AFRO-CLASSICS FROM KENYA:
A SPECIAL CASE OF THE LUO;

1. NYAR JODONGO;
2. ORUTU OVERTURE

A CREATIVE COMPOSITION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC FACULTY OF ARTS
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BY
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DECLARATION

This creative composition thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

ELLY O. OGALO

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

It is with great joy and a warm heart that I dedicate this work to my dear children Otieno, Omondi and Rohgo.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would not have been easy for me to write and bring this project to its present form without the cooperation and support of a number of people. To all of them I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation.

Dr. Fr. Okelo who was my University supervisor deserves special recognition for he made me understand what it means to be a graduate student. Thank you for the guidance.

Mrs. Margaret Mwiruki who not only allowed me to turn her house into an office but gave me access to all the facilities that gave this document a professional look, and never complained when I made her husband wear off his fingers on the keyboard while typing the entire document and preparing the music notation for printing. Thank you very much.

My acknowledgement would not be complete without my colleagues and friends Mr. T.K.Njoora, chairman of the Music department and Mr. S. Mak’Okeyo who read through my work and gave good advice that improved this work a great deal, and all the members of the Music department who encouraged me. I am thankful to you all.

My special tribute goes to Mr. Wagitu, Principal of Alliance High School without whose assistance and encouragement I would not have completed this project on time. I was honoured to be on your staff while undertaking my Post-Graduate studies and I owe this success to you and I am very grateful.
Mr. George Mwiruki believes in sharing knowledge and that is what he proved while working on this document. Thank you for sharing your expertise and facility with me and all the people that will read this thesis. You are one sincere friend that I am glad to have met and this document is a true testimony of what kind of a person I associated with.

Lastly I thank my lovely wife Pheobe for the moral support. Your perseverance and patience gave me all the strength I needed and my success is yours. May God bless you all.
The study aims at establishing various aspects of Western music that could merge with aspects of Luo music to objectively produce arrangements and compositions of Afro-classic works.

Aspects of the two cultures were identified, established, and merged. These included melodic line, intervals, rhythms and note groupings. Some aspects of music that were necessary from the works but were absent in music of either culture were incorporated. For example, harmony, dynamics, notation, bars and bar lines, time signature and tempo (Western); speech rhythm and syllabic accents (Luo).

Chapter One, the general introduction deals with the statement of the problem, objectives, rationale, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, literature review and methodology. Chapter Two discusses composition as an art in music creation. Chapter Three is the creative arrangement, Nyar Jodongo; the choral work. In the work attention has been put on the syllabic accent and intonation which govern the pronunciation of Luo words. The voice parts are written to adopt the traditional flow of the Luo syllables. Chapter Four is the creative composition, the Orutu Overture. This is an instrumental work where the Luo and Western musical aspects are merged.

Finally, Chapter Five gives a brief summary and conclusion on the merger of the Luo and Western musical aspects for arrangements and compositions.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ........................................................................................................... ii  
DEDICATION ............................................................................................................... iii  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................. iv  
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................... vi  
TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................................................................... vii  
LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................................... ix  
CHAPTER ONE .............................................................................................................. 1  
1.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1  
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM ............................................................................. 2  
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT .............................................................................. 4  
1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT ............................................................................ 5  
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY ............................................................................................. 6  
1.5.1 LIMITATIONS ...................................................................................................... 6  
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................. 8  
1.8 METHODOLOGY ...................................................................................................... 10  
1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS ......................................................................................... 12  
CHAPTER TWO ............................................................................................................. 13  
MUSIC COMPOSITION AMONG THE LUO ............................................................... 13  
2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 13  
2.2 Orutu ...................................................................................................................... 14  
2.3 Thum ...................................................................................................................... 17  
2.5.1 Tuning of Nyatiti ............................................................................................... 19  
2.4 Gara ...................................................................................................................... 20  
2.5 Oduon’go ............................................................................................................... 21  
2.6 Bul ........................................................................................................................ 21  
2.7 Ongeng’o ............................................................................................................... 24
CHAPTER THREE ........................................................................................................... 25
  3.1 CREATIVE ARRANGEMENT .................................................................................. 25
  NYAR JODONGO ........................................................................................................ 25
  3.2 ANALYSIS ............................................................................................................ 39

CHAPTER FOUR ............................................................................................................. 43
  4.1 CREATIVE COMPOSITION ................................................................................ 43
  ORUTU OVERTURE .................................................................................................... 43
  4.2 ANALYSIS ............................................................................................................ 69

CHAPTER FIVE ............................................................................................................... 73
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................................... 73
  5.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................ 73
  5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .................................................................. 73
  5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS ..................................................................................... 74
  5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER PROJECTS .................................................. 75

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................................................ 76

APPENDIX A
  Map of Nyanza Districts ......................................................................................... 78

APPENDIX B
  Map of Kenya ......................................................................................................... 79

APPENDIX C
  Original Melodies .................................................................................................... 80

APPENDIX D
  BUDGET .................................................................................................................. 91
LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

Figure 1 Orutu and a bow ......................................................... 14
Figure 2 Thum ................................................................. 18
Figure 3 Gara ................................................................. 20
Figure 4 Oduong’o .......................................................... 21
Figure 5 Bul ................................................................. 22
Figure 6 Ongeng’o .......................................................... 24
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The tradition of Luo folk music has been affected by migration and industrialization, among other factors, to such an extent that its present-day status is rather different from what it used to be originally. This has been due to several factors. One such factor is the migration by the Luo people in search of suitable settlement areas. This led to mixing of people from various ethnic communities at some stage during their movements. As they moved they shared some social and cultural activities of which music was part. They borrowed some musical aspects and practices thus incorporating them into their musical practices.

