

# ***Yiri*** **by Koko**

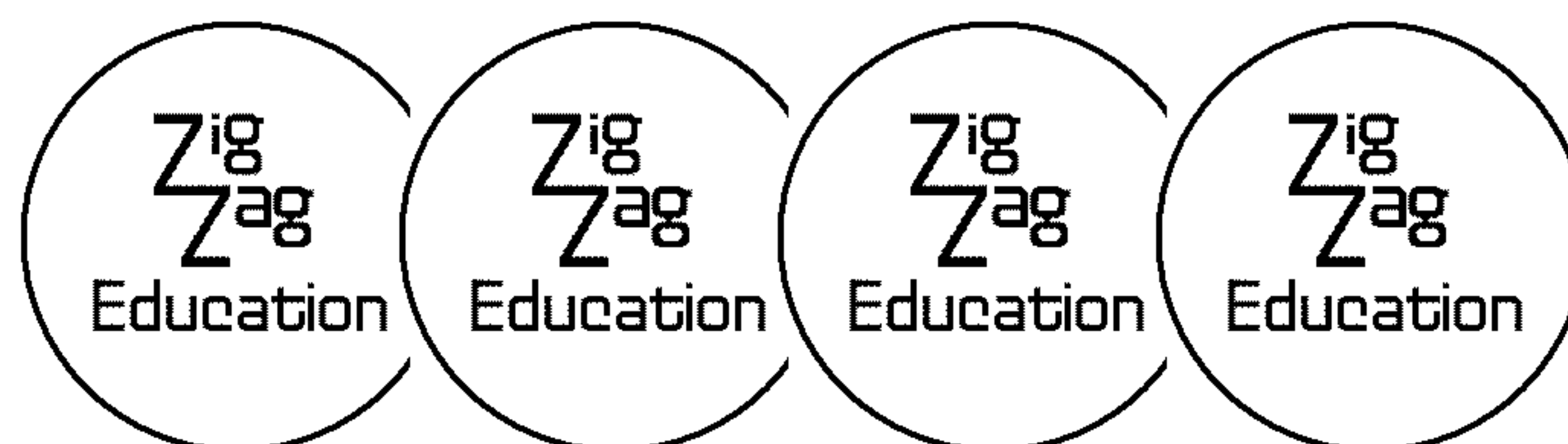
## GCSE Set Work Analysis & Activities

Update v1.1, 18 January 2010



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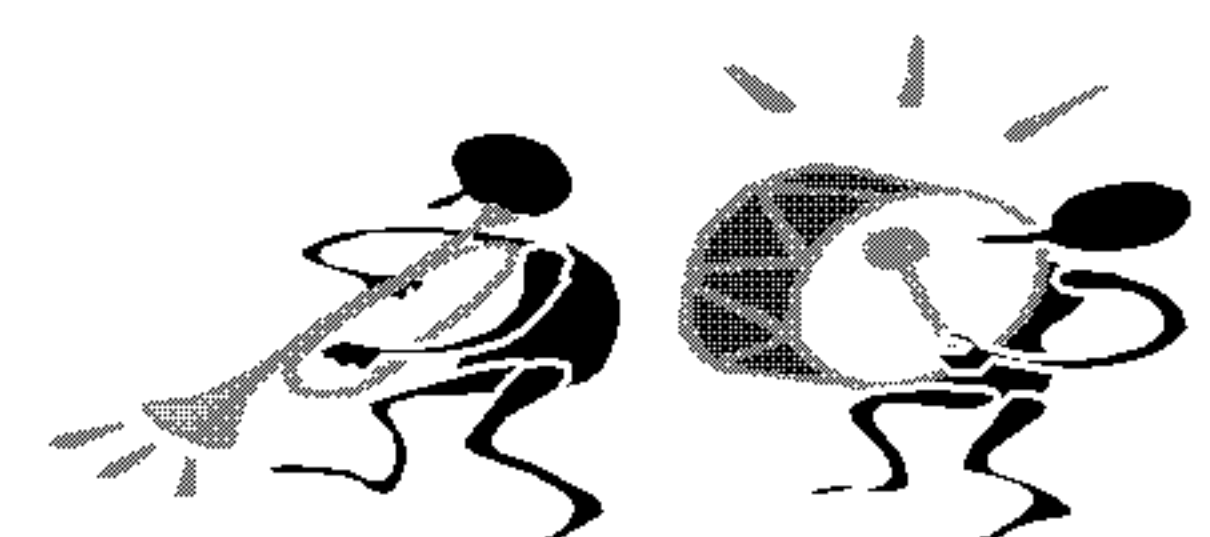
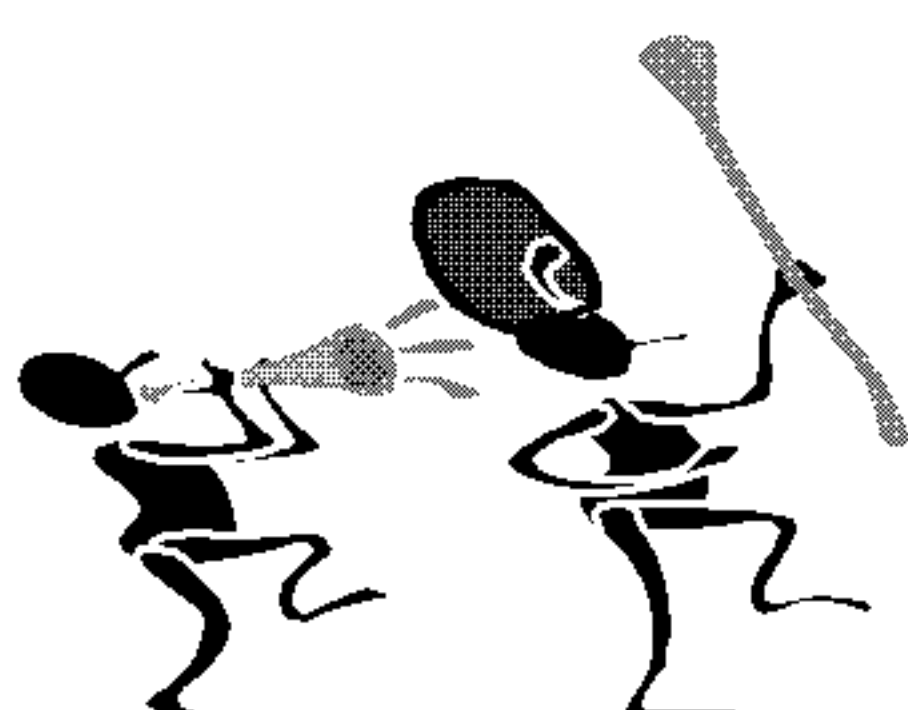
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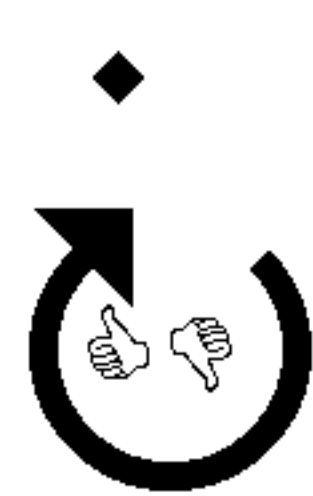
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## Teacher's Introduction

