

Siaya district of nyanza province in kenya



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This is a case-study of the creation and performance of folk song within a small community in Siaya district of Nyanza province in Kenya. I have been a participant in and observer of this community for about thirty five years. This preliminary study is sketchy, random, and not at all comprehensive since it is found in an oral setting.

The community is over forty years old in this area of Lela village of Jera sub-location. It is a non-profit making organization which is interested in keeping to the traditions and culture of the Luo. This group call themselves ohangla group and is based in Kisumu. Luo has its members throughout East and central Africa.

The members of this group re-create (and re-interpret) many aspects of the period, from feasts and competitions and wars to academic research and dozens of practical crafts. In the process the Ohangla group has created its own internal customs and history in and around Kisumu city.

The first context for music in the Ohangla group is in conjunction with ceremonies such as coronations or as entertainment at banquets. These occasions involve formal performances of instrumental and vocal art music from the early ages, with some folk music numbers.

This is different from the modern music which coupled with the current trends and traditions such as medieval dancing which is done while playing cassettes of medieval dance music primarily French court dances, and dances from Play ford's " Dancing Master".[1]

Deliberate modifications to existing tunes are rare. Most changes to tunes are unconscious, regardless of the magnitude of the change. Some variation

may arise from attempts at harmonization that persist into later solo performance.

Unconscious variations in tune may include the adding or removal of embellishments, shifts in tonality, and modifications to rhythm. For example, the low D in "The Brave and Bonny Host" which
Most audience at the Ohangla functions never sees the words of any song written down.

Any learning they do is oral. As for the performers, on average the words of a song are first partly or completely learned from a commercial recording or from a bardic circle performance, and only later written down as an aid to memory. Thus, most lyrics at some point pass through a non-oral stage in this community.

Some variations in text arise from forgetting or misunderstanding, but most major changes in this community are deliberate actions on the part of the performer. Changes to SCA folk song texts are common, and these changes are applied nearly as often to traditional folk songs as to SCA folk songs.

[1]. Bohlman, P. (1988). *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*. Indiana University Press.