The other factor which came into effect later during the colonial period was the influence of Western music. Western music was introduced by the missionaries who were the first Europeans to settle in Kenya. For a long period during the colonial era, the missionaries did not allow African melodies for worship in church. In the Luo community, Western hymn tunes were fitted with Luo words.

After listening, singing, and analysing some of these Western hymns fitted with Luo words, the writer realized that the speech rhythm and syllabic intonation were consistently not taken into consideration during translation of the text. In most cases, the Western melodies do not fit well with the sentence structures of some African languages. Apart from church music, secular music also suffered the same fate.
This project merged some aspects of Western music with those of Luo music without interfering with and/or distorting each other. The resultant composition from the merger is what the writer has referred to as “Afro-Classic” music. “Afro” in this case represents the African aspects of music. The prefix “Afro” has been used in several ways to mean “Africa”. “Classic”, (in the “Afro-classic” composition) is a representative of Western musical aspects from the common practice style. “Classic” in this case does not refer to the Classical Period in the History of Western Music, but to the Western Art Music in general.

Kenyan music consists of music from various ethnic communities like Luo, Luhya, Agikuyu, Maasai, Kalenjin and many others. This project used only the music from the Luo community this is why it is called “AFRO-CLASSIC MUSIC: A CASE OF THE LUO.”

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many Kenyan musicians have arranged various folk-songs of Kenya using Western composition styles. Some of these composers/arrangers, especially those whose works have been written in Luo e.g. Otieno, A. “Nyamgondho”, Yuko, D. “Lelo”, Ochieng’, S., “Koya iye tek”; Otieno, S. “Apenjo Yo”. Aguko, O., “Jasem”; Odhiambo, C. “Marwa” and many others have omitted some of the considerations discussed in this paper. As far as is known to the writer, little has been done in the analysis of these compositions and arrangements so as to establish the musical aspects that have been merged together from the Western and Luo music.
After analyzing a few published and unpublished works of this kind, it was realized that there is extensive use of Western harmony as the basis of these compositions and arrangements. From some of these compositions that have been performed (for example, at the 1991 Kenya Music Festival), one can easily notice that melody writing has been done at the expense of syllabic intonation and speech rhythm. This has to some extent caused some distortion of melodies and therefore the meaning of the texts used are perceived incorrectly.

These types of compositions and arrangements have also misplaced the accents in both the syllables and words. Take for instance the following sentence with rhythmic divisions as shown, "Onge gima anyalo rito epinyka".

In example (i) the rhythmic pattern used contradicts the speech rhythm of Luo language while in example (ii) the speech rhythm is the same as it is in the spoken language and the syllabic accents fall in the right places. Syllabic intonation, accent and speech rhythm are three factors which have been ignored by most composers of the said type of Luo songs. This has been due to the fact that the words are fitted to existing tunes instead of using the words to influence the flow of new melodies.
Luo folk songs have therefore been affected by the Western style of music composition and arrangements. The following questions served as the premise of this creative composition project.

1. Is it possible to write a composition in Luo using Western music aspects and Luo music aspects without distorting the true meaning of words and sentences?

2. Can Western music aspects be merged together with Luo music aspects to produce a piece of work to satisfy the expectations of literate musicians (those with the ability to read and write music)?

3. Can the notation of the composed pieces of work be done accurately (using conventional Western music notations) to make the reader comprehend the music?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The general objective of the project was to compose pieces of music with a specific academic orientation. The specific objectives were:

1. Establishing the aspects of music from Luo that could be merged with Western aspects.

2. Composing and writing a piece of music by merging Luo music aspects with appropriate Western music aspects especially rhythm, harmony and syllabic intonation.
3. Adopting and arranging Luo folk music using compositional techniques of Western music to produce an “Afro-Classic Luo composition.”

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

In an attempt to develop Luo music, many Luo musicians have incorporated Western musical aspects into Luo folk tunes. Since some of these composers have limited knowledge in the art of composition in Western style, most of them lacked understanding of the differences between the Western musical aspects and the Luo ones.

In their compositions, therefore, they may not have taken into consideration certain music components which are well grained in the Luo culture from which the folk songs are drawn. The neglect of rhythm, syllabic intonation, Western scales as well as speech rhythm has interfered with a number of compositions in Luo.

Most of the compositions the researcher refers to here are unpublished but the researcher’s experience as an adjudicator of the same at various music festivals has yielded strong evidence of inaccuracies in the notation of rhythm of Luo music. Examples given in the appendices (see Appendix C) are representative of the Luo tunes whose syllabic intonation and speech rhythms have been distorted by various composers and arrangers (as recorded during the Kenya Music Festival 1991, in Nairobi) and the possible corrections of the same melodies.

This project combined aspects of Western Classical music and aspects of Luo folk music, with special attention given to rhythm and melody, culminating into a creative
arrangement and composition. A combination of various Luo and Western music instruments are used in the performance of the composition.

It is the wish of the writer that this document becomes a source of information for students pursuing music composition in schools. The compositions may also be used for music analysis and also serve as reference materials for those who may, in future, want to pursue the same study.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The project encompassed an arrangement and a composition with an academic analysis of both works. The arrangement is a cappella in Luo, which is a combination of melodies that are borrowed from Luo folk songs. The writer has incorporated various traditional melodies in the arrangement but some sections have been altered to accommodate the common practice of Western harmonic progressions, without compromising Luo idioms.

