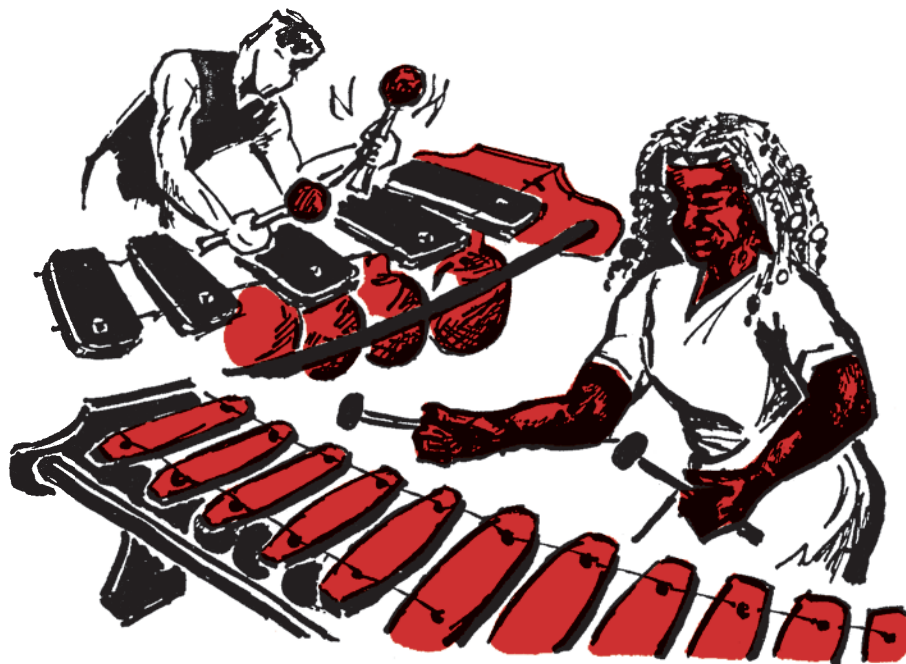




# CHALIA MARIMBA

## MUSIC BOOK 1

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# INTRODUCTION

This marimba-teaching guide is for music teachers and band directors who would like their students to have the great experience of learning how to play marimbas, African-style. The “African” music-teaching process does not use any written music. Rather, the students are shown their parts on the instruments by the teacher, and they memorize these parts.

The great advantage of this teaching method is that students learn music in the most natural way possible: by ear and through body memory. When we learn our first language as small children, we are not asked to memorize the alphabet or read words. Rather, we learn by hearing our language spoken, with all its complexities and strange sounds, and we begin to imitate those.

If it is possible for young children to learn the complexities of language without having to read and write it first, it is certainly possible for people to learn the complexities of rhythm patterns and music in a similar way. In fact, in most of Africa this ability is taken for granted. Perhaps the reason why music seems to come so “naturally” to most Africans is because nobody has any written notes to stumble over. The input of hearing music soon leads to the output of singing or playing music, especially when strong drum/dance rhythms are part of that input.

Every marimba student, whether in the United States, Africa or elsewhere, who learns to play using this “hands-on” method, is able to learn rhythm patterns and melodies that are much more complex than what would normally be possible, if he/she were having to decipher notation first. This is especially important for students who already have reading disabilities. Since there is no “reading” involved in playing marimba, everyone starts from the same point and all students have an equal chance of achieving success in playing an instrument.

For these reasons, only the music teacher should ever see any notation for marimba instruments. The students should remain blissfully ignorant of the fact that it even exists. This may mean some hard work for the teacher, since he/she has to learn to play each part confidently enough to be able to teach it well, but the rewards will be well worth it. Assume that *every* student will be able to learn how to play marimbas, and you will not be disappointed.

