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TO : ARTS AND CULTURE

FAX : 27 11 293030 OR 333 3256

FROM : ELIZABETH MLATI
ADMIN. SECRETARY

FAX : (02634) 725970 (PLO NO.) OURS CAN'T RECEIVE

NO OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE: 9

DATE : 20 MAY 1994

MESSAGE

PLEASE RECEIVE COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN TO OUR OFFICE ABOUT MR EPHAT MUJURU. IT WAS INTENDED TO BE SENT TO YOU BEFORE THE 10TH OF MAY 1994 BUT THEY REALIZED THAT IT WAS LATE. THEY HAVE SENT IT TO OUR OFFICE WITH THE REQUEST THAT WE SEND IT TO YOUR GOOD OFFICE.

PLEASE FIND ACCOMPANYING MR MUJURU'S CV AND THREE COPIES ABOUT HIS MUSIC. HE REQUESTS THAT HE BE CONSIDERED FOR THE FUTURE FUNCTIONS. PLEASE ADVISE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT WOULD HELP HIM AS TO HOW TO GO ABOUT BECAUSE HE WOULD LIKE TO PERFORM IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA'S CELEBRATIONS.

YOU MAY SEND THE REPLY DIRECTLY TO HIM. HIS FAX NO. IS 0263-4-333407 OR 335249.

BEST REGARDS



FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER!

Recd 19/05/94 Ely

c/o IMR, P.O.Box MP 167, Harare, Zimbabwe.
Tel : 263-4-303211 Ext 1440 ; Fax : 263-4-333407 or 335249
68155 (Home)

To : ANC Harare Office
31a Lincoln Road
Avondale
Harare

Attention : Mrs E^{MLATI}(Madlamini)

May 6, 1994

Dear Mrs^{MLATI}(Madlamini,)

RE : Ephat Mujuru and Spirit of The People's participation in the celebrations of South Africa's inauguration ceremony.

Congratulations for a decisive win in the just ended elections.

As per our telephone conversation with you yesterday, I wish to express Mr Mujuru's interest in participating in the celebration of South Africa's inauguration ceremony.

Mr Mujuru, master mbira player from Zimbabwe has been involved in various ANC activities like whilst he was in USA on tour in the eighties and in Australia in 1990. He has worked with persons like Mr Welcome Musomi in the States.

Mr Mujuru has recently toured Japan with his group (October 1993) and USA, on a solo tour (Jan 1994 - March 1994).

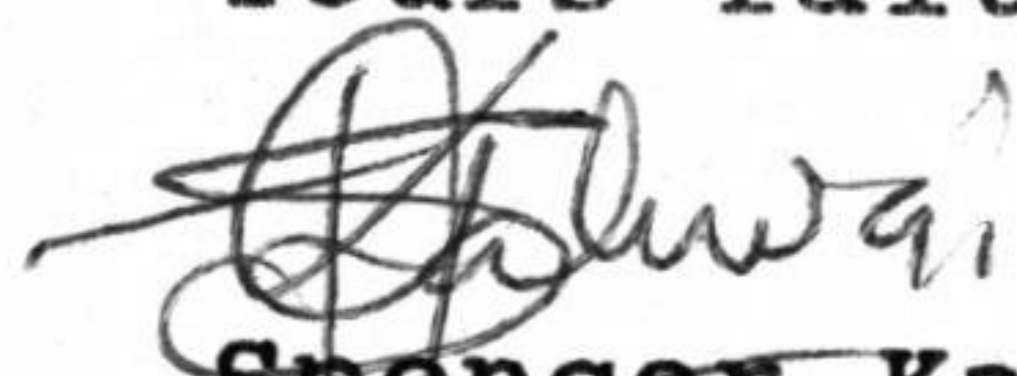
It might be of interest to you that Mr Mujuru recently released his album "HAPANA MUTORWA PASI PANO" and accompanying video in South Africa with Tusk Music. The theme is on global peace.

Let me add that Mr Mujuru's group is the most vibrant and exciting group in Zimbabwe as far as traditional music is concerned.

