3. Music and encounter

I open with a Christian song that is popular in the Duna community at Kopiago. This song declares that ‘laip senis’, meaning ‘life change’ in Tok Pisin, keeps coming for boys and girls as a result of God’s word that comes down like rain, never drying up. ‘Laip senis’ exists alongside such Tok Pisin terms as ‘tanim bel’ (‘turn the belly’, meaning to convert), used throughout the country by missions in their efforts to convert Papua New Guineans to a Christian way of life. Here, however, the term—and the song—takes on an even deeper resonance when one considers the dramatic life change experienced by the Duna people since the 1930s. So, what has changed for the Duna? How are they expressing this life change musically?

In this chapter, I endeavour to answer these questions first by examining the history of both the colonial and the missionary encounter in Duna country in and around Lake Kopiago, focusing on the kinds of musical influences of these encounters. Toner and Wild (2004:107) recently pointed out: ‘Ethnomusicologists and popular music scholars have tended to neglect the processes of transmission of both local musical styles and global popular styles, and instead have focused on the meanings of the final products whether indigenous or fused.’ This section concentrates particularly on the transmission of new musical influences. The second section will examine how the Duna have merged these introduced musical influences in order to sing contemporary songs about their current life experience. I will conclude with some brief notes locating this kind of musical syncretism, appropriation and indigenisation in the discourse of ethnomusicology.

The colonial encounter

In Chapter 1, I provided background to the period of first contact of the Duna with Europeans, which occurred in the mid-1930s. Although the arrival of

1 A shorter and earlier version of this chapter has been published under the title “‘Laip senis’: music and encounter in a Papua New Guinean community” (Gillespie 2007a).
the Fox and Taylor patrols on their land is generally understood to have been extremely traumatic for the Duna, photographic footage from the second patrol illustrates mostly positive exchanges between the Highlanders and Taylor’s men. These photographs also hold valuable information about musical exchange during this period. In particular, one photograph shows a policeman’s wife playing the mouth organ to an eager group of women in Wabag, the provincial capital of Enga Province in the Highlands region (reproduced in a plate in Gammage 1998:172–3). According to Gammage (Personal communication, 23 November 2005), Jim Taylor carried several mouth organs with him on patrol and these, along with metal jew’s harps, were used for trade. The popularity of the mouth organ could have resulted in part from the apparent similarity between it and traditional Duna musical instruments whose sound is also produced through the mouth, such as the kuluparapu and the luna, which are widespread across the Highlands. Gammage also writes that the Siame (from the Eastern Highlands Province) and the Purari (from the Gulf Province), who were on this patrol, played flutes at night, which no doubt would have been heard by the people of the country through which they travelled (though it is unlikely they would have been traded, as it appears they might have been associated with religion and sorcery by some of the members of the patrol) (Gammage 1998:115, 138). These appear to be the first examples of the Duna’s exposure to music of cultures outside their own region of the Highlands. It was not, however, the first exposure to music other than their own; the Duna were never a closed musical community by any means, as was described in the previous chapter.

Despite the eagerness of the second patrol to establish inroads into the Highlands, it was not until the late 1950s that the Australian government, then administering the area as part of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, began to build a government station at Lake Kopiago (see Figure 3.1). This station was to become a centre of activity for both the Duna and the government, with an airstrip and trade stores, council buildings and eventually a club for expatriates where the government officers played their chosen music on the radio for entertainment (Bill Gammage, Personal communication, 23 November 2005).

The key musical influence in Papua New Guinea at this time was guitar and ukulele music, which was first introduced to the country on a large scale during the 1940s by servicemen from Hawai’i and the Philippines (Webb and Niles 1987:54). These instruments, when played together and combined with a vocal line (and sometimes also a separate bass line), form the basic elements of stringband music. By the 1960s, stringband music had become popular

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1. Michael Webb and Don Niles (1987:52) report that the mouth organ, or harmonica, was already circulating in Papua New Guinea by the late 1800s/early 1900s, having been introduced by Australian goldminers.
2. The stringband can also incorporate a bass instrument made of large resonating tubes of bamboo or PVC, which are struck at one end with a rubber sole, producing a loud thumping bass note resembling the sound of a hand-muted electric bass guitar. When this instrument is included in the stringband ensemble, the group

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in villages throughout the country (Crowdy 2001:135). It eventually reached Kopiago by radio and perhaps also through musicians in the administration. Several stringbands were later established in the community, in particular to provide the club with live entertainment. It is also possible that films were shown at Kopiago during these heady colonial days; cowboy film music has been noted as a major influence on Papua New Guinean guitar styles (Webb and Niles 1987:53) and Kenny Kendoli (Forthcoming) refers to such films in an interview.

![Figure 3.1 Aerial view of Kopiago station, 1964. Note the circular parade ground and the tennis courts, now no longer in existence.](image)

Photo by David Hook

Under the Australian administration, Duna men became particularly mobile (rivalry between indigenous groups in the past is one reason given for limited travel; Okole 2005:187). Men travelled as far as Port Moresby in pursuit of paid work with the administration and on plantations. In these locations far from home exposure to other musical styles and instruments was inevitable. The metal jew’s harp, in addition to the mouth organ, had been an instrument of trade in Papua New Guinea since the early 1900s (Webb and Niles 1987:52) and eventually found its way to the Duna community on the men’s return. The metal jew’s harp proved to be a very popular instrument and its volume, tone and

becomes known as a ‘bamboo band’—an ensemble associated with Bougainville and Madang provinces in Papua New Guinea but with origins in the Solomon Islands (see Kemoi 1996:31). In its absence, bass notes are played on the lower strings of an acoustic guitar.
robustness continue to make it favoured by many men over the luna. The metal jew’s harp can also double as a fashion accessory/hair clip—one can be seen in the hair of Sane Noma in Chapter 2, Figure 2.3.

