

POLYPHONY BY WAY OF POLYRHYTHM:
THE CASE OF THE BANDA-LINDA HORN ENSEMBLES

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Polyphony by way of polyrhythm, or *hocket*, is created by the interweaving of several rhythmic figures located on different pitch levels in a specific scalar system.

In Subsaharan Africa, the hocket technique is used by ensembles of wind instruments in which each instrument emits mostly one single pitch corresponding to a scale degree. All the instruments in such an ensemble are invariably of the same type, but different size. The music they produce stands precisely at the boundary between strict polyrhythm and polyphony.

I will scrutinize the music of the horn ensembles of the Banda-Linda ethnic group, living in Central African Republic.

My purpose is

- to reveal the underlying coherence governing its organization,
- to describe the constraints imposed on the musical material by the organological nature of the instruments,
- to determine the musical principles governing the use of the hocket technique in Subsaharan Africa,
- to relate this strictly instrumental music to the vocal songs from which it derives,
- to show the method by which one can model such a repertoire.

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