

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**MŪGITHI PERFORMANCE AS A FORM OF SOCIAL
COHESION AMONG THE AGĪKŪYŪ OF KENYA**

**by
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DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Music , in
the Graduate Programme in

Faculty of Humanities Development and Social Sciences , University of KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that two external editor were used. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Music in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This research investigated what the musical characteristics of *mwomboko* music were, what its social characteristics were in terms of performers, listening, venues and class relations to what extent this music functioned as a means of engendering feelings of personal empowerment under conditions of social exclusion and how this music functioned as a catalyst for social cohesion. This study is necessary for it may contribute to the further study of the *mũgithi* one-man guitar performance.

I worked with the theoretical approach that music can create or maintain social cohesion. I also looked at how it can contribute to group solidarity and so increase the effectiveness of collective action. I am worked with the theory of social cohesion through music which works with the idea that music can be used as an avenue to create a sense of belonging to a group or community. Through the affirmation of the society's identity music also ended up affirming the individual's identity.

While this study specifically focused on *mwomboko* music within *mũgithi* performance style there were factors that had and continued to influence this type of music's performance and growth. This study shall try to investigate ways in which the development in Kenya influenced music's role in social identity, why music is used as a channel for social cohesion and the issues that bring up ethnic identity within multicultural urban setting.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Kenya is located on the east coast of Africa. It has a surface area of 582, 646 square kilometres and a population of approximately 38,610,097 people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010:38). According to the 1989 census, there are 42 ethnic groups in Kenya¹. The country is not culturally homogenous. With such ethnic diversity in the country, having a mutually acceptable cultural identification is difficult. Within these cultures there are four major unifying categories of languages: the Bantu people, the Nilotes and the Cushites/Hamitic people.

Illustration 1.1: The Three Major Unifying Categories of Languages

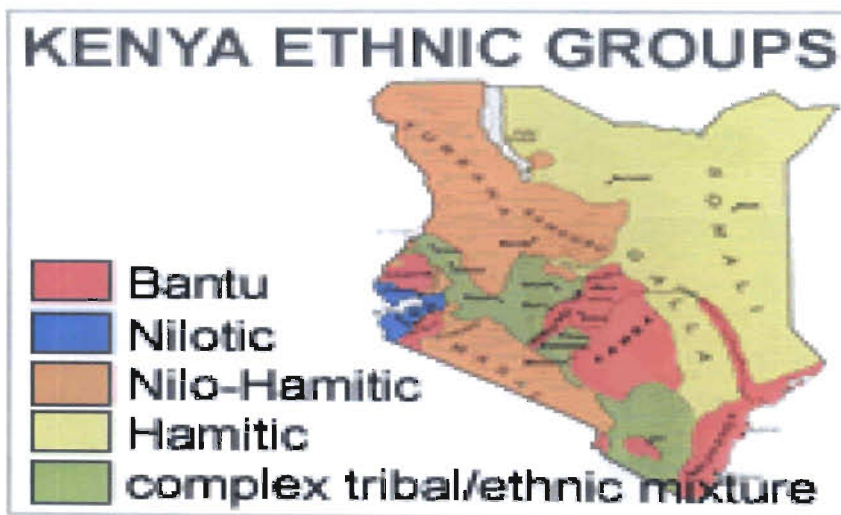


Image from website: www.kenyamission-un.ch/About_Kenya

Ethnic politics has revolved around the largest groups; the Agĩkũyũ (20%) who are Bantu, Luhya (14%) who are Bantu, Luo (13%) who are Nilotes, Kalenjin (11%) who are nilo-hamitic, Kamba (11%), Kisii (8%), Meru(5%) and Mijikenda (5%) who are all Bantus (Kagwanja 2003:26). There are two official languages, Kiswahili and English.

¹ The latest census of ethnic background in Kenya was actually done in 2009. It has however not given an estimated number of ethnic groups in 2009. Therefore the study used the 1989 census to determine the number of ethnic groups in Kenya.

Illustration 1.2: The Main Tribes in Each Province in Kenya

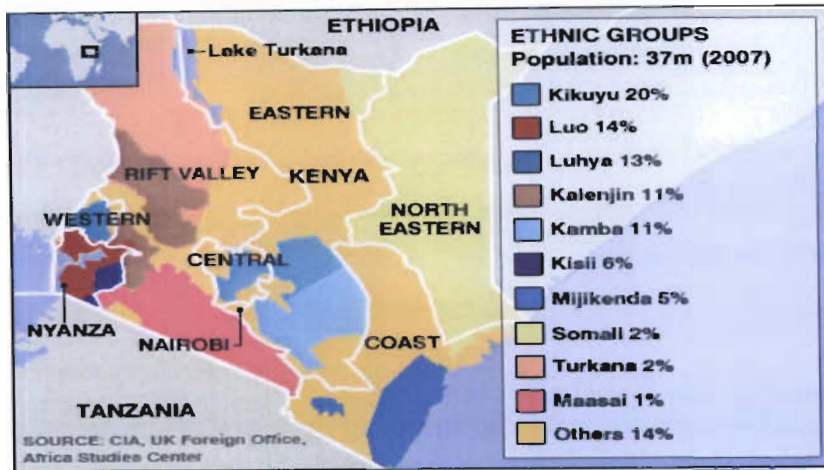
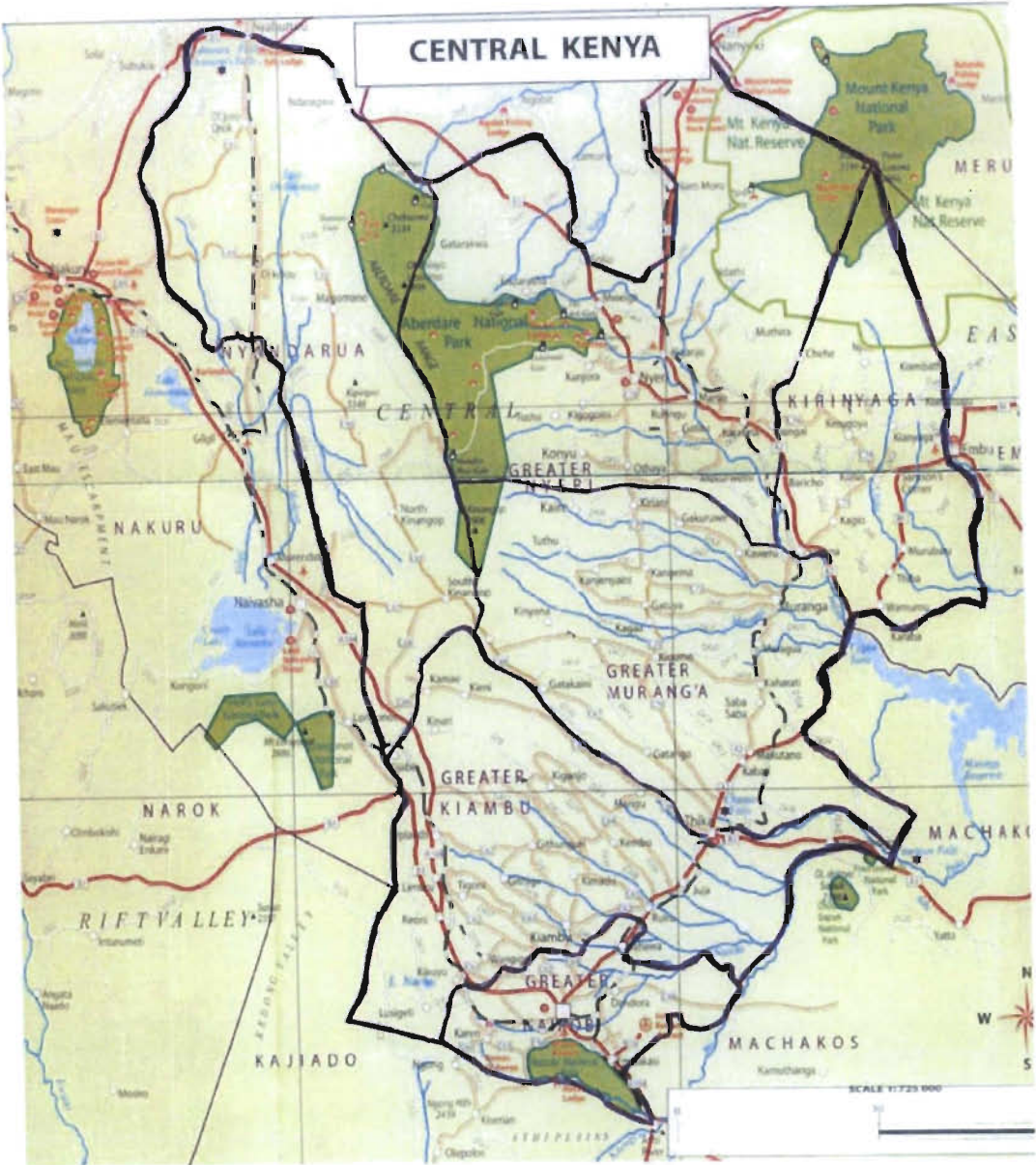


Image from website: news.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7167363.stm

From as far back as the 1940s during colonialism to the present day, ethnic politics has been present in Kenya. Machira (2001) in his article on Ethnicity, Violence and Democracy in Kenya discusses how ethnic violence was made possible by the colonialists through their creating separate squatter camps for each tribe within different regions. Later, this led to a sense of ownership by these tribes towards the areas where they were coerced to move. After independence, in 1963, all property was seen to belong to the state. Therefore anyone could settle in any area as long as they bought the land. Not all the ethnic groups were comfortable sharing what they termed as “their land” with other groups. This led to violent attacks by ethnic groups such as the Kalenjin and the Maasai on groups such as the Agĩkũyũ and Luo in order to force them to vacate “their land”. The Agĩkũyũ picked up songs that were sung in the past and changed them in order for them to identify with the circumstances they were going through and to create a feeling of empowerment under such conditions.

1.1 The Agĩkũyũ People

Illustration 1.3: Map of Central Province and Nairobi province



Website: www.kenyabrussels.com

The Agĩkũyũ are located in the highlands of south-central Kenya, (Central and Nairobi Provinces), traditionally from the Nyandarua (Aberdare) range and the foothill’s of Kirinyaga (Mount Kenya) in the north, to Nairobi and the Ngong’ Hills in the South (Jens Finke, 2000:374).

Along with the Maasai, the Agĩkũyũ suffered greatly under the hands of the British colonialists, losing much of their land. In the form of the Mau Mau², the Agĩkũyũ were instrumental in the armed struggle for freedom from the British, and bore the brunt of their reprisals (Machira, 2001: 104-105).

Before 1920, Kenya was a protectorate of Britain. Within this period the Agĩkũyũ not only lost their land to the white settlers but they were also banned from performing traditional dances and songs. Through my discussion with Wanjohi, a folklorist working for the Permanent Presidential Music Commission³, *mwomboko*⁴ dance was introduced as a way for the Agikuyu to discreetly rebel against the government but with the use of a dance that was familiar to the colonialists (Interview on the 18th of July 2008, Presidential Music Commission Office on State House Road)⁵. Together with *muthirigu*⁶, *mwomboko* was used as a music genre to sing against colonial oppression and need for the Agĩkũyũ to get their land back from the colonialists. During Kenya's struggle for independence in the 1950s the Mau Mau advocated violent resistance against British domination in Kenya. The Agĩkũyũ would place coded messages within the *mwomboko* song to send information and warnings to the Mau Mau.

On December 12, 1964 Kenya was declared a republic. Within the same period Jomo Kenyatta⁷ became Kenya's first president. Unlike before where people were forced to move

² The Mau Mau are a militant African movement among the Agĩkũyũ people. The movement was especially associated with the ritual oaths employed by the leaders of the Agĩkũyũ Central Association to promote unity in the independence movement.

³ This is a government commission that works with the documentation, conservation and preservation of the musical heritage of Kenya and the planning and arranging of performances presented to the president during public holidays.

⁴ This is a neo-traditional dance introduced during colonialism as an anti-government dance that disguised itself as an indigenous version of the waltz, through the pairing of partners and the use of the accordion.

⁵ Wanjohi is a folklorist who works for the Kenya Music Commission which is a government agency whose responsibility are collecting indigenous music and archiving it as well as the composition of songs to be sung for the president during political rallies and annual celebrations of independence.

⁶ This is a type of song genre that sprung up in the 1930s due to political upheavals in Kenya. It focuses on the myths of the origin of the Agĩkũyũ people and express protest against colonial power's suppression of the Agĩkũyũ culture.

⁷ Jomo Kenyatta is the first president of Kenya who led the country from 1964 to 1978 when he died. Jomo Kenyatta came from the Agĩkũyũ ethnic group.

around in Nairobi with a kipande⁸, with the coming of independence this was abolished. It was easier for people to enter Nairobi than before. This resulted to rural urban migration as people from all ethnic groups migrated to Nairobi in search of jobs. These migrations soon established Nairobi as one of the few multicultural urban settings in Kenya where different people from different ethnic groups shared living and working space.

Later in the 1970s Jomo Kenyatta gave the Agĩkũyũ back their land, and he even created easier purchase of land that was formerly owned by the colonialists in places like Molo⁹ in the Rift Valley. The Kalenjin, who were the original inhabitants of The Rift Valley, were not happy with this settlements thereby causing ethnic tension between these two groups. Upon President Jomo Kenyatta's death, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi¹⁰ became president. In order to retain his seat, President Daniel T. Arap Moi took advantage of the ethnic tension between the Kalenjin and the Agĩkũyũ. "When researchers came face to face with the violence, they understood its logic as a new phenomenon of informal repression, a strategy by the ruling elite to employ violence covertly to undermine political opposition, counter multiparty democracy, and regain the political initiative." (Kagwanja, 2003: 26) *Mwomboko* was born as a means for the Agĩkũyũ people to have an outlet in order to vent their frustrations against the suppression that was present during colonialism. *Mwomboko* has evolved in present day Kenya with the same role, only now it speaks out against the excesses in government and any social impropriety, such as lack of respect for elders, any form of infidelity, and even laziness. According to Wanjohi, *mwomboko* dance is still performed, but for entertainment purposes. Its role of social cohesion has however re-emerged within the *mũgithi* performance (Interview on the 18th May 2010, Lysak Haven Park Guest House in Machakos Town).

The word *mũgithi* is a term used in the 1950s to refer to a particular train that ferried both passengers and cargo in the same compartments. This is probably the earliest version of the

⁸ Kipande is a form of an identification given to the Kenyan indigenous people when entering the Capital City. It stated the time of entry, purpose for entry and when the individual was to leave the town.

⁹ Molo is a town known as one of the places with the coolest weather along the Rift Valley province of Kenya. The Rift Valley is predominantly Kalenjin with the Agĩkũyũ buying land in the area during President Jomo Kenyatta's reign.

¹⁰ Daniel T. Arap Moi was the second president of Kenya from 1978 to 2002. He came from the Kalenjin ethnic group

third class¹¹ section of the train, which was the only compartment Africans were allowed to ride in. Today, during the *mũgithi* performance, people hold each other as imitation of a train.

Illustration 1.4: Picture of People dancing the *Mũgithi* Train



Website: www.ethnicnewz.org

Mũgithi is a performance style that incorporates many songs within it: traditional music such as *gĩcandi*¹², *irua*¹³, neo-traditional music such as *mwomboko*, and modern music as well. In order to get a better understanding of *mũgithi* music, I shall first discuss the different performances styles within *mũgithi*. It has two performance styles. There is the *mũgithi* band performance and there is the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer *mũgithi* performance. The band performance consists of two types;

1. A band with only five performers including the lead guitarist, the rhythm guitarist, the bass guitarist, the drum set player and the solo singer on the vocals. They perform *mũgithi* music in entertainment clubs.

¹¹ Trains in Kenya have three compartments called classes. During the colonial period the classes were divided for the three divisions of racial classes that existed at the time. First class was for the Europeans and was therefore made more comfortable with cabins that held two people and with an area that had a restaurant. The second class was for the Indians and had cabins that held four people, while third class was for the Africans and had seats that faced each other which held more than six people.

¹² *Gĩcandi* is an indigenous dance of the Agĩkũyũ community performed by both men and women for entertainment. It later became part of the types of songs used in the *mũgithi* performance style.

¹³ This is an indigenous dance performed by the Agĩkũyũ after circumcision. The lyrics to this dance are lewd, usually discussing sexual acts, intentionally used to educate the initiates in preparation for marriage.

2. A second band with five to six men singing in harmony to a soundtrack. They tend to perform during weddings and during business social functions. Unlike the former type, they do not only sing *mũgithi* music, but also other indigenous songs from other communities in Kenya.

The singer-cum-guitarist and drummer *mũgithi* performance consists of one singer who is also the guitarist and a drum set player.

In order to differentiate the band performance from the guitar performance in this study, I shall refer to the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance as *mũgithi* performance and the band performance as *mũgithi* bands. However, this study shall be focusing on the *mũgithi* performance. This is because *mũgithi* performance style is the only one that employs the use of *mwomboko* music in its adapted form for its performance. Mike Rua and Salim ‘Junior’ are performers of *mũgithi* within the singer-cum-guitarist setting. They have both been performing *mũgithi* for more than ten years, first within the band performance, and then later moving into the *mũgithi* performance. Mike Rua and Salim ‘Junior’ have also established an interesting style of incorporating *mwomboko* into their performances. Salim ‘Mighty’, Salim ‘Junior’s brother, is also a well known *mugithi* performer in Nairobi, who became a *mũgithi* performer after being part of his brother’s audience for a number of years. These three performers have discussed at length in chapter three.

According to Wanjohi these three performers are known in Nairobi Province by the Agĩkũyũ community for their creativity in constructing elaborate lyrics to the music (Interview on the 18th May 2010, Lysak Haven Park Guest House in Machakos Town). However, my main emphasis shall be on Mike Rua because the data I collected from him was detailed. The data clearly showed how the audience responded to *mũgithi* as well as how they responded to him. I also collected information from the audience that described him as a popular *mũgithi* performer, who had an established fan base that attended most of his performances. He also employs the use of “curtain raisers”¹⁴ in his performance in order to prepare his audience. Rua was born in 1974 in Ruiru in Central Province of Kenya. He started learning to play the guitar when he was 10 years old. He later mastered the chords while playing in church. He joined a band but soon quit it in order to start as a solo performer. He has been playing *mũgithi* through the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance from 1996. He is

¹⁴ Curtain raisers are musicians who perform songs or dances before the main performance.

credited with modernizing the *mũgithi* performance style and is among the accomplished *mũgithi* performers in Kenya today. I will, therefore, focus on him and his style of *mũgithi*.

This study deals with the following key question: how does *mũgithi* within the one-man guitar performance assert and reaffirm the identity of the Agĩkũyũ people living in Nairobi? Subsidiary questions focus on *mũgithi* and whether this has the same unifying role that the *mwomboko* dance had during the colonial period. The underlying premise is that *mwomboko* within *mũgithi*'s performance style allows for a reassertion of the Agĩkũyũ identity. This happens within a multicultural, urban setting where, according to Mbugua, they feel they are marginalized (Interview on the 16th of July 2009, Kerarapon in Karen). I am also working with the premise that *mwomboko* within *mũgithi*'s performance style works as a channel for social cohesion.

1.2 Research Problems and Objectives

1. Why is music used as a channel for social identity amongst the Agĩkũyũ people?

During colonialism in the 1920s Kenyans were placed in living settlements according to their tribes. After independence the people were encouraged by the new government to buy the land and stay within those settlements. The capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, is one of the major places where ethnic groups mix. Kenyans, therefore, identify themselves primarily with their tribe or ethnic group. There also seems to be a feeling of powerlessness brought in by the political issues that make some groups such as the Agĩkũyũ feel left out or neglected by the government. This study will seek to find out how music acts as a major form of expression with regard to the empowerment of the Agĩkũyũ people.

2. In what ways is music used as a channel for social cohesion amongst the Agĩkũyũ people?

After many political events in Kenya there is usually some ethnic tension that is present due to politicians resorting to tribalism in order to create dislike and distrust amongst their

constituents so they may win the elections¹⁵. This tension is usually moved into songs and is expressed by the performers in various genres including *mũgithi's* style of performance. This study seeks to find out the ways in which music is used as a channel for social cohesion amongst the Agĩkũyũ

3. What are the issues that bring up ethnic identity within multicultural urban settings?

In Nairobi we find that as much as people live in a multicultural setting there are ethnic boundaries. Consequently there are entertainment clubs that play general music that appeal to every ethnic group. However there are nights dedicated to specific ethnic groups which consequently block out other ethnic groups from this particular space. This study seeks to determine the underlying issues that promote ethnic identity when people are living within multicultural settings.

1.3 Literature Review

I have embarked on a study of *mwomboko* music through *mũgithi's* one-man guitar performance style in an attempt to record the achievements and creativity of the performers using Mike Rua as the case- study. I have highlighted the skills of the performers, through their performance technique, at creating an avenue where the people feel they can vent out their frustrations as they sing. This is also an avenue where the people can identify with the music due to the performer's ability to make this very music seem familiar to the audience through their style of improvisation.

Just like the *mwomboko* dance, *mwomboko* within *mũgithi's* performance is a genre that is popular with the Agĩkũyũ community. As observed by Muhoro (2007:92) the dance was seen as have playing a vital role in community development. The dance, collectively with the

¹⁵ In 1991 the first acts of ethnic violence erupted and "they were the outcome of renewal calls by the Rift Valley politicians for the introduction of a federal system of government based on ethnicity." (Osamba, 2001:40) These leaders called for the expulsion of all non-indigenous ethnic groups from the rift valley claiming as their land. The ethnic violence was a way for the politicians to punish ethnic groups allegedly supporting political opposition.

songs that went with it asserted Agĩkũyũ pride in their culture therefore encouraging them to work and think as a group (wa Mutonya, 2007:171). The singer-cum-guitarist and drummer mwomboko has retained this function, through the changing times.

1.3.1 The Mwomboko Dance

Mwomboko was adapted by the Agĩkũyũ people due to the changes that were taking place around them. The Agĩkũyũ chose to pick up a dance that was familiar to the colonialists, the waltz, to ridicule them. The Agĩkũyũ worked with two features when adapting the waltz from the colonialists which are mimesis and parody. Working with Dagan's (1997:258) definition of the terms when dealing with *mwomboko*, mimesis refers to the adoption of symbols, resources, and practices of the colonial power with the aim of adapting the power in these expressions. Parody on the other hand, involves using foreign symbols, resources and practices in an ironic or symbolic or sarcastic way with the intent of mocking and ridiculing, thus diminishing the power of colonial symbolic acts. The Agĩkũyũ picked up the waltz and changed it to fit their indigenous form of dancing. They also adapted their language into the songs and added their own dance steps while they retained the main instrument, the accordion in the dance, in order to refute the colonialists feeling of superiority. In addition, the Agĩkũyũ mimicked the waltz, whose steps involved two partners, but would hope through their steps (*kuoboka*) instead of waltzing so as to ridicule what they thought was a silly way to dance. Muhoro (2002:104) highlights that the Agĩkũyũ loved the fact that they used the colonialists dance to pass information to the Mau Mau through their lyrics in the song. This was done in the 1950s when the Mau Mau rebellion was at its peak.

The "Agĩkũyũ changed the lyrics of the songs to become anti-establishment and pro-pan African songs" (Mwangi, 2006:160). Once independence was achieved in 1964 the dance changed in such a way that the songs in the dance were retained while the dance changed roles. It ceased to be a guise to entertainment due to immigration into urban towns and a lack of interest in the youth to learn the dances. Mr Wanjohi believes that the youth lost interest in the dance because with things such as attending school and going for work, the time to learn the very intricate steps of *mwomboko* could not be found (Interview on the 18th May 2010, Lysak Haven Park Guest House in Machakos Town). According to Gathoni Njenga, an elderly lady from the Agĩkũyũ community, the Agĩkũyũ migrated into Nairobi after independence to look for lucrative jobs to feed their families. She states that most of the

squatter camps, where they lived during colonialism, were in a poor state. This is because the colonial government neglected them as a form of punishment for their helping the Mau Mau. “During colonialism the living conditions were so harsh that you needed to work at the white settlers land to feed your family. It took the independent government ten years to give us back our land. During that period we had to find a way to feed our families and Nairobi, being the capital city was seen as the place where jobs could be found” (Interview done in June 2010, Mutarakwa in Limuru). Daniel Avorgbedor, in his article (1992: 46-47) discussing the impact of rural-urban migration on village life, talks about how the growth and continuity of musical forms is practically absent due to the absence of the youth through migration. The youth are the same people, who through constant participation, would become the composers and performers. With their migration, the dance is forced to evolve or go on a steady decline. Consequently *mwomboko* was slowly being performed less and less..