This is an extremely valuable resource for candidates of all abilities. However, some candidates in particular will find it very useful for raising their standards, or for looking at notation, and find it difficult to understand and use music vocabulary. This resource tackles these common difficulties in its layout and approach.

The composition task and the practice questions are aimed at all grades. The resource is a piece that should be taught jointly as a performance piece and as a learning resource. The devices mentioned in it. Its overall structure and internal structure can be used in a composition. Candidates should be encouraged by the teacher to analyse the devices used and what they sound like by doing the task.

The separate composition task will take the candidates through the steps of inspired composition. *Yiri* is analysed in detail in chronological order of music. It is then analysed again using the composition content guide and then for a third time using the content of the listening paper. This is to make the resource more accessible, and to make it adaptable to different teaching styles.

There are mark schemes for the practice questions and a keywords table with definitions. This resource is aimed at teachers that have little or no knowledge of the music of the 1970s. It is to provide quick and accessible information to the busy teacher who does not have time to do with even more paperwork. It is to be used in conjunction with the Edexcel GCSE Music specification.

**Ms Sheila Fay James, PGCE (Cambridge), B.Mus Hons (Goldsmiths College)**

Sheila James is an experienced Head of Music in challenging London school and GCE Music examiner for two major exam boards.

**Update v1.1:** Minor formatting changes on p. 5

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# Introduction to *Yiri*

## The Overview

The structure of the piece is basically a strophic song over an ostinato bass line and a coda. The ostinato bass tune is played in octave unison on the 2<sup>nd</sup> balaphon. The ostinato throughout the piece also. There are 13 variations of the main theme in the verses. The verses are varied slightly when the male-voice group sings, but are presented by the solo tenor voice. There is also much variation of the theme on the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon during instrumental sections. The sung verses often alternate between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> balaphon but this does not happen consistently. The group always sing in unison.

## Factual Information

**Title of set work:** *Yiri*

**Edexcel GCSE Music area of study:** Four

**Composer:** Madou Koné

**Artist:** Koko

**Album title:** Balafons et tambours d'Afrique, volume 2

**Album date:** 8<sup>th</sup> August 1994

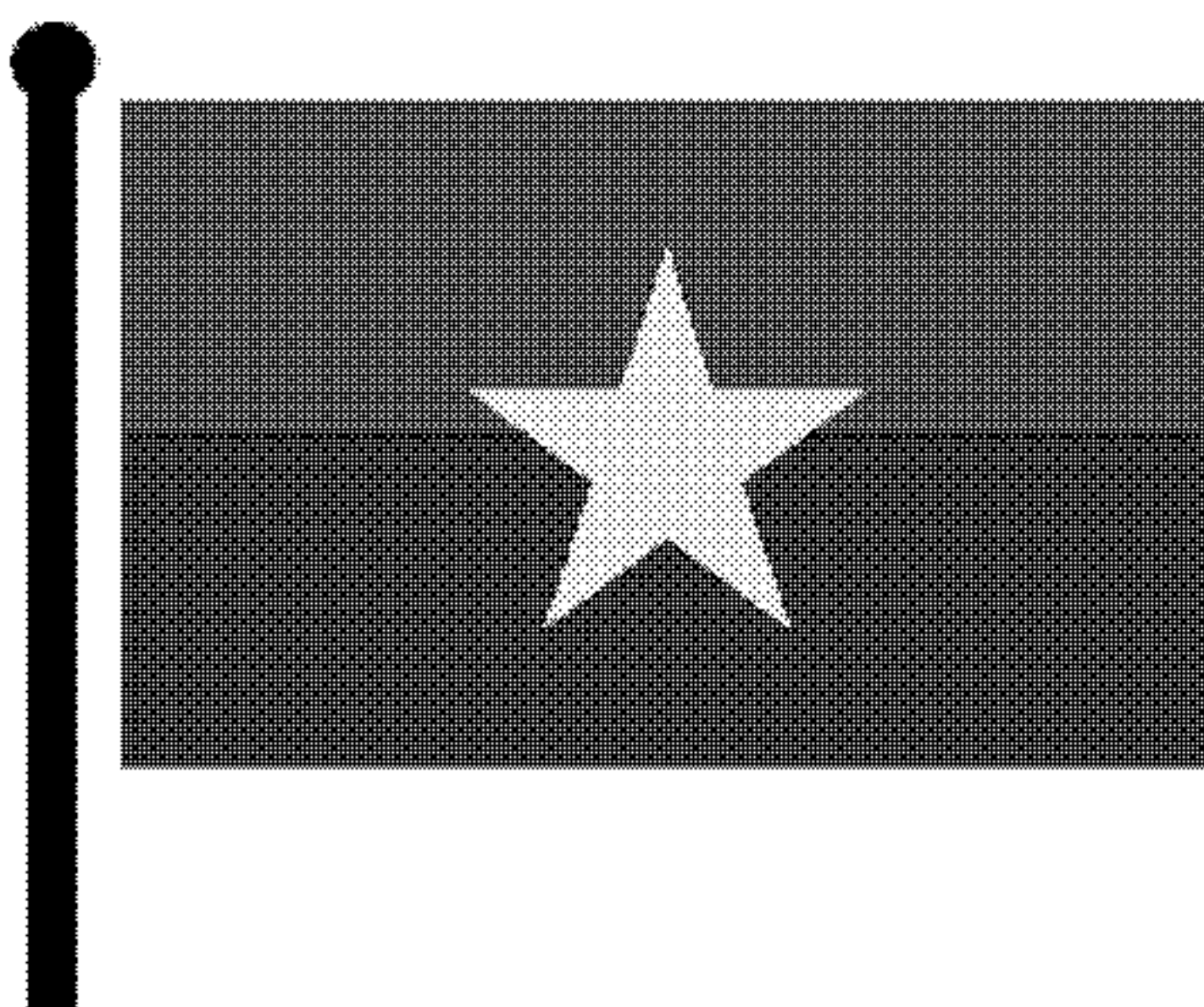
**Stockist:** <http://www.amazon.co.uk>

**Duration:** 6' 42"

**Country of origin:** Burkina Faso

**Geographical information:** *Yiri* is a piece from the West African country of Burkina Faso.

**Official language of Burkina Faso:** French (but 90 per cent of the population speak a language from the Sudanic family).



