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A Musical Instrument Travels Around the World: *Jenbe* Playing in Bamako, West Africa, and Beyond

Rainer Polak

Abstract

Jenbe drum ensemble music has appeared in a variety of contexts, namely in local family and communal celebrations, at state-organized folklore ensembles in West Africa, and as West African percussion music in the industrialized countries. These contexts of jenbe playing emerged one after the other, partly developing out of one another. However, they did not supersede each other nor leave the other contexts unaffected. This article studies the reciprocal effects of local, national, and international utilization of the jenbe, illustrated by changes in instrument-making in Bamako, the capital of the Republic of Mali. It argues that only the feedback of local, national, and international jenbe playing has allowed its artistic and professional vitality in urban West Africa to grow.

The *jenbe* (*jembe*, *djembe*)¹ is a goblet-shaped drum. Local traditions of *jenbe* playing in rural areas exist mainly among Manding-speaking groups in northern Guinea and southern Mali, around the section of the river Niger between the towns of Faranah, Guinea and Koulikoro, Mali (see Charry 2000:196, map 8). The *jenbe* has spread further in the course of the urbanization of the former colony, *Afrique Occidentale Française*, and later as a result of the formation of the independent states of Guinea, Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Burkina Faso. Important contemporary centers of *jenbe* traditions, notably Conakry, Bamako, Abidjan, Dakar, and Bobo Dioulasso, are not situated within the core area of rural *jenbe* playing but rather are adjacent to it.

1. Three Contexts of *Jenbe* Playing

Jenbe drum ensemble music has been performed in the context of local dance and drum events with communal and family celebrations for centuries. *Jenbe* players are specialists who use knowledge handed down from tradition, personal competence, privately owned instruments (for the most part), and their own labor and creativity in



Fig. 1: Jenbe players (left bottom) at the French colonial minister's reception in Conakry. Photo: Fortier, 1908. From the CD-Rom Atlas du Patrimoine n°4, West African Postcards (1895-1930), file number 20. Reprint with the kind permission of Philippe David, Images&Memoire, Paris.

individual performances. They play only when engaged for a specific occasion, and, in the urban centers, earn their living in this way. Professional music practice in West Africa is often associated with distinct social groups of griots (called *jeli* in Bamana and other Manding languages) who act as oral historians, praise singers, social mediators, festival and popular musicians, etc. *Jenbe* playing, however, does not belong to the practices more or less exclusively belonging to the griots. It is a free profession in urban West Africa.²

Since the late 1950s, the *jenbe* has been integrated into the ballet programs of both private and state-sponsored (communal, regional, and national) folkloric ensembles in West Africa. Unlike any African musical instrument before it, the *jenbe* also has gained international standing in recent decades. International tours of national ballet companies have introduced the *jenbe* to the rest of the world. Since the mid-1980s concerts and CDs featuring *jenbe* music, classes for (and playing by) amateur drummers, and the exportation of the instrument have all led to an unparalleled boom in Europe and North America.

The following will outline local family celebrations, folkloric state ballets, and the international market for percussion music as they are present as different contexts of *jenbe* music in the Malian metropolis, Bamako.

1.1. Drum and Dance Events in Urban Family Celebrations

Local drum and dance events in Bamako are hosted in the context of so-called transition rites. At life-cycle events such as the Islamic naming of a newborn child, a circumcision, or a wedding, family members organize festive days or evenings. They invite their larger circle of relatives, the neighborhood, colleagues, and all those who pass by and want to stay to watch or participate. These celebrations, in addition to involving the consumption of plenty of food and the ritual exchange of goods, are marked by drum and dance events. Weddings consist of one or two evening receptions preceding the main event (*denba-tulon*) in honor of the bride's honorary mothers (*denbaw*),³ who organize and finance the festivals and the celebration during the actual wedding day. Of all local festival engagements of Bamako professional drummers, weddings make up more than 80%.⁴

Until well into the 1960s, celebrations featuring *jenbe* music in Bamako represented urban extensions and transformations of ethnically, regionally, or locally specific rural traditions.⁵ Only those who had been accustomed to dancing to the *jenbe* before having migrated to Bamako continued to do so in the city. Today families of very diverse social backgrounds and ethnic and regional origins promote *jenbe* celebrations. Among them are Manding speakers such as the Maninka, Bamana, Wasulunka, and the Khasonka, in addition to members of about a dozen groups from the north of Bamako and from neighboring countries. Only about one-third of the demand for work of professional *jenbe* drummers in Bamako takes place among the Maninka and Wasulunka, two groups that had already known the *jenbe* as a central part of their rural entertainment practices. Some families residing in Bamako organize *soirées dansantes* with popular music, or drum and dance celebrations with ensembles other than *jenbe* players, according to their specific ethnic or regional backgrounds. Yet, many today prefer the *jenbe* irrespective of whether they had known the *jenbe* as part of their former rural tradition.

There may be, at the same time and for the same occasion, one *jenbe* ensemble and another festival music ensemble, for instance, a Fulbe flute, fiddle, and calabash percussion ensemble. Both ensembles then will play either in turn or simultaneously, though occupying different spaces: normally the "ethnic" party will perform inside the compound walls and the *jenbe* party outside in the street. Sometimes they will even perform together, that is, if the hosting family forces them to do so. Such a forced pairing will sometimes turn out fine, but sometimes it will result in rather strange musical clashes. At any rate, rivalries and arguments between the ensembles are to be expected. In such cases, it is evident that the *jenbe* meets the younger females' desire to dance and to amuse themselves together with their local neighbors, friends, and colleagues, while elder family members feel better entertained and represented by music showing close ties to their original traditions.⁶



Fig. 2: Jeli Madi Kuyate and the author performing at a drum-and-dance event in Bamako at a *denkundi* (Islamic naming ceremony). Photo: Barbara Polak, 1991.

Since independence, *jenbe* playing has become an integral part of a supra-ethnic, local culture of Bamako. The style and repertoire of *jenbe* drumming in the metropolis is different from rural *jenbe* traditions. If a master drummer from the rural Maninka land comes to Bamako, he will start out like an apprentice and play only accompanying parts for a couple of months. One speaks of *bamakò fòli*, the “music of Bamako,” as distinct from, for example, *maninka fòli*, “music of the Maninka.” The Bamako repertoire and style of *jenbe* festival music represents a tradition of its own. It is a recent urban tradition that builds on, fuses and recreates different sources.

1.2. State Ballets as National Folklore

Both in the context of local celebrations and of African ballet,⁷ drummers, singers, and dancers interact to create a common performance. However, in ballet playing the drummers have to meet demands for a type of interaction quite different from that of the festival context. The characteristic quality of festival music is to allow everybody to participate in the common performance with his or her individual contribution in the form of dancing, singing, or other activities (cf. Knight 1985:68, 83; Charry

2000:195, 198). The sequence of events always has to be established and adjusted to meet the needs of the participant’s movements in the course of a performance. Any spontaneous intervention may decisively influence the interaction. Role distinction between performers and audience is not especially marked and is further nuanced by role switching: anyone may become the focus of public attention for the limited time span when he or she takes the initiative. The drummers alone play a role that is not easily nor regularly performed by non-specialists.

In contrast to this, in ballet performance role distinction between audience and performers is far more rigid. The repertoire is condensed, arranged into pieces, made uniform and preestablished (cf. Keita 1957:207f; Charry 1996:68). It artistically blends elements of different sources into a new aesthetic whole. Choreographic and musical arrangements have to be developed in formal rehearsal. By contrast, festival music does not contain a situation of practice other than the actual performance.

The phenomenon of West African state ballet originally started with the French colonial administration, which aimed to integrate African theatre into their African civil servants’ curriculum during the 1930s. Among the graduates of the *Ecole Normale William Ponty* (near Dakar), many became leaders of the later independence movement who brought the idea and practice of African theatre back to their home countries (Cutter 1971:248ff; Hopkins 1965:163f). One leader so influenced was Modibo Keita, who in the 1950s was the mayor of Bamako and who later became the first president of the Republic of Mali. In the 1950s, the colonial administration established a system of *centres culturels*, whose main purpose was to establish the practice of African theatre in a hierarchical system of local, regional, and territorial competitions; the All-French-West-Africa finale was held in Dakar (Traore 1957; Hopkins 1965:164; Cutter 1971:263ff; Skinner 1974:292f).

The independence movement *Rassemblement Democratique Africain* adopted the system of cultural competitions from the colonizer, and in 1958, together with other international youth organizations, held a French West African-wide “Festival de la Jeunesse d’Afrique” in Bamako that included athletic and theatrical competitions.⁸ After independence, the national states of Guinea and Mali immediately adopted the hierarchical system of athletic and cultural competitions on a national level.⁹ Moreover, African ballet, together with *ensembles instrumentales* and *orchestres modernes*,¹⁰ was institutionalized as national folklore¹¹ in the form of so-called “national ballets.” State-owned national ensembles recruited artists as civil servants into permanent troupes to meet the state’s demand for public representation. State ballets staged the folklore of the nation, or that of a region or other administrative sub-unit. They intended to construct the identities of these entities and to present them to the citizens, to foreign representatives, and to the world public in general (see Hopkins 1965 and Cutter 1967, 1971:244–88). State ballets have been crucial to the building of African national identities after independence in the late 1950s and 1960s; the first and foremost among these were those developed under socialist leadership, as in Guinea and Mali.



Fig. 3: Jeli Madi Kuyate, *jenbe* player with the Ballet National du Mali since 1966.
Photo: private coll. Kuyate.

The state ballet in Bamako today exists mainly in the form of the state-run *Ballet National du Mali*, which is perceived to be the “national troupe.” Since its official founding in 1962, this permanent ensemble has operated with *jenbe* ensembles as its main musical element. In contrast, the other two categories of official troupes work mainly either with the griots’ instruments and genres (*Ensemble Instrumental National*) or with Western instruments and popular genres (*Orchestre National A* and *B* and *Orchestre Badema*). The national ballet has enjoyed high prestige in Mali and abroad, and, like other state ballets, it has also served as a springboard for those members who have wanted to make it in the international market. However, it offers a very small number (only four or five) of salaried official positions for drummers as national artists. These positions, though poorly paid, are much sought after. Sedu Keita, a younger drummer in the group I study with, had been taking part in daily rehearsals and performances for four years without being paid in the vain hope of being eventually rewarded with an official position (see Ballet National du Mali [n.d.]-video). Finally he changed strategies and joined a commercial pop band instead.

In 1991 the Malian one-party state crumbled and with it, its cultural policy. The national ballet, which had been suffering from reduced state sponsoring of national folklore since the end of the socialist regime in 1968, was further limited in its resources and role as keeper of a national culture.¹² The budget cuts instituted by the new democratic governments, however, had an even more drastic impact on another institution of the cultural policy sector. They terminated the cultural competitions that between 1962 and 1990 had been introducing and integrating many youths to the practice of folkloric ballets on local, regional, and national levels.¹³ Since this state system was cancelled in 1991, commercial cultural competitions and privately and NGO-sponsored ballet projects have thus far not been able to make up for this loss. *Jenbe* players in Bamako especially complain about this because the multitude of competing ballets of the sub-groups of the state party and of higher educational institutions had constituted a great demand for drummers to be hired and paid for longer periods of time each year.

