

XYLOPHONE FANG

Traditional music from Gabon

The Fang region of Gabon lies, roughly speaking, in the north-west of the country, though it reaches also into Equatorial Guinea, southern Cameroun and the north-west of Congo. In the course of their precolonial history, the Fang, sometimes called Pahouin, had migrated extensively under the pressure of invaders from the north, eventually settling in the area they currently inhabit. Their music distinguishes itself from that of other Gabonese peoples' by the use of the *mvét*, a harp-zither that accompanies epic story-telling, and also their xylophones: the *mendzang me biang* and the *mendzang me yekaba*, instruments of the Ntumu group.

Music played by Amadinda is sounded on *mendzang me biang*. Originally this xylophone consists of two banana trunks on the ground, upon which a series of wooden bars of varying sizes and pitches are placed. The instrument is played by two men, side by side, a principal musician whose playing extends over a considerable range, and an accompanist who plays on only a few wooden bars.

In this transcription by Amadinda two instruments are used, allowing the ostinato player to appear from his background position for short moments from time to time.