The group comprises seven gentlemen and two ladies.

I hope that Mr Mujuru's wish to be celebrate the inauguration will be realised.

Yours faithfully,



Spencer Kahwai
(For Ephat Mujuru)

CURRICULUM VITAE FOR EPHAT MUJURU

SURNAME	Mujuru
FIRST NAMES	Ephat Muchandibaya
DATE OF BIRTH	6 August 1950
PLACE OF BIRTH	Makoni District, Rusape, Zimbabwe
SEX	Male
MARITAL STATUS	Married
NATIONALITY	Zimbabwean
CONTACT ADDRESS	Zimbabwe College of Music, Rotten Row, Harare, Zimbabwe
CONTACT TELEPHONE	263 04 723823/03 303211 Ext 1440 (c/o Spencer Kahwai)
OCCUPATION	Musician, music lecturer, music producer , dancer and story-teller and leader of a musical group.
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	Associate Master of Arts degree (University of Seattle, USA) .
HOBBIES	Making musical instruments, sculpturing and watching soccer.
BRIEF BACKGROUND	Mr Ephat Mujuru has taught African music and drama for four years at Washington University in Seattle. He played a large part in the foundation of the first National Dance Troupe of Zimbabwe and has been instrumental in the setting up of the Ethnomusicology program in Zimbabwe.

He is a teacher of African instruments at the Zimbabwe College of Music and plays mbira, ngororombe (African pan-pipes), and several kinds of musical bows, the traditions of which have been passed down to him through a long distinguished family line.

Ephat Mujuru specializes in one of Africa's own great instruments, mbira sometimes referred to as the thumb piano by Western listeners. His particular speciality is mbira dzavadzimu (mbira of the ancestral spirits) or mbira huru, as it has come to be called and he also plays the njari variety. Both of these instruments are linked with Shona traditional religious ceremonies called bira. Not

only is he master of the many styles of traditional songs, but he also composes his own songs and stories which he accompanies on mbira. He leads a mbira group called The Spirit of The People.

Many of the great musicians of Zimbabwe have been taught or influenced by Ephat Mujuru. He can count among his pupils people of all races and from all walks of life, among them the great American ethnomusicologist, Professor Paul Berliner, whose book, The Soul of Mbira, owes much to Mujuru's knowledge.

Between 1982 and 1985, Ephat Mujuru was visiting lecturer and instructor in the Department of Ethnomusicology (University of Washington ,USA). He taught story-telling at workshops at the New England Conservatory (Boston), dance at Yale; and mbira, drums in New York and Indiana.

Besides having travelled all over Africa , Ephat Mujuru made a tour of West Germany (1985), visiting Tubigen, Cologne, Hanover and Berlin, and on his American and Canadian tours between 1982 and 1985 he played in more than twenty cities, often to full houses at such distinguished venues as Carnegie Hall and The Alternative Museum in New York. In 1989, Ephat was invited to Ghana to receive the Pan African Award (1990), Australia (1991) and to South Africa (1991 ,1992 & 1993).

Recently, Ephat toured Japan (October 1993) with his group. The performances were staged at several venues in Tokyo and Nagoya to full houses. He also undertook a solo tour of USA (December 1993 to March 1994).

Ephat continues to carry out research involving traditional music by visiting the remotest of areas and communicating with elders in the know. He also experiments with other types of music.

It is important to note that Ephat has worked with other researchers to describe traditional music, notably that of the mbira in terms of the modern music notation.

There are many recordings of Ephat Mujuru and The Spirit of the People available, ranging from the traditional repertoire to his own compositions and story-telling and more recently, blending with modern instruments.

