

Course Content - Traditional Music from Africa - Part 2

Introduction

- Traditional music from the continent of Africa often features percussion, strong beats and rhythms.
- The continent of Africa is really big! The surface area of Africa is large enough to hold the surface area of the United States of America, China, India and most of Europe. The continent of Africa also has a lot of people living there – almost a Billion! That is almost twice as many people than in North America, which includes the United States, Canada and Central America. There are 48 countries in Africa.
- Singing, dancing and making music are the ways African cultures and ethnic groups celebrate life and share stories. They are passing their history on, from older generation to the younger ones.
- Traditional African rhythms are often Polyrhythms. Poly means two or more and a polyrhythm is when there are two or more rhythms or beats playing over each other at the same time.
- Traditional African melodies are sometimes Polyphonic. A Polyphonic Melody is when more than one melody plays over the top of each other at the same time.
- With so many different cultures, sometimes the same (or very similar) musical instrument is called by a different name, depending on where you are.

Southern Africa – Zimbabwe & Lesotho + Musical Movement Minute

- **The Shona people** from **Zimbabwe** have an instrument called the **Mbira** that is part of many traditional ceremonies like the rainmaking ceremony and an all-night ceremony called a **Bira** to help family members.
- A Mbira is made of a wooden board, hollowed gourd and metal tines.
- **Lesotho** is a country in Southern Africa that is surrounded on all sides by the country of South Africa.
- In Lesotho they play a cow hide beaten with sticks, a unique percussion instrument!
- **The featured instruments in this section:** Zimbabwe - the M'bira. Lesotho – Ramki (Oli Can Guitar), Morupa & Lekoko.
- The Musical Movement Minute was taught by a group called African Beat. www.AfricanBeat.com.au

Music in Life Lesson

The Music in Life lesson is a moment to engage in active listening. The Music in Life lesson song for this course is “Ewure Ile Komoyi Ode” by Haruna Ishola and His Apela Group. Students are invited to think about how the music makes them feel, think and move. Music is an individual experience; active listening encourages students to choose their own musical path.

Central Africa – Angola & Central African Republic + Fun Fact

- The **Baka** people of **Central African Republic** have a unique instrument that involves standing in water and slapping the surface to make rhythms and beats.
- **The featured instruments in this section:** Angola – Hungu, Dilonga, Shakers, Dikanza & Vandumbu. Central African Republic – Cylindrical drums, Limbindi, N'dehou, Ngombi & Water drums.
- We highlighted some traditional dances from Africa: The Kumpo Dance from the Jola people of The Gambia, the Zaouli dance from the Guro people of Ivory Coast, the Indlondlo Zulu Dancers from South Africa and the Doma Dance from the Dongon people in Mali.

West Africa – Nigeria, The Gambia & Senegal

- In **Nigeria**, the **Dundun** is both the name of a drum and a type of music played with a group on that drum
- **The Gambia** is one of the African countries that has a strong tradition of **Griots**. Griots are “living libraries” who’s storytelling music keeps the stories of their families and communities.
- Percussion and dancing are very prominent and important in the music of **Senegal**.
- **Featured instruments in this section:** Nigeria – Dundun or talking drum. The Gambia – Kora. Senegal – Djembe.