The composition, is an instrumental work for a combination of Luo and Western musical instruments. The Luo instruments orchestrated for are Nyatiti, Orutu, Ongeng' o, Bul, Gara, while the Western ones are Piano and Recorder. Nyatiti and Orutu are melodic instruments while Ongeng' o, Bul, Gara, are percussive. The melodic Luo instruments are tuned to be in pitch with the Western ones used in the composition.

1.5.1 LIMITATIONS

This particular project being a relatively new area, has very little literature to be used as a source of reference. Very few people have attempted to combine Western and Luo
music aspects in their composition. Apparently no single paper known to the writer has been written on these types of compositions.

In using Western notation to write Luo folk melodies and tunes that were used in the compositions, the composer was limited to the use of the aspects that could be combined with the Western notational symbols and signs. This, therefore, limited the writer to pitch and rhythm, leaving out colour (timbre) which is a very important element in this project, especially, the instrumental composition.

The fast tempo and rhythmic complexity of some of the Luo folk tunes led to some difficulties in the transcription of rhythm. The project involved the use of tapes and tape recorders which were quite expensive. Lack of sufficient funds limited the writer to use only a few tapes.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study has been guided by acculturation and diffusion theories. When two or more societies come together, they are considered to share some aspects of their cultures. This is known as acculturation. The results of the acquisition of such aspects are held to be important features of culture change. As Merriam (1964:316) observed, "... selectivity is widely held to be an important feature of culture change, that is, no group accepts innovations from other cultures wholesome, but rather accepts some items and rejects others." The study, therefore, used the acculturation theory to establish these aspects of Western musical culture which are acceptable to the Luo.
"... Whether music is diffused from one generation to another ... or from one society to another... the process of diffusion is invariably influenced by the re-interpretation and re-inventions of the receivers than the offerings of the givers" (Blacking 1987:20). The study, therefore, sets out to establish musical aspects which were diffused from the two cultures to produce new inventions that are sanctioned and interpreted as correct versions of the music.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Afro-Classic: Luo arrangement and composition is an area which has not attracted many scholars. This factor made it difficult for the researcher to have a frame of reference since only a few works have been published. The only publications that have some related ideas to this project are those on transcription of music other than Western music using Western notations. This involves only a few aspects of music, for example, pitch and rhythm. This therefore, leaves out other aspects of music like harmony, timbre, and texture, which are some of the main issues in this project.

Transcription or notation of Luo music using Western music notation may take two forms, prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive notation involves the writing of music using (strictly) the conventional music signs and paper. The application and interpretation of these signs may differ from one individual to the other, thus making it very subjective. Terminologies which are used to indicate the tempo, intensity, accentuation and other aspects of music may not be interpreted in the same way by different individuals.
Descriptive notation on the other hand involves the use of graphic recording sound. Pitch is identified with the height of a page while time is represented in the same way as in prescriptive notation. Descriptive notation being a new technology of notation which is not wide-spread might deny the majority a chance of being able to either use it for recording or interpreting what has been recorded using the method. In comparing the two forms of notation Bartok (1951) says, “The only true notation are sound tracks of the record itself” and that “the human mind cannot be able to translate the visual signs into tones.”

List (1974) on the other hand seems to advocate the use of prescriptive notation by stating that: transcription made by ear in notated form are sufficiently reliable to provide a valid basis for analysis and comparative studies of two aspects of music, pitch and duration.” Seeger (1958) on his part has the idea that when the two forms of notation are used together (Prescriptive and Descriptive), a more accurate and reliable transcription of any music would result.

In this study only prescriptive notation was used, since it is familiar to the majority of the readers.

While referring to the tuning of the xylophones made by different makers, and notation of musical examples, in his book Music of Africa Nketia (1975) has this to say:

The conventional staff notation has been used for notating all the music examples in this work, since the system will be familiar to most readers; notated pitches are approximate and do not have the exact values of those of Western tempered scale.

The Nyatiti and the Orutu used in this study were tuned to suit the piano and the recorder which form part of the instruments and have pitches which are not easily adjustable.
1.8 METHODOLOGY

a) Introduction:

The study uses empirical method and descriptive survey to re-examine the data collected by both the composer and other Afro-classic composers. The study utilized personal interviews, libraries, archives and other available sources to the advantage of the composer. This is in line with Nettl’s (1964) and Nketia’s (1974) observations that the outsider does not have a better chance of bringing out the essentials of musical culture as a trained native insider.

b) Location of the study:

It was not possible for the researcher to conduct research throughout the Luo territory. However, it was possible to interview respondents from Siaya, Kisumu, and South Nyanza districts (see Appendices A and B).

c) Data Collection:

The interviews which were mainly conducted orally in Luo language were recorded by a Sony R.S. 146 cassette recorder. Live performances of both instrumental and choral music were also audio-recorded or prescribed (see Appendix C).

d) Population Sampling:

Throughout the research, a total of 150 respondents were interviewed. The choice of who to be interviewed (respondents) was based on the original home district. The respondents were categorized either as traditional or church musicians, which was further
classified in terms of literate or illiterate and whether they were male or female (see the figure below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SIAYA</th>
<th>KISUMU</th>
<th>S. NYANZA</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional Musician</td>
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<td>Illiterate</td>
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<td>Church Musicians</td>
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<td>Literate</td>
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It should be noted that some of the literate and illiterate respondents perform both as traditional and church musicians.

e) Secondary Sources:

In addition to the primary sources of data referred to above, library and archives were used as secondary sources. This included the use of Kenyatta University library, University of Nairobi, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation library, the British Council library Kenya Institute of Education and personal libraries. In these libraries, documentary information concerning published and unpublished works on acculturation, diffusion, invention, change, creativity and all which is related to Afro-classicism were sought.