According to Alexander Alland the evolution of style may bring to the surface improvement in one direction, “or impoverishment in another, or something new.” (1976:7) The performance style of *mwomboko* has evolved into something new that incorporates musical elements, such as the imitation of the *karingaringa* and accordion rhythm into present songs. It has embracing new ideas like the use of singer who plays the guitar accompanied by a drummer.

In this regard *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* has adopted the function the dance served in articulating the identity of the Agĩkũyũ. Because of the way in which Kenyan music is adopted then served to the people, “it embodies the essence of the people, portraying and constructing their identity.” (Akuno 2008: 184) I have deduced that because of this, *mwomboko* music has survived and is playing a big role in the mobilization and generation of social cohesion amongst the Agĩkũyũ people.

Mwomboko dance has also changed to fit in with the music of the present day but the feelings of hope for a better life that it inspires are still the same. I, therefore, agree with Esther Dagan when she says, “The essential purpose of a dance during any transformation process remains: to reflect the society’s new reality, by changing various elements of the dance, while the dance continues to evolve.” (1997:312)

Mwomboko dance has been retained in Kiambu and Kirinyaga districts where its appeal is still present but, according to Wanjohi, who has been collecting data on *mwomboko* from as

early as the 1990's, its main purpose is entertainment (Interview on the 18th of July 2008, Presidential Music Commission Office on State House Road). Its role of social identity through empowerment is predominantly felt in this performance mainly in Nairobi (capital city of Kenya) where the Agĩkũyũ live in a multicultural community and where the performers frequent shows because of better pay by the owners. Therefore, today, the dance has evolved into a new form but in that new form it still retains its basic foundation: its lyrical structure and its rhythm. Shepherd goes on to state "when a musical form carries the cultural and social implications it does so only because the group or society in question externally imposes a set of meaning or significance on the music in a manner completely arbitrary to the music's basic quality." (1991:11-12) if the Agĩkũyũ simply desired an entertainment dance, they would have performed the waltz within that context without imposing any changes on it. This, however, did not seem to be their wish. They took the waltz and transformed it into a cultural dance by imposing their language to the lyrics of the song, their sense of rhythm to the melody of the music and modified the dance steps thereby creating a dance that would be familiar to the Agĩkũyũ people. Mike Rua explains why he loves using *mwomboko* music in his performance.

I feel that if I change too much in the music the people will not respond to it as well as they should. The power of this music is in their message and the traditional rhythm that they have so I keep most of the music as close to the original as I can. If you have ever been there as I perform you will notice that, unlike previous performers who would add rock or country music mwomboko which don't quite mix well, I keep it as Kikuyu as possible just the way it was meant to be performed. If I add a bit of sugar then it should not alter the overall sound of the music. When one changes too much in the music, the message in the music ends up altering or the emotional effect of the music changes (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

The *mwomboko* dance which is now *mwomboko* within *mũgithi*'s one-man guitar performance has been used as a political avenue of expression because the society that uses it feels that the song serves the same purpose it served in the 1930s to the 1950s of social cohesion and the affirmation of identity only in a different environment, the entertainment clubs, and in a different time, the 1990s to present day.

1.3.2 Mwomboko within Mũgithi

The one-man guitar *mwomboko* finds its appeal in towns where, after independence, migration of communities occurred from ethnic geographical spaces¹⁶, as seen in illustration 1.1 and 1.2, but with most movement into Nairobi, being the main metropolis. Through the migration of the Agĩkũyũ people to Nairobi, a new musical phenomena called *mũgithi* created. Within its performance, *mwomboko* and *gĩcandi* were re-invented and combined so that now within *mũgithi*, *mwomboko*'s message on "contemporary lifestyle and issues experienced by the modern society" (Muhoro 2007:91) were combined with *gĩcandi* lyrics which revolves around indigenous culture and behaviour.

Over the past twenty years, the Agĩkũyũ have embraced and accepted the idea of a solo performer reaching out to them, initiating participation from them therefore becoming an integral part in their culture. (Githiora,2008:87) The *mũngiki* movement¹⁷ also uses song as a form of mobilization of the people. Songs are used when taking the oath of fidelity to *mũngiki* and as they come together for meetings. After the 2007 presidential elections in Kenya the Agĩkũyũ were attacked in an attempt to remove them from areas not believed to be their original ethnic homes. The *mũngiki* group together with a few other Agĩkũyũ's in the village that were upset by these attacks got together and sang *mwomboko* and *Mau Mau* songs as an endeavour to demonstrate solidarity (Rachel Mbugua interviewed on the 16th of July 2009, Kerarapon in Karen¹⁸) .

Mũgithi performers, such as Mike Rua, have maintained the tune and rhythm of *mwomboko*. They have even attracted a larger audience through use of modern musical instruments such as guitar which was introduced in the 1970s in place of the accordion(*kinanda*) and the drum set in place of the steel ring (*karingaringa*). The performers have also fused rap, reggae and hip-hop in *mũgithi* making it attractive to their modern youthful audience. (Muhoro 2007:82) To some extent it can be affirmed that the approach in *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* is closer to

¹⁶ Ethnic geographical spaces refer to how different ethnic groups in Kenya are found within ethnically divided geographical borders. For example, the majority of the Agĩkũyũ communities are found in Central Province while the Luhya are found in Western Province and the Luo in Nyanza Province.

¹⁷ The *mũngiki* movement is a political religious Agĩkũyũ group, which is mostly associated with inter-ethnic fights in Kenya. They are known to take oaths of loyalty and sing Mau Mau songs which are the same songs sang by the *mwomboko* groups during the struggle for independence.

¹⁸ Rachel Mbugua, born in 1964, is one of this study's oldest interviewed patrons.

what Joseph Kamaru¹⁹ and Mike Rua embrace. Most notable and unmatched in *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* is the use of, as Muhoro states, “deep symbolism in *mwomboko*’s lyrics to transmit didactic values in the modern Gĩkũyũ society” (2007:92)

In this regard *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* has adopted the function the dance served in articulating the identity of the Agĩkũyũ. Akuno states that “music is only valuable when it serves a function of socio-cultural significance.” (2008:54)

Though there are few known writings dealing with *mũgithi* music such as articles by Wa Mutonya (2005 and 2007) and Muhoro (2006, 2007 and 2008) there are no publications that center on the *mwomboko* music within the one-man guitar *mũgithi*’s performance style in great detail. I therefore hope that this study can contribute to the further study of the *mũgithi* one-man guitar performance.

1.4 Principal theories in which this study is based upon

This is an ethnographic study and is based on the theory of social cohesion and social identity. This theory looks at how music can create or maintain group solidarity. According to Kidula music is an identity that outsiders (people who do not belong to that group) associate with a particular person or group. She asserts that music can also become part of a community or individual through the “accommodation of new musical ideas to the extent that it becomes known as belonging to that culture and is incorporated in that cultures musical heritage”. (1998:10) *Mwomboko* within *mũgithi*’s performance setting has incorporated new ideas in its performance which have been embraced by the Agĩkũyũ people. These new ideas such as new song text and instrumentation have provided a channel for venting out frustration while solidifying the community.

In her analysis on the functions of music, Akuno (2008: 54) maintains that the biggest function of music is to create cohesion between the individual and him/herself and between the individual and his/her environment. *Mwomboko* within *mũgithi*’s performance has been turned into an avenue where the people feel they can channel their frustrations musically

¹⁹ Joseph Kamaru, born in 1938, was one of the pioneers of *mũgithi* music from as early as 1967. He was one of the first *mũgithi* performers to record their music on to tape and have performed within the *mũgithi* band setting for the presidents of Kenya during public functions.

while solidifying the community as one. It has also managed to create a sense of attachment within the Agĩkũyũ through its musical performance.

Frith's theory of self and social identity and self and ethnic identity (1996:110) closely aligns with Akuno's view of cohesion. Through the affirmation of the society's identity, music also ends up affirming the individual's identity. This also works the same way with the ethnic group. Affirming of identity amongst the ethnic groups works hand in hand with affirming the identity of the individual. Music also offers a sense of "both self and others, of the subjective in the collective" (1996:110). *Mwomboko* within *mũgithi* is music that the Agĩkũyũ community enjoys because it is used to construct and redefine their self and social and self and ethnic identity. It connects them to a past time that gives them power while at the same time working with the issues of the present that is causing their sense of loss of power.

Mwomboko music within *mũgithi*'s performance has forced the Agĩkũyũ to remember things that happened in the past that reminds them of the struggles they underwent to get to where they are in their lives. This has had the effect of defining a sense of identity and a common purpose among the people. It has synchronized the individual moods to serve the larger goal of the group.

1.5 Research Methodology and Methods

This is an ethnographic study on *mwomboko* within *mũgithi*'s performance setting which looks at the music's role in bringing about social cohesion amongst the Agĩkũyũ community. The data for this research was collected and analysed qualitatively. For my fieldwork I selected *mũgithi* performers who were well known in Nairobi and had been performing *mũgithi* for more than ten years therefore making them performers during the revolution of *mũgithi* from *mũgithi* band into *mũgithi* singer-cum-guitarist performance. Through my preliminary research, I was able to establish that there were six *mũgithi* performers who had been performing this period of years. They were Mike Rua, Mike Murimi, Salim Junior, Njoroge Ngari, Salim Mighty and Ken wa Maria. However, I selected three of these performers due to unavailability of the rest. Through estimating the number of people I would be able to interview I was able to survey the quality of information I would get from the field. I also informally interviewed the audience to compare their opinion on what *mũgithi* music

represented in their lives. I also got to attend a few *mũgithi* performances in order to observe the relationship between the singer-cum- guitarist and the audience.

All the data was collected in Nairobi because this is where there are frequent live *mũgithi* events. My population consisted of the audience and the performers from the entertainment clubs that performed *mũgithi* music. I went to the field twice, the first time consisting of six weeks as from June to July of 2009 and the second being from May to June of 2010 for seven weeks. I used purposive sampling to identify performers who formed the basis of this research. I focused on them for they had been performing for more than eight years therefore would be able to provide me with more comprehensive and concrete information. They included Salim ‘Junior’, Salim ‘Mighty’ and Mike Rua. I however changed my focus to Mike Rua due to my being able to record his *mũgithi* performance as well being able to get a very comprehensive and detailed interview with him. Unlike the other two performers Mike Rua gave me examples of *mwomboko* songs as he discussed their purpose within *mũgithi* and I was also able to video record him on stage as he performed *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* using *gĩcandi* and *irua*. I looked at his style of performance on different days within the same venues paying close attention to the changes that occurred in his performance style.

Illustration 1.5: Pictures of Performers of *Mũgithi* Music from the 1990s

Mike Rua



Salim ‘Junior’



Salim ‘Mighty’



I interviewed Mike Rua at his home in Langata and recorded him performing at Club Comfy. Mike Rua, born in 1974, has been performing *mũgithi* since 1996. Rua moved from the band performance to *mũgithi* due to a desire to reach his audience, which he felt he could not do within a band.

I interviewed Salim ‘Junior’ at Impala Club in Parklands then recorded him performing at the same venue. Salim ‘Junior’, born in 1974, has been performing *mũgithi* since the early 1990s. Salim ‘Junior’ performed within the band performance before going solo.

Salim ‘Mighty’ was interviewed at Roasters Restaurant. He was born in 1978 and has been performing since the late 1990s and was part of the *mũgithi* audience before becoming a performer.

I also listened to the recordings of two pioneers of *mũgithi*: Joseph Kamaru and Njoroge Ngari. They possess a wide range of *mũgithi* music which could bring out the changes that have occurred to the music through time. I interviewed Joseph Kamaru who was easily available unlike Njoroge Ngari who left the country in the late 1980s.

Illustration 1.6: Picture of Joseph Kamaru



Joseph Kamaru is one of the pioneers of *mũgithi* music. I interviewed him at his home along Thika Road. I recorded him playing his guitar as he gave a description of how *mũgithi* within the band was performed. I also recorded him singing an *irua* song and some *mwomboko* songs so as to understand how he performed *mwomboko* within the *mugithi* band. This is because he was there since the conception of *mwomboko* within the *mũgithi* band. I wanted him to give a history of *mũgithi* and explain why it evolved into what it has become today.

I interviewed music practitioners such as Sussane Gachukia, and Peter Wanjohi. Sussane Gachukia is a music producer and distributor situated in Nairobi. Peter Wanjohi is a music folklorist for the Government under the Permanent Presidential Music Commission.

Illustration 1.7: Pictures of Interviewed Music Practitioners

Peter Wanjohi



Susanne Gachukia



I interviewed Sussanna Gachukia in order to get an inside perspective on mugithi distribution within Nairobi and Kenya at large as well as understand how its performance within the Clubs have affected its distribution and sales.

I interviewed Peter Wanjohi so as to get a brief history of *mwomboko* music which he has studied since the 1980s. I also wanted his perspective on its evolution into *mũgithi* music.

I also interviewed members of the audience who happened to be Agĩkũyũ in order to get a clear understanding into how social cohesion comes into play within the *mũgithi* performance through the use of *mwomboko*. Out of the large number of the audience I selected: Rachel Mbugua, Karanja Mugambi, Bertha Waithera and Githitu Mahinda. Below is an illustration of the above mentioned members of the audience.

Illustration 1.8: Some of the Audience of *Mũgithi* Music

Rachel Mbugua



Karanja Mugambi



Bertha Waithera



Githitu Mahinda



They were selected because they were all avid *mũgithi* fans, had all witnessed the revival of the mugithi performance under the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance and all of them had attended shows by Joseph Kamaru, Mike Rua, Salim ‘Junior’ and Salim ‘Mighty’ which enabled them to give a detailed account of their *mũgithi* experience.

I used purposive sampling to identify the venues where I would collect my data, but once I was in the field I found out that though the performers had particular venues where they performed, they often travelled to different venues in order to get a bigger fan base and to earn more money. I, therefore, ended up following them to different performances and would record only parts of the show that the management allowed me to record. The venues were Rim Club on Langata Road, Club Comfy on Thika Road, Impala Hotel in Parklands and Club Remenis on Langata Road.

I used open-ended interviews with both the performers and the audience and I received more information for they seemed more inclined to easily speak their minds without restriction.

I recorded the interviews and the stage performances so that I could recall everything that was said during the discussion. I analyzed the lyrics in order to find out areas of concern within the music that bring about identity and cohesion. I also recorded the performances in order to get a better understanding of the music.

The music I collected from the field had a very indigenous sound, using notes that have pitches not found on the keyboard. So an attempt was made to transcribe the voice and guitar as close to the music collected. Therefore, I used finale program for the transcriptions. However, there was a problem when transcribing the song *ngahikania nenda*. The finale

program placed the guitar and voice in different keys and would only place them in the same key when the voice was in any other key other than C# Major.

Mwomboko music has served the purpose of asserting identity of the Agĩkũyũ. This has been through its lyrics which are encouraging, rhythm which is very danceable and instrumental accompaniment which makes the music enjoyable. These are characteristics that were present during colonialism, and are present in today's *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* performance. It is with the use of the following genres, the *gĩcandĩ* lyrics, the *irua* comic effect and the *mwomboko* instrumental rhythm that *mwomboko* is such a powerful force of assertion of identity of the Agĩkũyũ people. In order to understand this better, Chapter two shall discuss these genres at a greater detail.

1.6 Summary abstract of the rest of the chapters

1. Chapter Two

Chapter two shall discuss the musical history of *mwomboko*, *gĩcandĩ* and *irua*. It shall cover the genres' origins in the 1930s to their development into *mũgithi* in the 1960s. The chapter shall explore what triggered their birth and their link to social identity and cohesion among the Agikuyu through their development.

2. Chapter Three

Chapter three shall discuss the development of *mũgithi* from a band performance in the 1970s to the *mũgithi* performance in the 1990s. The chapter shall then look at the following performers: Mike Rua, Salim 'Mighty' and Salim 'Junior' and their role in this development.

3. Chapter Four

Chapter four shall analyse five of Mike Rua's *mugithi* songs, paying attention to his technique of incorporating *gicandi* lyrics and *irua* lyrics into his performance. This chapter shall also analyse the relationship he establishes between the voice and the guitar.

4. Chapter Five

Chapter five shall discuss the five songs analysed in chapter four in terms of the relationship between the lyrics, the rhythm and their role of social cohesion through empowerment amongst the audience.

1.7 Glossary of Terms

Agĩkũyũ- refers to an ethnic community that mainly comes from the Central Province of Kenya and consists of 20% of the Kenyan population. The Agĩkũyũ are also called Kĩkũyũ by the general Kenyan populace but traditionally, they are called the Agĩkũyũ.

Gĩcandi- this is a kind of Agĩkũyũ form of poetry that touches on topics such as feasting merriment to sadness, from humour to tragic and gruesome lyrics. Through the gicandi, the performer tries to have a form of dialogue with the audience.

Gĩkũyũ- refers to the language spoken by the Agĩkũyũ.

Irua- *Irua* is the section of a *mũgithi* performance where the performer sings comical lyrics in order to create humour in order to engage with the audience.

Karingaringa- This is a percussive musical instrument used by the Agĩkũyũ in the neo-traditional dance, *mwomboko*. This is a metal ring that is tapped with a steel rod.

Mũgithi- is music is mainly composed in Gĩkũyũ popularly held in the weekends in the evening in modern indoor and outdoor entertainments establishments.

Mwomboko- This is music whose lyrical genre discusses the origin of the Agĩkũyũ community, act as protest songs against political or social injustices and is used to sensitise and create awareness of problems surrounding the community.

Singer-cum-guitarist and Drummer Performance- This term refers to a performance that features a singer playing the guitar accompanied by a drummer.

Popular Music- Music that is liked or admired by people in general and valued for the purpose it serves. It is secular, contemporary and non-folk and mostly meant for entertainment.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF MWOMBOKO, GĪCANDĪ AND IRUA

In this chapter I examine the history of *mwomboko*, *gīcandī* and *irua* with a special focus on *mwomboko*'s process of urbanisation. Special attention is also given to popular social and political agendas and how they have influenced the different dynamics of *mwomboko* music and its spread. My focus shall be on Nairobi, being an urban town right next to central province that has very many Agĩkũyũ as well as many other communities. It also is the main town where *mũgithi* is performed. This is where changes in *mwomboko* music can be clearly seen as in the case of the singer-cum-guitarist performance.

Traditionally music is still seen as an important facet in most cultures. However most roles that music played in the traditional setting have changed in order to assimilate with today's modern life. This makes some of the practices that facilitated some of this music irrelevant. For example, the Meru, Luhya and Agĩkũyũ who were among some of the ethnic groups who practiced female circumcision have ceased following this practice. The traditional songs that were used to accompany this rite of passage have now changed. Unlike before when the songs talked about how to be a good wife and mother to your family, one can hear them being sang during Aids Day discussing the dangers of Aids, the value of abstinence and the importance of being faithful to one's partner.

Urbanisation has also played a big role in bringing about these changes to traditional music. The Agĩkũyũ were in contact with the white settlers since the early 1900's. This is because most were employed in the settlers' farms. Consequently, most of the Agĩkũyũ aspect of traditional culture and society changed and adapted to fit in with the modern way of life. This is seen especially in their traditional music. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, an Agĩkũyũ writer, was born during the colonial period and he felt the brutality of the colonialists due to his family participation in the Mau Mau rebellion. He has written books and articles working around political and social injustices by the government roughly running from around the 1920s to President Moi's reign. He describes a popular praise dance and song performed by young women, *kanyegenyuri*, performed in the evening after work in any arena available. He discusses how it was created in the colonial era which needed a permanently defined group in order to be performed (1993:63). They came up with a dance that could work with the

allocated time and space and their limited social interactions and used it in a manner that gave them maximum psychic space.

The Agĩkũyũ have retained some of their traditional and neo-traditional dances, with their most honoured songs and dances being the ones that invoke the past: songs and dances that identify with the socio-economic turmoil that the community faced during colonialism. Some examples of these are: *kanyegenyuri*, *muthirigu*, *irua*, *gĩcandĩ* and *mwomboko*. I shall however focus on three of these dances for they are the ones that feature within the *mũgithi* performance. They are *irua*, *gĩcandĩ* and *mwomboko*.

2.1 Irua Music

Irua are circumcision songs that were performed by both men and women before colonialism. These songs were performed after circumcision after the initiates came from the forest where they got their education on what was expected of them as adults. At this point they were also healed from the excision and got gifts such as goats for the boys and beaded necklaces for the girls on their safe return. The other adults in the community held a celebration ceremony where they performed *irua* songs for the new initiates. The words to the songs carried a lot of sexual innuendo therefore the only people who were allowed to be present for this celebration were those already circumcised.

Illustration 2.1: Transcription of an original *Irua* Song

Irua Song

Performed by Joseph Kamau

Tenor

T

De - ka - ga u - guo, de - ka - ga u - guo. Ma - ga - the - ka ma -

ka - ga - ra - ga - ra. Wb - i wa - di - gi - ki - di ka mu - ra - i mu - nu - nu.

Dekaga ũguo, dekada ũguo
Magatheka, makagaragara
Woi, wadũgũ kidũ kia Mũnai mũtutu

I used to do that, I used to do that
They laugh till they fall on the ground
Woi, my friend, Munai's thing is very sweet

This song was performed after circumcision. When the singer talks about the things “he used to do” he refers to his sexual exploits as a young man. At this point the singer would be demonstrating some of these sexual exploits by the use of actions that mimic sexual acts such as moving his hips front to back. This action would then have the people around laughing “till they fall on the ground”. He then tells of one of his friends, Munai, skills in the bedroom by saying how sweet Munai’s “thing” is. The words never directly referred to the sexual act but anyone who heard this song knew what message it carried. After such a painful ordeal as circumcision the singer would make the initiates laugh as he ushered them into adulthood through listening to songs that they were banned from listening to when uncircumcised.

As from the 1920s the ceremony was banned together with female circumcision and the performance or attendance of any circumcision dance was termed illegal. The Agĩkũyũ however found a way to retain these songs. In the early 1940s *irua*’s lyrics were incorporated into the then newly formed *mwomboko*²⁰, an accepted dance by the colonialists, due to its mimicry of their waltz²¹. *Irua* was incorporated into the music for a comical effect. The vulgarism of the *irua* words were meant to create humour in the performance therefore enabling the people to enjoy the songs. This can be observed in the video at 00:25:23 to 00:26:16.

In *mũgithi*’s one-man guitar performance which incorporates *mwomboko* songs, *irua* can still be heard. Its role of being a tension reliever through comical effect is still present. The singer uses nonsensical sexual lyrics to make the audience laugh and relax. He will do this every so often in order to ensure that the people are happy and shall continue drinking at the entertainment club. For example as one can see below in the song *mboco ãĩ mbũca*, at the end of the performance Mike Rua adds *irua* lyrics to the tune of the song.

²⁰ The newly-formed *mwomboko* incorporated the *irua* and *gĩcandĩ* dance. According to research done by Peter Wanjohi (Interview done in Machakos at Lysak Haven Park Guest House on the 18th of May 2010) *mwomboko* did not seem to exist before the late 1930s.

²¹ Mrs Mbugua, Interview done on the 16th of July 2009.