The flag of Burkina Faso has a red top half, a green bottom half and a yellow star.



**Meaning – social and cultural context**

*Yiri* is a native folk music from Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso has little Western Music. Much of the music is traditional folk music.

*Yiri* is celebration music. It is a way for a person out to honour their older rather than a young person.

# Unit 1: Performing Music

## Introduction section

- 1) Tune 1 played on the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon in the higher register.

Intro Tune 1

1st Balaphon opening melody

6

3 3

- 2) Tune 2 is played on the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon in the middle register. This tune is repeated. On the repeat, the lower version of the tune is varied heterophonically.
- 3) Tune 3 is played on the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon in octave unison, using heterophony.

Tune 2

1st Balaphon in octave unison with heterophonic variations on the repeat.

5 Tune 3

- 4) On the repeat of tune 3, the drum ostinato enters in from bar 2 and continues throughout the piece. It is played in call and response between the different drums with responses.

Drum rhythm ostinato

- 5) The bass melodic ostinato is played on the 2<sup>nd</sup> balaphon in octave unison.

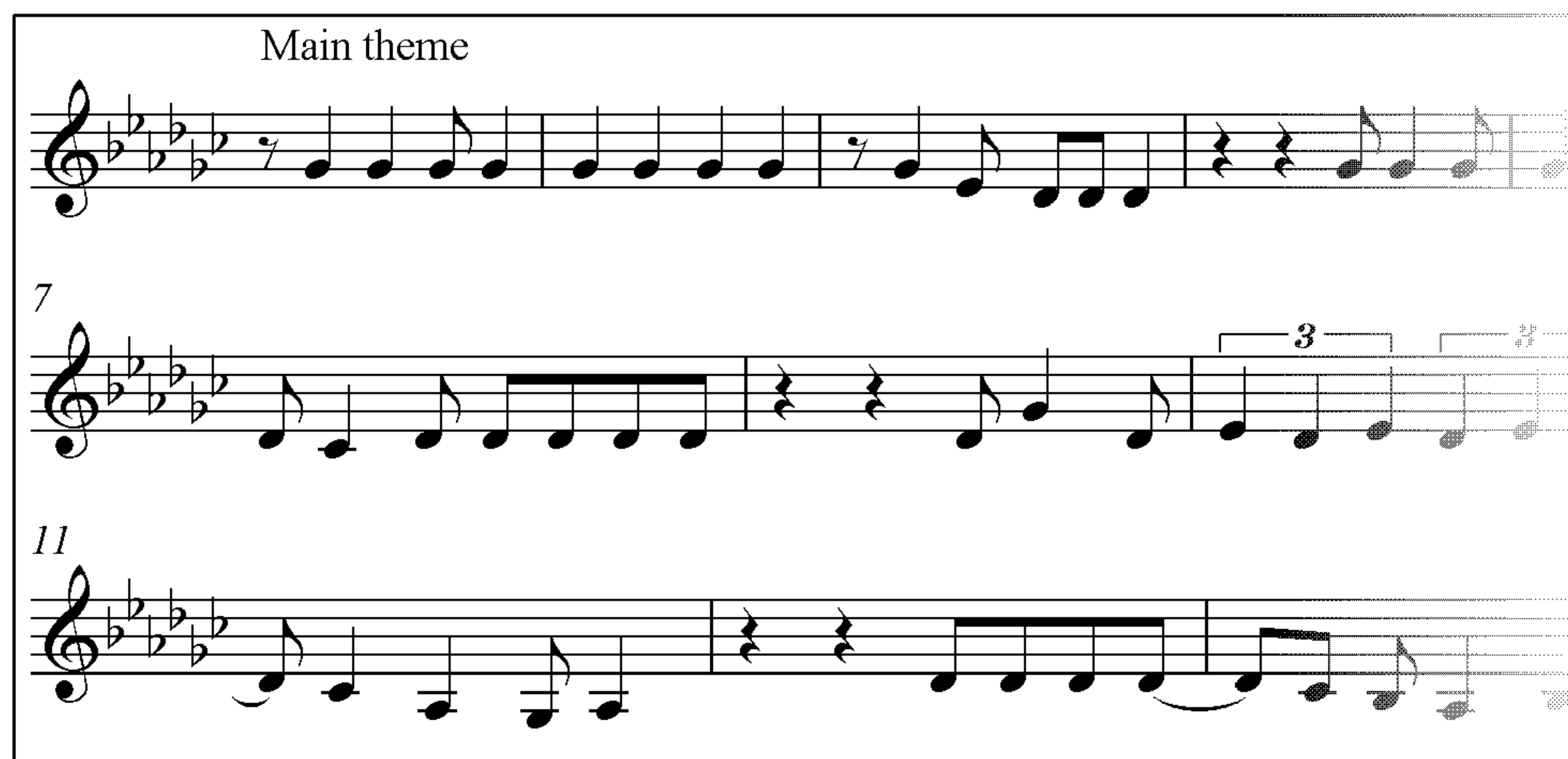
Ostinato in octave unison

- 6) The higher version of the ostinato adds heterophonic variations. Later on, the part adds flourishes in the high register of the instrument.
- 7) A link section of a few bars follows.



## Main section

- 1) The main theme is 14 bars long and is played by the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon again.



This theme is the basic tune of the verses. The verses are often variations of the theme. The verses are accompanied both by the 2<sup>nd</sup> balaphon's bass melodic ostinato and the drum's rhythmic ostinato.