Despite all this musical activity around the Kopiago station, Chenoweth (1969:218), the one ethnomusicologist of the time who was working with Duna songs (as collected by others), claimed that the Duna ‘have not been known to adopt any western songs’. The scene had, however, been set. In 1964, the administration officially derestricted the Lake Kopiago area (until that year it had not been possible for anyone outside the administration to visit the area) and the eager missionaries were finally allowed to enter (Haley 2002a:26).  

The mission encounter

The first missions to enter the Lake Kopiago area were the Lutheran Church and the Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML), but by 1967 there were six different denominations in the area (cf. Stürzenhofecker 1998:21), with representation by the Catholic, Apostolic, Baptist and Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) churches. Competition for land on which to establish missions in this period was so fierce that it was described as ‘a gold rush for souls’ (David Hook, Personal communication, 22 November 2007). Haley writes that as a consequence of increased colonial activity the ritual activities of the Duna had gradually ceased during the previous decade, thus clearing the way for the activities of the missions. This meant that in a very short time ‘virtual wholesale conversion had been achieved’ by the missions (Haley 2002a:26).

Scholars have compared and contrasted the impact of the colonial encounter with that of the missions, albeit from different angles. Regarding the preservation of culture in reference to the Highlands of Papua New Guinea generally, Andrew Strathern observes that missions always deliberately set out to alter and replace the people’s own culture, in both material and spiritual terms. By contrast, the Australian Administration officers maintained a more complex attitude towards local practices. In respect of social structure, they tended to be ‘conservationists’: this structure must not be broken down, they reasoned, because if so, they would lose the reliable intermediaries.

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4 The administration established the Restricted Areas Ordinance in 1934 chiefly to protect missionaries and other visitors to certain regions of Papua New Guinea from the possibility of violent encounter with indigenous peoples (Bill Gammage, Personal communication, 22 December 2005).
between themselves and the mass of the people…If the Administration agreed with missions on any issue it was quite likely to be on different grounds from those used by the missionaries. (Strathern 1984:32)\(^5\)

In his comparison of the colonial impact with that of the missions, Firth writes that

> [m]ost colonial governments were skimpy, under-financed affairs… people in much of Melanesia experienced colonial rule as intermittent and sometimes mysterious demands made on occasional visits by *kiaps* (patrol officers), native police and recruiters…the outside world was embodied not in government but in the mission station with its plantations, workshops, schools and gardens, and with missionaries who came to stay, and learned the language of their congregations. (Firth 1997:255; cf. Denoon 2005:14)

Denoon also contrasts the contact Papua New Guineans had with ‘kiaps’ with this holistic approach as embodied by the missionaries, emphasising the role of language in encounter. ‘Kiaps,’ he writes, ‘exercised control mainly by foot patrols. Their village visits were brief and they had to rely on Tok Pisin to communicate so they had limited insight into village affairs’ (Denoon 2005:16). These arguments on the whole suggest that the most influential life change came about through mission contact.

At Lake Kopiago, early mission activity quashed what ritual activity remained after the establishment of the government station. Haley (1996:285) reports that ‘the early missionaries smashed, burnt and poured holy water over ancestral *auwi* [stone relics]’. Ancestral forms of singing and ritual, such as *yekia*, were banned. Pastor Hagini (see Figure 3.2), a Duna elder and leader of the Apostolic Church in the Duna parish of Hirane, describes the reason for the banning of these ancestral practices as being that within them was believed to be the presence of Satan:

> Em i pasin bilong stil, pasin bilong pamuk, pasin bilong kilim man—pasin bilong ol dispela samting i kam insait long dispela ol samting…*yekia* na *selepa*, dispela em nem bilong…samting tumbuna stori bilong ol bipo, Satan i save kam insait long dispela.

[It is the ways of stealing, ways of promiscuity, ways of fighting—the ways of all these things come inside these things (ancestral song forms)...]

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\(^5\) It is important to note, though, that there is and has always been great variation between denominations in their approach to indigenous culture (this degree of variation also applies when considering Firth’s general comment on missionaries’ role in communities).
yekia and selepa, these are the name of...these kinds of ancestral stories from long ago, Satan comes inside these.] (Pastor Hagini, Interview, 20 April 2005)

During this interview, I sang to Pastor Hagini a yekia I had learnt from my friend and translator Petros Kilapa, a song that his ‘great uncle’ Koaria (whom he referred to as his mamane) is said to have composed in the 1960s. Petros’ mother, Pokole, had heard Koaria singing it and repeated it to Petros; he had not learnt it directly from his great uncle. The text of the yekia praises God—thus the biblical and the satanical are here united, or so it first seemed (see Example 3.1).

![Figure 3.2 Pastor Hagini, reading at the funeral of Wakili Akuri, 17 February 2005.](image)

**Example 3.1 (▶ Audio 5) ‘Lotu’ yekia.**

Ngote ngini Yesu wanda ruwata lungi kulukuluya mapu(ra)nania

alungi kulukuluya mapunania

pakala kulukuluya mapunania

ukai kulukuluya mapunania, aiyo ai

when Jesus, son of God, says that he will come, the lungi clouds will thunder all around

the alungi clouds will thunder all around

the pakala clouds will thunder all around

the ukai clouds will thunder all around, aiyo ai
This "‘lotu’ yekia’ was met with consternation by Pastor Hagini. ‘Ol i stilim nem bilong God [They are stealing God’s name]’, he declared. The name of God and the musical form declared by the missionaries as satanic could not exist together:


[The Bible says, Satan and God cannot come together. Satan and Jesus cannot come together. And with Satan the two (Satan and God) do not eat together, cannot sit together, cannot walk around together. The two are completely different. And God ousted him and he came down to this ground. And he (Satan) used people, and God too used people. And the people Satan used are something different, their songs too, their work too, their way of life too, their food too, it’s another food altogether. Something else. And we of the mission are something else altogether.]

