

Donald Kachamba in Berlin (1993)

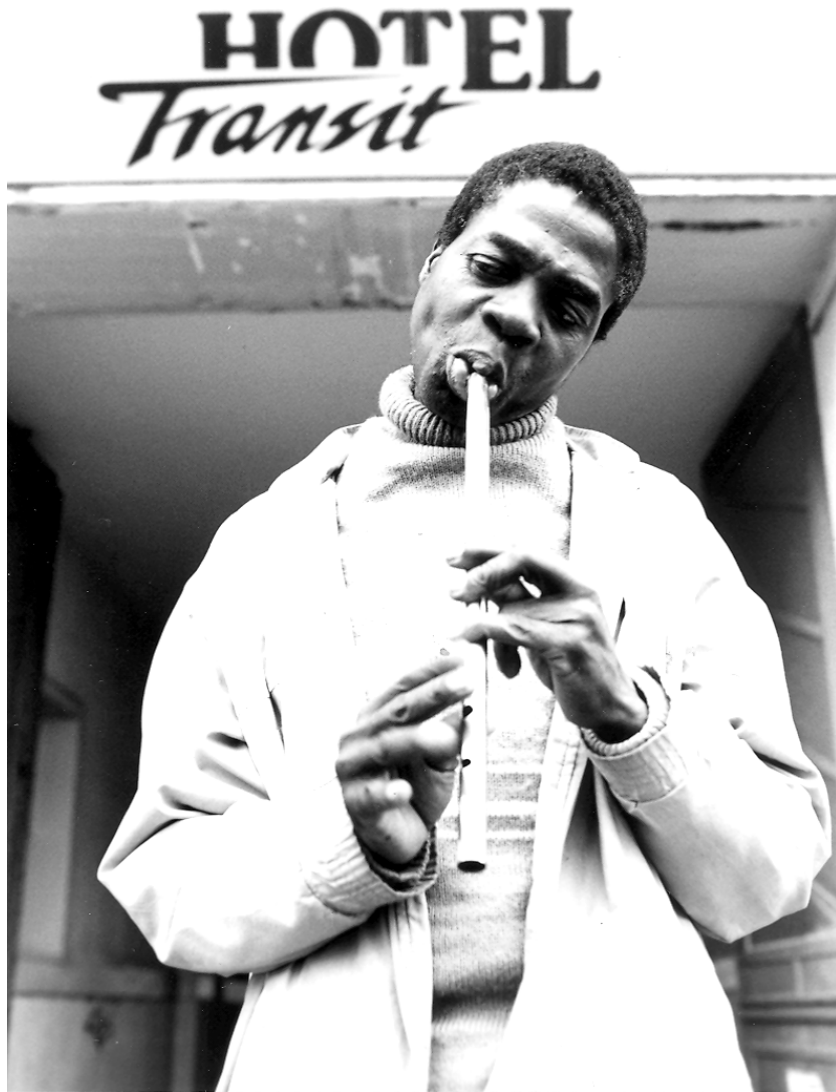


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Gerhard Kubik*

**Transformations and Reinterpretations
of American *Jazz*. An Inside Account of
Jazz Performances in Chileka, Malawi,
Home Area of *kwela* Flutist, Guitarist,
and Composer Donald Kachamba**

Jazz has had a profound impact on the rise of new musical forms in southern Africa. It began in the 1930s with ballroom dance music and intensified in the late 1940s in South African cities and townships when kids took up swing jazz with toy instruments and developed *kwela* “flute jive”. From the early 1960s, South African jazz clubs were ablaze with Bebop and other forms of modern jazz played by groups such as the Soul Jazzmen from Port Elizabeth, the Jazz Faces Quintet, the Lionel Pillay Trio, the Malombo Jazzmen, and many others. Meanwhile street-band *kwela* had spread to the neighboring countries, notably the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi). At the same time Brazilian popular music spread to Mozambique and Angola, and somewhat earlier Cuban rumba to the Congo and Kenya.

My personal account traces the transformations American jazz, rumba and other forms of New World music have undergone in our own musical group in Chileka, near Blantyre, southern Malawi, focusing on a particular period of crisis and renaissance between July 2000 and September 2002.

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The paper takes a look at intimate processes of composition by the band members involved and discusses how African and Blues harmonic ideas have been integrated and reconciled, leading to the reinstatement of *kwela* in the broader stylistic framework of modern jazz. It also analyzes how a younger generation is gradually taking over the leadership from the founders of this music.

I.

The developments described in this paper began in July 2000 when Donald Kachamba (1953-2001), leader of our musical group for 26 years, was still active. A few months earlier, in December 1999, Donald had returned from his stay as Artist in Residence at the University of California, Los Angeles, equipped with a long video of his teachings and his final, public performance with the U.C.L.A students on December 4. In his air baggage he also had several Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy motion pictures in their original, uncut versions, which he had obtained with the help of one of his student friends. From boyhood on, Donald had been an enthusiastic Laurel and Hardy fan, and he also loved other 1920s and 1930s comedians like Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and the Marx Brothers. But especially the culture of Laurel and Hardy had been part of his artistic life and even his personal behavior, for instance, after seeing this duo singing “Honolulu Baby”:

When he was nineteen he used to laugh with such vigor and so incessantly in public cinemas across Europe that audiences were turning their heads! Some elderly women complained. Later, he used to do a good deal of acting during concert shows, and even in private, some of which is recorded on video (Kubik/Malamusi, Video Nr. 31).

Donald Kachamba had been at U.C.L.A. for three months, from September to December 1999, giving courses at the Department of Ethnomusicology on invitation by Professor Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. From there he returned to Malawi. When I too flew back to Malawi from Europe, arriving in Chileka on June 28, 2000, to spend some months in our home village, Singano near Chileka, Donald was waiting for me at the airport together with many other relatives of our family. I found that he looked somewhat slim, but he gave me the impression of being vigorous.

As in the years before, we began to get together regularly in his house for rehearsals with our “Donald Kachamba’s Kwela Band” (see Discographic and Cinematographic references). With Donald on guitar, Moya Aliya Malamusi on one-string bass, a youngster on rattle and myself on E-flat clarinet, we set out to revive much of the music he had composed beginning in 1985, with titles such as “Namaseko”, “Ife timakonda kuyimba”, “Talekani miseche”, “Pang’ono pang’ono tatopa nchito”, “Pafibe zikomo” etc., beautiful music that was no longer *kwela* in the strict sense. It had become something else. The best way to describe it would be to say that it was Donald’s music and the music of his unique band. There was no other music like that in Malawi. Most other groups were imitating the current international pop music disseminated by the mass media. Our recent tours to Europe had included Germany, Belgium and France, with recordings made at Radio France, Paris, on January 23, 1995, and then in 1997 we participated in a festival at the German Film Museum in Frankfurt am Main and also gave a concert in the *Gewandhaus* Leipzig.

In July 2000, in Donald’s house we were embarking on something slightly different with Donald’s student Sinosi Mlendo on guitar. We were trying out new compositions such as “Sinjonjo Blues” and “Sena Twist” (in an AABA chorus form). Donald volunteered to play second clarinet, as in the old days when Moya’s young brother Fulaye, aged 16, had played guitar. That was in January 1982 (CD Pamap 103, LC 07203, Günther Gretz, Frankfurt am Main). Now we played again “Chikumbutso Lumba”, in memory of Fulaye who had died at that young age of Pneumococcal meningitis. But this time – in the year 2000 – Donald found it hard to play clarinet. He complained of short breath and general weakness. Even playing the flute was becoming difficult.