1.3. International Markets

In Europe and North America, a market has existed since the mid-1980s for concerts and CDs with percussion based on *jenbe* music. Yet even more striking than this is the extent of instrument sales, *jenbe* classes, and amateur-playing taking place in the industrialized countries in the 1990s. The *jenbe* is about to replace the Afro-Cuban *conga* in the West as the most widespread drum played without sticks but with bare hands. It has actually surpassed Ghanaian drum and dance genres within the international scenes of “Afro” and percussion and dance enthusiasts. The leading industrial percussion manufacturers (Remo, Meinl, LP, Afro-Percussion, etc.) began producing *jenbew*, and educational institutions have begun to invite private teachers to give instruction in *jenbe* playing.

The *jenbe* playing in recording studios, concert stages, drum and dance workshops, and schools, does not simply consist of “traditional” repertoires and styles of local African festival music. The arrangement techniques and transformations developed in the ballet context form a constituent part of the mediation process of *jenbe* music in the West. Among these are, for example, signal phrases marking the beginnings or endings of pieces or prearranged rhythmic changes, the enlargement of ensembles with accompanying instruments and parts, and the canonization of a standard repertoire. As dancing is mostly left out and the focus is shifted further toward the music, for instance its arrangements and the lead drummer’s role, *jenbe* percussion music represents a third *jenbe*-related genre, after festival music and ballet music.

Many African *jenbe* players in the international scene have concentrated their business relationships mainly in one Western country. Some aspects of the *jenbe* market, however, show a tendency towards internationalization. Instructional books are being translated into English to possibly serve beyond national markets.¹⁴ These materials and CDs are produced and distributed internationally. The Internet provides quite a lot of advertisement and public relations web-sites for international (African and non-African) players, teachers, and traders.¹⁵ The Internet also carries different sorts of related information, for instance, collections of notations, discographies, and discussion lists.¹⁶ The most successful of all *jenbe* players in the West, Mamady Keita, may also be seen as the personification of the tendency towards the internationalization of *jenbe* practice. He has established educational institutes in Brussels, Paris, Munich, Washington, Tokyo, and other cities. These private drumming schools are run by accredited local teachers and are centrally coordinated, for instance in terms of occasions when the master visits, or online advertisement from a central server.

Conakry has been the major center for the internationalization of *jenbe* culture. Abidjan and Dakar, too, have played important roles in this process. Even if it has been catching up during the past five years or so, Bamako is lagging somewhat behind the other metropolises in terms of personal, cultural, and economic integration into the international market and *jenbe* scene. Nevertheless, the international *jenbe* market in Bamako is effective in a variety of ways. Some dozen drummers who have been successfully working abroad for more than just one concert tour (and through this have “made it” in the eyes of their colleagues) stay in town. For some or even most of them, their return stay in Bamako is only for a limited duration. They already have arranged for their next jobs abroad, or at least hope to do so as soon as possible. Moreover, non-Africans frequently come to Bamako and stay some days, weeks, or even months, for training as *jenbe* players. One finds all levels of accomplishment, from beginners to professionals. Most Bamako *jenbe* players make plans or just dream of single, repeated, or permanent possibilities (concerts tours, teaching seasons, emigration); they want to work in some country of the whites, or the rich world, as they tend to perceive it.

The number of drums produced for export in Bamako is many times greater than that for local demand. Quite a few local drummers earn extra income by assembling

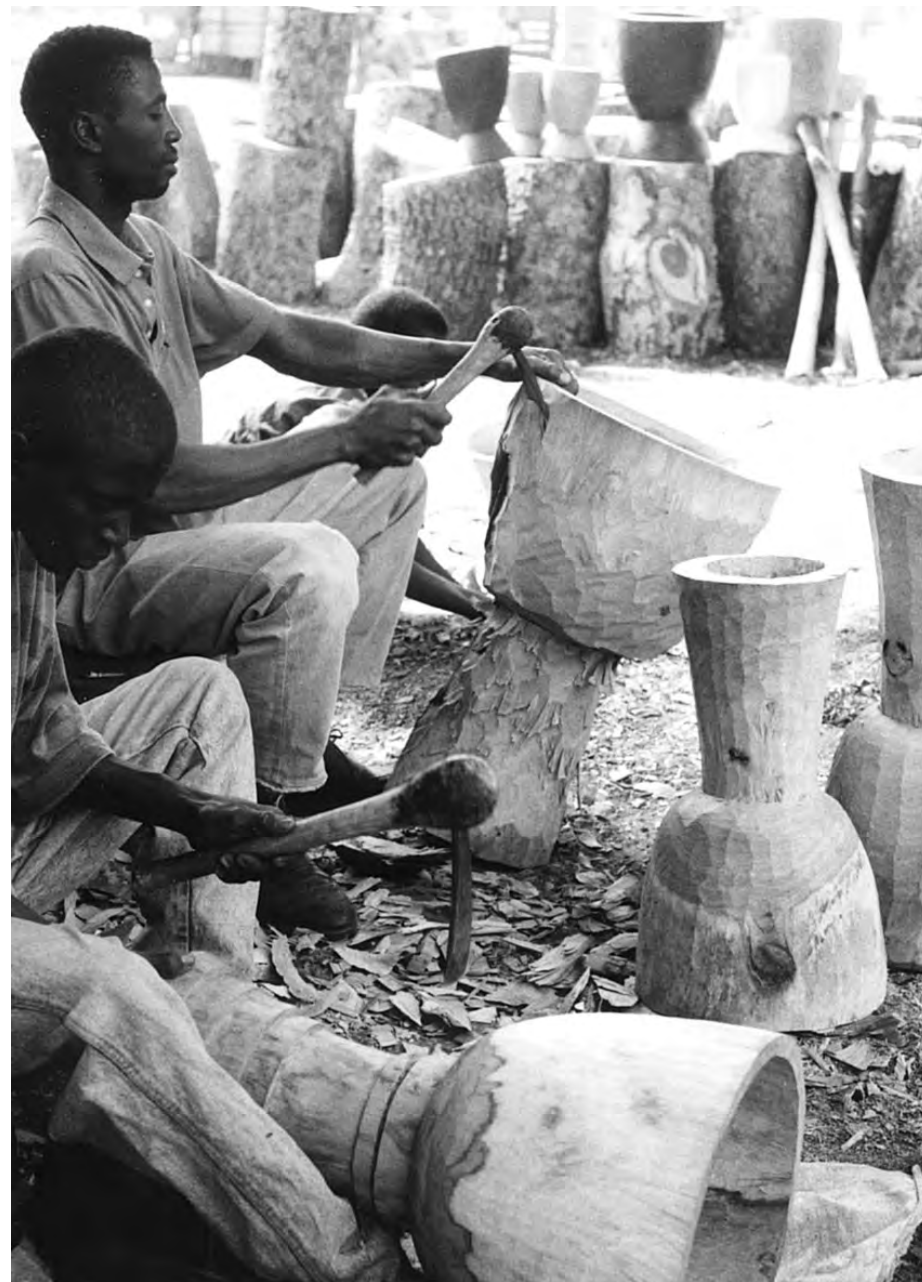


Fig. 4: Manufacture of *jenbe* bodies for export-traders in Bamako by woodworker Isu Kumare and his apprentices. Photo: Polak 1998.

instruments to be exported as either pieceworkers or sub-contractors. As performers and especially as teachers, many international drummers have direct sales prospects at their disposal and run some sort of export business.

Drum ensemble music is almost completely absent from the local cassette market in Bamako (see Charry 1996, online version). Yet *jenbe* music is listened to from cassettes, particularly by the drummers themselves. Even though small in numbers, those cassettes, which are brought in mainly as souvenirs by international drummers to Bamako from Europe or, more recently, from the U.S., have made most local drummers familiar with the repertoire and style of international *jenbe* percussion music.

1.4. A Chronological View

Local drum and dance celebrations, the state ballet, and *jenbe* percussion in the industrialized countries each deserve more attention as social institutions, cultural forms, and genres of artistic expression than space here permits. This article will follow the outline already given, focusing on the relationships and possible interactions between these three contexts of *jenbe* drumming.

This section takes a chronological perspective. Local drum and dance celebrations, folkloric ballets, and international *jenbe* percussion came into being successively and, in part, grew out of one another. Repertoires that had been practiced previously in the context of local celebrations were re-worked and integrated into the basis of practice for the state ballets. Through their many concert tours abroad, the ballet companies introduced *jenbe* music and musicians to the world.¹⁷

Many of the early protagonists and contemporary *jenbe* stars of the northern hemisphere started out as local village drummers and later were recruited by regional and national ballet groups. Years of work in these ballets have introduced them to industrialized countries, and, with time, they established contacts and eventually permanent business relationships.¹⁸

The biographies of most Bamako drummers born before 1970 generally reflect this chronological development. They had spent their youth as farmers and local festival drummers in the countryside and originally migrated to Bamako not for the purpose of becoming musicians, but to seek a form of “normal” employment as characterized by earning fixed monthly wages. But the demand for festival drumming and periodical ballet engagements combined to offer the prospect of a decent income. Eventually they preferred this to other jobs then available to male youths, such as selling iced water or ice cream in the streets, pushing hand-lorries, driving mule-carts, washing cloth, or doing a restaurant’s dishes. Since the decline of state ballet in the 1990s, their perspectives for other jobs in addition to festivals have been connected with the international market.

Since the mid-1980s, many Bamako-born youths, then about 15 years old, have been flooding into the *jenbe* business as apprentices and eventually, some five or ten years later, as professionals in their own right. A considerable number of these no

longer hold festival music to be the field of basic socialization into the drumming culture and profession, but instead are trying to head directly toward the international market.

Let me cast two sidelong glances onto some other musical genres in order to emphasize the point that the nationalization of formerly local cultural forms has in prominent cases actually pre-conditioned and catalyzed their internationalization and commercialization. First, I shall draw on other Malian (and greater francophone West African) musical genres for one example. The autobiography of the all-round musician Sorry Bamba shows the progression of his work in the fields of local dance music in the 1950s, state-sponsored ballet and *orchestre* musics in the 1960s and 1970s, and in international Mande pop music in the 1980s and 1990s. The international pop music careers of interpreters of the Mande guitar and harp traditions (Charry 1994) and of Malian female singers (Duran 1995, Diawara 1996, Schulz 1996) would not have been possible without their tenure with the regional and national *orchestres* and *ensembles* founded after independence.