These include :

THE MBIRA MUSIC OF ZIMBABWE
LP ZML 1003 (1981)
Teal Record Company of Zimbabwe

MBAVAIRA

LP ZML 1013 (1983)

Teal Record Company of Zimbabwe

MUTIMUKURU

LP ZML 1033 (1987)

Teal Record Company of Zimbabwe

THE RHYTHMS OF LIFE

LYRCD 7407 (1990)

Lyrichord Discs Inc. (USA)

(Independent label)

HAPANA MUTORWA PASI PANO

EPH 1 LP (1991)

(Independent label)

Referees :

You may refer to :-

- i). MR NEIL CHAPMAN
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- iii). MR ARNOLD MABERE
BT Worldwide Networks Policy Planning Performance
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403 St. John Street
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CONTACT IN ZIMBABWE:

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Passing On the Ancestral Music

by
Banning
Eyre

EPHAT MUJURU

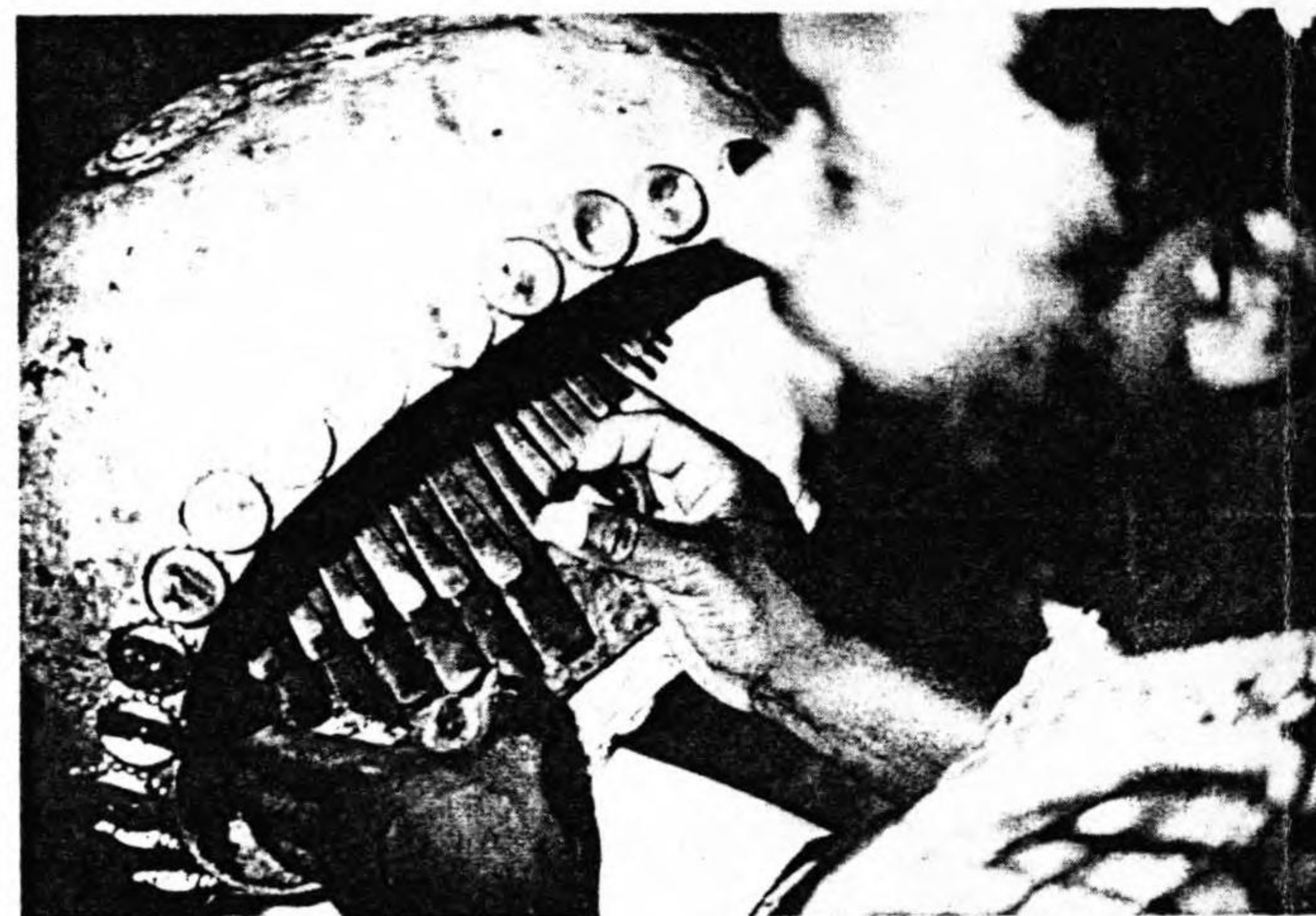


photo by Banning Eyre

While Zimbabweans fought and died to topple their Rhodesian oppressors in the 1970's, a young traditional musician named Ephant Mujuru managed to get national radio play for a slyly political song. "How can I cross the river?" asked the song "Guruswa," which means "ancient Africa" in the Shona language. Perhaps Rhodesian radio programmers heard only quaint nostalgia for the past in the song, but future Zimbabweans got the message. "It was talking about our struggle to free ourselves," explains Mujuru during a recent interview in Boston. "In the time of our ancestors, they had none of these problems [things like subjugation, cultural oppression, and mass poverty]. We wanted the place to be like it was before colonization."

The idea that to move forward, you must recover things from the past is quintessentially African, and goes to the heart of Ephant Mujuru's central mission—to promote the ancient culture of his people, the Shona. Mujuru is considered one of the great living masters of the *mbira*—a polyphonic keyboard-like instrument of tuned metal prongs. The *mbira* became the musical focal point for the resurgence of African culture in Zimbabwe's struggle for independence. Mujuru was born in 1950 in a small village in Manicaland, near Zimbabwe's Mozambican border; he has brought the *mbira* to Carnegie Hall and to jam sessions with musicians as diverse as Nigeria's Fela Kuti and Britain's Eurythmics. "When the *mbira* is played, it brings the two worlds together," says Mujuru, "The world of our ancestors and the world of today."