We were aware, of course, that he had been a diabetic since 1994, on daily insulin injections; and our last concert tours in Europe had been somewhat difficult, because with Diabetes Mellitus, Donald always had to disappear before an evening concert in a bathroom to give himself an injection. Some people in the audience noticed it and began to construct their own theories.

But in Chileka in July 2000, diabetes was not the actual complaint. His insulin levels seemed to be stable. He simply was not feeling well,

he said. He was coughing and had breathing difficulties. He was always feeling tired.

Two years earlier Donald had started to train several young men and boys in the vicinity, mostly relatives, to play various instruments. I once video-taped a delightful session that took place in his garden under the mango tree (Kubik/Malamusi, Video Nr. 54). That was shortly before he left for the United States. The most talented and devoted young man among those trainees was Sinosi Mlendo, whose maternal uncle (*malume*) incidentally is Moya A. Malamusi. First Sinosi had learned from Donald all the standard cyclic patterns on the five-string guitar used for dance-band performances and he internalized Donald's feel for swing and prominent accentuations. At this "junior" stage, Sinosi can be seen with Donald, Moya, and another boy, Khilizibe, in a delightful - though somewhat falsely synchronized - production by Television Malawi under Producer Waliko Makhala in 1999, before Donald's trip to the United States. The five-string guitar is an invention by Donald's elder brother, the late Daniel J. Kachamba (1947-1987). Daniel can be seen playing it in a cinematographic documentation *Kachamba Brothers*, that I made in 1967, now also on DVD (production Wolfgang Bachschwell, Vienna). There are various tunings; Daniel had used one he called "Key G high six", while in Donald's band the so-called LG tuning is used (Kubik 1974: 36-37). It is an adaptation for plectrum guitar in band performances. Six-string African finger guitar playing would not be suitable for this style. But five-string guitar played "vamping" - to use an expression coined by John Low (1982: 44) - allows for unusual chord progressions and fingerings.

Other trainees of Donald included Stuwadi Mpotalinga, painter, on rattle and bass. He had already been with us on tours to Europe in 1991 and in 1995. Christopher Gerald alias "Khilizibe" was another of Donald's trainees. He had started music on a home-made banjo in 1994 as a teenager with his own band that he called "Tingoyesa Band" (We-are-just-trying Band) (Kubik/Malamusi, Video Nr. 32). And there was Dayina, Moya's second daughter, then about twelve years old, a very lively girl, fond of games. When Donald, in July 2000, became increasingly hesitant about attending rehearsals, his sparkling nature only occasionally returning to its former energy levels, the group of youngsters simply went on by themselves. And I played the

clarinet with them. No one was yet seriously worried about Donald. We believed that he would soon get better.

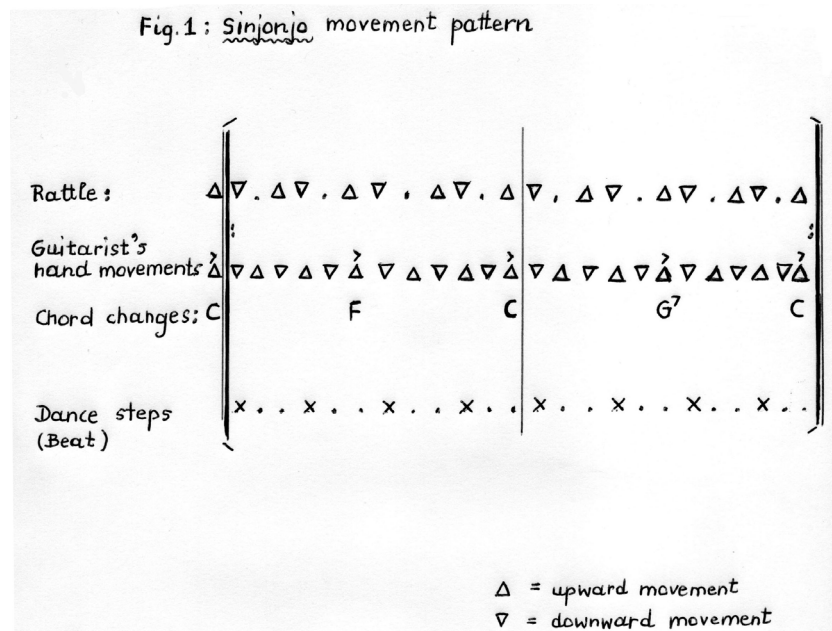
Since Donald could no longer blow the flute without pains in his chest, let alone play a second clarinet, I always felt somewhat relieved when he came to play lead guitar with us. I was worried and began to discuss with Moya how we might persuade him to have a thorough medical examination.

Sinosi Mlendo found himself increasingly taking over Donald's role on the guitar. He also became interested in trying out new ways, such as experimenting with chords beyond those, which are basic to southern African popular music. Looking for ways to depart from the cyclic forms of *kwela* and *mbaqanga* – South African genres of popular music (Coplan 1985) – he got attracted to the 12-bar blues and AABA chorus forms while retaining Donald's rhythmic structures unchanged: *sinjonjo*, double-step (also called *simanje-manje* by elderly musicians in southern Malawi), twist, or *lumba* (rumba) (for Kachimba Brother's terminology see Kubik 1974).

I said to Sinosi: "If these are the directions you want to take, let us develop the theme of 'Sena Twist' to include a clarinet melodic phrase repeated *across* your changing chords in the AABA form". Sinosi had written down the chords in a little book in the standard notation for jazz chords. I then played the theme and several variations on the E-flat clarinet in Sena style. The "bridge" or B part was also suggestive of Sena progressions (Sena is an ethnic group in Southern Malawi and Central Mozambique, known for specific chord sequences in their xylophone and other music, Tracey 1991). Played in twist rhythm, as it is called in Kachamba terminology, but all chord changes on the guitar are off-beat; they come one elementary pulse-unit earlier, before the inception of a measure, and they occur on an up-stroke of the guitarist's right hand. This is why in our transcription of the theme the chord symbols are written ahead of the bar lines. Next we began to work on the twelve-bar blues, "Sinjonjo Blues", we had played the other day in Donald's house. *Sinjonjo* is a dance-pattern in a 12-pulse cycle. It originated in southern Africa in the 1950s. For *sinjonjo* it is very important to understand that we musicians internalize an elementary pulsation, i.e., a continuous reference grid of very fast units without any pre-conceived accentuation. On top of it there is the second reference level: the beat shared with the dancers' steps. But the guitar-

ist has to play evenly; he will not watch the dancers. While the beat in *sinjonjo* combines three pulse-units, creating the impression of a music in fast triplets, the guitarist in his hand movements, up and down, executes duplets. The result is a duple/triple interface. In addition – also in “jive and twist” – all chord changes are anticipated in relation to the dancers’ and the rattle player’s beat by the value of one elementary pulse-unit. That gives this structure a kind of “kick”, i.e., there are strong offbeat accents on pulse-units six and eleven of a measure.

Fig. 1 (*sinjonjo* movement pattern)



To the best of my knowledge such a structural scheme does not underlie the rhythm of blues accompaniment in American jazz, Rhythm & Blues, or rural blues. It is something specifically southern African, a rhythmic reinterpretation of jazz. So in this breeding place of jazz transformations at Singano village, Chileka, something peculiar has come up. A few years later we would call it “Sinjonjo Blues”.

In standard *sinjonjo* – we have to remember – all chord changes occur one elementary pulse-unit before the reference beat of musi-

cians and dancers. This is a small but consequential deviation from - American blues in our blues renderings. Anticipatory chord changes were, of course, the hallmark of most South African popular music from the 1950s to the 1970s. Paul Simon did not understand that in his “Graceland” when he played with West Nkosi and other *mbaqanga* musicians. He also got the beat wrong.