Illustration 2.2: *Irua* Section of the song *Mboco ĩrĩ Mbũca* by Mike Rua

Irua begins here

28
T
sha ri - ra ch - ra ch - o ĩr - ra ma - tu - mbi Nh he
C G C

31
T
o no - we ba - ko - ri ĩmwe. no - we. no -
C G

34
T
we. Nh - ra ohoro wa no - we. No - we. Fine
C G C Fine

Ac. Gtr.

Ngaheo nowe bakori ĩmwe
Nowe, nowe
Ndaria ohoro wa nowe
Nowe

I was given a bucketful of nakedness
nakedness, nakedness
I'm talking about nakedness
nakedness

This *irua* section is preceded by emotional lyrics discussing the mistreatment of the singer at the hands of the colonialists. As can be observed in the video the singer is very serious as he sings the main song but once he is into the *irua* section his features change to create a form of comical face. In *irua* the words have no relevance to the patrons and are mainly meant to make them laugh. It is impossible to quantify nakedness but the singer uses this information to make the words seem silly therefore working at entertaining the audience.

2.2 Gĩcandĩ Music

Gĩcandĩ refers to a competitive, yet cooperative, riddle-like dialogue poem and poetic exchange. Njogu (1997: 47) defines *gĩcandĩ* as “poem of enigmas sung by poets in a duet and not by a soloist and chorus as in the case with many other Agĩkũyũ traditional songs” Njogu (1997: 60) goes ahead to transcribe one of Joseph Kamaru’s recordings from his audiodisc ‘*matemo ma gĩcandĩ*’.

Illustration 2.3: An Example of *Gĩcandĩ* performed by Kamaru

Kamaru:

Ūyũ ti gĩcaandĩ wooka
Ĩno nĩ njũũ mwanjanjo
Yũkũite ikĩrĩaga ndaahi
Yetereire ngĩgĩ ciũke
Ciũke na mace ya rūũngũ
Kamarũ wa Wangĩrũ ngũũria:
Ūtarĩ rūũngũ eeke atĩa?
Gĩkĩ tĩ gicaandĩ ngiũna
Maya ni matemo maakĩo
Gĩtũmĩ ndiarĩ mũũgi wa kũmenya
Ngũgũtũ thata na ĩrĩa ĩ ihu
Ona ndiakũranĩite kumenya
Mwere, mũhĩa kana ũgĩmbĩ
Ona mũkombi na mweethia
Ii mũrauga ngemi muonete ki?
Na ngũgeria ngwetherera ngaaga
Na Kĩgotho baba ni akuĩte
Akinyĩrĩte mũtuunda ũtũ
Ngũũria kana nĩ kũrĩ ũtũire
Ugĩnyonereria kwara
Riitho ũnyonere tĩ maithe
Nawe gũtũ unjiguĩre
Kagũrũ ũthiire Ikamba
Ngacarie mace rĩa rūũngũ
Nĩ wa Wanjirũ tĩ ngerice

*This is not gicaandi that has come
This is the first njuu locust bird
Which has come eating grasshoppers
As it waits for locusts to come
To come with the gourd plant
I, Kamaru wa Wanjiru, I want to ask:
What does one do if one has no gourd?
This is not gicaandi I am performing
These are its fragments
Because I wasn't clever enough to distinguish
A sterile cowrie shell from a pregnant one
I had not even differentiated
The bulrush millet and sorghum,
The foxtail millet and mweethia seeds
What have you seen that makes you ululate?
I am trying to look around without success
yet, Kigotho, my father, died
Searching for this plant I ask:
Does anyone still exist
Who could show me how to perform?
Eyes: see for me, yes, eyes
And you ears: hear for me
Legs: take me to Kambaland
That i may go in search of the gourd plant
So that I, son of Wanjiru, may succeed*

Transcribed and translated by Njogu (1997: 60)

Among the Agĩkũyũ, during colonialism and probably pre-colonialism, there used to be a singing poetry festival or competition which was organised by the elders, held in the evenings

at an arena which drew large crowds²². The best poets/musicians of the various clans within the area would then “meet in the arena like in the battle and compete with words and instant competitions. These musicians had even developed a form of hierographise, which they kept to themselves.” (wa Thiong’o 1993:19)

Gĩcandĩ was then picked in the 1960s by *mũgithi* performers such as Joseph Kamaru and Daniel Kamau²³ but mainly by Joseph Kamaru. They picked its style in the creation of their songs. Later in the 1990s the one-man guitar, due to its adoption of many of *mũgithi* songs, also picked *gĩcandĩ* as well. Like in the song *Twathiaga tukenete*, one can see the use of *gĩcandĩ* poetry. By using *gĩcandĩ*’s form of poetry within *mũgithi*, specifically *mwomboko* music, the performer continues with the role of telling the story of his people’s struggles in post colonial Kenya. Mike Rua states a very interesting comment in support of this.

This music lets people know and remember their roots. It tells them about where they came from. You and I are from Nairobi but when we hear these songs we remember that we saw our fathers or even our grandparents singing and dancing to these songs. It makes you proud of who you are and where you come from (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

John Muikia²⁴, part of the *mũgithi* audience, shares in this opinion. He feels that getting ontology on the Agĩkũyũ history is good for it makes him remember who he is, where he came from and creates a form of inspiration to be a better, stronger person than before because he owes it to himself and to his community.

Mũgithi under the singer-cum-guitarist performance concept would not have come to be without *mwomboko* as its predecessor. According to Githiora *mũgithi* through the singer-cum-guitarist performance concept is very popular among the Agĩkũyũ people but without the traditional music, *mwomboko* being most featured, this music would not have reached and touched as many people as it has now. (2008:86). According to Rua the music has also

²² Various writers such as wa Thiong’o (1993) and Njogu (1997) discuss *gĩcandĩ* as a indigenous performance by the Agĩkũyũ. No definite date is given to the performance of this dance but with it being discussed as an indigenous performance allows me to draw to the conclusion that it must have been present before and during colonialism before it was banned by the colonialists.

²³ Joseph Kamaru and Daniel Kamau were *mũgithi* pioneers. Their music was performed from the 1960s up till the 1990s.

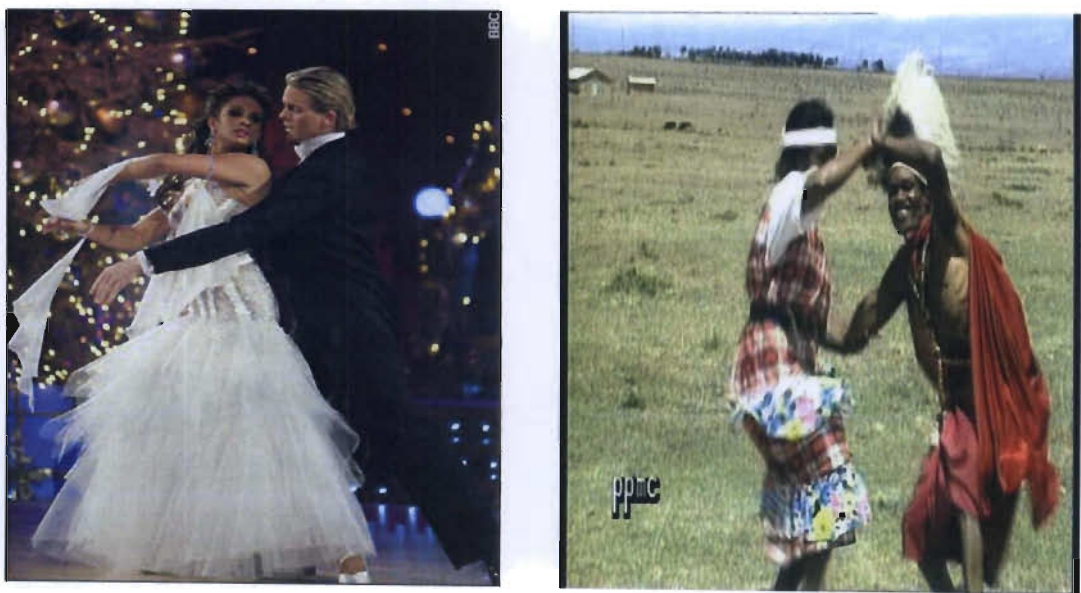
²⁴ Interviewed in his office at Wilson Airport on Langata Road on the 3rd of July, 2009.

enabled performers like him to perform not only in many clubs in Nairobi and in many towns in Central Province but it has enabled him to travel to the United States of America and Dubai due to the following it has gathered²⁵. It is then best to explain why *mwomboko* is so important to this *mũgithi* performance by looking at its birth and growth.

2.3 Mwomboko Music

It is fair to say that *mwomboko* can be traced back to the 1930s during the colonial rule. The Agĩkũyũ were farm labourers for the white settlers in the White Highlands which consists mainly of Central Province. The Kenyan indigenous people had begun fighting against colonialism and the Agĩkũyũ people used the waltz, which they had seen the colonialists perform in their houses, “as an ethopoetic weapon for social and political protest against colonialism.” (Mwangi, 2002:160) The similarity between the two dances was they were both a couple dance, however the Agĩkũyũ version of the waltz had the following choreographies: bouncing with a heavy step (*kuoboka*) instead of gliding;

Illustration 2.4: Gliding of a Waltz and Bouncing of a *Mwomboko* Dance



Waltz Image from website: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1573462/Dazzling-Dixon-lifts-dance-prize.html

²⁵ Interview on the 23rd of June at home in Lngata, 2009.

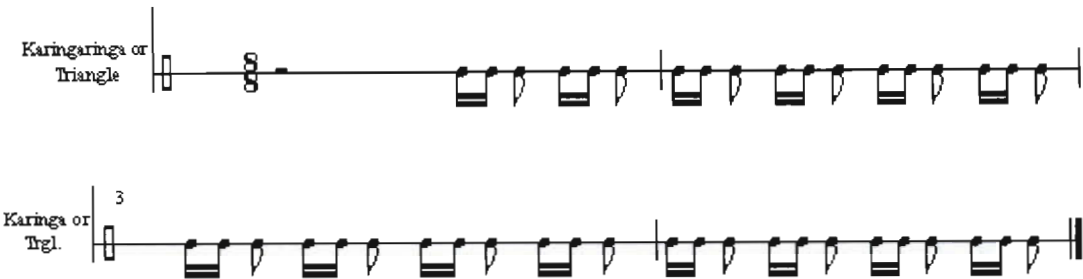
Use of the accordion (*kinanda*) but incorporating an Agĩkũyũ sense of melody and rhythm; introduction of a new instrument, *karingaringa* (a ring made of steel with a rod that taps against the inner walls of the ring) that was played using similar rhythms to the rest of the community’s percussive instruments; Agĩkũyũ sang lyrics.

Illustration 2.5: Picture of the Accordion and the Steel Rod and Ring



Each *kinanda* (accordion) performer has their own style of playing the instrument. There is standard format of playing the *kinanda* however the *karingaringa* (steel rod and ring) has a basic rhythm.

Illustration 2.6: *Karingaringa* Rhythm



In order to get a better understanding of the different styles of playing the *kinanda* as well as the standard rhythm of the *karingaringa* see the audio disc track one and two.

Mwomboko continued being performed through the 1940s and 1960s. Wanjohi explains in his interview how the people felt compelled to perform *mwomboko* as a way of holding on to their integrity as Agĩkũyũ people while undetectably supporting Mau Mau through the lyrics

of *mwomboko*. I shall discuss the 60s, 70s and 80s in greater detail in Chapter Three. However, it is important to state that in the late 1960s the lyrics were adapted into the *mũgithi* performance along with the style of instrumentation though the instruments changed from the accordion (*kĩnanda*) and *karingaringa* (a ring made of steel with a rod that taps against the inner walls of the ring) to the guitar and the drum set respectively. As the music grew in popularity amongst the people, the dance changed to represent empowerment. The “Agĩkũyũ changed the words of the song to become anti-establishment and pro pan-African songs” (Mwangi, 2002:160). In an interview with Mike Rua²⁶ where he discussed the role of *mwomboko* music in the one-man guitar performance, he stated:

Then there are the old songs where the lyrics talk about how we were found here by the colonialists and they treated us badly. Because of this treatment we sang songs that they did not understand talking about their bad treatment and how we would get our land back. These lyrics were adopted in ĩrua and mwomboko songs. Because both songs and dances easily flew under the radar of the colonialists due to the harmless nature of the performance, they were favoured by the performers and worked well in also sending out messages to the Mau Mau. From this music is where we got our independence (Interview on the 23rd of June at a home in Langata, 2009).

Mwomboko came about at a time when the Agĩkũyũ people were tired of working for the colonialists on the land that they knew was theirs. Therefore as the Mau Mau was formed the Agĩkũyũ came up with *mwomboko*. They knew the dance would go unnoticed by the colonialists because it was a satire to the Scottish waltz which appeared soft and non-vigorous. As Muhoro states in his article, the *mwomboko* schemers timed opportune moments to air their views to the masses, as during football matches when the Agĩkũyũ people would go to watch and cheer white settlers playing football. (2008:107) At half-time the singers would perform and pass secret messages to the crowds of Agĩkũyũ people present. Through manipulating the lyrics they would use this time to send coded messages to the Mau Mau as well as inform the rest of the Agĩkũyũ people what was happening around them. The lyrics would also have encouraging words that were composed to make the Agĩkũyũ people think as one community and it was also designed to make them identify themselves as strong Agĩkũyũ people.

²⁶ Interview on the 24th of June 2009.

Illustration 2.7: Lyrics of a “*Twathiaga Tukenete*” Working as an Inspiration Song

<i>Nitwamĩrĩrie mathena</i>	We have gone through problems
<i>Ona menya maro meingĩ</i>	Plus known a lot of fights
<i>Ndagotiga atĩ</i>	I leave you with this
<i>Tũtingemaka</i>	Why should we worry
<i>Ngũtirĩ woirĩ gũtũirĩ</i>	There is no one who will torment you forever
<i>Ena inyũothe aciari</i>	And all of you fellow men
<i>Ena inyũothe anake</i>	And all of you fellow women
<i>Kawera nokarathĩ na mbere</i>	The work is progressing
<i>Gatiga cũka na thutha</i>	It is not regressing

The singer in the first verse encourages the people by informing them that no pain ever lasts forever. The second verse sends out a message to both the people and the Mau Mau on how through their rebellion they are making progress in achieving their goal.

Muhoro (2008:76) also goes on to the state that *mwomboko* was also used to advance socio-political awareness to the populace, the song genre therefore becoming a weapon for educating the people. Through the songs the Agĩkũyũ people were re-educated about their religious and traditional beliefs that were important to uphold and they were also received information on how far the Mau Mau were to liberating them from the colonialists. Through the awareness created among the people, the Agĩkũyũ remained strong as a community, singing *mwomboko* and enjoying the music. This is because it was something the colonialists could not take away from them and because by singing it, they felt closer to achieving their goal of having their land back from the colonialists.

2.4 Conclusion

Mwomboko has evolved into a new form but still retains its basic foundation, the lyrics that incorporate *irua*'s sense of humour and *gicandi*'s sense of poetry and its instrumentation and very danceable rhythm which makes it appealing to the audience. The performance style of the *mwomboko* has incorporated old musical ideas such as the use of inspirational lyrics, and the imitation of the instruments that were used in the 1930s. However it has embraced new ideas that make it as expressive as it was in the past. This is done with the use of the guitar as a main instrument to the performance and the use of one guitarist-cum-singer who creates a

performance that allows room for discussion with the audience by the use of guitar based interludes and the use of *irua* as shall be seen in illustrations in chapter three.

Mwomboko has been used as a political avenue of expression because some of the Agĩkũyũ people seem to feel that it would be the best instrument to use due to it being imported from a performance that carries great meaning to the Agĩkũyũ people. John Muikia²⁷, one of the audience who I interviewed, states that the *mũgithi* music provides that space where, as he observes many times, people shout out against injustices done by the government without worry of being reprimanded. “We use *mũgithi* as a forum where some people vent out their frustrations loudly to the performer or quietly with the next person as I usually do.” Therefore, through its continued performance *mwomboko* carries on empowerment to the people and has retained the purpose of social cohesion.

As in the case of singer-cum-guitarist *mũgithi*, which shall be discussed in the following chapter, *mwomboko* has been instrumental in galvanising an urban-based audience into one imagined community. Within the singer-cum-guitarist *mũgithi* performance *mwomboko* has helped reaffirm identity amongst the participants, while at the same time offering them a site to help recreate themselves through a modern version of traditional music.

²⁷ Interviewed in his office on Langata Road on the 3rd of July 2009

CHAPTER THREE

THE BIRTH OF THE 1990s MŪGITHI CONCEPT THROUGH ITS PERFORMERS

“Every colonized people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been create by the death and burial of its local cultural originality finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation: that is, with the culture of the mother country. (Franz Fanon 1967: 18)

During colonialism the Agĩkũyũ were not allowed to perform their music because it was seen as pagan. They were also made to move from their land to squatter camps and made to work for the land that they believed was theirs. According to Wanjohi they felt as though they were losing their identity and they needed to affirm themselves. Therefore they took *mwomboko* which was an imitation of the waltz which the colonialists identified with therefore allowing its performance and gave it an indigenous name, *mwomboko*, which created ownership of the song. They also took the dance steps and exaggerated the movements to show mockery to what the westerners turned as civilized dancing. Finally, they used their indigenous language for lyrics, which the colonialists did not understand, singing words of encouragement to their fellow Agĩkũyũ people (Interview on the 18th May 2010, Lysak Haven Park Guest House in Machakos Town).

Mwomboko was felt to have made such an influence in the assertion of their identity that later on in the 1970s up to the 21st century when the Agĩkũyũ felt socially excluded by the government, as we shall see later in the chapter, they use it again within *mũgithi* performance to recreate a reassertion of identity.

Salim “Junior”, Salim “Mighty” and Mike Rua are some of the most popular *mũgithi* artists. Although my main focus shall be Mike Rua, in this chapter I shall look at the three performers in order to give better understanding of the birth of *mũgithi* music.

Mũgithi music which is mostly composed in Gĩkũyũ²⁸, is a popular weekend song and dance. It is held usually in the evenings in indoor or outdoor social and entertainment establishments

²⁸ The Agĩkũyũ people’s language.

in urban Kenya, in many cities but especially in Nairobi due it being the Capital city of Kenya.

The previous chapters have discussed *mwomboko*'s birth and development. They however have not touched on the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer concept in detail. In this chapter I aim to talk about its birth and development. I hope to show its growth from the *mwomboko* dance in 1930s, its adaptation in *mũgithi* music in the 1960s and 1970s to the *mũgithi* that we now know today.

3.1 The Birth and Development of Mũgithi Music (1970s-1980s)

After independence there was a lot of migration into the urban towns. *Mwomboko* which had been a rural performance danced in the squatter camps on the colonialists' farms was now changing. As I mentioned in chapter one, once independence was achieved the dance was performed less due to migration into urban towns with most of the migration being to Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya.

With all the changes taking place before the 1970s such as migration to urban towns, and inter-mixing with other ethnic groups, the *mwomboko* songs were easier to carry forward as opposed to the dance because it was easier to transmit. All the song required was for one to sing it on order for it to be remembered while with the dance, one required a partner, or partners and space therefore making it more tedious to perform. Performers like Joseph Kamaru who had picked *mwomboko* songs would perform them live on (VOK) The Voice of Kenya radio and television during public holidays²⁹. This kept the *mwomboko* songs fresh in the Agĩkũyũ's minds. While there were other popular musicians during the period, they were concerned with other themes like relationships, culture, urbanization, religion and traditions, Kamaru seemed to be the only Agĩkũyũ musician who had the courage to use his music to comment on politics. According to wa Mutonya, "Kamaru saw himself as a 'teacher' expressing the traditional vultures of his culture, as contemporary social comment." (2007: 29) All the attention was focused on the songs while the dance was mainly being performed for entertainment purposes. From my fieldwork I observed that very few of the audience

²⁹ Voice of Kenya was a government owned television and radio broadcasting network. The name changed to Kenya Broadcasting Corporation in the 1990s

remembered the actual dance steps of the *mwomboko* but remembered that there was a waltz like dance that accompanied the *mwomboko* song. The songs made the music very appealing to the listener. Each song served the role of social cohesion in different ways but now together they blended in such a way that the music would end up creating comic relief through *irua*, be inspirational and educational through *gĩcandi* and would be entertaining through the whole *mwomboko* experience. This would therefore make the people relax enough to want to talk to one another.

In the 1970s Kamaru would sing *mũgithi* songs which would be recorded and heard on radios and he would also perform for the president on stage during public national holidays. These songs would attack the government on issues that the government chose not to address, such as ethnic violence perpetuated by political leaders and rigging in elections. This was a time when the Agĩkũyũ were receiving favours from the government that was led by the President, Jomo Kenyatta. For example, with encouragement and support from Kenyatta, the first president, Kenyan squatter labourers particularly Agĩkũyũ farmers left the overpopulated Central Province and purchased land in the Rift Valley during the 1960s and 1970s. They were also given senior posts within the government. After Jomo Kenyatta's death Daniel Arap Moi³⁰ became president. After the 1982 attempted coup during Moi's reign, the Luo and the Agĩkũyũ leaders were seen as the main instigators behind it. (UNHCR 2003: 2) Therefore Moi decided to ban all ethnic associations thereby strengthening his power. "It was felt that the ban was particularly directed towards GEMA, (Gikuyu, Embu, Meru Association) a strong association bringing the three communities around Mount Kenya region together." (Mutonya, 2007: 30) In exchange for their aid in continuously supporting him through their votes, the Kalenjin³¹ were rewarded with resources from the State. These included senior position in parastatals and in the administration, as well as actual monetary benefits in the form of government loans. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the accession to power by Moi saw the simultaneous entry of Kalenjins into top positions, and the corresponding exit of the Agikũyũ. Mrs Mbugua in response to my question about the reason for the emergence of the one-man guitar says:

³⁰ Daniel T. Arap Moi was the second president from 1978 to 2002. He came from the Kalenjin ethnic group.

³¹ Kalenin Is an ethnic group of nilotic in the Great Valley in Western Kenya

My cousin who had been working for a government parastatal during Kenyatta's era was ousted one day on the pretension that he has been stealing funds in Moi's rein. He demanded an audit which never seemed to happen. Luckily he was close to retirement, all his children were grown and he had invested his money wisely otherwise he would have been in deep financial trouble. Ironically the person who replaced him was a Kalenjin. [The same tribe as the president] I also had relatives and friends who were left homeless due to their houses being looted and burned by Kalenjins in Molo³². It felt like Moi was trying to kill us all. We needed music that made us think of a brighter and better tomorrow. Music that gave us hopes by reminding us of what a strong people we are from our past achievements. Mũgithi did that for us (interview done on the 16th of July 2009, Kerarapon in Karen).³³

As much as there were other *mũgithi* performers like Daniel Kamau (D.K) and H.M. Kariuki, Joseph Kamaru was the most renowned in his performances, and was frequently invited to perform in stadia during public holidays for both the first and the second President of Kenya. Due to being on air during these performances and also due to his not being afraid to address political and social grievances in front of the president, Joseph Kamaru was the man best known for making *mũgithi* music popular.

3.1.1 Joseph Kamaru

Illustration 3.1: Picture of Joseph Kamaru interviewed at his home on Thika Road



³² Molo is a town known as one of the places with the coolest weather along the Rift Valley province of Kenya. The Rift Valley is predominantly Kalenjin with the Agĩkũyũ buying land in the area during President Jomo Kenyatta's reign.

³³ Mrs Mbugua is a 52 year old lady who has been attending *mũgithi* since it began in the 1990s.

Joseph Kamaru was born in 1938 in a place called Muranga. From an early age, Kamaru talks about being very good at leading the other boys and girls in school in Agĩkũyũ songs which they as students had composed. They would take these songs for competitions but times were hard and the Mau Mau were on the up rise therefore they would be taken for these competitions and back to school by escorts with guns. Kamaru adds that around the same period, which was in the 1950s, Agĩkũyũ performers were not allowed to sing any songs let alone perform any traditional dances. After Independence, in order for the government to show that they had no issue with the public performance of indigenous dances and songs, this music was revived and performed publicly.

