

Dan Kusaya

Teacher Resource Guide Lotus Blossoms 2026



About Dan Kusaya

Born in Rusape, Zimbabwe, Dan Kusaya's journey as a musician began with being immersed in traditional music and culture: ngoma percussion and dance, hosho (Zimbabwean gourd instruments), marimba, and mbira. Now, he's a one-man band, live looping multiple instruments in performances that include traditional Zimbabwean songs, stories, and instrumentation, evoking a time when music was known to have magical properties: ceremonies where people sang for rain, appeased ancestors, harvested crops. Dan is both a skilled performer and a teacher dedicated to passing on Southern African music and culture to new audiences.

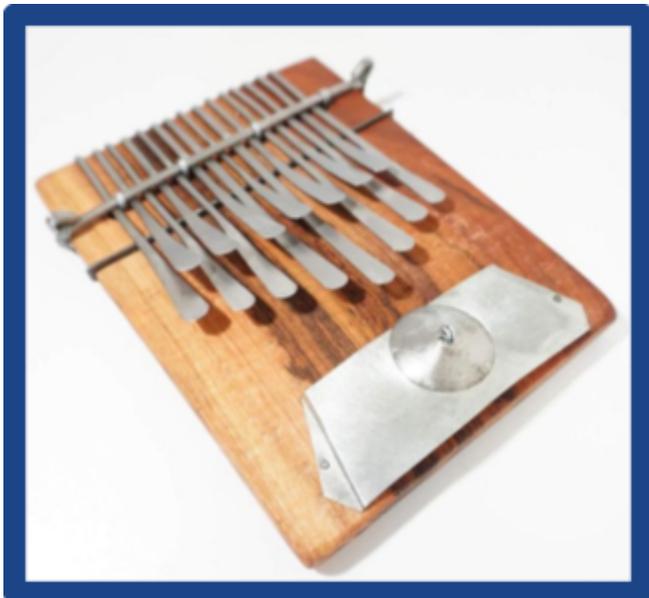
Traditional Zimbabwean Music

Zimbabwean music is heavily reliant on the use of instruments such as the mbira, Ngoma drums and hosho. Zimbabwean traditional music is an important part of everyday life, community, and culture. Many songs use instruments like drums, shakers, rattles, and the mbira, a famous instrument made with metal keys that are played with the thumbs. Drums come in many sizes and are played with hands or sticks, and some are even made with seeds, wood, bamboo, or animal skin. Music is used for many reasons, such as celebrations, work, storytelling, ceremonies, healing, honoring ancestors. Sometimes songs are sung without any instruments at all. Traditional music follows people through their whole lives, from lullabies to songs for weddings and funerals. Today, some musicians use traditional sounds to talk about problems in society or mix them with modern music styles. Festivals, schools, churches, and popular musicians help keep these music traditions alive. Ongoing efforts are important to protect and share Zimbabwe's traditional music so future generations can learn from it and enjoy it.

Instruments

Hosho

The hosho are Zimbabwean musical instruments consisting of a pair of maranka gourds with seeds. Before the hota seeds are added, the hosho is boiled in salted water and the inside is scraped out with a corncob, newspaper plug, or woven wire. Removing the debris inside the hosho allows for a more sharp and percussive tone. When shaken, the Hosho makes a sharp, rhythmic sound.



Mbirra

The mbira is a traditional instrument from Zimbabwe, featuring metal keys on a wooden soundboard. Known as a "thumb piano," it is played by plucking keys with both thumbs and the right forefinger. Bottle caps and shells may be attached to add a buzzing tone. The mbira is used in ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and entertainment.

Ngoma Drum

The ngoma drum is a single headed African drum that is carved from wood and covered in cow or goat hide. Ngoma drums are tall, sometimes even reaching 42 inches. It is played with the hands while standing. Different parts of the player's palms and fingers strike different parts of the drumheads to produce a small variety of timbres. They are often played in groups, with different sized drums playing different notes or tones. The ngoma drum is used in Zimbabwe for traditional dances and celebrations.



Fun Facts

Zimbabwe

Population: 16.9 million

Capital: Harare

Languages: Shona, Ndebele, English

Zimbabwe has the largest man-made lake in the world!