Meanwhile the concept of anticipatory chord changes has largely disappeared from contemporary styles in southern Africa. Teenagers in our village are now conditioned by the “gumba-gumba” in the bar next door to a simple, broad ground-beat: “di – di di”, etc. Therefore, some of them are as disoriented by the accentuations in our music, notably in *simanje-manje* pieces, as did European teenagers and West Africans in the 1970s during our world-wide concert tours with Donald Kachamba. Audio-psychologically, these listeners react to Donald’s music with *metric inversion*, i.e., disoriented by the offbeat accentuations and the change of chords on the off-beat, they do not recognize the ground-beat in the places where insiders feel it. Most amusingly, these people then take the offbeat for the beat and dance on it (see Musical Examples 1 and 2).

In terms of Donald’s musical concepts, the directions Sinosi wanted to take were both conservative and novel. In Donald’s band we had often played pieces in a twelve-bar blues form, more often in the 10-bar shortened form introduced by the late Daniel Kachamba. But Sinosi’s versions had something radically different from *kwela* and related styles, not least in the chords. The chorus form had also been used in *kwela*, for example in the Kachamba Brothers’ “Mai Lumba”, which was modeled on a performance by the Sithole Brothers in Cape Town as seen in Kenneth Law’s 1960 film “Pennywhistle Boys”. But most of the themes like those by southern African musician-composers were based on cyclic forms whose harmonic basis can be described as (a) F – C (^{6/4}) – G⁷ – C, and (b) C – C (⁷) – F (⁶) – G⁷. Sinosi wanted to change that and explore different harmonic dimensions. It soon turned out that he would play with great ease any traditional 1920s to 1930s jazz tune in the chorus form and rarely get “lost”, in contrast to what happens regularly to jazz beginners (see Paul Berliner’s comments on the matter, Berliner 1993: 71-82). While retaining Donald’s *motional* patterns, *sinjonjo*, *simanje-manje* etc., he would fall in love with, for example, the theme and chord sequence of

Musical Example 1

Musical Example I
"Sena Twist"

Instrumental theme and
Guitar chords

Copyright:
Donald Kachamba's
Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Twist (fast)

The musical score consists of eight staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody is written in eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff, guitar chords are indicated: C, C, Dm, Dm, Dm. The second staff continues the melody with chords G7, C, C, C. The third staff has chords C, Dm, Dm, Dm. The fourth staff has chords G7, C, C, C7. The fifth staff changes to a bass clef and has chords C7, F, F, Fm. The sixth staff has chords Fm, G7, G7, C. The seventh staff has chords C, Dm, Dm, Dm. The eighth staff has chords G7, C, C, C.

Musical Example 1a

Variations:

The musical score consists of six staves of music. The first staff has chords C, D_m, D_m, and D_m. The second staff has chords G⁷, C, C, and C. The third staff has chords C, D_m, D_m, and D_m. The fourth staff has chords G₇, C, C, and C⁷. The fifth staff has chords C⁷, F, F, and F_m. The sixth staff has chords F_m, G⁷, and etc.

Musical Example 2

Musical Example II
"Sinjonjo Blues"

Copyright:
Donald Kachamba's
Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Instrumental theme and
Guitar chords

Sinjonjo (slow)

I

II

C F C C⁷ F

F⁷ C C⁷ F/F_m C G⁷

C C C C⁷ etc

New Orleans's jazz tune "Make me a pallet on the floor". George Gershwin's tune "I Got Rhythm" with its numerous derivatives turned out to be child's play for him, though he was probably not aware that the theme's chord sequence, minus the bridge (which Sinosi mastered easily) had been used from the late 1950s into the 1960s by pre-Kachamba guitarists in Chileka like White Chinyama and Piasoni Chinkhango, whose pictures can be seen in Kubik/Malamusi (1994: 30). The song to which I am referring and which is based on "I Got Rhythm" is called "Ndinalamba kalata". (I wrote a letter). Knowledge of jazz themes based on "I Got Rhythm" spread through southern Africa during the 1940s and 1950s with radio broadcasts and gramophone records. The countries that were combined from 1953-1963 under the name Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland – today the independent states of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi – were a principal market for the South African music business heavily based on jazz.

Within a month, our small band, now held together by Sinosi Mlendo, was developing a jazz repertoire of a dozen items. Donald was watching these developments, and occasionally he came to “sit in” with the wonderful ebony-black guitar he had bought a few years ago in Portugal, before giving a first concert with it at the *Gewandhaus*, in Leipzig in 1997. Unfortunately none of these last sessions in Chileka with Donald playing lead guitar was recorded.

By the end of July, Moya and I were becoming increasingly alarmed about Donald’s health. He did not at all get better, and so Moya drove him to one of the more expensive hospitals in the country, where doctors then diagnosed all sorts of “infections”, especially of the chest, while giving the impression that they were all curable with antibiotics! We were lulled into a false sense of optimism and misjudgment of the situation.

Although it was on the tip of our tongues to suggest that Donald take a HIV test, we did not dare to speak out what we thought. There is a culture of secrecy about HIV in southern Africa. People who die due to AIDS die “officially” of TB or dehydration, and on the village level AIDS is called the “government’s disease” (*matencia aboma*) and is perceived as an unlikely, remote image, a shadowy existence. Why some die prematurely must then be due to witchcraft (*ufiti*), and that solves all problems of further investigation or prevention. In Donald’s case it is even possible, however, that a test was made at some stage; but then we were never informed about the result. Eventually Donald was admitted to a somewhat cheaper hospital, one in Lunzu, not far from Chileka. But since we soon found him walking in the hospital garden whenever we visited him, reading books and talking in his usual humorous way, and since he seemed to look much better than he had shortly before, we gathered the impression that the treatment of his pulmonary infection was adequate. As for the possible immune deficiency, we would see to that later, we thought, once he was out of the clinic.

In the meantime, the band in the village was playing almost every day. We were practicing the new songs and composing more of them. Sinosi used to come to my house even late in the evening to try out new chord sequences, discovering various finger positions on the five-string guitar (tuned to one of the non-standard tunings introduced by

the late Daniel Kachamba) for minor, diminished, sixth, and major seventh chords.

The new hit was a *lumba* (rumba) item in the name of Dayina, Moya's twelve-year old daughter, who was sometimes sitting in with us to sing.

“Dayina Lumba” (see Musical Example 3)

Text sung in Chinyanja:	Translation:
Dayina!	Diana!
Tidzipita ku Chaina!	Let us go to China!
Tikagule mapaina	So that we buy some pine trees,
kwadzala kuno ku phiri!	to plant them here on the mountain!
Dayina!	Diana!
Tidzipita ku Chaina!	Let us go to China!
Tikagule mapaina	So that we buy some pine trees
ku midzi!	there in the villages!
Tikalephera titani?	If we fail to do so, what then?
Tidziyimba nyimbo zonsezi!	Then let us just sing all (our) songs!
Dayina!	Diana!
Tidzipita ku Chaina!	Let us go to China!
Tikagule mapaina	So that we buy some pine trees
ku midzi!	there in the villages!