I explained to Hagini the good intentions Koaria was said to have had in composing this yekia, which were, Petros said, to ‘praise God’s name’. Hagini acknowledged that he too had composed such songs of praise using ancestral forms when he first came to Christianity, but soon gave it up. Eventually, he conceded of Koaria’s efforts: ‘i gutpela, tasol i no gutpela tumas [it’s good, but it’s not very good].’

An adverse attitude of foreigners to the people and cultures of pre-contact Papua New Guinea was not unusual at this point in history. Schieffelin et al. (1991:265) observe: ‘Traditional Papua New Guinean cultures with their body nakedness, exotic, “primitive” customs, and frequent violence were the evangelist’s very image of Satan’s country.’ This negative attitude to pre-contact culture had a significant impact on traditional forms of Duna music—in particular, the function of the music and the context for performance. Most of these early forms of music can still be heard today, but in altered form—for example, yekia are generally not now performed in the presence of women and performances have been moved from courting houses to the men’s house; however, this change of context has allowed for men to create yekia verses of politics and other issues of social dissatisfaction (examples of such yekia verses are discussed in Chapter
I once asked a young Duna man, Jeremiah Piero, why the physical aspects of yekia performance had ceased, why the men no longer sat in the laps of women while the men sang. He burst out in response: ‘Sem [shame]!’ (Jeremiah Piero, Recorded conversation, 2 March 2005). As shame is ‘an emotion anthropologists have frequently analyzed as a mechanism of social control’ (Myers 1986:120), it can be surmised that the missionaries fostered this sentiment within the Duna in order to control the new society they found themselves in.6

Missionaries on the whole preferred to introduce songs from their own churches, rather than facilitate the incorporation of ancestral song styles into Christian worship. In particular, they favoured songs with simple melodies written for children, such as *Jesus Loves the Little Children*, which was taught to the Duna of Kelabo by members of the CMML (Ian Armitage, Interview, 9 February 2005).7 There was also sharing of resource materials between missions—in particular, the fundamentalist groups—and this served to facilitate the movement of particular songs across the region.

Despite its apparent cumbersomeness, the gramophone made inroads into the Highlands of Papua New Guinea fairly quickly. Patrol officers and also gold prospectors used it, as a published photograph by Michael J. Leahy (1967:26) reveals, but perhaps its greatest potential was as an instrument for the dissemination of Christian teachings. Representatives of both the SDA Church and the CMML have published accounts of their use of the gramophone with Duna people in particular. Not only do they describe the Duna’s startled response to the sound production of the instrument, they describe the importance of teaching the Duna to operate the gramophone themselves, and describe leaving the instrument and its records for people in the community to play over and again in order to learn the teachings within, which had been recorded in their language (Were 1968:41, 54; Armitage 1969). It is very likely that Christian music accompanied these recordings of the gospel, and thus new music would have been disseminated as well.

The use of indigenous languages was a key element in the conversion of the Duna to Christianity, as was the case with indigenous groups in other parts of Papua New Guinea, the Pacific and indeed across the world. At Kelabo in the 1970s, linguist Glenda Giles of the Summer Institute of Linguistics translated the Bible into Duna and created the first and still the only guide to the Duna language (Giles n.d.). Through Giles’ extensive work, missionaries became aware of the subtleties of the Duna language and were able to use this information to serve

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6 It is also very likely that Jeremiah would have been embarrassed to discuss the topic with me—a woman of a similar age to him.

7 According to Webb (1993:106), this particular song was made popular in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s by Ray Steven’s song *Everything is Beautiful*. 
their purpose of converting the people to Christianity. San Roque explains that ‘missionary translators use[d] the verb-endings of Duna to reinforce messages that the Christian god is “true” and a certainty’. She writes that the verb endings in Duna can make reference to either a) the way the information expressed in the sentence has been received (e.g., through sound, sight, personal experience, hearsay—this is the grammatical category of ‘evidentiality’) and/or b) whether or not the speaker is certain about the information. Christian materials (unsurprisingly) tend to favour the ‘certain’ and ‘personal experience’ verb-endings. (Lila San Roque, Email communication, 8 November 2005)

Many Christian songs were, and still are, sung in English, Tok Pisin and Duna (usually at least two of these languages in the one performance). The Duna also sing some songs in the neighbouring languages of Hewa and Bogaya, as particular Christian songs were translated as they circulated the district and were acquired by Duna attending regional bible meetings. For the comprehension of the Christian message, it was important for the introduced Christian songs (as opposed to those later composed by the locals) to be translated for the congregation into ‘tok ples’ (meaning the indigenous language of the place) (cf. Jones 2004:219). In the case of the Duna, the Duna people themselves carried this out through Tok Pisin. The difficulty of singing in a new musical system was not considered as challenging as singing in other languages; once the translation into Duna had occurred the songs were apparently quite easily performed (Pastor Hagini, Interview, 20 April 2005), though the missionaries themselves might report otherwise (cf. McLean 1986:36; Jones 2004:36, 61). One missionary writes of the work of one of the first Christian teachers at Kopiago (incidentally a Papua New Guinean): ‘He taught the people to sing songs so different from their village chants that at first their voices could not find the notes and their tongues stumbled over the words. The children learned more quickly and sang with enthusiasm’ (Were 1968:36).

Many of the schools in the Kopiago area, and throughout the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, were established and run by the missions. Christian songs therefore formed the core of music education in the schools and all school music education was essentially Western due to the identities of the teachers (cf. Niles 2001:129). In addition to the education given by the teachers at Kopiago, ABC Radio National produced school broadcasts for each grade that were listened to within the classroom, and these included songs such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* and a somewhat indigenised *Here We Go ’Round the Mango Tree* (Richard Alo, Personal communication, 30 July 2006).

It is widely recognised that ‘[s]chooling helps to perpetuate existing ideologies, assimilate ideological challenges, and produce new ideologies in line with
changing economic and social conditions’ (Green 2003:264). Pertinent to the topic under discussion here is the observation that ‘[m]usic education participates in the construction and perpetuation of ideologies about musical value’ (Green 2003:265). Songs such as Ten Little Indians (introduced, presumably, to teach the Duna how to count in English) appear to have been quite influential musically for the Duna. In particular, Ten Little Indians (Example 3.2) shares melodic and harmonic similarities with Duna Christian songs and newly composed secular songs such as those presented later in this chapter.