Cultural centres where live musical performances take place or venues for music festivals provided opportunities for participatory observation. In some of these venues the composer played musical instruments, performed among other competitors, conducted choirs and adjudicated the competitors.
The information collected from the discussions, observations, transcriptions of musical examples and the recordings were conceptually used in arranging and composing the creative arrangement Nyar Jodongo and Orutu Overture composition.

1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definition of terms given below is as they are used in this creative composition project.

**A cappella**
Unaccompanied vocal music

**Bul**
A traditional Luo double-headed drum

**Dholuo**
The language spoken by the Luo people of Kenya

**Gara**
A Luo metallic rattle

**Illiterate Musician**
Musicians who have no ability to read and write music.

**Literate Musician**
Musicians who have the ability to read and write music

**Musical aspects**
The aspects of music excluding instruments

**Musician**
Anyone capable of singing and/or or performing on a music instrument

**Notation**
The art of writing music

**Nyatiti**
An eight-stringed Luo lyre

**Ongeng’o**
A metal ring struck with a metal rod

**Orutu**
A one-string Luo fiddle
CHAPTER TWO

MUSIC COMPOSITION AMONG THE LUO

2.1 Introduction

In the history of music composition by composers from the Luo community, both popular and traditional, love, courtship and praise songs have dominated the scene. This trend was reinforced about 15 years ago when composers performed to win political favours by composing songs in praise of leaders of newly created political parties. The composers paid little attention to other topics that could be of benefit to the community since most of the Luo composers were comfortable communicating in Luo than in Kiswahili, in which most patriotic songs are written.

The choice of themes of particular compositions were reached after comparing various topics used by earlier composers. Songs mainly talk about various issues on different subjects as they relate to the society. The composers have the responsibility of composing songs to educate the community in these various topics.

The creative composition of Afro-classic involved the merger of some of the Luo Traditional Musical instruments namely, Orutu, Nyatiti, Gara, Oduong’o, Bul, and Ongeng’o with Western Musical instruments such as the Piano, Recorders e.t.c. The compositions exploited the possibility of creating and producing Afro-classic works combining Luo and Western musical aspects.
The Luo musical instruments used in this composition are described and illustrated, with diagrams. Some of the works derive their titles from the principal instruments that carry the melody most of the time.

The following are illustrations of the Luo musical instruments used in the composition.

2.2 Orutu

*Orutu* is a Luo single or double stringed musical instrument or one-stringed fiddle. It is a counterpart of the Western musical instruments of the violin family because of the style of playing. It has a resonator, a bridge, an arm, a string, and a tuning peg. It is played by bowing.

![Figure 1: Orutu and a bow](image)

*Orutu* is a Luo single or double stringed musical instrument or one-stringed fiddle. It is a counterpart of the Western musical instruments of the violin family because of the style of playing. It has a resonator, a bridge, an arm, a string, and a tuning peg. It is played by bowing.
The resonator is cylindrical in shape and varies in size, from one maker to another. The average length of the arm is 6 inches, but some are as short as 4 inches while others are as long as 9 inches. The diameter of the resonator also varies with some being 4 inches while others could be as wide as 6 inches. The resonator is made from a small trunk of a tree called bondo. This tree is chosen for this purpose because of its softness, and is very easy to handle.

The maker cuts the size of bondo trunk he requires from a relatively wet tree trunk and curves out the inner part leaving it hollow, and allows it to dry. When it is dry, final touches are made by filing and smoothening it until the required shape and size are attained.

When the wooden resonator is ready, one end is covered with a monitor lizard skin while it is still wet to allow for tight stretching. Small sharpened wooden pegs or wire nails are used to secure the wet skin on the wooden structure. On the wooden shell just below the section where the monitor lizard skin reaches, about 1 inch from the top, two holes are bored on both sides of the shell of the resonator directly opposite each other through which one end of the arm is passed. The skin membrane is secured to one end of the resonator then left to dry.

A lot of improvisation and developments have been seen in the making of Orutu resonators. Since the species of the tree used for making the instrument is facing extinction, the new generation of Orutu makers have started using tin-cans of various sizes. These are mainly cooking fat tins, left after their contents have been exhausted.
The tin resonator is then covered with a wet goat-skin on both sides and then left to dry after it has been laced so that it sticks on that end. Though the structures of both the wooden and the tin resonator shells look alike, their sound resonance is different.

The arm of orutu is made up of a stick of about 2 feet long. The stick diameter varies from one maker to another, but the average is about an inch. One end of the arm that is fixed through the opposite holes on the shell of the resonator is made slightly narrow. The other end has varied shapes with some makers leaving it circular while others make it flat to allow for one or two tuning pegs to fit in. In either case, a small hole is pierced (bored) at the far end for the tuning peg.

The tuning peg is made of wood that is narrow and conical at the end that enters through the hole on the arm while the other end is made flat to allow for the grip in tuning. On the modern instruments, the tuning peg is a 5 or 6 inch wire nail, with one end curved. The curved end is used for tuning while the other end of the nail holds the string.

