

Amadinda - Traditional music from Uganda -

There are many names for log xylophones - amadinda, one of the best known, is from the Ugandan kingdom of Buganda. Amadinda ("sounding keys") is the name given by the Ganda people of central Uganda to their twelve key instrument. The amadinda xylophone tradition is one of the most interesting musical styles in Africa. The pieces are mainly of fixed form and require no knowledge of rules for improvisation.

The two essential instrumental parts are called okunaga ("to lead in") and okwawula ("to divide"). Both parts are played in octaves. The third part is called okukoonera ("to knock"). The okukoonera part is played by a third musician on the top two keys of the instrument only. The musicians interlock their parts by slipping their notes into gaps in the other musicians' parts. In this way, the musicians may distribute the notes of the melody between different players - so with only one musician playing, the melody might not be heard: it is only when two or more musicians play together at speed that the full melody and other patterns can be heard emerging from the overall sound.