- 2) The singers sing the 1<sup>st</sup> verse against the ostinato bass on the 2<sup>nd</sup> balaphon, improvising occasional flourishes. The drum ostinato accompanies in a similar way with occasional improvised rhythmic flourishes. The 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon punctuates the singing.
- 3) The 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon varies the tune for a 2<sup>nd</sup> verse, which it plays as an instrumental variation to accompany it.
- 4) The group sings the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse in the same way as the first verse with the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon.
- 5) The balaphon varies the tune for a 4<sup>th</sup> verse with the ostinatos.
- 6) A solo tenor sings the 5<sup>th</sup> verse but in a recitative style and as a variation of the theme. The tune is based around the G flat above middle C and the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon occasionally plays the same tune. The last phrase is echoed by the group of singers and doubled by the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon.
- 7) The soloist sings the 6<sup>th</sup> verse in a similar style to verse 5 with the last phrase being echoed by the group of singers and doubled by the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon.
- 8) The soloist sings the 7<sup>th</sup> verse for part of the way and the instrumentalists play a variation of the theme.
- 9) The 8<sup>th</sup> verse is sung by the singers in the same way as verses 1 and 3.
- 10) The 9<sup>th</sup> verse is another instrumental verse. It is played with balaphon 1 in the same way as verse 2.
- 11) The 10<sup>th</sup> verse is sung by the singers in a very similar way to how they sang the first verse.
- 12) The 11<sup>th</sup> verse is instrumental, and is another melodic variation of the theme.
- 13) The 12<sup>th</sup> verse is sung by the singers in much the same way as they sang the first verse.
- 14) The 13<sup>th</sup> verse follows as another variation of the theme.

## Coda

- 1) The drums play louder and with more emphasis on the rhythmic accents, creating more improvisation to create more polyrhythms over the ostinato rhythm.
- 2) The second balaphon continues to maintain the ostinato bass tune and occasionally plays melodies in the upper register.
- 3) The two balaphons improvise in polyphony with various syncopated rhythms.
- 4) Finally, tune 3 from the introduction is played by both balaphons together, sometimes doubled at times by the drums to create moments of homophony against the ostinato. After the repeat of tune 3 the piece ends with one strike of the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon.

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## Using the Class Activity Worksheet

The Class Activity worksheet on page 6 can be used in various ways. Below

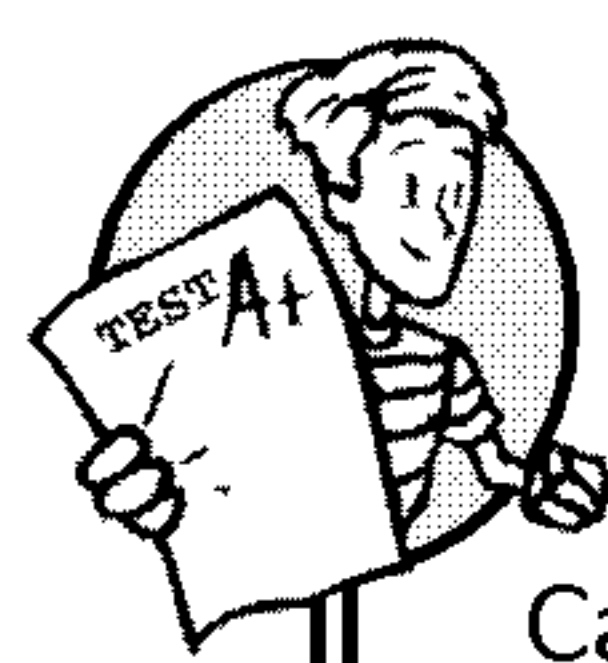
### Knowledge

The following 'Class Activity Worksheet' sheet is primarily a learning resource illustrating the musical devices involved. Candidates learn about these devices so that they can hear them played, see them written down, and learn the technique.

### Performing

Candidates may also choose to use this activity as their exam ensemble performance. It would suit the D grade candidate as it is an easier part and very repetitive. Part 2 is of a *medium* difficulty and would suit a C grade candidate. It should be learnt by ear, but can be referred to by candidates during the learning process to develop their musical understanding. They might want to teach this piece as part of their rhythm notation unit.

Any combination of three different untuned percussion instruments may be used.

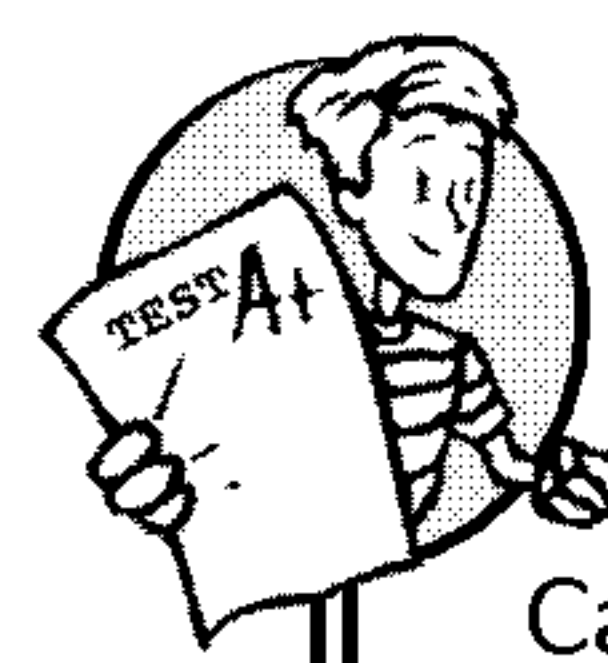


### Going for an A

Candidates who are going for an A grade would need to extend the improvisation from bar 18 so that they can exploit the resources of their instrument by varying technique and adding complex triplet and syncopated rhythms. For the sake of the board criteria, add clear dynamic contrast and shading (even though this is not traditional for African drumming). The candidate or conductor should give a clear cue for when the section ends and the written scored music is resumed. As this is an ensemble piece, the other parts hold at least an ostinato rhythm throughout the candidate's improvisation so that the 'performing within an ensemble' criterion is met.

### Composing

Candidates may also choose to use the device headings and structure as a template for their composition. They should feature varying texture and rhythm, using a clear internal structural devices from the Class Activity piece.



### Going for an A

Candidates going for an A grade would need to add complex rhythms of triplets and syncopation. If they are using music software to do this, they must humanise the music by adding appropriate articulation such as accents, phrasing and dynamics, and choose the tempo to the way that they sound in the software rather than by instrument name alone. They must ensure that the music is playable on real instruments. (They may wish to add other parts to create harmony and melody).