Initially Orutu strings were made from sisal fibre, but with the current technological developments, metal wire has replaced the fibre. One end of the string is tied onto the tuning peg while the other end is tied around the protruding end of the arm which passes through the resonator. For tuning, the tuning peg is turned round to tighten or loosen the string until the desired pitch is attained.

On the skin membrane, made from monitor lizard, covering the resonator, is placed a small piece of wood of about 1 inch in length and a quarter of an inch broad that serves as a bridge. This bridge, which, apart from raising the string from the skin, helps in the
production of sound by acting as a sound pick up due to its attachment to both the string and the resonator.

The playing bow is made of a stick and a string. The stick is bent to form a curve and the string, is mainly of sisal fibres tied to both ends of the curved stick. For the grip of the bow, *dwogo* resin from *otho* (*Balanitaceae*) tree is used.

Though a single stringed instrument, it is possible to play a wide range of sounds on *orutu*, depending on the expertise of the player. For a right handed player, the instrument is held by the left arm. The left hand holds the neck next to the tuning peg with the four fingers placed over the string to manipulate and regulate the sound to the desired pitch. The resonator is held against the body just below the armpit, with the open end left uncovered for resonance. The playing bow is held in the right hand and the sisal fibre rubbed on the string, producing different pitches by manipulating fingers of the left hand to reduce or increase the length which results in increasing or reducing the tension of the string.

2.3 Thum

*Thum* is a type of lyre found among the Luo people of Western Kenya. It is an eight-stringed instrument popularly known as “*Nyatiti*”. *Nyatiti* is about 62 centimetres long and has a bowl of about 42 centimetres in diameter. The components of the *Nyatiti* lyre include a resonator, a frame (arm and cross bar), 8 knobs, 8 strings and a bridge.
The resonator is a bowl-shaped structure curved from a tree trunk. This is sometimes referred to as **bundi thum** or **ohodha**. A cow hide is stretched over the open part of the oval shaped bowl. The skin is stretched into position using small wooden pegs or small wire nails. The resonator shell has a small rectangular hole bored on the upper side which serves two purposes. It may be used by the player as a window through which he keeps his *gara* and *oduung'o* when not in use, or receives the monetary gifts during performance, or it can be opened and closed, to increase the sound volume when open and reduce it when closed.

The frame consists of two pieces of wood which jet out of the bowl (resonator), and the distance between them widens outwards to about 40 centimetres at its widest part, to which the crossbar is fixed to keep the frame in position. Tuning knobs are tied around the crossbar. For proper support of both strings and the frame, two holes are bored on the crossbar into which the arms are fixed. The crossbar is therefore used to keep the two arms in position as well as for holding one end of each string.
At the far end of the bowl is a small hole otuchi, through which the strings are passed and tied to a small piece of wood or wire nail. The other ends of the strings are tied onto the tuning knobs on the crossbar. The tuning knobs are made from papyrus fibres, and sisal strings. These materials are used for the purpose of grip onto the crossbar. As opposed to modern Orutu, the modern Nyatiti lyre has nylon strings and not metal. The bridge which is used to raise the strings from the resonator is made up of three reed-pieces and a flattened wooden stick held together on both sides with lumps of bee wax odok.

Nyatiti is played by placing it horizontally, with the bowl and arm of the lyre almost resting on the ground and the side of the resonator with string facing the player. The player’s left arm passes over the upper arm of Nyatiti, holding it in position. The right arm is left free to approach the strings from the inner side. In most cases, the left hand plays the upper four strings while the right hand plays the lower four. Two fingers are used in each case, but the more experienced players use all the four fingers and the thumbs. The player usually accompanies himself with the ankle bells gara and the toe ring, oduong’o.

2.5.1 Tuning of Nyatiti

Thum is tuned by the use of the knobs on the crossbar which are turned round to fasten or loosen the strings until the desired pitch is attained. The strings are tuned using the following diatonic intervals:

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<td>s</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>r</td>
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starting with the upper string.
2.4 Gara

Gara is an ankle bell shaped like a pea and is made of cast iron, inside of which are metal ball bearings. A set of Gara is tied around the Nyatiti player’s right ankle and is played by raising and dropping the ankle rhythmically. A player may use as few as 2 or as many as 10 jingles which are joined together using an animal tendon and tied around the player’s ankle wrapped with a piece of cloth.
2.5 Oduon’go

Oduong’o is a metal ring worn on the toe of the right foot. The size depends on the size of the player’s toe and is played by striking it against the lower arm of Nyatiti next to the crossbar.

Gara and Oduong’o are instruments that maintain rhythm, reinforce intensity and may be played simultaneously, alternately or each by itself.

2.6 Bul

Bul is a double-headed drum found among the Luo community. By double-headed here, it means that both sides of the drum are covered with skin as opposed to some that are covered only on one end, single-headed.
Traditionally, *Bul* was made from cylindrical tree trunks whose inner parts had been carved out to leave a hollow structure. Today, round tins of various sizes are used instead of tree trunks.

In case a tree trunk is used, it is left to dry before the open sides are covered. Cow skin pieces are cut into shapes according to the size of the hollow structure. The pieces are usually 6 inches to 1 foot wider than the trunk to allow for overlapping. Near the edges of the two skin pieces of the same size, are pierced small holes.