The ancestors are at the core of the Shona religion, living spirits that the people turn to for counsel in matters great and small. When I first met Mujuru in Zimbabwe in 1988, he took me to a traditional *bira*, a spirit possession ceremony at the home of his uncle, the celebrated singer and spirit medium Hakurotwe Mude. For hours, three *mbira* players wove celestial sound tapestries against the insistent *CHA-ka-cha, CHA-ka-cha* of the *bosho* gourd rattles. Deep into the night, Mude and a woman in the small neighborhood audience became possessed by ancestor spirits who proceeded to debate the appropriateness of having a white-skinned visitor at a Shona religious ceremony. Happily, the ancestors approved of me in the end; it was

here, at my first *bira*, that I began to better appreciate this mysterious and beautiful world, the spiritual source of the *mbira*'s seductive melancholy.

The young Ephant was raised and taught to play the *mbira* by his grandfather, Muchatera Mujuru. Muchatera was a medium for perhaps the most important figure in Shona ancestor cosmology, Chaminuka. Showing clear talent for the *mbira*'s polyrhythmic complexities, Mujuru advanced quickly, playing his first possession ceremony when he was just ten. At his Rhodesian-run Catholic school, young Mujuru's teachers told him that to play *mbira* was a "sin against God." Mujuru himself sees no contradiction between the Shona religion and Christianity. In fact, today he is an active member of the Catholic church. But at the time, the school's attitude irritated Muchatera so much that he withdrew his grandson and sent him to school in an African township outside the capital, Salisbury, present day Harare.

In the big city, Mujuru hesitated before committing himself to the life of a musician. "I didn't really know what was best for me in my life, whether I wanted to work as a bank clerk or some such thing," Mujuru recalls. "I worked in an accounting office. But the people there were very colonial. They had so much hate. They didn't re-

spect African people." Mujuru ultimately had to leave. "It was sad," he says, "because I thought life was beginning, and then I had no job. I was eighteen and very confused."

All along, though, Mujuru says that there was a "silent voice" telling him that his hope lay in *mbira* music. Following that voice, Mujuru began spending time in the village of Bandambira, where he studied with a great old *mbira* player of the same name. In the highland corn fields near Mondoro, beneath Zimbabwe's big skies full of large birds, battleship clouds, and horsetail sunsets, Mujuru reaffirmed his ties to the *mbira*. Soon, he went to live and apprentice with another master player, Simon Mashoko.

