

Re-Sounding the historical Congolese xylophone collection and cultural heritage through artistic research practices

The main goals of this research project are to reinvestigate, revive and recreate the music practice of the *manza* xylophones of the Azande people in northern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a music tradition that is in decline due to colonisation and fragmentation of patrimonial chiefdoms. Once owned and performed by the chiefs and notables, a number of these court instruments were acquired by military and ethnographers of Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium (RMCA) since the beginning of the twentieth century, and preserved in the museum musical instruments collection till now. Through the interdisciplinary research methodology that conjoins music experimentation, participatory creative actions and ethnography, the project will bring impact to the society and the academic world in terms of cultural heritage, provenance research, and decolonial and multicultural values, next to the developments in research methodology, aesthetics and techniques of the musical art.

Hence, artistic and empirical results will be generated through three main phases: first, sampling the instruments' sound to the electronic replica, and to hypothesise the embodiment and music practice of the *manza* xylophone music through practising the historical sound recordings of the DEKKMMA archive of RMCA on the replica xylophone (music experimentation); second, the co-creation, co-experimentation, performances and workshops with the source and diaspora communities, as well as students and musicians in Europe (participatory creative actions and knowledge dissemination); and third, the ethnography, such as, interviews, field studies, art residency and archival research. In this presentation, I will focus on the ongoing first phase of music experimentation, meaning the technical procedures of sampling the historical instrument collection, and the analysis and re-creation of the museum DEKKMMA sound archive.



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Adilia On-ying Yip has obtained the Doctoral in Arts (PhD) title from University of Antwerp (ARIA) and Royal Conservatoire Antwerp in 2018 with the artistic research project 'Inventing New Marimba Performance from the West African Balafon Practice'. She is the main investigator of Belspo Brain 2.0 project "ReSoXy—Resounding the Musical Heritage of the Xylophone Collection from the Africa Museum" (2023-25). She

is an alumnus of docARTES, Orpheus institute Ghent (2013-15) and the Masters in African Studies from Ghent University (2020-21).

Born in Hong Kong, Yip is currently living and working in Antwerp for her projects that cross the classical, contemporary, and world music fields. She is the founder member of

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Parallel Session

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