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## CLASS ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

**Call and response**

Part 1 *mf*

Part 2 *mf*

Part 3

**7 monorhythm**

Part 1 *sfz* *p* *cresc*

Part 2 *sfz* *p* *cresc*

Part 3 *sfz* *p* *cresc*

**13 rhythmic ostinato**

Part 1 *f* *mp*

Part 2 *Improvise*

Part 3 *f* *mp*

**18**

Part 1 *p*

Part 2 *tacet*

Part 3 *tacet*

**23 Complexity**

Part 1 *p cresc* *mf*

Part 2 *p cresc* *mf*

Part 3 *p cresc* *mf*

**27 Call and response**

Part 1 *sfz*

Part 2 *Improvise*

Part 3 *Improvise*

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## Unit 2 – Composing Music

### Use and Development of ideas

Ostinatos are the main feature of African music in general. They have been still widely used in much popular African music today. Ideas flow in a natural way, using previous motifs to move the music on. Call and response, heterophonic variation, and syncopated polyrhythms help to create the interesting yet simplistic feel. The two main ostinatos – one is melodic and played by the 2<sup>nd</sup> balaphon and the other is a rhythm in call and response amongst the drums.

### Exploitation of the Medium

- The vocal range of the singers is quite wide for male voices – going as high as the C<sup>5</sup> to as low as the G flat below middle C.
- Each balaphon plays two tunes simultaneously. Most of the time the tunes are in unison, but sometimes there are two different tunes at the same time or one tune with improvisation.
- The drums present their ostinato in call and response with improvised variations to keep the rhythmic groove flowing.

### Structure and form

- The overall structure is strophic.
- The internal structure is a set of variations over an ostinato tune. The theme is repeated with variation. Other than at the beginning when the theme is introduced, it is repeated in the many verses sung by the group.
- There is an introduction, then the theme, followed by several sung verses with variation. A coda ends the piece.
- The variations are presented by the 1<sup>st</sup> balaphon and, on occasions, a soloist.
- The variations are all accompanied by the ostinato in the bass register of the balaphon, played in octave unison, and an ostinato rhythm shared by the drums with additional improvised rhythmic flourishes.

### Accompaniment

Untuned and tuned percussion are used. Call and response is used throughout. The ostinato is played throughout. The drum ostinato rhythm is played in call and response with the music. Imitation and call and response are used to punctuate the singing at various points. The overall effect of the accompaniment is polyrhythmic, with some complexity. It features polyphonic doubled melodies with heterophonic variants of the melodies in the balaphon.

### Texture

The texture is light, due to the use of polyrhythms and polyphonic and heterophonic textures. The piece is light and airy.

### Tempo and rhythms

The tempo is moderate. The drums play the main ostinato rhythm in call and response with the ostinato rhythm with improvised rhythmic flourishes to add interest.

### Dynamic contrast

Dynamics are used expressively in the introduction but the rest of the piece is mostly at a moderate level (moderately loud) for most of the piece. There is natural phrasing leading to diminuendos throughout.

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## Instrumentation and Technique

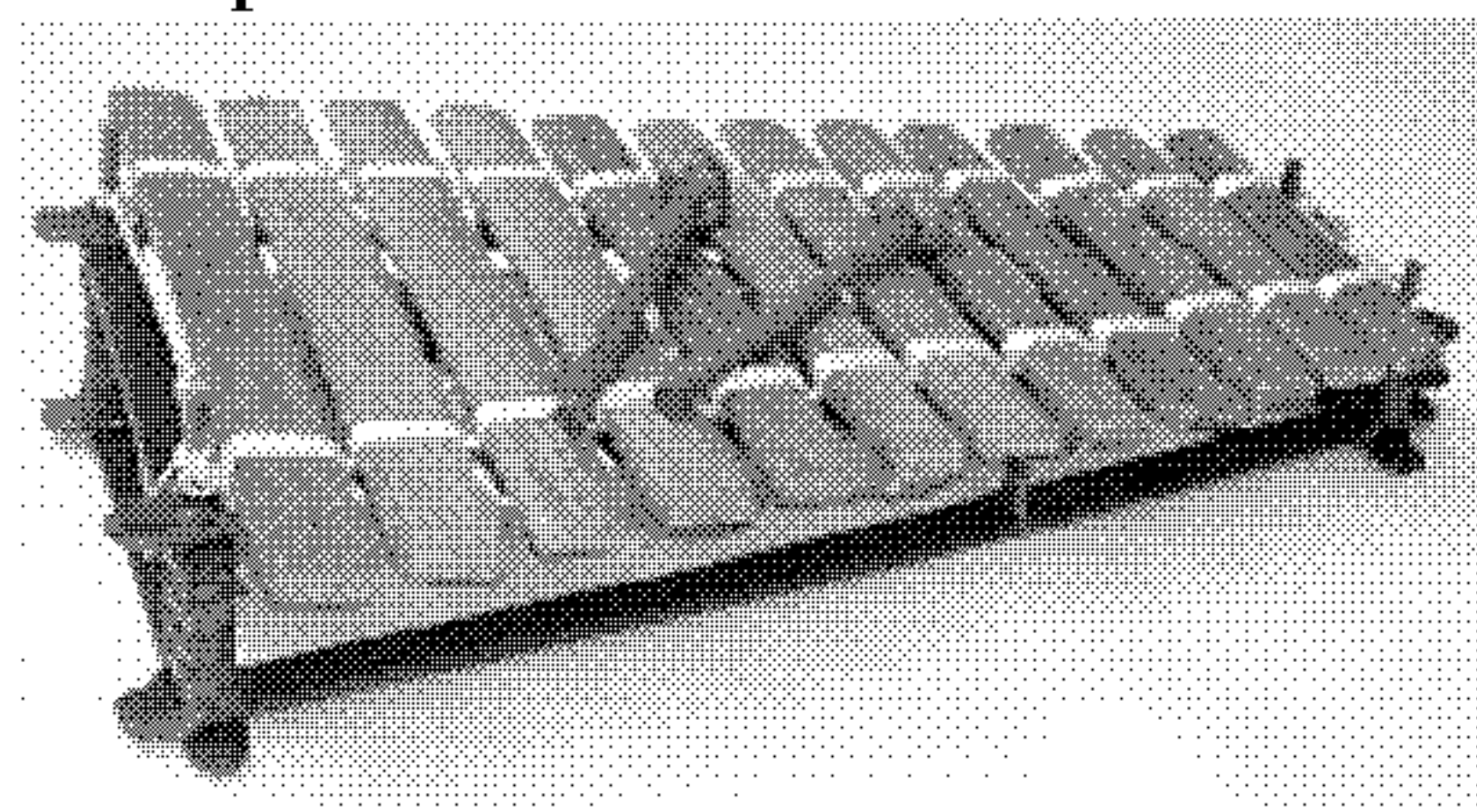
*Talking drum* – a traditional West African drum. It is shaped like an hourglass that can be tightened by squeezing the drum whilst playing it. It can be hit to create a variety of timbres. It was originally used to send messages across by imitating the inflections of native African languages. This is where it got the djembe are shaped differently and can be tuned by tightening or loosening sides. All these stringed drums fall loosely under the djembe family.