Secondly, we have an example from another continent. There is one more instrument from the formerly “non-European” musical genres besides the *jenbe* that has spread to the industrialized countries on a strikingly large scale, namely the Australian trumpet *didjeridu*. This instrument, too, has developed from an object used by one ethnic group and in specific contexts only to the emblem of a greater, i.e., pan-Aboriginal ethnicity, and later on to a national symbol (namely of Australia), before it began its journey around the world.¹⁹

Capitalism generates a permanent demand for new cultural forms that are to be commercialized. Until now cultural forms could only originate in local contexts, although they are able to spread globally (Spittler 2000). In most cases contacts between the world market and local culture are mediated through certain institutions or agencies.²⁰ The examples given here (*jenbe*, Mande pop music, and *didjeridu* booms in the West) all show the national state to be one instance of this effect. This is especially the case with the cultural policies of West African states after their independence, states which have turned out to be mediating agents between local cultures and the world music market. Even more than this: in the context of official Malian and Guinean institutions, cultural forms have been isolated and rearranged, and now are being further developed and successfully marketed on the international scene.

One outcome of this is that the market for African *jenbe* players in Europe and America today is to a considerable extent supplied by former national ballet drummers who personally have shaped the processes that now fit and embody their careers and their playing styles and repertoires. In contrast, for the great majority of local *jenbe* players in Bamako (or even more so for those from the countryside), going to the land of the whites for commercial success will remain but a dream.

Nationalization preceding, mediating, and conditioning the globalization of local culture is expected and, as indicated by the Australian example, widespread. Yet, there is more to the specific case than this rather conventional wisdom. First, there is a paradox. Politicians and artists of independent African states in the 1960s longed

for international respect and acceptance of their nationalist and Africanizing ways. Yet the successful consequences of their political activities, for instance worldwide *jenbe* playing and the marketing of West African music, actually happened to take place by meeting the formerly colonizing system's demands for cultural forms to commercialize. This is of some irony, especially regarding the decidedly anti-colonial and anti-capitalist stance of most West African cultural policies in the 1960s. And since the African states that produced this culture have ended up in permanent economic decline and dependence, for many of their "national" artists who did not start an international career, this irony tastes bitter. Secondly, there are some questions concerning the triumphant advance of the *jenbe* that remain unanswered.

1.5. Unanswered Questions

How did it come to be that the *jenbe*, of all African instruments, is now played in so many classes and enjoys such a vogue among amateur drummers in Europe and North America? Why not, for instance, the bridge-harp *kora* or the xylophone *bala*? These instruments too, through LPs and CDs and international concert tours of Malian and Guinean ballet groups, ensembles, and individual artists, have fascinated a worldwide audience.

Merely referring to an exoticism that definitely plays a role in the spread of the *jenbe* (and the *didjeridu*) in the West, does not sufficiently explain this growth of popularity. Perhaps in industrialized and highly mechanized societies there is a specific desire for the physical experience of beating a skin with the bare hands. There could also be a desire for beating a drum that—like most membranophones—is of very limited tonal qualities but instead has rich timbral qualities. Certainly, the powerful and brilliant sound of the *jenbe* is an important factor in its worldwide popularity. However, the expectations and experiences of beginning drummers who attend classes or buy a *jenbe*, like many other aspects of its striking international spread, have yet to be empirically researched.²¹

Besides Guinean and Malian former national drummers, some *jenbe* players who had not spent much time in state ballet ensembles entered the European scene at an early stage. Fodé Youla and his *jenbe*-based percussion ensemble Africa Djolé marked the beginning of the *jenbe* boom in Germany with a now legendary concert and workshop in Berlin (see "Africa Djolé," 1978 disc). It is an astonishing fact that only one year before Africa Djolé's breakthrough in Germany, Youla published a recording in Paris that does not contain a single note of *jenbe* playing (Youla 1977 disc). Instead, all solos are played on a much lower-tuned drum. The cover photo shows a drum with a calf-hide head, perhaps an instrument from Youla's home region in lower Guinea. However, Youla had already perfected the song repertoire and percussive arrangement techniques that he would later employ with Africa Djolé. With Africa Djolé, Youla switched to the *jenbe* and added an extra *jenbe* soloist. This

different instrument, with its greater soloistic and expressive qualities, was just what the German Afro-percussion and dance scene was waiting for.

Adama Dramé and then Soungalo Coulibaly have been pioneering various aspects of the *jenbe* markets in France and Switzerland since 1984 and 1986, respectively.²² Both are residents of Bouaké in the Ivory Coast. They came to this city from Burkina Faso and Mali, respectively, as labor migrants. They live in a country whose economy is the strongest in francophone West Africa and whose non-socialist cultural policy never promoted the state ballet as part of national folklore to the extent that Guinea and Mali did. Both musicians had mainly performed as urban, commercial festival drummers in different cities in Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Ivory Coast before having been hired to tour Europe. After having completed their first tours abroad, both continued to work in the local festival context and at the same time have set up their private performance groups for future tours (see Dramé and Senn-Borloz 1992).

As mentioned in the introductory section of this article, in Abidjan, Bamako, Bobo Dioulasso, Conakry, Dakar, and many other cities in the Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Senegal, commercial *jenbe* playing constitutes a free profession. This profession generally is based on demand in the urban festival culture; it is manifest in a distinct milieu of urban *jenbe* players who meet this demand. It might be a rather conventional wisdom that nationalization may precede, mediate, and condition the globalization of a formerly local cultural form. But how did it come to be that the *jenbe*, of all the Manding (and greater Western Sudanic) musical instruments—and there are plenty—, arrived on the festival and entertainment scene of so many West African cities with such success in the course of the 20th century? A linear historical perspective of subsequential developments which—even if the insights it offers are far-reaching—is not sufficient to approach this question.

2. The Making of a Globalized Instrument

To this point I have roughly differentiated local Bamakoian, national Malian, and international Western levels of professional *jenbe* practice as three distinct social institutions and cultural forms: drum and dance festivals organized by families, folkloric ballets sponsored by the West African states, and percussion music demanded by specific segments of the world market and specific institutions of Western societies. These institutions and genres, however, are far from forming closed social or musical systems. On the contrary, the simultaneity of their existence in one place, and the overlapping practice of one group of agents of one social milieu in two or all three of the named contexts, allows for interaction. Zanetti (1996:174), for instance, reports on the impact of state ballet drumming in Guinea:

Rapidement, leur musique devient modèle pour tous les jeunes jembefola [*jenbe* players]; le vocabulaire rythmique du ballet, assimilé et rejoué dans les fêtes tradition-

elles, entre alors dans le bagage indispensable à l'apprentissage de l'instrument, et se répand rapidement dans toute la zone d'influence mandingue.

The object of this central section of the article is to show that, within only a few years, repercussions of the international and national *jenbe* practices can have significant effects on local festival music. Taking into account such repercussions of the more recent institutions and genres onto the seemingly "older" and more "traditional" festival music implies a view of tradition that includes cultural change and allows some degree of constant change to be at the heart of any process of handing down music in time (cf. for instance Nettl 1983:172–186 and 1996).

In an ongoing process, international percussionists borrow from the national ballet drummers, or from their own experiences as ballet drummers; ballet drummers borrow from the local festival drummers—or from their own experiences as former or even as current local drummers. At the same time, drummers working mainly in local festivals borrow consistently from their national and international colleagues, or from their own experiences in these contexts. Thus it becomes quite possible that elements or traits that had been borrowed by the local level from the national and international levels later on get borrowed again and recycled into the subsequent practice of the ballet ensembles and percussionists. The effecting processes of selective interaction and feedback can be of considerable complexity. Yet because of the limitations of research and for the sake of clarity and illustration, I will rely on one relatively simple and obvious example of feedback that has occurred within the field of instrument construction and change in sound.

The model of the typical Bamako *jenbe* has been subject to considerable change in the course of the past fifteen years. Its drum body has decreased in size: the average drumhead diminished in diameter from about 35–38 cm to 32–35 cm. The tension of the skinhead has increased, and the pitch has risen. Each tone that is produced by one stroke has decreased in duration (i.e., has become of shorter decay). The sound with the highest and sharpest timbre,²³ the so-called "slap," has especially gained in brightness and pithiness within the overall sound of the larger instrumental ensemble. The base of the wooden shell has become narrower and conically tapered towards the bowl. This again has sharpened the distinctiveness of its three main timbres, while instruments with rather broad, cylindrical bases have a certain portion of the bass timbre that generally overlaps the tone and slap timbres, no matter what the striking technique. The overall sound of a Bamako *jenbe* today is more concise, sharply contoured, cleaner, dryer, and thinner than it used to be.²⁴

One crucial element in the construction of the *jenbe* is the mode of mounting the skin onto the shell. The following will focus in some detail on the recent change in this technical function and its possible relations to different aspects of practice, i.e., acoustical sound, the work of instrument-making, and playing style.

In Bamako, as elsewhere in West Africa, it was common practice until well into the 1980s to sew the skin onto a strap made of several braids of leather cord that ran around the drum shell tightly below the upper edge of the bowl.²⁵ Apart from the wooden shell, all components of the drum originally were made of different kinds of

animal skin: the skin, the sewing cord, the aforementioned strap, another strap that was wrapped and sewn into the edge of the skin for reinforcement, the tensioning cord, and a third strap around which the tensioning cord turned at the lower edge of the bowl (for an illustration of this technique, as applied with partly different materials, see figs. 5 and 6). This type of *jenbe* can reach and steadily maintain the amount of skin tension necessary to produce the right sounds only if assembled with the greatest of care and generous use of materials. In most cases, however, the skin of such a *jenbe* has to be heated over an open fire immediately before being played. The tension thus reached will start to decrease within the following 15 to 30 minutes. Thus, one is obliged to repeat the procedure of making a fire and heating the skin every half hour, or every hour at the minimum.

I will describe two changes in the mode of head fixing in *jenbe*-making in Bamako: the introduction of new materials and the appropriation of a new technique.

2.1. *Industrial Materials*

Having taken residence in New York City in the early 1970s, the Guinean-born Ladji Camara came to be the first freelance *jenbe* player and teacher of renown outside Africa. Abdulai Aziz Ahmed, an African American from New York City who in the early 1970s was among the first pupils of Ladji Camara, has said:

When I first saw Ladji's drum, it was tied with a couple of different kinds of cord, telephone wire, and lacing went in all directions. That was the way it was. He did not care about what it looked like. Over there (Africa) they used whatever was available (Sunnett 1996:145).

In the 1950s, it became common practice to twist thin iron wire around the bowl instead of leather cord in order to produce the braided straps. The lower straps were replaced by solid iron rings of four or five mm. In Bamako during the 1970s, tensioning cords of leather had been superseded by strong, 4- to 6-mm nylon cords. Thin synthetic cord had replaced leather string for sewing.