With the mission interest in teaching in ‘tok ples’, supported by a national trend in teaching literacy in local languages across Papua New Guinea, which had developed significantly by the 1990s (Litteral 1999), songs such as Ten Little Indians were translated into Duna and sung in the classroom. ‘Indians’ were replaced with ‘Kopiagos’ (Richard Alo, Personal communication, 30 July 2006). This song was to be further localised in at least one instance by the Rewapi Elementary School of Hirane parish—a school recently established by the local Duna people to address the need for a school closer to their homes. Their ‘Indians’ became ‘Rewapi’, referring to the children of the school, which is located in a subsection of Hirane parish known as Rewapi (the importance of land references in Duna song is discussed in Chapter 5) (Figure 3.3). I here provide a musical transcription of this song in order for it to be compared with the later transcriptions in this chapter (Example 3.2).

Example 3.2 (Audio 6) Ten Little Indians.

Example 3.2 (Audio 6) Ten Little Indians.
From the very beginning of missionisation, select local people were trained to lead the churches in their own communities. These people were agnatic members of the local parish group (people who belong to it through a line of male ancestors, holding ritual and land rights to the area), such as Pastor Hagini, and thus already in a position of power and respect within their community in a traditional sense (Stürzenhofecker 1998:40; see also Stewart and Strathern 2002b:130; Strathern and Stewart 2004:62, 159, 2009:320). In the Kopiago area at the time of this writing, the churches were led entirely by Duna people (with the exception of the recent arrival of a Korean Catholic priest). This is mostly because they have the ability and do not appear to need the guidance of foreigners. Another reason behind the absence of foreign missionaries is, however, the debilitated state of Kopiago station, illustrated in the content of the songs that are analysed below. The increasing violence associated with such a lack of services also dissuades foreigners’ long-term stay.

The collision of the colonial and the Christian in song

The revivalist movement of the mid-1970s was another historical factor in the spread of Christian music across Papua New Guinea. Its origins have been traced to Christian movements in the Solomon Islands from where the revival spread across Papua New Guinea westwards to the very edge of the country (cf. Robbins 2004:1–2). Pugh-Kitingan writes that the Huli language group—neighbours
to the Duna—adopted non-indigenous melodic structures during the revival, which swept into Huli country from the neighbouring Foe people, and that they used these structures to compose ‘thousands’ of Christian songs in their indigenous languages. It is likely that these songs, and the inspiration for such composition, also passed through Duna country. Huli revivalist songs, known as Ngodenaga Iba Gana (Pugh-Kitingan 1981), share strong similarities with the popular music of the time and ‘may have been unconsciously derived from pan-Pacific string band music heard on radios purchased from trade stores’ (Pugh-Kitingan 1984:109, cf. 1981:291). The cross-fertilisation between Christian and stringband/secular musical forms is generally accepted to be the case in Papua New Guinea and has been recognised elsewhere in the literature on Papua New Guinean music (for example, Webb 1993).

Pugh-Kitingan (1981:291) identifies a melody that is ‘characteristic of many of the revival songs’ and she transcribes and translates this melody (pp. 585–6). I reproduce the first section of Pugh-Kitingan’s transcription as Example 3.3.

Pugh-Kitingan (1981:291) identifies the melody as pentatonic and describes it thus:

The melody falls into two phrases. After opening with a rising fifth, the first phrase has a generally descending direction from the pitch a sixth above the lowest pitch. The second phrase also falls from this highest pitch and has a similar length to that of the descending portion of the first phrase.

Each verse line falls into two parts, corresponding to the two melodic phrases in the tune.

Pugh-Kitingan (1981:292) also provides the following observation of the melody’s distinct rhythm: ‘A recurring [two quaver plus one crotchet] rhythm pervades the melody in this example. This is reminiscent of the regular beat in string band music and provides a further clue to the source of the tune.’ All these

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8 Pugh-Kitingan (1981:290–1) writes: ‘While the term Ngodenaga Iba Gana can be applied to all types of Christian songs including European hymns, it refers specifically to songs created spontaneously by the indigenous church during the 1973 to 1976 Christian revival. Some of these have subsequently become a regular feature of Huli worship and their verses have been collected to form a songbook.’ It should be noted that Pugh-Kitingan utilises diacritics in her representation of this Huli phrase, as shown in Example 3.3; these diacritics could not be reproduced here.

9 Papua New Guinea is not the only country in which Christian songs have influenced the secular. Aaron Corn (with Gumbula 2002), for example, writes of the Australian Indigenous band Soft Sands: ‘Its founding members innovatively adapted earlier models of gospel composition—introduced through the influence of Methodist missionaries—to the setting of new popular songs with lyrics in Yolngu-Matha [the indigenous local language].’

10 A ‘second section’ of the performance of this melody, showing part-singing, has been published in Pugh-Kitingan (1984:109).
melodic and rhythmic features are evident in the Duna Christian song ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’, which will soon be analysed—thus we can consider the origins of this song to be found within this same religious movement.11

Example 3.3 Excerpt of Pugh-Kitingan’s Transcription 74.


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11 There are some melodic similarities also with the song Ten Little Indians reproduced as Example 3.2, particularly in the rising and falling phrases over the interval of three and a half tones (a fifth). The similarity between this school song and the new religious songs of the time could have contributed to the song’s popularity (and longevity).
A very similar melodic template as that which Pugh-Kitingan transcribed appears as a song entitled *Ega Emene*, published in a 1980 songbook, with lyrics in Huli, and described as ‘a string band song, written about 1976’ (Fearon 1980). The lyrics are not religious but are of unrequited love and involve self-mutilation (a topic covered in Chapter 6), as the relevant page of the songbook shows (Example 3.3b).

