

Zeze – A Tanzanian Fiddle

An Empirical Research of the History, Structure,
and Playing of Wagogo's and Waha's Zeze



Written Final Project

Autumn 2014

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1 Introduction

Essential vocabulary of areas, ethnic groups, and the instrument presented in this paper:

Bagamoyo	City on the east side of Tanzania by the Indian Ocean.
Dodoma	Region in the middle of Tanzania. Also the capital of the United Republic of Tanzania.
Kigoma	Region on the west side of Tanzania, near Lake Tanganyika.
Mgogo (pl. Wagogo)	Ethnic group from Dodoma.
Muha (pl. Waha)	Ethnic group from Kigoma.
Zeze [zɛzɛ]	Stringed instrument. The number of strings varies and it can be played with a bow or by plucking, depending on the instrument.

I was in Tanzania, for the first time, as an exchange student for one semester (2012–2013) at Tumaini University Makumira, studying music education. The university is located in the north of Tanzania, near the city of Arusha, which is on the foothills of Mount Meru. Mount Kilimanjaro and the city of Moshi are also quite close by. When I was planning my trip to Tanzania, I tried to figure out if there was any kind of “Tanzanian fiddle.” I was interested in stringed instruments, because of my main instruments, *violin* and *jouhikko* (a Finnish bowed lyre). I guessed that there had to be one, since some kind of a version of the “fiddle” has been found in just about every culture. However, I could not find any information on the Internet. Basically, the only bit of information I found was that the “Tanzanian fiddle” is called the *zeze*. It was also really confusing, because *zeze* can mean many kinds of stringed instruments that are played with a bow or by plucking. In Tanzania, I also learned, by talking to many people, that even though different ethnic groups have different kinds of *zezes*, they always call it just a *zeze*. In this paper, I differentiate between the various *zezes* by adding the name of the region – for example, *Wagogo’s zeze* – to the name of the instrument.

In the Arusha region, it was impossible to find any kind of *zeze* tradition, but I was lucky, because one of my fellow students, Seth Lulamaze, was playing *Waha’s* one-stringed *zeze* from *Kigoma*, West Tanzania. Seth taught me some basics of the instrument. Just before the university’s Christmas break, we also had a workshop with three *Wagogo* musicians from Dodoma. *Zeze* player Daudi Mazoya was one of them and, from him, I learned some basics of the *Wagogo’s zeze*. Seth was traveling to Kigoma for Christmas, so I asked him to find an instrument builder to make me a one-stringed *zeze*; and, just before I left Tanzania, musicians from Dodoma sent me a four-stringed *zeze*. At the same time, the music department at Makumira University also received two-, four- and

five-stringed zezes from Dodoma.

When I returned to Finland, I still wanted to know more about zezes and was very surprised to learn that there was next to nothing written about the Tanzanian fiddle type of zeze on the Internet or in books, but luckily I managed to go back to Tanzania with the help of a grant from Sibelius Academy. According to my zeze teachers, the tradition is almost dead. It is very rare to find someone who can play the zeze in Tanzania. Now, the subject is a very broad one and my second visit to Tanzania was very short – I could stay only one month in February 2014 – but, in this paper, I tell as much about the zeze as I was able to learn during my two stays in Tanzania.

During my first stay, I received a couple of lessons from Seth Lulamaze, who is a *Muha* from Kigoma, and I also interviewed him. I also attended a two-day workshop, where I got to know something about the Wagogo's zeze from Daudi Mazoya. I met them both at Makumira University. During my second trip, I stayed for two weeks in Bagamoyo, where a really famous Tanzanian musician from Dodoma, Dr. Hukwe Zawose (1940–2003), lived with his family. Most of his large family still resides there; they are all musicians and know Dodoma's tradition. I received ten zeze lessons from Msafiri Zawose and nine instrument-building lessons from Julius Zawose, both of whom are sons of Hukwe Zawose. I also had some conversations at Makumira University, in Arusha, with my Tanzanian supervisor Seth Sululu, who teaches there and knows a lot about Tanzanian traditional music. I recorded all the sessions, except for the building lessons, which I photographed and took notes during instead. That material includes some songs, advice on how to play the zeze and pictures and, all in all, a lot of information about the Tanzanian culture. The quality of the photographs and recordings is not perfect, because I was mostly using my smartphone for them. I also found some useful information from some books from the 1980s; and, finally, also something from the Internet after receiving good tips regarding what kinds of keywords (Wagogo festival, for instance) to use when searching for information. I really recommend checking out the sources for this paper and opening the links I put there, because a video of the zeze is worth a thousand words. Unfortunately, it is mostly Wagogo's zeze tradition that can be found on YouTube and not many other ethnic groups' traditions.

There is not a lot of information about the Tanzanian zeze and the few pieces of information that are available are spread far apart. Sometimes, the bits of information are also in conflict with each other. Furthermore, in Tanzania, there are only a few people left who play the zeze. For all these reasons, my aim in this work is to get to know as much as possible about the zeze, as well as about

building and playing it, and to collect everything I have found out about the instrument. My information comes mostly from zeze players Seth Lulamaze, Daudi Mazoya, Msafiri Zawose, and Julius Zawose, all of whom I met during my trips to Tanzania. Some information I found from books and my other sources were musical, like CDs and YouTube videos.

In this paper, I will first briefly provide Tanzania's musical history (Chapter 2). I will then tell more about the zeze, especially Wagogo's and Waha's zeze (Chapter 3). Next, I will show one way to build Wagogo's zeze (Chapter 4). Finally, I will explain how to play Wagogo's and Waha's zeze (Chapter 5). All in all, I will concentrate mostly on the Wagogo's and Waha's zeze traditions, because my informants are from those regions.

2 Introduction to the Musical Tradition of Tanzania

2.1 Musical History of Tanzania

Before starting with the musical history of Tanzania, I want to clarify the name of the country. Tanganyika became independent in 1961 and a republic just a year after that. Julius Nyerere was chosen president of the republic. Zanzibar became independent in 1963. Finally, in 1964, the United Republic of Tanzania was created, when Tanganyika and Zanzibar were joined together. In this text I will refer to these areas by the name Tanzania.

Some of the oldest vestiges of human culture have been found in Tanzania. It can be assumed that the first music was created there two million years ago by people who worked using simple stone tools. After that, the peoples living there were hunter-gatherers who most likely produced at least some signal-shouts. The bow used for hunting inspired a stringed instrument – the musical bow. Beginning in approximately 2000 BC, North Africa started to dry up and the Sahara Desert started to form. Many peoples were wandering south to Tanzania. They probably brought drums and stringed instruments, like types of lyres and harps, with them. It has been estimated that polyphony was formed at that time in Africa, more than 1000 years earlier than it started to be used in European art music (Malm 1984, 4).

From the beginning of our chronology, Tanzania became a part of large trade system that spanned all the way to China, Indonesia and the Arabic countries. The xylophone supposedly came to East Africa at that time from Indonesia. During 1000–1500 AD in big trade centers like Kilwa, Bagamoyo, and Zanzibar there existed great Hindu and Arabic trading houses with rich musical lives. Islam started to spread to East Africa and an Arabic-African mixed culture started to form. Indeed, the Bantu language, Swahili, reflects Arabic influences. Around 1400 AD, Tanzania was a colorful mix of different peoples and languages, which are still present: *Bantus*, *Kushitis*, *Nilotes*, *Nilo-hamites* and *Khoisans*. In some places trade generated courts, where special court music was played with drums. Music started to develop by oral tradition (Malm 1984, 4–5).

In 1498, Vasco da Gama's three ships came to Tanzania, and the Portuguese destroyed the trade culture of East Africa. They did not leave musical influences, but they managed to stop the development process of the coast (Malm 1984, 5).

At the end of the 17th century, people from the coast drove out the Portuguese from Tanzania and Arabic influences became stronger again. Zanzibar became one of Africa's big slave trade harbors, with Arabs taking care of the slave trade. At that time, many of East Africa's peoples developed egalitarian social systems. Usually everybody had the same types of jobs, but some groups featured distribution of work because of age, gender, or caste system. One special occupational group was smiths and another one was religious leader-doctors (*Waganga wa Kienyeji* in Swahili). *Waganga wa Kienyeji* were usually musicians. The *Manga* (one person) led the education of the young and took care of the important instruments that were needed in education. In Tanzania, people were developing rich *ngomas* (Malm 1984, 5–6).

The word *ngoma*, in Swahili, means music, dance, and drum. Dr. Arnold Shiwala tells about the *ngoma* in the written part of his doctoral dissertation called *Chizentele – My Path to Original Artistry and Creative Fusion of Ngoma with Finnish Folk Music and Dance*. “[...] *Ngoma* function as an identity for social groups, professional groups in the community, as an identity for ethnic groups as well as an identity for the nation. [...] You can understand and recognize a certain ethnic group by studying or watching their *ngoma*” (Shiwala 2009, 18).

In the 1860s, the Germans and the English competed for East Africa and, in the end, Tanzania was claimed by Germany. In 1905–1907, in South Tanzania, people started to revolt against Germany. They spread messages about this by singing special songs, and men's military training happened in the camps where they danced *likinda*, which is a *ngoma* that taught them how to fight against the Germans. They did not manage to drive away the Germans, however (Malm 1984, 6).

The Tanzanians' fight against colonialism failed in the beginning of the 20th century; the main reason was Christian missionaries and the way they were worked, beginning in the 1860s, with the Tanzanian people. They tried to save the pagan Tanzanians by converting them into the European cultural forms, including Christianity. They were met with a lot of resistance from local religious leaders and educators; but because they could offer material help, especially during crop failures, they also received support. One result of the missionaries' work was an increase in inequality. An upper class, educated by Europeans, developed and segregation started. Moreover, the Christian missionaries forbade the Tanzanians from playing their own local music, because it was considered pagan. They not forbid only certain types of music, but also traditional conveyance of knowledge about topics like farming and nursing, for example, which was communicated through music and dance. In some regions, local culture died without anything taking its place. Missionaries also

attacked African music and dance on the Islamic coast (Malm 1984, 6–7).