Jenbe construction invokes high demands on a tensioning cord material that does not easily break under high tension. Nylon cord of more than 4 millimeters fulfills these demands. In the context of *jenbe* construction, it actually breaks only after heavy abrasion that occurs only in the course of several, even up to a dozen, head changes. Leather cord, in contrast, often breaks, sometimes even in the process of its first tensioning. This obliges one to make additional knots, which not only takes extra effort in itself but adds toilsome work while threading the cord in the process of tensioning or tuning the drum. Iron wire and nylon cord are reusable, i.e., they do not have to be completely replaced with each skin change, as was the case with the organic materials. Moreover, the industrial materials are available in cities, whereas more specialized sorts of animal skin for the sewing and tensioning cords are not.²⁶

In the countryside, every possible way of mixing the most divergent materials is still in common usage today. However, the new industrial materials have replaced



Fig. 5: Jenbe with sewn-on head. The tensioning cord is made of nylon; the sewing cord is of synthetic fiber too. Photo: Polak 1998.

the older ones in the practice of urban professional drummers because of technical and economical advantages concerning the aspects of tensile strength, durability, and availability. Still, until the 1980s, the technique of sewing on the skin to one reinforcing and one tension-transmitting leather strap had not yet been subject to structural change as a result of using these new materials. The constituent parts were still assembled in the same way, and the components have continued to fulfill the same functions as before.



Fig. 6: Detail of the instrument shown in fig. 5. The tension transmitting strap running round the upper edge of the shell and the wedged in reinforcement strap (which can be seen as a bulge protruding in the edge of the skin) consists of several braids of leather cord. Photo: Polak 1998.

2.2. A New Technique

Fastening of the skin by sewing can be replaced by wedging the skin between two solid iron rings. The iron is bent around the upper edge of the bowl by hand and fashioned into a ring by welding. Two such rings are made. One iron ring is wedged into the edge of the skin. This inner “flesh” ring performs a function similar to that of the former leather head band. Loops of nylon cord are knotted on the second iron ring. The tension cord runs through the loops. The tension applied to the cord is transmitted to the loops around which the cord turns, and thus to the tension-transmitting ring. Only when the tension-transmitting ring is pulled down does it wedge the skin between itself and the reinforcement ring, so that the tension is transmitted to the skin.²⁷ Once tensioned, this upper “head” ring and the loops together perform much the same function as the former leather stitching cord.

The importance of the rings has increased in that they now multifunctionally serve both as tension transmitter and reinforcement (as before), and as two counterparts of a clamp that holds the skin. The following refers to instruments assembled with this clamp technique using iron rings and synthetic cord as “iron *jenbe*.” By contrast, “leather *jenbe*” designates instruments constructed with the sewing tech-



Fig. 7: A contemporary Bamako jenbe with rings made of 6-mm steel reinforcing bar (re-bar). Photo: Polak, 1997.

nique irrelevant of the materials used; these could be leather or leather mixed with wire and nylon cord. These are translations of the Bamana terms, *nègè jenbe* (iron jenbe) and *nfòsòn jenbe* (leather strap jenbe), and follows their indigenous usage.

Clamp techniques for holding drumheads are commonly used worldwide and applied in the construction of lug-tensioned drums, for instance in marching drums, drum sets, and in industrially produced *conga* and *bongo* drums. The clamp technique employed to tune *jenbe* skins with two iron rings in combination with cord lacing was developed in the 1970s. Some sources suggest that this happened first in the U.S.A. and Europe, where drummers of the Guinean, Malian and Senegalese national ballets, other drummers from West Africa, and African-American and European percussionists met. Ahmed (1998:n.p.) even presents a detailed genealogy that claims to identify the definite origin of the iron *jenbe*:

When I first saw djembes like Ladjì's, the heads were sewed on all with rope, no iron rings. In Senegal they were done with wire and pegs. It was Chief Bey [an African-American professional percussionist] who developed that technique. He taught his godson Richard Byrd, who taught me. Richard fixed Ladjì [Camara's] first drum with iron rings. I taught brothers in Chicago, principally Moshe Milon and the brothers who were in the Sun Drummers. Moshe shared this with Famoudou [Konaté] and now it is everywhere.

During the 1970s, the iron *jenbe* might have reached Dakar and Abidjan as the expected standard for an export drum.²⁸ Yet, it is equally possible that artisans in Dakar or Abidjan had developed the iron *jenbe* independently. It is not my goal here to define the exact origins of the iron *jenbe*. It is however of interest that the new technique was adopted from its original context of the early globalizing *jenbe* scene into local *jenbe* practices in the West African interior.

In Bamako, the first iron *jenbe* appeared in the early 1980s.²⁹ At this time, the change to the iron *jenbe* in Dakar and even more so in Abidjan was already in an advanced state, if not almost complete.³⁰ *Jenbe* players returning from work as migrants in Abidjan and from the international tours of the national ballet ensemble had brought the first samples of iron *jenbew* along. The following describes the introduction of the iron *jenbe* into local practice from the perspective of the professional *jenbe* drummers of Bajalan, which is a *quartier populaire* in the western part of Bamako.

In 1983 Kasim Kuyate, then about 27 years old, was just about to purchase the materials for assembling the first *jenbe* of his own. He had previously seen iron *jenbew* only in photos of people returning from Abidjan. At his first sight of an actual iron *jenbe*, he decided to make his own drum according to this shining example. However, even though as a griot he was interested and had some general competence in making handicrafts, he failed to deduce the exact procedure for mounting an iron *jenbe* in all its subtleties from the mere inspection of a completed sample.

Nothing really came out of it. All the others [namely the other drummers of the Western part of town] have seen it, but nobody else tried himself, or followed my example. After one or two years [of trials and errors] I gave up. (Interview, Bamako, January 1998)

It was not until 1986 or 1987 that Kuyate returned to the problem. He reports:

I finally learned the right way [to prepare the materials and assemble an iron *jenbe*] from François [Dembele]. (...) also some white people came along by this time, from Abidjan, they came to him, and some had their iron *jenbew* with them. Only shortly before we [drummers of western neighborhoods Bajalan and Bolibana] got them, they had them in Medina Kura [eastern/central neighborhood] (Interview, Bamako, January 1998).

In the early 1980s François Dembele was among the leading *jenbe* players with the *Ballet National of Mali*. Drummers from other parts of Bamako also consider Dembele to have been the forerunner of the iron *jenbe* in the city of Bamako. For example Moussa Traore (1999: n.p.), who originally is from an eastern suburb of Bamako and now resides in the United States, reports that he first saw an iron *jenbe* in 1984 with François Dembele at a rehearsal of the national ballet ensemble. Dembele himself states that he became acquainted with the iron *jenbe* in the U.S.A. during a concert tour of the national ballet; he recalls seeing it for the first time with members of the Guinean national ballet (interview, Bamako, March 1998). No more than five years were to pass before, at the end of the 1980s, all *jenbe* players in Bamako had adopted the clamp technique with solid iron rings from the milieu of the national ballet and other drummers with foreign contacts.

When Bamako drummers discuss the iron *jenbe*, the time before its coming is hailed as “the good old days” in one special respect. During the short rests that occurred from time to time during the course of a performance because one had to retune the drum, the musician enjoyed a break from the strenuous work of playing. For while a drummer was obliged to kindle a small fire and heat the drumhead, the playing came to a halt without causing the dancers and singers to complain. Today, in contrast, it is not rare for drummers to have to play continually for two or three hours, and other participants are immediately affronted if the drummers stop for whatever reason.

One decisive argument, however, is in favor of the iron *jenbe*: it is far easier to change the skin of an iron *jenbe* than by using the finicky and tiresome sewing technique. In Bamako, *jenbe* players change the skins of their instruments because of wear and tear every one to three months, if not earlier, when it is damaged or does not sound right. From an interview with Kasim Kuyate (Bamako, January 1998): “The iron *jenbe* pleased me. It does not take much work to assemble and it does not damage the skin [as stitching does].” The iron rings and nylon cord certainly cost money but require less care. It saves much time that some of the nylon and iron elements can be reused as components without being taken apart, for instance the loops of cord on the upper and lower tension rings that form the eyelets for the tension cord.

The new clamp technique had an impact on musical practice that is more far-reaching than simply that of easing instrument construction. Most importantly, wedging the skin between the rings used as clamps does not damage the skin; i.e., it does not create predetermined breaking points. The clamp technique thus removes

the decisive limiting factor of tension application. It allows for the enormous tension that today is commonly applied to goat skinheads and nylon cords.

3. Instrument Making and Musical Practice

Today, large *jenbew* are considered impractical. Given the fact that urban professional drummers quite often have to play marching or standing upright with the instrument strapped around their waist or over one or both shoulders for several hours, this stands to reason. Beyond that, however, instrument size and tuning are related to stylistic identity: large *jenbew* tuned low are today associated with the staid and mature, but old-fashioned, style of the elders. One certainly could moderately tension and tune an iron *jenbe* low. With the exception of some elders, however, nobody does so. Here, more than practical reason is clearly involved; this is a culturally valued interpretation. This fact becomes even more obvious when seen from the older drummers’ perspective. The older drummers despise the youngsters’ small and high-pitched *jenbew*. They identify their former pupils’ instruments with the present (allegedly spoiled and corrupt) musical style, which is characterized by faster tempos, larger ensembles and more unrestrained ornamentation.

Yamadu Dunbia and Kasim Kuyate, who both have been performing professionally in Bamako for decades, agree that only with large and low-tuned *jenbew* is one able to practice what they consider orthodox, or “normal” style, as they say in Bamako. Indeed, from time to time older drummers would lower the tension and pitch of a *jenbe* tuned too high with a handful of water rubbed into the skin. Younger drummers would never lower the tension of a drum. To many of them, the idea of an over-tensioned *jenbe* does not even seem to exist.

Yet the cultural, generationally distinct evaluation of different styles does not directly determine an individual’s actions. Rather than being deducible from a stylistic or cultural system, action always takes place in the field of (often conflicting) interaction between cultural norms and values, practical reason, and personal intentionality. The following example may show that individual action means dealing with these aspects. Since his youth, the old Dunbia (born between 1917 and 1920) has been playing mainly in small ensembles consisting of one *jenbe* and one accompanying drum. Perfectly suitable for this task are large, low-tuned *jenbew*, with their colorful and evocative³¹ sound. Indeed, Dunbia owns two large *jenbew* of more than 37 cm in diameter. Yet one has to add that Dunbia has retired long ago; now he plays only very sporadically. He makes part of his earnings by renting his instruments out to younger drummers who often complain about their size, poor technical state, and low tuning. Kuyate was born around 1954 and represents the middle generation. Still, he actually has a very small *jenbe* of his own. This might be partly explained by the fact that he, in contrast to Dunbia, has experienced the trend towards larger ensembles, now at least three and commonly four or five drummers, faster tempos and longer periods of non-stop playing. This trend partly derives from the ever-increas-