Joseph Kamaru says that his first encounter with *mwomboko* was after independence back at his village in Kangema in Muranga.

A mwomboko performer came to entertain the audience at a wedding. He used the accordion together with the karingaringa. I thought he performed very well therefore I tried to imitate his singing. So when I came to Nairobi and I started to record my first three songs, I bought an accordion and recorded my first mwomboko song. This was during the late 1960 or early 1970s (Interview done on the 27th of May 2010, Garden Estate on Thika Road).

He decided to start recording them with his *mũgithi* music because he was worried that if he did not they would never be heard again.

His *mũgithi* however was very different from the one-man guitar we know today. As much as he had recordings of his music and was well known and loved by the Agĩkũyũ, the venue did not quite create a means for the people to share their grievances with him. Due to the stage being in front of the presidents who the people feared, the Agĩkũyũ people were more or less left as listeners to his music rather than contributors. (Nation Newspaper: 2009) This reaction from his audience filtered through to his performances in clubs with his band. According to wa Mungai as the early 1990s moved in the Agĩkũyũ people kept feeling left out politically and socially by the then ruling government and Joseph Kamaru's music was banned from public performance on account of its overtly political content. (wa Mungai 2008:62) This brought about the birth of the one-man guitar performance.

3.2 The Birth and Development of the Mũgithi performance (1990s- 2009)

This *mũgithi* first started as a medium or outlet for expressing various anxieties resulting from political repression of the 1980s and 1990s, coupled with adverse economic circumstances in Kenya³⁴. Sussana Gachukia, a music producer, gives a brief history of *mũgithi* in the 1990s.

I would say the one-man guitar (singer-cum-guitarist and drummer) mũgithi started in the 90s with a man called Joe Mwenda who used to play his own original music; a blend of rock and blues, plus some of the oldies. For me this was the revival of mũgithi but in a new format of one-man guitar. His allure was that he refined it: he was well educated, well travelled and could speak both kikuyu and English fluently. He glamorized it. To add to this, the political atmosphere of the time was that it was not good to be an Kikuyu for they were slightly austersized. So here was a man publicly proclaiming his heritage.

In the beginning, the 1960s and 70s, the artists would tour the country. Their pay afforded them the ability to pay the band but with the advent of the bar culture in Kenya, more and more establishment owners begun cutting down on their costs. Consequently there were no more profitable tours hence the downsizing of the 16 man band to a maximum of a 4 piece band but mostly a guitarist and his drummer (Interview on the 12th of May, Riara School on Riara Road).

Throughout the entire 1990 there was excessive ethnic violence in Kenya. According to Bertha Waithera, one of my interviewees and part of the *mũgithi* audience, in 1996 the government decided to further continue their discrimination against the Agĩkũyũ youth in the Rift Valley Province denying them National Identity Cards without which they could not marry, attend university, obtain employment or register to vote.

She says:

I had some family friends who had been living in Eldoret for more than thirty years. Early in the 1997 my aunt took her son to collect the Identity Card he applied for towards the end of 1996 in order for him to vote in the 1997 elections. As soon as he reached the office and gave his name they informed him without even bothering to look for the identity cards, that it had not arrived. He knew many other Kikũyũ's had gotten the same treatment but was hoping to be the lucky one. When they tried to complain to their chief, he simply said that they has no control over where the Identity Cards came from

³⁴ In the 1990s foreign investors were backing out of the country due to the violence that was promoted by politicians. This weakened the currency, and the exchange rate against the dollar which brought about the economic recession.

so they might as well go home and wait or leave the Rift Valley. We all knew it was all a ploy so that none of them could vote against him (Interview done on 16th July 2009, Kerarapon in Karen).

Mwomboko became a powerful means of expression in *mũgithi*'s performance as coupled with the adverse economic circumstances in Kenya. The Agĩkũyũ people used *mwomboko* as their avenue to vent their frustrations. By attending the *mũgithi* performance the Agĩkũyũ, through breaks provided by the performer would speak out against these injustices that they felt were being unfairly inflicted upon them by the government allowing them to identify with their community. *Mũgithi*'s performance also provided a stage for them to get together with their fellow Agĩkũyũ's, share their grievances and find comfort in each other. According to Mike Rua, when they heard these songs they remembered their roots. (Interview on the 23th of June 2009, Langata.Estate in Otiende.) The music reminded them of their origins and what they had gone through during colonialism to get to where they were instilling a sense of pride in their cultural background.

Illustration 3.2: 'Twathiaga Tukenete'³⁵ performed by Mike Rua

Verse 1

*Twathiaga tukenete
Tugashoka tukenete
Rugendo rwitu
Rurarĩ rweya
Tugithĩĩ na tugĩcoka*

*We would go happy
And come back happy
Our journey
Was very good
We went and we came back*

Verse 2

*Nithwamĩrĩrie mathĩna
Ona menya maro mũĩngĩ
Ndagotiga atĩ
Tutingĩmaka
Ngũtĩre woire gũtũire*

*We have gone through problems
Plus known a lot of fights
I leave you with this
Why should we worry
There is no one who will torment you forever*

In this song we can see how the *mwomboko* is used to remind the Agĩkũyũ people of how important they are. How they shall always prevail through hardship. Mike Rua goes on to explain how this song works with the audience. he states:

With a song like this I would sing the verse and you hear the audience shout back the chorus to show that they know exactly what I am talking about. This

³⁵ A full transcription can be found in the appendix.

song was sung by Mau Mau and was also a mwomboko song. Later it was performed during the Moi regime and it has become a favourite after the 2007 Post Elections Violence. From the lyrics you can see how these words serve a year politically purpose. By verse two the people are giving each other "high five" as the audience add their lyrics to the song. At this point the people are listening to one another and sharing opinions. It is quite wonderful to watch (Interview on the 23th of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

In order for the performer to entice the audience to add their own lyrics he may sing the first word of the first verse 'twathiaga' cuing them to finish the phrase. One person could then shout the second word 'tunyitanite' (as we held each other as friends), then the performer sings the first word of the second phrase, 'tugashoka' and another person inspired by the first replies, 'tunyitanite' (as we held each other as friends) to which the performer and the audience finish the last three phrases of the verse.

The 2007/2008 Post Election Violence made *mwomboko* songs within *mugithi* performance very popular. Mike Rua discussed his experience with *mwomboko* during the violence.

I have a neighbour and friend who during the violence heard screaming from outside. He ran out to help and was caught in the onslaught. He used to stay with his mother. They killed him before her eyes and my family stayed with her for a while until she found somewhere to stay. There are people who composed music talking about what happened to them or to others. Sadly because they are not known their music was never given a chance to be heard but when I go to the rural areas and I hear these songs I take them and perform them in nice entertainment clubs where I know many Agĩkũyũ people are gathered and need to know what is happening to their fellow people.

There are Agĩkũyũ people who do not travel much to the rural area therefore after the violence, I have felt it as my duty to inform people of what is happening back in the rural areas and how Agĩkũyũ people have been affected

by the violence. For example you have been away and now that your back you may not know what is happening (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009 in Langata Estate in Otiende).

Mũgithi has continued to play important roles in sociocultural and political commentaries on a variety of issues in the country. It has also become part of urban folk like Nairobi in recreation discourse of Agĩkũyũ cultural institutions.

The modern nightclubs which hosts the *mũgithi* performance uses musical skills and humour to engage with the audience and to throw challenges at Agĩkũyũ tradition, the Christian

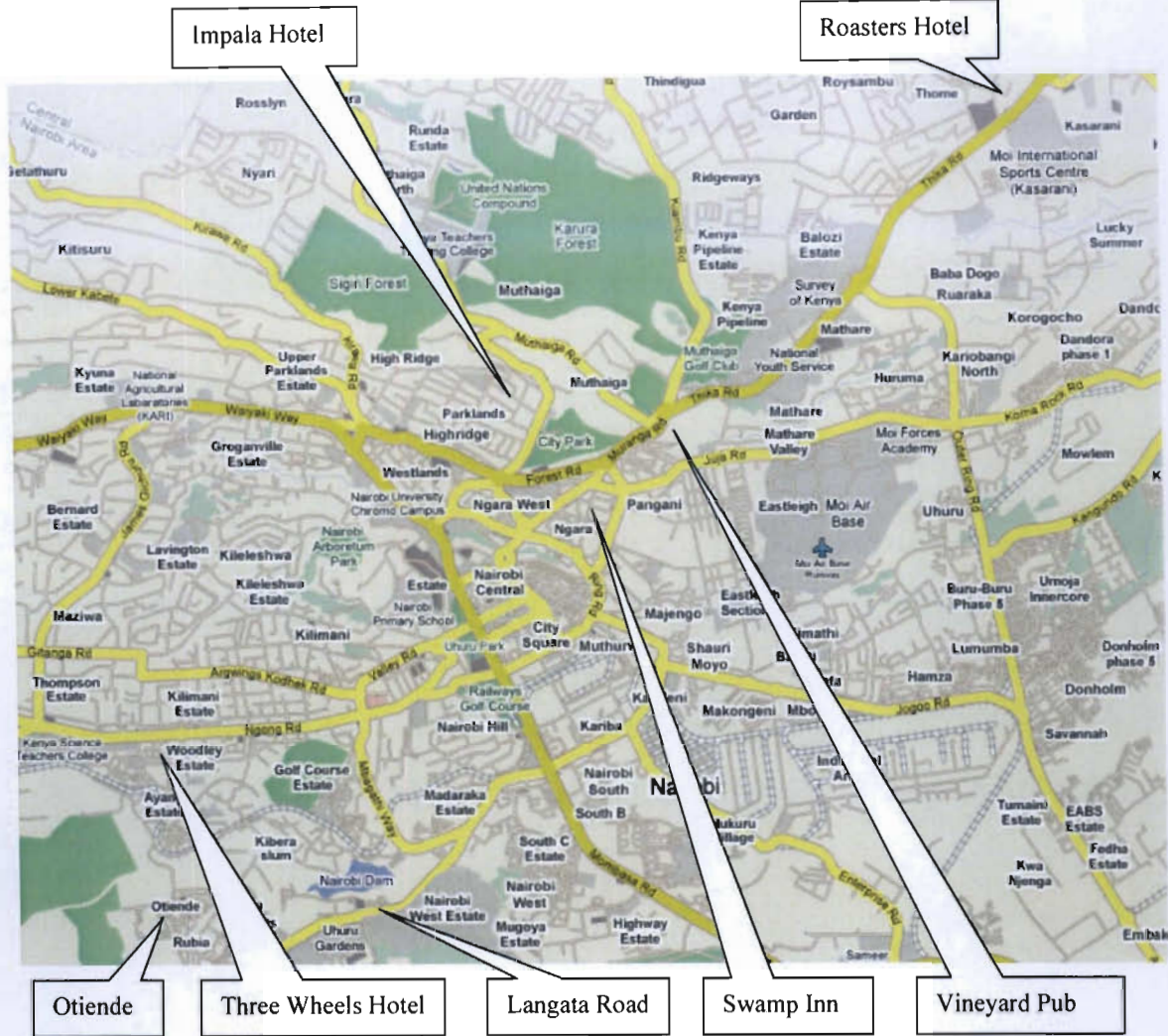
church, the nation, the government and western dominated modernity. It is important to note that popular *mũgithi* performers know that “within their commonplace existence they have the means with which to deal blows against the mighty by means of their critique of society, especially through the satirical laughter that their work evokes amongst audience.” (wa Mungai 2008: 63)

For most one man guitarist, there are three sections within *mũgithi*'s one-man guitar concert: popular music, traditional and/or neo-traditional music and gospel music. All these three types serve a very important role in the music. From the data I collected I found that the popular music is mainly for entertainment, the traditional music/ neo-traditional music was for educational and motivation and the gospel section was for the people to worship God.

During the *mũgithi* performance Mike Rua organises his show in this order. He starts with the popular music at around 10pm. At around 12 midnight he changes to a mixture of gospel and popular music³⁶. at around 2am he changes to *mwomboko* music up until 3am where he mixes it with gospel and he finally finishes with gospel at around 3:30am which signals the end of the show.

³⁶ The gospel and popular music consist of Kenyan local songs and music from around the world that fall within these two genres.

Illustration 3.3 Map of Nairobi Showing the Venues where the Artists Perform



3.2.1 Mike Rua

Mike Rua, born in 1974, is one of the principal musicians who enable the growth of the one-man guitar style of performance. Mike Rua is credited with modernizing the *mũgithi* dance wave and is among one of the most accomplished *mũgithi* performers in Kenya.

Illustration 3.4 Mike Rua with his favorite guitar



The musician currently performs at Rim Club along Lang'ata Road on weekends. When he was about 10years of age, Mike Rua began improvising, building guitars using wire and discarded cooking oil tins. On weekends, he would be the darling of the other children in his rural village in Ruiru in the Central Province of Kenya. His peers would excitedly mill around him and dance to the captivating tunes emanating from the “homemade guitar.”

By the time he was in the upper primary at Thika Primary School in Kiambu district, he had established himself as a prolific guitarist. “His mastery of different guitar chords earned him a place in the St. Andrews Church Province of Kenya (now Anglican Church of Kenya) church choir in Zimmerman³⁷. The congregation, he recalls, would burst into a thunderous applause whenever he laid his fingers on a real guitar.” (East Africa Standard Magazine, 7th of February 2003)

By the time he was admitted at Gikindu High School in Kiambu district, Rua was a seasoned guitarist, performing at wedding parties and other social events. However, he did not predict a future as a musician. “I had a strong liking for football and paid more attention to the game than music,” he says. In 1995 he decided to be a full-time musician. “Queen Jane and her band were the talk of the town. I wanted to be part of their success and celebrate the best of their fame. I sought recruitment to the band as a guitarist.” Rua, after finishing High School,

³⁷ Zimmerman is an Estate along the north east side of Nairobi. The people living within the area range between the upper and the lower middle class.

joined talented artistes like Mike Murimi, Salim Junior and Queen Jane to form Queen J Les Band³⁸.

He stopped playing for the band in 1996 to venture into solo performances. He explains his reasons for this choice of action.

I wanted to be my own master, develop my skills and perfect my singing. It had dawned on me that a band required teamwork and synchronization of the various skills in order for there to be a good production (East Africa Standard Magazine, 7th of February 2003).

While at the Vineyard Pub he would test the audience's reaction to different renditions of songs previously performed by Joseph Kamaru and Daniel Kamau 'DK'. Depending on how the audience responded to it, he would play the song more often. '*Tuthiaga Tukenete*' was first adapted by Joseph Kamaru. Rua adapted it because of how well the fans responded to it.³⁹ At this point he was working on his improvisation skills on the guitar and his voice as well as trying to figure out what the Agĩkũyũ audience responded to during the entire one-man guitar performance. He then changed to Three Wheels Restaurant along Ngong Road, before performing at many various venues. Even without a standard current venue he made sure that he had the freedom to move around and perform wherever he could in order to spread his music and his fan base as well as earn more money.

According to Mike Rua the one-man guitar *mugithi* allows one to interact with the audience as well as communicate with them on a level that they are comfortable with and that they understand. This is because the audience can, at whatever time they feel necessary, break into the performance and speak their minds;⁴⁰ that is of course if they do not agree with what the performer is singing. This allows the performer to instantaneously change his lyrics to fit in with what the audience will better connect with.

³⁸ Queen J Les was a *mugithi* band consisting of Mike Murimi and Salim Junior who are now *mũgithi* solo performers. Queen Jane still performs in a band with new band members.

³⁹ Refer to full transcription in appendix.

⁴⁰ The audience breaks into the performance adding their own lyrics to the song currently being sung as they complain about transgression that happened to them. In order to maintain the same topic the audience can start a song that has covers the similar topics as the previous song.

As much as there are three types of music that he and his other counterparts employ in the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance: popular music, traditional music, gospel music, there are distinct features in his performance that have allowed him to be so well accepted. Mike Rua gets other performers to start his shows. These are usually people who perform popular music such as Kanda Kid⁴¹ who are not mūgithi performers. He uses this time to connect with the audience to know how they are therefore giving him a chance to share in some of their problems. When he goes on stage he will perform his songs but as soon as he gets to traditional music, he will perform songs that he knows they will understand due to particular stresses they are going through. During the break of a verse and chorus where the guitar plays the solo part, he will then allow the audience to speak and voice their opinion to what he has just sung. Rua tells me that he finds his style of performance very therapeutic for by the time the show is over, “the people are feeling so much better than when they came in” (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

3.2.2 Salim ‘Junior’

Salim ‘junior’ or Paul Mwangi Salim, born in 1974, is another great performer known for his adaptations of songs performed by Kamaru or Daniel Kamaru (DK).

⁴¹ Kanda kid is a popular dancer-singer who hails from a musical family. He specializes in performing *Lingala* songs. This is a music genre mainly performed in Central Africa with the dominant instrument being the voice and the guitar. dance also plays a major role in the music

Illustration 3.5: Salim on stage with his electric guitar at Impala Club



Salim ‘Junior’ is a name he goes by as he first started performing one-man guitar in the early 1990s. He felt there was a need for good performances in entertainment clubs that would be both informative as well as speak pit on the social and political evils that were going on at the time. He picked *mwomboko* songs particularly because of the connection they had with the Mau Mau and for the role of motivation in which he felt they served. Salim says “I got the right to remix their songs but was now incorporating the one-man guitar style which popular music, gospel songs and *mwomboko* and circumcision songs (*irua*).” (Interview on the 18th of July 2009, Impala Hotel at Parklands)

Salim ‘Junior’ feels that as much as *mũgithi* performance during the 70s and 80s was great and that the people enjoyed it, the music solely for entertainment.

Kamaru seemed to be the most interested mũgithi performer in singing for the plight of the people amidst all the political turmoil that was going on and the president creating fear amongst people through intimidation. After he was banned from singing there was a gap left. No one would dare perform in front of the president Moi for fear of persecution so the performers needed somewhere to perform without attracting any attention from the government (Interview on the 18th of July 2009, Impala Hotel at Parklands).

Salim ‘Junior’ states that this is where the performing in entertainment clubs began. There was also the wave of themed ethnic nights at various Nairobi venues. Most of the then upcoming performers wanted an avenue to speak out to the people without the interference of a band.

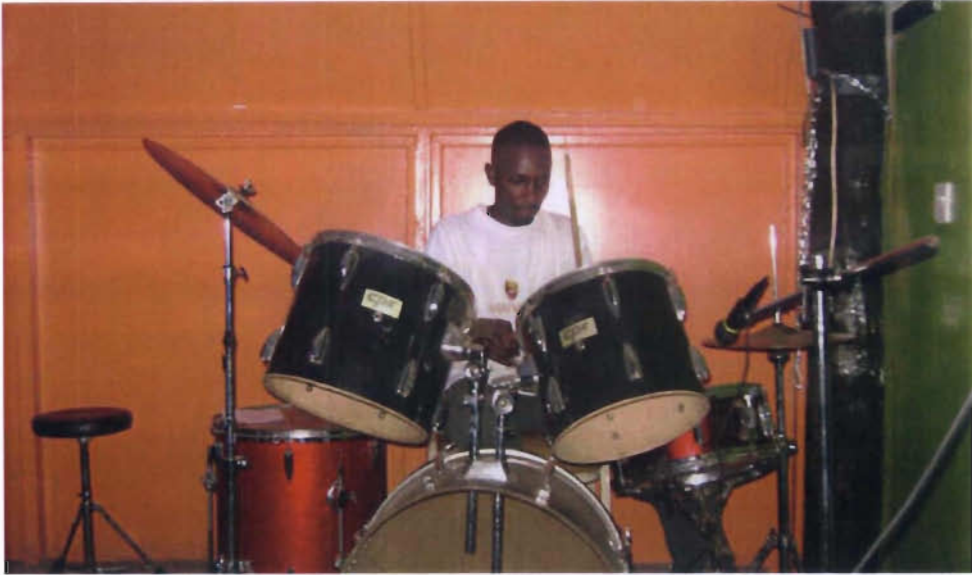
The music grew from this idea. the Agĩkũyũ people soon realized that they had somewhere to turn to, where they could find solace from some injustice that they had gone through, vent their frustrations on things that were not being done by the government and share with other fellow Agĩkũyũ issues in a place that allowed them to be themselves. At first there was less use of *mwomboko* and *irua* within the *mũgithi* performance. Salim ‘Junior’ says that he first wanted to observe the reaction of the Agĩkũyũ people to this music. They received it so warmly that he slowly increased the length of his performance. “Where at beginning I performed this music for thirty minutes I would now perform for two hours or more depending on how the people responded to it” states Salim. (Interview on the 18th of July 2009, Impala Hotel at Parklands)

He goes on to add,

As you can see from the generation we are in, with all the problems that we are having, it is better to sing these old songs and bring back the important information that was there in order to have a positive change amongst the people of today. When I take up some of these old mwomboko songs, I add a few things of my own to it to make it fit in with the times. I will usually add a few lyrics here and there that talk about the problems that we are having today as Agĩkũyũ people and try to associate it with a particular song that talks about the same issues then i’ll give solutions to these problems. I try to change very little in it so that I can maintain the same feeling within the music (Interview on the 18th of July 2009, Impala Hotel at Parklands).

Mũgithi in the 1990s was very simple with there being no drummer as there is now in the present day. The singer-cum-guitarist enjoyed the freedom to perform his choice of songs without having to consult other band members. It also allowed him the luxury to travel from one entertainment club to another without much restriction as most bands would have due to their dependency on the whole team being present. However times have changed and the need for a drummer is here says Salim. The drum gives the performance a fuller sound without compromising the concept of the performance, it being a *mũgithi* performance.

Illustration 3.6: *Mūgithi* Drum Set Player



The music needed to change a little bit. Something was required in the music to make it complete without altering too much of the performance. According to Salim, the audience is the one who requested for the use of the drum towards the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st Century. The drum set was introduced with the drummer expected to just provide the steady rhythm for the performer. This was especially expected when he sang *mwomboko* songs where the drum set is meant to imitate the *karingaringa*.⁴²

3.2.3 Salim ‘Mighty’

Salim ‘Mighty’, born in 1978 is a renowned performer in Nairobi. Salim’s real name is Timothy Njuguna Salim but Salim ‘Mighty’. He is the younger brother to Salim ‘Junior’

⁴² This is a metal ring that is tapped with a steel rod.

Illustration 3.7: Salim ‘Mighty’ during the interview at Roasters Hotel



Ironically enough ‘Mighty’ started performing *mũgithi* a few years after his brother had ventured into the business. His inspiration into getting into *mũgithi* was watching his brother perform on stage with freedom to improvise and his freedom to move from one venue to another. ‘Mighty’ compared this freedom with the confinement his brother experienced within the band performance and chose to go for *mũgithi* which would allow him to be his own boss while earning a living doing something that he had come to enjoy. He was sure that as long as he enjoyed performing *mũgithi*, then the audience would enjoy it too. Mighty states:

*First of all the Agikuyu people enjoy watching a performance that allows them to feel like they are part of the music and they are listening to something that they love. For example I went to watch the Zambezi band and I noticed that all the performers did was stand on stage as they performed *mũgithi* songs. The people did not have an avenue to respond to the songs because the band was performing their songs using soundtracks. The band could therefore alter very little of their music which in turn made it hard to the audience to take part in the performance. However in my performances there is a big difference for the people dictate the songs that I sing and when I should change to a new song in order to make it more exciting for them (Interview on the 2nd of July 2009, Roasters Hotel on Thika Road).*

It is important to note that ‘Mighty’ did not really play a big part in the emergence of the singer-cum-guitarist solo performance within *mũgithi* but observed the changes that took place within the performance at his brother’s side as part of the audience. Just like his

brother, 'Mighty' also adapted a lot of Joseph Kamaru's music as well as Daniel Kamau. He loved what *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* music was doing to the Agĩkũyũ people in terms of bringing them together to share within one another. Discussing his style of performing *mũgithi* he says:

I usually start with popular music because this starts off the evening on an exciting note due to the fast pace of the songs. This caters for the youth in the club. I then play traditional music like mwomboko and mix it with gospel because at this point I want to sing about issues the Agĩkũyũ people are going through. This gives the audience their cue to correspond with me as we discuss, in song, various political and social issues that are perturbing the community (Interview on the 2nd of July 2009, Roasters Hotel on Thika Road).