*Balaphon* – xylophone-type wooden tuned percussion instrument of West Africa. Balaphon one plays the main melodies during the first part of the piece and punctuates the voices after each phrase of singing. Balaphon two plays the main section of the song and adds occasional flourishes in the higher register.

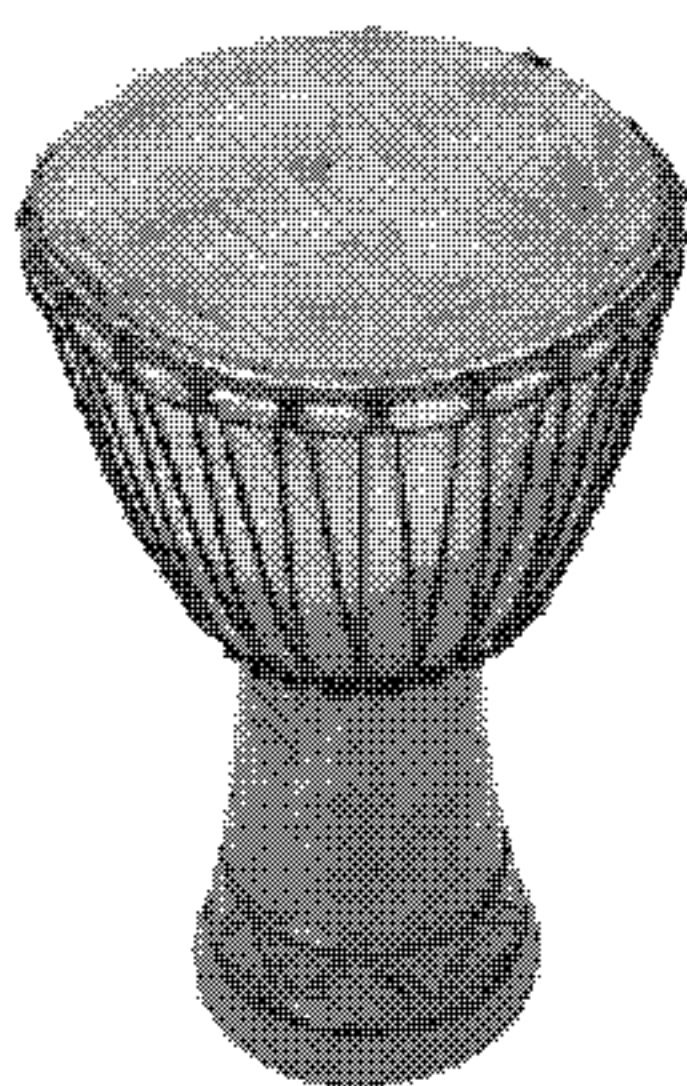
*Cowbell* - this is not used in any noticeable way until the end of the piece.

*Singers* – singers sing in unison and use the high tenor range. The solo singer uses the tenor range.