“Dayina Lumba” was one of the earliest pieces composed in this rapidly transforming band. By Monday, July 10 we had a text outline for discussion. “Composed” is perhaps an overstatement in this particular case, because there were a few problems; one I remember was how to space out the long /a/ in the word *kwadzala*. I think Moya was the one who found the solution (see Musical Example 3, second line). This song simply “happened” to us. Everyone can recognize the 1920s American hit that is behind it. However, with Sinosi on the guitar, this song – first played instrumentally with improvised solo clarinet variations – seemed to reconfigure itself, as if it wanted to return to its “roots” in Africa. We soon discovered that it fit a *lumba* rhythm pattern to the time-line (sticks) (Recordings in Djenda/Kubik Collection) [. . xx . xx .], i.e., in Donald's conception of rumba, which was a little more Kenyan than Congolese. And it fit our guitar rhythm so naturally that we even suspected that ours might have been the original rhythm to go with it, before it was adapted to the Foxtrot and

Charleston dance culture of the “Roaring Twenties”. It must be mentioned here, that in Donald’s rumba adaptations all the chord changes coincide with the inception of a measure, they are *not* anticipated. So local kids were dancing enthusiastically to our version of “Dinah”, originally published in New York City in 1925.

Musical Example 3

Musical Example III
 "Dayina tidzipita ku Chaina"

Copyright:
 Donald Kachamba's
 Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Instrumental theme and
 Guitar chords

Sticks: z z z z etc. Lumba (fast)

Dayi - na ! Ti - dzi - pi - ta ku Chai - na ! Ti - ka - gu - le ma -
 C C A⁷ A⁷

pai - na ! kwa - dza - la ku - no ku phi - ri .
 D_m G⁷ C G⁷

Dayi - na ! Ti - dzi - pi - ta ku Chai - na ! Ti - ka - gu - le ma -
 C C A⁷ A⁷

pai - na ku mi - dzi !
 D_m G⁷ C

Ti - ka - le - phe - ra ti - ta - ni ?
 C⁷ C⁷ F F

Ti - dzi - yi - mba nyi - mba zo - nse - zi !
 D⁷ D⁷ G⁷ G⁷

Dayi - na ! Ti - dzi - pi - ta ku Chai - na ! Ti - ka - gu - le ma -
 C C A⁷ A⁷

pai - na ku mi - dzi !
 D_m G⁷ C C

**Fig. 2: Cover page of the original “Dinah”
published in New York City in 1925**



The songwriters Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young invented the famous line: “Dinah – if she wandered to China, I would hop an ocean liner, just to be with Dinah Lee!” The lyrics of the song are nonsense lyrics; the words are combined simply because they rhyme: “Dinah, is there anyone finer in the state of Carolina?” Our text of “Dayina Lumba” is also all “nonsense”. It is condensed from little images strung together. One inspiration, of course, was the lively Dayina who used to play with great fervor what is called *misumisu* in Singano village, jumping over a string held up by two girls. We needed a personal song for her to sing with us in this band to which we had given a name in her honor: “Dayina Swing Jazz Band”. Another image that worked itself into the song text was our fond memories of walks in the Michiru Mountains with the children, not far from our village. During the last few years, most of this Forest Reserve has been depleted mercilessly by charcoal burners, with no authority ever bothering to stop the destruction of one of the last original areas of biodiversity in southern Malawi.

This is, of course, serious. Once all the original trees are gone, including my favorites such as *mulombwe* (bot. *Pterocarpus angolensis*), the forest might be “privatized”, with timber companies or whoever planting pine trees and fast growing Australian specimens. The new proprietors will then erect a fence around the reserve. It happens that the name of the girl, Dayina (Chinyanja pronunciation of Diana, no connection with the Princess) rhymes with “China” and also with *mapaina* (pl.), the Chinyanja borrowing of (Engl.) “pine-trees”. That is how the song took shape: we would soon have to go to China to beg for pine-trees for our beloved mountains, depleted by the charcoal burners. And if we failed, what then? Sure, in that case we wouldn’t blow up anybody in revenge, but simply go on with our music.

The song became quite successful in the village. When Wolfgang Bender, head of the African Music Archive, University of Mainz, visited us from 20 to 25 August, studying the collections in Moya’s Oral Literature Research Program, and seeing his Ethnographic Museum, we gave a musical party on the veranda. Many children were flocking to our compound and Malawi TV came with a non-working camera. Waliko Makhala, producer, and a good friend of the house, interviewed us, and he asked me specifically about what kind of message our songs conveyed. In all honesty, I should have replied that

they do not convey any messages, but that would have been contrary to what the world expects music to be. Was there nothing to denounce, to criticize, to deplore, perhaps the “power structure”, “the system”, “globalization”, “corporate culture”, or some other entity? Was there no moral or educational benefit in those songs? The “unlikely event” of a song by free association of words and images, without any explicit purpose to improve human society, was probably difficult to be accepted by the mass media. Oxygen masks may then be needed to compensate for the loss of pressure: So I declared our “Dayina Lumba” to be an “ecological song” and that we were furiously fighting ecological destruction! In a sense that was even true. *We are* concerned with the destruction of the original landscape of our Michiru Mountains. Even teenage boys in the family, such as Romeo, deplore the fact that they can no longer spot any trees in the mountains to be tapped for rubber glue (*kugoma ulimbo*) to be used for bird trapping. But the song text is merely a game with names, rhymes, and the surprise effect of unusual images. It was not composed to express any social outrage. The same applies to another song with a text in English, in AABA form, composed July 27, 2000. It starts with this chord sequence: C – E_{bm}⁶ – D_m – G⁷, etc., on the five-string guitar, all in a fast *sinjonjo* rhythm, i.e. triplets, with chord changes one pulse-unit before beat 1 of each measure. The words are: “I love you, I love you until tomorrow only!” (Musical Example 4). There are allusions, but no commitments. In spite of the apparent logic, it is a form of textual surrealism marked by an absence of the usual emotional engagement with topics human beings are slavishly attached to: love, social concerns, etc. So when a text appears in our music that seems to be concerned with any of these, it does not mean that it is our concern. For us it is important how the syllables of those words and their tonality conform to the melodic-rhythmic phrases of the musical theme.

By mid-August Sinosi Mlendo’s repertoire of jazz-like pieces and *lumba* had increased to a dozen. It included “Break the Blues” (Aug. 1), in which Donald still played lead guitar with us, “Simanje-manje minor” played instrumentally (it would receive a Chinyanja text two years later), “Soul Blues” (Aug. 2), and even the chord basis (Aug. 6) of what in Fall 2006 would crystallize into Theme 2 of “A Walk with John Coltrane”. On Friday, August 18, the chord sequence of a new blues, “I walk up the mountain” (Musical Example 5) would

be set, a day later the instrumental part of “Chérie m’a refusé”, and on August 22, two days before our first public concert, there came “Sunshine walk”, instrumentally, with no words yet. We also added an old East African rumba to our repertoire, in an arrangement for clarinet, guitar, rattle, and one-string bass. We called it “Rhino Boys’ Lumba”. This piece is based on one of the first rumba records appearing in Kenya after World War II, when soldiers had returned from Burma: “Rumba zetu” by The Rhino Boys (His Master’s Voice, Rumba N. 17102, OMC. 20227). However, we only adapted theme A of the original piece, not theme B in a minor key. We have no aversion to minor keys, but in this case theme A turned out to be central to us, with a new chord basis, that we did not want to depart from it. There were also some other songs in the making, on the “waiting list” we would say, using airport language. For example, it will interest researchers of the history of this music that the chord sequence of what would be “Ngola e” in the Luchazi language (see our 2004 CD) occurred to us on July 24, 2000, four years before Sinosi would take it up again for the words to be composed.

Donald Kachamba was hospitalized on August 9. In his absence we would have regular rehearsals with Sinosi on guitar, Stuwadi Mpotalinga on bass, Khilizibe on rattle, and myself on E-flat clarinet. There was no flute player. We were waiting for Donald’s return, and for this reason no *kwela* flute pieces were played. Dayina would sometimes join us singing.