**Example 3.3b Ega Emene.**

There is therefore a historical relationship between the Christian song forms introduced by the missions and contemporary secular songs as introduced by the administration. This is evident not only in the use of similar melodic and harmonic structures, but in instrumentation: both Christian and secular music incorporate the use of the guitar. At Kopiago, boys who learn the guitar—and it is mostly young males—do so first of all in the church setting, accompanying the congregation. In church, boys can gain the easiest access to the instrument, as church members are significantly mobile members of the community with the most financial support, so are able to travel and buy the instruments and the strings needed for them. The boys then take these skills in guitar playing out of the church and into the secular music arena. This trend has resulted in whole bands forming within the Christian music scene and then crossing over to popular music (such as the band now known as Ramula Bitz—see Chapter 5).

The relationship between a particular Christian song style and contemporary secular music will now be considered through the examination and comparison of two Duna songs. First, the Christian song ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’, which opens this chapter, will be analysed. I will consider its harmonic, melodic and textual structure and then compare it with a particular contemporary song that is currently popular around Kopiago and that I have given the title of ‘Mamba pi nakaya’ (loosely translated as ‘We don’t have a Member [of government]’).12

The song ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’ is typical of Christian songs currently sung by the Duna around the Lake Kopiago area. Example 3.4 is a transcription of the common structure of this song (the corresponding recording features the second verse only).13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ngote haka Ngote haka</th>
<th>God’s talk God’s talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngote haka Ngote haka</td>
<td>God’s talk God’s talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngote haka ipa mo waya keina</td>
<td>God’s talk is like water it keeps coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nane laip senis nganda waya keina</td>
<td>boy’s life change keeps coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imane laip senis nganda waya keina</td>
<td>girl’s life change keeps coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngote haka ipa mo waya keina</td>
<td>God’s talk is like water it keeps coming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Many popular songs around Kopiago are not known by one particular title, so when discussing songs I usually refer to them by the first line of text or the first line of the most identifiable verse, if there is more than one. Christian-style songs in Duna usually have one verse of single short statements repeated and one verse with more variation in text, which I regard as more identifiable, as the nature of variation makes it more distinguishable from other Christian songs.

13 The melody of this song has been transcribed into the key of G to allow for clearer presentation, as this key places the melody in the centre of the staff (cf. Feld 1982:21). Also, as it happens, G is the only key in which Christian songs of the Apostolic Church at Hirane are played, and it is with members of this church that I have conducted much of my research. Transcriptions of following songs in this chapter are also in G for comparative purposes (the leading note F# does not appear at any point in the melody, thus I have not included it in the key signature; it does, however, appear in the D chord of the accompaniment).
This song is here presented in two verses, each of seven bars length. Performers may, however, take as much or as little rest between verses (and between the repetition of verses) as they like (sometimes at least half a bar), so the overall length of seven bars is not a fixed measure, as will be seen in subsequent versions of this song.\textsuperscript{14}

The chords provided in the transcription represent the chords as played by guitars in accompaniment. Each verse contains the same simple harmonic structure: the first line of every verse is tonic (I), the second line moves to the subdominant (or IV), the third line moves from tonic (I) to dominant (V), and then back to the tonic (I) again.\textsuperscript{15} Not incidentally, these three primary chords also form the backbone to stringband music. Some stringbands play in one key only (Webb 1998:138) and such an emphasis on the tonic chord is also evident in this song, whose melody focuses on the tonic triad and the steps in between.

Melodically, each verse has the same general contour: the first phrase of four bars features an ascent from the tonal centre to three and a half tones above it (a fifth) over the first two bars and a descent of the same range over the next two bars, and the second phrase of three bars features an ascent followed by

\textsuperscript{14} When more than one performer sings the song, it is the strongest singer who takes a leading role, determining the length of a break and the number of repetitions.

\textsuperscript{15} Here I denote a line of text based primarily on the repetition and parallelism of words; however, I also take into account the interaction between the harmonic, melodic and textual features. The harmonic structure of this song is marked by the use of primary chords on the guitar, and it is on these grounds that I use this system in the analysis here.
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a descent, which centres on two tones above the tonal centre (a third) before firmly landing back on the tonal centre repeated. It is important to note that the melodies across songs of this kind are loose in that they do not require an exact reproduction of pitches; no two performances articulate the exact same pitches and there is variation between singers when these songs are sung in unison; however, all versions follow the same basic melodic contour as described above. If the transcriptions of the melodies provided in this chapter are compared, they reveal the kind of melodic variation that occurs (comparison also shows the kind of variation in phrase length). Following both the choral church tradition and secular traditions such as stringband music, an attempt at singing in harmony is usually made when these songs are sung as a group, although as it is quite erratic and threatens to cloud the analysis, that aspect of Duna singing will not be examined in this publication.

The textual structure of Christian songs has an unwavering repetitiveness tied in with the repetitiveness of form in harmony and melody. The first phrase consists of the same statement repeated (‘Ngote haka’) or two statements of a similar meaning (‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina/imane laip senis nganda waya keina’), which mirror each other. The final line of text introduces material that varies from these first two lines. Between verses, however, this final line is often the same, as in this example. Many Christian songs, including this one, use a combination of Duna and Tok Pisin languages to present their message, in order to employ those Tok Pisin terms seen by the missions as so important to conversion, such as ‘laip senis’ and ‘tanim bel’.

These harmonic, melodic and textual features are also evident in the secular song ‘Memba pi nakaya’ (Example 3.5). ‘Memba pi nakaya’ was reportedly composed for the government elections of 1997 (Richard Alo, Personal communication, 19 June 2004). It promotes one of the Duna candidates for the Koroba–Lake Kopiago open electorate, Benias (Ben) Peri, and encourages people to vote for him.