The dry hides are then put into a container of water and left to soften for one or two days. Dry skin pieces which are to be used as laces to fasten the skin to the trunk are also put into a container of water and left to soften. The softened skins are then stretched over the hollow sides of the trunk or tin and tightly joined together using the soft laces and left to dry.
Bul is usually played by beating either head with a stick whose size depends on the size of the drum. The drums are tuned by exposing them to the sun or by heating them on fire to warm up and tighten for desired pitch.

The drums are of different sizes and this dictates the sound produced. The small sized drums are usually high pitched while bigger ones produce low pitch in comparison to the smaller ones. The big drums have strips of skins tied to them used for carrying them while they are being played.

Bul is suspended over the left shoulder for right handed players and vice versa for left handed players and held directly in front of the player. When used for traditional dances, the drum is played on one side using two sticks. In case of use in Church, one stick is used on one side of the drum while the palm of the other hand is used on the other side of the drum to muffle and control the pitch and rhythmic patterns of the sounds produced.

The small, high pitched drum Nyiduong is held with one hand while the playing stick is held in the other hand. Alternatively, if more than one is used, they are placed on the ground and arranged according to their different sizes and pitches and an experienced drummer can play up to five drums.

The drums used in this composition are of two different sizes, a small and a big one to be played by one person. The big drum maintains the ostinato rhythm while the small drum plays various rhythmic patterns, (as in Bars 19 to 23 in the work).
2.7 Ongeng’o

Ongeng’o is a round metal ring that varies in size and its diameter ranges between 3 and 8 inches.

Figure 6: Ongeng’o

Ongeng’o is used to maintain the tempo and at times to decorate the rhythmic patterns used in a performance. It is played by hitting on the outer side to maintain the tempo, and the inner side for rhythmic decorations, using a small metallic rod. The metallic ring, Ongeng’o is held in the left hand while the rod is held in the right hand and vice versa for a left handed player. The ring is held loosely when a loud sound is desired and tightly to muffle the sound.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1 CREATIVE ARRANGEMENT

NYAR JODONGO
30
ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. A - du - ndo Nya - ni ny - ni. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. A - du - ndo Nya - ni ny - ni. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

O nyar Luo O nyar Luo ya - ye o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

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Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.

Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo. Ber - ni o - ta - mo wan'g chwo.


100 Nya' jo do ngo. Nya' jo do ngo. Nya' jo do ngo.
Ya ye a du ndo nya' jo do ngo. A du ndo ni o ta mo wangi chwo.

A du ndo ya ye nya' jo do ngo. A du ndo ni o ta mo wangi chwo.

Ya no a ya ye nya' jo do ngo. Ber ni o ta mo wangi chwo.

O nga nga nga nga. 139 O nga nga nga. O nga. 142 O nga nga nga. O nga nga nga.

The first verse of the song section is notably longer than the second verse.
3.2 ANALYSIS

"Nyar Jodongo" literally means "the daughter of the elderly men", implying that she is a very respectful lady. Her beauty is appreciated by the composer who refers to her as "Adundo", a term used for a moderately tall lady. The term "Okwaro" which is used severally in the composition refers to a lady with a light complexion. The composer has avoided the use of specific names of the subject because this is a composition meant to last long and to appeal to and have some meaning to the listeners. The song therefore is not directed to an individual.

Nyar Jodongo is a courtship song in Luo language, composed for a six part chorus. The composition has three main sections with the first section running through measures 1 - 60, while the second and the third sections run through measures 61 - 115 and 116 - 155 respectively.

The first part of the composition is notably longer than the following two due to its function. In the Luo community, courtship is taken as an important aspect of life and the suitor involved must use 'sweet' words to convince the lady. In this section, therefore, the composer has used very few words to describe the lady and assure her of her incomparable beauty. The length is created by tonal changes and varied treatment of melodic lines. The first section opens with unison singing by all voices, which introduces the main melody. The rhythmic pattern is constant throughout the passage and the melody is in simple binary form (AB) with both parts being equal in length and similar in structure.
The words of the melody are as follows:

**Dholuo**

Ber ni otamo wan’g chwo,

Ayaye Adundo okwaro,

Ber ni otamo wan’g chwo,

**Literal translation**

Your beauty has vanquished 
the eyes of men

Oh! Adundo the brown

Your beauty has vanquished

the eyes of men

The first section may be divided into four sub-sections with each displaying a different treatment of the melody, either in terms of pitch or rhythm. The section that lies between measures one and twenty five, is dominated by call and response form.

The second sub-section is marked by an immediate change of tempo as well as tonal shifts between G major and its relative minor. This is evident in measures 26 and 31 which is quite slow and at the same time sung quietly. The suitor changes his tone to show the seriousness of the whole idea of courtship. In the next four measures, the music sounds quite disjunct but pleasing to the ear, by beginning with a two and a half crotchet rest in measure 32. The rest is intentionally placed for the singer to listen to and hear any response could there have been any from the lady. The whole of this section uses only the third line/phrase of the melody but in various ways.

The third sub-section has an interesting sequential tonal change to the subdominant introduced by the soprano. The composer uses an implied tonal change to the minor of the subdominant in measure 48 but returns to the major key immediately.

The slow tempo and change of rhythmic pattern in measures 55 - 60 marks the end of section one. This section is also used in preparation for the next, as it slowly modulates...
to the dominant of the dominant which is the same as the supertonic of the original key. 
The shift of the tonal centre to only a major second above, is for the brightness needed in 
the second section.

The second part, which lies between measures 61 and 115, has a lot of differences 
with the first in terms of text, tempo, harmony as well as rhythmic variation. The suitor 
advises the lady to block her ears not to hear the rumours aimed at spoiling their 
relationship.