Missionaries started a European style of school where Africans sang European spiritual songs and hymns. The European influences became stronger in the 1930s and 1940s, especially around Mount Kilimanjaro and Lake Victoria, because of the rich natural resources in the region and good possibilities for the Europeans to exploit them. Still, Africans found the European church music too simple and banal, and they changed the timbre and rhythm to make it more African. At first, the missionaries were against the Africanized arrangements; but, when Tanzania became independent in 1961, it became accepted as Christian music (Malm 1984, 8).

Because of European colonialism, many of the African peoples lost respect for their own culture. They were even calling their own music and dance by the name *ngoma ya shetani* (dance of the devil) (Malm 1984, 8).

From 1920 to 1961, Tanzania was governed by the British. European influences were the biggest in the cities, where people were separated from their own group culture. In the 1930s, in the biggest city of Dar Es Salaam, different ethnic groups founded associations that buried their own members while dancing their own ngomas as well as new dances like the Afro-European dance, *mbezi*. To Africans, following proper burial rituals has always been very important, since they have strong communion with their forefathers. Within these associations, some of the other European habits were also changed back to African (Malm 1984, 9).

In the 1940s and 1950s, opposition against European colonialism raised its head and Tanzania became independent in 1961. Independent Tanzania's president, Julius Nyerere, took it as a matter of honor to bring back local culture, music, and dance (Malm 1984, 9)

2.2 Musical Areas of Tanzania

In 1984, *Musiikin Suunta 3/84* was published in Finland; this particular issue concentrated on Tanzania's music. In it, an Austrian music researcher, Gerhard Kubik divided Tanzania into seven musical areas. The areas are cultural, not political, so they do not respect national borders. According to him, this description is imperfect and in the future, when there is more information, the description could be altered (Kubik 1984, 10).

Kubik's seven areas of Tanzanian music are as follows:

1. Coastal region; the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba
2. Nyamwezi and areas of the Sukuma culture
3. Northwest Tanzania (Buhaya etc.)
4. Middle Tanzania (Wagogo, Kimbut, etc.)
5. Ruvuma River region (Makonde, Makua, Yao)
6. Southern Highlands and Lake Nyassa
7. West Tanzania

2.2.1 Coastal Region; the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba

Very strong Arabic influences can be heard, for example, in the playing style of the *udi*-lute (Arabic *ud*).

2.2.2 Nyamwezi and Areas of the Sukuma Culture

The Nyamwezi, a Bantu ethnic group, lives in the middle of Tanzania and is the only ethnic group there to use the same scale as in the Coastal region and Zanzibar, because of a strong trading connection between the areas. Initiation ceremonies and educational songs have had a big role in the Sukuma people's secret and semi-secret ceremonies, where they have used the double-coated cylinder drum *sitra*, one-stringed violin, and *endono*.

2.2.3 Northwest Tanzania

The *Haya*, *Zinza*, and *Ha* peoples from northwestern Tanzania have been influenced by Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. Haya's seven-stringed sitar is a mark of high social status and accompanies, among other things, the songs of the legends.

2.2.4 Middle Tanzania

Middle Tanzania is probably the most musically energetic area of Tanzania, because musicians are usually both players and dancers. Part of the music is connected to secret societies like the *Gorowa* people's old men's *Mandabaha* society, where they use a holy horn trumpet. Music is also used in initiations. For instance, the Wagogo have many different dances for the circumcision ceremony. Until the 1960s, Wagogos used to gather in Dodoma's old town for an annual dance festival. They have a really rich dance tradition (Kubik 1984, 10–16). Nowadays, they gather every year for the Dodoma festival (Sululu 2014). They also had special dances and instruments for when the chief died, for the harvest time, and for many other situations. One of the most important instruments of

the Wagogo people is a violin that Kubik calls *izeze* or *chizeze*. The traditional version has two strings, but when Kubik was traveling in Tanzania there were already other variations of that, like four-stringed and even twelve-stringed *izezes*. Other important Wagogo instruments are, for example, the xylophone, *marimba*, and thumb piano, the *ilimba*.

2.2.5 Ruvuma River Region

In southeastern Tanzania, the *Makonde* people were very famous because of their circumcision dances and masks that they used while dancing. They have also a lot of instruments, like a small xylophone called the *chityatya*; a one-stringed fiddle, the *akanyembe*; and a xylophone made of wood, the *dimbila*.

2.2.6 Southern Highlands and Lake Nyassa

The southern highlands, especially the region around Lake Malawi, has received a strong influence from the other side of the lake. The *Pangwa* and *Mamda* peoples were especially famous in the 1950s for their songs about the famous shaman *Chikanga*.

2.2.7 West Tanzania

West Tanzania was the least known when Kubik was writing his portrayal (Kubik 1984 16–17). At least the *Waha* peoples from Kigoma have a one-stringed *zeze* (Lulamaze 2013), and they also have different kinds of shakers and drums.

2.3 Common Characteristics of Tanzanian Music

Part of the information about the common characteristics of Tanzanian music comes from Seth Sululu, who graduated with a Master of Music from Northern Illinois University in 2012 and is now working, among other things, at Makumira University as a music lecturer. According to him, everything that people do affects the music and instruments they have been using, like being animal keepers, cultivators, fishers, etc. In Tanzania, there are more than 120 ethnic groups that can be divided into Bantu-speaking groups and non-Bantu-speaking groups. Languages also affect music. Traditionally, music has always had a function and it is never presented without a purpose. For instance, some music and instruments are presented only during a certain day or ceremony. Also, some instruments are only for men and some only for women. Not every kind of music is allowed to be played by every person (Sululu 2014).

Msafiri Zawose also told me about the context of Tanzanian music in general. Nowadays, everything is changing in Tanzania. People are focusing on other things besides keeping culture alive and are doing lots of other work than that which Tanzanians have traditionally done. In the cities, people do not have their own fields or raise their own animals, so they need to get enough money to buy all the food they need and the cost of living is going through the roof. People read books, magazines, use the Internet, watch the television, and go out when they have free time. All of this has a negative effect on the traditional culture. People who still play traditional instruments are very rare (Zawose 2014).

3 Zeze – a Tanzanian Fiddle

African fiddles belong to the group of chordophones, which are stringed instruments. A more accurate categorization tells us that they are lutes (Nketia 1968, 98, 102). A lute's strings run parallel to its neck. In Africa, both bowed and plucked varieties have been found. The most widespread form is the one-stringed fiddle, which is played with a bow and appears in three main forms that are displayed in Chapter 3.1 (Nketia 1968, 102).

3.1 African One-String Fiddles

According to Kwabena Nketia, three kinds of one-stringed fiddles are found in Africa.

3.1.1 Masinko

One type of one-stringed fiddle, the *masinko*, is found in Ethiopia. It resembles the spike fiddle. The resonator is made of wood and is diamond-shaped and covered with goat skin. Approximately fifteen to twenty of these can be played together (Kwabena Nketia 1968, 102).

3.1.2 Riti, Goge, Goje, Gonje

The second type is the one-stringed fiddle with a family resemblance to the *rebec*, an Arabic version of the bowed lute. It has a wide distribution in the Savannah belt of West Africa. *Wolofs* from Senegal call it *riti*, whereas *Hausa* from Nigeria, *Songhai* and *Djerma* from Niger, and *Dagomba* from Ghana call it *goge*, *goje*, or *gonje*. The resonator, which is round or oval, is usually made of a calabash and is covered with water lizard skin. The strings and the bow hair are made of horse hair (Kwabena Nketia 1968, 102–103).

3.1.3 Sese, Zeze, Engingini, Ekegogo, Izeze, Chizeze

The third type is the one-stringed fiddle from East and Central Africa, which is called *sese* or *zeze* in Zaire, Kenya and Tanzania and *endingini* in Uganda (Nketia 1968, 103). One name for this kind of instrument in Kenya is the *ekegogo* (Odwar 2006, 13). In Tanzania, the instrument is also called *izeze* or *chizeze* (Kubik 1984, 16). The resonator is made of wood, bamboo (Nketia 1968, 103), calabash (J. Zawose 2014), a coconut shell (von Gnielinski 1985, 28) or a clay pot (Masoya 2012). It is covered with the skin of a *duiker* (Nketia 1968, 103), rat, like it was at one time made among the *Wagogo* people (M. Zawose 2014), goat (Lulamaze 2013), Nile monitor (J. Zawose 2014) or

snake (Mazoya 2012). The strings can be made of sisal fiber (Nkabena Nketia 1968, 103), the fiber of a *msabhi* tree (Mazoya 2012), the ligament of a cow (M. Zawose 2014), or wire or nylon (J. Zawose 2014). The bow can be made, for example, from a piece of wood like *mswagwa*, *mdete* (Mazoya 2012), or *mkole* (J. Zawose 2014), and the bow hair is made of sisal fiber (Nketia 1968, 103), animal hair (von Gnielinski 1985, 28), or *baobab* tree (J. Zawose 2014), or there is none and the bow is just a stick (M. Zawose 2014). Rosin is taken from a wood called *mpenga* or *mdachi* (Mazoya 2012).

3.2 Tanzanian Fiddles

In Tanzania, the one-stringed zeze has been found at least among the *Wangoni* people in Ruvuma, who call it zeze, *king 'wenyeng 'wenye*, or *king 'wenye* and among the *Wagogo* people in Dodoma, who call it izeze (Lewis & Makala 1990, 46), zeze (M. Zawose 2014) or chizeze (Kubik 1984, 16). The *Twanyiramba* people in Singida, *Wanyamwezi* people in Tabora, *Wasukuma* and *Wagere* people in Mwanza, *Wajita* and *Wakiroba* in Mara, *Wachaga* of the *Machame* people in Kilimanjaro, *Wayao* people in Lindi, people in Mtwara (Lewis & Makala 1990, 46), and the *Waha* people in Kigoma (Lulamaze 2013) all call it zeze. The *Wahaya* people in Kagera call it *endingini* (Lewis & Makala 1990, 46). Von Gnielinski wrote in her book that Hyslop (1976) mentions the one-stringed fiddle from the *Bahaya* of the West Lake Region, which is used by the *Wasanaki* and by the *Wanyamwezi* of Tabora. In the West Lake Region, the resonator may be made out of a cow horn. One-stringed instruments that are on display at the National Museum come from the *Robanga* of the *Walkoma*, from the *Farkwa* of the *Wasandawe*, and from various coastal and southern regions (von Gnielinski 1985, 28).