For more information about Cécilia visit:

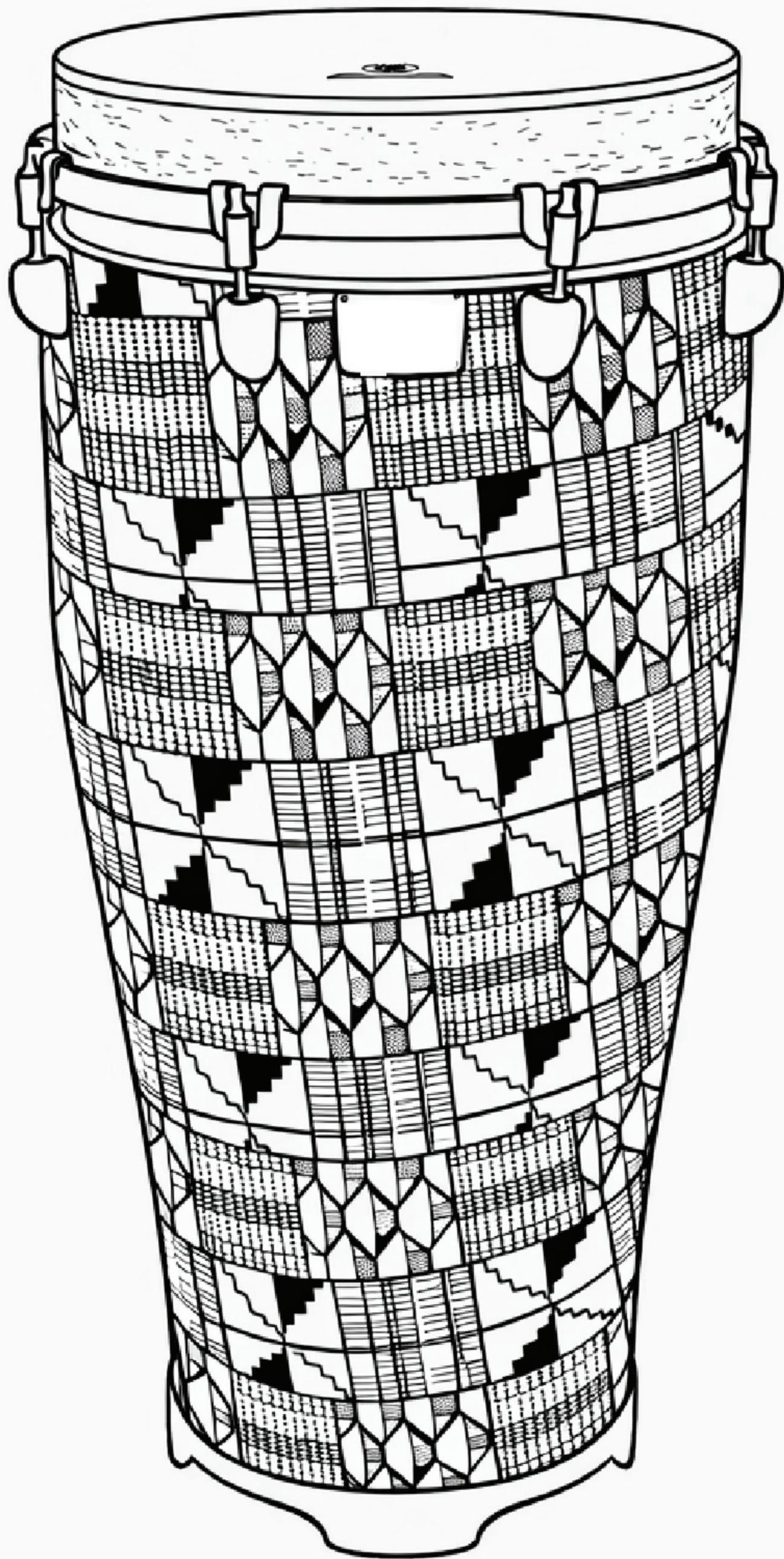
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NGOMA
HOSHO
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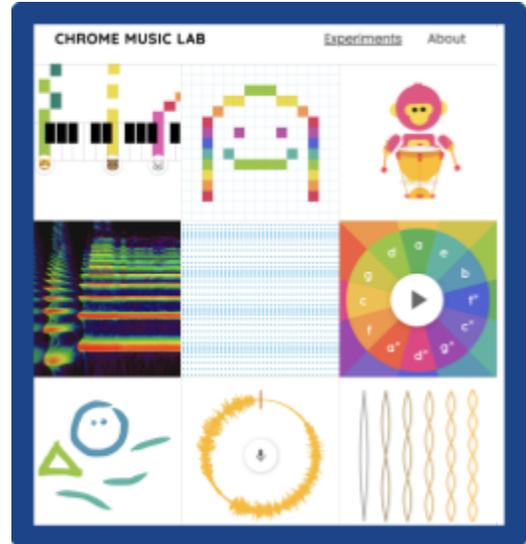
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STEAM Activity - Chrome Music Lab

See Sound in Action!

Chrome Music Lab is a free, web-based collection of interactive experiments that makes music more accessible and fun to learn. It uses hands-on, visual activities to help users explore concepts like rhythm, pitch, and chords.



Visit: musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Experiments

No need to create an account or download an app, only an internet browser is needed to access Chrome Music Lab. Chrome Music Lab also works on tablet devices.

Materials prepared by **Lotus Education and Arts Foundation, 2026**

Written & Compiled by Lotus

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