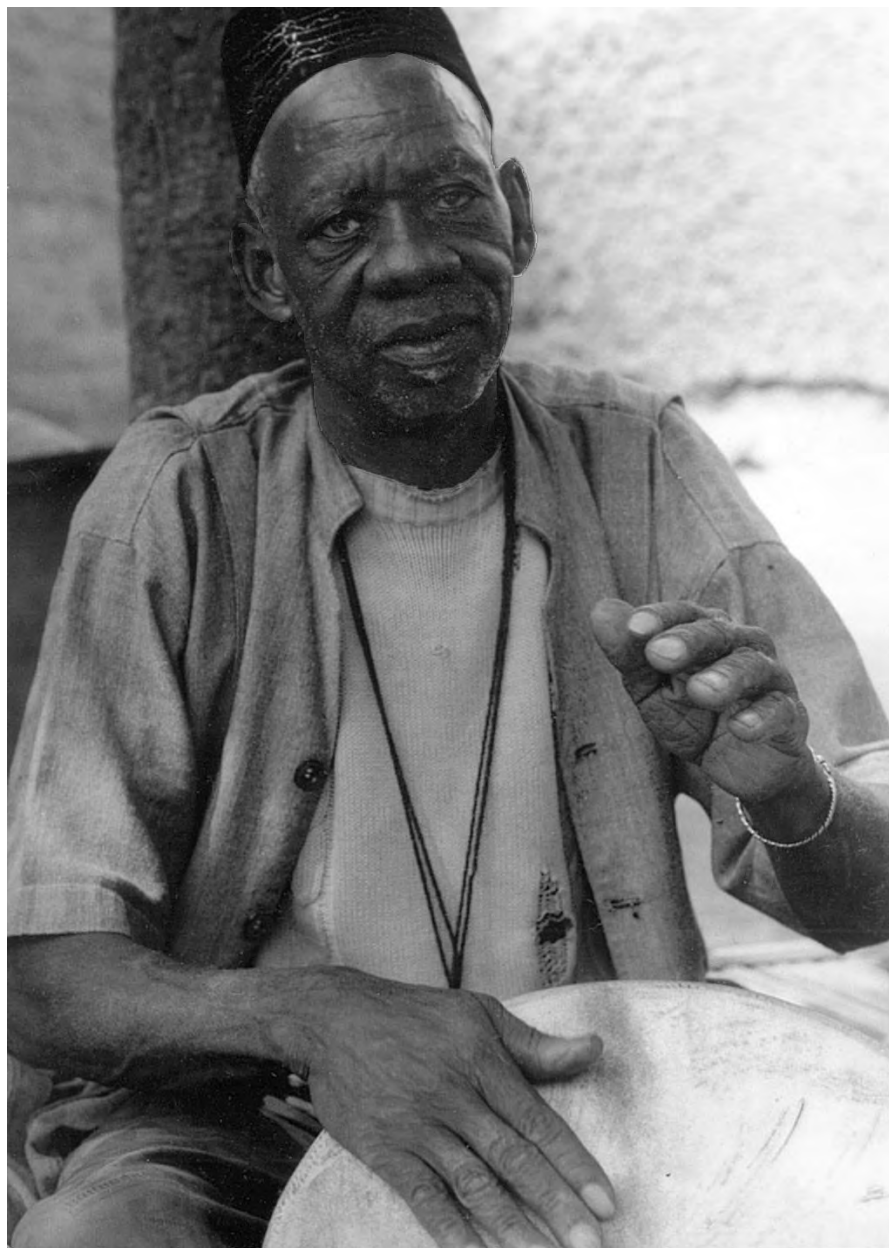


Fig. 8: The late Kati Namori Keita (ca. 1927–1999), owner of the instrument shown in fig. 5 and soloist of sound sample 1, was among the dozen prominent drummers who in the 1960s and 1970s shaped the Bamako style of *jenbe* playing. He was held to be the last professional drummer in Bamako who refused to accept the iron *jenbe*.
Photo: Polak, 1998.

ing influence of ballet playing on festival music in Bamako since the 1960s.³² When in 1997 and 1998 an ensemble consisting of Dunbia, Kuyate, a 12-year-old apprentice and myself performed a dozen or so engagements, both of the older performers felt fortunate to have my rather small and light *jenbe* of 34 cm with us. This was especially the case when our feet and public transport (which presents difficulties in Bamako) had to take us to another end of the city. Thus, pragmatic considerations and cultural approval or disapproval prove to be flexibly assessed, parallel criteria in evaluating instruments.

Without a doubt, however, there are unambiguous differences between the generations in making use of the possibilities inherent in the iron *jenbe*. In the view of younger drummers, extremely tensioned *jenbew* are nothing but the norm. The playing of tightly tuned skins results in calluses all over one's palm, and eventually in permanent deformations of the hand. Many younger drummers hold this to be an emblem of their profession, and they are proud of it. In emergencies, that is, in cases of sores or chapped skin, they play with taped fingers.

Their elders, who have been playing on looser skins all their lives, are exposed to this damage to a significantly lesser extent. They see calluses as protection against harm, but not as a positive sign or value of musicianship. From their point of view, the degree of drum skin tension commonly applied today both causes cracks on the player's palms and degrades the quality of *jenbe* sound.

The ideal of high-tuned *jenbe* is nothing new. Even in the days of the leather strap *jenbe*, drummers used to try new ways of fastening the drumhead with the objective of reaching the highest possible tension. When wire and nylon were introduced, some drummers for example only selectively employed the new materials and left some parts of the leather as they were formerly made. They preferred this material, taking advantage of its ability to contract, when wet processed, while drying.

The iron *jenbe*, however, has served as a new and necessary precondition for the radical realization of a formerly limited ideal. This solution to an older problem had been used to an extreme. New contexts such as large ensembles and playing inside halls or in recording studios has created new needs for which the new *jenbe* sound is appropriate. Nevertheless, the rationalization of one aspect (high tension creating higher pitch and concise sounds) impairs others, as for instance a loss of mellowness and brightness of sonority.

4. Market Integration and Cultural Change

By the end of the 1990s, all of the approximately 20 professional *jenbe* players in Bajalan, Bamako, had previously worked as festival drummers. Of these, 17 had been, or still were, members of ballet troupes, for the most part state ballets, two of which were NGO-sponsored and one private. The majority of these musicians had already taught foreigners.³³ About half of them had worked in the instrument export business. None of them, however, had stopped working at family celebrations at any

time. Two drummers from Bajalan have had considerable regular income in addition to festival employment: Jeli Madi Kuyate (see figs. 2 and 3) has been employed with the *Ballet National* and has held the official status of a civil servant for three decades. Drisa Kone has worked as a *jenbe* player and a teacher in Europe for several months each year between 1991 and 1998. Nevertheless, they too have always continued to practice and to identify themselves, at least partly, as festival drummers.

The demand for work for *jenbe* players is differentiated and is located on different local, national, and international levels. To the local agents working as drummers in Bamako, however, these different sources of demand appear as parallel and simultaneous sectors of the local job market. Almost every individual serves several markets in order to diversify and add to his sources of income; nobody can afford to take the risk of concentrating exclusively on only one of the various drum-related sources of income. Thus, everybody learns to meet the standards of the different markets to the highest degree possible. The three sectors for work for *jenbe* players in Bamako—namely local festivals, state ballet ensembles, and the international market—support one and the same group of agents. Urban professional drummers are differentiated by specialization only gradually and to a limited extent.

The technique of fastening skins between iron rings used as clamps is an example of a repercussion from national and international music practices onto local practices. National and international traditions partly developed out of local practices and later—but not necessarily much later—re-affected these local practices. About 15 years ago, the spread in popularity of the iron *jenbe* in Bamako began in the city center, where one finds the prominent intermediary institutions and current meeting places of Bamako-based musicians, international agents, and consumers or representatives of music markets.³⁴ In the course of only a few years (between about 1985 and 1990), the iron *jenbe* gained acceptance and almost complete prevalence over the leather-strap *jenbe*. The material in common use nowadays is a 4- to 7-mm round iron or steel reinforcing bar which is rather easily available in Bamako, as in all urban centres where buildings are constructed of concrete. At the same time the iron *jenbe* has just started to spread little by little in the countryside where round iron, welder's shops, and strong nylon cord have been hard to find until now, and are even harder to pay for. In the early 1990s, when the iron rings had only been in use for a short time, drummers still used to heat their iron *jenbe* above a small fire of cardboard. This passed out of use within a couple of years. Today, Bamako drummers take advantage of the possibilities of the new technique with more skill. When readjustment of the tension is necessary during a performance (which is now more rarely and less systematically the case), this is accomplished with a few powerful blows to the upper iron ring. To this end, one simply takes the pestle from the closest grain mortar that is at hand in every compound; some drummers even carry an iron hammer with them.

The iron *jenbe* has turned out with time to be a pre-condition for the globalization of *jenbe*. It was only the solid and steady method of attaching drumheads with the clamp technique that is relatively easy to do, which made possible and practical the massive spread of the *jenbe* in industrialized countries in the 1990s. Only since Bam-

ako drummers have adopted, learned to use and master this technique have they been able to successfully meet the standards of the international market—as their colleagues from Abidjan, Conakry, and Dakar had started to do years before them.

Jenbe players in West African cities, Europe, and America have all eventually committed themselves to the same technique of skin fastening. This obvious homogenization of instrument making applies foremost to its technical aspect and only to a lesser extent to its conceptualization. In one respect, the interpretations of the iron *jenbe* by Africans and non-Africans diametrically oppose each other. For the Bamako drummers, the iron *jenbe* represents the “modern” *jenbe* in contrast to the ancient model of the leather-strap *jenbe*; for Europeans and Americans the iron *jenbe* is the “traditional,” if not “African,” *jenbe* as opposed to industrially produced, lug-tensioned instruments. However, this divergent conceptualization and the resulting misunderstandings do not hinder the two parties to effectively interact via the world market on quite a large scale.

The example of instrument making as featured in this article shows that interaction between local, national, and international markets and artistic genres can be advantageous for the economic and cultural vitality of a local musical tradition. Drummers in Bamako have made an international technique their own and have profited from this feedback, both practically and economically. The transformation and reevaluation of a formerly rural festival music to a national folklore and later to an internationally admired art has generally contributed to upgrading its status in the judgment of the Bamakoian population. It has contributed to its integration into the local culture of the metropolis of the Republic of Mali, while other genres and instruments have disappeared in the urban context. Local culture, its utilization by national cultural politics, and its international commercialization are thus closely related.

The artistic and professional vitality of urban *jenbe*-playing in West Africa—especially in the metropolises, where the local and the national have merged since independence—predated and preconditioned its recent globalization. Yet today it continues to flourish, and that only since the instrument began to travel around the world. Even drummers of citywide renown find it increasingly difficult to survive in Bamako nowadays if they do not get jobs on the global market.

Jenbe players of the middle and elder generations steadily and sometimes aggressively complain about the cultural and aesthetic depreciation of *jenbe* making and playing in the course of its intensified integration in local and global markets. Zanetti (1996) seems to adopt and restate such value judgments of musical change. On the one hand he admires the art and great tradition of the Guinean national drummers, and on the other, he tends to condemn the commercialization of this art as producing stylistic and repertory-related decadence in urban drumming. All agents in the *jenbe* culture put the blame on one aspect and grant fame to another, that is, they oppose commodification and support cultural authenticity. It is evident, however, that the elder drummers, no less than the younger ones, follow both musical and economic interests. Professionalization, nationalization, and commercialization of urban *jenbe* playing in West Africa have been going on as integrated and ambivalent processes

since the 1960s, when those elder drummers who are now complaining were in their youth and were creative. Their denial of any quality in present *jenbe* playing is due in part to their wish to exclude their younger rivals from the market, or to their disappointment over the fact that their own share of that market has dwindled over the years.

