



**Bringing traditional instruments of Africa into the 21th century:  
Presentation of the 'Mvet fou' (Crazy Mvet) by François Essindi**

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We propose in this project to bring together traditional musical concepts of Cameroun, including both instruments and musical corpus, and modern ones from Occident, including engineering technologies and musical styles. François Essindi is an artist and instrument maker from Cameroun, with the ambition of moving the musical heritage of Cameroun beyond traditional boundaries and make it evolve towards original and fruitful ways. As a first step, we will present various instrument making techniques realized by François to the traditional Mvet (a zither with steel strings from Cameroun), such as the fixation of strings to the calabashes with pegheads inspired from acoustic guitars, and a new global shape of the instrument which also allows original methods of playing. As a second step, we describe experiments of implementing sensors on this instrument, drawing inspiration from the field of instrument augmentation (Lahdeoja, 2010). This protocol includes piezoelectric, electromagnetic and optical sensors. And the three applications considered here are : 1. automatic music transcription, as the selected multichannel sensors allow to record the sound of each string separately, and convert a polyphonic signal into monophonic ones which are much easier to analyse (Cazau et al., 2013). The analytical recordings obtained with the sensors should help in transcribing traditional tunes from Africa and consequently in providing precise musical characterization and in their preservation ; 2. timbre modification, which is the main preoccupation of instrument augmentation 3. Human-Machine musical interaction, through the OMAX improvisation IT environment. We used this environment with the MIDI data from our retrieval system.