Salim 'Mighty', just like his counterparts, has done so well in creating awareness in what is happening to the Agĩkũyũ people that there have been performance where all three agree that they have encountered a situation where as they sing about the bad things that have happened, for example the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence that left thousands of people, including the Agĩkũyũ homeless, the audience ends up raising funds which they request the performers to give to the displaced people⁴³.

The emergence of *mũgithi* has definitely led to the beginning of good things. It has led to the addition of good performers like 'Mighty' who due to being inspired by the way the music worked at bringing the people together, decided to join and play his part though he choose to add something different to the music.

The music has unified the Agĩkũyũ and created a platform where the people can voice their issues as they enjoy the music. The development of this music has also benefitted the audience as well as being a form of education for the performers.

The Agĩkũyũ community had values and traditions which, like any other indigenous group, dictated their way of life but through colonialism they were forced to part with some of their rites as well as songs or be persecuted. This brought about an identity crisis which was regained through the performance of *mwomboko*. But as fate would have it, through

⁴³ During the 2008 Post Election Violence there were ethnic fights which led to people being displaced from their homes. The government created shelters for these Internally Displaced Persons in government lands aiding them with food and tents with the help of fellow Kenyans, United Nations and Red Cross. Some of the people displaced were Agĩkũyũ.

independence, the migration that followed caused a decline in the performance of the dance. However the song moved into a new performance setting which was *mũgithi*. The ethnic violence that soon ensued brought about another identity crisis and *mwomboko*, through this *mũgithi* performance setting, was again embraced. The reassertion of identity was seen through the performance of songs that encouraged the audience to be strong and to remember the trials in which they had battled and won like in the songs ‘*Twathiaga Tukenete*’ and ‘*Mboco ãĩ Mbũca*’,⁴⁴

Joseph Kamaru was one of the most known pioneers of *mũgithi*, and through his most known live performances to the president where he spoke against government misdeeds, was an inspiration to his audience who later became *mũgithi* performers as well. Some of these performers were Mike Rua, Salim Junior and Salim Mighty who are now using *mũgithi* as an avenue of creating social cohesion through the *mwomboko* songs that they sing. This use of *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* shall be clearly seen in chapter four.

⁴⁴ Refer to full transcription in the appendix.

CHAPTER FOUR

MŪGITHI MUSIC AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STYLE

Ethnicity is an issue in Kenya, and as can be observed from chapter two, this issue can be traced to as far back as 1920. The British colonialists worked under a policy of divide and rule. (Maupeu, 2007:161) Maupeu asserts that “the colonial power had gathered nearby groups, each with administrative units to forge ethnic groups themselves trapped in each district” to maintain this system movement that was regulated by the *Kipande*⁴⁵. In each province a dominant ethnic group was positioned: the central province and the two in Nyanza province. This placement made the people associate with one another in terms of tribe instead of as a nation. Because of this, many performances that have music derived from indigenous songs and dances are mainly attended by the people from that indigenous group.

The singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance is not a concept only used by the Agĩkũyũ community. Other ethnic groups also use it in their performances. For example the Luo make use of the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance concept through Tony Nyadundo performance. Tony Nyadundo is a musician from the Luo community. He performs songs using material from indigenous dances and songs just like the *mũgithi* performers. Also, just like Mike Rua, most of Tony Nyadundo’s performances are in Nairobi. Whether he uses his performance for social cohesion is rather unclear for there was no documentation in support of this. However, these performances lead people in Kenya to gather ethnically in a musical space creating separation between ethnic groups.

Performers like Kamaru show the effect of such separation, through his style of performance in 1960’s to the 1980’s. Kamaru sung songs that would speak against different forms of social injustices especially directed to the Agĩkũyũ. For example, Kamaru released a song in 1975 condemning the killing of JM Kariuki, a member of parliament representing a town in central province. The song pointed fingers at the president’s aids and friends as the culprit (Kariuki, 2009:3) Kamaru’s music is expressed by Maupeu (2007:163) as comical, vulgar, has the use of incantations as well as being inquisitive.

⁴⁵ Identity cards showing that each migration must be authorized by an employer or administrative authority.

The forming of ethnicity was further promoted by the government through the attack of the Agĩkũyũ in the 1990's by the Kalenjin community, and later the 2007/2008 post election violence. This is the time *mũgithi* through the singer-cum-guitarist performance concept came into being. From the similarities seen between Kamaru's style of performance and Mike Rua's performance, there is a reason to believe that one is the adaptation of the other. As it has been observed in the previous chapter Kamaru was known to prefer singing on stage in front of the Kenyan people together with the president. He loved the fact that through this style of performance he was able to reach the Agĩkũyũ people with a message that he felt they needed to hear. Through the *mũgithi* performance using the one man guitar concept Mike Rua message is delivered to the Agikuyu people within the entertainment club at a time.

Kamaru sung in his preferred choice of language: Gĩkũyũ. He employed the use of *gĩcandi* as seen in illustration 6 to bring out the poetry within his music. Mike Rua employs the use of *gĩcandi* in his lyrics to serve the purpose of creating poetry within his music as shall be demonstrated in this chapter.

The one-man guitar *mũgithi* is the only style that employs the use of *mwomboko* music in its adapted form in its performance. Mike Rua is one of the performers who came from the band performance and established an interesting style of incorporating *mwomboko* into his performances. This chapter shall therefore discuss Mike Rua's style of performance while he was in the *mũgithi* band and how that later developed and changed in the one-man guitar performance and finally the overall characteristics of the change.

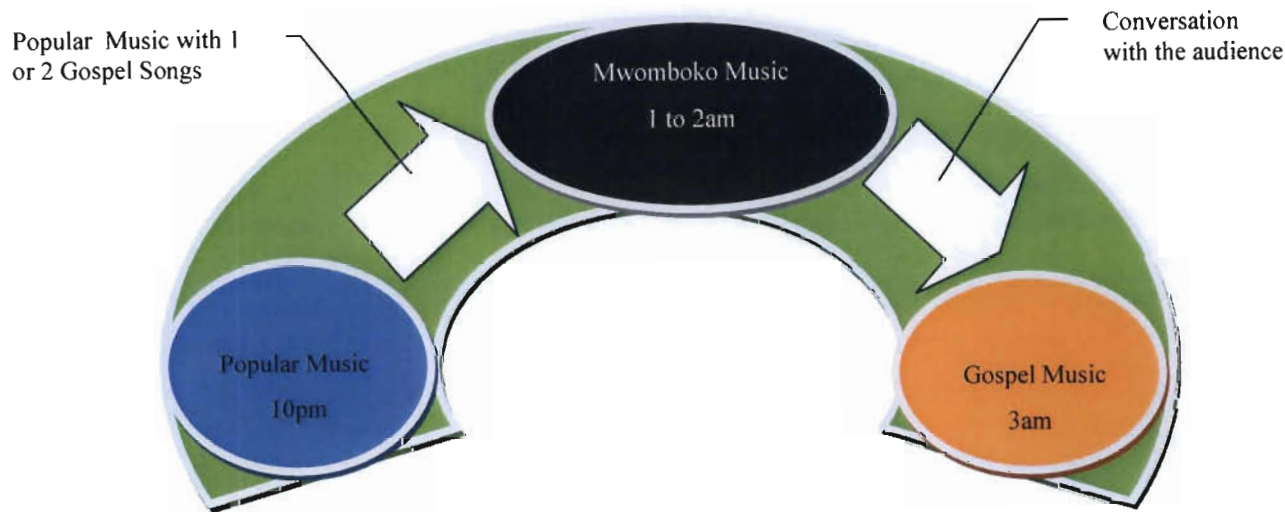
Kamaru also loved including *irua* into his performance but sadly they were never performed on stage as he only performed them in informal settings such as local night clubs which was very rare. He actually dedicated a whole audio CD, "adults only" to *irua* music. These were circumcision songs which due to the language within the music, were for Agĩkũyũ adults only. Rua uses this technique of incorporation *irua* into his performance for comical effect.

Mike Rua, through my observation, mimics a lot of Kamaru's style of performance. Kamaru was effective when he performed in front of a group of people for the people felt enriched through his performance. Mike Rua's style of performing *mũgithi* tries to attain the same kind of response from the audience that pioneers like Kamaru achieved.

4.1 Mũgithi through the Singer-cum-guitarist and Drummer Performance Concept

The *mũgithi* through the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance, for most one-man guitarists, comprises of three types of music: popular music, traditional and/or neo-traditional music and gospel music. All these three types serve a very important role in the music.

Illustration 4.1: Diagram of the *Mũgithi* singer-cum-guitarist performance



In Mike Rua performance of the one-man guitar *mũgithi* he always starts with the popular music with a gospel song here and there to create variation. He then plays the modern *mwomboko* music to finish with the gospel music. Rua has two styles of playing the guitar. He either strums or plucks and uses a plectrum for both techniques.

Rua, like all *mũgithi* performers, works with the tuning system as that used in classical music. This can be seen in illustration 4.2.

Illustration 4.2: The Six Strings on a Guitar

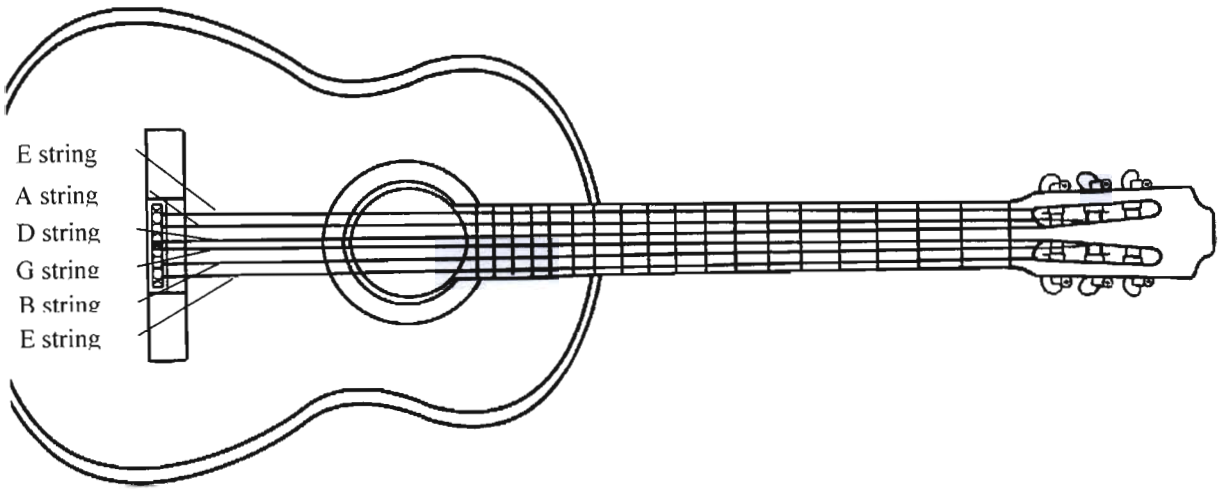








Illustration 4.3: The Notes of the Guitar and where they are in the Staff

E note	A note	D note	G note	B note	E note
					
					
					
					
					
					

The two figures above shows the names of the strings as well as the sound they produce on the piano or keyboard. According to Mike Rua *mūgithi* music works with the following tuning. The improvisation of music on the guitar is made using the following tuning on the strings.

As discussed earlier there are three sections within the *mūgithi* performance. The show begins with popular music which is mainly for entertainment. It is a way for the performer to introduce the audience to the *mūgithi* show. He therefore starts by relaxing them with music that they can sing along to and dance to.

4.2 Popular Music

Mike Rua starts his *mũgithi* performance with music that helps his patrons to relax and unwind from a long day. He calls this type of music popular for he feels that most of the patrons are familiar with this type of music and can sing along. His popular music consists of reggae music, Kenyan rumba and West African Soukous⁴⁶. Most of the time he allows other performers to open the stage for him⁴⁷. The preliminary performance opens the show and prepares the patrons for Mike Rua performance.

When Rua selects a song for the performance he chooses songs that are slow in tempo. Reggae's tempo is generally slow with a constant rhythm and can be termed as relaxing. As can be seen in the song '*one thing I want him to know*' the performer chooses very slow song by Gregory Isaac that is known by many patrons, due to his frequent performance of the song. For the patrons who want to dance, they get to jump or shake to the music. Those who are not dancing sit and enjoy their drinks as they converse with friends alongside the music.

In the soukous performance, Mike Rua plays the guitar for Kanda Kid who dances to the guitar and drum set. This excites the audience who cheer and clap for both Kanda Kid. Mike Rua however states that this does not happen at all his venues. This is only seen when the manager request for other performers at an added fee.

He also favours songs that have similar rhythm. By using this technique, the audience is able to easily pick out the lyrics without having to worry about a change of rhythm. Mugambi discusses why the use of this technique is very critical to the performer if he wants to engage with the audience.




I love the fact that at the beginning of the performance I get to sit and relax with my friends after a long day at work. The one thing I appreciate with mũgithi at the beginning of the show is, it allows me to just relax. Yes, the music is loud, but the sound is not too busy with the guitar playing crazy melodies and the drummer going crazy with the rhythm. It is nice and steady

⁴⁶ Soukous also known as lingala or congo is a musical genre that originated from Belgium Congo and French Congo during the 1930s and early 1940s, and which has gained popularity throughout Africa.

⁴⁷ When I went to video record Mike Rua's one-man guitar *mũgithi* performance in Club Comfy, Mike Rua had Kanda Kid start the performance with his dancing onstage to the lingala music that a fellow performer called Kariuki was performing. Kariuki was singing as Mike Rua played the guitar with the accompaniment of the drum.

until later in the evening when we, the audience, are ready for the heavy music
(Interview on 18th July, 2009).

Mr Mugambi mentions steady in reference to the constant rhythm that is found in the music. The main note within the music is the dotted quaver and the dotted quaver rest.

Dotted quaver-  or the dotted quaver rest  which is in essence a quaver-
quaver followed by a semi quaver- 

This music is meant to be slow and entertaining as it builds to *mwomboko* music. As people become more relaxed, more and more people head on to the dance as shall be seen on the video.

4.3 Mwomboko Section

The *mwomboko* section is at the middle of the *mũgithi* performance as can be seen in illustration 4.1. There are three features within the *mwomboko* section that enable social cohesion and the reassertion of identity.

Illustration 4.4: Features within *Mugithi's Mwomboko* Section



There is no particular order in which these features are performed. However *irua* tends to feature at the end of *mwomboko* before the performer starts conversing with the audience. The *gĩcandi* lyrics and the voice and guitar call and response work together through different ways. They will therefore be discussed as separate features. Five songs performed by both

Joseph Kamaru and Mike Rua shall be used to create a better understanding on the roles of these features. They are:

1. *Twathiaga Tukenete* – This is a song performed during colonialism. It was adapted and performed by Joseph Kamaru in the 1970s and Mike Rua as from the 1990s
2. *Mboco Īrĩ Mbũca* – This is a song that was adapted by Joseph Kamaru in the late 1960s and is being performed by many present *mũgithi* performers like Mike Rua only in Joseph Kamaru’s adapted form.
3. *Kĩbata Kia Matuko Maya* – Joseph Kamaru composed the lyrics to this song in the early 1970s using *mwomboko*’s sense of rhythm. Mike Rua has adapted this song into his performances.
4. *Cheni nĩ Cheni* – Cheni ni Cheni is an adaptation from a *mwomboko* song performed by both Joseph Kamaru in the late 1960s and in the late 1990s by Mike Rua.
5. *Ngahikania Nenda* – This is Mike Rua’s adaptation of a song by the same title by Joseph Kamaru.

The full transcriptions of these songs can be found in appendix I.

4.3.1 Gicandi Lyrics

Mwomboko would not be such a powerful tool for the performers if the songs were not inspirational and encouraging. *Gĩcandĩ* is based on use of metaphor to create poetry when singing and through this poetry, the lyrics are meant to invoke a feeling of belonging within the audience and are meant to encourage self reflection. Most of the songs performed by Mike Rua were also performed by Joseph Kamaru. Whereas Kamaru performed these songs in the 1970s and in a band, Rua performed them in the 1990s and still performs them in the 21st Century but he is the singer and guitarist and uses the assistance of a drummer. The song “*Twathiaga Tukenete*” as can be seen in the video at 00:08:53, is used as an inspirational song. The lyrics discuss how the Agĩkũyũ people would go happily and come back happily from fighting the colonialists. This song serves as a reminder on what the Agĩkũyũ went through in the past. From this reminder the people are shown that there is no problem that lasts forever as seen in the last line of verse 2.

Illustration 4.5: Lyrics of *Twathiaga Tukenete*⁴⁸ Verse 1 and 2

Verse 1

<i>Twathiaga tūkenete</i>	<i>We would go happy</i>
<i>Tūgashoka tūkenete</i>	<i>And come back happy</i>
<i>Rūgendo rwitū</i>	<i>Our journey</i>
<i>Rūrarī rwea</i>	<i>Was very good</i>
<i>Tūgithi na tūgīcoka</i>	<i>We went and we came back</i>

Verse 2

<i>Nithwamīrīrie mathīna</i>	<i>We have gone through problems</i>
<i>Ona menya maro mīngī</i>	<i>Plus known a lot of fights</i>
<i>Ndagotiga aī</i>	<i>I leave you with this</i>
<i>Tutingīmaka</i>	<i>Why should we worry</i>
<i>Ngutire woire gutuire</i>	<i>There is no one who will torment you forever</i>

Mike Rua uses metaphors to create humour in the music. In ‘*Twathiaga Tukenete*’ verse four is metaphorically discussing how the current President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki⁴⁹ representing the *githeri*⁵⁰, has been accepted by all the Agīkūyū who come from both the wind ward side and the lee ward side of Mount Kenya (representing two guards). The drum⁵¹ which is usually big represents the post he now holds and the people have been left on the hill waiting for him to lead them to a better country with a better economy and a better life in general.

Illustration 4.6: Lyrics to *Twathiaga Tukenete* Verse 3

Verse 3

<i>Githeri gia rokotenī</i>	<i>githeri from Rokotenī</i>
<i>Kia rugetuo na duramu</i>	<i>has been cooked with a drum</i>
<i>Eeh na nyūgū īgīrī</i>	<i>ehh with two clay guards</i>
<i>Cia ūgīkūyū</i>	<i>from the Agīkūyū</i>
<i>Ītūgatīgītuo marīgū</i>	<i>which have been left up the hill</i>

⁴⁸ See full transcription in Appendix I

⁴⁹ He is the third president of Kenya currently in his second term in office from 2002. He comes from the Agīkūyū community.

⁵⁰ A staple food of the Agīkūyū people consisting of maize, beans and potatoes.

⁵¹ This is a cylindrical container made of steel generally used for transporting dangerous material like acid. It is clean it then use it for cooking for large crowds of people for something major like a party.

'*Twathiaga Tukenete*' discusses group issues. The singer works at creating group unity by the use of "we" in reference to the Agĩkũyũ people and the use of "you" as a group. However not all the songs are meant to create group unity. '*Mboco Īrĩ Mbũca*' is a song dedicated to individuals. The lyrics center on a person's problems. This song allows the audience to reflect on their own problems as individuals and see that problems come and go but they never really go away so one must learn to make the best with what they have.

Illustration4.7: Lyrics to *Mboco Īrĩ Mbũca*⁵² Verse 1 to 3

Verse 1

*Ona ngiũkera ũtuko
Ndigashererwo ni wira
Ndaririkana gethomo giakwa
Ndathomagira kũndũ
Ndikaga ciũndũ ciũru
Ndaititwo ta ngobo wa mũcii ũcio*

*as I woke up in the night
so I'm not late for work
I remembered what I learned
I used to read from a place
I used to do bad things
I was treated like a dog in that family*

Chorus

*Ndahiagwo mboco iri mbũca
Riria ciana ciao iraria matumbi X2*

*I was given beans with weevils
while their children ate eggs*

Verse 2

*Ndaokeraga ta tha ikũmi

Ngatwiiri ngombe mambembe
Na mbere ya ũcio ngaruga ũshũrũ
Na ngakamanga rani inya cia iria
Umuthenya ndware ngithii githomo*

*I would wake up at around four (in the morning)
so I could harvest maize for the cows
and before that I would cook porridge
and I would milk four sheep for milk
that I would take as I went to school*

Chorus

*Ndahiagwo mboco iri mbuca
Riria ciana ciao iraria matũmbi X2*

*I was given beans with weevils
while their children ate eggs*

Verse 3

*Ohh wainĩ ngiuma cukuru
Wera nĩ mugae
Wirirũo ũihurie itagi rĩrĩ maĩ
Nũ gatege hũkori kahawainĩ
Na ndukariganĩrwũ nĩ miriũ
food*

*in the evening as I left school
work is already broken down for me
as I am told to fill the tank with water
and work in the café
as well as not forgetting not make the*

⁵² See full transcription in Appendix I

With the fourth verse of this song the singer allows the audience to see what he has chosen to do to empower himself rather than be unhappy with what “happened to him in the that house.”

Illustration 4.8: Verse 4 to Mboco Īrī Mbūca

<i>Ngai niateithiaga ciana</i>	<i>God helps children</i>
<i>Īrīa cīoreriaga thina</i>	<i>Who have problems</i>
<i>No cū ūhetūkaga wega kirathinĩ</i>	<i>And those who perform well in class (learn from life)</i>
<i>No kiungu kiuya ngita</i>	<i>That's why I pick the guitar</i>
<i>Nga mehinya na kīu</i>	<i>And play it with power</i>
<i>Ndaririkana thīna wa mucī ucō</i>	<i>As I remember the problems I had in that house</i>

The *gĩcandi* lyrics also chastise people from behaviour that is deemed inappropriate such as girls going to clubs most nights instead of being at home. The club becomes the platform where the performer feels he can reach young girls who are supposed to be at home rather than at the clubs. By his performance of this song, he shows his disapproval of such behaviour. An example of such a song is ‘*Kibata Kia Matuko Maya*’.

Illustration 4.9: *Kibata Kia Matuko Maya*⁵³

<i>Kibata kīa matuko maya</i>	<i>The important things nowadays</i>
<i>Ni twistiti na rumba ca</i>	<i>are dancing to twist and rumba</i>
<i>Ado oria aitũ mainaga</i>	<i>All out people are dancing</i>
<i>Twistiti na rumba ca</i>	<i>twist⁵⁴ and rumba⁵⁵</i>
<i>Tũiritu twa matuko maya</i>	<i>The girls of today</i>
<i>Gũtire oria ūkomaga kwa nyina</i>	<i>None of them sleep at home</i>
<i>Kĩrĩrĩ kīao ni ūrafĩnĩ</i>	<i>their favourite thing is going to clubs</i>
<i>Na twistiti na rumba ca</i>	<i>For twist and rumba</i>
<i>Nao anake aria twenao</i>	<i>And the boys that we have</i>
<i>Gũtire ūri rūhiũ rwa njora</i>	<i>None of them have a sword</i>
<i>Rũhiũ rwa njora no thifoti</i>	<i>To then swords are just reports</i>
<i>Na twistiti na rumba ca</i>	<i>And twist and rumba</i>

⁵³ See full transcription in Appendix I

⁵⁴ Twist is a dancing style that was favourable in Kenya in the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s. The main movement of the dance is the swinging from side to side with the arm lifted to the chest area.

⁵⁵ This is a dance that was loved in the 1960s and the 1970s. The dance involved moving from side to side with arms gently swinging side to side rhythmically with the dance steps.

4.3.2 Voice and Guitar Relationship

Mwomboko within *mũgithi* has an interesting guitar and voice relationship. In each song that is performed Mike Rua not only uses the guitar for harmonic accompaniment but he also uses it to emphasize particular issues that he wishes to stress on and as an imitation of the percussive instrument. In each song he uses a different technique of playing the guitar as well as singing in order to express the proper emotion to each song. For example in the song “Mboco Iri Mboca” which is a sad song discussing how a man has been mistreated by the family he is living with, Mike Rua employs the use of imitation to create emphasis on the particular words of the song which serve as punch lines.