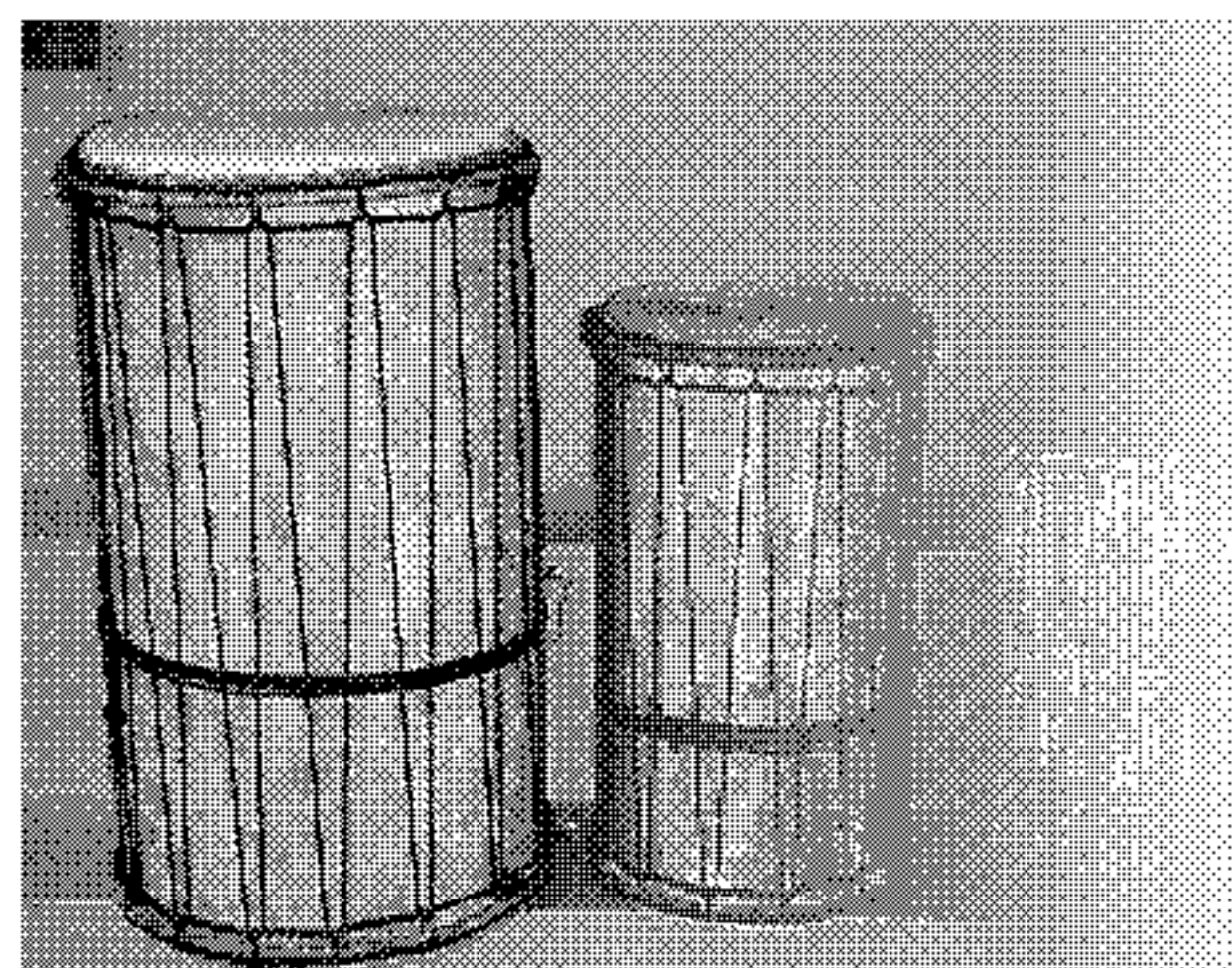
<http://www.earthvibemusic.com>



This is a balaphon



This is a djembe



These are dununs

## Melodies and tonality (draw scale)

The music begins in D flat major, but quickly moves to G flat major melodic ostinato on D flat. The tonic is established as G flat because the melodic phrase ends on the tonic note.

## Lyrics

The lyrics are in a native tribal language. No lyrics or translation are currently available.

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### Creating a West African Inspired Music

Compose your piece by following the instructions from 1 to 7 below.

*Alternative instruments, including music technology, claps, piano or any other tune used instead of the ones given below. (Allow at least four lessons to complete this task, perfect and record it.)*

- 1) Choose a scale to create your tune from:

- The C major scale – C D E F G A B C
- The A minor scale – A B C D E F G A
- The Dorian scale – D E F G A B C D
- The Mixolydian scale – G A B C D E F G

Use a xylophone. Just mix up the notes of your scale to create a tune that you

**Important:** Write the letters of your tune down so that you can both remember

- 2) Create an ostinato tune from your scale. Use a bass xylophone. This will be your

- Get someone to play your ostinato tune while you play your main tune on the main xylophone that you both play in tune and the tunes work well together.
- Changes can be made to the rhythm.
- Changes can be made to the pitch.

Write your final ostinato down, and write down any changes to your main tune.

- 3) Get two different African drums and two drummers:

- Create a call and response rhythm and show your drummers how to play the ostinato rhythm that is played throughout your piece.

- 4) Put all your ideas together:

- Let the drummers start their ostinato call and response rhythm.
- Bring in the bass xylophone to play the ostinato tune.
- Bring in the main tune on the main xylophone.

- 5) Now that you have a nice groove going, create several more tunes based on your variations:

- Develop your ideas.
- Use different playing techniques to add variety on the drums.
- Use the different ranges of the main xylophone to exploit the resource.

Write all new versions of your tune down.

- 6) Rehearse your composition and allow the other players to improvise (add a few

- Develop ideas by using different playing techniques, different rhythms, and dynamics throughout the music.

- 7) Record your composition.

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## Unit 3 – Listening and Appraising

### Musical Element

- **Pitch** – Balaphon 1 plays in the higher register. Balaphon 2 plays in the lower register. Both are diatonic and usually move by step with some small leaps. There are melodic leaps in the first phrase of the vocal melody of each sung verse. The solo singer uses a 9<sup>th</sup> from the G flat below middle C.
- **Duration** – Notes are short rather than long for most of the melodies and rhythms, with the exception of the solo singer who contrasts with long held notes when he sings.
- **Dynamics** – Other than the introduction's first tune, which uses dynamic contrast, the music is largely mezzo forte.
- **Tempo** – Other than the first tune in the introduction, where it is fairly fast, the tempo is steady throughout the performance.
- **Timbre** – The timbre is percussive throughout due to the use of tuned drums.
- **Texture** – The texture is fairly thin throughout because only a few instruments are played in polyphony or heterophony.
- **Structure** – The structure is a strophic song with an introduction and an instrumental section and a rhythmic riff/ostinato. Some verses are sung and some are instrumental.

### Instrumentation

- The instruments used are two balaphons, drums from the djembe family (talking drum and djembes), and male voices.
- The drums play as the percussion section. The talking drum is played with the hands and is squeezed by the arm to change the pitch of the drum, sometimes to imitate the human native tongue. It is played with a curved stick.
- Balaphon 2 plays as the accompaniment throughout. Balaphon 1 supports the main melody in unison, or punctuates the singing with antiphonal responses, but plays the instrumental sections.

### Key Musical Features

- Ostinato bass melody and rhythms.
- Call and response.
- Strophic form.
- Repetition of musical ideas.

### Musical and Melodic Devices

- The theme melody of each verse comprises two basic snippets of melody. The first snippet is that is played four times in succession with slight variants of rhythm and pitch, then the second half is a motif that is repeated a minor third lower to end on the tonic.
- The first balaphon and sometimes the second balaphon improvise high-pitched accompaniment.
- Melodies are often played an octave apart and are heterophonic due to the different parts between the lower and main melodies.

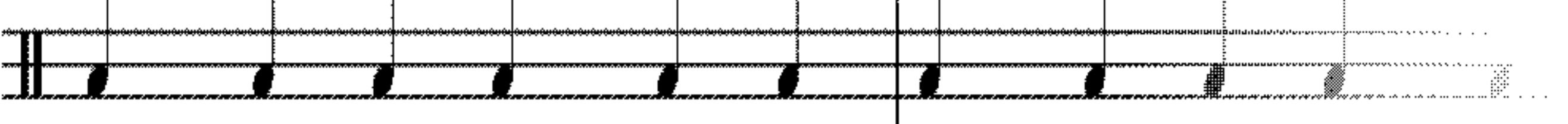
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## Rhythmic Devices

The main ostinato rhythm  talking drum, and is saying something in the native tongue which is recognised by the native listeners. This is a common rhythmic device of the talking drum, which responds in call and response fashion near the ends of bars with semiquaver and eighth note patterns. Musicians often improvise rhythms around the ostinato rhythm, especially during the coda.

## Tonality

The tonality is comparable to Western tonality. It opens with a melody based on a G flat major chord, but then goes on to settle around the tonic of G flat. Although the melodic lines are pentatonic, overall it uses all of the G flat major scale. Therefore, it can be treated as a resource as if in G flat major.

## The Context of the Music

- *Yiri* is a native folk music piece from Burkina Faso.
- *Yiri* is celebration music for bringing a person out to honour them, particularly a younger person. Often a chief would be honoured in this way. It is a

## Conventions of Music in Burkina Faso

- Celebration music for honouring individuals is a common and very old tradition in Burkina Faso.
- Burkina Faso has little in the way of popular Western Music. Much of the music is traditional.

