I can't tell you how wonderful the music is in this collection is - each song a clear and shining jewel waiting to be discovered. The songs in this collection are:

- **Amai Vachauya**: 4 variations plus intro and outro
- **Chemutengure**: 24 variations
- **Chikunda 1**: through composed - 10 different phrases
- **Chikunda 2**: through composed - 7 different phrases plus intro and outro
- **Hwawa**: a single phrase
- **Kana Ndoda**: 7 variations plus an intro
- **Kukaiwa**: 3 variations
- **Mahororo**: 9 variations
- **Ndo Nofira Msango**: through composed - about 3 variations plus intro and outro
- **Ndo Wombera**: 4 variations
- **Nhemamusasa**: 4 variations

African mbira music is cyclical - you repeat a two, three, or four measure phrase many times, and then move on to a new variation of the phrase to repeat. Each variation is like a level up in a game, or a new leg of a journey with new emotional overtones and new scenery, but the same basic substance. In terms of western music, each variation of a particular song will have compatible rhythms and the same chord progression. That is actually an amazing piece of the puzzle to remember: even though these are traditional African songs, they all have a well-defined chord progression that they stick to, repeating over and over again - pointing to a universality of music.

Some songs, such as Amai Vachauya and Chikunda 2, have a composed intro and outro - ways to start and end the song. Most songs do not have an intro or an outro, but are just variations. That means it is up to you to decide how to begin and how to end. You could launch right into the first variation. Or you could start in the middle of the first variation to “fool the listener” into not knowing where the real beginning of the phrase is.

Some songs, such as Nhemamusasa, you will want to learn every variation, and will probably wish for more. On the other hand you have Chemutengure with 24 different variations. You probably won't want to perform them all. Start by picking five that you like and seem natural to you - arrange them in a way that shows a growth pattern, from simple to complex. Play each variation four or eight times. (In the sound files, each variation bounded by a repeat sign is played twice.) Of course, the real fun starts when you have played this music long enough that you start coming up with your own variations, or even start to improvise your own variations.

**WHAT FILES ARE IN THIS DOWNLOAD?**

For each song, we include:
- a PDF file, a graphical image of the tablature. View on your screen or print out.
- an MP3 file so you can hear what the song is supposed to sound like in this tuning.
- a KTabS file, which can be played by the KTabS Reader or the full KTabS program.

For help reading the tablature, go to: [http://www.kalimbamagic.com/learnhow/learnhow_tablature.php](http://www.kalimbamagic.com/learnhow/learnhow_tablature.php)
Song Notes by Ivodna Galatea

Amai Vachauya (Shona trad. ATK, MHT). “Amai Vachauya” means “mother will come” - it is the first line of a lament “Mother will come; come and see; come and see this poor man.”

The field recording at ILAM is here: http://preview.tinyurl.com/AmaiVachauya.

Chemutengure (Shona trad. ATH,MHC,PBS,PML). The name “Chemutengure” means “that which carries” and refers to the Boer carts driven by the song is a song of encouragement to the drovers. Perminus Matiure [PML], explains:

“Chemutengure literally means that which carries and this refers to the white men's wagon. When the whites came to Africa they used ox or horse drawn wagons to travel from one place to another especially the Boer ox wagon. They used to employ black men to drive the horses. The Shona call kutyaira ngoro. The composer of this folk song explains the experiences of the wagon driver.”

Hear Andrew Tracey play it here: https://tinyurl.com/chemutengure

Chikunda Nos. 1 and 2 (Tete trad. ATM,ATK,MHI,MHT). Chikunda Nos. 1 and 2 are pieces in the Chikunda language of the Sena/Nyungwe people of Tete. Jege Tapere played these tunes for Andrew Tracey, but did not know the name of them as he could not speak Chikunda and couldn't remember the lyrics. The arrangement of Chikunda No 1 begins with the simplified form of the first Chikunda piece included with the AMI African-Tuned Karimba. What follows in the arrangement then is the transcription by Andrew Tracey of Jege Tapere’s performance in [ATM] with the “little tune” and “big tune” marked: “This piece is in the relative minor mode; the legato passage at the end is how Tapera would have me play against him on a second mbira.”