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Notes

- 1 My spelling of this instrument name follows the conventional spelling of the Bamana (French: Bambara) and the closely related Maninka (French: Malinké) languages in Mali. Accordingly, my marking the plural of the noun *jenbe* with the suffix *-w* as "*jenbew*" goes conform with the Malian convention. For more details on the spellings of *jenbe*, see Charry 1998: <<http://www.wesleyan.edu/~echarry/jembe-spelling.html>> September 2000.
- 2 Knight (1984) has established the distinction between griots and drummers and their respective social spheres, cultural attributes, and musical practices in Manding society. Duran (1995) and Modic (1996) describe styles and institutions of professional or semi-professional music practice of Malian females of non-griot origin; drawing on these case studies, Hale (1998:235–37) discusses the relationship of griots' and non-griots' professional or semi-professional musicianship. In the past, the social group of "blacksmiths" (bam. *numu*) was associated with the instrument (see also Charry 2000:199, 213f).

- 3 A bride's honorary mother or mothers are recruited from among her older female relatives. The bride's birth mother cannot function as honorary mother at the same time; often, the birth mother's sisters or cousins function as honorary mothers.
- 4 My research assistant, Madu Jakite, collected statistical data between March, 1997, and March, 1998. These data comprise date, place, occasion, organizer, players, instruments used, and repertoire played, of 356 local festival engagements performed by *jenbe* players from Bajalan, a *quartier populaire* in western Bamako. About ten lead drummers, or a total of 25 professional drummers (among them Madu Jakite), belong to the studied group. The qualitative research upon which this article is based was completed in Bamako (and selectively in the *cercles* of Kangaba, Kolokani, and Banamba) in 1991, 1994, 1995, 1997, and 1998. I spent all of these periods (3 to 6 months each) with the same group of drummers. My method lays much stress on participation in the work of the studied people, that is, my development and practice as a festival drummer. Over the years, I took part in about 150 performances as a player and observer.
- 5 Cf. Meillassoux 1968:86–112.
- 6 Cf. Modic (1996:82, 114) for cases of parallel engagement of Bamana musicians and *jenbe* players in Bamako.
- 7 The French word *ballet* in Mali has both the meaning of the organizing institutions, performing ensembles, and the genre of folkloristic dance drama. Its synonyms *troupe folklorique* or *ensemble folklorique* refer to the institutions and ensembles, whereas (Bam.) *catiri* signifies the artistic genre; the latter is a loan word from French *théâtre*. The semantic field of the English term "ballet" includes the type of action meant here: "A theatrical entertainment in which ballet dancing and music, often with scenery and costumes, combine to tell a story, establish an emotional atmosphere, etc." (Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary 1997:59).
- 8 Ballet and theatre troupes from eight territories of French West Africa (i.e., all but Mauritania) took part. The program reads as follows: "*présentation–nuit d'accueil–danse folklorique–grand bal–bal populaire*" [opening day]; "*rencontre–conférences–échanges culturels–compétitions sportives et culturelles–théâtre–manifestations folkloriques–bal populaire*" [second through fifth days]; "*kermes enfantine–échanges culturelles–rencontres diverses–adieu–grand bal–bar frais–danses folkloriques–feu d'artifice*" [sixth and last day] (Festival Afrique 1958:1–8).
- 9 See Traoré 1957, Festival Afrique 1958, Hopkins 1965, Cutter 1967, 1971:244–88, and Meillassoux 1968:69–72.
- 10 See Charry (1994:32, and footnote 25) for the West African usage of *ensemble* and *orchestre* which, like *ballet*, signify both institutions and musical genres.
- 11 See Keita (1957), the most influential of all West African ballet directors, for an emic ("authenticity") and Mark (1994) for an etic ("intentional construction of identity") justification for using the term "folklore" to designate West African ballet.
- 12 This generally enhanced the increasing commercialization of the expressive arts in Bamako; see Schulz 1996:244–310.
- 13 The national finales of the cultural competitions in Bamako were labeled *Semaine artistiques, culturelles et sportives de la Jeunesse* from 1962 to 1968, and *Biennale artistique* from 1970 to 1990. They each had been prepared by qualifying contests (*Inter-quartier, Inter-commune, Inter-regionale*) several months in advance. For recent developments in Malian cultural policy, see Schulz 1996:311–73.

- 14 Blanc (1993) originally wrote in French and Ott (Konaté and Ott 1997) in German; both have been translated into English. Billmeier and Keita's book (1999) is trilingual.
- 15 Recently, a drummer from Bamako began for the first time to sell instruments (prices are in U.S. dollars) and offering classes on-line (Fanfan Bagayogo, <<http://djembe-foley.net/>>).
- 16 See, among others, Tom Daddesio et al., "Djembe and Mandé Music Resource and Reference Page," <<http://www.nauticom.net/users/tcd/djembemande/index.html>>; George W. Sherouse, "Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the jembe-list Mailing List," <<http://sherouse.home.mindspring.com/jembe-listfaq>>.
- 17 Even the first world tour (1962 through 1964) of the *Ballets Africains de la République de Guinée* (compare 1964-disc) counted over 50 performances in the cities of five continents.
- 18 For instance Famoudou Konaté (formerly first *jenbe* player of the *Ballets Africains de la République de Guinée*), Mamady Keita (formerly *Ballet Djoliba*, a second Guinean national ballet), Maré Sanogo, and François Dembele (both formerly *Troupe Folklorique National de Mali*, later called *Ballet National du Mali*).
- 19 I here rely on Nettl (1996), who interprets the specialized literature.
- 20 The significant role of electronic media in the development and distribution of "world music" is obvious; Youssou N'dour, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and Oumou Sangare were at the top of the African cassettes market before they were "discovered" by the Western cultural industry in 1984, 1986, and 1989 (respectively) through CDs and world music festivals. See Diawara (1996) for the Mandé case and Erlmann (1994) for a critical analysis of the hegemonial structure underlying the world music market.
- 21 It would be of interest to compare the *jenbe* boom with other globalized performance arts, for instance *didjeridu* playing, tango and oriental dance, and with new spiritual movements that have occurred in Westernized countries.
- 22 Dramé was the first to develop a regular output of LPs and later CDs (see discography) and an individual style of solo playing; Coulibaly successfully integrated *jenbe* playing into larger instrumental (including non-percussion) ensembles of Mandé "neo-traditional" and Mandé-based world music (see discography; cf. Zanetti 1996).
- 23 A skilled *jenbe* player is able to produce tones of definable and distinct sonic qualities. The three main timbres are called "bass," "tone," and "slap" in the international musician's jargon. A dark bass timbre is produced by striking the drumhead with the entire palm of one's hand; the full-tone timbre is produced by striking the skin at its outer edge with the underside of one's fingers; the sharp slap timbre results from striking the head at its outer edge but with only the underside of each finger's first joint touching the membrane.
- 24 See Appendix D: Sound samples on the Internet.
- 25 Compare Schaeffner (1990:85–86) and Zemp (1971:41) for descriptions of the sewing technique to fasten a *jenbe* membrane. A photo of a *jenbe* of 1938 with sewn-on membrane (Ponsard n.d., Coll. Musée de l'Homme, Paris, file number D.84.1026.493) is reprinted both in Charry 2000:fig.26, and in Polak 2000a:fig.2. Another possibility to fasten a *jenbe* membrane is to simply nail the skin onto the drum body. On the organology and classification of West African drums, see Meyer (1997).
- 26 Availability was also the main reason for replacing a variety of skins to make *jenbe* heads (for instance antelope-skins, *Cephalophus grimmia* and *Tragelaphus scriptus*) with only goat skin in the urban and international contexts.

- 27 See Blanc (1993:66–72) and Meyer (1997:29–32) for more detailed descriptions and illustrations.
- 28 Ahmed states: "Little by little, the drums that came over [imported from Africa] started to have metal rings on them" (quoted in Sunkett 1996:145).
- 29 An example from another center of urban *jenbe* playing in the savannah, Bouaké, Ivory Coast, confirms this date: On the first LP by Adama Dramé (1984a–disc; recorded in 1978 in Bouaké) one can hear the marked decrease in pitch of the drum even during the course of a single piece; this is typical for a sewn and fire-heated *jenbe*. The cover photo shows Dramé playing a *jenbe* carefully and regularly assembled with the sewing technique using a new, strong nylon cord. Starting with Dramé's second LP (1984b–disc), his *jenbe* sound had become markedly higher and more steady in pitch, as is typical for the iron *jenbe*.
- 30 Personal communications with the *jenbe* players Stephan Rigert (Switzerland) and Uhuru (Germany).
- 31 Dunbia as well as Kuyate are specialists in playing for spirit possession cults; in this context the sound of large and low-tuned *jenbew* is evocative in a literal sense as it is provoking the spirits to appear, or to induce a trance. This is held to be difficult with a very tightly tuned *jenbe*; in allusion to this, "old-style" *jenbew* are sometimes labeled "spirit *jenbe*" by Bamako drummers.
- 32 A change in instrument construction and sound similar to the one described had taken place years before in Guinea. An agent and observer in the Guinean-French *jenbe* scene simply deduces this from the context of state ballets: "*Le son guinéen s'est épuré par les années de travail au sein des ballets qui pouvaient regrouper une dizaine de percussionnistes. Par nécessité, le son devait être clair, sec et précis, parfaitement défini*" (Kokelaere und Saïdani 1995, n.p.).
- 33 These foreigners mainly came from France, Austria, Germany, Holland, Spain, the U.S., and Canada. Among them were musicians, development project workers, tourists and researchers, namely Eric Charry, Wesleyan University, Clemens Zobel, EHESS, Paris, and the author.
- 34 In addition to the *Ballet National* and the cultural competitions/festivals already mentioned, the *Carrefour des Jeunes* and the *Institut National des Arts* are of outstanding importance. The drummers from parts of Bamako neighboring the city center are more closely oriented toward the international market than others; the international market, analogously, influences the ones from the outer districts less. The neighborhood of Bajalan has resulted from the westward extension of Bamako in the 1950s and early 1960s (see Villien-Rossi 1966 and van Westen 1982). This case study thus is typical of the social milieu and musical practice of urban professional *jenbe* playing as it has developed in Bamako since the 1960s.

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Appendix A: Annotated Discography

This appendix lists sound recordings of *jenbe* playing. The focus of selection and annotation is historical relevance. The catalogue is subdivided into decades according to the time of the recording.

1930's

- VA
1966 *Traditions: Afrique Occidentale/Soudan Français*. Radio France Internationale/Archives Radiophoniques.
"Nya foli," "Sene foli," "Samory war song": songs, *bala*, and *jenbe* drum ensemble, probably from southeastern Mali.
Recorded in 1931 at the colonial exposition, Paris. Digital reprint of 78-rpm shellacs, *Bibliothèque National Français (BNF)*, Paris, file number PDC 12.000272.3.
- VA
1991 *African Music*. Folkways Cassette Series 08852 [first ed. 1957].
A1, "War song": *bolon* (quasi-bridge harp), drum ensemble (probably with one *jenbe*).