Wagogo people also have zezes with more strings. Traditionally, they had a two-stringed zeze, but also four and five-stringed zezes, played with a bow (Mazoya 2012). In his book *The Music of Africa* (1968), Kwabena Nketia mentions that the two-stringed zeze was played with a piece of stick and the four-stringed zeze with a bow of sisal fiber (Nketia 1968, 103); but, during my time in Tanzania, I did not see or hear about the Wagogo using sisal fiber bows. Of course, the situation might have changed from when Kwabena Nketia was writing his book. Von Gnielinski wrote in her book, *Traditional Music Instruments of Tanzania in the National Museum* (1985), that fiddles in Tanzania may have one, two, three or even eleven to thirteen strings (von Gnielinski 1985, 28). She does not go deeper into this and it could be that the big zezes have also been played with a bow.

Msafiri Zawose said that they mostly use the big zezes with many strings without a bow and by plucking them (M. Zawose 2014). At least in Tanzania, the zeze also means a plucked instrument made of calabash, but the plucked ones usually have more strings and they can be really big in size (M. Zawose 2014).

Nowadays, the zeze's situation in Tanzania is not very good. For example, in Kigoma, most of the people do not recognize the instrument anymore (Lulamaze 2013). In Dodoma, it is very rare to find a person, who still can play the zeze (M. Zawose 2014), and my fellow students in Makumira University (2012–2013) from the *Sukuma* and *Chaga* ethnic groups, for instance, had never heard that the zeze existed in their own culture.

3.2.1 Wagogo's Zeze

Dodoma's region, where Wagogo live, is in the middle of Tanzania. Wagogo's zeze can be either a bowed or a plucked one. The bowed one usually has two to five strings (Mazoya 2012), but Wagogo has also one-stringed zezes (M. Zawose 2014) and the plucked one more, usually nine to thirteen strings (M. Zawose 2014, von Gnielinski 1985, 28).

Wagogo's zeze is the best known zeze of Tanzania. One reason for that is Hukwe Zawose's (1940–2003) career as a musician and a teacher. He was born in Dodoma, where he learned the music of the Wagogo ethnic group. Hukwe Zawose was one of the rare governmenthired traditional musicians (Donner 1983). He played a lot of gigs and held workshops around the world, recorded five CDs, taught at the Art College of Bagamoyo and is also, as of 1997, Sibelius Academy's doctor honoris causa.

Nobody knows what the real history of Wagogo's zeze is. Daudi Mazoya said that “we found this music from our grandfathers” and that “zeze is originally from Dodoma” (Mazoya 2012). Msafiri Zawose said that one reason for the Wagogo people's rich instrumentation could be the geographical location. Dodoma is in the middle of Tanzania and many people have traveled through the area during the history of Tanzania (M. Zawose 2014).

Traditionally, in Wagogo culture, men play the zeze and women have different roles, such as dancing and playing the *mheme* drum. But women are not prohibited from learning or playing the zeze if they wish to do so (M. Zawose 2014).



Picture 1. Zawose's style of Wagogo's two-stringed zezes and bows.



Picture 2. Wagogo's traditional four-stringed zeze. The resonator is made of goat skin over a calabash.



Picture 3. Wagogo's traditional four-stringed zeze with a bow.



Picture 4. Wagogo's traditional four-stringed zeze. The resonator is made of a snake skin over a coconut.



Picture 5. Different sizes of Zawose's style of Wagogo's four-stringed zezes. Resonators are made of calabashes or wood covered with Nile monitor skin.



Picture 6. Two models of Zawose's style of Wagogo's big zezes, which are played by plucking.

3.2.2 Waha's Zeze

The Kigoma region is on the west side of Tanzania, near Lake Tanganyika. The one-stringed zeze is one of the Waha people's instruments there. The resonator of the Waha people's zeze is made of a calabash, which is covered with goat skin. Strings are made of sisal fiber, as is the bow hair. The Waha people call it the zeze or izeze.

Nobody knows the exact history of Waha's zeze, but it might have come from the neighboring country, Burundi, with traders. As with Dodoma's zeze, Waha's zeze has traditionally been played mainly by men. Similarly, however, it is not a forbidden instrument for women.

In Kigoma, people in general are no longer familiar with the zeze. Just a few people are still playing it, because the new Western instruments, like the guitar, are taking over the traditional ones (Lulamaze 2013). The zeze has also been entertainment for the shepherd, but nowadays there is so much more to do than just play, like using smartphones (M. Zawose 2014).



Picture 7. Waha's big one-stringed zeze. The resonator is made of a calabash covered with goat skin.



Picture 8. Waha's big one-stringed zeze with a bow.

3.3 Appearance of the Zezes

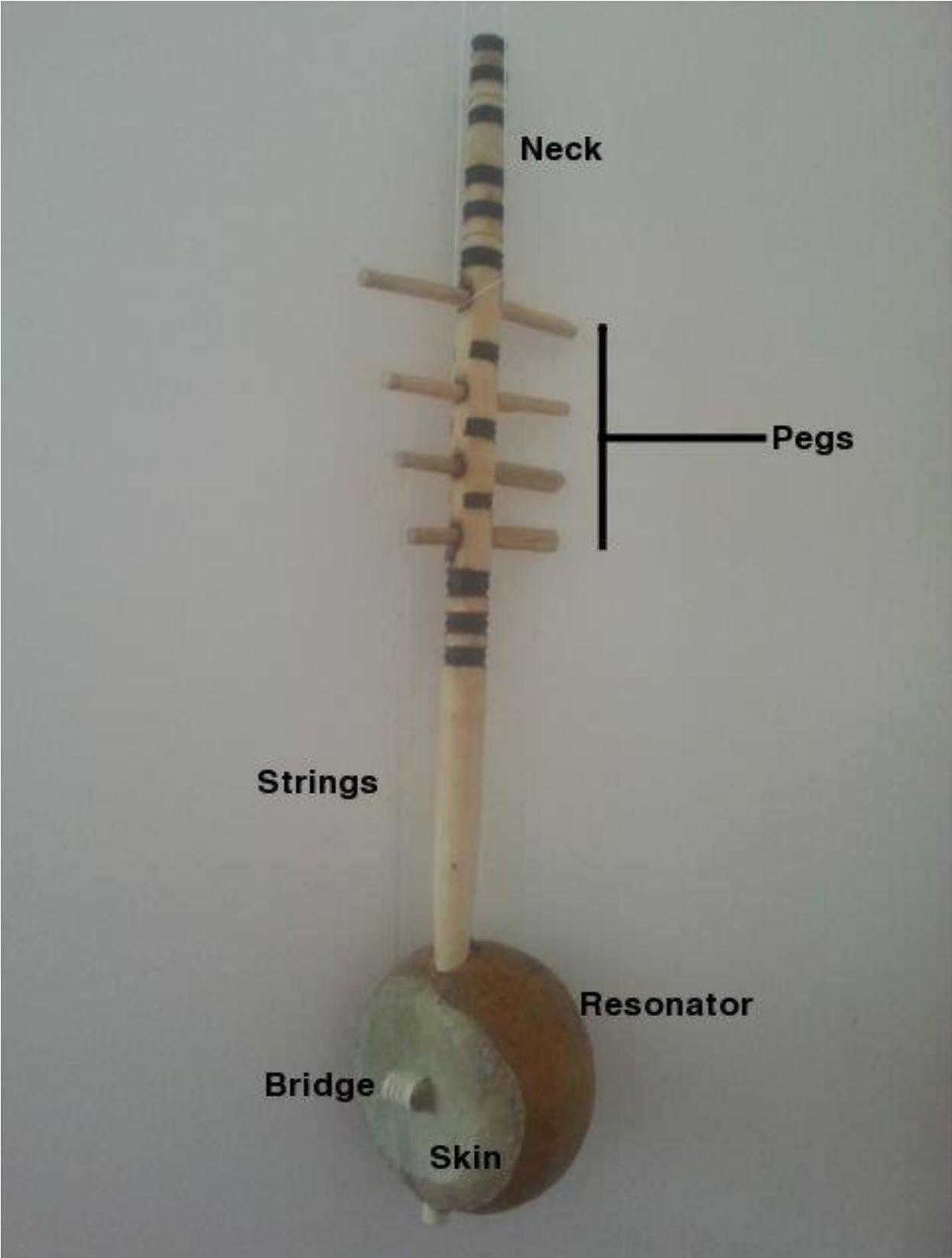
The appearance of the zezes varies significantly, depending on the building material and the builder. Some zezes are really simple, while some are decorated with painted ornaments on the body or neck. There might also be animal or human figures carved at the end of the neck. One reason for the decorations may be the competitions, because the beauty of the instrument plays a big role therein. Another reason could be the ceremonial purposes (von Gnielinski 1985, 29).

The length of the neck and the size of the body can vary a lot. The size of the body depends on what kind of material is available. For example, a calabash can be either very small or very big. The biggest ones are not handy for the bowed zeze because, while playing it, the instrument is held against the chest. Usually the length of the neck is 45–60 cm (von Gnielinski 1985, 29). The zeze's register depends on its size. The smaller ones have a higher pitch; the bigger ones, a lower pitch.



Picture 9. Head of a one-stringed fiddle, ekegogo, from Kenya. According to the sources, zezes in Tanzania might have decorations like this (von Gnielinski 1985, 29).

4 How to Build a Zeze



Picture 10. Here are the names for the parts of a zeze.

This chapter will show you how to build Wagogo's four-stringed zeze. This version is modified from the traditional one by Hukwe Zawose and his family to be more playable. The four main differences compared to a traditional one are the string order and function, the bridge, a hook in the neck, and the bow (M. Zawose 2014). The differences are illustrated below:



Pictures 11, 12 and 13. Differences between traditional and Zawose's zezes.