Illustration 4.10: Transcription of *Mboco Iri Mbūca* adapted by Mike Rua⁵⁶

Mboco Iri Mbuca

Performed by Mike Rua

C

Tenor

On - a re - jo - ke - ra u - tu - ku ndi - ga -

Acoustic Guitar

F C G

4

T

ce - re - rwo ri wi - ra nda - ri - ri - ka - ra gi - tho - mo - gia - kwa. Nh - tho -

Ac. Gtr.

C F G

7

T

ma - gi - ra ku - ndu, ndi - ka ga ci - cu rjo - ru Nh - tve - tuo - ta re - bo wa mu - ci -

Ac. Gtr.

C F C

10

T

u - cio. Nh - he - a - gao mbo - co i - ri mbu - ca ri - ra

Ac. Gtr.

⁵⁶ See full transcription in Appendix I

13 G C F

T

ch-ra ci-o ra-ra ma-tu-mbi Nha-he-a-gwo mbo-co i-ri mbu-

Ac.Gtr.

16 C G C

T

ca ri-ra ch-ra ch-o ra-ra ma-tu-mbi

Ac.Gtr.

As can be seen above with the guitar notes marked with the symbol \longleftrightarrow , the guitar notes follow the same rhythmic if not melodic pattern of the voice. This mimicry is meant to draw the attention of the audience to these parts. The first symbol is on the words “remembered what I had learned”, the second symbol is on “in that family” and the two last ones which fall on similar words are “eggs”. As can be seen in illustration 4.7 and in the video at 00:11:15, all these words punctuate the end of the sentences. This would then mean that Rua wants the audience to pay attention to the words at the end of each sentence.

Another technique Mike Rua uses to get the audience to sing along with him is through repetition. The use of repetition works in many ways. In the song “*Twathiaga Tukenete*” he repeats the last three line of each verse then has the guitar play mimic the repeated lines.

Illustration 4.11: Transcription of *Twathiaga Tukenete* performed by Mike Rua⁵⁷

Twathiaga Tuk enete

Performed by Mike Rua

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a Tenor (T) and Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.) part. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4.

System 1:

- Chords:** C
- Tenor (T):** Starts with a whole rest, then sings "twa-thi-a-ga tu-le-re-te,".
- Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.):** Accompanies with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

System 2:

- Chords:** F
- Tenor (T):** Continues with "tu-ga-co-ka tu-le-re-te. Ru-ge-rdo rwi-tu ru-ra-re rwe-ga".
- Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.):** Continues the accompaniment.

System 3:

- Chords:** G, C, F
- Tenor (T):** Continues with "tu-ga-thie ra tu-ga-co-ka. Ru-ge-rdo rwi-tu ru-ra-re rwe-ga".
- Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.):** Continues the accompaniment.

⁵⁷ See full transcription in Appendix I

This can be seen as from bar 4 to the last bar of the piece as well as the video at 00:8:53. Rua repeats the last three lines of the verse again so that the audience can sing along the second time around. He then plays the guitar to allow the audience to dance to the music before introducing the second verse. This also affords them the chance to sing the three lines again if that is their wish. ‘*Cheni Ni Cheni*’ also uses repeat for the same purpose of creating an opening for the audience to sing along with the performer. This can be seen in the video as the audience sing together with the performer.

Illustration 4.12: Transcription and Lyrics of *Cheni Ni Cheni* performed by Mike Rua⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See full transcription in Appendix I

14

T

aki - e - ru - kua age - thui - kuu Gi - guo aki - i - ru - kua age - thui kuu

14

E. Gtr.

14

Cym.

B. Dm.

Verse

Ngaigua makiorania

Mūdū ena mūka

Aengaguo akiññukia agathiñ kũũ

Gaguo akiññukia agethiñ kũũ

I hear them ask themselves

someone with a wife (disciplined person)

when he decides to go home, where does he go

decides to go home, where does he go.

The guitar is playing a percussive role rather than a harmonic role when it replies to the voice as can be seen at bar 12 and bar 15. The guitar and the cymbals play two very different *karingaringa* rhythms that work well together which is seen in the video at 00:23:31.

Illustration 4.13: *Karingaringa* sound similar with the Electric Guitar of *Cheni Ni Cheni*

Accordion

Karingaringa or Triangle

Illustration 4.14: *Karingaringa* sound similar with the Cymbals of *Cheni ni Cheni*



The following two illustrations show two different *karingaringa* sounds which march with the electric guitar rhythm and the cymbals rhythm of the song *cheni ni cheni*. Rua strums the E chord of EFlat Major continuously using the following rhythm in illustration 4.12 in imitation to the accordion as can be seen in illustration 4.12. In the same two illustrations, the bass drum also rhythmically imitates the sound of the *karingaringa*. There could be other rhythms, but as shall be seen in the video, the Permanent Presidential Music Commision archives had dances that used only these two variations and those are the ones that Mike Rua employs in his music.

In all the *mwomboko* songs that Mike Rua performs he uses the chordal structure of chord I, chord IV and chord V except when imitating the *karingaringa*. They vary in the order they are used but the music begins and ends with chord I. As explained earlier, Rua's technique of playing his guitar is based on what he feels fits within his music. Also, since most of his *mwomboko* music is from Joseph Kamaru, Rua plays the music with chords that would best fit the music. My analysis of Joseph Kamaru's version of the songs does indeed follow the chord I, chord IV and chord V. For example through the entire music both Kamaru and Rua's performance of '*Mboco Īrĩ Mbũca*' the guitars play chordal accompaniment to the voice working with three chords: chord I, chord IV and chord V. Joseph Kamaru's music is in the key of E Major therefore chord I is E Major, chord IV is A Major and chord V is B major with the fifth note omitted.

Illustration 4.15: Chordal structure of Joseph Kamaru’s *Mboco Īri Mbūca*

Mboco Iri Mbuca

Joseph Kamaru

The musical score for "Mboco Iri Mbuca" by Joseph Kamaru is presented in two systems. The first system features four staves: Soprano, Tenor, Electric Guitar, and Maracas. The Soprano and Tenor parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Soprano part has a whole note chord E in the first measure and a whole note chord A in the second measure. The Tenor part has a whole note chord B in the first measure and a whole note chord A in the second measure. The Electric Guitar part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Maracas part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system features four staves: Soprano, Tenor, Electric Guitar, and Maracas. The Soprano and Tenor parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Soprano part has a whole note chord E in the first measure, a whole note chord B(omit5) in the second measure, and a whole note chord E in the third measure. The Tenor part has a whole note chord B in the first measure, a whole note chord A in the second measure, and a whole note chord E in the third measure. The Electric Guitar part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Maracas part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

In his performance of the very same song Mike Rua’s music is in the key of C Major making his chord I- C Major, chord IV- F Major and chord V- G Major.

Illustration 4.16: Chordal Structure of Mike Rua's *Mboco Īrī Mbūca*

Mboco Īrī Mbūca

Performed by Mike Rua

The musical score for "Mboco Īrī Mbūca" is presented in four systems, each featuring a Tenor (T) and Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.) part. The lyrics are written below the Tenor staff, and the guitar part is shown in a simplified chordal structure. Chord markings (C, F, G) are placed above the guitar staff to indicate the harmonic structure.

System 1: The Tenor staff begins with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics "On - a rē - ke - ra u - tu - lu ndi - ga -". The guitar part consists of a series of chords. A chord marking "C" is placed above the guitar staff.

System 2: The Tenor staff begins with the lyrics "ce - re - rwo ri wi - ra nda - ri - ri - ka - ra gi - tho - mo - gia - kwa. Nh - tho -". The guitar part continues with a series of chords. Chord markings "F", "C", and "G" are placed above the guitar staff.

System 3: The Tenor staff begins with the lyrics "ma - gi - ra lu - ndu ndi - ka ga cie - cu rgo - ru Nh - tve - tuo - ta rgo - bo wa mu - cie -". The guitar part continues with a series of chords. Chord markings "C", "F", and "G" are placed above the guitar staff.

System 4: The Tenor staff begins with the lyrics "u - cib. Nh - he - a - gwo mbo - co i - ri mbu - ca ri - ra". The guitar part continues with a series of chords. Chord markings "C", "F", and "C" are placed above the guitar staff.

When both were asked why they preferred the use of this three chords they had similar answers. Joseph Kamaru explained that he loves the way guitar accompanies the voice when using this three chords. He also states that he used them for they were the chords he was familiar with therefore could confidently use without worrying on making a mistake (Interview on the 27th of May 2010 at his home on Thika Road). Familiarity with the chords was also an answer that Mike Rua gave as to his preference to the chords.

4.3.3 Irua Lyrics

As Mike Rua selects one *mwomboko* song after another he picks the tempo of the music. He chooses faster and faster song to bring in the *irua* lyrics. Rua could start with a song like ‘*Twathiaga Tukenete*’ which he then connects to ‘*Mboco Iri Mbuka*’. He then could branch to ‘*Cheni ni Cheni*’ then finally finish with ‘*Ngahikania Nenda*’ from which he would bring in the *irua* lyrics. It is important to note that he does not have to follow this style in order for the *irua* lyrics to be introduced. The performer studies the audience to determine when *irua* is necessary. As can be seen in the video at 00:23:31 through to 00:26:17 Rua plays ‘*Cheni ni Cheni*’ then brings in a faster song, ‘*Ngahikania Nenda*’, at followed by the *irua* section. This section is meant to be comical, making the people relax from the serious lyrics that were sang before.

Illustration 4.17: *Irua* lyrics in ‘*Mboco Īrī Mbūca*’

Ngaheo nowe bakori ĩmwe
Nowe, nowe
Ndaria ohoro wa nowe
Nowe

I was given a bucketful of nakedness
nakedness, nakedness
I’m talking about nakedness
nakedness

Illustration 4.18: *Irua* Lyrics in ‘*Ngahikania Nenda*’

Rendi Muthoni
Niahetwo narua
Agũthĩĩ Nairobi
Kũrĩa Makoro

This girl called Muthoni
has been given real fast
So she can go to Nairobi
To eat rubbish

By looking at the words one can see the humor through the nonsensical words of the lyrics. In illustration 4.17 the singer discusses nakedness. The words hold no particular meaning but are meant for mere humour. Unlike the first *irua* illustration, the second personalizes on an individual or individuals in the audience. The singer talks about how Muthoni has had quick sexual intercourse in order to go to Nairobi to eat thrown fruit and vegetable peels. Muthoni is a common Agĩkũyũ name therefore it could belong to four or five female members of the audience. This words also are nonsensical and it draws the audience attention to people they may know called Muthoni and laugh at them. This could in turn draw the other patrons’ attention to the Muthonis’ in the audience which could lead to other people talking about the said Muthoni leading to interaction. Some of the audience also shouts their own nonsensical

and vulgar words. This interaction can be seen in the video at 00:25:03 at the *irua* section. This tends to lead to conversation between him and the audience.

4.4 Gospel Music

Gospel music is used within *mũgithi*'s performance style as a form of ending to the entire show. This is the point where the audience sings church songs to exalt God. They use this opportunity to ask for forgiveness for all the wrong things they did during the week and on the day of the performance. Different members of the audience shout a name of a song that they want to hear and the performer in most cases plays the music. He could stop to have a chat with the people and maybe discuss ways in which they could help fellow Agĩkũyũ in camps due to them being chased from their homes during the 2007/2008 post election violence. Money could then be given to the performer by the audience to take to these displaced people. This money is considered as offering or tithe with the main aim of helping other Agĩkũyũ people who are less fortunate. The people use this time to worship and for those who plan on not attending church, they use this opportunity to say their prayers.

4.5 Conclusion

Mike Rua has perfected the manipulation of adapted music in order to allow the audience to connect with it. He works under the format of popular music as a form of introduction to his *mũgithi* performance. He then goes to *mwomboko* music where he educates the audience and inspires them to be better people as individuals and as a community. He then heads on to gospel music which is a summary of his performance through worship and prayer.

Mike Rua creates a relationship with his audience. Through his *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* he allows the audience to be part of the performance. He allows them to interact with him which leads to him knowing what they want to listen to and the best way to deliver it to them. For him *mũgithi* is more than just a performance but is a space where he can speak to the Agĩkũyũ, reminding them of who they are through songs that talk about the Agĩkũyũ tradition, through songs that inspire individuals to be great and songs that reprimand people against unacceptable behaviour. He does this with the use of *gĩcandi* lyrics which, as shall be seen in chapter five, the audience has come to know and love. He also makes the guitar work hand in hand with the voice in order to express whatever emotion is needed in the voice.

Finally he brings in *irua* lyrics to make his audience relax and laugh in order bring his *mwomboko* session to a close. Through all this Mike Rua has established *mwomboko* as a great form of entertainment, education, inspiration and as a source of motivation for the Agĩkũyũ people within the *mũgithi* performance setting.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH PERFORMANCE

Change can affect development of music and Giddens and Duneier (2000) theory of Societal Change best expresses this idea. With this theory they believe that cultural influences clearly play an important part in social change. For example, when applied to this study, the transformation of the waltz into *mwomboko* for the Agĩkũyũ and the development of *mwomboko* into something the people could relate to and see as important had major effects on what the people thought about the music, their attitudes to legitimacy and authority in relation to the music, therefore influencing and retaining the social structures, systems and values of the community. *Mwomboko* within *mũgithi* has managed to retain these social structures, systems and values of the community through the way the music is performed. Mike Rua states how people from different classes of life; young or old, rich or poor respond well to *mwomboko* music and this makes them comfortable enough to direct the performer to perform songs that work around a particular topic that is favorable to them. This helps the audience to enjoy the performance more because they get to hear music that changed to fit their mood as per their requests thus allowing them to relate to the music.

I have studied songs that have been adapted and performed by Joseph Kamaru and now presently adapted and performed by Mike Rua. These songs discuss the problems the Agĩkũyũ have faced, songs that speak about how the Agĩkũyũ should take pride in who they are and where they come from. These are songs that speak about how important the Agĩkũyũ are as individuals and as a community and finally songs that discuss how the Agĩkũyũ should work and talk with pride. Examples of such songs are *Twathiaga Tukenete* and *Mboco Iri Mboca* which can be found in appendix I. Through my observations, the music works at uplifting the spirits of the audience on an individual and group basis. By this I mean that the entire performance of *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* is organized in such a way that an individual carrying feelings of social exclusion, because he/she comes from the Agĩkũyũ community, can come together with other people and participate in the singing and dancing of *mwomboko*. At the end of the night the individual has socialized with other Agĩkũyũ and is feeling much better as an individual through sharing with other Agĩkũyũ. This reaction is triggered by the *mũgithi* performance as can be observed in the video at the end of the *mwomboko* section as from 00:25:32 to 00:26:17.

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I have studied songs that have been adapted and performed by Joseph Kamaru and now presently adapted and performed by Mike Rua. These songs discuss the problems the Agĩkũyũ have faced, songs that speak about how the Agĩkũyũ should take pride in who they are and where they come from. These are songs that speak about how important the Agĩkũyũ are as individuals and as a community and finally songs that discuss how the Agĩkũyũ should work and talk with pride. Examples of such songs are *Twathiaga Tukenete* and *Mboco Iri Mboca* which can be found in appendix I. Through my observations, the music works at uplifting the spirits of the audience on an individual and group basis. By this I mean that the entire performance of *mwomboko* within *mũgithi* is organized in such a way that an individual carrying feelings of social exclusion, because he/she comes from the Agĩkũyũ community, can come together with other people and participate in the singing and dancing of *mwomboko*. At the end of the night the individual has socialized with other Agĩkũyũ and is feeling much better as an individual through sharing with other Agĩkũyũ. This reaction is triggered by the *mũgithi* performance as can be observed in the video at the end of the *mwomboko* section as from 00:25:32 to 00:26:17.

5.1 Mwomboko Music and Social Cohesion

In the past *mūgithi* was performed to bring the Agĩkũyũ community together in order to fight and resist the colonialists and through this a sense of identity was established. In present time *mwomboko* is used for social cohesion but in the face of social exclusion. In the 1930s to the 1960s the *mwomboko* lyrics carried metaphorical meaning to express feelings of discontentment with the colonialists. The performers choose from *mwomboko* songs with lyrics that can relate with the problems of present day while indirectly discussing political and social issues that are happening now. For example, a song like *Mboco Iri Mbuca* discussed how during the colonial period, while working for the white men the Agĩkũyũ people were treated unpleasantly.

5.1.1 Mboco Iri Mbuca

Performers like Mike Rua adapted this song from Joseph Kamaru who also learned this song when he was a young man in school. Kamaru discusses how when he was young a *mwomboko* performer came to his village to perform some of these songs. He fell in love with the music and once he started recording his music in the late 1960s he had to record *mboco ĩrĩ mbũca*.

Illustration 5.1: Lyrics to *Mboco ĩrĩ Mbũca*⁵⁹ verse 1 to 3 performed by Mike Rua

Verse 1

*Ona ngĩũkera utuko
Ndigashererwo ni wira
Ndaririkana gethomo giakwa
Ndathomagira kundu
Ndikaga ciundu ciuru
Ndaititwo tan ngobo wa mucii ucio*

*As I woke up in the night
So I'm not late for work
I remember what I learned
I used to read from a place
I used to do bad things
I was called like a dog in that family*

Chorus

*Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ*

*I was given beans with weevils
While their children ate eggs*

Verse 2

*Ndaokeraga ta tha ikũmi
Ngatwĩre ngombe mambembe
Na mbere ya ũcio ngaruga ũcũrũ*

*I would wake up around four (In the morning)
So I could harvest the maize for the cows
And before that I would cook porridge*

⁵⁹ Refer to full transcription at appendix I

*Na ngakamaga rani inya cia iria
Umuthenya ndware githiĩ githomo*

*And I would milk four sheep
That I would take as I went to school*

Chorus

*Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ*

*I was given beans with weevils
While their children ate eggs*

Verse 3

*Ohh wainĩ giuma cukuru
Wĩra ni mũgae
Wĩriruo uihĩrie itagi rĩrĩ maĩ
Nu gatege hukori kahawaini
Na ndũkariganĩrwo nĩ murĩo*

*In the evening as I left for school
Work is already broken down for me
As I am told to fill the tank with water.
And work in the café
As well as not forget to make the food*

Chorus

*Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ*

*I was given beans with weevils
While their children ate eggs*

This song expresses dissatisfaction with the colonialists as they forced the children to go to school to study. For the Agikuyu child, this was literally impossible because the same child woken up early to do household chores. In addition, this child was being underfed. This song would originally end in the third verse with the singer lamenting about ill treatment from the colonialists.

Illustration 5.2: Lyrics to *Mboco ĩrĩ Mbũca*⁶⁰ verse 4

*Ngai niatethiaga ciana
Iria cio riaga thĩna
No ciu ũtũkaga wega kirathinĩ

No kiungu kũuya ngita
Nga mehinya na kũũ
Ndaririkana thĩna wa mucĩ ũcio*

*God helps children
who have problems
and those who perform well in class (learn from
life)
that's why I pick the guitar
and play it with power
as I remember the problems I (the people) had
in that house*

Mike Rua explains why he thinks the verse was added to the song.

During the older days the sadness the lyrics invoked was necessary in making the Agikuyu people want to fight for their land. As long as they understood how bad they were being treated by the colonialists, the spirit to fight would be retained. When I see this song I want them to remember all the trials we as the Agikuyu have through but verse four is necessary for it shows that one can use the negative things to make you stronger, as an individual and as a community (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

⁶⁰ Refer to full transcription at appendix I

Since 1990 to the present day the song has been used to discuss how the government increases taxes while salaries remain the same if not decrease. When Mike Rua sings this song he hopes the lyrics make the people think of loved ones lost and left homeless during the Molo clashes⁶¹ during President Daniel Moi's regime from 1978 to 2002 and the 2007 Post Election Violence. It is all in the hope of showing this to the audience that it can be anyone of them in that situation and thus there should be solidarity amongst them. In verse four the performer attempts to show the audience that through his performances not only does the music serve at uplifting the audience's spirits but it also works at empowering him. The idea is that God will always help those who help themselves therefore the people should learn from the problems they experience in life and work hard at whatever they do in order for God to help them.

The thing that makes *mwomboko*'s style of performance within *mũgithi* distinctive is the way the performer creates an interesting technique of bringing out the intensity of the songs he sings while at the same time creatively dialoguing with the audience or makes them laugh by changing some of the words within the song to create a comical effect in order to break tension that comes from singing these *mwomboko* songs.

In order for the people to relate to the lyrics the performers ensure that the audience can sing along with them. If the guitarist figures out as he sings the song that the audience does not know the song, he makes sure that he repeats the words of each verse over and over until the audience pick up the words of the song. He also employs the technique of keeping quiet towards the end of a verse or chorus in order to enable the audience to hear their own voices. This gives them ownership to the song. This he does with the audience continuously getting louder and louder as they sing along. This can be observed in the video at 00:24:50 to 00:26:16. When he is sure that they have the words he lets the guitar play the same chord to the song as he discusses the song with them. At this point the people say whether they agree or disagree with what he has said and a discussion ensues between him and the audience. *Irua* lyrics are mainly added at the end of the song before the discussion between the audience and the performer.

⁶¹ Molo is a town in the Rift Valley Province. Back in the 1990s the town was predominantly populated by the Agikuyu with a few people from the Kalenjin community. The Kalenjin, before colonialism were the main settlers in Molo until it was taken over by the colonialists as the White Highlands. Later under the Presidency of Jomo Kenyatta the land was mainly allocated to then purchased by the Agikuyu. this did not sit well with the Kalenjins who believed they should have been given back what they believed was their land.

Illustration 5.3: Lyrics to the *Irua* Section of *Mboco Īrī Mbūca*⁶²

<i>Ngaheo nowe bakori imwe</i>	<i>I was given a bucketful of nakedness</i>
<i>Nowe, nowe, ndaria ohoro wa nowe</i>	<i>nakedness, nakedness</i>
<i>Ndaria ohoro wa nowe</i>	<i>I'm talking about nakedness</i>
<i>Nowe</i>	<i>nakedness</i>

As can be seen from the illustration above the words from the song are nonsensical. This has the audience laughing which lightens the mood at the club. This also signifies the end to that song and the start of another. Since the music is in strophic form it guarantees the audience have only to remember the words as the tune remains the same in the entire song.

5.1.2 Cheni Ni Cheni

This is one of the many favorite *mwomboko* songs that performers like Mike Rua, and Salim 'Junior' have had the honour to perform during their *mūgithi* shows. I shall be looking at Mike Rua's version of the song through its live performance.

Illustration 5.4: Lyrics to *Cheni Ni Cheni* performed by Mike Rua at Remenis Club

Chorus

<i>Cheni ni cheni</i>	<i>Urgently, Urgently</i>
<i>Kwa wanjiru</i>	<i>To Wanjiru's place</i>
<i>Niguthie uriro kamone</i>	<i>I must go and see the family</i>

Verse

<i>Mwomboko tū hinya</i>	<i>mwomboko is strength</i>
<i>Mwomboko tū hinya</i>	<i>mwomboko is strength</i>
<i>Nowatuūkinia</i>	<i>it has made us reach (where we are)</i>
<i>Wega tū hinya</i>	<i>well and with strength</i>

<i>Ngaigua mokiorania</i>	<i>I hear them ask themselves</i>
<i>Mūdū ena mūka</i>	<i>someone with a wife</i>
<i>Aengaguo akiinūkia agathiĩ kūũ</i>	<i>when he decides to go home, where does he go?</i>
<i>Gaguo akienūkia agethiĩ kūũ</i>	<i>decides to go home, where does he go?</i>

<i>Naniĩ dīkamīra</i>	<i>and I tell them</i>
<i>Mudu ena mūka</i>	<i>someone with a wife</i>
<i>Wega wake</i>	<i>the good thing about him is</i>
<i>Nukuria akihūtuo na</i>	<i>he eat when he is hungry</i>
<i>Dare mūshene ta ariaage</i>	<i>and he doesn't gossip like other men</i>

⁶² Refer to full transcription at appendix I

The first section of verse one refers to *mwomboko* as a source of strength. It also talks about how *mwomboko* has brought the Agikuyu people forward through many generations retaining the strength in us through its performance. The second verse usually has the audience singing along with performer as they ask him where a person with a wife goes. Here they refer to how the world today has very few people with good conduct. A married man is expected to live as a perfect example to other men. The performer answers them, informing them that this person does not have to worry about that because everyone accepts this person because he does not follow the ways of the world. The guitar goes back to the lyrics of the chorus. This can be observed in the video at 00:23:31.