Some particular characteristics of this song are worth noting at the outset. Sometimes the phrase ‘Memba pi nakaya’ (‘we do not have a Member either’) is sung as Memba pi naraya (‘there is not a Member either’), usually when sung by children—as this example is; however, this is grammatically incorrect. In these cases, I have given these versions the grammatically correct title (to be consistent with other versions of this song) but stayed faithful to the text as it is sung. Another feature worth noting in the performance of both Christian and popular songs is that the first and second lines, when similar to each other, are often swapped around during a performance, more as a result of uncertainty by the performers of which should come first than a conscious decision to alternate lines. This interchangeability will become apparent in the comparison of the examples presented in this chapter.
It is significant that this song complains of a lack of services (in particular a highway) in the Duna community. The Papua New Guinean local government member is, across the country, thought of as the provider of all sorts of things to the people, such as roads, schools, business opportunities and capital. In this way, the relationship between the voter and the member is reciprocal: they vote and the member provides the desired goods. This system has been labelled by one Papua New Guinean scholar as a ‘cargo-cult delivery system’, in which the MP is ‘merely a conduit to pass on to the people what they desired’, and has evolved from a history of dependence established during colonial times (Okole 2005:193). The highway, then, is not simply one of many desired services, but represents both literally and figuratively this conduit, as the road is necessary for the flow of goods and services.

This song is made up of two verses, which conform to the melodic patterns of ascent and descent as described in the analysis of ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’ above. Textually, too, there are the same features of repetition present. One particular variation to note is in the beginning of the first verse. Here, the first phrase has been condensed into two bars instead of the usual four. The result is that this first verse becomes a kind of introduction to the second verse, speeding the song along to where the body of the message is contained.
A crucial aspect of the composition of ‘Memba pi nakaya’, modelled on the Christian song form as utilised in ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’, is that its form is very open to textual change. So far the campaign version of ‘Memba pi nakaya’ has been used as a launching pad for at least three different versions. In this way, the song is being used as a creative site, with its text changed and manipulated to suit the topics that its performers—Duna men, women and/or children—wish to portray. This aspect of Duna creativity is also typical of ancestral song genres and this continuity in creativity will be examined more closely in Chapter 7. The next section of this chapter explores these different versions of ‘Memba pi nakaya’ and shows how this song is being used to express (and ultimately to affect the change of) the Duna’s current experience of political and social instability.

**Creativity and contemporary social issues**

*We will have to give them a lot if they are not to be disillusioned.*

The Southern Highlands Province is marked by political unrest and parts of the province, including Kopiago, remain very poor, despite oil and gas operations in the province (Hanson et al. 2001:91, 93). Elections in and around Kopiago have become increasingly violent and at the time these songs were recorded the people of the Koroba-Lake Kopiago electorate still did not have a Member of Parliament to represent them and to help work towards a change of circumstance. The results of the 2002 elections were, after some months, declared void due to voting irregularities and, as a result, the winner was required to step down. A new member was re-elected only in July 2006. The line of the song ‘Memba pi nakaya’ (‘we do not have a Member either’) at this time, then, was a literal description of the political situation for the Duna people. So was the paired statement ‘haiwe pi naraya’ (‘there is not a highway either’). Although on most current maps the Highlands Highway is shown as ending at Kopiago (some of the more accurate maps at least show the road as unsealed), the reality has been far from that. The road has been left in poor repair for more than a decade and during my fieldwork in 2005 it was rare to see a vehicle make the journey to Kopiago station. Roads are sought after throughout Papua New Guinea (cf.

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16 Although the main cause of the poor state of the roads to Kopiago is understood to be neglect of maintenance, Robinson (2002:148) has described how the frustration experienced by the Duna people at the outcome of the 1997 election caused them to contribute to the destruction and abandonment of development in their community by damaging bridges and buildings.
Hughes 2000), but in a place with as few services as Kopiago, the lack of a road becomes symbolic of an abandoned community, a ‘last Kopiago’, which is truly at the edge of civilisation, as the following versions of this song reveal.\(^\text{17}\)

The declaration of Kopiago as a remote location is, however, a declaration with two sides. Feld explains the complexity of attitudes towards development for the Kaluli people of the Southern Highlands Province and this comment can be extended to the Duna and other isolated groups in Papua New Guinea:

> Many people express a desire for a road that would connect them with the outside: they say they want development, want cash, want to participate in the economy and enjoy what they imagine to be its benefits. But the same people, the most outspoken ones about development, will be quick to tell you that they don’t want raskols [Tok Pisin for criminals—usually young men], don’t want fighting, don’t want trouble with alcohol, don’t want weapons, don’t want population pressure on their resources. So at the same time that they desire to be modern members of the nation, they also take a certain comfort in being remote, off the grid, without oil, gas, gold, logging, or other big development projects...It is in the context of such concerns about the future that people see the resourcefulness of the past. (Feld, in Feld and Crowdy 2002:81–2)

Being the ‘last place’, then, can also be a point of praise. Richard Alo (Personal communication, 3 August 2006) suggests that the phrase eke konera (‘last place’) can be likened to such phrases as mei konenia (‘steep slope’), which praises and promotes steep ground (this phrase is commonly used in songs describing certain Duna places, as will be seen in Chapter 5). Although there might be undesirable elements attached to a place that is considered ‘last’, or ‘steep’, these are still dramatic and identifying features.

One could suggest that a sense of isolation in this region of the world is a result of colonial influence; Hau’ofa (1993:7) has pointed out that it was ‘continental men, namely Europeans’ who introduced the view (to their fellow men and also to Pacific Islanders themselves) that the Pacific Islands are ‘tiny, isolated dots in a vast ocean’. On a local level, too, it could be said that Duna people became aware of themselves as isolated only after contact with Europeans and colonialism. Certainly, it was only then that they became aware of what they possessed and how they lived in relation to the ‘developed world’.