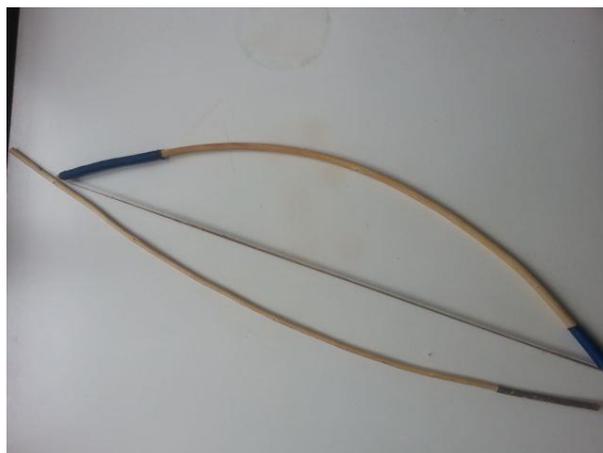
Picture 12 shows the bridge of a traditional zeze. All the strings are on the same level and the pegs on that side of the neck make a gradation to bring each of the strings on a slightly different level, so that they can be played (Picture 11). The string order from the left (from the player's perspective) is one, two, three and four. Picture 13 shows the bridge of Zawose's zeze. It is not straight, which results in even more space for fingers between the strings. It is also easier to control which strings

are sounding when playing the instrument with the bow. There is also a hole in the middle of the bridge. String number four goes through the hole, making it easier to pluck, because it stays lower than the others. In this model, the string order from the right is one, two, three and four, the fourth string being there just for plucking (Picture 11) (M. Zawose 2014).



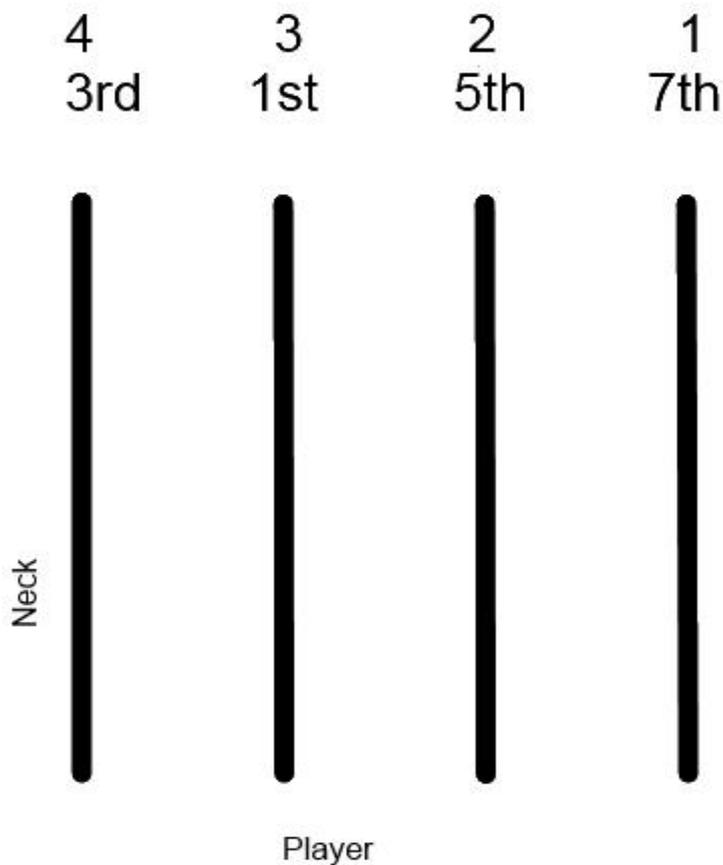
Pictures 14 and 15. Differences between traditional and Zawose's zezes.

In the traditional zeze (Picture 14), there is no hook in the neck. In Zawose's model (Picture 15), there is one. The player puts the thumb of his left hand against it, because it helps with finding scales and keeping the instrument balanced while playing, dancing, and singing (M. Zawose 2014).



Picture 16. Differences between a traditional and Zawose's bow.

Traditionally, the Wagogo's bow has been just a wooden stick (Picture 16, bottom). Zawose's model (Picture 16, top) is a bent wooden stick with soft material from baobab wood as bow hair.



Picture 17. Tuning of Zawose's zeze.

The tuning of Zawose's zeze (Picture 17) is usually a major seventh chord: String number one is the highest note and it is the major seventh. String number two is the fifth under the seventh. String number three is the root note of the chord under the fifth. Finally, string number four is the third between the root and the fifth. The smaller zeze (with a shorter neck) has higher tuning than the bigger one (with a longer neck). Strings are very tight. Older strings have higher tuning than the new ones, because they tighten even more around the pegs as time goes by. The strings also straighten during this process.

4.1 A Stepbystep Guide to Building a Zeze by Julius Zawose

These measurements are for a *calabash* that is approximately 12 cm (4.7 inches) wide. The making of this kind of zeze takes some days. It was the first one that I did and it took about 15 hours. The calabash and the skin need to dry during the building and it will take a couple of days, depending on the weather.

4.1.1 Building Material

Calabash (body)

Skin of the animal, in this case, the skin of a Nile monitor (body)

Mninga wood (neck, pegs and bridge)

Piece of mpingo wood (bridge)

Wire (strings)

String (strings)

Metal band (body)

Nails (body)

Instant glue (body and bow)

Wood glue (body and bridge)

Mclachi (sap of a special tree) (rosin)

Baobab wood (bow's hair)

Branch of the mkole tree (bow)

4.1.2 Tools

Pencil

Measuring tape

Big saw

Small saw

Knife

Spoon

Pliers

Fire place

Match

Different sizes of pitchforks

Sandpapers

4.1.3 Making of the Body, Neck, Bridge, Hook, Strings, and Pegs of a Zeze



Picture 18. Making the body (Index 1).

1. Use a pencil to draw a line around both heads of the calabash (Picture 18).
2. Cut along the drawn line with a small saw (Picture 18).



Pictures 19 and 20. Making the body (Index 3).

3. Take out the seeds and the rest of the insides of the calabash with the saw and a spoon. Tidy the edges with a knife (Pictures 19 and 20).



Picture 21. Making the body (Index 4).

4. Bend a small metal band to be put on the inside and a bigger band to be put on the outside (Picture 21).



Picture 22. Making the body (Index 5).

5. Cut ten hooks out of even smaller wire (Picture 22).



Pictures 23 and 24. Making the body (Index 6).

6. Try to keep the circular metal bands aligned, one on the inside and the other one on the outside, near the top. Draw ten dots with a pencil, next to the outer metal bands. Make small holes with a spike on both sides of the outer band. Start with four places and put in the first four hooks, so that you do not have to hold the metal bands anymore while making more holes. Finally, put all the hooks in their places (Pictures 23 and 24).



Pictures 25 and 26. Making the body (Index 7).

7. Twist the ends of the hooks inside the calabash with pliers (Picture 25) and turn them aside (Picture 26).



Picture 27. Making the body (Index 8).

8. Wash the skin of an animal with washing powder and tear off any remaining pieces of meat. Then rinse with water. This skin is from a Nile monitor (Picture 27).



Picture 28. Making the body (Index 9).

9. Using water, stretch the skin tightly on top of the calabash (on the side with the metal bands) and nail it with 20 to 25 nails, but do not tap the nail all the way in (Picture 28).



Pictures 29 and 30. Making the body (Index 10).

10. Tie a knot around one of the nails and start threading the string between the nails. After one round, turn the string about 2 cm (0.8 inches) straight under it to make it very tight. Lock the string with one nail and a knot (Pictures 29 and 30).



Picture 31. Making the body (Index 11).

11. Insert four nails around the calabash, between the string, to keep it in its place. Cut the rest of the skin away with a knife just under the string (Picture 31)



Picture 32. Making the body (Index 12).

12. Wet the calabash and scratch the surface layer off with a knife. Rinse with water and let it dry a couple of days (Picture 32).



Picture 33. Making the body (Index 13).

13. Saw the neck of the zeze from *mninga* wood. For a 12 cm (4.7 inch) calabash, the neck should be 73.5 cm (28.7 inches) long, 3.5 cm (1.2 inches) wide, and 2 cm (0.8 inches) high (Picture 33).



Pictures 34 and 35. Making the neck (Index 14).

14. Draw a mark with a pencil for the four peg holes. The line does not need to be straight, but you can still use the ruler by bending it. The first hole is 12.7 cm (5.0 inches) from the top and the distance between each of the pegs is 5.1 cm (2.0 inches). Start so that the topmost hole is on the right side of the wood piece's widest side and the one at the bottom is on the left side of the widest side (when looking at the back of the neck). Draw the marks on both sides of the wood (Pictures 34 and 35).



Pictures 36, 37 and 38. Making the neck (Index 15).

15. First, heat a poker in the fire and burn a starting point for each of the holes. Then burn the holes, first with a smaller poker and then gradually with a bigger one. In the end, the holes should be about 1.3 cm (0.4 inches) wide (Pictures 36, 37, and 38). Finally, burn a small hole in the side of the neck, so that you can put a hook there for hanging purposes.



Picture 39. Making the pegs (Index 16).

16. Saw the pegs for the zeze from mninga wood. Saw a piece of wood that is about 60 cm long, 5 cm wide, and 2 cm (0.8 inches) high. Then saw it lengthwise, so that you get two pieces that are 2.5 cm (1.0 inches) wide. Then, cut them into four pieces that are each 30 cm (11.8 inches) long (Picture 39).



Picture 40. Making the pegs (Index 17).

17. Measure a halfway point and draw a line around each of the pieces. Start to shave off pieces from one half (Picture 40).



Pictures 41, 42, 43, and 44. Making the pegs (Index 18).

18. When that half is almost the size of the holes in the neck, shape it with a knife until it fits one of the holes (Pictures 41 and 42). Do each peg individually for each hole (Picture 43). Because the holes can differ from each other size-wise, number each peg (1, 2, 3 and 4). Make a mark so that you know what part of the peg will be inside the neck (Picture 44). Sand the pegs with sandpaper, but do not sand the part that will be inside the neck.



Picture 45. Making the neck (Index 19).