The section consists of two melodies which are used alternately with one being a 
refrain. The melody in measures 61 - 64 is used as a refrain and therefore has no variations 
as it reappears later, while the one in measures 65 - 68 is used as an episode and is given 
varied treatments in later appearances, as is evident in measures 73 - 83. Melodic shifts, 
segmentation and imitation have been used as developmental techniques. In the rest of this 
section measures 109 - 111 is used as a bridge to lead back to the original key while 
measures 112 - 115, which was used as a refrain earlier, concludes the section but now in 
the key of G major.

The last section of the composition may be divided into two sub-sections, measures 
116 - 142 and measures 143 - 155, being first and second respectively. The first sub-
section is a six-part chorus with two tenors singing a duet against the rest of the choir. The 
duet is given to the tenors because it is the gentlemen that persuade the ladies, and here they 
are actually pleading with the lady to listen to them and not to the rumours.

The most interesting bit of this sub-section is the use of triplets in 2/4 time against 
straight crotchet and quaver notes. The triplets are simply used for more expressions, by
creating a feeling of compound time which had just been used in the previous section. The choir which only supports the duet sings in triplets throughout the section, against the varied rhythms by the duet.

The second part of the last section measures 142 - 155 is a kind of a tail piece which reminds us of the materials used in sections one and two. The ideas used in the first two sections are combined here to conclude the piece.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 CREATIVE COMPOSITION

ORUTU OVERTURE
4.2 ANALYSIS

*Orutu* overture is a composition which displays the merger of Western musical instruments and Kenyan Luo musical instruments. While much original material have been used in the work, the composer had some bias to Luo idioms. See Appendix C for various motifs played by *Orutu*.

This inclusion of Luo idioms was necessitated by the fact that Luo musical instruments have been used. The vocal melodies which are usually accompanied by the named instruments are Luo in origin, therefore, the melodic contours and the rhythmic patterns are maintained.

Some of the melodies used in the composition are traditional. Some of these have been modified for proper merger with the Western aspects of music, for example, harmony, text, and melodic balance.

The work has three main sections One, Two, and Three. The middle section is slightly faster than the first and the last. The three sections are connected by short transitional passages which act as a bridge in each case.

"Poco piu mosso" used as the tempo mark in the middle section is an indication of a little urgency required for a good mood in the triple time.

Section one ends in measure 23 but is extended to measure 33 by a transitional musically congested area with each of the instruments struggling to outplay one another. This prepares the instrumentalists for the next section with a new time signature. The triple
time brings forth new life to the piece as well as the increased tempo, and the introduction of new materials.

Measures 66 - 69 have a different time signature, simple duple, which serves as a transition to the last section of the piece. This final section shares material with the first section, including common rhythmic patterns, time signature and melodic contours.

The first section of the piece starts with an initiated four measure introduction by the Ongeng’o which introduces the rhythmic style to be used in this section. The Orutu then announces the main melody in simple binary form. The second part of the melody is a repetition of the first, except for the last two notes.

A two measure bridge at measures 9 - 10 leads to a series of melodic shifts, an important aspect of music development found in indigenous African music. The “additive process” is quite evident between measures 17 and 23 where the melody is shared between the Orutu and the two recorders, as Nyatiti and other instruments provide supportive material. The Nyatiti, which features here in the syncopated melody. The syncopation, a distinctive feature here in the second section, is achieved by playing the melody on the left hand with a steady but frequent beat.

After the repeat sign in measure 23, the text becomes lighter, though the piano and the Orutu become quite aggressive by playing very short notes. All the instruments join in at measure 28 with a light touch to conclude the section.

The second section of the piece has a lot of excitement created by a slight increase in tempo, change of time signature as well as brighter melodic material.

The Orutu introduces the new melody with a quiet and light accompaniment by the percussions, while the other melodic instruments remain silent. This section is generally
very light in texture, even in areas where all the instruments play at the same time. The piano and the Nyatiti, which had very complex rhythmic gestures now present simple, straightforward rhythm to accompany the recorders and Orutu.

Interestingly enough, the Nyatiti plays identical accompaniment patterns with very little variation between measures 56 and 65. The melody plays a subservient role to additive processes and melodic shifts.

In preparation for the next section the tempo of the 4 measure bridge is slowed almost to the original speed. The time change to simple duple creates a contrasting mood with the triple rhythm which dominated the middle section.

Two melodies run concurrently, one played by the recorder I while the other by the piano. This “Poco meno mosso” rounds up the second section of the piece.

For once in the piece the piano gets a chance of introducing new material. The Basso ostinato in the left hand, with a steady crotchet beat accompanies in the right, the syncopated melody. The most significant feature here is the treatment of call and response in a traditional form. For example, measures 70 - 73 the piano functions as a “call” while the response is found in recorder II and Orutu, in the following 4 measures. The section is also characterized by the melodic shift from one instrument to the other, travelling through various registers.

The texture is kept light until measure 86 when all of the instruments join in. The pattern of one bar “call” and four bars “response” still remains evident with a few instruments remaining silent.
Due to the limitations in range and pitch of the Luo instruments used, the composition has remained on one tonal centre throughout. The main developmental devices used therefore, are melodic shifts, register changes, and rhythmic and time variations. Most of the harmonic materials are derived from the segments of various melodies used. Originality of the melodies and tunes have been maintained in all areas.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The project findings revealed that:

1. It is possible to write a composition in Luo, or adopt and arrange a Chinese melody with Luo words, using Western music aspects, without distorting the true meaning of the text.