Musical Example 4

Text:

I love you, I love you, until tomorrow, only!
 I love you, I love you, until tomorrow oh!
 Bye, good bye, don’t ask me why!
 If you need me, don’t be so shy!
 I love you, I love you, until tomorrow, only!
 Bye, good bye, don’t ask me why!
 Because I think I’ll never see you again!
 I love you, I love you, bye bye!

Musical example IV
 "I love you, until tomorrow only!"

Copyright:
 Donald Kachamba's
 Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Sinjonjo (fast)

I love you I love you un-til to-mor-row on-ly!

C B_{bm}6 D_m G⁷ C

etc.

Musical Example 5

Text:

I walk up the mountain and I'm walking all night.
 I walk up the mountain and I'm walking all night.
 'Cause I'm a stranger-walker, and I'm walking all night.

Moonshine is my pillow and the stones are my bed.
 Moonshine is my pillow and the stones are my bed.
 'Cause I'm a stranger-walker, and the stones are my bed.

Blues! Don't let me down! Blues! Don't let me down!
 'Cause I'm a stranger-walker, Blues don't let me down!

Musical example V
 "I walk up the mountain"

Donald Kachamba's
 Kwela Heritage Jazzband

I walk up the moun-tain and I'm walk-ing all night.
 walk up the mountain and I'm walk-ing all night.
 I'm a stran-ger wal-ker and I'm walk-ing all night.

F / F⁷ D_m⁷ / A_b⁶ F / F⁷ D_m⁷ / A_b⁶ B_b
 B_b⁷ F / F⁷ D_m⁷ / A_b⁶ C
 B_b⁷ F / F⁷ D_m⁷ / A_b⁶

“I walk up the mountain” was Sinosi’s most audacious venture into blues composition so far. Like Blind Lemon Jefferson (Evans 2000: 94-95) he would experiment with unusual chords, without, however, abandoning progressions to the subdominant in the second line and to the dominant chord in the third, within the 12-bar blues form. The novelty in Sinosi’s song is the riff-like harmonic pattern over the tonic mode, two measures long and functioning like a responsorial phrase to the singer’s statements. Its structure $F - F^7 - D_m^7 - A_b^6$ incorporating blue notes is based on the second *kwela* harmonic cycle obscured by two substitute chords. The effect is startling and gives Sinosi’s blues rendering and the backing of his voice line with the guitar riff a strange originality. Incidentally, the text motif of the “stranger-walker” is in a sense symbolic of the singer’s identity. Mlendo was his father’s name and means “stranger”. So this song has indeed some meaning.

On Saturday, August 19, Moya video-taped one of our sessions (Kubik/Malamusi, Video Nr. 36), first on the veranda of my house, where we played “Make me a pallet”, then in an opposite line-up of the band within the compound. We played “I love you until tomorrow”, “Rhino Boys’ Lumba”, and “Dayina ku China”. Preparations were now starting for our appearance at the launching ceremony of Moya’s CD *From Lake Malawi to the Zambezi*, scheduled for August 24.

During the long period of Donald’s hospitalization we had more visitors. Dr. Mitchell Strumpf arrived just for a day on Sunday, August 27. At that time he was based at Africa University, Mutare, in Zimbabwe. He is an old friend who has lived through much of the history of the Kachamba Brothers and our family in Chileka. For many years he was teaching at the University of Malawi, Zomba, and at present he is professor at the University of Dar Es Salaam, Department of Fine and Performing Arts. He is also the editor of a book I wrote jointly with Moya A. Malamusi, my wife Lidiya Malamusi and Donald Kachamba: *Malawian Music. A Framework for Analysis*, published in 1987. During the 1980s he made a representative video documentation of lecture performances we gave with Donald in his department. He was sad to hear about Donald’s hospitalization, but delighted to listen to some of the new compositions with our band, which we played for him, especially the “bridge” in “Sena Twist”.

The last time I saw Donald Kachamba was on Tuesday, August 29. I was already in “packing fever”, because my departure to Europe for various urgent assignments was scheduled for the next day. I went on foot from Singano Village, Chileka, all the way to Lunzu, where Donald was staying in Mlambe Hospital. There is no diary note about this last encounter, except that I was tired after the very long walk. But I remember that Donald gave us the impression that he would recover. He was walking, reading and spending most of his time in the hospital garden, not in the ward. When he escorted us to the gate and we shook hands, I did not think that it would be for the last time.

Through September I was on an assignment in Portugal at the *Museu Nacional de Etnologia* in Lisbon to work on a book about their collections of lamellophones from Angola and Mozambique. In the evenings I used to sit in the magnificent park opposite the monastery in Belém, whistling endless variations to “Soul Blues”, “I walk up the mountain”, “Sena Twist”, and other pieces we had composed that year. There was telephone contact, right from the street in Lisbon to Malawi, something unthinkable only a decade earlier. I was surprised to learn, by October, that Donald had still not been discharged from hospital. From a distance, with soothing reports from the village, I concluded that he had “overstayed” only because he was now being subjected to some radical, break-through treatment of the antibiotics-resistant TB. Information was not very detailed, however, and it sounded palliating, as if nobody wanted to be accused later of having been the first to divulge some unpleasant truth.

But it is so sweet to deny reality. After a few weeks I eventually heard that he had been sent home to the village. Again, I did not want to understand the symbolism. Donald’s condition seemed to deteriorate increasingly. I had several telephone conversations with him from Vienna, but at the beginning of December we realized, also from his letters, how serious the situation was. Eventually, Moya and I made a rescue attempt with the help of friends in Europe and in America. Domingos Morais in Lisbon, one of Donald’s close friends, had an idea. He would arrange for him to be flown on a TAP flight to Lisbon by mid-January 2001, even if he had to be put in a wheel chair. In Lisbon, the world famous hospital of tropical medicine would have a look at this case. In Malawi, his principal student and relative, Sinosi, was taking care of Donald. Sinosi was a witness to the last few days

of Donald's life. Apparently, Donald felt such despair that he also stopped injecting himself insulin, and he began to drink sugar-containing "Fanta"! It looks as if he was giving himself up. On January 9, 2001, he fell unconscious; that was just a week before the planned departure to Lisbon. Sinosi drove him immediately to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Blantyre. There, Donald J. Kachamba, my oldest friend in Malawi and the leader of our musical group for 27 years died on January 12, 2001, without regaining consciousness.

II.

By mid-July 2002, after an awful year of indecision – with many different professional obligations – I eventually decided to go back to Malawi to have a look at the wreckage of our jazz band. I was surprised when I arrived in Chileka from Johannesburg on Saturday, July 27, to find that Sinosi, Stuwadi, and Khilizibe had been waiting for me all the time. Moya had given Sinosi a somewhat better guitar than the one he used to play in the year 2000. The miracle occurred. From the minute I was back in Malawi, we played again almost immediately. I have diary notes that testify to the miracle. In addition, some reinforcement had arrived from Zambia: Mose Yotamu, a guitarist (see the DVD *African Guitar*, Kubik 1995) who had been on tour with us to Germany and to Finland in 1988 in "Donald Kachamba's Kwela Band", was here to work on our research project *East African Traditions of Chieftdom, Kinship, and Ritual*, financed by the Scientific Foundation, Vienna (Project Nr. P 15007; 2002-2004). At the moment he was working in Makanjila on initiation, but it was good to know that he was around.