"We used to go and perform in the villages," says Mujuru, recalling his days with Mashoko. "One day we went to a place where they were threshing the corn and we played while people were working and they were very happy because the music made them work so hard." Mujuru's path became clear—to follow in the footsteps of Muchatera Mujuru, Mubayiwa Bandambira, and Simon Mashoko. "They had respect," says Mujuru emphatically. "They were not as rich as those accounting people, but they were much happier."

In 1972, Mujuru formed his first group, Chaminuka, with which he performed throughout the brutal decade of the independence war. Mujuru says, "When we played *mbira*, people would come and dance with a special feeling. 'Hey, we are going to be independent!'" In the context of war, *mbira* music became political, a rallying cry for the resurgence of African culture in Zimbabwe.

In the popular music sphere, the champion of this resurgence was Thomas Mapfumo. Mapfumo began composing his first songs in the mid-70's, translating *mbira* lines onto guitars, and *hosho* and drum rhythms onto the trap set. He sang words to encourage the *chimurenga* guerrillas from whom his music took its name. "Mothers, Send Your Children to War," and "Trouble in the Communal Lands" were typical *chimurenga* titles.

Though Mapfumo's music sought to link the revival of Shona religion with the ongoing political struggle, the forces of tradition and revolution could themselves come into conflict. The Rhodesians had systematically taught Africans to shun their heritage as if it were something shameful. For urbanized Zimbabwean blacks in particular, overthrowing colonialism did not negate the value of embracing Western ways. And for the fighters, nothing, including religious tradition, was more important than winning the struggle. Near the end of the war, Ephant's grandfather became a victim of the tumultuous times. Muchatera's wartime *biras* asked the ancestors how the people could end the suffering of war, a mission misconstrued by some as a lack of resolve. Though his work embodied the most spiritual goals Zimbabweans were fighting for, he lost his life before the fight was won. This was just one of many such events in a harsh and tragic war that Zimbabweans are anxious to leave behind them.

Zimbabweans gained their freedom officially in 1980, and the work of building a new nation began. Renaming his group Spirit of the People, Mujuru recorded his first album in 1981, using only *mbira*, hand drums, *hosho*, and singers. He sang about brotherhood and healing, crucial themes during a time when the nation's dominant ethnic groups, the Shona and Ndebele, struggled to work out their differences.

Independence and a measure of commercial success brought new possibilities for Mujuru. He helped to found the National Dance Com-

pany and became the first African music teacher to work at the stuffy Zimbabwe College of Music. In 1982, Mujuru came to the US for the first time to pursue university studies and, eventually, to lecture at the University of Washington in Seattle. Teaching *mbira* and *marimba* there, he began work that was later carried on by fellow Zimbabwean Dumisani Maraire, who still lives in Seattle at the heart of a vital African music scene.