19. Shave off part of the neck from the end that will be inside the calabash, so that it will be wedge-shaped (no picture available). Sand the neck with sandpaper (Picture 45).



Pictures 46 and 47. Making the body after the skin is dried (Index 20).

20. Make sure that both the calabash and the skin are dry. Take off the string and the extra nails that kept the string in place (Picture 46). Hammer the remaining nails all the way in. Cut the edge of the skin with a knife, so that it looks good (Picture 47).



Pictures 48, 49, and 50. Making the body after the skin is dried (Index 21).

21. Use first a pencil and then a spike to mark the holes, just under the skin's edge on both sides of the calabash (Picture 48). The neck will go through these holes. Then use fire and a poker to make the holes bigger, as you did with the holes in the neck (Pictures 49 and 50).



Pictures 51 and 52. Putting the body and the neck together (Index 22).

22. Start with a small poker and exchange it for a bigger one, until the hole is about the same size as the neck's wedge-shaped head (Picture 51). Use a knife to make the holes perfect for the neck. Put the neck through the calabash, so that the length of the neck between the calabash and the lowest peg is about 30 cm (Picture 52).



Pictures 53. Putting the body and the neck together (Index 23).

23. Glue both holes with instant glue (Picture 53).



Pictures 54, 55, 56, and 57. Putting the body and the neck together (Index 24).

24. Saw the head of the pegs in many places to get wood dust, then and mix it with wood glue and apply the mix on top of the instant glue (Pictures 54, 55, 56, and 57).



Picture 58. Making the bridge (Index 25).

25. Find a small piece of wood for the bridge and a slim piece of very hard wood called *mpingo*. The *mpingo* piece should be about 0.5 cm (0.2 inches) wide (Picture 58).



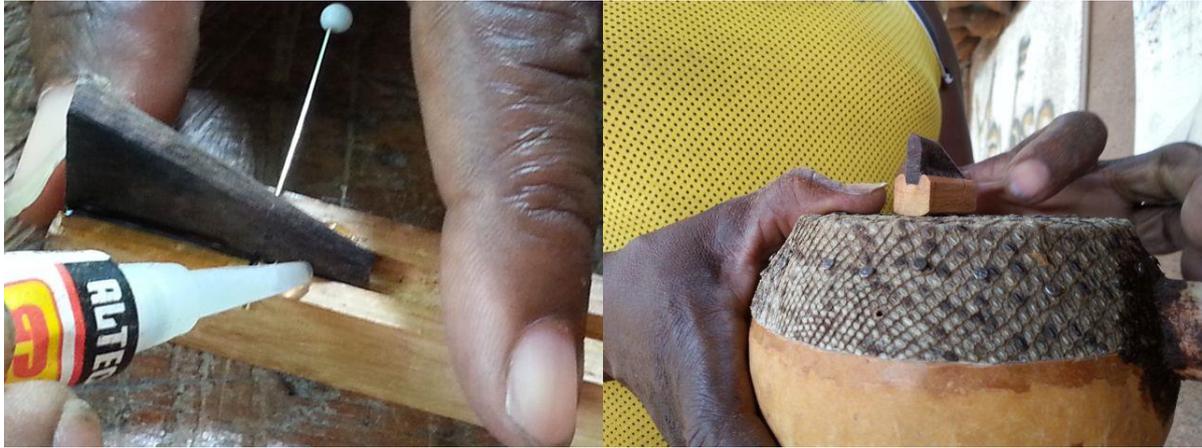
Picture 59. Making the bridge (Index 26).

26. Saw the mpingo wood piece into a triangle (Picture 59). Its width is about 2.5 cm (1 inch), height about 1 cm (0.4 inches), and depth about 0.5 cm (0.2 inches). Round the corners with a planer and sandpaper.



Pictures 60, 61, and 62. Making the bridge (Index 27).

27. With help of the mpingo wood piece, pencil, small saw, and a knife, make a track in the middle of the bigger wood piece, so that the mpingo wood piece sits there perfectly (Picture 60). Saw a small hole in both of the pieces, so that there is a hole for the fourth string (Picture 61). Use a pin to check that the hole is big enough (Picture 62).



Pictures 63 and 64. Making the bridge (Index 28).

28. Keep the pin in the hole and glue it first with instant glue and then finish with the wood glue and wood dust mix (Picture 63). Even the sides with a planer and sandpaper. Fit the bridge to the zeze (Picture 64).



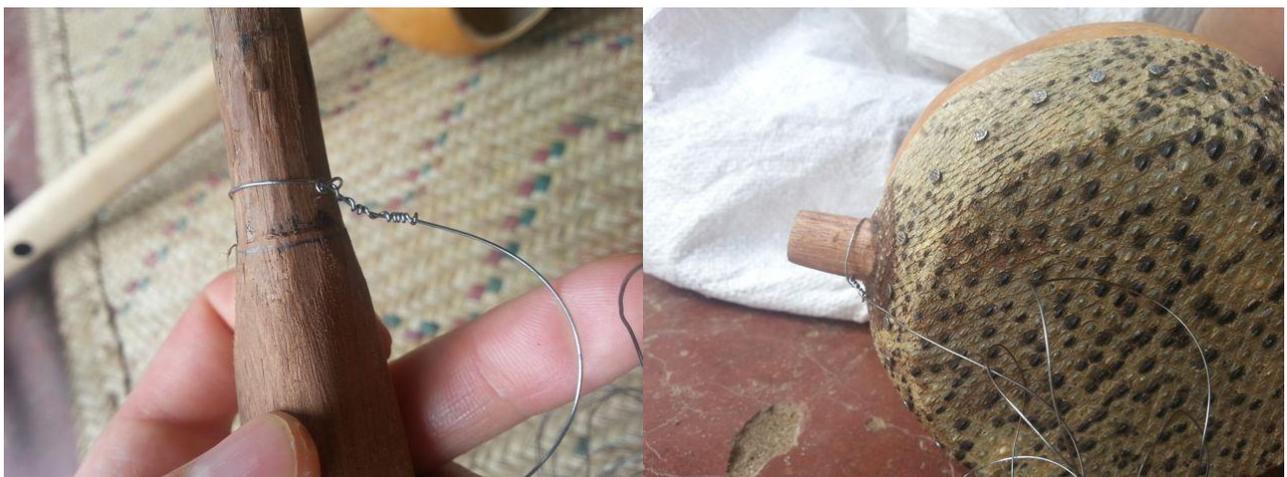
Pictures 65, 66, 67, and 68. Making the bridge (Index 29).

29. Saw off the heads, so that the bigger wood piece's length is about 2 cm (0.8 inches), width about 1 cm (0.4 inches), and height about 1 cm (0.4 inches) (Picture 65). Sand the sides and corners and visible glue away with sandpaper (Picture 66). The bridge is now ready (Pictures 67 and 68).



Picture 69. Making the body (Index 30).

30. Use a knife first and then sandpaper to clean both sides of the calabash of visible glue (Picture 69).



Pictures 70 and 71. Making the strings (Index 31).

31. Use one of the pegs as a tool and spin wire so that you get a loop that you can put at the bottom of the zeze (Pictures 70 and 71).



Pictures 72 and 73. Making the strings (Index 32).

32. Cut the string (wire) to a good length. Make a small loop on the other side by using pliers (Picture 72). Thread an acrylic string through the loop and tighten the loop by using the pliers. Burn the head of the thread with fire (Picture 73).



Pictures 74 and 75. Making the strings (Index 33).

33. Turn the thread around the peg, inwards from the perimeter (Picture 74). Do this for the three highest strings, starting with the highest one. Do the next ones so that you have a bit more distance from the body, so that all the strings have their own line. Put the bridge in its place after winding the first three strings (Picture 75). Tighten the loops at the bottom of the zeze, if needed.



Picture 76. Making the strings (Index 34).

34. Saw the last peg just under the lowest string and sand its head (Picture 76).



Pictures 77 and 78. Making the pegs (Index 35).

35. Make a small circle just under the top of the fourth peg with a knife and chip away a little bit of wood, so that the string cannot fall away from the peg (Picture 77). Then split the top of the peg by hitting it carefully with a knife, so that you get a small track, into which you will put the head of the string (Picture 78).



Picture 79. Making the strings (Index 36).

36. Thread the fourth string through the hole in the bridge (Picture 79). Then fasten it to the bottom of the zeze, as you did with the other strings.



Picture 80. Making the strings (Index 37).

37. Thread the string through the track so that it is locked there and then turn it around the fourth peg (Picture 80).



Picture 81. Making the strings (Index 38).

38. Using a small saw, a jigsaw for example, saw tracks into the bridge for the strings (Picture 81).



Pictures 82, 83, and 84. Making the pegs and the bottom peg (Index 39).

39. Shorten the pegs so that the string sides of the pegs are 8.5 cm (3.3 inches) from the neck (Picture 82) and the other side is 8 cm (3.1 inches) from the neck (Picture 83). Saw the bottom peg under the string (Picture 84). Sand all the pegs with sandpaper. also, sand the rust from the strings.



Pictures 85 and 15. Making the hook (Index 40).

40. Tune the instrument and find a good place for the hook (a place for the thumb), so that you can easily find a scale for the first string. Make a hole for the hook with an awl (Picture 85) and put the hook in its place (Picture 15).

4.1.3 Making of the Bow for a Zeze



Pictures 86 and 87. Making the bow (Index 41).

41. Start making a bow by carving away the branches from a *mkole* branch (Picture 86) and sand it with sandpaper (Picture 87). A good length for the branch is 60 cm.



Pictures 88 and 89. Making the bow (Index 42).

42. Carve both heads of the branch, so that they look like triangles (Picture 88) and carve a notch in the middle of the triangle (Picture 89). The triangle is at the side of the branch and the notch is in front of the branch.



Pictures 90 and 91. Making the bow (Index 43).

43. Fill the notch with a thin shred of the *baobab* tree, so that you have some extra baobab over the head of the branch (Picture 90). Glue the extra baobab to the branch with instant glue and wrap string around the glued part; also use instant glue to secure the end of the string (Picture 91).



Picture 92. Making the bow (Index 44).