\(^{17}\) Expressing that one’s place is ‘last’—that is, being geographically as far from desired services as is possible—is common in Papua New Guinea. Paul Wolffram (2006:110–11) reports that the Lak of New Ireland, at the other end of the country, describe their remote district as being the ‘las kona’ (last corner)—a common phrase in Tok Pisin.
Disgruntled voters soon turned the election song ‘Memba pi nakaya’ as presented above into a song criticising Ben Peri, who ultimately lost the election (cf. Haley 2002b:126). Thus, a song composed for his campaign was ultimately turned against him. In the song, Peri is accused of not providing the desired services and not spending time with his own people, but rather, travelling between the town centres of Mendi and Tari in the Southern Highlands, living the good life (Example 3.6).

Once again, the melodic structure follows the conventions of the Christian song style as revealed in the analysis of ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’. This version of the original ‘Memba pi nakaya’ has been taken up as a campaign song against Ben Peri and here the notion of Kopiago as ‘truly the edge’ (‘eke konera’) and the ‘last’ place is introduced (cf. Haley 2008:222–3).

**Example 3.6 ( Audio 9) ‘Memba pi nakaya’ (Ben Peri).**

memba pi naraya there is not a Member either
haiwe pi naraya there is not a highway either
eke konera las Kopiago eke konera truly the edge last Kopiago truly the edge

memba pi naraya there is not a Member either
haiwe pi naraya there is not a highway either
nane Ben Peri Mendi Tari pasinda the boy Ben Peri passes Mendi and Tari like the yakombe bird*
heka yakombe

* Haley (2008) identifies the yakombe bird as a ‘swiftlet’.

Another, even more recent version of this song praises a Duna man named Peter Pex, who until the middle of 2004 held the coveted position of Kopiago Community Relations Officer for the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV), the community administrative section of the Porgera mine, which is located in another province and language area. Interestingly, it was said that this version was heard for the
first time in October 2004, which was several months after Pex had been sacked from his position for a ‘conflict of interest’. This version of ‘Memba pi nakaya’ seems to have been written to clear Pex’s name and reputation (Example 3.7). He might have composed the lyrics himself.

**Example 3.7 (Audio 10) ‘Memba pi nakaya’ (Pita Pex).**

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haiwe pi naraya               there is not a highway either
membra pi naraya             there is not a Member either
ekte konera las Kopiago eke konera   truly the edge last Kopiago truly the edge
home ni puka                           like that
nane Pita Pex ya, Pita pi kampani ne hakanaru
hakayata                              talk is done
hakayata pare hunia ayu peyana      talk is done now we can play
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In other words, Kopiago does not have a highway or a government member—it is really the last place that receives any kind of development. Then, however, Peter Pex goes and talks to the company and now that is done the people of Kopiago can enjoy themselves, as he has obtained good things from the company for them. These good things are many and varied: the PJV provides not only compensation in monetary terms for the use of the Strickland River to deposit tailings from the mine, it provides medical supplies and assistance among other services. This song reveals the importance of the ‘kampani’ (‘company’) to the Duna and to Papua New Guinea at large—a phenomenon that Stürzenhofecker
(1998:32) points out is ‘the epitome of desired change, development, and modernity’. The ‘kampani’ is particularly important in a society experiencing failed government representation. Like the politician whom Okole describes, however, ‘the vision of the company operates in Kopiago as a cargoistic idea’ (Strathern 1991:614), and for much the same reasons.

![Figure 3.4 Road being created at Kopiago, 1964.](image)

Photo by David Hook

It is debateable, however, whether the voicing of community desires in the ‘Memba *pinakaya*’ songs is entirely an expression of ‘cargo cultism’. These desires are not a product of hyper imaginings by people unaware of the functioning of the Western institutions of politics and companies. Rather, these desires are largely for real items and services that the Duna at Kopiago have already experienced in the past, mainly during the time of the colonial administration, when money from elsewhere was channelled into the community. There was once a highway (see Figure 3.4), there was a political representative and there were schools and hospitals. The Duna had all these things and then slowly lost them. These particular songs themselves are therefore songs of protest based in reality, not fantasy.

Musically, we have again the same melodic and textual structures as discussed in the preceding songs. The second and third verses feature the same kind of
condensing of lines as the original campaigning version of ‘Memba pi nakaya’ presented in this chapter, in its line of ‘yaka yaka ruwano’—four bars have become two—and the effect of speeding the text to its more crucial line is also the same.

The final version of this song that I will discuss here was adapted to have a Christian message so that it could be performed in church (Example 3.8). Although the accents of the guitar accompaniment of the corresponding recording suggest different bar divisions (as does the accompaniment for Example 3.4, led by the same guitarist), I have presented the melody here as I have the previous melodies for ease of comparison.

Example 3.8 (► Audio 11) ‘Memba pi nakaya’ (Apa Ngote).

Rather than looking to the politician or the company for support in a community with no highway and no government member, this version of ‘Memba pi nakaya’ looks to God to take care of the Duna. Musically it maintains all the hallmarks of previous versions regarding melodic shape, harmonic sequences and textual structure. In addition, as a song of God, it seems that this secular song, inspired by the Christian song style, has come full circle.
Vocabulary for introduced music

If we continue to consider the indigenous vocabulary used to discuss song forms in order to understand the indigenous conception of musical forms, we find that introduced song styles too are categorised. Two categories are used: lotu ipakana (‘Christian songs’) and danis ipakana (‘dance songs’). The classifications of ‘lotu’ and ‘danis’ both come from Tok Pisin; however, this is not surprising as the musical forms that these terms label are also exogenous. The classification can also be described as religious versus secular content of songs (as we now know that musically these songs can be very similar). The performance context for lotu ipakana is primarily the church (and church-based situations such as mission school or home worship), while danis ipakana takes its name from the most popular performance context for secular music: the ‘disco’. This is understood in the broadest sense to mean the public location for the performance of music (live or recorded) of secular content where the anticipated audience participation involves dance and includes the genre of stringband. In terms of instruments, the category of alima, which as we have seen applies to ancestral musical instruments, also extends to include introduced musical instruments such as the guitar (ngiti) and ukulele (ngulele). The metal jew’s harp, which so closely resembles the Duna luna, is differentiated from it by the name luna khao (‘white luna’). These instruments are, however, referred to as alima only when they are used without vocals; a genre such as stringband that incorporates vocals will always be described as a kind of ipakana. Thus it can be seen that vocal musical expression dominates that of instruments (when the instruments themselves are not considered to be vocalising).

