



Unit 4: African Music

Lesson 3

Remember the principal features of African music?

- repetition
- improvisation
- polyphony/polyrhythm
- cross-rhythms - *exercise*
- variations
- call & responses

Common structure of an African drum piece.

Pay special attention to the role of the Master Drummer of this group, and to the different patterns/variations he directs the group to perform:

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=XBpml5vmGhk&feature=related>



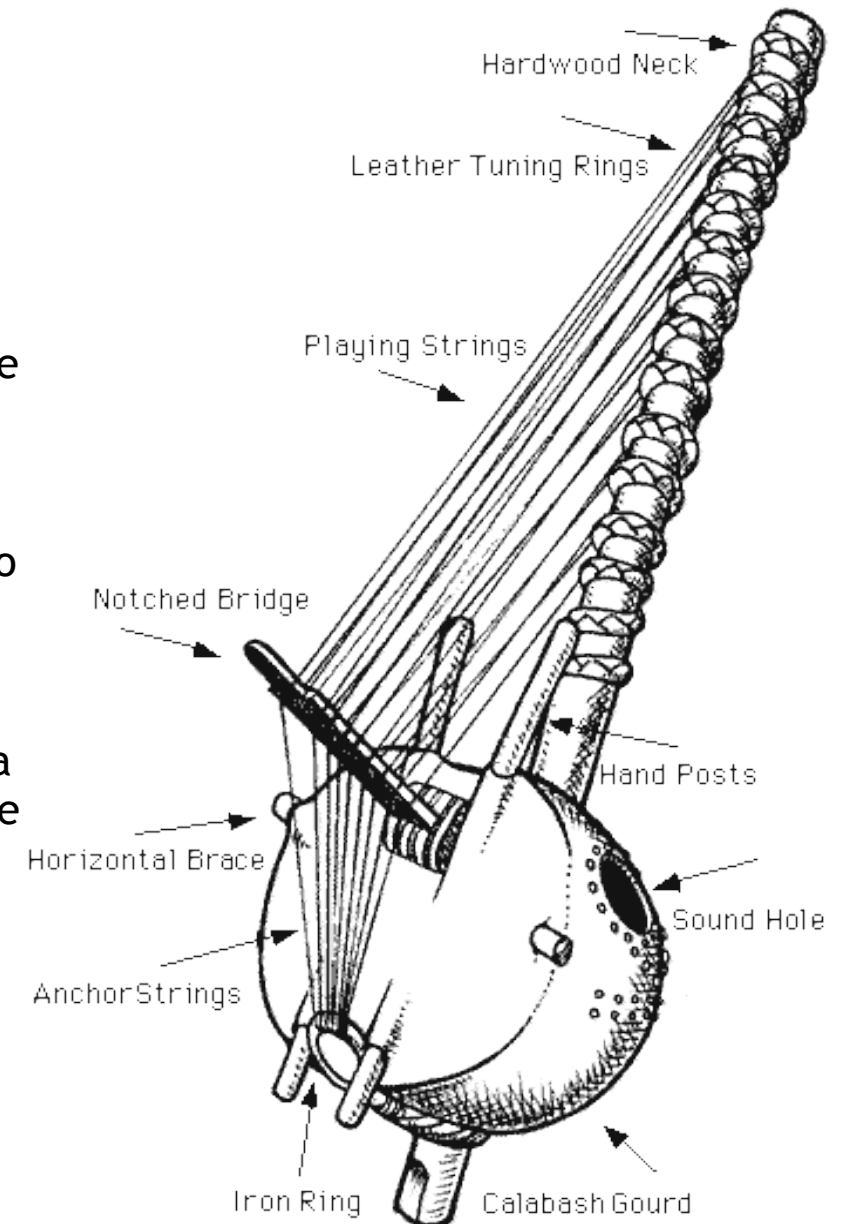
African instruments

Kora

Introduction:

<http://www.soundjunction.org/what%E2%80%99sakoramadeof.aspa?NodeID=205>

- large calabash cut in half and covered with cow skin to make a resonator.
- notched bridge
- 21 strings - 11 for the left hand, 10 for the right
- player uses only the thumb and index finger of both hands to pluck the strings in polyrhythmic patterns
- ostinato riffs and improvised solo runs are played at the same time by skilled players
- by moving leather tuning rings up and down the neck, a kora player can retune the instrument into one of four seven-note scales
- Watch clip:
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=86lv-uYPORc&feature=related>
- Famous player: Toumani Diabate





Balaphon

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=s6DFdnEY0FQ>

- wooden keys
- strung over calabash resonators
- hit with padded wooden sticks
- polyphony (two hands independent)



<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=uh64tFYyXUM>



Mbira (thumb piano)

- from Zimbabwe
- wooden resonator
- staggered metal keys
- sometimes fitted into a calabash as an alternative resonator:



- <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=tRkDX00uQqk>