2. As is evident in the previous chapters of the arrangement work, it is clear that Western musical aspects can be merged together with Chinese Vernacular music, to produce a piece of work to satisfy the expectations of both Chinese and Western musicians.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the research questions formulated for this project. The conclusions reached and recommendations given are meant to assist those composing music in Luo or any other Kenyan language, using both Kenyan and Western music aspects. This also includes the arrangement of already existing tunes in their original form.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The project findings revealed that:

1. It is possible to write a composition in Luo, or adopt and arrange musically, a Luo melody with Luo words, using Western music aspects and Luo music aspects without distorting the true meaning of the text.

2. As is evident in the previous chapters of the arrangement and composition, it is clear that Western musical aspects can be merged together with the Luo musical aspects to produce a piece of work to satisfy the expectations of literate as well as illiterate musicians.
3. Notation of the two works in this study has been done carefully and most if not all have been accurately written and digitally tested on electronic keyboard instruments. This was done using the conventional Western music notation.

4. The aspects of music from Luo that can be merged with the aspects of music from the West include the melodic line, intervals, rhythm, time signature and note grouping.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary and conclusions as presented in this study, the following recommendations should serve as a guide for further study and research.

Many Kenyan composers are being encouraged to arrange their folk tunes using the Western musical ideas. May I recommend that the composers and/or arrangers do so in a language they are more familiar with so as to avoid misplacement of the syllabic accents as well as rhythmic accents. For example, a Luo who has the mastery of Luo language in his arrangement/composition should aim at giving all the words as sung by all the voices correct pronunciation.

To the Ministry of Education, I would like to recommend that some of the Kenyan music compositions/arrangements be used in our secondary schools for the teaching of analysis as well as performance.

Those who teach music composition as a unit of music discipline should stress these ideas to their students and have as many Kenyan arrangements and compositions as
possible, analysed by students. The students should also be encouraged to compose in Kenyan languages to exploit this possibility of the merger.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER PROJECTS

The following are some suggestions for further research, as based on the findings and conclusion of this study.

- The present study was carried out in the music of one ethnic group. Similar studies should be done with music of other ethnic communities of Kenya.

- In the adaptation of tunes and melodies, there is need to conduct a research on the possibility of using a tune from one ethnic community to fit in the words from another ethnic community. For example a Kikuyu tune/melody fitted with Luo words.
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Seeger C. “*Prescriptive and Descriptive Music Writing*”. Music Quarterly Volume XIV, Number 2, April 1958.

APPENDIX A: Map of Nyanza Districts

SOURCE: NATIONAL ATLAS OF KENYA, 3rd EDITION
(DRAWN, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY)
SURVEY OF KENYA 1970.
APPENDIX B: Map of Kenya

MAP OF KENYA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF NYANZA PROVINCE OCCUPIED BY THE LUO PEOPLE

Extracted from NATIONAL ATLAS OF KENYA, 3rd EDITION.
(Drawn, Printed and Published by) SURVEY OF KENYA 1970.
APPENDIX C: Original Melodies

(i)  Ye-su bi-ro a-da-la, ko-ro

(ii) Ya-su bi-ro e da-la ko-ro

(iii) Nko-yi ma ra-eng o-ma si-

- Lwal cha ko.
(i) O - nge gi - mo 'nya - lo ri - to e

(iii) O - nge gi - mo 'nya - lo ri - to a

pimy-ka.

(ii) Winj ka - ka ma - la - i - ka we - ro we -

nde lo - cho.

(iii) Winj ka - ka Ma - la - i - ka we -

-ro we - nda lo - cho.
**IWEA GI LELO**

Transcribed by

**82**

YACO

Ma-ma nyako nyo-ro i-dhi e chi-ro ma-mi-iwe

—ya gi le-lo ni njo-ma no-pi— re to

1ST TIME

**AND TIME**

njo wo? njo. Thi-pi ma-ni-we-

—ye wanda koro gwe-ndi o-ke-yo to nja-

—thi twa-vo a-twa-ya njo-no kwombo kwom-

Fine

Ma-ma re-ti nya-thi-ni ywak, ri-

nya-thi-ni ywak, re-ti nya-thi-

—ti-mo pok-lo-lo. DS. al fine
VOCAL

ACHI URUDI Transcribed by OGAJO E.O.

A-chi u-ru-di u-ru-di ma mwa-lo

Cho-gá-winji-e. A-chi-u-ru-di u-

-ru-di ma-mwa-lo cho-gá-winji-e.

Cho-ga a-chi wuod o-mo-lo cho-gá

-winji-e cho-ga a-chi wuod o-mo-lo

cho-gá-winji-e. etc
ONGER WANG'O-LIL

chamo kum gi balo- - o-nger wang'o-lil, a-

Kondo chamo kum gi balo, o-nger wang'o-lil

ma-ya-nge.

OTHUONE

Da-yo luonge nya-thi-no da-yo luonge o-thuone.

Da-yo luonge nya-thi-no da-yo luonge o-thuone e-

 ero ero o-ye-yo bel max o-yie-ko gi chunge, e-

 ero ero o-ye-yo bel max o-yie-ko gi chunge.
ORUTU MELODIES

Transcribed by
DGALD E.D.
ORIA

Transcribed by
DG-Ado E-B.

etc.

ORDTU

Transcribed by
DG-Ado E-B.

etc.
APPENDIX D: BUDGET

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