The singer repeats the verses over and over until he makes sure that almost everyone in the audience can sing along with him. This creates a feeling of association with the song allowing the audience to relate with the music at a personal level.

The instruments in the performance of this song are the guitar and the drum set. This can be seen in illustration 4.12 and in appendix I for the full transcription, the performer does not play the guitar as he sings to the song but as he is about to finish the words he then brings in the guitar to create emphasis on the last words. Mike Rua informed me after his show why he did this.

I actually stop playing the guitar on purpose. I usually want this song to really imitate mwomboko's style of performance plus it is one of the songs that the patrons really enjoy so I stop playing the guitar so that they can hear themselves sing. I am sure you have seen how excited they get when they sing and dance this mwomboko song so I try not to ruin it for them (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

5.1.3 Twathiaga Tukenete

This is an old song originally performed during the colonial Mau Mau period. The melody is similar to Joseph Kamaru's version as can be seen in appendix I. The difference can be heard in the instrumentation. Joseph Kamaru uses a band while Mike Rua uses one guitar and a drummer. The lyrics have not been changed over time and can appeal to most periods in time. Joseph Kamaru performed this song as it was for the first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta informing him of the Agĩkũyũ people's trials and how they came out of it stronger than ever.

This song is always sung to uplift the audience's spirit. The lyrics of this song have powerful intonation to remind them of the struggle experienced by the Agĩkũyũ and how they have overcome this struggle. The lyrics to this song have not changed much from the colonial days. However verse 5 was added by Joseph Kamaru to show how the Agĩkũyũ have spread through every region and therefore should be proud of how well they have done in order to have managed to spread so far. This shows the audience that they as Agĩkũyũ are strong and resilient and that is something they should be proud of.

Illustration 5.5: Lyrics to the *Twathiaga Tukenete* performed by Mike Rua

Verse one

<i>Twathiaga tũkenete</i>	<i>We would go happy</i>
<i>Tũgashoka tũkenete</i>	<i>and come back happy</i>
<i>Rũgendo rwitũ</i>	<i>our journey</i>
<i>Rũrarĩ rwega</i>	<i>was very good</i>
<i>Tũgĩthĩ na tũgĩcoka</i>	<i>we went and we came back</i>

Verse two

<i>Nitwamĩrĩrie mathĩna</i>	<i>We have gone through problems</i>
<i>Ona menya maro meingĩ</i>	<i>plus known a lot of tights</i>
<i>Ndagũtiga aĩ</i>	<i>I leave you with this</i>
<i>Tutingĩmaka</i>	<i>why should we worry</i>
<i>Ngutirĩ woirĩ gutuirĩ</i>	<i>there is no one who will torment you forever</i>

Verse three

<i>Ena inyuothe aciari</i>	<i>and all of you fellow men</i>
<i>Ena inyuothe arata</i>	<i>and all of you fellow women</i>
<i>Kawĩra nokarathiĩ na mbere</i>	<i>he work is progressing</i>
<i>Gatiga coka na thutha</i>	<i>it is not regressing</i>

Verse four

<i>Gĩtheri gia rokoteni</i>	<i>Gĩtheri⁶³ from rokoteni⁶⁴</i>
<i>Kia rugetuo na duramu</i>	<i>has been cooked with a drum</i>
<i>Eeh na nyũgũ igĩrĩ</i>	<i>ehh with two clay pots</i>
<i>Cia ugĩkũyũ</i>	<i>from the Agĩkũyũ</i>
<i>Itugatigituo marigũ</i>	<i>which has been cooked with bananas</i>

Verse five

<i>Wathiĩ Mũranga tũriũkuo</i>	<i>when you go to Mũranga we are there</i>
<i>Wathiĩ Githumu tũriũkuo</i>	<i>when you go to Kisumu we are there</i>
<i>Ona Karpatojo tũriũkuo</i>	<i>even Garpatonjo we are there</i>
<i>Nyũmba ya Mũmbi</i>	<i>the Agĩkũyũ people</i>

⁶³ This is a traditional meal from the Agĩkũyũ community consisting of mainly beans and maize.

⁶⁴ It is assumed that Rokoteni is a place where the Mau Mau hid.

*Tūrī aingī mūno
Gūtīrī handū tūtārī*

*we are very many
there's no place where we cannot be found*

Verse one starts by discussing the journey the Agĩkũyũ made while the country was colonized and how they returned successfully after having achieved freedom from the colonialists. The audience usually sings this part with the performer as they swing their soda and beer bottles to show their approval to these lyrics.

In verse three the singer talks about how the work to build the Agĩkũyũ community is ongoing therefore they should play their part in its development such as helping other in need.

The entire song is in strophic form. The last three lines of each verse are repeated for emphasis and this is where the audience always sings along with the performer.

When the performer sings the repeated section he makes sure the audience can sing along with him. Mike Rua discusses how he performs this music in order for the crowds to get the message while enjoying themselves.

As the people hear verse two, Nitwamiriirie mathena (we have gone through problems) Ona menya maro meingi (plus known a lot of fights) because of the old message it carries the people really relate to the song therefore making them shout the end of the verse Tutingemaka (why should we worry) and Ngutiri woire gutuire (there is no one who will torment you forever). There is a probability that there are individuals within the crowd who feel like they have been having a hard time at work or at home. They therefore sing this section, sharing 'high fives' with other patrons, to uplift their spirits and to make them feel better (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

This verse starts conversation between patrons. In verse five the performer sings about different towns in Kenya where the Agĩkũyũ have settled. This usually is followed by the audience shouting their own where they think the community has settled. At this point the audience and the performer have a form of call and response where the performer shouts out one area and the audience shouts another area. He then finishes the last two lines of that verse of the song with the audience followed by applause from the audience.

5.1.4 Kibata Kia Matuko Maya

This song was performed after colonialism during the late 1960s. The words are originally by Joseph Kamaru set under the *mwomboko* rhythm. This song has been picked up by the 21st Century performers under the modern *mũgithi*. This serves the purpose of speaking against certain negative behaviors carried out by the youth.

Illustration 5.6: Lyrics to Kibata Kia Matuko Maya

Verse 1

*Kibata kĩa matuko maya
Ni twistiti na rumba ca
Ado oria aitũ mainaga
Twistiti na rumba ca*

*The important things nowadays
are dancing to twist and rumba
All out people are dancing
twist and rumba*

Verse 2

*Tũiritu twa matuko maya
Gũtire oria ũkomaga kwa nyina
Kĩrĩrĩ kĩa ni ũrafĩnĩ
Na twistiti na rumba ca*

*The girls of today
None of them sleep at home
their favourite thing is going to clubs
For twist and rumba*

Verse 3

*Nao anake aria twenao
Gũtire ũri rūhiũ rwa njora
Rũhiũ rwa njora no thifoti
Na twistiti na rumba ca*

*And the boys that we have
None of them have a sword
To them swords are just reports
And twist and rumba*

This song has been performed by many *mũgithi* musicians within the singer-cum-guitarist and drummer performance. Joseph Kamaru however composed the lyrics to the tune of *mwomboko* back in the 1960s. This song was composed when dances like the twist and rumba were highly favoured. From the lyrics one can deduce that the youth would go against what was expected of them in order to go out and dance the twist and rumba. The second verse shows how the girls are not sleeping at home so they may go to the clubs and twist. The third verse is metaphorical. Njenga, a *mũgithi* fan who is very familiar with this song and has requested *mũgithi* performers to play it for her during their show, states that the sword refers to the state of being decent and honest. She explains that the song tells of how young men value the wrong things. Their characters are tarnished and they make it worse by bragging on how good mannered they are (Telephone interview on the 2nd of November 2009).

Mike Rua states that the guitar section of this song makes the audience go wild. He loves introducing this particular guitar rhythm when he feels he is losing the audience's attention.

Just by playing the introduction motif, the crowd goes wild dancing and singing along with him as he performs this song (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende). Another song that has the same effect on the audience is *Ngahikania Nenda*.

5.1.5 Ngahikania Nenda

As can be seen in the video at 00:25:23 this song works in total opposition to all the rest. Unlike the other songs that try to make the audience identify with the lyrics, this song's main purpose is to create comic relief and scorn those who refuse to respect Agĩkũyũ tradition. The words of the song cover a situation that is rarely found among the Agĩkũyũ. Mike Rua enjoys performing this as his last *mũgithi* song because from its fast rhythm it slowly signifies the end of *mwomboko*.

Illustration 5.7: Lyrics to *Ngahikania Nenda*

Verse one

*Nake Akimira
Diwa Maria
Ngamoya Rumia
Niguo ruigane*

*And he told them
I belong to Maria
I will pick a hundred of them
so that they can fit*

Chorus

*Nii ngarua nenda
Hatania kuu
Ngahikania nenda
Murania kuu
No ngarithio nenda
Mucuthe ni wakwa*

*I will get circumcised when I want
where shall you take me
I will marry when I want
where shall you take me
My dowry shall be paid when I want
it is my decision*

Verse one talks about a man who is not worried about getting married. There seems to be pressure from family or friends that he should look for a partner but he simply tells them that he belongs to Maria, his mother. It is stated in such a way to show that Maria is a very wealthy lady therefore when the need arises he will simply pick a hundred goats⁶⁵ from her and pay the dowry.

It is understood among the Agĩkũyũ that if a young man wants to be considered a man, then he must be circumcised⁶⁶. Agĩkũyũ men and women also understand that marriage is a

⁶⁵ The standard dowry price of a Agĩkũyũ girl is a hundred goats.

⁶⁶ An Agĩkũyũ boy is expected to get circumcised when they are 14 years old because that is the age in which most boys finish primary school and that is when puberty begins. They also time the circumcision for the end of

community affair rather than an individual affair. Therefore discussions on the dowry are held by clan members rather than by a single person⁶⁷. The youth however understand that this is the Agĩkũyũ way. This song ridicules those who feel they cannot conform to the Agĩkũyũ traditions of circumcision, marriage and dowry payments. In the video at 00:25:19 which is towards the end of the chorus Rua cuts of the instruments and his voice in order for the audience to insert lyrics of their choice. They become the performers and they seem to enjoy that. To the listener it sounds like a group of people shouting all at once but everyone seems to be enjoying the song. As is expected, everyone in the audience finishes the last line together. This is usually followed by cheers from the audience and requests for the song to be repeated again.

5.2 Conclusion

The Agĩkũyũ people in Nairobi come from different social backgrounds. Some are rich. Others are from the middle class and some are poor. My theoretical framework works under the notion that music can create group solidarity. One of the Major theorists, Kidula (1998: 10) believes that music foreign to a group of people, once adapted and the musical ideas accommodated, can be said to belong to that community. *Mwomboko* which was taken from the waltz, adapted and used as a voice for the Agĩkũyũ people to express their feelings of discontentment became music that was loved and accepted as Agĩkũyũ within *mũgithi* performance setting. In any normal setting, people from different social backgrounds would not find themselves interacting with one another unless they are in the same family or clan and it would probably take a social gathering to bring them together. The one-man guitar *mũgithi* performance style manages to bring these people together within one space. *Mwomboko* music within *mũgithi* performance setting brings out the similarities between the Agĩkũyũ people. For example, like in the performance of the chorus of *Ngahikania Nenda*, people are reminded of the importance of customs and traditions and their value to the Agĩkũyũ community. Now people of different generations can come together in one setting, and other than the difference in appearance there is no difference between them as they enjoy

the year when school is closed because that will give the boy some time to heal from the incision before heading off to the next level of education which is Secondary School.

⁶⁷ In most Agĩkũyũ marriages the girl dowry is not paid in one installment. There is the first installment when the girl is about to get married. This could be a third of the initial bride price. The other payments are expected sometime during the marriage in order to ensure that the two families get to meet over the years.

their music. This therefore creates an avenue to see themselves as one community as opposed to the different classes that they come from. In support of this, Gachukia states that with *mũgithi* people of different generations can come together in one setting and other than the dissimilarity in appearance there is no difference between them as they enjoy their music. (Interview on the 12th of May 2010, Riara School on Riara Road) Basically *mwomboko* through *mũgithi* breaks the social barriers that dictate the difference between the people. Mugambi, one of the people in the audience that I interviewed started,

I prefer live performance over recorded ones because when the musician goes into mwomboko songs I feel like the music is talking to me. I also get an avenue to sing back lamenting issues I have watch him reply to me as he sings. The other great thing is at this point someone else could have been having a problem just like mine. Through hearing me lament about it we strike up a conversation as it might just happen that a friendship is created through this. I have made friends through such instances and we still find ourselves going to watch the one-man guitar performances together (Interview on the 17th of July 2009, Nairobi West Estate, Nairobi West).

He goes on to discuss how later on when he meets up with these people is when he discovers what class they form but at that point it does not matter because a friendship has already been established. Mahinda, an avid *mũgithi* fan, states other ways in which friendship within *mũgithi* can be made.

The evening would begin with a group of individuals meeting up in the club usually to eat some meat and have a few drinks usually before the performance begins. When it starts most of the people are mainly sat down interacting in their small groups. As the night progresses solitary dancing begins then followed by the individuals in the small groups standing to dance together. This goes on for a while then the small groups start to merge to form larger groups and depending on the song sometimes they all merge into one big group but only for a short while. When people start to get tired they go back to their seats but the interaction with the stranger you met on the dance floor never stops as long as they are within hearing distance (Interview done on the 22nd of April 2010, Architecture Office in University of KwaZulu-Natal).

Mahinda is currently in South Africa but he states how when he is in Kenya he never misses a performance for through the arrangement of *mũgithi*, from the light good natured songs to the more serious and controversial songs, as the night proceeds, leave him with a sense of satisfaction.

There is also the practice of the performer trying to have a standard venue for his performance. This creates a familiarity between the audience and the performer. Members of

the audience become so comfortable with him that they can confidently voice their opinions while he is performing and he gets to give his opinion back. A form of conversation is created between the audience and the performer allowing the people to share as one group and also allowing individuals to release some of their frustrations without fear of being judged by the performer and by the rest of the audience. This familiarity allows the performer to know exactly what the people want to hear and what time to play it. Mike Rua states how this happens.

I usually start with their kind of music so that they feel that they have been catered for but when I get to this old music they actually seem to enjoy it. Because I want to make sure everyone is enjoying the music I will usually play one of their popular songs in between this music I will hear one of them shout that I should go back to what I was playing before (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

The people end up being the ones demanding that the musician continues playing the *mwomboko* songs. At this point *mwomboko* music ends up being the music that invokes them to open up to one another and also allows the performer to discuss issues that the audience earlier on where not ready for. He basically picks the cue from the people that the time is right for *mwomboko* music.

Mwomboko creates an avenue for many things and sometimes criticism is one of them. The performer every now and then adds a few comical lyrics or sometimes sings things that are not true in order to check whether the audience is listening. Ironically, at all times when this has happened the audience are ready to correct him. The one-man guitarist enjoys having people sing back to him because through this correction the rest of the audience creates a discussion around this. Mike Rua gives his opinion on this issue.

When one adds something extra to the music it allows the audience to feel like they are part of it. The audience feels like they are adding something special to the music. When we as performers include new lyrics to the music we allow the performer and them as the audience. For example I could sing something that the audience does not agree with and someone from the audience in a drunken stupor calls me a does because he is not happy with what I have said. He is not being serious when he calls me this therefore I will have no hard feelings as I make them correction. This will all be done using funny lyrics in order to continue the fun and musical conversation that I am having with the audience. (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende.)

Salim 'Junior' however gives a different view about this when he talk about how he personally uses this form of communication to create a form of awareness in people. He talks about how some people will go to his performances looking rather down from work. Other seem less aware of what is happening in the country. He says that he tries to sing songs that are informative therefore leading the people to a form of call and response allowing him and the audience to communicate and discuss things that they feel have either put them down or need to change. He discusses how he also tries to sing the old songs that talk about how they as Agĩkũyũ people should be proud of who they are and where they have from (Interview on the 19th of July 2009, Impala Hotel at Parklands). How they should not let people put them down because they are a strong community. *Mwomboko* ends up being a form of way to uplift the people spirits and a way for the audience to enjoy themselves as they rediscover what makes them important.

Mwomboko is also used as a form of education for the people. This message varies from discussions on social behaviors that are unacceptable to reminding people about atrocities that have been done to the Agĩkũyũ and how the people in the audience can help. Issues of social behaviors are usually directed at the youth who are working with modern ideologies as opposed to conforming to traditional thoughts and ways of living⁶⁸. For example some of the things the performers sing about discuss how one should behave if he considers himself a man. Performers like Mike Rua and Salim 'Mighty' usually aim these songs at the youth who they believe have a lot to learn in life. They will sing songs that talk about how men in the old days would never have thought of burning cars or throwing stones. "I will basically have added a few lyrics in appropriate songs that will allow the message to be received without altering the song. It is fun to watch the expression of the youth as they point at each other or laugh at one another. From this I see that they hear and understand what I am saying." (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende) The performers usually hope that through such interactions between the youth, a discussion is sparked among themselves and between the elders and them in order to create an open forum that leads to a better community that understands the values of the *Agikuyu* people. With regards to the aspect of

⁶⁸ There are things that the youth do that were not tolerated in the traditional setting. Things such as illegitimate children, sex out wedlock, uncircumcised men sitting together with circumcised men, the youth and elders drinking together, etc

mwomboko making people aware of what is happening around them, Salim ‘Mighty’ has this to say.

The adaptation of mwomboko songs reminds the audience of their homes in the rural areas and of what is happening there. It maybe reminds them of famine that is being experienced or people who have been left homeless due to the 2007 Elections Violence. They could be upset because of what they remember but they love how the music makes them reminisce about the people back home. But all this depends on how each individual understands the music. There are people who would hear particular words and remember a fight they witnessed and this makes them cry while there are other who would hear the same song and remember how they are being harassed at work and this makes them sad because they miss their parent or grandparents. As I said, it all depends on how one chooses to interpret the song.

The most interesting thing is when I see people who have clearly never met before become friends due to their sharing a certain experience. People start discussing the problems they are encountering amongst themselves and by the end of the performance I feel quite fulfilled in that my performance allowed people so vent out their frustrations therefore going home much happier than they came (Interview on the 2nd of July 2009, Impala Hotel at Parklands).

Mike Rua adds to this by explaining how the audience through *mwomboko* songs also remembers transgressions that have been inflicted on them or to other people that they know. This brings about many different emotions in people. For example he says how he could be singing a song that talks about how brothers have been fighting for land and this song reminds some of the audience of things that have happened to them or if not, their neighbours. He states how the audience might at this point recall a situation where someone got killed in their neighborhood because of land. He also discusses how when one comes for the *mũgithi* performance they will hear him talking about how people are dying from hunger or how the government does not seem to be doing anything to help. There will be people crying because they are remembering the family they have lost during the violence or are crying out anger at the government’s neglect. The stage then becomes an avenue for information.

The people also help other through the attendance of these performances. Mike Rua tells of an incident where during his Saturday performances he informed the audience of his attending a fund raising in his church on Sunday the following day for the Internally

Displaced Persons (IDP)⁶⁹ and the audience gave him money to take the fundraising. “As funny as this may sound, the people gave me money for the fundraising. I said it as a joke but the following day I gave Kenyan shillings 53,000 to the church from my patrons. It was quite impressive (Interview on the 23rd of June 2009, Langata Estate in Otiende).

Waithera’s personal view on why she attends the *mũgithi* performance style is because she feels it is good for relaxation after a stressful day at work or when one want to get together with friends while listening to renditions and adaptations of old music that reminds her of the past. “When I leave a *mũgithi* performance I feel better about myself as a person and as an Agikuyu because of the lyrics that discuss how we as the House of *Mumbi*⁷⁰ are a great people because of the struggle we have gone through. It also makes me want to call my grandmother because I feel like the music sends me back to her. The old music reminds me of sounds she used to sing to me and stories she told me of how she is a strong woman because of the suffering she endured during the colonial period” (Interview on the 5th of July 2009, Senate Estate at Kinoo). All of my other audience share these sentiments. They all seem to feel that the one-man guitar has been a source of strength for them and has given them an avenue where they end up meeting new people, sharing with others their problem and a place where they can have a heart to heart with the performer. They also seem to share the feeling that there is a reaction of contentment after attending the *mugithi* performance and “nothing can ever stop me attending this music. This is because to feel free to mingle and laugh with people I have never met and because I know we share the same ideals and that *mũgithi* appeals to us. It is such a wonderful feeling that I wish the rest of the Kenyan communities could share could share it with us” (Interview done on the 16th July 2009, Kerarapon at Karen). I believe that *mũgithi* does create an avenue where the people feel they can express themselves as they share with other people within the given space of the performance.

The singer-cum-guitarist seems to look at his performance as a way to give the people something important in terms of, information, enjoyment, space to vent out their frustration, place for reprieve against the pressure of life and a place where they can look into what

⁶⁹ These are the people who were left homeless after they were chased away from their homes or their houses were burned during the 200 Post Election Violence.

⁷⁰ This is the other name used in songs and poems for the Agikuyu people, Mumbi being the mythical mother of the community.

makes them who they are as they meet new acquaintances. Kidula says, “it is not so much what a teacher achieves in the class using a set syllabus, but rather than how the students respond to the knowledge. Music is valued the most from its end product creatively. It is those creative composers and performers who bring music to life and sharpen the public’s perception.” (1997:237) Through the creative adaptation of *mwomboko* songs the performers have enabled the people to achieve empowerment and have reaffirmed the Agĩkũyũ identity. Their creativity has reintroduced something that might have faded into the past and given it a new identity that is loved and valued by their audience.

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APPENDIX I

TRANSCRIPTIONS

Irua Song

Performed by Joseph Kamaru

Tenor



De-ha - ga u-guo, de - ha-ga u - guo. Ma-ga - the - ka ma -

T



ka - ga-ra - ga-ra. Wh - i wa - du-gu - hi-du kia mu - ra - i mu-tu - tu.

Lyrics

<i>Dekaga ũguo, dekaga ũguo</i>	<i>I used to do that, I used to do that</i>
<i>Magatheka, makagaragara</i>	<i>They laugh till they fall on the ground</i>
<i>Woi, wadũgũ kidũ kia Mũnai mũtutu</i>	<i>Woi, my friend Munai's thing is very sweet</i>

Kamaru's Rhythm of the Karingaringa on Guitar

[Composer]

Guitar



Twathiaga Tukenete

Joseph Kamari

♩=96

The musical score is arranged in a grand staff with six staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts: Tenor (treble clef) and Soprano (treble clef). Both start with a whole rest in the first measure. The next two staves are for electric guitars: Electric Guitar 1 (treble clef) and Electric Guitar 2 (treble clef). Electric Guitar 1 plays a melody of eighth and quarter notes. Electric Guitar 2 plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The bottom two staves are for percussion: Cymbals (treble clef) and a combined Snare/Bass Drum staff (two staves). The Cymbals play a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Snare and Bass Drums play a simple rhythmic pattern of quarter notes.

Tenor

Soprano

Electric Guitar 1

Electric Guitar 2

Cymbals

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

T
 S
 E. Gtr. 1
 E. Gtr. 2
 Cym.
 S Dr.
 B. Dr.

