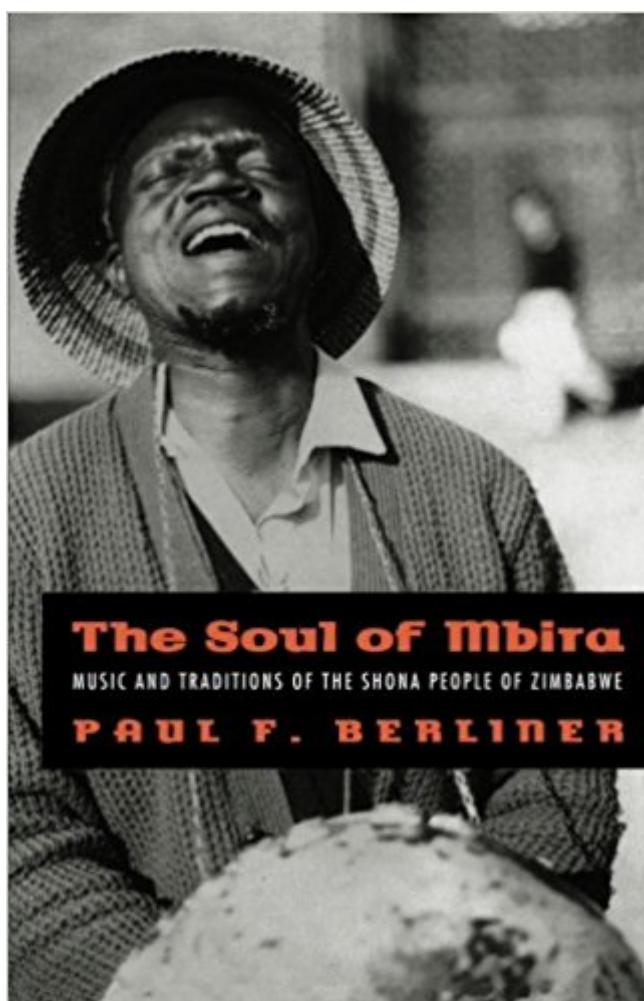


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# The Soul Of Mbira: Music And Traditions Of The Shona People Of Zimbabwe



## Synopsis

This sensitive, scholarly portrayal of Shona musicians and the African Musical tradition is highly engaging and comprehensive in its range of data. Paul Berliner provides the complete cultural context for the music and an intimate, precise account of the meaning of the instrument and its music. "Paul Berliner's *The Soul of Mbira* is probably the best ethnography ever written about an African musical tradition. It is a complete classic . . . I know of no other instrument with the range of the mbira, and the book is equal to the instrument." — John Chernoff [The Soul of Mbira] illustrates the fact that Shona mbira music in its beauty, subtlety, and virtuosity demands the same kind of respect that we might hold for any other classical music." — David Reck, *Parabola* "The book is a model of ethnomusicological thinking and investigation and it suggests a specific way of approaching a complex socio-musical system." — John Baily, *Popular Music* "When next someone asks 'What is ethnomusicology?' or 'What do ethnomusicologists do?' I shall suggest this book. . . . This is a landmark in ethnomusicological literature. Berliner succeeds in conveying both the joy that goes with mbira playing and the mystic relationship between the player and his instrument. In short, this is humanized ethnomusicology." — K.A. Gourlay, *Ethnomusicology*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This sensitive, scholarly portrayal of Shona musicians and their musical tradition is highly engaging and comprehensive in its range of data. Paul Berliner provides the rich cultural context for the music and an intimate, precise account of the meaning of the mbira and its music.

Very informational.

Excellent copy, as described

Anyone who liked *Thinking in Jazz*, another Paul Berliner book, will probably enjoy *Soul of Mbira*. It takes a similar approach, looking at the history, sociology, tradition and musical nature of the Shona mbira (also known as the kalimba, sanzhi, likembe, or 'thumb piano' - though after you hear Paul's comments on the latter name, you won't want to use it again). Other musical instruments by the Shona are also covered, but to a much lesser degree. The section on performance is nice, but it is the part which suffers most from 'dancing about architecture' syndrome. The appendix on 'building and playing your own mbira' is informative, but unless you have access to an anvil and fire, not very practical! It isn't hard to modify the design and make your own anyway, though, it just won't be as traditional.

Excellent! An in depth study of the music and the traditions and culture that are the driving force behind the music. Any serious study of the mbira must include this book.

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