What at first looked like a psychological landscape bombed flat, turned out to be sounds waiting for reconstruction; Sinosi's little book contained all the chords for our songs composed in the year 2000 and Khilizibe started a thick book of his own with song texts waiting to be set in music. We then made an inventory of the titles and the dance movements:

"Sinjonjo Blues"	Sinjonjo
"Dayina tidzipita ku Chaina"	Lumba
"Sena Twist"	Twist
"I love you until tomorrow only"	Sinjonjo (fast)
"Simanje-manje minor"	Simanje-manje

“Chérie m’a refuse”	Lumba
“Soul Blues”	(a) Sinjonjo and (b) Simanje-manje
“Sunshine Walk”	Sinjonjo
“Break the Blues”	Sinjonjo (fast)
“I walk up the mountain”	Sinjonjo
“Rhino Boys’ Lumba”	Lumba

In addition there was Donald Kachamba’s legacy, a hundred-something musical pieces. So we started to work, first on improving the lyrics of some of our own songs, in Chinyanja or English, one even in French. Some other pieces had no song texts, such as “Sunshine Walk”, “Rhino Boys’ Lumba” and “Soul Blues”.

It is perhaps characteristic of the way we compose in our band that it is a group process. We inherited this from the experiences in “Donald Kachamba’s Kwela Band” and ultimately the “Kachamba Brothers”. In Donald’s Band the leader, Donald, would often come up with a melodic idea, suggesting that I play that on the clarinet, developing my own variations. Then he would discuss with Moya the vocal part, how their voices should go together, backing it up with guitar chords, and so on. In our band it is similar. One of us gets an idea, perhaps a melodic phrase for flute or clarinet, then a suitable guitar backing is found. The rattle beat is easily identified. Then we work together on the combination and on variations. It can be that a vocal part with a suitable text is composed years after an instrumental version of the piece has been developed. Vocal lines are sometimes sung solo, in other pieces there is a call-and-response form. When we shape up a chorus phrase, we usually sing in parallel, following African harmonic ideas, in some songs blues tonality. In a few songs the combination of vocal lines can be polyphonic, in which case two people sing, each a different text-line, as in some Sena music of the Lower Shire Valley. It is like a motet.

One can also start with a text-line and then set it out melodically. That was Khilizibe’s original approach. But nowadays we follow much more Donald’s compositional techniques. Donald normally had a guitar part and a basic voice-line together. But what has come up with Khilizibe recently is most interesting. From about 2005 it has often happened that one of us starts developing a guitar part, then calls Khilizibe who records it on his cell-phone (!) and takes it to his house. The next day he comes back with the words and melody of a perfect song! This is the history of several recent songs we have composed for

two guitars and rattle: “Iwe nkazi wanga”, “Timtamande” and “Kuyimba kuposa mbalame” (in the years 2004-2005) and “Mfumu ya bwino” (in 2006), romantic stuff sung by Khilizibe with much feeling. But in 2002 Khilizibe, born 1981, was just a quiet performer on the rattle, with a stable beat and an acute ear for taking part in second- or third-voice lining.

Diary note, July 29, 2002:

Sinosi has just come and we should play... Sinosi brought his guitar to my house because Donald’s house is no longer available for practice. It has been rent out by self-appointed relatives to some strangers who are working at the airport. I unpack my clarinet, and we begin our session, as if the interruption of two years had only been twenty-four hours. In the next few days we will rehearse the existing repertoire and embark on some new pieces.

One of these was “Do remember” (Musical Example 6):

Musical Example 6

Musical_example_VI
 "Do remember"
 Clarinet part and guitar chords

Copyright:
 Donald Kachamba's
 Kwela Heritage Jazzband

The musical score for "Do remember" is presented in three staves. The first staff contains the initial melody with chords F¹³, G⁷, C, and A_m. The second staff continues the melody, featuring a first ending bracket over the final two measures with chords F¹³, G⁷, C, and A_m. The third staff begins with a second ending bracket over the first two measures, with chords A_b^{maj7}, G, C^{maj7}, and A_m, followed by "etc." indicating further continuation.

“Do remember” is a song composed in little bits. While I was in Vienna, Sinosi and I used to communicate by satellite telephone. In winter 2001, I once faxed my version of a certain chord sequence to him. He then played it back to me on his guitar from Chileka through the phone (!), while I was whistling the main theme, as I would play it on the clarinet.

Thus, our Chileka number +265/1/692-357 is indeed very musical. In addition it has its own secret mathematical structure. For example, if you take one specific permutation of the country code, 256 instead of 265, then (with some luck) you might find Moya and me in Uganda! That was the case from December 31, 2001 to February 4, 2002 when we were working on the totemic clan system of the Kingdom of Buganda. And the number 1 for the area code is ubiquitous and goes with Blantyre as it goes with Vienna and other cities. The next ciphers, 6 and 9, are identical shapes, only inverted (whatever that means) and the sequence 2, 3, 5, 7 is the start of the prime numbers into infinity about whose mysteries one may consult the so-called Riemann hypothesis. There is a 1 million US\$ reward for whoever can solve one of these mathematical puzzles, i.e., the law of the order of prime numbers. Perhaps I have now made readers receptive to the idea that there is quite a bit of mathematics in African music and in jazz (most apparently in Thelonius Monk). An instructive example is the asymmetric time-line patterns. Sinosi uses the Angolan 16-pulse time-line in his composition “Timangoyimba kusangalala”, and the common 8-pulse stick pattern is the background to “Dayina tidzipita ku Chaina”, although nobody strikes it.

Diary note of Friday, August 2, 2002:

This is a joyous day, as far as I can see ahead. It is as if our jazz band had returned to life. Sinosi has unearthed a few pieces by Donald and learned them on the guitar. Not bad indeed, how he plays “Talekani miseche”. And when he played “Bop Blues” this morning, a piece which we hadn’t managed in the old band, Moya – all of a sudden – appeared at the door during our rehearsal to play it with us on the bass. We have rehearsed three pieces together. In “Talekani miseche” Moya and Sinosi were singing in two-part harmony very nicely. Finally we played “Dayina”. It was so funny; the bass-playing Moya imitated his daughter’s voice-line! She wasn’t around today. It was as if Donald had come to see us, happy with what’s going on here. Perhaps he *was* here with us that moment! I believe he thinks positively about us that we continue his and our music.

One of the highlights of 2002 was the development of a piece we had listed in 2000 under the title “Simanje-manje minor”. This piece is in a double-step or *simanje-manje* rhythm. Foreign audiences should be careful with their reactions when listening to this kind of rhythm. Almost invariably they get the beat references wrong. Disoriented by strong accentuations on the guitar, in the instrumental and voice parts, listeners tend to invert the entire structure metrically, i.e., they hear

the beat on the offbeat. Besides strong offbeat accentuations, this is, of course, stimulated by the fact that invariably chord changes do not coincide with the start of a measure in this music, but are anticipated by the value of two elementary pulse-units. In other words, in a metrical sequence of 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 steps, harmonic changes already occur on 4 and not on 1. Many listeners then take beat unit 4 for beat unit 1 and invert the structure. If they try to dance, they dance on the offbeat. This looks funny to us. *Simanje-manje* pieces in “Donald Kachamba’s Band”, and indeed in our successor band, require a distinctive bass pattern to be added. Within a simple cyclic chord sequence the base pattern is as shown in Figure 3.

Fig. 3: Basic pattern of the one-string bass in *simanje-manje*

Basic pattern of the one-string bass in *simanje-manje*

The figure shows a musical staff with a bass clef. Above the staff is a line labeled 'Rattle:' with a series of 'x' marks indicating a rhythmic pattern. Below the staff is a line labeled 'Chord changes (on the guitar):' with the chords C, F, C, G⁷, and C. The staff itself contains a sequence of notes and rests, with some notes marked with 'z' symbols, representing the one-string bass pattern.