44. Fasten the other side of the baobab, in the same way, to the other side of the branch and remember to bend the branch so that you get a bow-like bow (Picture 92). Sand the extra fiber away from the baobab with sandpaper.

4.1.4 Making of the Rosin



Pictures 93, 94 and 95. Making rosin (Index 45).

45. Warm up special tree sap (Picture 93). Wagogo people call this sap *mclachi*. Put a piece of

mclachi on the back side of the joint of the calabash and the neck (Picture 94). Make it sleek with a hot poker (Picture 95). This will be used for rosin.



Pictures 96 and 97. Zawose's style of zeze (Index 46).

46. The zeze and the bow are now ready (Pictures 96 and 97).

5 How to Play the Zeze

Traditionally, zeze playing is learned by ear, following someone who can play, like all folk music in Tanzania. This is the way it is learned even today. “You have to hear music instead of counting [...]; just accept that the music is in your mind and [...] body” (M. Zawose 2014). After the body starts to move, the player knows what the time signature is, which can, of course, change during the piece. But it does not matter what the time signature is; the only thing that matters is that the body knows it (M. Zawose 2014). All the zeze music I have heard in Tanzania is always changing somehow. Melodic and rhythmic variation is part of the music. The same tune is different each time it is played.

5.1 Wagogo’s Zeze

Wagogo’s zeze has a loud, sharp, metallic, and clear sound because of its wire strings. Sounds can vary depending of the instrument and the bow.

5.1.1 Playing Positions



Pictures 98 and 99. Playing positions for Wagogo’s zeze.

A zeze is held against or under the left side of the chest. Each musician finds his or her own preferred place for it (Picture 98). The gap in the bottom of the resonator should be open. Sometimes the player can make additional effects by putting his or her forearm on it. Traditionally, the bow is held as in Picture 99, so that the index finger, middle finger, and ring finger rest above the stick and thumb, while the little finger keeps the bow in balance by being underneath it.



Pictures 100 and 101. Playing positions for Wagogo's zeze.

Zawose's style of holding the bow can be seen in Picture 100. One way to find the right grip is to hold the bow between the thumb and other fingers, like a pen, then just turn the bow horizontally. The thumb will stay on the side of the player and the other fingers go on the other side. With a traditional zeze, the left hand's fingers touch the strings from below, as in Picture 101.



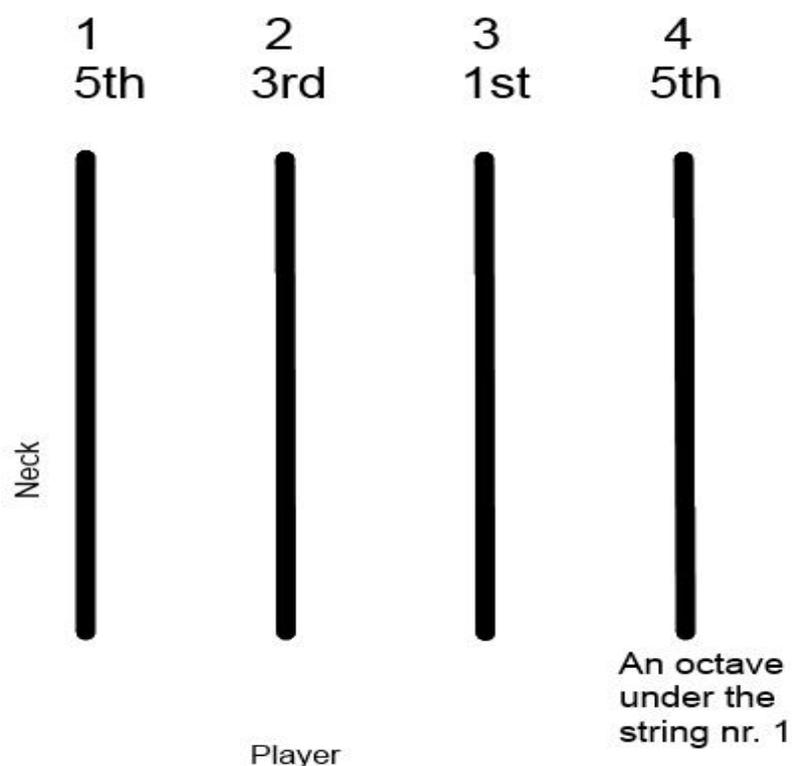
Picture 102. A playing position for Wagogo's zeze.

Zawose's style of zeze system is the same, but the string order is reversed and the fourth string is just for plucking with the little finger while the thumb is held against the hook, which is found on the neck (Picture 102).

5.1.2 Tuning

Wagogo's zeze usually has more than one string, but there are also one-stringed zezes (M. Zawose 2014). The two-stringed zeze is usually tuned a minor third apart (Lewis & Makala 1990, 44) or to any other tuning that follows the Wagogo scale, which is pentatonic, starting from the highest note going downward (M. Zawose 2014). The four-stringed zeze's most common tuning by Daudi Mazoya is a Bb Major chord with F (above the middle C), D (above the middle C), Bb (under the middle C), and F (under the middle C) (Mazoya 2012); or Major 7th chord with C# (highest note), A# (under C#), D# (under A#), and G (between D# and A#) (M. Zawose 2014). The size of the instrument also affects the tuning. A bigger instrument has a lower tuning and the smaller instrument has a higher one. If the zeze is played only to accompany singing, it can be tuned to the key that feels good for the instrument and the singer. If the zeze is played with other instruments, like the ilimba, it has to be in the same key. Dynamic variance does not really exist in Wagogo's zeze playing. Maybe this is because of the materials used for the strings and the bow. To get a uniform sound one must really play at a fixed volume.

5.1.2.1 Four-stringed Zeze's Tuning by Daudi Mazoya



Picture 103. Tuning by Daudi Mazoya.

String order from the left (viewed from the bridge): one, two, three, and four

Major chord

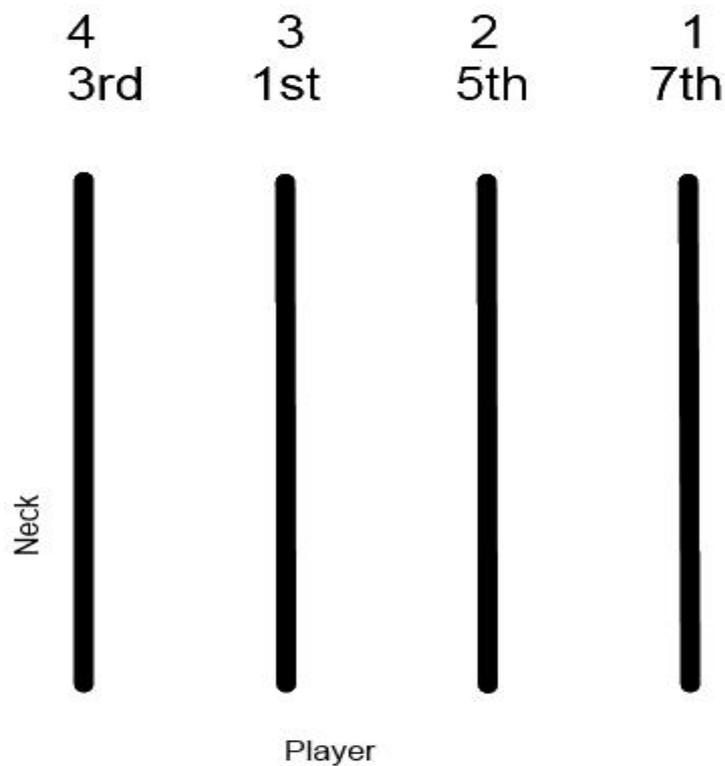
String number one: Fifth of the chord

String number two: Third of the chord under string number one

String number three: Root of the chord under string number one and two

String number four: Fifth of the chord, octave under string number one

5.1.2.2 Four-stringed Zeze's Tuning by Msafiri Zawose



Picture 17. Tuning by Msafiri Zawose.

String order from the right (viewed from the bridge): one, two, three, and four

Dominant seventh chord

String number one: Seventh of the chord

String number two: Fifth of the chord under string number one

String number three: Root of the chord under string number one and two

String number four: Third of the chord between string numbers two and three

5.1.3 Playing

The strings can be played one by one, two together, three together, or all of them together. Both melodies and chords can be played (M. Zawose 2014). Traditional four-stringed zeze's string order starts from the left (viewed from the bridge). The left one is number one and the right one is number four. The first three strings are mainly played with fingers to produce scales, whereas string number four is mostly a drone tone, but of course the first three can also work as drones (Mazoya 2012). Hukwe Zawose's family has been developing their own zeze model and one difference it has from other versions is the string order. String number one is on the right side (viewed from the bridge) and number four is on the left side. Usually, strings number one and two are played with fingers, but it is also possible to play number three with fingers. All three strings still work also as drones.

The fourth string is just for plucking. It is usually plucked with the little finger. The string numbers are not in the order of the lowest and highest sounds. In traditional zeze, pressing the left hand's fingertips against the strings under the string produces different melodies or chords (Mazoya 2012). In Zawose's style, the fingertip or inner side of the finger touches string number one. On strings number two and three the fingers come from under the string and push the string slightly upward. The finger plucking of string number four (usually with the little finger) also comes from under the string.

The traditional bow is just a stick, but it is still used the same way as a Western bow would (instead of just hitting the strings with it). Zawose's model of the bow is a bent stick with baobab tree for bow hair (M. Zawose 2014). The length of the bow varies significantly. Bows are quite long, approximately 60 cm, but the whole bow is not used. Rhythm and melody affect the amount of bow used. Players can play one note per one bow stroke or use legato. Some decorative tunes are used. Especially in zeze solos, the player can go up the scale to the main tune or do some trills and play all of them with the same bow. The amount of decorations depends also on the player. The sound of Wagogo's zeze is quite loud. Big dynamic differences are not common because of the wire strings and the material of the bow. The sound will not be clear even if the zeze is played softly.