Listen to the original field recording at ILAM here: http://tinyurl.com/chikunda1

The arrangement of Chikunda No 2 follows the transcription by Andrew Tracey of Jege Tapere’s performance in [ATM]: “Its main interest is in the changing directions of the melody; the basic tune itself varies intriguingly between up and down, and, in the variations, the direction is constantly changing, with notes appearing here and there unexpectedly, giving an effect of surprise which invariably pleases an African audience. Note the use of dynamics for variation. This is another tune with a different player- and listener-image. The player is conscious of the contrast of the left and right hand rhythms. The listener, however, associates together notes of similar pitch and constructs his own rhythmic framework for the tune on the normal two against three pattern.”

Listen to the original field recording at ILAM here: http://tinyurl.com/chikunda2

Kana Ndoda (Shona trad. ATM,ATK). The name “Kana ndoda” means “If I Want”, the phrase itself is the first line of the song, as described by Tracey in [ATM]:

“Most of his other tunes have a more standardised accompaniment. One of the first that I learnt was “Kana ndoda kuramba murume”, a sad song in 5/8 time. “If I should want to refuse (divorce) my husband, I should be very worried. Have you eaten your food with the mouse's head?” (A mouse's head is considered a delicacy.)”

Hear Andrew Tracey play Kana Ndoda here: https://tinyurl.com/KanaNdoda
Kukaiwa (Shona trad. YT). Kukaiwa is a place name so this may be a toponym. The transcription is from YouTube.

Mahororo (Shona trad. BWL, GGK, PBS). Williams among many others suggests that the name “Mahororo” has several possible translations [BWL] ranging from a toponym (the name of a river, following [FHK]), to “baboons talking”, to “song of rest after victory”. Matiure says it translates as “victory” and says “The word mahororo is derived from the word kuorora which means defeating.” [PMR]

Ndo Nofira Msango (Shona trad. ATM). According to Tracey [ATM] It is a song for the Mhondoro spirits, originally played on the njari

Ndo Wombera (Shona trad. YT, ANM). This tune is a hymn of gratitude - “I clap my hands” [ANM]. It is claimed as a traditional tune but liner notes implicitly ascribe it to Dumisani Maraire.

Nhemamusasa ()

Song Notes by Mark Holdaway

Right Index Finger Technique: the tablature shows you exactly which tine needs to be played at each instant, but does not tell you which thumb to play it with. Tines on the left side of the instrument are played with the left thumb, notes on the lower right row are played with the right thumb, and the upper right row tines are played with the right index finger, as shown in the photo. Unlike the mbira dzavadzimu technique, which has the index finger plucking upward, on the karimba the right index finger approaches the tine from the top and plucks downward. The longest tine in the middle usually is plucked by the right thumb. The shortest tine right next to can be played by either the right index finger or the left thumb.
I have rated these songs on easiness or difficulty: 1 is for the least difficult songs, 2 for intermediate, and 3 is for difficult songs. Most of these pieces start out easier and get more complex - so even if a song is rated as difficult, give it a look and try to play the first bits. If not, come back to it in the future when you understand more about karimba music.

Also, I am supplying the chord progressions for these songs. The intro and outro might not follow the chord progressions.

**Amai Wachauya**  
Level: 1  
Not difficult, but the rhythm is a but odd in that it seems to be withholding itself early in each phrase, and then the notes come rushing out at the end of each phrase.

| Chords | F | Dm | F | C |

**Chemutengure**  
Level: 1, 2, and 3  
pick your variations wisely  
This song was made famous by the CD Shona Spirit, and the short two measure cycle helps make this one of the most accessible pieces in the Shona repertoire. All of the variations feel pretty much natural, though some of them require fast repeated notes on the same thumb, which will limit the speed at which you will be able to play those variations.

| Chords | F | Am | Dm | F | Am | C |

**Chikunda 1**  
Level 2  
This song is “through composed”, meaning there are no repeats. Each three measure phrase builds on the previous, and one gets the sense of deepening intrigue. Similar to Bungu Utete, in the relative minor - another concept that bridges the cultural divide between southern African music and Western music.