Recorded 1933 in Bankoumana (cercle of Kangaba, southern Mali) by Laura Boulton/Strauss West Africa expedition.

1950's

The ethnomusicologist Gilbert Rouget (*Musée de l'Homme*, Paris) traveled to the Kankan area in upper Guinea in 1950 and 1952. Twelve tracks of his recordings represent the earliest documented corpus of *jenbe* music. The recordings of 1950 have been published on various discs:

- Koroma, Jean et Mamadu Koroma
(n.d.) *Saramoriba*. Africavox (78-rpm shellac) A 100–1.
AX 10, "Chant pour la danse avec tambour": two *jenbew*.
- VA
(n.d.) *Koukou; Allah ye oube ouro*. Africavox (78-rpm shellac) GT-8.
AX 64 and 65, "Water-drums": song, two *jenbew*, and one pair of *ji-dunun* (water-drums).
- VA
1956 *African Music From The French Colonies*. Columbia World Library of Folk and Primitive Music (33-rpm LP) KL 205.
A9, "Drum duet": two *jenbew*.
- VA/Rouget et Koroma, eds.
1959 *Pondu Kakou. Musique de Société Secrète—Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, Guinée*. Contrepoint (33-rpm LP) MCV 20141.
B6, "Batterie malinke: *mosso bara*": two *jenbe*; B9, "Danse de femmes: *mosso bara*": song, two *jenbe*.

Rouget's six *jenbe* recordings of 1950 have not yet been republished. But his six recordings of 1952 that were first published on various shellacs in 1952 were re-released on LPs in 1972 (*Musique Malinke*, Vogue LDM 30113; *Musique d'Afrique Occidentale*, Vogue LDM 30116), were pirated in 1995 (*African Tribal Music and Dances*, Laserlight digital CD 12179), and finally published on the following CD:

- VA/Rouget, ed.
1999 *Guinée. Musique des Malinké*. Le chant du monde (CD) CNR 2741112.
Two *jenbe* players perform duets and accompany song, flute, and *ji-dunun* in the following pieces: # 15, "Call the mothers", # 16, "Water drum (*ji dunu*)", # 17, "Water drums and women's chorus—women's dance", # 18, "Two drums—Drumming for *moso don*, women's dance", # 19, "Song for bird mask (*kòma*)", # 20, "Women's drum—*moso bara*". The solo drum is a leather strap *jenbe*, while the smaller accompanying *jenbe* has its head nailed on.

1960's

- Ballets Africains, Les.
1964 (*no title*). Bel Air (LP) 411043.
Live recording of the *Ensemble National de la République de Guinée*. A1, "Soko"; A3, "Minnuit": *ensemble instrumentale* music with interludes (one minute each) of *jenbe* drum ensemble music. B6, "Finale—Tam-tam Africain": exotic soundscapes (cries, rat-

tles, animal sounds, etc.), two-and-a-half minutes of *jenbe* ensemble playing. The *jenbe* rhythm consists of several sequences of dense and overlapping *échauffements*, i.e., the musical equivalent of solo dancing.

Archived at BNF, Paris, file number B 72 000175. Famoudou Konaté plays the lead *jenbe* on this and on the following recording.

Ballets Africains de la République de Guinée

1967 *orgie de rythme ... orgie de couleurs*. Syliphone (LP) SLP 14.

B1, "Initiation": drum ensemble music. Within this track (totaling 4 tracks), the *jenbe* forms the interludes between the main parts lead by the *krin* (slit drum). The *jenbe* ensemble rhythm is based on *sukufurasi fôli*, a Maninka rhythm originally associated with the celebrations held during the night before circumcision (*furasi*), and nowadays popular at all drum/dance occasions.

Archived at BnF, Paris, file number B 70 000953.

Excursus on the Ballets Africains

The *Ballets Africains* was formed in 1947 in Paris by the playwright, director, and choreographer, Fodeba Keita. The original line-up comprised artists of West African, Central African, and Caribbean origin. The repertoire of drum and dance events did not play an important role in the early years of the *Ballets Africains*. All 78-rpm shellac discs that the *Ballets* recorded in Paris during the late 1940s and early 1950s consist of *orchestre moderne* and *ensemble instrumentale*. Not a single one, however, contains any *jenbe* playing. For instance, the Ballet's legendary homage to Bamako—"À Bamako, les filles sont belles"—, is a song sung in standard French, set in a *rumba* rhythm, and orchestrated with guitar, *tumba*, and *claves* (*Ballets Africains* de Keita Fodeba, [n.d., ca. 1947], *L'Afrique de demain/Bamako*. Chant du Monde 728 [archived at BNF, Paris, file number C 012226]).

Keita's many performances of the early 1950s too are mainly set for guitar (*orchestre moderne*) and *kora*, *bala*, and *flute (ensemble instrumentale)* music; only exceptionally are some parts set for drum ensemble music. In one piece, however, Fodeba Keita reveals his fascination with the integrative capacities of drum/dance events. This piece, called *Noël de mon enfance*, is completely set in "*rhythme de tam-tam*." It describes Keita's experience of a village celebration, in which the locals and the French representatives of the colonial power merge in communal action—he speaks of a "holy communion"—and transgress, or at least for a moment forget, the borders of cultural otherness and dependence (Keita 1950: 44–47).

In 1953, the *jenbe* player Ladjji Camara joined Keita's *Ballets Africains* and pioneered the tie of *jenbe* music and African ballet that later would prove so close and successful. The *jenbe* traditions of the region of Kankan in northeastern Guinea, where both Keita and Camara come from, later became most influential in the development of a national Guinean, and recently of an international, *jenbe* style. In 1958, Keita's troupe was appointed the national ballet of the first independent state of francophone Africa, the République de Guinée. This marked a remarkable transformation, considering the international and intercultural origin of the troupe in Paris. *Jenbe* music apparently had a specific role in the 1960s programs of the *Ballets Africains*. It filled only some minutes of a program; as an interlude and finale, however, it represented a conspicuous and essential element of the show. Although the music of the two LPs listed above is mainly modern guitar and *ensemble instrumentale* music, the covers and supplements show exclusively folkloristically costumed dancers and drummers.

In 1958, the *Ballets Africains* performed at the Festival d'Afrique in Bamako; in the festival newspaper (*Festival Afrique* 3:n.p.), a lengthy excerpt of Fodeba Keita's programmatic text "Les hommes de danse" (Huet and Keita 1954:8–15) was reprinted. In 1958 and 1959, almost every West African independence movement leader of importance visited Conakry and was welcomed with the impressive spectacles of the *Ballets Africains* at the airport and evening receptions at conference halls. The national ballet of Guinea took the role of a prototype for the Malian and other West African national ballets. From the 1960s onwards, the Guinean national ensemble, with its lead drummer Famoudou Konaté (who had replaced Ladjji Camara), has been among the leading mediators of the spread of the *jenbe* outside West Africa.

Dan/VA/Zemp, eds.

(n.d.) *Percussions de Côte d'Ivoire*. Alvarès (LP) C488.

B1: two *jenbe*-like drums, one set of five small goblet-shaped drums.

(n.d.) *The music of the Dan*. UNESCO Collection/Bärenreiter Musicaphon (LP) BM 30 L 2301.

A3, B10, B11, B12: two *jenbe*-like drums, one five-drum-set, song, trumpets (horns).

Guinea/VA

1961 (*no title*). Tempo (LP) 7008

B3, "danse du feu": one *jenbe*, one *dununba*, one *tama*; performed by the ballet troupe of the region of Kankan.

Guinea/VA

(n.d.) *Escale en Guinée*. Pathé (LP) CPTX 240746 [ca. 1963/64].

A1, "Gloire à P.D.G. [*Parti Démocratique Guinéen*]": *bala*, *bolon*, *jenbe*.

Mali/VA

1969 *Djungdjung*. Love records LR (LP) 12.

A6, "Dance rhythm": two *jenbew*, one *dunun*. This is the earliest *jenbe* recording from Bamako. It features the rhythm *sunun* played by members of the national ballet, Madu Faraba Sylla—*jenbe*, Tindo Jakite—*jenbe*, and Sèginè Koita—*dunun* (identified by Jeli Madi Kuyate and Madu Faraba Sylla, 2/2000).

Mali/VA

(n.d.) *Epic, historical, political and propaganda songs of the Socialist government of Modibo Keita (1960-68)*. Albatros (LP) VPA 8327.

B2, "You must be courageous": song, flute, *dunun*, *jenbe*.

Mali/VA

(n.d.) *Musique du Mali. Vol. 2. Melodie* (2 CDs) DK 053.

CD1, # 6, "Baaralaw": song, one *jenbe*, guitar. Performed by the regional troupe of Kayes (not of Bamako, as is wrongly maintained in the liner notes).

VA

(n.d.) *African Rhythms and Instruments, Vol. 1*. Lyricord, LYR (CD) 7328.

These recordings feature the national folklore of various African states as performed at the *Première Festival Panafricaine*, Algiers, 1969. The Troupe Folklorique (national ballet) of Mali plays three pieces: 4, "xylophone, percussion and female voices"; 5, "drums and rattles"; and 6, "kono".

No. 4 is the ballet's version of a Maninka *jenbe*-rhythm called *menjani*. No. 5 is misleadingly edited: the first 80 seconds of this piece belong to piece *menjani* (no. 4). Only after one-and-a-half minutes does the rhythm *ngonba* begin, a genre of southeastern Bamana. This rhythm originally is played with Bamana drums of the *bôn* type, but was

transposed to the *jenbe/dunun* ensemble by the national ballet. The players of pieces no. 4 and no. 5 are Brèm Kuyate–*bala*, Maré Sanogo–*jenbe*, Madu Faraba Sylla–*jenbe*, Bala Samake–*jenbe*, Tindo Jakite–*jenbe*, Sèginè Koita–*dunun*, Seran Kanute–*dunun-ba*, and Sungalo Sacko–*tama* (interviews with Jeli Madi Kuyate and Bala Samake, 2/2000). No. 6, *kòndò*, features a Bamana rhythm from the region of Segu representing a bird mask. This piece is not performed with a *jenbe* as lead drum, but with a Bamana drum of the *bòn* type, played by Zani Diabate.

1970's

Africa Djolé

- (n.d.) *Live: The Concert in Berlin '78*. Free Music Production, FMP (CD) 1.
The first, and very popular recording of completely *jenbe/dunun*-based music on the European market.

Camara, Ladj

- 1979 *Africa, New York*. Lyrichord, LYR (CD) 7345.
The first *jenbe* recording on the US market; recorded in 1975 in NYC.

Dramé, Adama/Mondet ed.