Video 1–Daudi Mazoya 1. Daudi Mazoya puts rosin on the bow and plays the four-stringed zeze while singing: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/daudi_mazoya_1.m4v

Video 2–Daudi Mazoya 2. Daudi Mazoya's right hand in a close-up while he is playing zeze:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/daudi_mazoya_2.m4v

5.1.4 Music

The zeze is traditionally played just with singing, which always goes together with the playing of the zeze. These songs often tell many kinds of stories about life, or they can be religious in nature. In the early seventies, when the Wagogo people figured out their tuning, scale, and rhythm together, they started also to play the zeze with other instruments, like the ilimba, ndono, *bwangwa*, and *shumbi* (M. Zawose 2014).

5.1.4.1 *Mnyamaye*

Video 3–Daudi Mazoya 3. Daudi Mazoya plays the beginning of *Mnyamaye* (lyrics below). Short bow and legato can be seen:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/daudi_mazoya_3.m4v

Video 4–Daudi Mazoya 4. Daudi Mazoya with two ilimba players, one of which is Musa Njakamba while the other one is unknown at the time of writing. The beginning of *Mnyamaye*:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/daudi_mazoya_4.m4v

Traditional from Dodoma Wagogo ethnic group

Language: Kigogo

Story in English by Musa Njakamba

Mnyamaye, mnyamaye x4

Ka, hodou mnyamaliyechi

Nkulamusa mnayamaye

Nililonga mnyamaye

Nye wahinza mnyamaye

Wanjakaye mnyamaye

Mnyamajo mnyamaye ku hoda mnyamaye chi

Yaya gwe mnyamaliye chi

Tsaba gue mnyamaliye chi

Why are you so silent?

I'm talking to you.
Why are you so silent?
I want food.
Why are you so silent?
I'm crying for my mom.
Why are you so silent?

5.1.4.2 Untitled

Video 5–Daudi Mazoya 5. Daudi Mazoya with two ilimba players (one of which is Musa Njakamba and the other is unknown at the time of writing) play a tune from Dodoma:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/daudi_mazoya_5.m4v

5.1.4.3 Herode

Traditional from Dodoma Wagogo ethnic group

Language: Kigogo

Explanation in English by Musa Njakamba

Mtemi yulya Herode Herode mtemi yulua

Herode, yaulalga ne wantu wo monogu

Mtemi yulya Herode yasa kajo yaulajon Yesu

Mtemi yulya Herode, mtemi yulya Herode Herode

Mtemi yulya Herode

King Herode wants to kill Jesus Christ.

The meaning of the song is to tell the Christian people to be careful.

5.1.4.4 Mama Wee

Video 6–Msafiri Zawose: Mama Wee (lyrics below):

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/msafiri_zawose_mama_wee.m4v

Sound clip 1–Msafiri Zawose plays Mwilolelo and Mama wee (lyrics below):

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/mwilolelo_mama_wee.mp3

Composer Msafiri Zawose

Language: Swahili

Translation by Ella Isotalo

//:Mama wee, mama wee, mama wee :// x3

Asante sana kwa kunizaa mama,

miezi tisa tumboni mwako mama

//:Ndio maana mimi nakupendaga yaya,

ndio asili mimi nakuombea mema ://

//:Mother, mother, mother :// x3

Thank you for giving birth,

nine months in your stomach

//:Of course I love you,

naturally I pray for you ://

5.1.4.5 Mwilolelo

Traditional from Dodoma Wagogo ethnic group

Language: Kigogo

Explanation in English by Msafiri Zawose

//: Nwakasingo katali tali yagwa mwilolelo ://

//:Yagwa mwilolelo ngwee yagwa mwilolelo ://

Nwakasingo

This song is about a looker, someone who is very beautiful and gets stared at often.

5.2 Waha's Zeze

Waha's zeze has a soft, silent, and nasal sound because of the sisal fiber strings and bow, but every zeze is different and the sounds can vary.

5.2.1 Playing Positions



Pictures 104, 105, and 106. Playing positions for Waha's zeze.

The zeze is held against the chest or under it, just like Wagogo's zeze (Picture 104). The gap in the bottom of the resonator should be open. The zeze's neck rests on the palm between the thumb and the index finger. The bow is held with three fingers: thumb, index finger, and middle finger (Picture 105). The fingers touch the string from the up side (Picture 106).

5.2.2 Tuning

The tuning depends on the size of the instrument. A larger instrument has a lower pitch and a smaller one has a higher pitch. Usually the player tunes the instrument so that the pitch is natural for the instrument and the player's voice.

5.2.3 Playing

The Waha use only three fingers of the left hand for playing melodies: index finger, middle finger, and little finger. Sometimes the player can use the ring finger as a passage finger. They can change the position to get higher or lower scales, but usually the player chooses one place in which to keep their hand. Position changes during the piece are not common. This fingering makes it possible to play a scale, which in one position has four notes. The fingertips or inner sides of the fingers, depending on the instrument's size, touch the string and make different sounds. Melodies are played without any decorations. The bow is like a metronome, one bow's length for one note (Lulamaze 2013). Approximately 15 cm of the bow are used, which means that almost the whole of the bow is used. The zeze does not have dynamic variations, as there is no reason for such because the loudest sound from Waha's zeze is not very loud.

5.2.4 Music

Usually this zeze is played alone with singing. While singing a player can play just the open strings like a metronome or he can produce a kind of ostinato. Between the singing parts it is the zeze's

time to speak, so to say. Sometimes the zeze can be accompanied by drums or shakers. Songs can tell, for example, of love or they can be religious in nature. Some of the songs can have call and response parts (Lulamaze 2012).

5.2.4.1 Musaninkawe

Sound clip 2–Seth Lulamaze plays Musaninkawe (lyrics below):

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/58714921/Zeze/musaninkawe.mp3>

Traditional from Shunga village, which is part of Kasulu, Kigoma; Waha ethnic group, Kasulu district.

Language: Kiha

Translation in English by Seth Lulamaze

*Ndalazegeye ndewe,
mukayila hagati ndewe,
nzampula na musaninkawe,
avuye kuvoma....ndagizendamuhe mwiliwe....musaninka mwiliwe....
yacha yiluka ndewe ntamukozeko.
Alahise.... alahise
Alahis'alahise ndewe ntamukozeko*

I was travelling
around the area,
I met a girl called Musaninka.
She was coming from the river where she was getting some water...
I greeted her...
Musaninka, good evening...
But the girl ran away without me getting to touch her hand.
She has gone... she has gone
She has gone, she has gone, without me getting to touch her hand.

5.2.4.2 Mgolugeudeu-Mugolugeudeu Ndakulehese

Traditional from Shunga village, which is a part of the Kasulu town, Kigoma; Waha ethnic group, Kasulu district.

Language: Kiha

Translation in English by Seth Lulamaze

Call–*Mgolugeudeu*

Response–*Ndakuleheje*

Call–*hano Kumtine*

Response–*Ndabhelewe*

-*Ingotugeude–Ndadhelewe*

-*Ingondakubhone–Ndadhelewe*

-*Nfatakumtima–Ndadhelewe*

The boy was calling the girl when the girl had passed him by.

The boy said: You girl, who are moving, I want to talk to you. I love you, I want to remain with you, just come with me.

(This song is for the young boys and girls who are not yet married.)

5.2.4.3 Untitled 2

Traditional from Shunga village, which is part of Kasulu, Kigoma; Waha ethnic group, Kasulu district.

Language: Kiha

Explanation in English by Seth Lulamaze

Wewe mgenzulingahi vi we wadutebhye

Niyowabha walihamy tubhatwalidugiye mwijulu

Call–*tubhatwalidugitemwijn*

Response–*tubhatwalidugitemwijn*

This song tells about someone who always goes to church but is not yet ready to do the things needed to get into Heaven.

5.2.4.4 Yuyu We

Traditional from Shunga village, which is part of Kasulu, Kigoma; Waha ethnic group, Kasulu district.

Language: Kiha

Solo–*Yuyu we*

Response–*niakitabhela Yesalaghela ntakitabhela we*

5.2.4.5 Akajambo Kimano Yampaye Ndakila

Traditional from Shunga village, which is part of Kasulu, Kigoma; Waha ethnic group, Kasulu district.

Language: Kiha

Translation in English by Seth Lulamaze

Solo–*Akajambo kimano yampaye ndakila*

Response–*somiyounjili yawe*

Solo–*Yohana ndamsomo – Somiyovijili yawe*

Solo–*Marko ndlamsomo – Somiyovijili yawe*

Solo –*Paulo ndamsomo – Somiyovijili yawe*

The words God gave me, I received them.

I always read Yohana [John's] gospel.

I always read Mark's gospel.

I always read Paul's gospel.

You can add other names there as well.

(The whole song means that I always read the bible, which I got from God.)

5.3 Learning to Play the Zeze

When I was in Tanzania I asked the zeze players I met to teach me. Every time they asked me why a white woman wanted to know this instrument, but still they were really happy to teach me because of my interest in their culture. Compared to the violin, for example, the zeze does not have a very long pedagogical history. There are no books or studies of the best place for each finger, etc. I learned it like the people have always learned: by observing how my teachers were holding the instrument and then trying to mimic what they did.

Msafiri Zawose taught a lot, so he has an idea of how to break the tunes into smaller parts and teach the tunes one part at a time, as well as how to practice the rhythm and singing of the melody of the tunes at the same time by stamping the feet, clapping the hands, and singing without the instrument.

Every teacher first asked me to play some scale or simple fingerings for a minute to get familiar with the instrument, and then we started to learn the tunes.

Perhaps my history with the violin and jouhikko helped me to learn to play the zeze, even though the playing position is different. At least it did not feel weird for me to move the bow with a relaxed hand while fingering the strings at the same time.

Singing and playing Wagogo's zeze simultaneously was a challenge in the beginning, so at first I practiced playing and singing separately. Wagogo's zeze has different kinds of ostinatos under the singing melody and the rhythms were tricky sometimes. With Waha's zeze I did not have this problem because the zeze is usually doubling the singing melody or playing the drone.