“Simanje-manje minor” – when Sinosi first played it on the guitar in 2000 – was different from all the standard *simanje-manje* items we had played in Donald’s band, not in rhythm, but in form because of its AABB arrangement, and in the chords. Once, on July 19, 2000, when Donald was still with us in the village, Sinosi was playing the guitar part casually. Donald heard it and seemed to be somewhat bewildered. He asked Sinosi: “Is that supposed to be *simanje-manje*?” It was as if he wanted to say that Sinosi had not understood the basics of this music.

We have both given thoughts to Donald’s comment. But it is obvious what Donald had found unusual: it was the chords. In rhythm it is pure *simanje-manje* or “double step” (as Daniel Kachamba used to call it), but the chord sequence is nowhere to be found in South African popular music, where *simanje-manje* originated. We are sure, however, that after some time, Donald would have come round and accepted this probe into new territory.

Long after we had played it instrumentally, the text in Chinyanja to our “Simanje-manje minor” occurred to me on a long walk to a far crossing of the Likhubula River on August 15 with Ananjeza, Moya’s wife, and Nansi, Sinosi’s mother. I was unusually quiet on the way, while Ananjeza and Nansi were talking. It is a two hours’ walk from our village. My mind was somehow focused on rivers and people searching a ford. In addition, all along our way, the instrumental version of this piece did not get out of my mind; it seemed to repeat itself continuously, as if I had a CD-player somewhere in my head, playing just this one item. Some people need a “Walkman” or some other cassette device (nowadays the iPod) for listening to music while walking. With me it is easier and cheaper. The songs are sounding from inside my brain without any electronic pacemaker.

When we were walking over a bridge, it suddenly “clicked” and I had the first line of the song on my lips! Ananjeza, I suppose, did not notice anything; we had some conversations about different matters – but there was this parallel strand of musical thought. In Malawi, when you approach a watercourse you shout from afar to the people who might be bathing there: “Ku madzi! Ku madzi!” (To the water! To the water!). Then the people reply: “Aime!” (You should stop) if they are undressed. But if they are dressed, they reply: “Apite!” (You may pass!).

This is exactly how our song starts, with words spoken.

Leader (shouting): Ku madzi! Ku madzi!

Chorus (answering): Apite!

Song in Chinyanja with English translation:

L. Ku mulatho!	There at the bridge!
Ch. Musasochere!	Don’t get lost!
L. Tidzipita propanda mavuto!	Let us pass without any problems!
Ch. Inu atsikana mudzatigulire dzikondamoyo!	You girls, you should buy for us <i>dzikondamoyo</i> cakes!

Leader (shouting): Ku madzi! Ku madzi!

Chorus (answering): Aime!

When I told Sinosi the words, coming home, he burst out in laughter, especially after hearing the last line. He found the text most amusing,

and so do many youngsters in our village to this day. But as so often, the words had merely “happened”.

Sinosi found the second, upper voice for the vocal part almost immediately.

Musical Example 7

Musical Example VII
 "Ku mulatho" (At the bridge)
 Instrumental theme and
 Guitar chords

Donald Kachamba's
 Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Double step (fast)

Guitar chords for instrumental theme:
 Line 1: G⁷ C C F C G⁷ C
 Line 2: G⁷ C C F C G⁷ G⁷ F
 Line 3: A⁷ D_m D⁷ G⁷ G⁷ C C F
 Line 4: A⁷ D_m D⁷ G⁷ G⁷ C C

Chorus:
 Leaders:
 Chorus:
 ku mu-la-tho! Mu-sa-so-che-re! Ti-dzi-pi-ta po-pa-nda-ma-vu-to!
 ku mu-la-tho! Mu-sa-so-che-re Ti-dzi-pi-ta po-pa-nda-ma-vu-to! I-nu a-
 tsi-ka-na mu-dza-ti-gu-li-re dzi-ko-nda-mo-ya . I-nu a-
 tsi-ka-na mu-dza-ti-gu-li-re dzi-ko-nda-mo-ya.
 Guitar chords for chorus:
 Line 1: G⁷ C C F C G⁷ G⁷
 Line 2: G⁷ C C F C G⁷ G⁷ F
 Line 3: A⁷ D_m D⁷ G⁷ G⁷ C C F
 Line 4: A⁷ D_m D⁷ G⁷ G⁷ C C

I cannot suggest how to interpret the text, except as a sequence of dreamlike images. Some might think it is symbolic. It may be, but it all depends on what one projects into it. A group of boys goes to the river. They want to cross. Yes, they can, but there is a warning: “Don’t get lost!” Now, those boys don’t want any problems ... On the other side, then, they meet a group of girls, and they demand that those girls buy them some cakes known as *dzikondamoyo* (= those things that love life). Perhaps it is symbolic, but anyone can give our song the meaning they like, and it is always true.

A few months later, Moya would hand over to Sinosi Donald’s last flute for practice; so in 2003 we would all be surprised to find Sinosi playing flute. But for now we were determined to arrange one of Donald’s last compositions “Chemwali muli kuti?” (Sister, where are you?) for flute, rattle, guitar, and voices. He had composed this piece shortly before 1995. It is a mourning song, but not in relation to his own sister who died much later. Donald recorded a solo version for guitar, rattle and voices in Ghent, Belgium, in 1995, for Herman C. Vuylsteke of the Belgium Radio en Television, Brussel. Vuylsteke had also recorded our band the year before in a bar in Belgium and published the recordings on a CD in the series *La Chant du Monde* (see reference). With Sinosi we were now practicing Donald’s “Chemwali”, setting the voice lines to the traditional “Lake Malawi” harmony (see also Kubik et al. 1987 for comments on the “skipping process”).

Musical Example 8

Text in Chinyanja:

Chemwali muli kuti?

Mwasiya mavuto.

Tichite bwanji?

Mwasiya mavuto.

Translation:

Sister, where are you?

You have only left misery.

What should we do?

You have only left misery.

Che-mwa-li mu-li ku - ti ? Mwa-si-ya ma-vu-to.
 C D_m F /D_m C

Ti-chi-te bwa- nji ? Mwa-si-ya ma-vu-to.
 C D_m F /D_m C

Returning from Makanjila, Mose Yotamu would join us on the bass. For Moya’s Museum of Ethnographic Objects in Jacaranda House, Chileka, he would also construct a friction drum of the type found in northwestern Zambia and Angola. He even joined us with the friction drum in some items that had a *kachecha* time-line, such as the second part of our song “Ndumba Mangwangwa”.

Many new pieces, which would be published two years later on a CD featuring our concert on December 10, 2004 in Vienna’s *Sarg-fabrik* (Coffin Factory), were already with us in 2002, sometimes without words, sometimes in an embryonic state. In a diary note of August 20, 2002, there is a first mention of our composition “New York 9/11” and that it is based on a descending chromatic sequence through major seventh and diminished chords (Musical Example 9). This was the instrumental version. The song text and vocal line on top of the chords was not yet found. We would find it while staying in the Highlands of Upangwa, southwestern Tanzania in 2004!

On Wednesday, 28 August 2002, I wrote into my diary:

It is unbelievable, but new compositions are somehow dropping into our lap. Right now, this evening, I have been sifting down with the guitar, and as I was somewhat casually changing fingers from a C^{maj7} to a C⁶ chord, the song outlined above emerged like a mathematical equation!

I was referring to an outline of our “Marabenta Lumba”. *Marabenta* today is something like the national popular music in Mozambique. What present-day groups are playing with electrically amplified guitars, however, is only a shadow of original *marrabenta* played with acoustic guitars and other instruments in the townships of Maputo during the 1950s. Apparently, the music was inspired by Brazilian

records on 78 rpm. shellac discs. In our conversation in November 2006, Tiago de Oliveira Pinto observed that the term *marrabenta* might be a corruption of *barravento* as one of the three basic *toques* in the Candomblé de Angola, or as a particular type of *samba-de-roda* in the Recôncavo de Bahia called *samba-de-barravento*. The term then appeared on popular records by Custódio Mesquita and Evaldo Rui in 1944, and another popular song was performed by Nassara Frazão in 1940. This roughly conforms to the period in which *marrabenta* began to develop in Lourenço Marques, now known as Maputo.