## Sharing Opinions

- Even though the balaphon is a native folk music instrument of West Africa, it has been used in jazz music around the world for some decades now.
- The talking drum has been used traditionally to send messages across the mountains. Its rhythms imitate the inflections of the native languages and are used to interpret the rhythms into actual words. When the talking drum is used entirely as a rhythm instrument, so much of the potential of this resource is lost.
- The National language of Burkina Faso is French, because it was a French colony. However, there are several native tribal languages spoken in the country.
- *Yiri* could be compared with other set works and discussed comparatively. Candidates should give their own opinion on the similarities and differences between the set works. Candidates should compare the use of: the musical elements; the musical features; the melodic devices and the rhythmic devices. The tone and the different contexts of each set work. Appropriate musical vocabulary should be used (see the key words table at the end of this resource).

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## Practice Questions: Area of Study

### Section A

1) Listen to the extract which will be played **two** times.

a) Name the opening instrument \_\_\_\_\_

b) Other instruments join in part of the way through tune 2. Name the

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

c) *Circle* the music vocabulary that best describes the musical device used

**canon**

**ostinato**

**imitation**

d) The theme follows after the introduction. Briefly describe, using correct terminology, how the other instruments accompany the theme tune.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e) The solo tenor voice sings with backing instruments for part of the song. Describe how the musical ideas are used during the

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Section A

2) Listen to *Yiri* by Koko

a) Name the country that this piece is from \_\_\_\_\_

b) Name **two** West African drums used in this piece.

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

c) *Circle* the music vocabulary that best describes the musical device used in the piece.

\_\_\_\_\_ canon \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ call and response \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ drone \_\_\_\_\_

d) Briefly describe the meaning of the following music vocabulary:

- Heterophony
- Octave
- Unison

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e) Describe how previously used musical ideas are reused during the piece.

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## Section B

Answer either Question 3 or Question 4

3) The following questions are about *Yiri* by Koko:

a) Give the year that this track was released.

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b) State whether *Yiri* is written in a folk, popular or classical music style.

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c) State how the following musical elements are used in *Yiri*:

- Tonality
- Instruments and texture
- Dynamics and tempo
- Structure

Use correct musical vocabulary throughout your answers.

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4) The following questions are about *Yiri* by Koko:

a) Give the country of origin for this piece.

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What traditional social occasion would *Yiri* be used for?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) State how the following musical devices are used in *Yiri*:

- Heterophony and unison
- The talking drum's playing techniques and communication
- Accompaniment and harmony in comparison with *All Blues* by T
- Ostinato

Use correct musical vocabulary throughout your answers.

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Mark Scheme for Practice Questions

Question		Answer
1	a	Balaphon.
	b	Any two of: talking drum, balaphon, djembe, dunun (drum alone).
	c	Ostinato
	d	Any three from: bass ostinato, rhythm ostinato, octave unison, and response rhythms in the drums.
	e	Any three of: the solo sings in recitative, the ostinatos continue, the solo echoes the last phrase of the solo verse, the first balaphon occurs, the vocal tune.
2	a	Burkina Faso
	b	Any two of: djembe, dunun, talking drum.
	c	Call and response.
	d	Heterophony is the same tune played together but with slight variations in rhythm. An octave is the same note played at eight notes above or below. Unison is the same tune played at the same pitch by other instruments.
	e	Tune 3 from the introduction is re-used; the bass ostinato continues; tune 3 is played by the drums.
3	a	1994.
	b	Folk music style.
	c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Major and pentatonic scales are used. The music is diatonic.</li><li>Any two points from: The instruments are tuned and untuned. The texture is thin because they play in unison, octave unison, or polyphony. There are no chords, but melodic lines and drums are used through most of the piece. Sung parts are in unison.</li><li>The dynamics are mostly mezzo forte except at the beginning, crescendos and diminuendos, and in the coda where the music is softer.</li><li>Any two from: The structure is a song that is strophic. The music is in ostinato variations form. It has an introduction, a series of verses, and a coda. It is a song based over an ostinato bass line.</li></ul>
4	a	Burkina Faso.
	b	Either one of: celebrating an important person. Bringing out a message such as a chief or older person.
	c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Heterophony is used when balaphon 1 is in octave unison, notes apart and the rhythms are occasionally varied slightly.</li><li>The talking drum is played by placing it under the arm and varying its pitch. It is often hit with a curved stick to play it. It is used for communication by the natives, imitating the inflections of speech and the rhythms of the words.</li><li><i>All Blues</i> has chords whereas <i>Yiri</i> does not. <i>All Blues</i> has a thick texture because it uses chords whereas <i>Yiri</i> has a thin texture because fewer instruments play simultaneously.</li><li>An ostinato is a musical idea, one or two bars long, that repeats throughout the music. The bass part played by balaphon 2 is an ostinato.</li></ul>

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## Keywords

Keyword	Definition
Balaphon	A West African xylophone. Some of the notes are similar to European xylophones.
Call and response	A musical idea is played and another player responds with a different musical idea.
Complexity	Triplet rhythms are played at the same time as other rhythms that are syncopated.
Cross-rhythms	Duplet and triplet rhythms are played together.
Djembe	A family of drums that have strings around the head. The goblet-shaped stringed drum is commonly used in West African music.
Doubling	Different instruments play the same tune at the same time.
Dunun	A mug-shaped djembe.
Dundun	A cylinder-shaped djembe.
Flourish	The adding of many quick beats or notes to decorate a tune.
Heterophony	A tune is doubled, but with slight variations.
Imitation	A musical idea is answered in echo.
Layering	Different instruments join in one after the other to create a complex texture.
Mode	A row of notes based on the white notes of the piano keyboard.
Octave	A note that is eight notes away from the original note.
Octave unison	A tune that is doubled eight notes away from the original tune.
Ostinato	A musical idea that is repeated constantly throughout a piece.
Pentatonic scale	A row of five notes that is used to create tunes.
Polyphony	Several tunes played together but with different parts.
Polyrhythm	Several different rhythms played at the same time.
Register	The high-pitched, medium-pitched or low-pitched part of an instrument.
Rhythmic decoration	Adding quicker rhythms to decorate the basic rhythm.
Scale	A row of notes, e.g. a C major scale. <i>Yiri</i> is based on a pentatonic scale.
Syncopation	A rhythm that stretches over strong beats.
Theme	The main tune that is varied later on in a piece.
Unison	Instruments play the same tune at the same pitch.

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