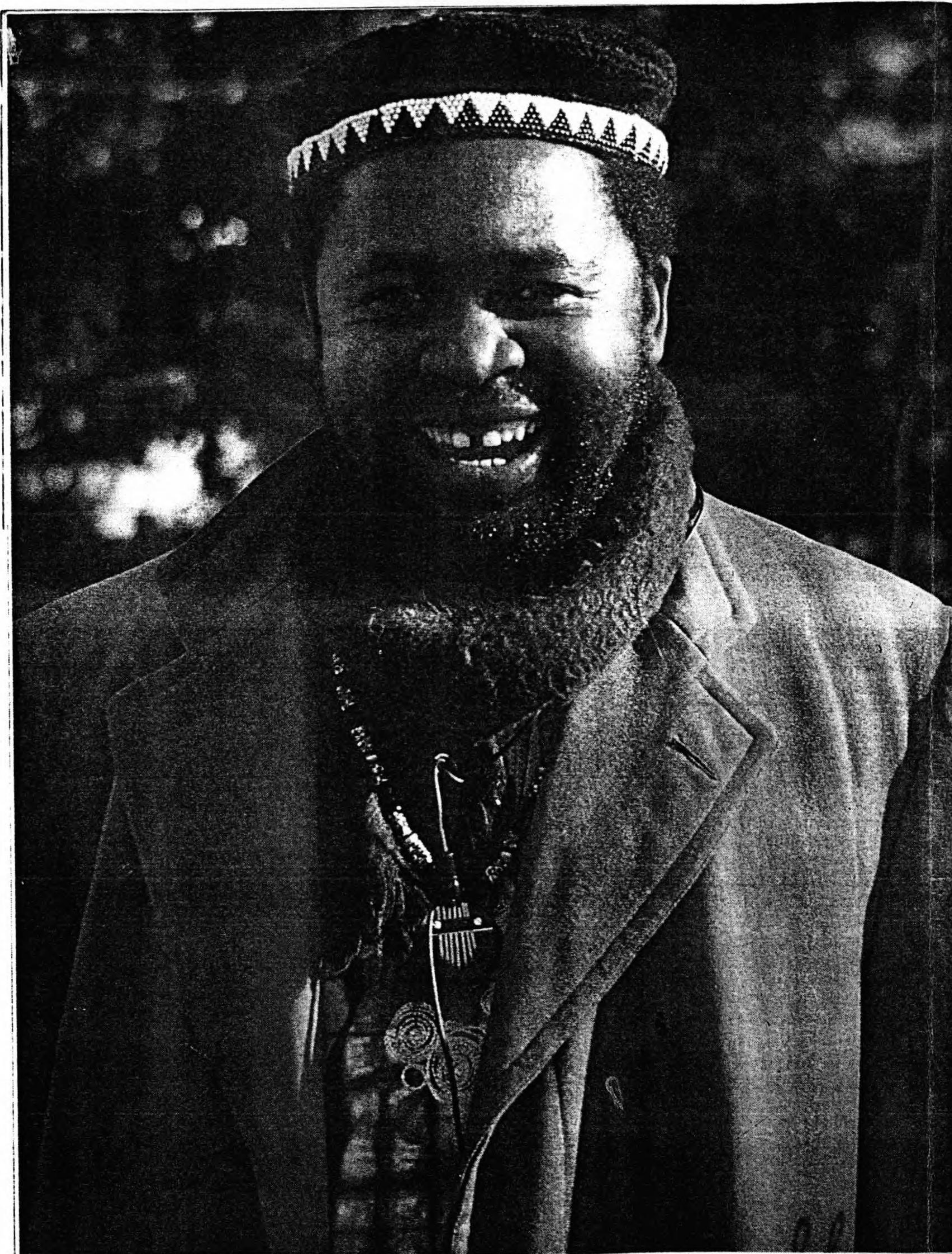
Throughout the 1980's, Mujuru traveled widely, returning to Zimbabwe to record two more traditional albums. During his 1989 US tour, I helped him to record an album of largely overlooked Zimbabwean hand percussion music. Though not typical of his main work, the resulting CD, *Rhythms of Life* (Lyricord), is Mujuru's only domestic release to date. But that's about to change. Mujuru is currently finalizing negotiations with an American label. In the near future, he plans to release a record of children's stories as well as one with his band. But first, Mujuru will record a solo introduction to his first love and principle musical domain, the *mbira*.

Mujuru plays all of Zimbabwe's five types of *mbira*, but his specialty is the popular *mbira dzavadzimu*. Where *mbiras* can have from fifteen to fifty iron prongs, the *mbira dzavadzimu* has twenty-two, arranged in three register banks that Mujuru characterizes as "voice of the children, voice of the adults, and voice of the elders." The prongs, often made from flattened bed springs, get clamped tightly onto a laminated slab of hard Mubvamaropa wood. *Mbira* makers often attach shells or bottle caps to the *mbira*'s tin shield to produce a resonating buzz that compliments the chiming character of the notes. For amplification, players use sticks to jam the instrument into a large, halved calabash that serves as a resonating chamber.