I remember that I called Sinosi immediately, so that we would work on it and on Friday, August 30, 2002, Mike Kamwendo of *Quest Magazine*, Blantyre, came to see us; he made an interview, photographed the band in action and wrote an assessment of our work. It was obvious that we would soon go on tour overseas with this band and we were beginning to think about a name. Eventually we agreed upon “Donald Kachamba’s Kwela Heritage Jazzband”. It is a bit long for a band name, but necessarily descriptive (see Musical Example 9).

Mike Kamwendo was the first person outside Singano village to whom we played “New York 9/11”. He liked it very much and said that there was no other place in Malawi where one could hear such music. Then he asked Sinosi to tell him where he had learned to play guitar. Kamwendo noted that even the sound of his guitar with the five-string tuning was unusual. It was neither banjo nor guitar, but something else. Sinosi explained that the idea of the five strings and their tuning came from the late Daniel Kachamba. Mike Kamwendo commented that apparently Sinosi had internalized Donald’s music from birth (Sinosi was born in 1980). He added, however, that what we were playing had changed since the days of Donald, because we were using other chords. Mike Kamwendo, himself a musician, later wrote a lucid article about us (Kamwendo 2002). It even attracted the attention of American colleagues.

It seems that “Kumalatho” which came out of “Simanje-manje mirror”, was becoming a local hit in Singano village, along with “Dayina”. People liked it, most certainly because of the words. Musical appreciation in Malawi is text-focused. A song is considered to be a failure if the words do not impress people’s imagination. But seeing that we were successful with this song, I began to cogitate about those

Musical Example 9

Musical Example 9
"New York 9/11"
Instrumental theme and
Guitar chords

Sinjonjo (middle)

Copyright:
Donald Kachamba's
Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Note: Chord changes throughout this piece occur on the last quaver before each measure, i.e. before the bar-line.

words, trying to reconstruct how they had come to my mind in the first place, on that long walk with Nansi and Ananjeza to the river cross-

ing. And why did those keywords “kumulatho” (at the bridge) occur to me at all? Suddenly I remembered that the same day in the morning we had been playing a theme by George Shearing. And Sinosi had made a mistake on the guitar at the “bridge” of this piece!

Time was running out, because I would have to leave for Europe in early September, and even if there was no international tour right away, we would continue with our music in Chileka next year. These were the hassles, I said, of having a band whose members have different passports!

With Donald Kachamba, we had toured on combined lecture and concert trips no fewer than thirty-three countries of the world between 1972 and 1997. His last visit to Europe brought us concerts at the German Film Museum in Frankfurt and in the *Gewandhaus*, Leipzig, Germany. 1999 he was granted a five-year J-1 visa for the United States, on invitation by the University of California, Los Angeles, where he spent a marvelous teaching period. Sadly he was only able to use it for a single entry. Had he lived he would perhaps have built a brilliant future on the U.S. circuit as a musician and composer.

That was the world before September 11, 2001. With visa restrictions everywhere now due to fear of terrorism, combined with reasonable fears of international criminal organizations, Donald would have to operate in a very different world. When we were traveling with him, a Malawi citizen and Mose Yotamu, a Zambian citizen, to Finland and to East Berlin in 1988, complications were negligible: Mose did require a visa for Germany, but could cross over into East Berlin on a day’s pass. Donald and Moya had been walking in and out of Germany since the 1970s on their Malawi passports without any requirements for a visa. Now, arranging a visit to Europe for Malawi musician friends could entail the walk to a lawyer signing a guarantee of support. On the other hand, on an EU passport, even after paying 130.00 Euro for a multiple entry visa to Malawi, I myself would regularly get a stamp for a visitor’s pass of just 30 days upon arrival. Luckily, it is possible to line up later in Blantyre and get a prolongation, while such facilities do not exist for the Malawian members of our jazz band traveling to Europe on a so-called Schengen visa.

It makes things complicated. We in science and art do not feel many positive aspects of the so-called globalization that in theory should benefit our musical group. On the contrary, boundaries are

going up everywhere. Literally, whenever we want to do rehearsals with our musical group, we first have to ask permission from various nation states to do so! For us, this confirms that in our world of the early twenty-first century, artificially imposed “cultural identities” only promote segregation, if not outright racism. There is little space for an unusual artistic group like ours.

Donald did not live to see September 11, 2001, and the sort of psychological trauma left behind. Terror – once state-sponsored with the annihilation of millions of Jews in Central Europe, the wanton destruction of towns and cities like Coventry, Hamburg, Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki in World War II, but now privatized and within reach of every individual feeling a “mission” – has become a permanent institution. Satellite TV (“Independence Day”), Internet and video games provide models and advice; cell phones have become strategically important tools.

The last song we composed in 2002 was perhaps one of our most unusual: “I feel so lonely”. This one *has* a message. Sinosi sings it in English to the accompaniment of guitar clarinet, bass, and rattle. It is plain blues, but not in a 12-bar blues form. The form is AAB, adding up to something like a 24-bar blues. I do not know whether something comparable to our song exists anywhere in jazz. In our remote world at Singano village, Malawi, we would not think of searching in libraries for parallels, let alone the Internet. It would be an undertaking with little benefit.

A first note on “I feel so lonely” is found in my diary on September 5, 2002. This was two days before my departure. The next day we were still practicing the new song. “Shining path” is a hidden reference to the Maoist guerrilla movement *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru. No other comments can be found, except the complete text, which Sinosi Mlendo would sing. Years later we would create a second, interlocking text-line and make it our jazz motet:

Musical Example 10

“I feel so lonely! (text in English sung by Sinosi Mlendo)
 (sung twice)
 I feel so lonely,
 I feel so lonely,

Without a shining path,¹
 Because you never know,
 And you will never know
 What I can see!

Oh, my sorrow
 Won't go away,
 Because you never know
 And you will never know
 What I can see!

Musical Example X
 "I feel so lonely"

Copyright:
 Donald Kachamba's
 Kwela Heritage Jazzband

Instrumental theme and
 Guitar chords

Sinjonjo (slow)

F G_m⁷ F_{ma}j⁷ E_bm⁶ B_b
 B_bm F C F
 G_m⁷ F_{ma}j⁷ E_bm B_b
 B_bm F C C_m
 C_m B_b B_bm F
 C F /B_b F

Vocal part

I feel so lone-ly, I feel so lone-ly, without a shi-ning path.
 be-cause you ne-ver know, and you will ne-ver know what I can see ... Etc.

1 "Shining Path" (*Sendero Luminoso*) is a hidden reference to a Maoist guerrilla movement in Peru.

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Other recordings, cinematographic shots and video recordings of Donald Kachamba, his band members and trainees, are scattered in various parts of the world, at radio stations, cultural institutions (e.g. Goethe Institutes), universities and in private possession. – Larger documentations are found, for examples, in the Ethnographic Museum, Berlin (Abteilung Musikethnologie), in Arthur Benseler's Afrika-Archiv, Freiberg am Neckar, in the Phonogram archive Vienna, including the recording of a complete concert at Jazzland, Vienna, given by "Donald Kachamba's Kwela Band" in 1985, and in the African Music Archive, Institute for Ethnology and African Studies, University of Mainz. – In the United States materials can be found at the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive and at the Center for Black Music Research (Library), Chicago.