6 Conclusions

The musical history of Tanzania is very colorful. Music and its position in the society have been changing constantly. Some of the reasons behind this have been quite troublesome, but some of it is just natural development. Tanzania's own strong culture has met a lot of setbacks and influences throughout time. Big trade centers were cultural melting pots. Vasco Da Gama's expedition destroyed a lot of the traditional culture. Arabs took care of the slave trade, but they also left a strong musical influence. The time of colonialism activated some Tanzanian groups to hang on strongly to their own traditions, but the spreading of European influences was undeniable. Missionaries played a big role in this. But when Tanzania became independent, President Julius Nyerere treated the state of local culture as a matter of honor, but in some ways, it was already too late; the local culture was already totally different than it was before Europeans and Arabs came to Tanzania.

There are over 120 ethnic groups in Tanzania and each one has their own musical traditions. Music has been a part of their everyday life, which is reflected in ngomas. You could say that music and life are perfectly intertwined. Fishermen have their own songs and dances and so do shepherds, cultivators, and so on. Of course, nowadays things are changing fast and people also have other kinds of professions and globalization has also left its mark, which cannot help but affect the musical life. Music is not a part of a bank clerk's workday as it is for a shepherd's. Now, even the shepherd might choose a smartphone instead of a traditional instrument when he goes to work and is in need of some entertainment.

There are a lot of different kinds of fiddles in Africa and every one is unique. Tanzania is a huge country and its nature is different in different areas. Long distances and the vast amount of the different ethnic groups guarantee musical and material differences. The material of an instrument depends always on the environment. Builders use local trees and other plants, as well as local animals, to make an instrument. Music and its function are also different between areas and ethnic groups. Appearances also vary a lot. Some zezes are really simple and some have lots of decorations. This also depends of the builder and the function of the instrument. Every builder has their own way of making an instrument. Thus, many kinds of Tanzanian fiddles called zezes exist. There are different kinds of one-stringed zezes as well as zezes with two, four, and five strings. Different areas have their own variations of zezes. Regional instruments have found their own

shape, sound, and ways to play them over a long period of time. Some areas have a bow with hair, while in Dodoma the bow is just a stick. The material of the body and strings make a big difference to the instruments' sound. Material issues also make zeze a truly local instrument because the materials get easily broken if the climate changes a lot. For example, Tanzanian wood breaks easily in Finland's climate.

The zeze is part of the Tanzanian music culture, but where did it come from? I heard different versions of its history but perhaps the truth is their combination. The zeze is an old instrument. The musicians I met told me that it has always been there. Most likely it came to Tanzania with some people who were traveling to or through Tanzania.

How to build the instrument is lore as well as the music. Of course every new generation revises the building process and finds new ways and materials to make the instrument more ergonomic and playable. I had an opportunity to build a zeze with Julius Zawose, who learned the skill from his father, Hukwe Zawose, who was taught by his forefathers. In his time, Hukwe introduced considerable changes to the zeze. He moved from Dodoma to Bagamoyo and the same materials were not available there, but he still wanted to develop the instrument. Today, his son Msafiri Zawose plays his kind of zeze around the world.

Zeze players have learned the songs and playing techniques from their fathers and grandfathers. Every zeze player I met remembered how their grandfathers played the zeze in the evening after work. The zeze and those songs were the sound of childhood to them. When they grew up, they took the zeze with them to the pasture, and so the tradition continued.

Learning to play the zeze and singing with it is not only about learning how to hold the instrument and get a sound out of it; it is also learning how the music sounds and what kinds of elements it includes—like Wagogo's pentatonic scale, starting from the highest note, making melodies and chords out of it, or Waha's scale with four notes and a distinct style of singing. The only way to learn these things is listening to someone who knows the tradition.

The zeze is still developing, as Zawose's musical family showed me. The people playing it seriously want to make the instrument easier and more ergonomic to play. Although the zeze is not a usual sight in the villages anymore, it is living its own life, at least inside this one yard in Tanzania. Nowadays in Tanzania almost everybody has a smartphone, so it is also easy to make a

video or record music and put it on YouTube, for instance. It is true that the tradition is not as lively anymore and probably many songs are already left unsung, but there might still be more documents today of zeze playing than ever before.

Still the amount of zeze recordings or information is not vast. The existing zeze music can be found on some CDs, YouTube, or other places on the Internet. If any serious research about the zeze exists before this, I have not been able to find them. Some sentences about the instrument are scattered over some books or articles and some zezes can be found from the National Museum of Tanzania, but that is it. And, as mentioned before, it is very rare to find people who still play the instrument. It is perhaps easier to start playing a Western instrument. This does not necessarily need to be the case.

7 Final Words

There were nice surprises I encountered during my time in Tanzania. One of them was that in a Tanzanian travel guide (in the part about Northern Tanzania) there is a chapter of Tanzania's traditional instruments, and the zeze is mentioned as one of them. The book tells that "the most purely melodic of Tanzanian instruments is the zeze, the local equivalent to the guitar or fiddle [...], used throughout the country under a variety of different names" (Briggs 2009, 17). It was nice to notice that the zeze is present in the travel guide, even though there are a lot of people in Tanzania who do not even know this instrument exists, but I really do not agree with the claim that it can be found everywhere in Tanzania. Then again, when I was hanging out in Zawose's yard, I often heard somebody playing the zeze or some other instrument in some house somewhere around the corner at the same time as Msafiri telling me that it is very hard to find people who play that instrument nowadays. The sound of the instrument made me very happy, even if it was happening in the yard of a music family. It is better to hear traditional instruments somewhere than nowhere!

In February, when I was taking off from the Kilimanjaro airport, I found an in-flight magazine, *Paa Tanzania*. There were many familiar faces from the Makumira music department in the article "The Beat Goes On." The article told about the music department and there was also a picture of one of the music students, Catherine Mushi, with a five-stringed zeze, though the name of the instrument in the magazine was the five-stringed *zizi* (Paa Tanzania 2014, 46–51). I guess that all publicity is good publicity, even if the name of the zeze was misspelled. I am happy that there were many pages of Makumira's music department and some of Makumira's music students became enthusiastic to play the zeze when they got the instruments to the school!

Even though the zeze's situation at the moment is not very good, there are still some people—even some young people like Msafiri Zawose—who have a big passion for playing both traditional and newly composed music with the zeze. Its function is, of course, different than before. For example, Msafiri plays concerts around the world and records his music as well. Every year in Dodoma there is the Dodoma festival, where traditional music from Dodoma, including that played with a zeze, is on display. More people get to know the zeze because of these kinds of musicians and festivals, but at the same time, on the whole, the Tanzanian people know the Western instruments better than they do their own.

Hopefully someday the Tanzanian traditional instruments will take over in the Tanzanian news feeds and the people will start to use more instruments like the zeze in their music. I saw some nice combinations of Western and Tanzanian instruments during my time in Tanzania, and I also got an opportunity to play the zeze in some rap songs. The situations where people needed zezes and other instruments to entertain themselves while herding sheep or in the evenings after working hours will not come back, but hopefully new ways of using traditional instruments are coming to fill the gap. It might take some time before people realize that Tanzanian instruments are as good as or even better than Western ones, but hopefully it will happen! Music education on every level could play a big role in saving traditional music in Tanzania.

Of course it would be nice if more traditional zeze music could be found in archives in the future, that way people could listen to it and continue to make music after the tradition is gone. The same is true for the instruments. I hope that many kinds of zezes find their way to the archives so that there are enough models after which to make new ones. Now it is still possible to find people who are playing tunes from their grandfathers' zezes or who can build their own zeze, so this massive collecting of materials needs to be done as soon as possible.

This paper is a small part of the huge tradition of the Tanzanian bowed zeze. I am very happy that I had the opportunity to become familiar with the Tanzanian zeze within the framework of this paper. I came to know a lot, learned nice tunes, built the instrument, bought some instruments, studied Swahili and, best of all, met wonderful musicians and other nice people in Tanzania.

The whole process has been a lesson for me and the best part of it is that the work is never ready. I really want to go back to Tanzania again and again and get to know more about the zeze and the zeze music from different areas, as well as the country and the culture as a whole. The zeze lessons I attended were really nice events that took place under the sunny sky in Bagamoyo and the pitch-black sky full of stars in Makumira. The whole time there were lots of people and animals around. Sometimes I needed to explain that I was really okay to learn by ear and that I am also a folk musician because they knew that Europeans usually want to get sheet music instead of learning by ear. I would be very happy if I soon receive a new opportunity to go back to Tanzania and become more familiar with different kinds of zezes.

Just before I finished this paper I received nice news from my Finnish supervisor, Sinikka Kontio. I had been using Anneliese von Gnielinski's book *Traditional Music Instruments of Tanzania in the*

National Museum as a source in this paper and Sinikka found the email address of her eldest son, Friedrich, and wrote to him. He answered Sinikka and told her that Anneliese is unfortunately not with us, having passed away in 2007, but he sent two pictures and told her that he can check if there is some more information in Anneliese's notes about the zeze. Here is one of the pictures, which was probably taken near the city of Arusha in the beginning of the 1980s (Picture 107). When I was in Tanzania I heard that there is no zeze tradition near Arusha. It will be very interesting to hear if there is more about the zeze in Anneliese's notes (von Gnielinski 2014).



Picture 107. Anneliese von Gnielinski's son Franz and Tanzanian musicians (the names of which are unknown at the time of writing). The one on the right is holding a zeze.

I came back from Tanzania with three zezes (the fourth is still in Tanzania) because I want to learn to play them more. One is from Kigoma (Waha) and two from Dodoma (Wagogo). Then there is the one I made. It is a pity that Finland's climate is not very kind on them. The Finnish winter is really cold and dry and the summer warm and sunny, but still not as damp as in Tanzania. After some days in Finland, the zezes started to crack from the calabash, neck, and pegs. Luckily, they are all still playable, though not in a perfect condition. Thus, tuning and playing them is much harder here than in Tanzania. I also want to try to make new music from songs with my violin and the jouhikko and maybe include some Finnish influences.

I hope this paper will do its part to save the zeze because it is a truly beautiful and unique instrument. The world is changing fast, especially in Africa. A lot of new things have taken over the old traditions. Some music comes and some dies, but it is not an ideal situation. I hope that there is a place for all this music and also these instruments in the future. Too much culture has already become extinct. I really hope that I and many others continue this work to collect information of the zeze, before it is too late.

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