When he records his solo record, Mujuru is keen to feature the ancient Shona vocalizations that he has so effectively worked into his performance style. "Some of this language is like rap," he explains. "It's talking. It's a rhythmical language." Instinctively, he grabs his *mbira*, presses it against the kitchen table to get some volume, and begins speaking in clear, warm tones, his animated face reflecting the character of each sound. "Cooooooo. Chika! Cooooooo. Chika! That's the horse," he says, laughing at his own pastoral nod to the American rappers.

With 25 years of playing experience behind him, Mujuru has a vast repertoire of traditional and original songs. "There are songs for herding livestock, chopping down trees, political gatherings, rituals, and even for taking a bath." The bath reference typifies Mujuru's unflagging and at times absurdist sense of humor. His ability to get laughs has helped him transform the traditional art of telling allegorical tales to children into a personalized narrative form that disarms adult audiences as well. In one story, a hyena confronted with a dead cow and a dead goat cannot decide which to eat first and dies of starvation while pacing greedily back and forth between the two prizes.

Mujuru's levity also affords him license to address serious topics, such as war and starvation. He says he is not a politician but a "musician who talks about the philosophy of life," and the most common theme in his songs is unity. Unity is a constant theme in his life as well: Mujuru has worked to unify Africans and non-Africans, the rivalrous Shona and Ndebele, the rich and the poor, traditional and pop musicians, his wife and seven children, and squabbling band members. The fact that he's also helped build solidarity behind the traditions of the *mbira* gives him special satisfaction.



Remarkably, mbira music is more popular in Zimbabwe now than it was during the first heady days of independence, a time when some of Mujuru's peers still thought him old-fashioned and un-hip for playing such an arcane instrument. But if mbira has found a new place in Zimbabwean society, Mujuru does not claim responsibility for the change. "The person I give credit for that is Thomas Mapfumo," he says without hesitation. "We were playing the traditional music, but then there was another generation we could not reach. When Thomas came, he put the guitar [into the music], and people really started respecting mbira."

In the years since independence, Zimbabwe's highly active music scene has been dominated by guitar-based pop bands rather than mbira groups. Zairean rumba or *soukous*, flavored by Kenyan interpreters on its way to Zimbabwe, remains a popular element, and South Africa's forthright jive rhythms also find their way into a lot of Zimbabwean stylings. To compete in this realm, Mujuru has revamped his band, Spirit of the People, to play mbira-based electric dance pop.

The best available text on mbira music is *The Soul of Mbira* (University of California Press) by Paul Berliner. Thorough, well-written, and engaging to read, the book offers an excellent primer on Shona culture and the arts of making and playing mbiras. The book is available through Original Music in Tivoli, NY.

You can hear some of Berliner's field recordings on two Nonesuch Explorer records—*The Soul of Mbira*, and *Mbira Music of the Shona People*. These are hard to find now, but they're both expected to be reissued on CD late this year.

Ephant Mujuru's only domestically-available recording is *Rhythms of Life* (Lyricord), a mostly percussion album. He has a track with his traditional group on *Take Cover*, a Zimbabwean compilation on Shanachie. Watch for new titles

In 1992, Mujuru's first electric album, *Hapana Mutorwa*, made its way to the top of the local charts, edging out Zimbabwe rumba kings Leonard Dembo and John Chibadura. Now, on any weekend night, Spirit of the People may go head-to-head with eight or nine other dance bands, playing at hotels around the sprawling city of Harare.

In the 1990s, for the first time since Mapfumo pioneered the roots rock audience, young bands have begun picking up the torch that Mapfumo and Mujuru have carried. Mbira pop bands like Mambakwendza, The Black Ites, Legal Lions, and Vadzimba have carved out a new niche in Zimbabwe's competitive pop scene. Brushing aside often heard complaints that these new groups lack originality and simply rehash Mapfumo's ideas, Mujuru boosts the trend unabashedly. "We need more mbira groups," he insists. "They should be multiplied by 200. I don't complain. If there is a problem, I go and help them. I've helped a lot of groups. That is my work as an mbira player. Our forefathers left us this music and now we are passing it from generation to generation."

soon, as Mujuru will be recording during this tour.

Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited have two available albums that feature mbira, *Chamunorwa* (Mango) and *Hondo* (Zimbo/Stern's). Stella Chiweshe, a rare female mbira player based in Germany, has two mostly acoustic records, *Ambuya?* (Shanachie) and *Kumasha* (Piranha), both recommended. Also, American-based mbira player Dumisani Maraire has a domestic release, *Chaminuka* (Music of the World).

To find out more about mbira activity throughout the country, contact the publishers of the newsletter *Utandande*, 1711 East Spruce St., Seattle, WA 98122-5728.

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Photo: Pat Pollard

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A MEDLEY OF AFRICAN MUSIC

AS SOUTHERN AFRICAN MUSICIANS DISCOVER DIFFERENT MUSIC FORMS, THEY ARE PRODUCING A RICHER AND MORE INTERESTING BLEND OF AFRICAN RHYTHMS...

By SAUL MOLOBI

LISTENING to music from different African countries highlights the importance of cultural interaction and exchange. Although most musicians remain faithful to their traditional music, some enrich it by drawing on the rhythms and sounds of other cultures.

pic: Ted Records, Saul Molobi



KING LION: Mixes reggae with township music

For example, Mozambique musician King Lion mixes his country's traditional mbaqanga-like music, called "marabenda", with slow-tempo roots reggae rhythms to make his special sound. His voice is sweet and it floats above the heavy reggae sounds of the instruments, much like Jamaica's reggae star, Eric Donaldson, who first inspired him.

For King Lion, whose real name is Innocent Marleco, reggae was the first foreign music he ever heard. But when he started composing his own music, he didn't dismiss the local marabenda music. Instead, he borrowed ideas from reggae to enrich marabenda.

After coming to South Africa as a migrant mineworker in 1985, he formed his band, The Black People's Choice, with four Mozambican friends and a South African. He composed many songs for the group. In 1987 he approached South African singer and producer, Pat Shange, about recording an album. It was called "Beautiful Woman is Like a Rose" and was well received in Mozambique.

Since living in South Africa, King Lion has picked up some of the township beat, which he has mixed with reggae on his second album, "Living in Africa". A couple of the songs are even in Zulu!

RHYTHMS OF ZIMBABWE

ZIMBABWEAN musician, Ephat Mujuru, plays the mbira, or thumb-piano. He is the leader of the popular band, The Spirit of the People.



EPHAT MUJURU: Tells traditional stories

In his first three albums, Mujuru's rhythms were similar to the Northern Sotho "dipela" (mbira in Shona) music player, "Malome" Mokgwadi. Their music is identified by the mbira's striking notes accompanied by a traditional story.

In Mujuru's latest album, "Hapana Mutorwa Pasi Pano" (which means "No-one is a stranger on this earth"), the sounds and

beat are more like the fast-tempo, Shangaan mbaqanga rhythms of South Africa's Obed Ngobeni.

Mujuru's lyrics are filled with powerful traditional story-telling images, which he enriches with poetic expressions, idioms and metaphors.

The subjects of his songs are drawn from the historical life of Zimbabwe. In his song, "Zimbabwe", he sings about the history of his people in their struggle against British colonialism and the victories that led to the formation of an independent Zimbabwe. And his "Shumba" is a traditional song that praises the ancestors.

Mujuru, who also teaches music and dance at the Zimbabwe College of Music in Harare, received the Pan-African Award for Music from Ghana's Arts Image Foundation in 1991 for his contribution to African culture and tradition.

A UNIQUE LESOTHO BLEND

LESOTHO band, Sankomota, spends so much time in South Africa that not many people know its place of origin. Although the band's music sounds like South African township disco, it remains a Lesotho blend



TSHEPO TSHOLA: Legend from Lesotho

of touches of gospel music and traditional mbaqanga music.

The band was founded by its guitarist, Frank Leepa, and its gifted lead vocalist, Tshepo Tshola. It first came to South Africa in 1978, when it was known as Uhuru.

Their songs were about the daily experiences of the people of the "Mountain Kingdom", which is what some people call

(S. Africa)