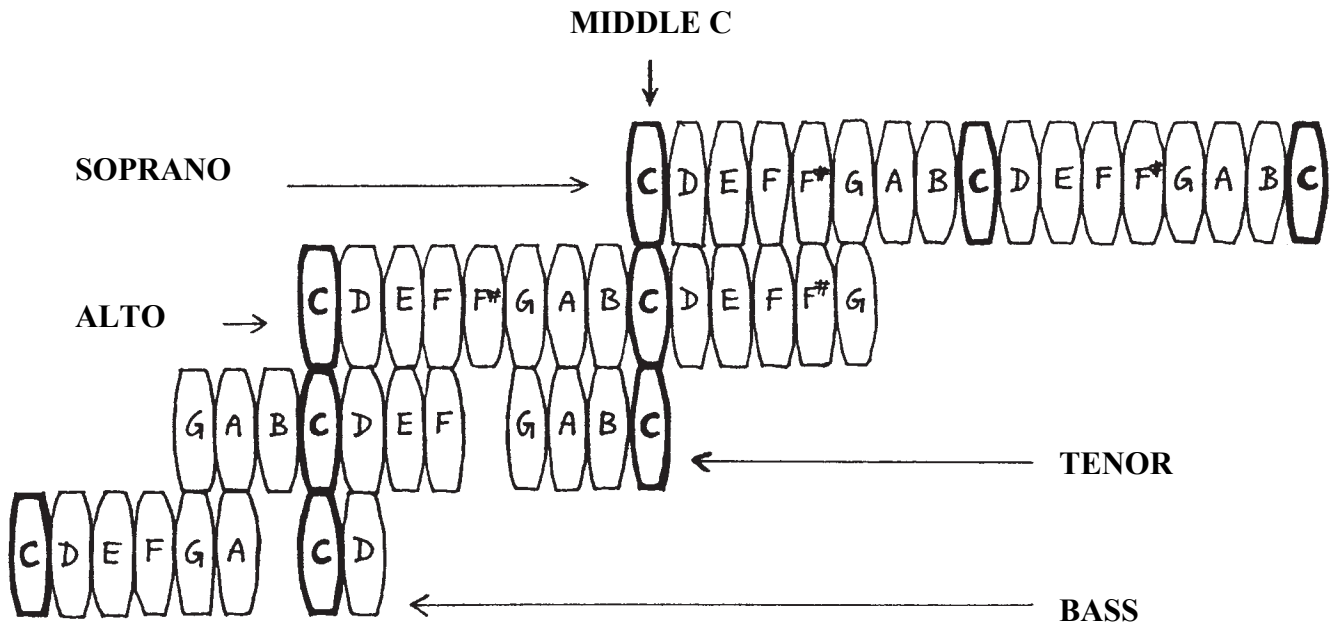
Welcome to a musical journey that will take you and your students all over the world, to destinations both familiar and unfamiliar, through songs you know and songs you have never heard before. Soon enough, all these songs will be yours too.

## Tonal range of Chaia Marimbas

The chart below illustrates the tonal range of Chaia Marimbas for the four different instruments used in an ensemble: **soprano**, **alto**, **tenor** and **bass**. There are Orff instruments with similar tonal ranges to the Chaia Marimbas, and these can also be used to play the songs in this book. For example, the Orff *tenor-alto* has exactly the same range as the **soprano** Chaia Marimba, and the Orff *deep bass* has the same range as the **alto** Chaia marimba. Each instrument is played by one person, except for the alto which generally has two players.

The Kwanongoma-style marimba was introduced to the Northwestern United States some years ago, and its tonal range is the same as the Chaia Marimba. The instruments, however, have different names: the soprano is known as the **treble**, the alto, as **tenor**, the tenor, as **baritone** and the bass is still the bass. To avoid confusion, any person using this book who has Kwanongoma-style marimbas may want to change the names of the instruments in the notations so that they correspond with his/her own instruments.

### THE CHAIA MARIMBA INSTRUMENTS: COMPLETE RANGE



## Song 2: Sithi Amen

### Teaching the marimba parts

This song includes a “roll” (vibrating sticks very fast on a note) in the **soprano** part, which usually does not present any difficulty for students. The only problem may be knowing where to come in for the harmonies shown at the end of the song. If students learn to sing the piece first, this will come naturally.

Note that this song, along with *Otsotsi* and *Intombi Yami*, has two different soprano parts (Soprano 1 and Soprano 2). These should be played on two separate instruments. The two alto parts (Alto 1&2) can, as usual, be played by two people on the same instrument.

The **alto** parts can be taught by counting “one-and-two, three-and-four”. If the C-chord is the “home” chord, then the chord up from it will be the F-chord, and the chord down from it will be the G-chord. Teach students to come “home” before going up or down.

The **tenor** part is a little more complex, especially the syncopated rhythm in the chorus. If students are having difficulty, they can simply copy the bass part. The **bass** part has a steady, even beat. It is mostly a matter of counting, and remembering the right notes to play for the chorus.

### Putting the song together

For this song, start with bass and tenor, then bring in the altos, and sopranos last. To end the song, go out in the same way. For the full effect, combine with a choir, using the choral arrangement of *Sithi Amen* (available separately).



# Sithi Amen

Musical score for the first system of 'Sithi Amen'. The score is written for six voices: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor, and Bass. The time signature is common time (C). A vertical bar line is placed at the beginning of the second measure. Above the Soprano 1 staff, there is a notation for a 'roll' (a series of sixteenth notes) with the text 'roll' below it. Above the Soprano 2 staff, there is a first ending bracket with the text '(on repeat only)' below it. The Soprano 1 part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a series of eighth notes. The Soprano 2 part begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and then a series of quarter notes. The Alto 1 and Alto 2 parts begin with a quarter rest, followed by a series of quarter notes. The Tenor part begins with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and then a series of quarter notes. The Bass part begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of quarter notes.

Musical score for the second system of 'Sithi Amen'. The score is written for six voices: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor, and Bass. The time signature is common time (C). The Soprano 1 staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) and begins with a quarter note G4. The Soprano 2 staff has a first ending bracket with the number '4' above it. The Alto 1 and Alto 2 parts continue with their respective parts. The Tenor and Bass parts continue with their respective parts. The system ends with a double bar line.