice of chicken; offerings of its blood, feathers, and cooked meat; prayers	Invokes drum spirit, worships ancestor drummers, to ensure prosperity and many children for the community	Chief
	Pacific, Solomon Is.: 'Are'are	'Au (panpipes)	Particular set of burned panpipes kept as relics	Worships the ancestors who made the panpipes	Musicians?