The musical score is written for a band. The vocal parts (T and S) are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The guitar parts (E. Gtr. 1 and E. Gtr. 2) are also in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. The cymbal part (Cym.) is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. The drum parts (S Dr. and B. Dr.) are in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The score consists of two measures. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes for the vocalists and guitars, and a triplet of eighth notes for the cymbals. The second measure contains a triplet of eighth notes for the vocalists and guitars, and a triplet of eighth notes for the cymbals. The drum parts are marked with a '3' above the first measure, indicating a triplet.

5

T

S

5

E.Gtr. 1

E.Gtr. 2

5

Cym.

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a band arrangement. It consists of six staves. The top two staves are for vocalists T and S, both in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Staff T has a measure rest followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Staff S is a whole rest. The next two staves are for electric guitars, E.Gtr. 1 and E.Gtr. 2, both in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. E.Gtr. 1 has a measure rest followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. E.Gtr. 2 has a measure rest followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. The fifth staff is for cymbals (Cym.) in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It has a measure rest followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bottom two staves are for drums, S.Dr. and B. Dr., both in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. S.Dr. has a measure rest followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. B. Dr. has a measure rest followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4.

7

T. 
Twa-thi - a-ga tu - he-re - te, tu-ga - co-ka - tu - he-re - te - i

S. 
Twa-thi - a-ga tu - he-re - te, tu-ga - co-ka - tu - he-re - te - i

E. Gtr. 1 

E. Gtr. 2 

Cym. 

S.Dr. 

B. Dr. 

9

T. Ru-ge - ndo wi - tu ru-ra - ri rwe - ga, tu-ge - fhu ra tu - gi-co - ka.

S. Ru-ge - ndo wi - tu ru-ra - ri rwe - ga, tu-ge - fhu ra tu - gi-co - ka.

9

E.Gtr. 1

E.Gtr. 2

9

Cym.

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

11

T

Ru-ge - ndo rwi - tu ru-ra - ri rwe - ga, tu-gi - thù ra tu - gi-co - ka.

S

Ru-ge - ndo rwi - tu ru-ra - ri rwe - ga, tu-gi - thù ra tu - gi-co - ka.

E.Gtr. 1

E.Gtr. 2

Cym.

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

13

T

Nā-twa - mi-ri - rē ma-thi - ra o-ra me-rya ma - ro mei - rge.

S

Nā-twa - mi-ri - rē ma-thi - ra o-ra me-rya ma - ro mei - rge.

E.Gtr. 1

E.Gtr. 2

Cym.

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

15

T

Nh-ô - ti-ô - ti tu-ti - rgi-ma - ha, rgi-ti - re woi - re gu-tui - re.

S

Nh-ô - ti-ô - ti tu-ti - rgi-ma - ha, rgi-ti - re woi - re gu-tui - re.

E. Gtr. 1

E. Gtr. 2

Cym.

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

17

T

Nh-ô - ti-ô - ti, tu-ti - gi-ma - la, ngu-ti - ri woi - re gu-tui - re.

S

Nh-ô - ti-ô - ti, tu-ti - gi-ma - la, ngu-ti - ri woi - re gu-tui - re.

17

E. Gtr. 1

E. Gtr. 2

17

Cym.

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

10

T
rgu - ti - re woi - re gu - tui - re.

S
rgu - ti - re woi - re gu - tui - re.

E.Gtr. 1
10

E.Gtr. 2

Cym.
10

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

Verse one

Twathiaga tūkenete
Tūgashoka tūkenete
Rūgendo rwitū
Rūrari rwea
Tūgithi na tūgicoka

*We would go happy
and come back happy
our journey
was very good
we went and we came back*

Verse two

Nitwamiririe mathina
Ona menya maro meingi
Ndagutiga ai
Tutingimaka
Ngutiri woiri gutuiri

*We have gone through problems
plus known a lot of tights
I leave you with this
why should we worry
there is no one who will torment you forever*

Verse three

Ena inyuothe aciari
Ena inyuothe arata
Kawira nokarathi na mbere
Gatiga coka na thutha

*and all of you fellow men
and all of you fellow women
he work is progressing
it is not regressing*

Verse four

Githeri gia rokoteni

Githeri from rokoteni

*Kia rugetuo na duramu
Eeh na nyũgũ igĩĩ
Cia ugĩkũyũ
Itugatigituo marigũ*

*has been cooked with a drum
ehh with two clay pots
from the Agĩkũyũ
which has been cooked with bananas*

Verse five

*Wathiĩ Mũranga tũriũkuo
Wathiĩ Githumu tũriũkuo
Ona Karpatojo tũriũkuo
Nyũmba ya Mũmbi
Tũrĩ aingĩ mũno
Gũtirĩ handũ tũtarĩ*

*when you go to Mũranga we are there
when you go to Kisumu we are there
even Garpatonjo we are there
the Agĩkũyũ people
we are very many
there's no place where we cannot be found*

Twathiaga Tūkenete

Performed by Mike Rua

♩ = 96

C

Tenor

Acoustic Guitar

F

T

Ac. Gtr.

G C F

T

Ac. Gtr.

G C

T

Ac. Gtr.

The musical score is written for Tenor and Acoustic Guitar. It consists of four systems of music. The first system has a C chord and a tempo of 96. The second system has a C chord and a 3-measure rest. The third system has G, C, and F chords. The fourth system has G and C chords. The lyrics are in Māori and English.

twā-thi - a - ē tu - he - re - te.

tu - ē - co - ka tu - he - re - te. Ru - ē - ndo rwi - tu ru - ra - re rae - ē

tu - ē - thūe ra tu - ē - co - ka. Ru - ē - ndo rwi - tu ru - ra - re rae - ē

tu - ē - thūe - ra - tu - ē - co - ka.

Verse one

Twathiaga tūkenete
Tūgashoka tūkenete
Rūgendo rwiitū
Rūrārī rwea
Tūgīthī na tūgīcoka

We would go happy
and come back happy
our journey
was very good
we went and we came back

Verse two

*Nitwamĩrĩrie mathĩna
Ona menya maro meingĩ
Ndagũtiga aĩ
Tutingĩmaka
Ngutirĩ woirĩ gutuirĩ*

*We have gone through problems
plus known a lot of tights
I leave you with this
why should we worry
there is no one who will torment you forever*

Verse three

*Ena inyuothe aciari
Ena inyuothe arata
Kawĩra nokarathiĩ na mbere
Gatiga coka na thutha*

*and all of you fellow men
and all of you fellow women
he work is progressing
it is not regressing*

Verse four

*Gĩtheri gia rokotenĩ
Kia rugetuo na duramu
Eeh na nyũgũ igĩrĩ
Cia ugĩkũyũ
Itugatigituo marigũ*

*Gĩtheri from rokotenĩ
has been cooked with a drum
ehh with two clay pots
from the Agĩkũyũ
which has been cooked with bananas*

Verse five

*Wathiĩ Mũranga tũriũkuo
Wathiĩ Githumu tũriũkuo
Ona Karpatojo tũriũkuo
Nyũmba ya Mũmbi
Tũrĩ aingĩ mũno
Gũtirĩ handũ tũtarĩ*

*when you go to Mũranga we are there
when you go to Kisumu we are there
even Garpatonjo we are there
the Agĩkũyũ people
we are very many
there's no place where we cannot be found*

Mboco Iri Mbuca

Joseph Kamaru

E A ♩=96

Soprano

Tenor

Electric Guitar

Maracas

E B(omit5) E

S

T

E. Gtr.

Mrcs.

6 4

S O - na re - jo - ke - ra utu - ko ndi - ga -

T O - na re - jo - ke - ra utu - ko ndi - ga -

E. Gtr.

Mrcs.

A E

8 8

S she - re - rwo ni we - ra nda - ri - ri - ka - ra gi - tho - mo gia -

T ce - re - rwo ni we - ra nda - ri - ri - ka - ra gi - tho - mo gia -

E. Gtr.

Mrcs.

10 B(omit5) E

S
kwa. Nda - tho - ma gi - ra lu - ndu - rdi - la -

T
kwa. Nda - tho - ma - gi - ra lu - ndu, rdi - la

E. Gtr.
10

Mrcs.
10

12 A E B(omit5)

S
ga cie - lu rjo - ru nda - rae - tuo ta rgo - bo wa mu - cie

T
ga cie - lu rjo - ru nda - rae - tuo ta rgo - bo wa mu - cie

E. Gtr.
12

Mrcs.
12

14 E A

S
u - cio. Nh - he - a - gvo mbo co i - ri mbu

T
u - cio. Nh - he - a - gvo mbo - co i - ri mbu -

E. Gtr.
14

Mfcs.
14

16 E B(omit5)

S
ca, ri rã chã ra chã - o ra - rã ma -

T
ca, ri - rã chã - ra chã - o ra - rã ma -

E. Gtr.
16

Mfcs.
16

18 E A

S
tu - mbi Nh - he - a - gwo mbo - co i - ri mbo -

T
tu - mbi Nh - he - a - gwo mbo - co i - ri mbo -

E. Gtr.
18

Mics.
18

20 E B(omit5)

S
ca ri - ra ch - ra ch - o ra - ra ma -

T
ca ri - ra ch - ra ch - o ra - ra ma -

E. Gtr.
20

Mics.
20

22

S

tu - mbi Ndo - hi - tu - mbi

22

T

tu - mbi Ndo - hi - tu - mbi

22

E. Gtr.

22

Mrcs.

Fine

Fine

Fine

Fine

- 6 -

Verse 1

Ona ngiũkera ũtuko
 Ndigashererwo nĩ wĩra
 Ndaririkana gethomo giakwa
 Ndathomagira kũndũ
 Ndikaga ciũndũ ciũru
 Ndaititwo ta ngobo wa mũciĩ ũcio

As I woke up in the night
 So I'm not late for work
 I remember what I learned
 I used to read from a place
 I used to do bad things
 I was called like a dog in that family

Chorus

Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
 Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ

I was given beans with weevils
 While their children ate eggs

Verse 2

Ndaokeraga ta tha ikũmi
 Ngatwĩre ngombe mambembe
 Na mbere ya ũcio ngaruga ũcũrũ
 Na ngakamaga rani inya cia iria
 Umuthenya ndware githiĩ githomo

I would wake up around four (In the morning)
 So I could harvest the maize for the cows
 And before that I would cook porridge
 And I would milk four sheep
 That I would take as I went to school

Chorus

Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
 Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ

I was given beans with weevils
 While their children ate eggs

Verse 3

Ohh wainĩ giuma cukuru
 Wĩra ni mũgae

In the evening as I left for school
 Work is already broken down for me

*Wĩriruo uihĩrie itagi rĩrĩ mĩ
Nu gatege hukori kahawaini
Na ndũkariganĩrwo nĩ murĩo*

Chorus

*Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ*

Verse 4

*Ngai niatethiaga ciana
ĩria ciorerĩaga thĩna
No cĩĩ ũtũkaga wega kirathini*

*No kiũngu kiũya ngita
Nga mehinya na kũũ
Ndaririkana thina wa mũcĩĩ ũcio*

*As I am told to fill the tank with water.
And work in the café
As well as not forget to make the food*

*I was given beans with weevils
While their children ate eggs*

*God helps children
who have problems
and those who perform well in class (learn from
life)
that's why I pick the guitar
and play it with power
as I remember the problems I (the people) had
in that house*

Mboco Iri Mbuca

Performed by Mike Rua

$\text{♩} = 96$

The musical score is written for Tenor and Acoustic Guitar. It consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the song with a Tenor line and an Acoustic Guitar line. The lyrics are 'On - a ngo - he - ra u - tu - ku ndi - ga -'. The second system has a Tenor line and an Acoustic Guitar line. The lyrics are 'ce - re - rwo ri wi - ra nda - ri - ri - ka - ra gi - tho - mo - gia - kwa. Ndi - tho -'. The third system has a Tenor line and an Acoustic Guitar line. The lyrics are 'ma - gi - ra ku - ndu, ndi - ka ga ci - cu ngo - ru Ndi - tve - tuo - ta ngo - bo wa mu - ci -'. The fourth system has a Tenor line and an Acoustic Guitar line. The lyrics are 'u - ci. Ndi - he - a - guo mbo - co i - ri mbu - ca ri - ri'.

Verse 1

Ona ngiũkera ũtuko
Ndigashererwo nĩ wĩra
Ndaririkana gethomo giakwa
Ndathomagira kũndũ
Ndikaga ciũndũ ciũru
Ndaititwo ta ngobo wa mũciĩ ũcio

As I woke up in the night
So I'm not late for work
I remember what I learned
I used to read from a place
I used to do bad things
I was called like a dog in that family

Chorus

Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca

I was given beans with weevils

Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ

Verse 2

*Ndaokeraga ta tha ikũmi
Ngatwĩre ngombe mambembe
Na mbere ya ũcio ngaruga ũcũrũ
Na ngakamaga rani inya cia iria
Umuthenya ndware githiĩ githomo*

Chorus

*Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ*

Verse 3

*Ohh wainĩ giuma cukuru
Wĩra ni mũgae
Wĩrũuo uihĩrie itagi rĩrĩ mĩ
Nu gatege hukori kahawaini
Na ndũkariganĩrwo nĩ murĩo*

Chorus

*Ndaheagwo mboco ĩrĩ mbũca
Riria ciana ciao irarĩa matumbĩ*

Verse 4

*Ngai niatethiaga ciana
ĩria ciorerĩaga thĩna
No cĩĩ ũtũkaga wega kirathini

No kiũngu kiũya ngita
Nga mehinya na kũũ
Ndaririkana thina wa mũciĩ ũcio*

While their children ate eggs

*I would wake up around four (In the morning)
So I could harvest the maize for the cows
And before that I would cook porridge
And I would milk four sheep
That I would take as I went to school*

*I was given beans with weevils
While their children ate eggs*

*In the evening as I left for school
Work is already broken down for me
As I am told to fill the tank with water.
And work in the café
As well as not forget to make the food*

*I was given beans with weevils
While their children ate eggs*

*God helps children
who have problems
and those who perform well in class (learn from
life)
that's why I pick the guitar
and play it with power
as I remember the problems I (the people) had
in that house*

Cheni Ni Cheni

Performed by Mike Rua

$\text{♩} = 94$

Musical score for "Cheni Ni Cheni" featuring Tenor, Electric Guitar, Cymbals, and Brake Drum.

First System:

- Tenor:** Che - ni no che - ni wa - hwa Wa - rji - ru ri - gi - thi uri - ro nga - mo -
- Electric Guitar:** (Silent)
- Cymbals:** (Silent)
- Brake Drum:** (Silent)

Second System:

- T:** re. Kaho - ra ti - mu - ro, Kaho - ra.
- E. Gtr.:** (Silent)
- Cym.:** (Silent)
- B. Dm.:** (Silent)

6

T

Kaho - ra ti-mu-no, Kaho - ra. Kaho - ra ti-mu-no, kaho - ra. Mwo-mbo -

E. Gtr.

6

Cym.

B. Dm.

8

T

ko tu hi-rya, mwo-mbo-ko tu hi-rya, nowa-tu - hi-rya we - ga tu - hi-rya. Nowa-tu -

E. Gtr.

8

Cym.

B. Dm.

10

T

li - ryā we - ga tu - hi - nya

E. Gtr.

Cym.

B. Dm.

12

T

Ngai-gua ma-kio-ra - rā mu - di e - ra mu - ka Aigā-guo

E. Gtr.

Cym.

B. Dm.

14

T

aki - e - nu - kia agi - thū - kun Ō - guo aki - i - nu - kia agi - thū kun

E. Gtr.

Cym.

B. Dm.

16

T

Nā - rāe

E. Gtr.

Cym.

B. Dm.

18

T

di-ra-mi-ra mu-du e-ra mu-ka we - ga wa - ke. Nā-kai - rā ahi-ho - tuo rā dā -

E. Gtr.

18

Cym.

B. Dm.

20

T

re mu-she-re tā ahi - ge. Che-ni no che-ni wa-kwa

E. Gtr.

20

Cym.

B. Dm.

19

T

ke. Na - ku - ri ahi - ho - tuo ra ch - re mu - she - re ta ari - ge.

E. Gtr.

Cym.

B. Dm.

21

T

Che - ri ro che - ri wa - kwa Wai - ri - mu ru - gu - fwi uri - ri ri - ga - mo -

E. Gtr.

Cym.

B. Dm.

- 7 -

Chorus

*Cheni nĩ cheni
Kwa wanjiru
Nĩgũthiĩ ũiro kamone*

*Urgently, urgently
To Wanjiru's place
I must go and see the family*

Verse

*Mwomboko tũ hinya
Mwomboko tũ hinya
Nowatũkinia
Wega tũ hinya*

*mwomboko is strength
mwomboko is strength
it has made us reach (where we are)
well and with strength*

*Ngaigua mokiũrania
Mũdũ ena mũka
Aengaguo akĩinũkia agathiĩ kũũ
Gagũa akĩinukia agethiĩ kũũ*

*I hear them ask themselves
someone with a wife
when he decides to go home, where does he go?
decides to go home, where does he go?*

*Nanie dīkamīra
Mũdũ ena mũka
Wega wake
Nũkũrĩa akihotuo na
Dare mushene ta ariaagĩ*

*and I tell them
someone with a wife
the good thing about him is
he eat when he is hungry
and he doesn't gossip like other men*

Kibata Kia Matuko Maya

Performed by Mike Rua

♩ = 125

D G/B D Emin/G D G/B

Tenor

Acoustic Guitar

4 D Emin/G D Emin/G

T

Ac. Gtr.

Ki - ba - ta kia ma - tu - bo ma - ya

7 D D

T

Ac. Gtr.

ra tvi - sti - ti ra - ru - mba ca. A - di o - the ai - tu

10 Emin/G D

T

Ac. Gtr.

mai - ra - ga tvi - sti - ti ra ru - mba ca.

13 D Emin/G

T

Ki - ba - ta kda ma - tu - ho ma - ya ri tvi - si - ti ra ru - mba

Ac. Gtr.

25 Emin/G

T

Ac. Gtr.

Ki - ri - ri kya - o ru - ra - fi - ri twi - sti - ti na ru - mba

28 D Emin/G

T

Ac. Gtr.

ca. Tui - ri - tu twa ma - tu - ko ma - ya

31 D

T

Ac. Gtr.

gu - ti - re uko - ma - ga kwa nyi - ra. Ki - ri - ri kya - o

34 Emin/G D

T

Ac. Gtr.

ru - ra - fi - ri Twi - sti - ti na ru - mba ca.

Emin/G

T

37

Nã - o a - ra - he ariã tve - ra - o gi - ti - re urã ru - i

Ac. Gtr.

37

E min/G

49

T

Ru - i rwa njo - ra no thi - fo - ti

Ac. Gtr.

49

D

51

T

ra tari - sti - ti na ru - mba ca.

Ac. Gtr.

51

- 5 -

Verse One

Kibata kĩa matuko maya
Ni twistiti na rumba ca
Ado oria aitũ mainaga
Twistiti na rumba ca

The important things nowadays
are dancing to twist and rumba
All out people are dancing
twist and rumba

Verse Two

Tũiritu twa matuko maya
Gũtire oria ũkomaga kwa nyina
Kĩrĩrĩ kĩa ni ũrafĩnĩ
Na twistiti na rumba ca

The girls of today
None of them sleep at home
their favourite thing is going to clubs
For twist and rumba

Verse 3

Nao anake aria twenao
Gũtire ũri rūhiũ rwa njora
Rũhiũ rwa njora no thifoti
Na twistiti na rumba ca

And the boys that we have
None of them have a sword
To them swords are just reports
And twist and rumba

Ngahikania Nenda

Performed by Mike Rua

♩ = 110

G♭Ab11AbD♭

Tenor

Electric Guitar

Cymbals

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

The musical score is written for five instruments: Tenor, Electric Guitar, Cymbals, Snare Drum, and Bass Drum. The time signature is 4/4, and the tempo is marked as 110 BPM (♩ = 110). The key signature has one flat (Bb). The Tenor part begins with a melodic line in the first measure, followed by rests. The Electric Guitar, Cymbals, Snare Drum, and Bass Drum provide a rhythmic accompaniment throughout the piece.

G \flat A \flat 11 A \flat D \flat

T
3
Ná-he ahi - me - ra di - wa Ma - ri a.

E. Gtr.
3

Cym.
3

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

G \flat A \flat 11 A \flat D \flat

T
5
Né-mo - ya ru - mi - ya ní-ño rui - ga - re.

E. Gtr.
5

Cym.
5

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

D \flat

7

T

Ni ga ru - a re - rda ha - ta - rda lu - u

E. Gtr.

7

Cym.

7

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

G \flat A \flat 11 A \flat D \flat

9

T

Na - hi - ka - rda re - rda mu - ra - rda lu - u

E. Gtr.

9

Cym.

9

S.Dr.

B. Dr.

$G\flat$ $A\flat 11$ $A\flat$ $D\flat$

11

T

B

Na - li - ka - rüa re - nda mu - cu - thi ni wa - hwa.

E. Gtr.

11

Cym.

11

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

$G\flat$ $A\flat 11$ $A\flat$ $D\flat$ $G\flat$ $A\flat 11$ $A\flat$

13

T

B

E. Gtr.

13

Cym.

13

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

16

T

Re - rdi Mfu - tho - ru

E. Gtr.

Cym.

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

Db Gb Ab11 Ab

18

T

rie - he - two na - rwa A - gu - the Ndi - ro bi

E. Gtr.

Cym.

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

Db Gb Ab11 Ab

- 5 -

20

T

ku - ri - a ma - ko - ro. Nāi ga ru - a ne - nda

E. Gtr.

Cym.

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

Db Gb Ab11 Ab

22

T

ka - ta - rāa ka - u. Nea - hi - ka - rāa ne - nda

E. Gtr.

Cym.

S. Dr.

B. Dr.

Db Gb Ab11 Ab

D \flat G \flat A \flat 11 A \flat

24

T. *B* mu - ra - rā ku - u Na - hi - ka - rā re - rā

E. Gtr. 24

Cym. 24

S. Dr. 24

B. Dr. 24

D \flat G \flat A \flat 11 A \flat D \flat

26

T. *B* mu - cu-thi ri ra - kaa.

E. Gtr. 26

Cym. 26

S. Dr. 26

B. Dr. 26

- 7 -

Verse one
Nake Akīmīra
Dīwa Maria

And he told them
I belong to Maria

*Ngamoya Rūmia
Nĩguo rūigane*

Chorus

*Nĩĩ ngarua nenda
Hatania kũũ
Ngahikania nenda
Mũrania kũũ
No ngarithio nenda
Mũcuthĩ nĩ wakwa*

*I will pick a hundred of them
so that they can fit*

*I will get circumcised when I want
where shall you take me
I will marry when I want
where shall you take me
My dowry shall be paid when I want
it is my decision*

APPENDIX II

FILM

Mwomboko and Social Cohesion through Mũgithi

NO	TIME	DESCRIPTION
		Section A
1.	00:00:41	Origins of Mwomboko Dance
2.	00:02:09	Kiangai Mwomboko dancers performing Mwomboko dance
3.	00:03:42	Role of Mwomboko during colonialism
4.	00:04:54	Role of Irua among the Agikuyu people
5.	00:05:25	Joseph Kamaru singing an original Irua song
6.	00:06:46	Uthaya Mwomboko dancers variation II
7.	00:07:12	Birth and development on Mugithi music
8.	00:08:53	Mike Rua performing “Twathiaga Tukenete”
9.	00:10:44	Mwomboko within Mugithi
10.	00:11:15	Mike Rua performing “ Mnoco iri mbuca”
11.	00:14:19	Difference between Mugithi in 1960s and Mugithi in the 1990s
12.	00:15:01	Joseph Kamaru’s Audio
13.	00:16:22	Characteristics of Mwomboko within Mugithi
14.	00:18:43	Mike Rua performin “Kibata kia matuku mayo”
		Section B
15.	00:20:23	Githitu Mahinda describing a Mugithi performance
16.	00:23:31	Mike Rua performing “ Cheni ni cheni”

17.	00:24:50	Mike Rua performing “ Ngahikania Nenda”
18.	00:25:23	Irua section of “Ngahikania Nenda”
19.	00:26:17	Importance of Mugithi music by Sussana Gachukia