- 1984a *Rhythms of the Manding*. Grem, DSM (LP) 042.
This recording of 1976–78 (first published in 1979, Phillips, UNESCO collection 6586 042) features the earliest field recordings of urban *jenbe* festival music. Two tracks of *jenbe* solo playing anticipate much of Dramé's later developments of virtuosic *jenbe* percussion.

Mali/VA

- (n.d.) *Biennales du Mali. Arts et culture Vol. 1*. Sono Disc (CD) SD40.
No. 6, "Ne bè taa maliba la/Sa ka fisa ni malo ye": song, choir, Bamana–*bala*, *dununba*, *jenbe*; performed by the Troupe folklorique régionale de Bamako.
This disc contains recordings of the 1970 (not 1980, as is wrongly maintained in the liner notes) finale of the Malian cultural competitions. Most of the tracks were previously published (*Les meilleurs Souvenirs de la première Biennale artistique et culturelle de la Jeunesse* [1970], Bärenreiter Musicaphon [LP] BM 30 L 2651; *Mali* (n.d.), Radio France Internationale/Archives Radiophoniques ARC 12).

Youla, Fodé

- 1977 *Soleil de guinée*. Sonodisc (LP) SAF 500531.

1980's

Africa Djolé

- 1980 *Kaloum*. Free Music Production (LP) FMP/SAJ-26.

Africa Djolé

- (n.d.) *Basikolo-Ne-Ne*. Free Music Production FMP (CD) 44.

Coulibaly, Soungalo

- 1988 *Na ya*. (cassette; no label/number; produced in France)
Some of Coulibaly's arrangements of Malian repertoire on this cassette have re-entered the tradition of festival music in Bamako since then.

Dramé, Adama

- 1984b *Traditions*. Auvidis (LP) AV 4510.
1986 *Djeli*. Auvidis (LP) B5519.
1987 *Grands maitres de la percussion: tambour djembe*. Auvidis (LP, CD) B6126.

Senegal/VA

- 1981 *Kora, Balafon et Percussions du Senegal*. Arion (LP) ARN 33602.
A1, "Introduction à la fête" [rhythm *woloso dòn*], A3, "danse de fête" [rhythm *dansa*]: three *jenbe*, one *dunun*.

Senoufo/VA/Förster, eds.

- 1987 *Musik der Senoufo*. Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin, MC (LP) 4.

Wasulun/VA

- 1987 *Guinée. Les Peuls du Wassolon*. Ocora (CD) HM 83.

Keita, Mamady and Sewa Kan

- 1989 *Wassolon*. Fonti Musicali (CD) FMD 159.

1990's

Ballets Africains de Papa Ladj Camara, Les

- 1994/95 (*no title*). Lyrichord LYR (CD) 7419.

Ballets Africains, Les

- 1991 (*no title*). Buda (CD) 82513-2.

Ballets Africains, Les

- 1994 *Silo*. Buda (CD) 92579-2.

Coulibaly, Soungalo

- 1992 *Percussion and Songs from Mali*. Arion, ARN-64192.
1999 *Dengo*. Djinn Djow Productions (no label number).

Dramé, Adama

- 1992 *Mandingo Drums*. Playa Sound (CD) PS 65085.
1996 *30 years of jembé*. Playa Sound (CD) PS 65177.

Doumbia, Abdoul

- 1995 (*no title*). (CD) AKD 95.

Dunbia, Yamadu et al./Polak, eds.

- 1996 *The Mali Tradition. The Art of Jenbe Drumming*. Bandaloop (CD) BLP 001.
1997 *Dònkili—Call to Dance. Festival Music from Mali*. Pan Records PAN (CD) 2060.
1999 *Bamakò Fòli. Jenbe Music from Bamako (Mali)*. <<http://www.nauticom.net/users/tcd/djembemande/bamakofoli.html>>.

Freres Coulibaly, Les

- 1993 *Anka Dia*. Auvidis (CD) B6775.

Kante, Mamadou

- 1994 *Drums from Mali*. Playa Sound (CD) PLS 65132.

Keita, Mamady

- 1992 *Nankama*. Fonti Musicali (CD) FMD 195.
1995 *Mogobalu*. Fonti Musicali (CD) FMD 205.
1996 *Hamanah*. Fonti Musicali (CD) FMD 211.

- 1998 *Afo*. Fonti Musicali (CD) FMD 215.
 2000 *Balandugu Kan*. Fonti Musicali (CD) FMD 218.
- Konaté, Famoudou/Engel/Beer/Simon, eds.
 1991 *Rhythmen der Malinké*. Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin (CD) MC 18.
 Field recordings of urban festival music from Conakry; studio recordings. Konaté's *jenbe* playing expertise plus the high standards of an ethnomusicological recording edition make this CD the most outstanding production of *jenbe* music of the 1990s.
 1998 *Guinée: Percussions et chants Malinké*. Chants du Monde/Buda 92727-2.
- Percussions d'Afrique
 1999 *Djembe*. Buda (CD) 829762.
- Rhythms of Mali
 1995 *Drums of Mali: Baco Djicorni*. Djenne DJ (CD) 1001.
- Sidibe, Mamadou & Jeremy Chevrier, eds.
 2000 *Village Djembe Drumming*. MP3.com (CD) 48139.
- Traoré, Moussa
 1999 *Mali Foli*. Talking drum records TD (CD) 80108.

Appendix B: Historical Photographs

CD-Rom Atlas du Patrimoine n°4, *West African Postcards (1895-1930)*. Produced by Philippe David, *Images&Memoire*, Paris; edited/distributed by *ICG Mémoire directe*, Paris, in the name of *UNESCO*.

This CD represents an important corpus of iconographic sources on musical instruments and playing in French West Africa. It contains, among many others, 20 photographs of *jenbe* playing (file numbers 0020, 0038, 0039, 0211, 1012, 1013/2648, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1023, 1024, 1026, 1027, 1283, 2630, 2647, 2650, 2652). Most of the photographs were shot by the post card producer G. Fortier between 1906-09, during his voyages through upper Guinea and southern *Soudan Français*/Mali.

Articles and Books

- Delafosse 1912 vol.2:fig.40
 Three *jenbe* players, one *tama* player, and one flutist perform for a griot's *sabre-dance* (see CD-Rom Atlas du Patrimoine n°4, file number 1016, "*danse de sabre*").
- Joyeux 1924:fig.2
Jembe, dunun, and horns/trumpets in festival performance.
- Dagan 1993:fig.20;122
 One huge leather strap *jenbe* from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (dept. of musical instruments, file number 1986.467.1); two *jenbe* drummers with flutists, probably in Bamako (Dagan quotes Documentation française, *UNESCO*, Paris; the same photo is archived at *BNF*, Paris, as file AO 4562 ("Mali, photo by G. Oudinot, 1947").

Charry 2000:fig.26-35

The drumming chapter of Charry's comprehensive book on *Mande Music* contains reprints of several historical photographs, and photos of Charry's personal research in The Gambia, Guinea, and Mali.

Disc Covers and Supplements

- Guinea/VA/Rouget ed. 1999:fig.14-22.
 Several photos of 1952 show the playing and tuning of two leather strap and one nailed *jenbe*.
- Ballets Africaines 1964;1967: Front covers and supplements
 Several photos of live performances present two *jenbe* players (incl. Famoudou Konaté) and two *dunun* players.
- Mali/VA n.d. (Canti epici ...): Front cover
 One set of five small goblet-shaped drums, one large *jenbe*, and one *dunun* taken at a ballet performance.
- Dan/VA/Zemp ed. (n.d.):fig.4-6.
 One large *jenbe* and sets of several smaller goblet-shaped drums.
- Drame 1984a; 1984b: Front covers
 Huge leather strap *jenbew* with regularly and densely fashioned nylon ligatures.
- Wasulun/VA 1987: Supplement
 Several photos of leather strap *jenbe*.
- Senoufo/VA/Förster ed. 1987:fig.13-15.
 One leather strap *jenbe*, one xylophone, one hourglass-shaped drum.

Collection Musée de L'Homme, Paris

One leather strap *jenbe* taken into the inventory in 1938 (Guinée, Nzérékore, file number D-84-1026-493); one *jenbe* player in performance (Guinée, file number 50-3625-612); one *jenbe* players in performance (Mali/*Soudan*, Kayes, file number 64-7051).

Internet

- Ballet Djoliba*, feat. Mamady Keita on top of a *jenbe* drummers pyramid:
 <http://www.guinee.net/culture/danse/ballets_joliba.html>;
- Ballets Africains*, feat. Ladj Camara:
 <http://www.guinee.net/culture/danse/ballets_africains.html>.

Appendix C: Videography

- Ballet National du Mali
 (n.d.) (*no title*). Paris: T.A.T. Audio-Visuel.
 This video of a studio performance was recorded in the early 1990's. The *jenbe* players are Jeli Madi Kuyate, Brama Fayinke, and Sedu Keita; Zani Diabate plays *bala*.

Chevallier, Laurent

1991: *Djembefola*. Paris: Rhea films.

The spectacular story of Mamady Keita's return to Guinea and his home village.

Appendix D: Musical Examples

Sound samples are available on the Internet at <www.uni-bamberg.de/ppp/ethnomusikologie/wom-2000-3>. The aim of the sound samples is to make audible the change of sound of the Bamako *jenbe* that came along with the change of instrument making and style analyzed in the article. All samples feature the same rhythm. The players, who all play their own instruments, belong to different generations of the same tradition in Bamako.

Sound sample 1:

Namori Keita (*jenbe*), born around 1927, and Fasiriman Keita (*dunun*) play rhythm *sunun* in a studio-like setting in Namori Keita's compound in Kati, close to Bamako. Namori Keita performs on his low tuned leather *jenbe* (see fig. 5) that is about 36 cm in diameter. His warm and "breathing"—as one says in Bamana—*jenbe* sound, playing style, and drum patterns are representative of the 1960s and 1970s. Recording: Polak 1998.

This recording of rhythm *sunun* very much resembles Mali/VA, 1969 (LP): A6.

Sound sample 2:

Jaraba Jakite (*jenbe*), born around 1953, Madu Jakite (*jenbe*), Solo Samake (*dunun*), and Fasiriman Keita (*dunun*) play the rhythm *sunun* at a wedding festival in Bamako. Soloist Jaraba Jakite plays a rather high tuned iron *jenbe* of about 36 cm in diameter. His roaring and hissing sound is typical of the festival drummers of Bamako in the 1980's. Recording: Polak 1994. Published in *Bamakò Fòli*. Dunbia et al./Polak ed. 1999.

Sound sample 3:

Draman Keita (*jenbe*), Sedu Keita (*jenbe*), Vieux Kamara (*dunun*) und Lansina Keita (*dunun*) play the rhythm *sunun* in a studio-like setting in Bamako. All players were born between 1966 and 1974. Draman Keita and Sedu Keita both play extremely high tensioned *jenbew* of only 28-30 cm in diameter. The dry and high pitched sound of *jenbew* like these is much appreciated by the younger generation of drummers who are setting the tone in Bamako since the 1990's. Recording: Polak 1998.