| Chords | Dm | F | C | Am |

**Chikunda 2**  
Level 2-3  
The African Tuned Karimba (also called mbira nyunga nyunga) has a note layout that makes playing certain octave combinations simple

| Chords | F | Dm | F (Am) | C |

**Hwawa**  
Level 1-2  
Karimba music is typically “two phrase music” such as Chemutengure - the first measure of each variation asks a question (harmonically, it says “F Am Dm”), while the second measure of each variation restates that question as an emphatic answer (harmonically, it goes “F Am C”). Most mbira dzavadzimu music is more complex with four individual phrases that relate to each other in a similar, but more complex manner than just “question phrase/answer phrase”. This delightful little song is in between the two and four phrase music, and gives us three phrases (C Am C | F | C | D - I would draw the phrases in a different place than the bar lines). Furthermore, the other songs so far have all be rooted in F (the low note on the karimba) - except for Chikunda 1, which is in Dm, relative minor to F. Hwawa is rooted in C. Why? The standard nyung nyunga tuning in F lacks the 4th degree of the scale, or Bb, but if we turn around and make C be the root note, the 4th of C is F which is on the instrument several times. Mbira dzavadzimu music usually requires the 4th, so when you see karimba music arrange as this song, not rooted on the low tine, that is a clue that you might be playing mbira dzavadzimu music transposed to the karimba (or nyunga nyunga).

| Chords | C | Am | F | C | C | D | D |
Kana Ndoda  
Level 2
Classic two phrase pattern.
Chords | F Am | Dm | F Am | C |

Kukaiwa  
Level 1-2
Classic two phrase pattern.
Chords | F Am Dm | F Am C |
The recording does not match the music in the third variation.

Mahororo  
Level 3
This piece is so beautiful, it is worth the cost of this package all by itself.
The structure of this piece borrowed from the mbira dzavadzimu repertoire has a very similar structure to Nhemamusasa - that is, each variation has four little phrases, except that it starts on Nhemamusasa's last phrase (with the G in it), and one chord is missing from each little phrase. Three different thumbing patterns are repeated throughout: a) right thumb - right index - left thumb, which is not difficult; b) left thumb - right thumb - left thumb (or its mirror image), which, when two of these patterns are adjacent, there will be two left thumbs in a row, which is a bit awkward; and c) pure alternating left - right over 6 or 9 beats, which of course is the easiest. Measures (ie, each measure is also a “little phrase” in this piece) tend to end strong with the strictly alternating left-right patterns.
Chords | C G | C Am | F Am | Dm FM7 |

Ndo Nofira Msango  
Level 2
This one sounds more primitive because of its simple chord progression and its idiosyncratic following of that pattern, but nonetheless it is not particularly easy.
Chords | Dm | F |

Ndo_Wombera  
Level 1
Again, a simplified version of the four phrase mbira music - compare the chords to Nhemamusasa's chords. The fourth phrase in each variation is the same, a way of deepening the sense of return at the end of each variation.
This is a good one to start with.
Chords | C Am | C F | Dm F | C G |

Nhemamusasa  
Level 2
This would rated as a 3, except that this arrangement is painless: the first variation is made of slow two note chords, and each variation after that has a strictly alternating right-left pattern. Nhemamusasa is also a classic example of Andrew Tracey's theoretical model of mbira music [ATS], or what we have been calling here “four phrase music”. Each measure is a little phrase with three chords, and four of those phrases build to make each variation.
Chords | C Em Am | C F Am | Dm F Am | C Em G |
Bibliography and Sources

These are the references consulted and the sources drawn on for the arrangements in this book. And of course I drew on the performances made available on YouTube by the fantastic Mbira/Sanza/Kalimba community for making so many performances available for study. The three letter codes are used to indicate where the literature was directly used.


......................(1975) Insert for AMI Kalimba, African Musical Instruments [ATK]


......................(1997) “Getting Started with Mbira dzaVadzimu” Percussive Notes , 35 pp38- [MWG]