More broadly but also more hazily, the Duna make a distinction between introduced music and indigenous music in their vocabulary. This distinction is expressed as khao ipakana (‘white songs’) and mindi ipakana (‘black songs’), respectively. I have already pointed out that ancestral Duna songs are described as awenene ipakana, in contrast with the khao ipakana that is ‘white’ song. Mindi ipakana is a term that can also be used to describe awenene ipakana; however, unlike awenene ipakana, the term mindi ipakana can be applied to introduced songs that are considered to be indigenised. This indigenisation is particularly apparent where the texts of songs are concerned. Songs of an introduced style and in the ‘white’ languages of English or Tok Pisin are described naturally as khao ipakana; songs of an introduced style but in the Duna language are described as mindi ipakana (Kipu Piero, Personal communication, 30 March 2005). All the song examples given in this chapter, then, would be called mindi

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18 It would be interesting, if it were possible, to complete this paradigm with a comprehension of how Duna ancestral songs sung exclusively in English and/or Tok Pisin would be classified; however, as no such songs have so far been recorded or studied, the question must remain unanswered.
ipakana; an English-language version of Ten Little Indians, on the other hand, would be a classic example of khao ipakana. Such a determining element based on text alone shows supremacy of text over musical sound. It also highlights the importance of indigenous language in the process of indigenisation.

**Syncretism, appropriation and indigenisation**

The essential argument of this chapter concerns how a form of Christian song—introduced initially by missionary contact but taking as a major influence the popular music of the 1970s in the shape of stringband music—has become a musical framework for the Duna to create their own songs of social protest. This Christian/popular song form is an example of syncretism at work. The definition of syncretism as the ‘attempted union or reconciliation of diverse or opposite tenets or practices’ (The Oxford English Dictionary 1989) is very useful when considering this song. Its form fuses the Christian song format and popular music forms—both seemingly opposing tenets representing different social values—to the point where the two influences are indistinguishable from each other in the resulting musical style.

Considering the situation surrounding the Duna’s initial encounters with introduced music—in particular, the seemingly forced adoption of Christian songs—the term ‘appropriation’ is not accurate to describe the process by which the Duna first began to sing songs from elsewhere. Appropriation is an exercise of power on the part of the appropriators—‘[t]o examine musical borrowing and appropriation is necessarily to consider the relations between culture, power, ethnicity, and class’ (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000:3)—and there seems to have been little power held by the Duna in the initial acquisition of Christian musical traditions. That position changed, however, and the popularity of the Christian revival movement that swept through the Highlands in the 1970s and the songs composed in response to this movement, assisted in popularity by the musical influences of stringband music, showed a community with the power to appropriate and eventually manipulate these introduced styles.

Alongside discussions of the appropriation of Western styles of music is the complementary discussion of the ‘indigenisation’ of this introduced music. The song ‘Mamba pi nakaya’ and its various forms as presented in this chapter are examples of indigenisation at work in text and content. Writing on the kaneka music of New Caledonia, Goldsworthy (1998:45) defines indigenisation as a ‘conscious process of infusing a tradition with indigenous elements in order to make it more regionally specific and representative’. In this Duna example, indigenisation has occurred primarily through the use of Duna as the language of the song text and the singing of themes specific to the experience of the
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Duna. This use of text and social content is a common way of indigenising music around the world (cf. Bilby 1999:278–9). Another example of indigenisation at work is the actual constant reworking of the ‘Memba pi nakaya’ text; creativity with song texts on a set melody is a central element of traditional indigenous Duna musical invention and this is exactly what is creative in the Duna’s engagement with the set melodies of the introduced material presented here. This continuity in compositional style is explored further in Chapter 7.

Music is increasingly understood to be not simply a reflection of the status quo but an active form of expression that can directly impact on experience, identity and political processes (cf. Goldsworthy 1998:58). Stringband music in Papua New Guinea in particular is recognised as an important musical form for understanding the country’s concerns:

Papua New Guinea stringband music, as an example of complex local style development, offers more than an exotic journey in syncretism. It can provide another perspective with which to view notions of global and local as they relate not only to guitars and musical style, but wider social concerns as well. (Crowdy 2001:153)

The ‘Memba pi nakaya’ songs are a case in point. As I have shown, these songs have been adapted several times to express the varied experiences of the Duna and each version is an attempt to bring about changes in their lives through the articulation of their concerns among themselves and to visitors in their community.

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly sketched the history of the Duna’s initial encounters with the West through the perspective of musical practice. While the colonial encounter was the people’s first experience of Western culture, it was the missions that provided systematic exposure and education in the playing of guitars, the singing of Western melodies (including singing in harmony, which is not a feature of ancestral song performance) and the translation of these melodies into ‘tok ples’.

The Christian revivalist movement of the 1970s encouraged prolific song composition across the country, and one melody in particular was characteristic of such compositions. Pugh-Kitingan documented this melody as sung by the Huli people, and 30 years later the same melody continues to be popular in neighbouring Kopiago, as the analysis of just one of the many Christian songs
based on this melody, ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’, shows. Not only is this melody continually used to compose songs of worship (‘lotu ipakana’), it is also used in the composition of secular songs (‘danis ipakana’).

The vibrant and continually transforming Duna song ‘Memba pi nakaya’, and other Duna songs of its kind, represents the legacy of the colonial and the mission encounters united in sound. It is a creative site that is open to change and manipulation to suit the intent of its performers. This case study shows the powerful and innovative way in which Duna people, as a non-Western (and particularly post-colonial) society, manage their present and their future through music. The creativity and innovation in Duna song across a perceived divide between ancestral and exogenous song styles will be the focus of the remainder of this book.